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A

COMPREHENSIVE
HISTORY OF INDIA,
CIVIL, MILITARY AND SOCIAL. 5

FROM

THE FIRST LANDING OF THE ENGLISH,
TO THE SUPPRESSION OF THE SEPOY REVOLT;

INCLUDING

AN OUTLINE OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF HINDOOSTAN.

By HENRY BEVERIDGE, Esq.

ADVOCATE.

ILLUSTRATED BY ABOVE FIVE HUNDRED ENGRAVINGS.

VOLUME II.



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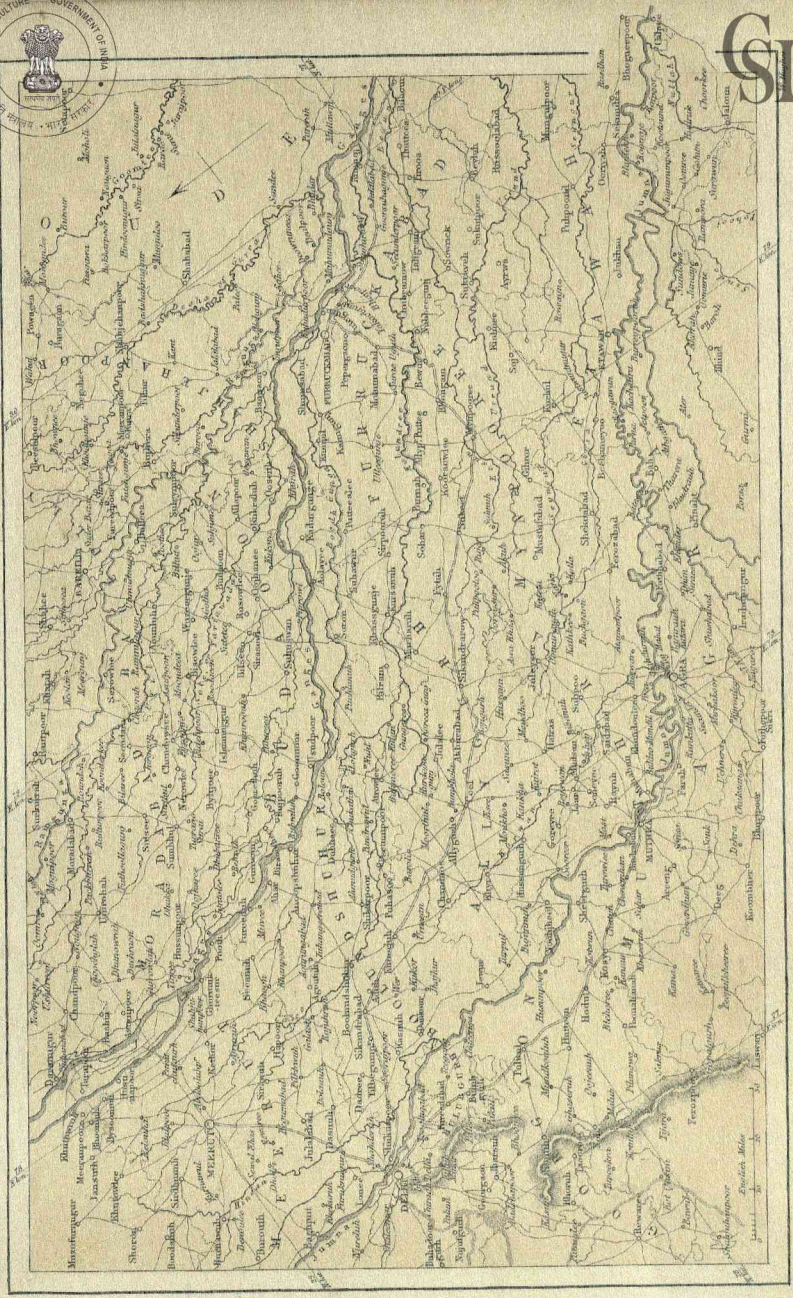


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THE VALLEY OF THE GANGES FROM NEAR CAWNPOOR TO MEERUT WITH THE COURSE OF THE JUMNA FROM CALPEE TO DEHLY.





AFGHANISTAN.

British Miles



GLS



Drawn by J. A. Waller F.R.G.S.

Engraved by J. A. Waller 54 Red Lion Square

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Actions by Gen. Havelock in 1857, thus
A day's flight in the Company of
1858 shown thus

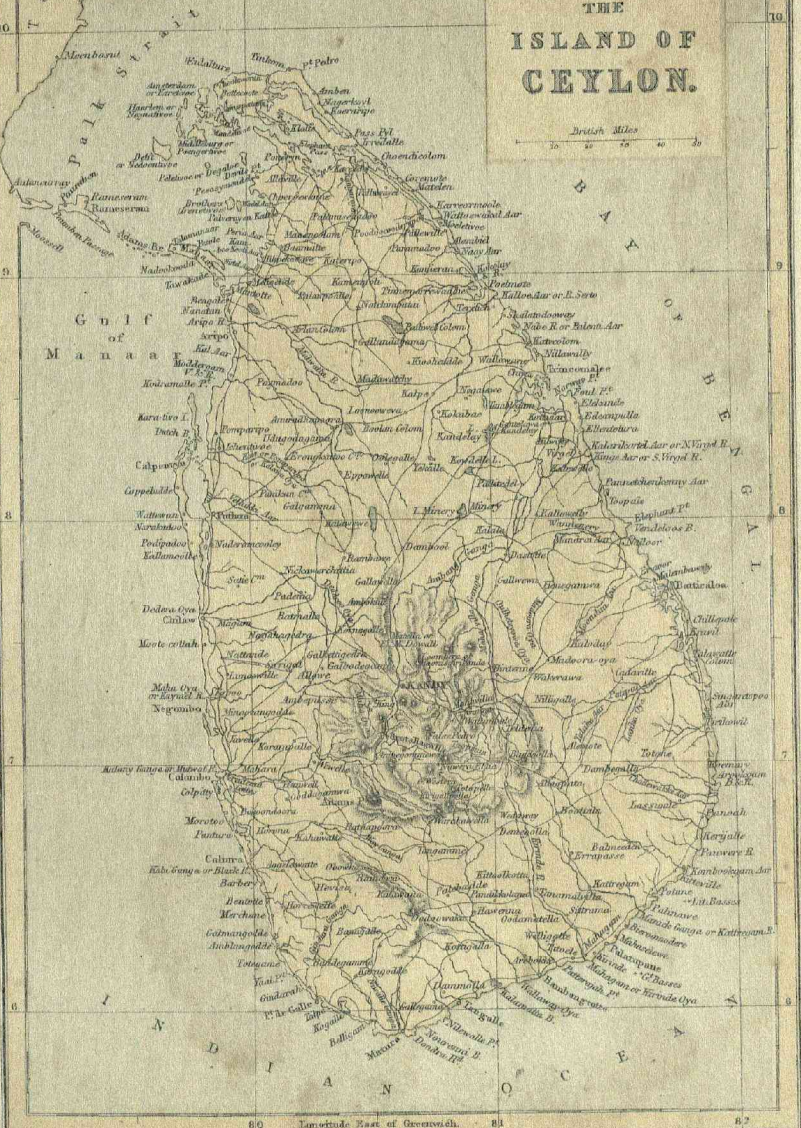


CSL

THE ISLAND OF CEYLON.

British Miles

10 20 30 40 50



Longitude East of Greenwich.

Drawn by Peter Wallis F.R.S.

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COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF INDIA.

BOOK IV.

OF THE INSTITUTIONS, LITERATURE, ARTS, AND MANNERS OF THE HINDOOS.

CHAPTER I.

Origin and Classification of the Hindoos.

HE Hindoos, though now forming the great body of the population of India, do not seem to have been its earliest inhabitants. These, it is probable, are still represented by some of the hill tribes, who after contending in vain against foreign invaders, quitted the plains, and found an asylum among mountains and forests, into which the conquering race could not or cared not to follow them. The tradition is that the Hindoos entered India from the north-west, and had their first settlement in a small tract lying about 100 miles north-west of Delhi, between the Guggur and the Soorsooty. In the *Institutes of Menu* this tract is said to have been named *Brahmaverta*, because it was "frequented by the gods," and the custom preserved in it by immemorial tradition is recommended as "approved usage." From this tract the Hindoos appear to have spread eastward, and occupied the whole country north of the Jumna and the Ganges. To distinguish this country from *Brahmaverta* it was called *Brahmarshi*, and from Brahmins born within it all men on earth are enjoined to learn their several usages. Besides these tracts *Menu* mentions two others—*Medhyadesa*, or the central region said to lie between *Himayat* (the Himalaya) and *Vindhya*; and *Aryaverta*, or the land of respectable men, described in rather indefinite terms, but meant apparently to include the countries stretching on each side of the central region, "as far as the eastern and the western oceans," in other words, the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.

A.D. —

Hindoos
not the
aborigines
of India.

wrong

Assuming that at the time when the *Institutes of Menu* were compiled, the whole territory included under the names of *Brahmaverta*, *Brahmarshi*,



Fabulous
nature of
Hindoo
history and
chronology.

Medhyadesa, and Aryaverta, was in full and undisputed possession of the Hindoos, we turn to their records in the hope of obtaining accounts more or less authentic of the manner in which they made their original conquests, and afterwards extended them into the Deccan, so as to bring the whole of India under their power. Unfortunately, on these important points the Hindoo annals furnish no information, and we are presented, instead of historical details, with the most extravagant fables. Commencing at a period so remote that the mind is unable to form any definite conception of the years which have elapsed since its commencement, we arrive at last at four *yugas* or ages, evidently resembling those with which the literature of the Greeks and Romans has made us familiar. The first age, or *satya yuga*, lasted 1,728,000 years. During this age man existed in his most perfect form. The whole race was free from any taint of corruption; and each individual, besides being of gigantic stature, lived 100,000 years. In the second age, or *treta yuga*, one-third of the human race had become corrupt, and the duration of the whole period, as well as of human life, suffered a corresponding diminution, the former being reduced to 1,296,000 years, and the latter to 10,000 years. In the third age, or *dwapara yuga*, corruption still proceeding, the whole period was reduced to 864,000, and the life of man to 1000 years. In the fourth age, or *cali yuga*, corruption became universal, and while human life has been restricted to its present maximum of 100 years, it has been predicted that the whole number of years now running their destined course will not exceed 432,000. The three first ages are evidently fabulous; but Hindoo chronology, maintaining a kind of consistency in its extravagance, treats them all as equally authentic, and assigns historical events to each. In some instances, indeed, even the myriads of years included in the ages are deemed insufficient, and the *Institutes of Menu*, though certainly not older than the ninth century before our era, are fabled to have been written at a date, to reach which, in counting backwards, the 4,320,000 years of the four ages must be multiplied by six times seventy one. In a similar spirit the *Surya Sidhantu*, an astronomical work of the fifth or sixth century, is assigned to the *satya yuga*, and gravely declared to have been written more than two millions of years ago.

The *cali*
yuga alone
historical.

The *cali yuga* is the only age which can be regarded as historical. It commenced about 5000 years ago, and thus falls within the period during which we know, from an infallible source, that men have lived upon the earth, and may have spread eastward from their original seat into the basin of the Ganges. Still, notwithstanding some remarkable coincidences, it is difficult in the extreme to unravel the web of Hindoo fiction, and assign a real existence to beings who, though living and performing exploits in localities which are easily identified, figure as the familiar associates of supernal or infernal powers, as the descendants of the sun and moon, and even as incarnations of deity. Such are the heroes of the two celebrated epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.



That they were real human beings, and not mere creatures of the imagination, may easily be admitted; but in all the details respecting them the supernatural predominates so much over the historical, and is so interwoven with it, that the attempt to separate them is fruitless. To the vague information furnished by the *Institutes of Menu* scarcely anything is added, and we must be contented to know, as a general but unexplained fact, that Hindoo supremacy, after being maintained by dynasties, the most important of which reigned in Ayodah or Oude, situated near the centre of Brahmarschi, was gradually extended over the whole length and breadth of the Indian peninsula, and even beyond it, into the island of Ceylon.

Early history
of the
Hindoos.

While it is impossible, in the absence of genuine annals, to trace the leading events in the early history of the Hindoos, and present them in the form of a continuous narrative, there is another important branch of inquiry, as to which a similar complaint cannot be made. In several ancient works, and more especially in the *Institutes of Menu*, we obtain an intimate acquaintance with their internal condition, and are introduced to a state of society of a very extraordinary character. As its distinguishing features must now be passed in review, we begin with the one which lies at the foundation of all the social arrangements of the Hindoos. From a very early date they have existed, not as one people, derived from a common origin and possessed of equal rights, but as distinct classes, separated from each other by impassable barriers, and destined to occupy very different social positions. This classification, to which Europeans, borrowing a synonymous term from the Portuguese, generally give the name of *caste*, appears to have had its origin in a mythological fiction. According to Hindoo theology, mankind are not the descendants of a single primeval pair, but were at first produced by Brahma, their imaginary creator, from four different parts of his body. From his mouth proceeded the Brahmin, from his arm the Cshatriya, from his thigh the Vaisya, and from his foot the Sudra. Each of these creations furnished the progenitors of a distinct class, whose social position and occupation were thus indelibly fixed in accordance with its origin. According to Menu, the Brahmin, since he sprang from the mouth, the most excellent part, "is by right the chief of this whole creation." Next in order, but at an immeasurable distance, stands the Cshatriya. His descent marks him out as a soldier, and his principal employment should be "to defend the people." The Vaisya represents the industrial class, and his proper duty therefore is to keep herds of cattle, to carry on trade, to lend at interest, and to cultivate land. To the Sudra, it is said, the supreme ruler assigns one principal duty, "namely, to serve the before mentioned classes without depreciating their worth."

Division into
classes or
castes.

In every description of the duties of the different classes, the elevation of the Brahmin is never overlooked. Though the Cshatriya and Vaisya are enjoined or permitted to read the Veda or Hindoo scripture, the Brahmin alone is



Supremacy
of the
Brahmin
caste.

entitled to teach it. They too may sacrifice on their own account, but to him exclusively is assigned the duty "of assisting others to sacrifice." The Cshatriya is required to give alms, and the Vaisya to bestow largesses, whereas the Brahmin need not give unless he is rich, and on the contrary, if poor, has the special privilege of "receiving gifts." These privileges, however, give but a feeble idea of his dignity, and therefore we are distinctly told that "the very birth of Brahmins is a constant incarnation of Dharma, god of justice; for the Brahmin is born to promote justice, and to procure ultimate happiness;" that "when a Brahmin springs to light, he is born above the world, the chief of all creatures, assigned to guard the treasury of duties, religious and civil;" and that "whatever exists in the universe is all, in effect, the wealth of the Brahmin, since the Brahmin is entitled to it all by his primogeniture and eminence of birth." To secure this pre-eminence of the Brahmins, and give practical effect to it, the principal places of authority and trust are reserved for them. The king, indeed, should properly belong to the Cshatriya class, but the requisite qualifications for his high office are to be acquired by listening with implicit deference to the instructions of Brahmins. From them he is continually to "learn habits of modesty and composure;" by their decision he is to "abide;" and though in choosing his counsellors he is only enjoined in general to appoint "men whose ancestors were servants of kings, who are versed in the holy books, who are personally brave, who are skilled in the use of weapons, and whose lineage is noble;" it is added, not that he is to act on the advice which they may give him, but simply that having ascertained their several opinions "let him impart his momentous counsel to one learned Brahmin distinguished among them all; to him, with full confidence, let him intrust all transactions, and with him having taken his final resolution, let him begin all his measures." Having thus a Brahmin for his prime minister, he is to select another of eminent learning for the office of chief judge, and leave it to him and three other Brahmins appointed to act with him as assessors, to investigate all causes brought into the king's court, and prepare them for decision either by himself in person, or by the chief judge as his deputy.

It is not so much, however, by the direct authority conferred upon them as ministers of state and judges that the ascendancy of the Brahmins is secured, as by the peculiar sacredness which is attached both to their persons and property, and which, while it permits them to commit crimes with comparative impunity, aggravates the guilt and increases the punishment of those who may dare to injure or offend them. A king, however much he may be pressed for money, must not "provoke Brahmins to anger, by taking their property; for they once enraged could immediately, by sacrifices and imprecations, destroy him with his troops, elephants, horses, and cars;" and in administering justice he "must not even form the idea of killing a priest," even though he may have been "convicted of all possible crimes." "He may be banished the realm, but it must be with all his property secure and his body unhurt," for "no greater



crime is known on earth than slaying a Brahmin." While the Brahmin may thus be guilty of all imaginable atrocities without putting his life in danger, the law carefully throws its shield around him, and punishes the slightest insults offered to him by the infliction of barbarous tortures and mutilations. Should a Sudra address him in contumelious terms, "an iron style, ten fingers long, shall be thrust red hot into his mouth;" should he "insolently place himself on the same seat," banishment is the mildest punishment that awaits him; "should he spit on him through pride, the king shall order both his lips to be gashed;" should he seize him by the locks, or other enumerated parts of his person, "let the king, without hesitation, cause incisions to be made in both his hands;" should he "through pride give instructions to priests concerning their duty, let the king order some hot oil to be dropped into his mouth and his ear."

Comparative
impunity
for crime
enjoyed
by the
Brahmins.

Such is a specimen of the penalties which the code of Menu provides for the slightest premeditated insults offered to a Brahmin. Legal penalties, however, are insufficient to heal his wounded dignity or satisfy his vengeance, and therefore, to make the punishment complete, sanctions of a different kind are put in requisition. In some cases where the offence proceeds from momentary impulse, or is of so trivial a nature that the law has not deigned to deal with it, expiation by penance may suffice, and hence, he "who says *hush* or *pish* to a Brahmin" may purge the offence by bathing immediately, eating nothing for the rest of the day, and appease him whom he has offended "by clasping his feet with respectful salutation." In like manner, one offending a Brahmin by striking him, "even with a blade of grass," or by "overpowering him in argument, and adding contemptuous words," must "soothe him by falling prostrate." It would seem, however, that from the refusal of the Brahmin, or some other cause, the offered reparation may prove unavailing, and hence we are elsewhere told that he who has smitten a Brahmin in anger and by design, even with a blade of grass, "shall be born in one-and-twenty transmigrations from the wombs of impure quadrupeds." The crime may be committed, and a fearful penalty incurred, without actually smiting; for it is expressly declared that "a twice-born man," that is, one belonging to any one of the three first classes, if he "barely assaults a Brahmin, with intention to hurt him, shall be whirled about for a century in the hell named *Tamisra*." Should there be not merely an intent to hurt or kill, but actual striking, the punishment shall be extended to a thousand years; and should blood be shed, then "as many pellets of dust as the blood of a Brahmin collects on the ground, for so many thousand years must the shedder of that blood be tormented in hell."

Penalties for
insulting a
Brahmin.

In the early age, when the *Institutes of Menu* were compiled, the Brahmin paid somewhat dearly for his honours by the strict discipline to which his whole life was subjected. Having been invested with the badge of his caste in his eighth, and, at all events, not later than his sixteenth year, he became a *Brahmachari*, or student in theology, took up his residence with a preceptor, and

Stages of a
Brahmin's
life



besides listening with the utmost deference to his instructions, spent a large part of every day in irksome observances, and even menial services. Among others, he behoved "to carry water-pots, flowers, cow-dung, fresh earth, and *cusa* grass, as much as may be useful to his preceptor;" to bring logs of wood from a distance, and with them "make an oblation to fire without remissness, both evening and morning," and to seek his daily food "by begging, with due care from the houses of persons renowned for discharging their duties," and where such houses could not be found, by "begging through the whole district round the village." If so disposed he might pass his whole life in this manner, induced by the consideration that "that Brahmin who has dutifully attended his preceptor till the dissolution of his body, passes directly to the eternal mansion of God;" but, in general, regarding studentship merely as a probationary stage, he passed to a second, in which, provided his rules as a student had not been violated, he was permitted to "assume the order of a married man," and "pass the second quarter of human life in his own house." During this stage, devoting himself chiefly to the study of the Veda, and living "with no injury, or with the least possible injury to animated beings," he might, "for the sole purpose of supporting life," acquire property "by those irreproachable occupations which are peculiar to his class, and unattended with bodily pain." Among the approved means of subsistence are enumerated gleanings, and gifts received, unasked, from worthy persons. Next in order are alms obtained by asking, and tillage, and last of all, traffic and money-lending, "but service for hire is named *swavritti*, or *dog-living*, and of course he must by all means avoid it." In the latter part of this second stage, if the Brahmin "has paid, as the law directs, his debts to the sages, to the manes, and to the gods," that is, according to commentators, if he has duly read the scripture, begotten a son, and performed regular sacrifices, "he may resign all to his son, and reside in his family house, with no employment but that of an unpire."

The first and second stages of a Brahmin's life.

The third stage of the Brahmin's life arrives when he "perceives his muscles become flaccid, and his hair gray, and sees the child of his child." He must now take up his consecrated fire, and the implements for making oblations to it, and departing from the town "repair to the lonely wood." During the second stage, when he was a householder, mortification was rather the exception than the rule. He was never, if able to procure food, to "waste himself with hunger," nor, possessing any substance, to "wear old or sordid clothes." On the contrary, with his hair, nails, and beard clipped, his passions subdued, his mantle white, his body pure, a staff of *venu*, a ewer with water in it, a bunch of *cusa* grass, or a copy of the Veda, in his hand, and a pair of bright golden rings in his ears, he was diligently to occupy himself in reading the Veda, and be constantly intent on such acts as might be salutary to him. Now, however, when retired to the forest, he was to "wear a black antelope's hide, or a vesture of bark," to "suffer the hair of his head, his beard, and his nails to grow continually," to eat

The third stage.

“green herbs, flowers, roots, and fruits,” breaking “hard fruits with a stone,” or letting “his teeth serve as a pestle,” and to torture himself by various inflictions, such as standing a whole day on tiptoe, in the hot season sitting exposed to five fires—that is, as the commentators explain it, *four blazing around him with the sun above*—in the rainy season standing uncovered while the clouds pour down showers, and in the cold season wearing a humid vesture. This discipline having been increased gradually by harsher and harsher mortifications, so as to “dry up his bodily frame,” he concludes his third stage by living

Third stage of the Brahmin's life.



PUNCH AGNEE, OR Penance OF FIVE FIRES.—From Belnos' "Sindhya," or Daily Prayers of the Brahmins.

“without external fire, without a mansion, wholly silent, sleeping on the bare earth, in the haunts of pious hermits, without one selfish affection; dwelling at the roots of trees, and meditating especially on those chapters of the Veda which treat of the essence and attributes of God. Should these austerities, as is certainly not improbable, destroy his health and terminate in an incurable disease, the injunction is that he is to “advance in a straight path toward the invincible point, feeding on water and air, till his mortal frame totally decay, and his soul become united with the Supreme,” for, it is added, “a Brahmin having shuffled off his body by any of those modes which great sages practised, and becoming void of sorrow and fear, rises to exaltation in the divine essence.”

If the Brahmin survived the rigours of the forest life, he entered upon the fourth and last stage, in which, without quitting his solitude, he was to be exempted from all external observances, and spend his remaining years in preparing, by pious meditation, for absorption into the divine essence. “Delighted with meditating on the Supreme Spirit, sitting fixed in such meditation, without needing anything earthly, without one sensual desire, without any companion but his own soul, let him live in this world, seeking the bliss of the next.” “Let him not wish for death; let him not wish for life; let him expect his appointed time, as a hired servant expects his wages.” His body, described as “a mansion with bones for its rafters and beams; with nerves and tendons for cords; with muscles and blood for mortar; with skin for its outward covering—a mansion infested by age and by sorrow, the seat of malady, harassed with pains, haunted with the quality of darkness, and incapable of standing long,” let him cheerfully quit “as a tree leaves the bank of a river when it falls in, or as a bird leaves the branch of a tree at his pleasure.”

Fourth stage



Such was the approved discipline of the Brahmin caste at the date of the *Institutes of Menu*, but many changes have been introduced by the lapse of time, and few if any individuals now profess to carry out that discipline in all its integrity. Any one of the four stages is now thought sufficient for a whole life; and the devotee selecting that which accords best with his own inclination, uses it as the means of founding a reputation for extraordinary sanctity; but the whole community pay no regard to the ancient regulations, and in practice at least hold them to be obsolete. To the privileges which separate them from other classes, and maintain their ascendancy as an aristocracy, they still adhere; and to prevent intermixtures with inferior classes, repudiate marriage as illegal in cases in which it was originally sanctioned. It is no longer, however, deemed necessary to depend for subsistence on voluntary gifts or alms, and Brahmins are found in all trades and professions. Even service, stigmatized by Menu as *dog-living*, is not repudiated, except under circumstances where it is supposed to carry personal degradation along with it. The army, which is in some respects the most absolute and rigorous of all forms of service, is full of Brahmins; and agriculture, though necessarily requiring a large amount of that bodily labour which they are recommended to shun, is a favourite employment. Still, a decided preference is given to occupations in which intellectual rather than physical exertion is required. Teaching continues to be the most honourable source of income to those not actually deriving their maintenance from services connected with religion; and much of the business, public and private, which requires some degree of intellectual training, is in their hands.

This general adoption of secular employments naturally tends to detract from the sacred character with which the Brahmins were originally invested, and hence, it appears that in various parts of India, and more especially in Bengal, their influence as an hierarchy is impaired, and they have been to some extent superseded in their religious functions by various monastic orders, in which as a general rule all the distinctions of caste are ignored, and nothing but a common brotherhood is recognized, Brahmin and Sudra living together as members on a footing of perfect equality. Still, notwithstanding the formidable rivalry to which they are thus subjected, the Brahmins continue to insist on the superiority which their fabled origin is supposed to give them, and find a ready acquiescence in the great body of their countrymen, who not only look up to them with veneration, but would regard it as a species of sacrilege to call any of their privileges in question. Full advantage has been taken of this slavish temper, and the whole business of life has been so arranged as to make the presence, and consequently the payment of a Brahmin indispensable on almost every occasion. Hence multitudes of the privileged class manage to spend their days in luxurious idleness, maintained either by the rents of lands which have been alienated to form permanent endowments in their favour, or the countless offerings which pilgrims and other deluded votaries are constantly pouring into their

Changes
in Brah-
minical
discipline

Partial de-
cline of the
influence
of the
Brahmins.



Even where no formal service is rendered or expected, mere liberality to Brahmins is held so meritorious as to expiate the guilt of many offences, and large sums annually expended in feasting and otherwise entertaining them are thought to be amply recompensed by the honour which the presence of such guests confers, or the blessings temporal and spiritual which they have in their power to bestow on those who befriend them. This extravagant deference to the Brahminical caste is sometimes manifested in ludicrous forms, and the water in which a Brahmin has dipped his toe, or the dust which has been gathered from his foot is not unfrequently set aside, and carefully preserved, under the idea that by such contact valuable properties have been conferred upon it.

Extravagant
deference
to the
Brahmini-
cal caste.

Originally all Brahmins were, in accordance with their common origin, equal in privilege and dignity. Their superiority to the other classes was determined by the pre-eminence of that part of Brahma which produced them; but in regard to each other there were no primeval diversities on which claims of precedence could be founded. In course of time, however, this equality disappeared. Some individuals surpassing others in the qualities which were held in highest estimation were naturally looked up to as leaders, and became the founders of families, which boasting of their descent, considered themselves entitled to stand above the common level of their class. In this way all the usual distinctions of rank have been introduced, and the Brahmins, instead of continuing to form a single homogeneous class, have been broken up into numerous sections, which, if not actually hostile, differ so widely from each other, that they have no social intercourse. The first great distinction between Brahmins is of a religious nature. They are all under obligation to maintain a perpetual fire, but the great majority of them disregard the obligation, while the minority who perform it, pluming themselves on their superior sanctity, are distinguished by the name of Agnihostras. The next distinction is genealogical, and classes all Brahmins under the two great heads of Gaura and Dravira, each of them composed of five distinct races, and located respectively in Hindoostan and the Deccan. The five Gaura races, arranged according to the territories presumed to have been their original seats, stand thus:—1. Kanyakubja, or Canouje; 2. Saraswat, or the North-west of India; 3. Gaur, or Bengal; 4. Mithila, or North Behar; and, 5. Utkala, or Orissa. Among the Draviras, in like manner, the whole of the Deccan, together with Gujerat, is parcelled out. Each of these races is again subdivided, and forms numerous ramifications, which it would be vain to attempt to trace. As a specimen it may suffice to mention that the Brahmins of Canouje alone count 156 distinct families.

Original
equality of
Brahmins.

Present dis-
tinctions.

In practice, the most important of all the distinctions at present subsisting among Brahmins is that of rank, which, in so far as regards those of Bengal, has the following fabulous origin ascribed to it:—A king of the name of Balal Sen, who reigned about six centuries ago, observing the strict fidelity of



The Kulinas
or nobles.

Some Brahmins in performing the obligations of their class, and the comparative laxity or total neglect manifested by others, determined to give them rank corresponding to their merits, and with this view divided them into three orders. Those entitled to the first rank, and on this account distinguished by the name of Kulinas, or nobles, behoved to possess nine eminent qualifications. They were, first, to be strict in Brahminical observances; secondly, meek; thirdly, learned; fourthly, of good report; fifthly, frequenters of holy places; sixthly, repudiators of gifts from the impure; seventhly, without deceit; eighthly, addicted to devotional austerities; and, lastly, liberal. The second rank was assigned to those who, without possessing the qualifications of the first, had been regularly initiated into all the rites necessary to constitute a complete Brahmin and were, moreover, well read in the Vedas. They were distinguished by the name of Shrotriyas. The third and lowest place was held, under the name of Vangshagas, by those who, though entitled to rank as Brahmins in respect of descent, had nothing else to recommend them.

Their degeneracy in
modern
times.

If Balal Sen was right in the original selection of the Kulinas, there must have been a great and rapid degeneracy in their descendants; for the modern Kulinas, while as a body they still retain their precedence, are generally destitute of the qualifications by which their progenitors acquired it, and employ the influence and privileges of their rank, not in purifying, but in corrupting public morals. Placed, as it were, on the very pinnacle of society, and privileged on all occasions to occupy the seat of honour, they are naturally courted by all other ranks, and it becomes an object of the highest ambition to become connected with them by intermarriage. The Kulinas have managed to turn this feeling to good account. The more respectable of them disdain to make a traffic of affinity, and are generally contented with two wives; but the others are less scrupulous, and consider from fifteen to twenty as a moderate allowance. Forty to fifty is not uncommon, and Mr. Ward had heard of some who had 120. Were these wives taken to their husband's house to form a harem, the injury to public morals though great would not assume its most malignant form; but the remarkable peculiarity is, that after the ceremony is performed, they continue to reside in the homes of their parents, and see their husbands, if at all, only at distant intervals. Even then the visit is only for etiquette, or it may be for some mercenary purpose. On such occasions the father of the wife is expected to make a present to the husband, who, mean enough to take advantage of the custom, makes his round of visits from house to house where each wife resides, and in this way gains a subsistence. It is easy to conceive how much licentiousness and crime such a system must engender. The woman tied for life to a man to whom she owes no affection, because she receives none, takes advantage of the freedom from restraint which the nominal relation confers, and not unfrequently, with the full knowledge of her parents, admits a paramour. When concealment becomes necessary, infanticide, or the crime which anticipates it,



are the usual means adopted. Often, from another cause, where no marriage has taken place, similar atrocities prevail.

The Kulina is permitted by the rules of his order to give his son in marriage to the daughter of a Shrotriya, and often has little difficulty in finding fathers-in-law, who value the honour so highly as to be willing to pay largely for it. By a strange perversion he can marry his daughter only to a person of his own rank, and hence, as in many cases such husbands cannot be found, daughters are too often regarded as an incumbrance, and if not prematurely cut off by the crimes already referred to, are in thousands of instances left to seek a maintenance by the most infamous means. According to Mr. Ward, "the houses of ill-fame at Calcutta, and other large places, contain multitudes of the daughters of Kooleenu Bramhuns, so entirely degraded are these favourites of Bullalsanu!"

Pernicious regulation regarding the daughters of the Kulinas.

We have dwelt at some length on the Brahminical caste, not merely because it is the most important, but because it furnishes, both in theory and practice, a general model of the whole system. In treating of the other regular classes a few remarks will suffice. Indeed, if we are to believe the Brahmins, the Cshatriyas and Vaisyas, the only classes which, from the privileges possessed by them, could have been regarded as their rivals, have entirely disappeared. In the *Institutes of Menu* they hold a place which is distinctly marked, and are fully instructed in the peculiar duties and privileges belonging to them. The one was the representative of power, the other of wealth; and, though the Brahmin only could expound the Veda, both of them were entitled to read it, and to offer sacrifice. In regard to initiatory rites, too, the discipline to which they were subjected, if inferior to that of the Brahmins, bore a marked resemblance to it in its leading features. The ceremonies performed before birth were common to all the three classes; in due time, after birth, they all received the tonsure, and at a later period they had all the privilege of becoming *dwija*, or twice born, by being invested with the *poita*, or sacrificial thread. This thread, or rather triple cord, worn over the left shoulder, and, after crossing the back, tied into a knot under the right arm, is now regarded by Brahmins as their distinguishing badge, but was anciently common to them with the other two twice-born classes, the only difference being, that while that of a Brahmin was of cotton, that of a Cshatriya was of *sana* thread only, that of a Vaisya of woollen thread. The Brahmins, perhaps galled by the approach thus made to them by the two immediately inferior classes, have taken the most effectual means of suppressing them. The key of knowledge being exclusively in their hands, they have made it subservient to their own aggrandizement, by carefully preserving evidence sufficient to establish the purity of their own descent, while they have allowed that which would have been available for the same purpose to the Cshatriyas and Vaisyas to perish. A great gap has thus been made in the social edifice. The intervening gradations having been destroyed, the Brahmin seated on the

The Cshatriya and Vaisya classes.

pinnacle seems to have attained a prouder elevation, while he looks down and sees nothing between him and the Sudra at its base.

Claim of the
 Rajpoots to
 be Cshat-
 riyas.

The assertion that the classes of Cshatriyas and Vaisyas have become extinct by intermixtures which have destroyed their purity and reduced them all to the level of Sudras, has not been tamely acquiesced in. Some of the industrious classes still claim relation to the original Vaisyas; while the whole nation of Rajpoots strenuously insist that the military spirit for which they continue to be distinguished, has been transmitted to them by uninterrupted succession from those who first derived it from the arm of Brahma. In one respect, however, the Brahmins have prevailed. Perhaps, by way of compromise, those claiming to be pure Cshatriyas have contented themselves with maintaining only those of their privileges which are strictly military. Those of an intellectual and spiritual nature, which gave them access to the Vedas, they have tacitly resigned, and the Brahmins have in consequence gained all for which they were disposed to contend, by becoming not only the authorized expounders, but the sole depositaries of all knowledge, human and divine.

The Sudra
 class.

The Sudras had less inducement than any of the other classes to guard the purity of their descent. They were, in fact, slaves, and having no privileges to maintain, must have been anxious only to escape from bondage. The existence of pure Sudras in the present day is therefore very questionable, though not only individual families in different parts of India, but the whole nation of the Mahrattas claim alliance with them. If the latter claim is correct they have not only overcome the disadvantages of their original position, but risen to be the founders of reigning dynasties. Nothing can be more humiliating than the terms applied to them throughout the *Institutes of Menu*. While "the first part of a Brahmin's compound name should indicate holiness—of a Cshatriya's, power—of a Vaisya's, wealth," that of a Sudra's should only indicate "contempt." He was to be excluded "from every sacred observance of the twice-born classes." So full of pollution was he, that the very sight of him was to be carefully avoided when a youth of the twice-born classes was to be invested with the sacrificial cord; the Veda could not even be read while he was present; and the Brahmin who should presume to teach it to him committed an offence so heinous that it could only be expiated in hell. Though he had the power he was not to acquire wealth, "since a servile man who has amassed riches gives pain even to Brahmins." This prohibition, in fact, was only adding insult to injury, for it elsewhere appears that the thing here forbidden was to him absolutely impossible, since a Brahmin might, without hesitation, seize the goods of his Sudra slave, inasmuch as "that slave can have no property."

The same injustice and inhumanity are conspicuous in everything that concerns the Sudra. Even the possibility of ameliorating his condition is denied him, for it is expressly declared that "a Sudra, though emancipated by his master, is not released from a state of servitude; for of a state which is natural



Condition of
the Sudras
improved in
modern
times.

Introduction
of new castes

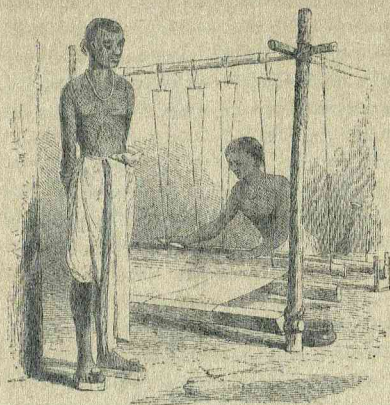
Caste now
identified
with profes-
sions and
trades.

to him, by whom can he be divested?" This interminable bondage, however, has happily passed away, and the modern Sudra is no longer a slave. If in service, his master, even though a Brahmin, must pay him stipulated wages, and if he prefers a different mode of life other occupations are open to him. He may engage in agriculture, which seems to be regarded as his appropriate calling; if of a more martial temper he becomes a soldier; even intellectual employment is no longer beyond his reach, and individuals of his class, known by the name of Kayets, have long been successful rivals of the Brahmins in all kinds of business requiring the use of the pen.

Though the number of original castes was only four, it was impossible in the natural course of things that others should not be formed by intermarriages or less legitimate connections. The arrangements made for maintaining purity of descent, how minute soever they might be, could not provide for every imaginable case, and therefore even from the very first concessions were made, from which a mixture of castes necessarily followed. A Brahmin could only have the daughter of a Brahmin for his first wife, but he might choose to have a second. In that case a greater latitude was allowed, and a selection from either of the two next classes was held to be legitimate. In like manner a Chatriya might marry a Vaisya, and a Vaisya a Sudra; but in these cases the offspring did not take the full rank of the father, but were held to be degraded to a middle rank between that of both parents. In regard to females the prohibitions were more rigid, for a woman could never marry beneath her own rank, and a low man making "love to a damsel of high birth" was to be punished corporally. Still, however severe the penalty, inclination and passion would often disregard it, and thus while even from legitimate connections degraded races were produced, others in almost endless variety resulted from connections which the law refused to recognize. "A Brahmin," says Menu, "if he takes a Sudra to his bed, sinks to the regions of torment;" and a Brahmini or female Brahmin cohabiting with a Sudra could give birth only to Chandalas, stigmatized as "the lowest of mortals." Such connections, however, were in fact formed, and children were produced, who, in their turn, became the parents of "very many despicable and abject races, even more foul than their begetters."

The variety of castes originating in these and similar connections has in course of time been almost indefinitely multiplied. At first difference of caste served only to indicate difference of race; but now, though this object is not overlooked, the great purpose which it serves is to regulate the kind of employment which each individual is destined to follow. To every caste a particular occupation is exclusively assigned; and thus, all trades and professions being regarded as hereditary, are transmitted without interruption from father to son in the same tribes or families. It is hence easy to see that the number of castes being as unlimited as that of the modes of employment, an enumeration of them is as difficult as it would be superfluous. Mr. Ward, speaking only of those of

Bengal, gives a detailed list of forty-one, and concludes by saying that more might be added. This is indeed perfectly obvious, as almost every name in the list is that of a genus including under it several subdivisions as species. For instance,



HINDOO WEAVER AND WINDER OF THREAD.
 From Solvyns' Costume of Hindoostan.

the Tatee caste, or weavers, forming the tenth in the list, and said to have originated from a male Sudra and a female Cshatriya, includes six divisions, which, notwithstanding their common progenitors, refuse either to eat or to intermarry with each other. In like manner we have castes with subdivisions under the names of Kasarees, or workers and dealers in brass; Agoorees, or farmers; Napitas, or barbers; Modakas, or confectioners; Kumbhakaras, or potters; Malakalas, or sellers of flowers, &c. All of these born to their trade must strictly adhere

to it, however little they may be disposed to it by inclination or suited to it by capacity.

Effects of caste.

This system of caste, accompanied with hereditary occupation, may have the effect of securing superiority of workmanship. The whole mind being employed on one branch of trade, and not permitted to look beyond it, must in a manner concentrate its faculties so as to devise the best means of performing the appointed task, while the bodily powers constantly engaged in the same operation must, as in the ordinary case of a minute division of labour, attain to great mechanical skill. These advantages, however, poorly compensate for the numerous evils with which they are inseparably connected. The mechanical skill which an hereditary weaver acquires, and the beautiful fabric which he produces by means of a loom of the simplest and rudest structure, cannot be viewed without some degree of admiration; but how soon is that admiration turned into regret when it is considered that the same invariable routine has been followed for ages, and that improvement has not only not been attempted, but if attempted would have been fiercely and fanatically resisted. Every man's boast is, that he does exactly as his father did before him; and thus amid a general stagnation of intellect, society is not permitted to take a single step in advance. There may be some truth in the observation, that if caste is unfavourable to progress it also tends to prevent degeneracy, and that hence, while other nations without caste have retrograded, India has maintained its ancient civilization. Dubois adopting this idea goes so far as to say, "I consider the



institution of caste among the Hindu nations as the happiest effort of their legislation; and I am well convinced that if the people of India never sunk into a state of barbarism, and if, when almost all Asia was plunged in that dreary gulf, India kept up her head, preserved and extended the sciences, the arts, and civilization, it is wholly to the distinction of castes that she is indebted for that high celebrity."¹ Again, "I have found out no cause that can have prevented the Hindus from falling into the barbarous state in which all the nations bordering on them, as well as most others that are spread over the globe under the torrid zone remain, unless it be the division into castes, which, by assigning to every individual in the state his profession and employment, by perpetuating the system from father to son, from generation to generation, prevents the possibility of any member of the state or his descendants giving up the condition or pursuit which the law has assigned him for any other."² In this extravagant eulogy most readers will recognize the prejudices of the church to which Dubois belonged, and in which uniformity and perpetuity are too apt to be mistaken for perfection and infallibility. Mr. Ward, the Protestant missionary, spoke more wisely when he said, "The institution of the caste, so far from having contributed to the happiness of society, has been one of its greatest scourges. It is the formation of artificial orders, independently of merit or demerit, dooming nine-tenths of the people, before birth, to a state of mental and bodily degradation, in which they are for ever shut out from all the learning and honours of the country."³

A.D. —

Alleged
favourable
results of
caste

Denied.

The loss of
caste.

It is impossible to believe that those doomed by the misfortune of their birth to the lowest castes can be satisfied with their social position, and yet it must be confessed that even in their estimation the loss of caste is the greatest calamity that could befall them. By every individual, high and low, the very idea of becoming an outcast is regarded with horror. It amounts in fact to civil death, and not unfrequently where the loss of caste has been incurred, actual death, by suicide, has been resorted to as a relief from the frightful consequences. Were the penalty inflicted as the punishment of crime, it might have operated as a kind of security for good behaviour, but unfortunately in the great majority of cases it is not crime that is thus punished, but acts perfectly innocent in themselves; acts, too, done, it may be, not of express design but unintentionally, through mere inadvertence, or perhaps through sheer necessity. "What," asks Mr. Ward, "is the crime for which a person forfeits his caste, and becomes an exile and an outcast for ever? Perhaps he has been found eating with a virtuous friend; or he has married the woman of his choice; or he has resided in other countries on business, and has been compelled by the nature of his situation to eat food not cooked by persons of his own caste. For these, or

¹ Dubois, *Description of the Character, Manners, and Customs of India*, 4to, page 14.

² *Ibid.* page 15.

³ Ward, *Account of the Writings, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos*, Serampore, 4to, vol. ii. p. 125.

Loss of caste.

Caste an obstacle to the progress of Christianity.

other reasons, the caste proscribes him from his father's house, and if his mother consent to talk with him, it must be by stealth, or at a distance from what was once his home, into which he must never more enter. Hence the caste converts hospitality, friendship, and the very love of one's neighbour into crimes, and inflicts on the offender in some cases punishment worse than death itself.⁷¹ It is true that the loss is not always final, and that by means of mummeries and mortifications, and more especially by a liberal expenditure in the form of gifts or bribes to those who have influence in the expelling caste, the offending member may be restored. Cases, however, occur which are deemed too heinous to admit of expiatory remedies. Among these it cannot be forgotten that an abandonment of the native superstitions holds a principal place, and consequently that it is impossible for a Hindoo to embrace Christianity without becoming a martyr in the highest sense of the term. The sacrifices he must make equal, if they do not exceed those which were required from the converts of the primitive church, and hence the distinction of caste has raised up an almost insuperable barrier in the way of the Christian missionary. The practical consequence is, that among the outcasts of Hindooism are to be found some of the noblest specimens of humanity—men whom no fear of temporal loss has deterred from throwing off the shackles of a degrading superstition, and making an open profession of the gospel. It must be confessed, however, that hitherto such specimens have been rare, and that the great majority of those who have lost caste justify, by their utter worthlessness, the sentence of exclusion which has been passed upon them. As a general rule, on being expelled from the society of their fellows, they lose all self-respect, and abandon themselves without restraint to every species of wickedness.

CHAPTER II.

The Religion of the Hindoos.



Original sources of the Hindoo creed.

IF all nations, ancient and modern, there is none among whom religion occupies so prominent a place as among the Hindoos. Its language is constantly on their lips, and its ceremonies mingle with all their daily avocations. Almost every natural object on which their eye falls is in some way associated with it; and on every side are beheld shrines and pagodas, in which the objects of its worship are supposed to be more immediately present. Its whole theological system, too, instead of being transmitted by such an imperfect vehicle as oral

¹ *Account of the Writings, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos*, ii. 129.



tradition, has been consigned to written volumes, believed to have been communicated by divine revelation, and therefore to contain truth without any mixture of error. To these volumes of course the ultimate appeal must be made, and therefore, whenever the object is to ascertain what the Hindoo religion is, at least in theory, it is only necessary to ask, What saith the Veda? By this name, meaning "science," the volumes composing the Hindoo scriptures are designated. They are chiefly composed of four works, distinguished by the names of Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, and Atharva-Veda, written in a form of Sanscrit so ancient, and so different from its more modern form, that only the more learned of the Brahmins understand them. It is impossible to say when they were first committed to writing; but it is admitted that as they now exist they are a compilation made from the original materials by an individual who has ever since been known by the name of Vyasa, or Vedavyasa, meaning "compiler of the Veda." He is supposed to have flourished in the twelfth or fourteenth century before the Christian era. The contents of the Vedas have not yet been thoroughly examined, but enough has been translated to prove that the system of religion which they teach does not countenance the numerous extravagances which have been engrafted on it, and which give to modern Hindooism many of its most revolting features. In several texts a pure monotheism seems to be taught, since it is repeatedly declared that "there is in truth but one Deity, the Supreme Spirit, the Lord of the universe, whose work is the universe." This monotheistic theory does not seem, however, to be consistently maintained, for mention is made of numerous gods who ought to be worshipped, and have power to reward their worshippers.

The Vedas.

Next to the Vedas, as a source of religious information, are the *Institutes of Menu*, which, though later in date, must have been composed before the system taught in them had undergone any essential change, and are understood to contain a faithful abstract of it. From this work, therefore, till the contents of the Vedas are better known, the true character of the primitive Hindoo theology will be best obtained. In its opening passage, Menu, who seems to be a personification of deity, rather than a real existence, is represented as sitting "reclined, with his attention fixed on one object." The divine sages approach, and "after mutual salutations in due form" thus address him, "Deign, sovereign Ruler, to apprise us of the sacred laws, in their order, as they must be followed by all the classes, and by each of them in their several degrees, together with the duties of every mixed class; for thou, Lord, only knowest the true sense, the first principle, the prescribed ceremonies of this universal, supernatural Veda, unlimited in extent, and unequalled in authority." Menu, complying with their request, begins thus:—"This universe existed only in darkness, imperceptible, undefinable, undiscoverable by reason, undiscovered, as if it were wholly immersed in sleep. Then the self-existing power, himself undiscerned, but making this world discernible, with five elements, and other principles, appeared with

The Institutes of Menu.

Account of
 creation.

undiminished glory, dispelling the gloom. He, whom the mind alone can perceive, whose essence eludes the external organs, who has no visible parts, who exists from eternity, even He, the soul of all beings, whom no being can comprehend, shone forth in person. He having willed to produce various beings from his own divine substance, first with a thought created the waters, and placed in them a productive seed, which became an egg, bright as gold, blazing like the luminary with a thousand beams, and in that egg he was born himself, the great forefather of all spirits."

Having proceeded thus far, Menu stops to explain that the waters were called *nara*, because they were the production of Nara (or the spirit of God), and that because they were his first *ayana* (or place of motion), he is named Narayana (or *moving on the waters*), and then continues:—"From that which is, the first cause, not the object of sense, existing, not existing, without beginning or end, was produced the divine male, famed in all worlds under the appellation of Brahma. In that egg the great power sat inactive a whole year, at the close of which, by his thought alone, he caused the egg to divide itself; and from its two divisions he framed the heaven and the earth; in the midst the subtile ether, the eight regions, and the permanent receptacle of waters." The material world having been thus created by Brahma, "from the supreme soul he drew forth mind, existing substantially, though unperceived by sense, immaterial, and consciousness, the internal monitor, the ruler."

Creation of
 inferior
 divinities.

What follows is so indistinct and elliptical that a gap in the original may be suspected; and therefore without continuing to quote, it will be sufficient to give the substance of what is most remarkable in the subsequent part of this account of the creation. Brahma having produced the great soul and all vital forms, the perceptions of sense, and the five organs of sensation, and pervaded "with emanations from the supreme Spirit, the minutest portion of six principles immensely operative," framed all creatures, and assigned to them "distinct names, distinct acts, and distinct occupations." Supreme over all, "he created an assemblage of inferior deities, with divine attributes and pure souls, and a number of genii exquisitely delicate." From fire, from air, and from the sun, he "milked out the three primordial Vedas," gave being "to time and the divisions of time, to the stars also, and to the planets, to rivers, oceans, and mountains, to level plains and uneven valleys; to devotion, speech, complacency, desire, and wrath," and to creation generally, for all came into existence simply because "He willed" it. Moreover, for the sake of distinguishing actions, he "made a total difference between right and wrong," and inured sentient creatures "to pleasure and pain, and other opposite pairs." Thus all was "composed in fit order," for "in whatever occupation the supreme Lord first employed any vital soul, to that occupation the same soul attaches itself spontaneously, when it receives a new body again and again; whatever quality, noxious or innocent, harsh or mild, unjust or just, false or true, he conferred on any being the same



quality enters it: as the seasons of the year attain respectively their peculiar marks, in due time and of their own accord, even so the several acts of each embodied spirit."

In the above account man is not distinctly mentioned, but the apparent omission is now supplied by the following abrupt announcement:—"That the human race might be multiplied, He caused the Brahmin, the Cshatriya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra to proceed from his mouth, his arm, his thigh, and his foot." In what shape they came forth, whether singly or in pairs of male and female, is not explained; but the latter may be inferred from its being immediately added, that "having divided his own substance, the mighty Power became half male half female." This statement, however, is not made for the purpose of accounting for the difference of sex in human beings, but of founding a very extraordinary claim by Menu himself. Brahma, we are told, from the female portion of him produced a male called Viraj, and this Viraj is solemnly declared to be Menu's own father. "Know me," says Menu, addressing the sages who were consulting him, "know me to be that person whom the male power, having performed austere devotion, produced by himself." This statement, startling as it is, is followed by another still more startling, in which Menu, ascribing to himself creative power, says, "It was I who, desirous of giving birth to a race of men, performed very difficult religious duties, and first produced ten lords of created beings eminent in holiness." After giving their names he continues thus:—"They, abundant in glory, produced seven other Menus, together with deities, and the mansions of deities, and *Maharshis*, or great sages unlimited in power; benevolent genii and fierce giants, bloodthirsty savages, heavenly quirksters, nymphs and demons, huge serpents and snakes of smaller size, birds of mighty wing, and separate companies of *Pitris*, or progenitors of mankind; lightning and thunderbolts, clouds and coloured bows of Indra, falling meteors, earth-rending vapours, comets, and luminaries of various degrees; horse-faced sylvans, apes, fish, and a variety of birds, tame cattle, deer, men, and ravenous beasts with two rows of teeth; small and large reptiles, moths, lice, fleas, and common flies, with every biting gnat and immoveable substances of distinct sorts. Thus was this whole assembly of stationary and moveable bodies framed by those high-minded beings, through the force of their own devotion, and at my command, with separate actions allotted to each."

Creation
of man.

Having described two creations—a primary by Brahma, and a secondary by himself, Menu asserts that, what he calls "this tremendous world of beings," is always tending to decay, and gives an explanation of the mode in which its final dissolution is accomplished. "He whose powers are incomprehensible having thus created both me and this universe, was again absorbed in the supreme Spirit, changing time for time. When that Power awakes, then has this world its full expansion; but when he slumbers with a tranquil spirit, then the whole system fades away; for while he reposes in calm sleep, embodied spirits,

Tendency of
all beings to
decay.



Transmigra-
tion of the
soul.

endued with principles of action, depart from their several acts, and the mind itself becomes inert; and when they once are absorbed in that supreme essence, then the divine soul of all beings withdraws his energy and placidly slumbers; then, too, this vital soul, with all the organs of sense and of action, remains long immersed in darkness, and performs not its natural functions, but migrates from its corporeal frame; when being composed of minute elementary principles, it enters at once into vegetable or animal seed, it then assumes form. Thus that immutable Power, by waking and reposing alternately, revivifies and destroys in eternal succession this whole assemblage of locomotive and immoveable creatures."

Human
and divine
periods.

Menu, after this description, prepares to quit the scene. His code of law, made known to him fully "in the beginning" by Brahma, he taught to the "ten lords of created beings" whom he had produced, and to one of those, Bhrigu, who had learned to recite the whole of it, he assigns the task of communicating it to the sages "without omission." Bhrigu accordingly becomes the narrator, and continues thus:—"From this Menu, named Swayambhuva, came six descendants, other Menus, each giving birth to a race of his own, all exalted in dignity, eminent in power." The duration of the reign of a Menu or his Manwantara, is calculated as follows:—The sun by his alternate presence and absence, gives mortals their day and night. A month of mortals is a day and a night of the *Pitris* (or inhabitants of the moon). The division being into two equal halves, "the half beginning from the full moon is their day for actions, and that beginning from the new moon is their night for slumber." A year of mortals "is a day and night of the gods," their day being "the northern, and their night the southern course of the sun." Four thousand years of the gods form a yuga or age of mortals; but the whole four yugas—the satya, treta, dwapara, and cali—are necessary to form an age of the gods, which, of course, includes 12,000 divine years. Multiply this age of the gods by seventy-one, and you have the duration of a Manwantara. It is added that "there are numberless Manwantaras, creations also, and destructions of worlds." The Being "supremely exalted performs all this as if in sport again and again," and has ample scope for working, because it takes a thousand ages of the gods to form a single day, and another thousand to form a single night of Brahma.

The Supreme
Being of
Hindooism.

In the above Hindoo cosmogony there is much vagueness and extravagance, and we look in vain for anything so explicit as the first verse of Genesis:—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" or so sublime as its third verse: "God said, Let there be light, and there was light." It is not to be denied, however, that it contrasts favourably with all other heathen cosmogonies, and in some instances so closely resembles the Mosaic record, not only in thought but in language, as to leave little doubt that it has incorporated with its fables fragments of the earliest truths communicated by primitive revelation to the human race. The one object on which Menu had his attention fixed when the divine



sages accosted him, is explained by commentators to have been the supreme God, and must not be confounded with Brahma, who had not a formal existence till he was born as a divine male in the mundane egg. If born, he was not himself the "self-existing power," "the first cause," "without beginning or end." To whom, then, or what do these epithets apply? The answer is, Not to Brahma, who at first male, afterwards subdivides so as to become female; but to Brahm, an antecedent mysterious essence not possessed of any gender, and therefore usually described as neuter. The existence of Brahm as the one sole universal Lord is undoubtedly taught in the Vedas as a fundamental article of the Hindoo creed, and the Brahmins, who claim to be the exclusive expounders of this creed, confidently appeal to this article when they would prove that they are monotheists and not idolaters. This much may be conceded to them—that if they are idolaters, they sin against a clearer light, for it would be easy to produce passages in which the divine perfections are described in terms which even a Christian need not repudiate. Take the following specimen quoted by Sir William Jones, from a learned Brahmin:—"Perfect truth; perfect happiness; without equal; immortal; absolute unity; whom neither speech can describe, nor mind comprehend; all-pervading; all-transcending; delighted with his own boundless intelligence; not limited by space or time; without feet moving swiftly; without hands grasping all worlds; without eyes, all-surveying; without ears, all-hearing; without an intelligent guide, understanding all; without cause, the first of all causes; all ruling; all-powerful; the creator, preserver, transformer of all things; such is the Great One."

Striking as the above passage is, there is a very serious defect in it. The description is true so far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. It speaks only of the natural perfections of God, and says nothing of His moral perfections, though it is by these alone that any practical relation between the Creator and his creatures is established. This is not an accidental omission, but forms an essential feature in Hindoo theology; and hence, the only inference that can be drawn from its loftiest descriptions of deity is, that it would be vain to worship him. Seated at an immeasurable distance, and wholly absorbed in his own perfections, he regards the actions of men with perfect indifference. It is even doubtful if he has any proper personality, for when the language in which he is described is strictly analyzed, many of the attributes ascribed to him prove to be abstract qualities and imaginary potentialities existing in some inexplicable manner apart from any essence. The universe itself, instead of being the voluntary production of Brahm, thus becomes identified with him, and the theory of monotheism is set aside to make way for that of pantheism.

The practical result is that, while individuals of a philosophical and contemplative turn of mind profess to adhere to the original doctrine of the Vedas, the great mass of the population have rushed headlong into idolatry of the most extravagant and grovelling description. Every thing animate and inanimate,

Monotheism
of the
Brahmini-
cal creed.

Defects in its
conception
of the attri-
butes of the
Deity.

Monstrous
 idolatries of
 the Hindoo
 religion.

real or fancied, has been converted into a god, and the Hindoo pantheon now boasts of being able to muster 330,000,000 deities. It is almost needless to observe that multitudes of these are duplicates and endless repetitions of the same beings or objects, under a variety of names; and that it is possible, after discarding the common herd, to give a sufficient view of the polytheism of the Hindoos by selecting for description only a few of the more celebrated divinities. The first place, of course, belongs to the Trimurti or Triad, consisting of Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; and Siva, the destroyer. These



1, BRAHMA. 2, TRIMURTI.—From Moore's Hindoo Pantheon.

The Hindoo
 triad.

three have sometimes been supposed to constitute a trinity in the ordinary sense of the term, and hence to present a singular coincidence with the Christian doctrine of one Godhead in three Persons or hypostases. It seems, however, to be established that the three are regarded as only separate forms, which the one supreme god assumes, according as he is employed in creating, preserving, or destroying. According to the Brahmins this is the orthodox view; but the popular idea is very different, and worshippers, so far from recognizing the identity or even the equality of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, have become ranged in hostile sects, among which the main distinction is the place which they assign to each as supreme or subordinate. In the contests which have thus arisen Brahma has fared worst. As creator, the primary place originally belonged to him, and in the usual representations of the triad, in which three heads are figured as rising from one body, he occupies the centre of the group, with the whole face displayed, while the other two, one on each side, are only in profile; but this barren honour is all that is left him, and while his colleagues count their shrines by thousands and their votaries by millions, he cannot boast of a single temple dedicated to him. In the temples of others a place is occasionally assigned to him, and he is seen standing or squatted, with a body usually painted red, and differing from the human only by the possession of four heads and four arms. The heads are encircled with an aureola or glory, and

Brahma.

in the hands are held respectively a book, understood to be the Veda, a spoon for sacrifice, a water-jug for ablution, and a rosary, used by Hindoos just as in the Church of Rome, for counting prayers. Beside him often stands his *vahan* or vehicle, in the form of a goose. A.D. —

Each of the triad gods is provided with a *sakti* or consort, through whom far more than by himself his energy is exerted. That of Brahma is Saraswati, who is figured as a white woman standing on a lotus, or riding on a peacock, with a lute in her hand. She is regarded as the goddess of learning, poetry, and music, and is more fortunate than her husband in worshippers, who hold an annual festival in her honour, and present at her shrine perfumes, flowers, and rice. Of the sons whom she bare to Brahma, the principal are—Viswakarma, who, as the architect of heaven, performs the same part as Vulcan among the Greeks; Nareda, who, as the messenger of the gods, is the subject of many legends; and Swayambhuva, in whom, as the first and chief of the Menus, Sir William Jones finds traces of identity with Adam. A leading feature in Hindoo mythology is the appearance of the gods in human form. Of this avatar or incarnation, Brahma furnishes only one remarkable example in Daksha, who gave his daughter in marriage to Siva, and having afterwards lost his head in a quarrel with his son-in-law had it replaced by that of a he-goat. In this monstrous form, brutish and human, he is still seen. Saktis or female divinities.

Vishnu, holding the second place in the triad, is usually represented as a comely placid youth, richly dressed. The only thing monstrous about him is his four arms. In one hand he holds a club, in another a discus or quoit, in another a chank or wreathed shell, and in another a lotus. His *vahan*, named Garuda, is in the form of a youth, with the wings and beak of a bird. He has two wives, Lakshmi and Satyavama. The former is his favourite, and he is sometimes seen sitting on a throne of lotus, with one of his arms around her. His name occurs seldom in the Veda, and not at all in the Institutes of Menu; but he has myriads of worshippers in every quarter, and has furnished by his avatars the subject of many of the most remarkable legends in Hindoo mythology and literature. According to what is called the orthodox view he ought to yield precedence to Brahma; but most of his worshippers, assuming in his honour the name of Vishnaivas, insist not only on giving him the first place, but in usurping for him the peculiar offices of the other members of the triad, and making them in fact not his equals but his creatures. He thus figures not only as preserver but as creator, destroyer, and renovator, and under names so numerous, that Ac- Vishnu.



VISHNU.—From Coleman's Hindoo Mythology.



at least a thousand are counted as invested exclusively with all the attributes of the sole supreme deity. In one representation, while he floats on the surface of the primeval waters, reclining, with Lakshmi at his feet, on the serpent Shesha, or Ananta, a well known symbol of eternity, he gives birth to Brahma, who is seen emerging from the centre of his body on the top of a lotus. The superiority thus claimed for him derives no countenance from the Vedas, but is fully developed in several of the mythological poems, called *Puranas*, which, though of later date and less venerable authority, are in much greater repute with modern Hindoos. The legend on which the above representation is founded is given by Kennedy¹ from the *Kurma Purana*, and, as a specimen of the kind of fables by which the Vishnaivas establish the supremacy of their favourite divinity, deserves to be quoted. For explanation, it is necessary to mention that both Kurma, who narrates the legend, and the Narayana, with the mention of whom it opens, are here meant to be only different forms of Vishnu. Kurma in a long discourse, addressing three sages or Brahmins, continues thus:—

“All was one tremendous ocean in which Narayana, with a thousand heads and a thousand eyes, reposing on Shesha, slumbered profoundly; and while thus immersed in mysterious sleep the thought of creation arose in his mind. Instant, then, in divine and wondrous sport, a lotus sprang from his pure navel; expanding to the distance of 100 yojans, refulgent as the young sun, blooming with sacred petals and filaments, and diffusing celestial fragrance; and from this lotus, after a long time had elapsed, was produced Brahma. Bewildered by illusion he immediately approached the universal Lord, and, awakening him with his hand, thus addressed him in gentle accents:—‘In this tremendous, unpeopled, and darkness-involved ocean, why, O Lord, dost thou repose solitary and alone?’ Vishnu smiling replied, in a voice loud as the clashing of clouds, ‘O excellent being! Know that I am Narayana, the one God, the Lord of all things; and behold in me the creator of the universe, and the great father of all animated beings; but who art thou?’ Brahma replied, ‘I am Dhata, Vidhata, Swayambhu, Brahma, the origin of the Vedas.’ On hearing these words, Vishnu, by means mysterious, entered the body of Brahma, and within it beheld comprised the three worlds, with angels, demons, and men, and having then issued from his mouth, Vishnu thus addressed Brahma: ‘Now, O Lord, enter within me, and behold thou also the three worlds.’ Having heard this agreeable speech, Brahma immediately entered within Vishnu, and there viewed with wonder this universe and all that it contains. But while he wandered, contemplating it, Vishnu closed the gates, and Brahma could find no exit except through the stem of the lotus, from which he had been produced; and then seated on its flower, he thus addressed Vishnu in a voice loud as the clashing of clouds: ‘What, O Lord! hast thou, desirous of victory, now done? but I am the sole

¹ Colonel Vans Kennedy, *Researches into the Nature and Affinity of Ancient and Hindoo Mythology*, 4to, pages 206, 207.

Supremacy
claimed for
Vishnu

Legend in
support of
his supre-
macy.



omnipotent being: there is no other than me, and no one therefore can overcome me.' To pacify him Vishnu thus replied in gentle words: 'O Brahma! it was not through malice that I closed the gates, but merely through sport; for who can oppose Pitamaha, the god of gods? But since thou hast been produced by me, thou shalt be considered as my son, and shall be named the *Lotus-born*.' Brahma replied: 'There is but one God, the supreme Lord of all things; how then can there be two, and Narayana and Brahma be each that Lord?' Vishnu then said: 'Who can acknowledge the supremacy of Brahma, when I alone am without beginning and end, and the sole supreme being? Therefore, O Brahma! seek protection from me.' Pitamaha with anger thus replied: 'O Lord! I know myself to be supreme, imperishable, the creator of the universe, the most excellent recipient; and nowhere can there be found any other supreme God than me. Dispel therefore thy slumber, and know thyself.' Having heard these angry words, Vishnu thus spoke: 'O Brahma, why art thou thus deceived by illusion; and perceivest not the real truth that I alone am the supreme Lord?' "

A.D. —

Legend in support of Vishnu's supremacy.

Singularly enough, on this occasion neither of the contending deities proves victor, for, in the midst of the strife, Siva suddenly makes his appearance, and compels both to confess that in claiming supremacy they were trenching on his prerogative.

Vishnu is in many respects the most attractive deity of the triad. His heaven, called Vaikunta, is 80,000 miles in circuit, and entirely of gold. Precious stones form its pillars as well as the ornaments of its buildings, which are constructed of jewels. Crystal showers descending upon it form a magnificent river, and feed numerous fine lakes, the surface of which are covered with water lilies—blue, red, and white, some of them with a hundred and others with a thousand petals. On a seat glorious as the meridian sun, sits Vishnu himself, and on his right hand Lakshmi, whose face shines like a continued blaze of lighting, and whose body diffuses the fragrance of the lotus for 800 miles. Glorified Vishnaivas are their ministering servants, and divine or angelic natures find constant employment in meditating on their perfections or singing their praise. On earth, too, there is less of a revolting nature in his worship than in that of most other gods of the pantheon. No bloody sacrifices are offered to him; and in all his avatars some beneficent or praiseworthy object has been contemplated. Of these avatars nine are already past, and a tenth is still to be realized. From the prominent place which they hold in Hindoo mythology, they are entitled to more than a passing notice.

Vishnu's heaven.

In the first, or Matsya avatar, Vishnu's object was to recover the Veda, which had been stolen by the demon Hayagriva. With this view he assumed the form of a small fish in the river Cretamala; and when a pious king, called Satyavrata, came to its banks to make a libation, thus accosted him:—"How canst thou leave me in this stream, exposed to its monsters who are my dread?"

Avatars of Vishnu.

First avatar
of Vishnu.

Compassionating its condition, Satyavrata removed it to a small vase full of water. In a single night it outgrew the vase, and was placed successively in a cistern, a tank, and a lake. In each of these its dimensions increased so rapidly, that as a last resource it was thrown into the sea. Here it resumed its complaints, and asked to be delivered from horned sharks and other great monsters of the deep. Satyavrata, astonished above measure, began to suspect the truth, and asked, "Who art thou that beguilest me in this assumed shape? Surely thou art the great God whose dwelling was on the waves. Say for what cause thou hast thus appeared?" Vishnu, disclosing himself, replied, "Seven days hence the three worlds will be plunged in an ocean of death, but in the midst of the destroying waves a large vessel sent by me for thy use shall stand before thee. Then take all medicinal herbs, all the variety of seeds, and accompanied by seven saints, encircled by pairs of all brute animals, enter the spacious ark, and continue in it secure from the flood on an immense ocean, without light except the radiance of thy companions. When the ship shall be agitated by an impetuous wind, fasten it with a large sea serpent to my horn, for I will be near thee, drawing the vessel with thee and thy attendants. I will remain on the ocean till a day of Brahma shall be ended." In due time the flood came, and all mankind perished except Satyavrata and his companions, who sailed in safety within the ship attached to the horn of the fish, which again appeared blazing like gold, and extending a million of leagues. After this deliverance Vishnu accomplished the great object of his Matsya avatar, by slaying the demon and recovering the Veda.

Second
avatar.

The singular resemblance which the above account bears, notwithstanding many ludicrous and extravagant additions, to the Mosaic account of the deluge, will justify the full detail which has been given. The second, or Varaha avatar, not possessing a similar recommendation, may be more summarily dismissed. A powerful and malignant giant, after afflicting the earth in various ways, rolled it up into a shapeless mass, and plunged with it into the abyss. Vishnu in order to recover it issued from the side of Brahma in the shape of a *varaha* or boar, which at first of small dimensions became in the course of an hour as large as an elephant. After uttering a voice which sounded like thunder, and shook the universe, the boar-shaped god suddenly descended from the air, dived into the ocean, which as if in terror rolled back on either side in huge billows, and on arriving at the bottom where the earth lay huge and barren, poised it on one of his tusks and brought it to the surface. There it still lies floating, spread out like a carpet.

Third
avatar.

In the third, or Kurma avatar, Vishnu assumed the form of a tortoise, for a very fantastic purpose. While the celestial inhabitants were seated on the summit of Mount Meru, their fabled heaven, in deep meditation, earnestly longing to discover the *amrita*, or water of immortality, Narayan (another name for Vishnu) suggested to Brahma that the true way of finding it was to churn



the ocean like a pot of milk. The Suras, a kind of demigods, and the Asuras, a race of gigantic demons resembling the Titans, were to be the churners, and the implement was a mountain named Mandar. For this purpose it was lifted out of its place, with all its forests and streams, and rested for support on the back of the king of the tortoises, who it seems was none else than Vishnu. The churning shaft was thus provided, but another difficulty remained. How was it to be worked? The device fallen upon was to employ the huge serpent Vasuki as a rope. By twisting it round the mountain, while the Asuras and Suras pulled alternately at the head and tail, a circular motion was given, and the churning process commenced. Meanwhile, a continued stream of fire, smoke, and wind was belched forth by the serpent, the forests of the mountain were wrapped in flames, and its numerous products—vegetable, mineral, and apparently animal also, carried down by a heavy shower which the lord of the firmament sent down to quench the conflagration—mingled with the milk of the ocean. The butter formed was thus a very heterogeneous compound, which yielded among other extracts the amrita, destined thenceforth to be the favourite beverage of the gods. The good obtained was not unmingled with evil. The venomous breath of the serpent tainted the ocean butter, and a pestilential stench proceeding from it threatened to make the world uninhabitable. This fatality was only escaped by the aid of Siva, who at the command of Brahma swallowed the drug. The amrita itself was next in danger, for the Asuras had seized it, and were resolved to keep it to themselves. Its recovery was due to Vishnu, who assumed the form of a beautiful female, and so fascinated the Asuras by her charms, that they voluntarily placed it in her hands. Thereafter a dreadful battle ensued, but the Asuras were defeated mainly by the prowess of Vishnu, to whose keeping the amrita has in consequence been intrusted.

Third avatar
of Vishnu.

The fourth, or Nara-Singh avatar took place under the following circumstances. The giant who buried the earth at the bottom of the sea was succeeded by a younger brother named Hiranyacasipa, who resembled him in all his worst qualities, and in particular refused to do homage to Vishnu. His son Praulhaud was, however, of a very different temper, and for expressing disapprobation of his father's conduct was banished, after narrowly escaping with his life. A reconciliation having afterwards taken place, the subject of Vishnu's supremacy was discussed between them. Hiranyacasipa persisting in his impiety asserted that Vishnu was in no respect greater than himself, and when Praulhaud, on the contrary, maintained that Vishnu was supreme over all, and present everywhere, tauntingly asked, "Is he in this pillar? (striking it with his sceptre); if he be, let him appear." The moment the words were spoken the pillar burst in twain, and Vishnu issuing from it in the form of a man with a lion's head tore the impious monarch in pieces, and placed Praulhaud on the throne.

Fourth.
avatar.

Fifth avatar.

The fifth avatar, called Varuna, because in it Vishnu assumed the form of a dwarf, is evidently a Brahminical fiction. The narrative is as follows:—A king called Maha Bali gained so much power in the spiritual world by his sacrifices and austerities that the very gods became afraid of him. They had actually been compelled to yield him the dominion of the earth and sea, and were waiting in consternation for the result of his last sacrifice, which it was thought would put him in possession of the heavens also. Their only resource was to supplicate the aid of Vishnu, who adopted the following singular device to effect their deliverance:—Having assumed the form of a Brahmin dwarf, he appeared before the king with every appearance of poverty, and asked for ground on which to build a dwelling for himself and his books. So humble were his views, he would be satisfied with as much as he could measure by three steps. Maha Bali at once promised the grant, and confirmed it by an oath in the most solemn form, by pouring sacred water from a vessel over the hands of the grantee. The moment the water reached his hands Vishnu started up, and at two successive steps strode over the earth and the ocean. There was no third place to plant his foot, and Maha Bali unable to perform the promise which he had so solemnly confirmed, was only released from it on condition of descending to the lower regions. In accordance with this fable, many of the most solemn acts of Hindoo devotion commence with the words, "Thrice did Vishnu step," &c., and the god himself is frequently addressed as *Trivikram*, or the Three-stepper.

Sixth avatar.

In the avatars already described Vishnu has appeared under monstrous forms. That of the Brahmin dwarf can scarcely be considered as an exception, since in the very moment he begins to act, it is thrown aside never to be resumed. In the three following avatars he makes a nearer approach to humanity, and performing actions which, while they partake largely of the marvellous, are not unfrequently connected with events which occupy a place in genuine history. In the sixth avatar his form is that of a Brahmin hero, Parasa Rama, or more properly Paris Ram, who makes war upon the Cshatriyas, and desists not till he has extirpated the whole race. The origin of his deadly enmity is thus explained. His parents, when they were childless, withdrew from the world, to pass their time in prayers, sacrifices, and religious austerities, in the hope that they might thus ingratiate themselves with Vishnu, and obtain through him the most earnest wish of their hearts, the gift of a son. They were successful, for in due time Paris Ram was born. He was not only beautiful, but endowed with every great and noble quality, as he well might be, seeing he was nothing less than Vishnu himself in human form. Mahadeva, another name for Siva, was so pleased with him, that he carried him to his heaven on the summit of Mount Kailasa. Here he remained till his twelfth year, and then descended on earth to defend his father against Deeraj, a cruel and vindictive tyrant of the Cshatriya class. It was too late, for when he arrived it was only to see the remains of the funeral pile on which the bodies of both his parents



had been consumed. His father, first oppressed, had at last been murdered by Deeraj; and his mother, refusing to survive him, had immolated herself by suttee. Paris Ram instantly vowed the destruction, not only of Deeraj, but of his whole class. To any mere mortal, or even to an inferior deity, the accomplishment of the vow would have been impossible, for Deeraj was in himself a mighty host, being possessed of a thousand arms, each wielding a destructive implement of war; but nothing could withstand an incarnate Vishnu, and Deeraj soon paid the penalty of his misdeeds.

The object of the seventh avatar is, like that of the sixth, to avenge oppression; but the means employed are different, and branch out into numerous details, often not devoid of interest, though we can hardly afford to glance at them. Here Vishnu appears as Rama Chandra, the warlike and virtuous son of a powerful Indian prince, whose capital was Ayodha or Oude. A monstrous giant of the name of Ravana, who reigned over Lanka, or the island of Ceylon, having partly by sorcery, and partly by an affectation of piety, extended his dominion over the whole world, threw off the mask, and openly avowed himself the enemy of the gods. Vishnu, as Rama Chandra, undertook to destroy him. This exploit forms the subject of the celebrated epic poem, *Ramayana*, and therefore properly belongs to the chapter in which the literature of the Hindoos will be considered. At present a short explanation may suffice. A prince of the name of Janaka had a beautiful daughter Sita, and a bow which a thousand of his stoutest archers could not raise. Many sought Sita in marriage, but Janaka declared that only he who could wield the bow should be her husband. Ravana tried and failed. Rama succeeded and carried off the prize by a double merit, for besides performing the task assigned by the father, he had previously gained the affections of the daughter. Ravana was enraged, but having full knowledge of Rama's strength and prowess, determined to pursue his object by stratagem, and not by open force. Circumstances favoured him. Somehow Rama, though the heir to his father's throne, had been excluded from it, and retired with his beloved Sita into a forest, to lead a life of seclusion and austerity. Ravana followed them, and by devices, of which various accounts are given, succeeded at last in seizing Sita, and carrying her off through the air in triumph. Rama, inconsolable for his loss, and determined to avenge it, set out on an expedition to Lanka. He obtained a powerful auxiliary in a sovereign of the name of Sugriva, who furnished him with an army of monkeys, headed by a renowned monkey general, called Hanuman. Some difficulty was experienced in bridging over the strait between India and Ceylon, but the skill and courage of Hanuman and his monkeys surmounted all obstacles, and a battle ensued, in which Ravana, though he had a charmed life, was slain. Rama returned along with Sita to Oude, where he reigned prosperously some ten thousand years, and then ascended to Vishnu's heaven. The services rendered by Hanuman have never been forgotten; and not only to him and the monkeys

Sixth avatar.

Seventh avatar.

Eighth
avatar of
Vishnu.

who accompanied Rama, but to their living descendants divine honours are still paid.

The eighth avatar introduces to our notice Krishna, in whose form Vishnu has eclipsed all his other exploits, and made himself the most popular deity in the Hindoo pantheon. The *Mahabharata*, an epic still more celebrated than the *Ramayana*, forms the subject of this avatar, which is in consequence scarcely less familiar to European than to Indian ears. The Brahmins, when speaking of it, seem unable to find language sufficiently hyperbolic, and gravely declare that "though all the seas were ink, and the whole earth paper, and all the inhabitants were to do nothing but write night and day for the space of 100,000 years, it would be impossible to describe all the wonders which Krishna performed." Though truly an incarnation of Vishnu, he was ostensibly the son of Vasudeva and Devaki, belonging to the royal family of Mattra on the Jumna. The reigning prince at the time of his birth was, Kansa, who, to prevent the fulfilment of a prophecy which foretold that one of the children of Vasudeva and Devaki would destroy him, had issued a decree that none of them should be permitted to live. To elude this inhuman decree,



KRISHNA.—From idol in British Museum.

Birth and
exploits of
Krishna.

Krishna was secretly removed and brought up by a neighbouring herdsman. Every year of his life furnishes the subject of some legend. When a mere child he began his exploits, and signalized himself in particular by destroying serpents and giants. As time passed on he grew into a handsome youth, and spent his time among the *gopis* or milkmaids, captivating their hearts by playing on the pipe, dancing and sporting with them. Not satisfied with his conquests among rural beauties, he lifted his eyes to the princesses of Hindoostan and was equally successful. The whole of his early life, indeed, is filled with love adventures, in which, owing to the general admiration which he excites, it sometimes becomes necessary for him to resist the importunities of his fair votaries, and caution them against the inconveniences which their excessive ardour might produce. In general, however, he is free from scruple, and frankly returns all the love which is offered him, even by those who could not give it without being guilty of conjugal infidelity. The excuse made for them is that the intrigue which would have been criminal with an ordinary mortal, becomes meritorious when carried on with him. On this loose principle he consents to act, at the same time managing, by means of illusion, to convince every indi-

idial among the myriads of his lovers that she possesses his heart and person without a rival. As he advances in years his amours become less frequent, and he performs many heroic exploits. Having overthrown the tyrant who had sought to destroy him at his birth, he mounts the throne, but is driven from it by foreign enemies, and retires to Dwarika in Gujerat. Here his alliance is courted by the Pandus, who were contesting the sovereignty of Hastinapur, supposed to have been situated to the north-east of Delhi, with their relations, the Curus. This war, of which the *Mahabharata* makes him the hero, having terminated in the triumph of the Pandus, he returns to his capital; not, however, to spend the residue of his human life in peace: civil discord ensues, and though he outlives it, it is only to die by the arrow of a hunter who, shooting unawares in a thicket, wounded him in the foot. The licentiousness generally characteristic of Krishna's career, and the gross indelicacy with which his amours are described in poetry or embodied in sculpture, perhaps furnish the best explanation of the fact that he counts among his worshippers all the opulent and luxurious, all the women, and a very large proportion of all ranks of Indian society. As a justification of the preference thus given him, it is often alleged that while in other avatars Vishnu exhibited only a portion of his godhead, in that of Krishna all his fulness was displayed, without diminution of power or splendour.

Ninth
avatar.

Buddha, whose worship though now almost banished from India has spread over countries of far wider area, is usually ranked as the ninth avatar of Vishnu. This, however, is denied by the Buddhists, who claim for the object of their worship a more ancient and loftier origin, and also by most of the Brahmins, who, regarding Buddhism as an abominable heresy, and hating it for its hostility to their domination as a caste, hold it impossible that there could ever have been any identity of form or purpose between Buddha and Vishnu. The tenth or Khalki avatar is only expected, and will not take place till the end of the cali yuga, when Vishnu will appear in the form of a white horse to close the present order of things and dissolve the existing universe preparatory to a new creation. The horse is represented holding up the foot of his right fore leg. When the catastrophe takes place he will give the signal for it by stamping with that foot on the ground. In concluding this account of Vishnu, it is necessary to prevent misapprehension by observing that, when his avatars are spoken of as *ten*, the meaning is, or should be, only that in that number are included all whose importance entitles them to special notice. In point of fact, as observed by



BUDDHA.
From Moore's Hindoo Pantheon.

Buddha.

Mr. Elphinstone,¹ "his incarnations or emanations, even as acknowledged in books, are innumerable; and they are still more swelled by others, in which he is made to appear under the form of some local saint or hero whom his followers have been disposed to deify."

Siva, the third member of the triad.

Siva, the destroyer, to whom the third place in the Hindoo triad is usually assigned, is distinguished by numerous names and represented by various forms.



SIVA.—From idol in British Museum.

Among the names those of Maha Deo or Mahadeva and Rudra, are of the most frequent occurrence. Among his forms the most characteristic are those that are most hideous, since thus only is it possible to portray the features of divinity whom the Puranas describe as "wandering about surrounded by ghosts and goblins, inebriated, naked, and with dishevelled hair, covered with the ashes of a funeral pile, ornamented with human skulls and bones, sometimes laughing and sometimes crying." His body, painted of a white or silver colour, differs from the human, chiefly in the head and arms. Instead of only one head, he has more frequently five, each of them with a third eye in the forehead; the arms vary from four to six. In his hands he usually holds a trident, one or more human heads, a cup supposed to contain human blood, and a sword or some other instrument of destruction. Occasionally he is mounted

on his vahan, the bull called Nandi, while his wife, usually called Parvati, but known also as Devi, Bhavani, Durga, Kali, &c., sits on his knee. In his less revolting forms he is represented with his hair coiled up like a religious mendicant asking alms, or seated as if in profound thought. His heaven is Keilas, one of the most stupendous summits of the Himalaya, where he is enthroned on the edge of a yawning gulf among eternal snows and glaciers. In Parvati he has a mate every way worthy of him. In appearance she resembles a fury rather than a goddess; her skin is black and her features absolutely hideous; her body is encircled with snakes, and hung round with a chaplet of skulls and human heads, while her whole attitude indicates defiance and menace. She delights in blood, and it is a well authenticated fact that at one time human victims were sacrificed to her.

Supremacy claimed for Siva.

Siva, like the other members of the triad, has advanced a claim to exclusive supremacy, and in the opinion of his more devoted worshippers, named Saivas,

¹ Elphinstone, *History of India*, vol. i. p. 180.

is believed to have established it. Of the many legends relating to this subject, the following is a specimen:—Siva, meeting with Brahma, insultingly asked him, "Whence camest thou, and who created thee?" Brahma had then five heads, Siva, and with the mouth of one of them replied, "And whence art thou? I know thee well, thou form of darkness." After much contumelious language banded to and fro, Siva lost temper, and gave a practical proof of his superiority by seizing the head of Brahma which performed the part of spokesman, and cutting it off with his left thumb. The Saivas think themselves entitled, in consequence of this exploit, to address their favourite divinity as the one supreme lord.

Since the process of destruction is, as a general rule, preparatory to that of some form of renovation, Siva is conceived to preside over both, and hence the Linga and Yoni, as representing the productive and regenerating powers of nature, are the great emblems used in his worship.

It is not difficult to understand how the idea of such emblems may have been suggested to contemplative minds unaccompanied by any approach to obscenity, but the great body of mankind are totally incapable of allegorizing purely on such a subject. To them grossness is too familiar, even as an object of thought, and when exhibited in a visible form only fosters licentious feelings and leads in practice to innumerable abominations. For these the shrines of Siva are notorious, but not so notorious as those of his consort Parvati, who, under various names, and more especially those of Kali and Durga, receives a worship of the most disgusting and atrocious description. The kind of carnage in which she delights



DURGA.
From Coleman's Hindoo Mythology.

is significantly indicated in the Kalika Purana, which, after an enumeration of the animals to be offered to her in sacrifice, adds, that one human victim would please her for 1000 years, and three human victims for 100,000 years. Circumstances do not allow her worshippers any longer to gratify her in this manner, but she has still full opportunity of satisfying her thirst for blood. In her temple at Kalighat, near Calcutta, 1000 goats, besides various other animals, are sacrificed every month; and it used to be the boast of her priest at Bindabashni, where the Vindhya Hills abut on the Ganges, that the blood before her image was never allowed to dry. This profuse shedding of blood, disgusting as it is, is not the worst feature in her worship. During the great festival of Durga Puja, celebrated in her honour, the name of religion is employed as a cloak for secret orgies, in which parties of both sexes meet and give themselves up to unbounded licentiousness.

The properties and offices assigned to the members of the Hindoo triad are so numerous and diversified that all the other gods of the pantheon seem

Other Hindu deities.

to be little more than repetitions of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, under new names and forms. According to this view, the infinite multiplicity of gods disappears, and instead of hundreds of millions, only a few great names stand forth as representatives of the whole. However correct this view may be as a theory, there is too much reason to fear that it does not hold true in practice, and that in the opinion of the great mass of Hindoos everything in the shape of a god to which a name has been given, and any act of worship is paid, has a separate and independent existence. It is necessary, therefore, to go beyond the triad and to give some account of other deities, who could not without straining be included under it, and yet either from the nature of the worship paid to them, or the number of their worshippers, cannot be left unnoticed. In the list of such gods,

the two first places unquestionably belong to Agni, the god of fire, and Indra, the god of the firmament.

Agni is perhaps entitled, in so far as antiquity gives precedence, to stand at the head of all the gods of the Hindoo pantheon. In the first four books of the Rig Veda—the portion of it now made accessible to English readers by the admirable labours of Professor Wilson—while the name of Siva is not once mentioned, and only two of the hymns of which the body of the work consists are addressed to Vishnu, no fewer than 147 are ad-



AGNI.—From Moore's Hindoo Pantheon.

Agni.

dressed to Agni. His domain embraces the heavens, where he appears in the sun and other celestial bodies as the great source of light and heat; the air, where he flashes in lightning and speaks in thunder; and the earth, where his presence is recognized in all kinds of artificial fire employed for common and sacred purposes. From the frequent use of fire in the religious services of the Hindoos, the worship of Agni may be said to be universal throughout India. All Brahmins fulfilling the obligations of their class are Agnihotras, that is, have a consecrated fire which is never allowed to be extinguished; and though, from the general laxity which now prevails, the great majority fail to do so, Agni must, so long as Hindooism continues to exist, be one of its most influential divinities. Though worshipped chiefly as an element possessed of the highest efficacy in removing all kinds of impurity, moral as well as ceremonial, he is also personified in various forms. Most usually he is drawn with a forked representation of fire issuing from his mouth; but this is sometimes wanting, and he is figured as a mitred prince, seated on a ram, which he guides by one of his four hands, while in the other three he holds a spear, a lotus flower, and a chaplet of beads.

Indra, the god of the firmament, holds a prominent place in the Rig Veda, and, like Agni, forms the subject of a large portion of its hymns. He is supposed to preside over atmospheric phenomena generally, and more especially over those productive of humidity. Hence the formation of rain forms part of his peculiar province, and he is sometimes seen engaged in sending down fertilizing showers, while a cloud, represented as a demon, combats his benevolent intentions by refusing to yield up its moisture. In his personified form Indra appears as a white man, seated on the elephant called Airavat, which is fabled to have been produced at the churning of the ocean. His wife, Indrani, usually accompanies him, but is sometimes represented separately, sitting on a lion with a child in her arms. Their heaven, called Swerga, situated on Mount Meru, is one of the masterpieces of Viswakarma, the architect of the gods, and so glistens with gold and gems as to outshine the radiance of a dozen of suns. In connection with Indra may be mentioned Pavana, the god of the winds. They are held to be independent divinities, but it is very difficult to assign distinct provinces to them, and prevent them from encroaching on each other. Pavana is represented riding on a deer or antelope, and holding in one hand a pennon, and in another an arrow. Deities of an inferior grade called Maruts, who are, in fact, only the winds personified, are his ministering servants, or rather perhaps the common messengers of all the higher gods. From the gods personifying the elements of fire and air, we naturally pass to another element, that of water, personified by a god of the name of Varuna, who may be regarded as the Indian Neptune, and is represented as a four-armed, white man, riding on a sea animal, with a rope in one hand and a club in another. He is much worshipped by fishermen; and being supposed capable of sending rain, is supplicated by husbandmen in seasons of drought.



INDRA.—From Moore's Hindoo Pantheon.

The heavenly bodies form an important class of Hindoo deities. The first place of course belongs to Surya, the sun, and Soma, the moon, in regard to both of which many wild fictions are current.

Surya, however, has suffered by a kind of competition with Agni, who, by appropriating most of his attributes, has left him comparatively little room for separate agency. In the usual representation Surya, in the form of a crowned



VARUNA.
From Coleman's Hindoo Mythology.

Surya.

prince, his head encircled with golden rays, sits on a splendid car, drawn by a seven-headed horse. In front of him sits his charioteer, Arun, holding the reins. Sometimes he seems to be regarded as the supreme lord of the universe, and as such is addressed in the Gayatri, which is the most solemn and mysterious of all the texts of the Veda. A much lower position is, however, usually assigned to him, and he even condescends so far as to become the parent, not merely of demigods, but of mortal men. His wife is Prabha, or brightness; but this form she has sometimes been obliged to exchange for that of its opposite, Chaya, or shade, in consequence of being unable to endure his intense splendour. He has not been always faithful to her. On one occasion Parvati, the wife of Siva, met him in the shape of a mare, and being impregnated with sunbeams by his breathing through her nostrils, became the mother of the Aswini, two of whom are the Twins of the zodiac. By Chandri, the wife of the moon, or the moon himself, usually represented as a male, but capable apparently of being transformed into a female, he had a numerous family called Pulindas. The mortals to whom he has given birth are the original progenitors of the race of Suryabans, who are hence called, and, what is more, seriously believed by multitudes to be, children of the sun. His worshippers are numerous, and he has several temples exclusively dedicated to him, though often, when exhibited in a bodily form, he is obliged to content himself with a place in the temples of other deities.

Soma or
 Chandra.

The moon, designated indifferently Soma and Chandra, is usually represented as a beautiful youth, sitting in a chariot drawn by an antelope, and holding in his hands a club and a lotus. The influence which he is supposed to possess in this lower world has given him many worshippers, who imagine that the whole current of life depends on lucky and unlucky days, of which he is the great regulator. The planet Budh, our Mercury, is considered to be his son, and the first sovereign of the lunar race, distinguished by the name of Chandrabans. The other planets are in like manner deified; but though they thus hold a place in the Hindoo pantheon, they are not entitled to a separate notice, as little more is expected from them than to furnish data for the calculation of nativities.

Among the gods who are conceived to exercise a more immediate influence on human affairs are Ganesa, the remover of difficulties, Cuvera, the god of wealth, Cartikeia, the god of war, and Kama, the god of love. It will be proper to describe them briefly in their order.

Ganesa.

Ganesa, or Gampatti, is represented as a short round fat man, with four arms and the head of an elephant. He is usually seated on a lotus, but sometimes rides on a rat, or has one near him, to indicate the prudence and foresight of which that animal is an emblem. In his hands he holds the *ankas*, or hook for guiding the elephant, a shell, for which a kind of battle-axe is sometimes substituted, a conical ball, and a cup with small cakes. He is much wor-

shipped, particularly in the Deccan, where his temples probably outnumber those of any god except Siva. The Peishwa Bajee Rao had an image of him in solid gold, with eyes of diamonds. Its value was estimated at £50,000. It is not thought prudent or safe to commence a journey, or a building, or even transact any ordinary matter of business, without invoking him, and hence, both to remind worshippers of this duty and furnish convenient means of performing it, his statues are set up on the public roads and other open places of resort. Not unfrequently, too, his image is placed over the doors of houses and shops, as a guarantee for the prosperity of those who occupy them. The god to whom all this homage is paid makes no pretensions to a very exalted origin.

Ganessa.

He had no father, and in the ordinary sense of the term, cannot be said to have had a mother, though that relationship is both claimed and gloried in by Parvati. The fable is, that while she was bathing, she collected all the scum and impurities of the bath, kneaded it into the human form, and gave it life by pouring water of the Ganges upon it. Accounts differ as to the mode in which he became possessed of the elephant's head. Some say that Parvati made him so at first; but the more generally received account is, that he had originally a human head, and was deprived of it by Siva, who, finding him placed as a sentinel at the door of Parvati's bath, and not knowing who he was, cut it off at a stroke. Afterwards, on seeing his wife overwhelmed with grief for the loss of her child, Siva seized an elephant's head,



GANESA.—From idol in British Museum.

which happened to be the first that came in his way, and placed it on Ganesa's shoulders. One of the most remarkable circumstances connected with the mythology of Ganesa is the existence of a living incarnation of him at Chincore, near Poona. This incarnation was first realized in the form of a saint of the name of Maroba, who was removed to heaven, while Ganesa not only took his place but undertook to occupy it in the persons of Maroba's descendants to the seventh generation. This imposture, gross as it is, has found multitudes credulous enough to be deceived by it, and the Brahmins, who profited by it, found little difficulty, even after the seventh generation elapsed, in continuing the farce of Ganesa's living incarnation. In 1809, Maria Graham paid a visit to the reputed deity. Her account of it is as follows:—"The whole place looked dirty, and every window was crowded with well-fed sleek Brahmins, who doubtless take great care of the Deo's revenues. We found his little godship seated in a mean verandah, on a low wooden seat, not any way

Living incarnation of Ganesa.



Living incarnation
of Ganesa.

distinguished from other children but by an anxious wildness of the eyes, said to be occasioned by the quantity of opium which he is daily made to swallow. He is not allowed to play with other boys; nor is he permitted to speak any language but Sanscrit, that he may not converse with any but the Brahmins. He received us very politely, and said he was always pleased to see English people. After some conversation, which a Brahmin interpreted, we took leave, and were presented by his divine hand with almonds and sugar-candy, perfumed with asafetida, and he received in return a handful of rupees."

Cuvera

Cuvera, the god of wealth, has no temples dedicated to him, and no altars at which oblations are made, but is amply compensated by the practical homage which he receives from all ranks and conditions of men. His mythology possesses little interest. He resides in a splendid palace, and when he travels is borne through the air in a radiant car, or rather palanquin, by four attendants. On his head is a richly ornamented crown, and two of his four hands hold closed flowers of the lotus. In none of these particulars is it possible to discover felicity of invention, or any peculiar appropriateness. In short, the Indian Plutus, like too many of his most ardent and successful worshippers, is indifferent to everything but wealth, and while he possesses it, and has the power of bestowing it, can dispense with any other attraction.

Cartikeia.

Cartikeia, the god of war, is regarded as the son of Siva, and was brought into existence by some very extraordinary process, for the express purpose of combating a giant of the name of Tarika, who had become a terror even to the gods. Brahma had been induced by the giant's penances and austerities to promise him universal power and dominion. This promise could not be recalled, and there seemed no means of escaping from the fatal consequences, for Tarika, abusing Brahma's blundering liberality, was threatening the whole creation with destruction: robbing the ocean of its riches, and the sun of its fire, commanding the moon to stand still, and subjecting all the other celestials to harsh and contumelious treatment.



CARTIKEIA.—Moore's Hindoo Pantheon.

In this dilemma the gods assembled a council, and after full deliberation saw only one possible means of deliverance. By Brahma's grant Tarika was declared to be invincible except to a son of Siva. But where was such a son to be found? Siva was at this time childless, and was leading a life of austerity, which precluded the hope of offspring. Various devices, in which Parvati and the god of love bore the principal part, were adopted, and at last, Cartikeia, having been deposited as a germ and nourished in the bosom of Gunga or the Ganges, emerged in the form of a beautiful male infant. After due nursing by females who came to the river to bathe, he grew up, and becoming fit

for martial exploits fulfilled the great end of his creation by slaying Tarika. When his character of god of war is considered, he might have been expected to take a prominent part in all the wars in which the gods figure as allies or auxiliaries. In general, however, only a secondary place is assigned to him, and it almost appears as if his merits had been purposely obscured by rivals jealous of his fame. For this apparent injustice he has some compensation in the number of his worshippers, and more especially in the honours paid to him during his annual festival. On that occasion images of him, to the number, in Calcutta alone, of 5,000, some of them of gigantic stature, are set up for worship, and at the conclusion of it thrown into the river. These images usually exhibit him as a young man of warlike appearance, situated very incongruously on a peacock, and holding a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other. Sometimes the peacock is treading on a serpent, and two additional hands are given him, in which he holds a spear and a trident.

Kama, called also Kamadeva or Camdeo, the god of love, is the subject of Kama. many pleasing fictions, and occupies a prominent place in ancient tales, poems, and dramas. Singular enough, notwithstanding the sway which he is described as possessing over gods and men, he cannot boast of possessing a single temple, or of being the object of any distinct and formal worship. Being thus more of an historical than an actually recognized divinity, little more need be said of him. The fables give him a double birth. By the first he is a son of Brahma, by the second a son of Vishnu and Lakshmi, during their avatars as Krishna and Rukmini. In both births the illusive prevailed over the real, and he is therefore designated the son of Maya, or illusion. His father Brahma, having promised that his dominion should not be confined to the hearts of the inhabitants of the world, but be felt even by the members of the triad, the youth was malicious enough to test his power by letting fly an arrow, which pierced Brahma's own bosom. He appears to have been equally successful with Vishnu. Not so with Siva. This god, when it was desired that he might become the father of a son destined to slay Tarika, was living retired in the practice of religious austerities. Kama, notwithstanding, presumed to send a shaft at him. It took effect, but Siva, incensed at the interruption given to his devotion, turned his third eye upon the infatuated archer, and with it burned him to ashes. After his second birth a demon carried him off, and threw him into the sea, where he was swallowed by a fish. From this living tomb he was afterwards rescued, and delivered as an infant to the care of the demon's wife. She, by some



KAMA OR KAMADEVA.
 From Moore's Hindoo Pantheon.

Kama.

strange metamorphosis, proved to be no other than Reti, or affection, the wife of Kama during his first life. After a time a mutual recognition took place, and the demon was destroyed. Kama is usually personified as a beautiful youth riding or kneeling on a parrot, and holding in his hands a bow ready bent and strung with bees, while a quiver of arrows, tipped with flowers, hangs behind his shoulder. His standard, adopted probably as a memorial of his marine adventure, is a fish. He is described as accompanied by Reti, and attended by the humming bee, the cuckoo, and gentle breezes. As he is constantly wandering over the world, no permanent locality can be assigned him, though his favourite haunt is with Krishna and his milkmaids, on the banks of the Yamuna or Jumna.

Yama.

From the god of love we pass to one of a very different description, Yama, the god of the infernal regions and judge of the dead. He has two distinct personifications. In the one called Dhermarajah he appears with a mild and benevolent countenance, seen only by those to whom a place of happiness is to be awarded. In the other, as Yama, he is seated on a buffalo with a crown on his head and a club and a rope or *pashu* in his hands. His inflamed eyes, dreadful teeth, and grim aspect are well fitted to inspire terror. The road to his palace is long and painful, over burning sand and red-hot or sharp-pointed stones, amidst showers of burning cinders, scalding water, and molten metal, and through dark passages beset with snakes, tigers, enormous giants, and all other imaginable horrors. The road is 668,000 miles long, and at the end of it, after crossing the Vaitarini, or Indian Styx, Yama himself is seen. His stature is 240 miles, his eyes of a purple colour expand like lakes, his voice resembles thunder, and his breathing the roaring of a tempest, a flame proceeds from his mouth, and every hair on his body is as long as a palm-tree. Attended by Chitra Gupta, a monster little less terrible than himself, he judges the trembling sinners as they come into his presence, and dooms them to their different hells. Though Yama has no temple dedicated to him, the terror which he inspires will not allow him to be forgotten. Oblations of water are made to him every day, and two annual festivals devoted to him are carefully observed.



YAMA.—Coleman's Hindoo Mythology.

Inferior
deities.

In the above enumeration of gods, all those occupying the first rank have been more or less fully described. The subject, however, is of boundless extent, and to give anything like a complete view of Hindoo theogony and mythology, it would be necessary to take some notice of numerous subordinate deities, many of them recognized only in particular localities, in which they are regarded either as a kind of patron saints to be courted for the blessings which

they may confer, or malignant demons to be deprecated for the evils which they may inflict. Both the heavens and the infernal regions are peopled with such imaginary beings. They are also constantly moving in the air, on the earth, and in the waters, and acting as the willing messengers or unwilling thralls of the higher gods. To the better class belong the Brahmadicas, or sons of Brahma, the Menus, the Rishis, good angels and good genii, Apsaras and Gandarras, or heavenly nymphs and choristers, by whose dances, songs, and music the inhabitants of the celestial mansions are constantly entertained. To the malignant class belong the Asuras, who, though of the race of gods, were disinherited and cast into darkness; the Deityas, a species of demons who have mustered armies and made war in heaven; Rakshasas, Pisachas, and still lower spirits, not unlike our nursery ghosts and goblins. By all of these much of the homage which is due only to the Supreme Power is practically monopolized.

Local and
inferior
deities.

Another series of imaginary beings which play an important part in the religion of the Hindoos are personifications of sacred streams—above all, the Ganges, which figures as a female divinity under the name of Gunga, and is both honoured and worshipped. So highly estimated is the honour of having given birth to Gunga, that Vishnu and Siva are represented by their respective votaries as laying claim to it. According to the Vishnaivas she had her first beginning in Vishnu's heaven, Vaikontha, and sprung from his foot; according to the Saivas, Keilas, Siva's heaven, was the place of



GUNGA (the Ganges).
From Moore's Hindoo Pantheon.

her birth. There she sprung from his head, and after long wandering among his matted locks descended at last upon the earth in a mighty stream, with all her train of fishes, snakes, turtles, and crocodiles. She is represented as a white woman with a crown on her head, either walking on the surface of the water or riding on a marine animal of rather nondescript form, though bearing some resemblance to an alligator, holding a water-jug in one of her four hands and a water-lily in another. After descending to the earth Gunga made a narrow escape, for a sage whom she disturbed in his devotions was so incensed that he swallowed her up. Having contrived ultimately to find an outlet, she divided herself into the numerous streams which now form a network across her delta. The modes in which homage is paid to her are countless. Her shrines exceed 3,000,000 in number; her banks are crowded with temples erected in her honour; long pilgrimages are made to obtain the privilege of bathing in her stream; for those who cannot make the pilgrimage, the water is transported to the remotest parts of the country and eagerly purchased; even the dying are carried to her banks to breathe their last, and in this way not unfrequently accelerate the event



which might have been deferred for days, or months, or years, by wiser and gentler treatment. In consequence of this practice the sacred stream can hardly be viewed without disgust, from the number of dead bodies which are floated down upon it.

Hindooism
in practice.

The character of the Hindoo religion may be legitimately inferred from that of the gods who are the objects of its worship; but a much more vivid impression may be obtained by passing from theory to practice, and viewing it under the forms it assumes both in daily life and on extraordinary occasions. In regard to all forms, private and public, one common remark may be made. The religious service performed is entirely of a ceremonial nature, and has nothing to do with the heart and conscience. If words of the Veda are repeated by rote as a kind of charm—if the breath is suppressed and made to pass in a peculiar manner through one nostril, while the other is stopped by the finger—if water is sipped, poured out, or used in bathing, while a number of minute regulations are carefully observed—by these, and such like mummeries, the worshipper considers himself cleansed from all impurity and entitled to claim the divine favour. If higher degrees of merit are aspired to, the means to be employed are not genuine sorrow for past sins and earnest endeavours to advance in holiness, but penances and austerities, the efficacy of which is estimated by the amount of bodily suffering which they inflict. The tortures to which multitudes submit with this view are often of the most barbarous and shocking description. The highest place in heaven is thus reserved for those who, from physical constitution or long training, possess most strength of bodily endurance, and the greatest villain on earth, without repenting of one of his crimes or forsaking one of his vices, may acquire the reputation and the privileges of a saint. Under such a system there is no inducement to virtuous practice. Every man has only to follow the bent of his own inclinations, assured that into whatever enormities passion or interest may lead him, it will always be easy to find some divinity who will accept his worship, and in return for it cancel all his guilt. In illustrating the highest form of religious observance required of a Hindoo in the ordinary routine of life, we shall be sure not to understate the matter by selecting the Brahmin as an example.

Observances
of a Brah-
min.

Assuming that the Brahmin performs all that is required of him, his daily course will be as follows:—On rising from sleep the first thing he does is to clean his teeth with a twig of the racemiferous fig-tree, repeating to himself during the operation the following prayer: "Attend, lord of the forest, Soma, king of herbs and plants, has approached thee; mayest thou and he cleanse my mouth with glory and good auspices, that I may eat abundant food. Lord of the forest! grant me life, strength, glory, splendour, offspring, cattle, abundant wealth, virtue, knowledge, and intelligence." The use of the twig, ordinarily deemed so indispensable that the omission of it would render all other religious services fruitless, is forbidden on certain specified days, when as a substitute for it



the mouth must be twelve times rinsed with water. Having thrown away the twig into some place known to be free from impurity, he proceeds to perform his ablutions. In these it is necessary to be very circumspect, as there are a number of minute rules which he must not violate. The water should, if possible, be taken not from a depth, as a well, but from the surface, and not from a stagnant pool but from a running stream—a river of the number of those deemed holy. In this respect, the Ganges is of course to be preferred to all others, but when it cannot be had the want of it may be supplied by the following prayer: “O Gunga, hear my prayers; for my sake be included in this small quantity of water, with the other sacred streams.” The ablution then proceeds, the Brahmin standing in the water, sipping it, sprinkling it, throwing it about on the crown of his head, on the earth, towards the sky, plunging thrice into it, and finally completing the process by washing his mantle in it. While thus engaged he repeats various prayers and texts of the Vedas, including the *gayatri*, styled the holiest of all, though it contains no more than this, “We meditate on the adorable light of the resplendent Generator, which governs our intellects.” Another mysterious utterance employed is that of O M, a contraction of the triliteral syllable A U M, the recognized symbol of the triad.

The ablutions performed, the Brahmin, supposed to have risen before the sun, prepares to worship that luminary as he emerges from the horizon. For this purpose various preliminary ceremonies are required. First, he ties the lock of hair on the crown of his head, takes up a bundle of cusa grass (*Poa cynosuroides*) in his left and three blades of it in his right hand, sips water, repeating the *gayatri*, and performing numerous mummeries, and after exclaiming “May the waters preserve me,” engages in deep meditation. The subject is curious, for he is only striving to realize the thought that “Brahma, with four faces and a red complexion, resides in his bosom; Vishnu, with four arms and a black complexion, in his heart, and Siva, with five faces and a white complexion, in his forehead.” This meditation is followed by a suppression of breath, the mode of effecting which is minutely and even ludicrously regulated. Closing the left nostril by the two longest fingers of the right hand, he draws a breath through the right nostril, and then by stopping this nostril also with the thumb remains without respiring till he has internally repeated the *gayatri*, the symbolical syllable O M, and a sacred text. This suppression of breath repeated thrice is followed by ablutions, a singular inhalation of water by the nose, and a sipping, at the end of which he exclaims, “Water, thou dost penetrate all beings; thou dost reach the deep recesses of the mountains; thou art the mouth of the universe; thou art the mystic word *vasha*; thou art light, taste, and the immortal fluid.” He is now in a fit state to offer acceptable worship to the sun, which he addresses standing on one foot with his face to the east and his hands in a hollow form. Among other things, he says of him that “he is the soul of all which is fixed or locomotive,” and apostrophizes him thus,

A.D. —
Observances
of a Brah-
min.

His morning
worship.

Brahminical
 rites.

"Thou art self-existent; thou art the most excellent ray; thou givest effulgence; grant it unto us." An oblation, consisting of *tela* or sesamum, flowers, barley-water, and red sandal-wood, is then made in a copper vessel shaped like a boat and placed on the head. With various other prayers and ceremonies, including an invocation of the gayatri, which is characterized as "light," as "seed," as "immortal life," as "the holiest sacrifice," and "the divine text who dost grant our best wishes," the daily morning devotion is brought to a close.

The five
 sacraments.

At noon and in the evening the service slightly varied ought to be repeated. Other portions of the day should be occupied with what are called "the five great sacraments." These are—1. The sacrament of the Vedas, or the teaching and studying of them. 2. The sacrament of the Manes, or an oblation of cakes and water to departed ancestors and progenitors generally. 3. The sacrament of the Deities, or prayers to all the gods of the pantheon, accompanied with an oblation to fire. 4. The sacrament of Spirits, or an oblation of rice and other food to all animated creatures; and 5. The sacrament of Men, or the performance of the rites of hospitality. In all of these the observance must be accompanied with prayers, ceremonies, and gestures, still more minute, unmeaning, and fantastical than those required in morning devotion, the whole forming an irksome routine, in which neither the intellect nor the affections have any share, and the most solemn religious acts degenerate into mere mechanism. It is not to be wondered at that a great majority of the Brahmins have found means to evade the letter of these requirements, and to curtail them to such a degree that one hour suffices for rites for which, if fully performed, at least four hours would be necessary. Unfortunately, in curtailing frivolous and useless ceremonies, no care has been taken to supply their place by something better, and the only effect has consequently been to bring that class which ought to set the example to all other classes, nearer than before to practical atheism.

Observances
 of the vulgar.

The great mass of the population, ever ready to take the law from those whom they regard as their superiors, select only those observances which are most agreeable, and thus make religion not a curb, but rather a stimulus to their natural depravity. In pursuing this course they are countenanced by a remarkable peculiarity in Hindoo faith and practice. A fundamental axiom of the Christian religion is, that he who offends in one point is guilty of all; in other words, that every precept is of absolute obligation, and consequently that the habitual neglect of any one known duty makes him who is guilty of it virtually an infidel. The Hindoo axiom, on the contrary, is, that all obedience is optional, and that within certain limits every individual is at liberty to lay down a rule for himself. He who aspires to the highest degree of future bliss will be contented with nothing short of perfection, and will consequently endeavour to fulfil every obligation to the very letter. He, on the other hand, who has no such exalted aims, and desires to be religious only so far as may be necessary to secure him against the loss of caste and the worst forms of future punishment, may



easily adopt a course of religious observance suited to his taste. Both the lofty aspirant and the lukewarm professor are, so to speak, within the pale, and both will be rewarded according to their deeds. When their final conditions are fixed, the difference between them will be not in kind but in degree. There will be no absolute condemnation, for however great the shortcomings of the one may be, his obedience, so far as it has gone, will be approved and accepted. The practical effect of such a rule is easily perceived. While the standard of obedience remains theoretically perfect, the great majority lower it till it becomes what they wish it to be. All duties felt to be irksome and disagreeable are carefully excluded, and every individual worshipper becomes in fact the maker of his own god, investing him only with such attributes as are pleasing to himself. The extent to which this is carried may be inferred from the well-known fact that every form of vice and crime—prostitution, theft, robbery, and murder—has found among the gods of the Hindoo pantheon some one who has sanctioned it by his example, and is therefore presumed to welcome those who commit it as acceptable worshippers.

Observances
of the vulgar.

But though the accommodating spirit of Hindooism allows each individual great latitude in selecting the objects and manner of his worship, and by permitting him to lower the standard to suit his taste, virtually abolishes all religious and moral distinctions, it must be acknowledged that the effect has been not so much to produce religious indifference as to foster a perverse zeal and multiply useless forms. Even those who content themselves with such observances as are necessary to prevent the loss of caste and leave them a hope of escaping final reprobation, have a laborious task to perform, since the omission of any one among a multiplicity of rites and ceremonies might defeat their object. The observances, of course, increase in proportion as higher aspirations are entertained. Some, desirous of attaining a higher order of animated being in their new metempsychosis, must acquire the necessary merit by increasing the number and variety of ceremonial acts. Others would fain purchase even a temporary residence in one or other of the fabled heavens appropriated to the gods, but cannot hope to reach the object of their ambition without adding to the routine of ordinary observances numerous acts of will-worship and painful privation. The highest object at which it is possible to aim is exemption from all future transmigrations, by what is called absorption into the divine essence. This, as it is the acmé of felicity, is also presumed, as might be expected, to be the most difficult of attainment. How to accomplish it is the great problem which has for ages tasked the ingenuity of Hindoo theologians, and cannot be said to be as yet satisfactorily solved. In one general principle, indeed, they are all agreed. The great obstacles to the final absorption of the soul by the supreme essence are its union with the body, and the various instincts, appetites, and passions which are supposed to be the result of this union. There is thus a thralldom from which the soul must be delivered.

Multiplicity
of forms.



Views of the
Hindooes in
regard to the
attainment
of spiritual
perfection.

Only two modes seem practicable. By retiring within itself and engaging in profound meditation and contemplation, it may render itself insensible to the existence of the external world, and thus gradually prepare for becoming part of a pure, spiritual, uncompounded essence. Thus acting, the soul assumes the offensive, and in a manner achieves its own freedom. This is one of the modes, and is in high repute with those who are of a metaphysical turn, and fond of indulging in dreamy indolence. In the other mode the mind is more passive, and the same object is sought to be gained by weakening the powers of the body and thus rendering it incapable of exercising its wonted tyranny. This mode is suited to the taste of those who, incapable of abstract thought and long-continued meditation, excel in physical endurance, and are able, as they think, to keep the body under by subjecting it to attenuating processes of hunger and thirst, painful postures, nakedness, extremes of heat and cold, lacerations, gashes, mutilations, and numerous barbarities not the less shocking from being self-inflicted.

Self-inflicted
tortures.

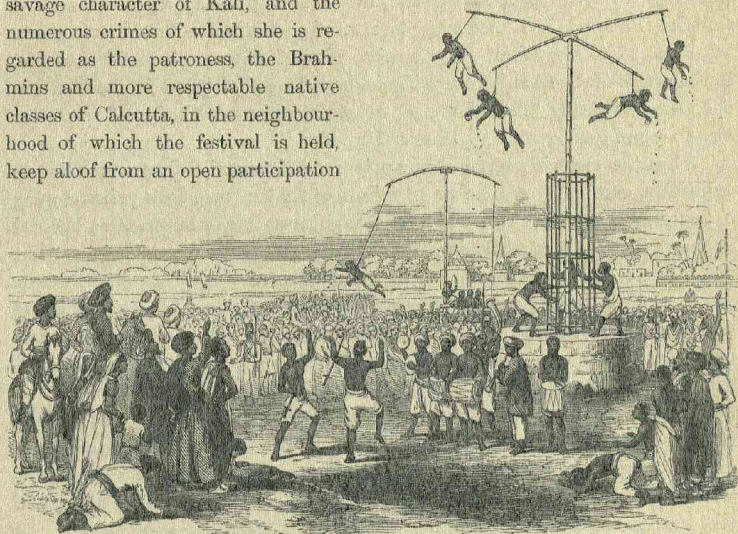
As a general rule, both modes of discipline are practised by the same individual, and hence while careful to prepare for contemplation by suppressions of breath and mysterious utterances, the Brahmin having, during the last portion of his life abandoned all sensual affections, is enjoined in the Institutes of Menu to "dry up his bodily frame" by means of "harsher and harsher mortifications," and in certain cases to feed "on water and air," till he has "shuffled off his body." The severest penances mentioned in the Institutes are to "slide backwards and forwards on the ground," to "stand a whole day on tiptoe," and endure the extremes of heat, cold, and moisture; but superstition the longer it is indulged always becomes the stronger, and hence to give a list of the severities practised in modern times by the devotees called *Yogis* and *Fakirs*, were to enumerate almost all the imaginable modes of torture. Keeping the palms of the hands closed till the nails grow into the flesh on one side and re-appear on the other—creeping along in twisted forms till permanent and unnatural distortion is produced—holding the arms upright till they lose their power of motion and become shrivelled—lying on beds of iron spikes—hanging over slow fires—burying in a living grave with only a small aperture to prevent suffocation—such are only a few of the modes by which superstition proves how expert it is in the art of tormenting. Superstition, indeed, cannot lay claim to all the diabolical ingenuity displayed, but must share it with impostors of various grades who infest the country as mendicants, and extort alms either by the commiseration which their sufferings excite, or the desire to be rid of their filthy and disgusting presence. Naked bodies smeared with the ashes of cow-dung, hair hanging in locks matted together with filth, human skulls filled with the same material, and human bones strung around the neck, are among the more common devices used by those who, without practising self-denial, are ambitious of the honour or greedy of the profit which even a hypocritical semblance of it too often commands.

In order to obtain a full display of the Hindoo religion, and the monstrous practices which it permits and encourages, it will be necessary after having seen how it operates in everyday life, to behold it when crowds are gathered to celebrate its greater festivals. As it would be difficult, if not impossible, to give a common description applicable to all, the advisable course will be to select as a specimen the festival of Kali, to whose delight in carnage reference has already been made, and the festival of Juggernaut, which, through the early attention which was drawn to it, is perhaps more familiar and interesting to the British mind than any other.

Hindoo festivals.

Kali or Maha Kali is, as will be remembered, identical with Parvati the wife of Siva, and is celebrated in an annual festival, which receives the name Charak Pujah from the *chakra* or discus, emblematical of the wheeling or swinging employed in its most characteristic performance. Owing to the savage character of Kali, and the numerous crimes of which she is regarded as the patroness, the Brahmins and more respectable native classes of Calcutta, in the neighbourhood of which the festival is held, keep aloof from an open participation

Festival of Kali.



CHARAK PUJAH.—From Gold's Oriental Drawings, and Parke's Wanderings of a Pilgrim.

in it, but at the same time show where their sympathies lie by contributing largely to the expense, and countenancing the proceedings by their presence as spectators. By the more zealous votaries a whole month before the festival, by others three days, are employed in initiatory ceremonies of purification and devotion. When the first day devoted to it arrives, an upright pole twenty to thirty feet in height is erected, and across its summit a horizontal beam is placed to move round on a pivot. From each end of the beam hangs a rope, the one loosely and the other with two hooks attached to it. The performance



now begins. A devotee coming forward prostrates himself and is immediately fastened to the hooks, which for this purpose are run through the fleshy parts of his back near the shoulders. The end of the other rope is then seized by a number of persons, who commence running round with it at a rapid pace. This motion is of course communicated at once to the hooks, and the wretched devotee lifted up into the air is swung round in agony. Were the flesh to give way, the force with which he is whirled as well as the height would project him like a shot from a gun, and his death would be inevitable. The devotee by giving a signal may be relieved from peril and torture, but he is in no haste to give it, and usually remains suspended from ten minutes to half an hour, for, strange to say! this is a religious service, the merit of which is proportioned to the length of time the agony is endured. The moment he descends and is taken off the hooks, another steps forward to take his place, and the machine is kept wheeling till the day is far spent. In estimating the aggregate amount of suffering inflicted, it is necessary to remember that these horrid swings are not confined to the suburbs of Calcutta, where Kali's temple stands, but that in thousands of towns and villages throughout Bengal, they are in simultaneous operation, torturing the infatuated devotees, while multitudes of spectators stand around gaping with applause and wonder.

Hook-
swinging

Other
barbarities.

When the swinging terminates, another equally cruel and more murderous exhibition succeeds. A number of spikes or knives, with their points sloping outwards, are made to protrude from a large straw bag or mattress, and placed in front of a wall or scaffolding from twenty to thirty feet in height. The performance of the devotees is to leap from the scaffolding to the mattress. As the spikes are left somewhat loose, and there is room for the exercise of dexterity in taking the leap, the greater part escape uninjured, but several sustain serious injuries, and a few are killed on the spot. For the last, the spectators feel no pity, because the belief is that the fate which they have met is the punishment of some enormous crime, which they must have committed either in the present or in some former life. At night the devotees, seated in the open air, make an incision in the skin of their forehead as a receptacle for an iron wire to which they suspend a lamp. These lamps are kept burning till dawn, the wearers meanwhile celebrating the praises of their favourite divinity. It were easy to produce a long list of other self-inflicted tortures—of deluded wretches with their arms and breasts stuck full of pins—of others bound in a sitting posture to the rim of an enormous wheel, every revolution of which must reverse the natural position of head and heels—and of others, who, placing some mustard seeds on some mud with which they have covered the under lip, stretch themselves out on their backs, under a vow that they will lie there night and day, without change of position, till the seed shall germinate; but enough has been already said to show by what kind of works the favour of Hindoo deities can be courted.



The observances already mentioned are rather the preliminaries of the festival than its actual celebration, which can only be seen with all its accompaniments in the vicinity of the temple itself, situated near the extremity of a plain immediately south-east of the capital of British India, and known by the name of Kali-Ghat. It owes its site, and the veneration in which it is held, to a very singular legend. Siva's wife was Sati, the daughter of Brahma. After the marriage the two gods quarrelled. Brahma, who was the aggressor, not only insulted his son-in-law by leaving him uninvited to a banquet which he gave to the immortals, but stigmatized him as a wandering beggar, a dweller among tombs, a carrier of human skulls. Sati took the quarrel so much to heart, that she proceeded to the banks of the Ganges and yielded up her life, thereby furnishing an example, on which the Brahmins for want of a better have eagerly seized, to justify the immolation of widows, hence called *satis* or *suttees*. Siva on beholding his wife's lifeless body was literally distracted, and thrusting his trident into it began whirling it in the air with frantic gestures. His violence shook the three worlds, and threatened the universe with destruction. Even the gods were in alarm, and Vishnu, as preserver, hastened to interpose. With the view of calming Siva he reminded him that the world has no real existence, and that everything in it is only *maya*, or illusion. This was but sorry comfort, and Siva in his frenzy continued to rage and gesticulate as furiously as before. It next occurred to Vishnu that his fellow-god would calm down if Sati's body was removed from his sight, and therefore while it was whirling on the trident, he took a scimitar and kept hacking it till the whole had disappeared. Siva was not aware of this hacking process till it was completed, but as soon as the object which made him frantic was removed, returned to a sound mind. He was afterwards completely consoled by the return of Sati to him under the form of Parvati, the daughter of Himalaya. From the rapidity with which her body was whirled when Vishnu hewed it in pieces, the fragments were carried to great distances, and have made all the places where they were found famous. The toes of the right foot fell at Kali-Ghat and had lain in the ground undiscovered for ages, when a Brahmin, to whom their position had been revealed in a dream, dug them up, and erected on the site the temple which now bears the name of Kali. The hideous form usually borne by the idol has already been described, and it therefore only remains to give an account of the great day of the festival. The means have happily been provided by a most competent eye-witness, and we shall therefore do little more than abridge and occasionally quote verbatim from the graphic description given by Dr. Duff.¹

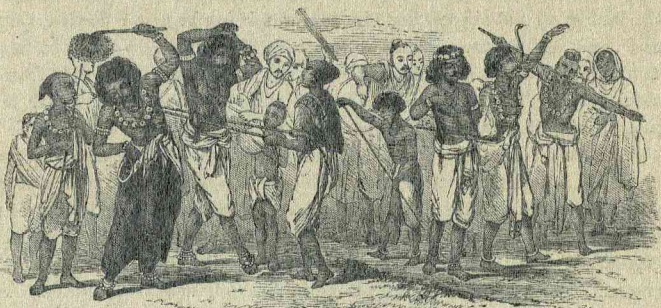
Origin of the festival of Kali.

At early dawn the native population of Calcutta begin to move in myriads along the road leading to Kali-Ghat—mere spectators, in promiscuous throngs, gaily dressed as for a holiday—and devotees in isolated groups, easily distin-

Its appearance described.

¹ *India and Indian Missions.*

guished by their loose robes and their foreheads liberally besprinkled with vermilion. "Two or three of them are decked in speckled or party-coloured garments, uttering ludicrous unmeaning sounds, and playing off all sorts of antic gestures not unlike the merry-andrews on the stage of a country fair. Two or three with garlands of flowers hanging about their neck, or tied round the head, have their sides transpierced with iron rods, which project in front, and meet at an angular point, to which is affixed a small vessel in the form of a shovel.



DEVOTEES OF KALI.¹—From Soltykoff.

Two or three, covered with ashes, carry in their hands iron spits or rods of different lengths, small bamboo canes or hukah tubes, hard twisted cords or living snakes whose fangs have been extracted, bending their limbs into unsightly attitudes and chanting legendary songs. Two or three more are the bearers of musical instruments—horned trumpets, gongs, tinkling cymbals, and large hoarse drums, surmounted with towering bunches of black and white ostrich feathers." Then instruments blown or beaten lustily make loud and discordant music. Besides the groups of devotees who move along in succession as far as the eye can reach, others are seen advancing and spreading over the southern side of the plain where the temple stands, with flags and other pageants, and with portable stages "on which men and women are engaged in ridiculous, and often worse than ridiculous, pantomimic performances." The temple is surrounded by a high wall and a court, and the principal access to it is by a gate on the west side. Opposite to this gate stands a party of Brahmins

¹ In Mrs. Belnos' *Manners in Bengal*, are two groups of devotees of Kali, and from these we have selected some of the principal figures. One of the men dressed in red silk, with female ornaments, and bells on his feet, was dancing with a water-snake, alive, thrust through his tongue, holding it only by its tail; the reptile curling its head and hissing. Another man, in similar dress, held in his hand an iron shovel with two pointed handles, which were

thrust through both his sides; the shovel had red-hot coals, on which from time to time the devotee threw some kind of powder which blazed up. One man had a bamboo, nearly three inches in circumference, bored through his tongue; another had two ropes run through his sides, the four ends of which were held by two men, whilst he danced backwards and forwards, with as much unconcern as if the ropes only went through his garments.



distributing consecrated flowers, and receiving free-will offerings of money in return. After the gate is passed the temple "starts up full in view." The spectators keep moving along a narrow pathway on the south side between the temple and a portico, while the devotees pass on the outside of the portico itself towards the eastern side of the court. The proceedings which there take place are thus described:—

"Towards the wall there were stationed several blacksmiths with sharp instruments in their hands. Those of a particular group that carried the rods, canes, and other implements, now came forward. One would stretch out his hand, and getting it instantly pierced through, in would pass one of his rods or canes. Another would hold out his arm, and getting it perforated, in would pass one of his iron spits or tubes. A third would protrude his tongue, and getting it also bored through, in would pass one of his cords or serpents. And thus all of a group that desired it, had themselves variously transpierced or perforated. When these groups had finished, another group was waiting in readiness to undergo the cruel operation; and so another and another apparently without end." Everything was now in readiness for the most solemn act of worship. It is thus described:—"Those of the different groups that carried in front the vessels already referred to, now ranged themselves all round the interior of the colonnade. All the rest assembled themselves within this living circle. On a sudden, at a signal given, commenced the bleating, and the lowing, and the struggling of the animals slaughtered in sacrifice at the farthest end of the portico; and speedily was the ground made to swim with sacrificial blood. At the same moment of time the vessel carriers threw upon the burning coals in their vessels handfuls of Indian pitch, composed of various combustible substances. Instantly ascended the smoke, and the flame, and the sulphureous smell. Those who had the musical instruments sent forth their loud, and jarring, and discordant sounds. And those who were transpierced began dancing in the most frantic manner—pulling backwards and forwards through their wounded members the rods and the canes, the spits and the tubes, the cords and the writhing serpents, till their bodies seemed streaming with their own blood." During this frightful scene the spectators looked on and applauded, ever and anon raising loud shouts of "Victory to Kali! Victory to the great Kali!" the grim idol which, seated within the temple, enveloped in a gloom artificially created by allowing no light to enter except by the door, was supposed to listen delighted to the homage thus offered.

Juggernaut, or Jagannath, justly designated as "that mighty pagoda, the mirror of all wickedness and idolatry," stands on the coast of Orissa, near the north-western shore of the Bay of Bengal, at the end of the principal street of the town of same name, every span of which, as well as a large adjoining district, is regarded as holy ground. Being the first object which meets the eye of the stranger, who, after a long voyage, is approaching the mouth of the

A.D. —

Festival of
Kali.Festival of
Juggernaut.



Hooghly, it would be a welcome sight, were not its name associated with monstrous delusions and shocking barbarities. Seen from a distance, whether by sea or land, it has certainly an imposing appearance, and even a nearer approach in the latter direction does not destroy this impression, for the whole town is inclosed by luxuriant groves and gardens, which produce the best fruit of the province; but at last the filth and stench, the swarms of religious mendicants, and other objects offensive alike to the eye, the ear, and the nostril, dispel all illusion, and leave little room for any feeling but disgust.

Festival of
Juggernaut.

The temple
described.

The temple, erected A.D. 1198, stands in a square area, inclosed by a lofty stone wall, each side of which is about 650 feet in length. It is built chiefly of a coarse granite, resembling sandstone, and appears as a vast mass of masonry, surmounted by several lofty towers. Its architecture is rude and inelegant, and no taste has been displayed in the selection and execution of its ornaments. These defects are rendered still more prominent by the treatment which it has received in modern times. A coating of chunam with which it was covered has all been washed away, except a few stains and patches, and many parts of the sculpture, in order to stand out more prominently, have been barbarously bedaubed with red paint. After entering the inclosure by the principal gate of entrance on the east, a flight of steps leads to a terrace, twenty feet in height, inclosed by a second wall, 445 feet square. Within this inclosure most of the principal deities of the Hindoo pantheon have temples. More especially under the great tower, which forms its sanctuary, stand idols of Balbhadra, identified with Siva—Subhadra, identified with Devi or Kali—as well as of Jagannath, or the lord of the universe, of whom some account must now be given. For this purpose it will be necessary to select from competing legends the one which is most generally received.

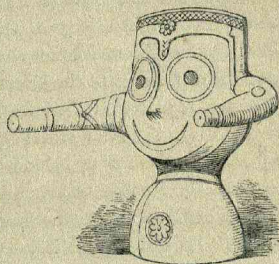
Legend
respecting
Juggernaut.

Krishna, it will be remembered, was accidentally killed in a thicket by an arrow. The hunter who shot the arrow left the body to rot under a tree, but some pious persons collected the bones and placed them in a box. Here they remained till the following incident took place:—Indra Dhooma, the King or Maharajah of Oojein, distinguished for his piety, was supplicating the favour of Vishnu, when the god appeared and assured him that he might gain the fruit of all his religious austerities, by putting the bones of Krishna into the belly of an image of Juggernaut. The king asked who should make the image, and was instructed to make application by prayer to Vishwakarma, the architect of the gods. Vishwakarma consented, but at the same time declared that if any one disturbed him while at work, he would leave the image unfinished. In one night he built a temple on what is called the Blue Mountain in Orissa, and then began with the image. After fifteen days had elapsed the king became impatient, and went to see what progress had been made. The architect thus interrupted put his threat in execution, and left the image without hands or feet. The king, greatly disconcerted, applied to Brahma, who promised to

make the image famous in its present shape. Accordingly, when it was set up he not only invited all the gods to be present, but condescended to act as high-priest, and gave both eyes and soul to Juggernaut, whose fame was thus completely established.

The above legend is so far defective that it does not account for the fact that the temple, instead of being consecrated to Vishnu alone, under his form of Juggernaut, is held as a kind of joint tenancy between him and two other gods. The Brahmins of Orissa have availed themselves of this circumstance to maintain that the worship in that temple is more spiritual than what is generally practised elsewhere. Their explanation is that the deity worshipped at Juggernaut is not subordinate to any other but the supreme Spirit itself; that the images are shapeless because the Vedas declare that the deity has no particular form; and that their grotesque and hideous form has been given them in order to terrify the vulgar into the discharge of duty. It may be true that some allegorical meaning, far more rational than that which is generally received, may be hidden under both the shape and the number of the shapeless idol, but the only thing which can be asserted without contradiction is, that if the object was to produce terror, it has been accomplished.

Brahminical explanation of the worship offered to Juggernaut.



IDOL OF JUGGERNAUT.
From Fergusson's *Hindoo Architecture*.

The number of annual festivals celebrated at Juggernaut is thirteen, but two, called the Asnan and the Rath Jatras, are greatly distinguished above the rest, because then only the monstrous idols are publicly exposed to view. The Rath Jatra, again, takes precedence of the Asnan, because on it alone the idols, besides being publicly exposed, pay a visit on their car to a place about a mile and a half distant. To the Rath, therefore, as the greatest of all the festivals, our attention will now be confined. In anticipation of the appointed day, vast numbers of pilgrims have assembled from all parts of the country. Many of these, affecting superior sanctity, or desirous of acquiring superior merit, have measured the whole length of the way with their own bodies, and others of them suffer voluntarily or of necessity so many privations, that the pilgrimage is said to be every year the direct or indirect cause of from 2000 to 3000 deaths. This computation will not appear exaggerated when it is considered that the aggregate number of pilgrims is not less than 50,000, and that the roads leading to the temple are in many places literally strewn with the bones or other remains of human beings.

His annual festivals.

The festival is celebrated on the second day of the new moon in Asar, that is in the end of June or beginning of July. After various prayers and ceremonies within the temple, the idols are brought forth beyond the principal



The festival
of Rath
Jatra.

entrance, called the Lion Gate, from its being flanked with colossal figures of lions, or more properly griffins in a sitting posture. Balbhadra, Juggernaut, and Subhadra, the so-called deities, are nothing more than wooden busts, about six feet in height, fashioned into a rude resemblance of the human head, resting on a sort of pedestal. The first two, as representatives of Siva and Vishnu, or rather of their incarnations Bala Rama and Krishna, are considered brothers; the third as an incarnation of Devi or Kali is their sister. The brothers, painted respectively white and black, have arms projecting horizontally forward from the ears; the sister, painted yellow, is left devoid of similar appendages. All three have frightfully grim and distorted countenances, and wear a head-dress of cloth of different colours, shaped somewhat like a helmet. In bringing them out without the gate the priests, after placing them on a kind of litter, fasten a common rope round their necks. This done, some drag them down the steps, and through the mud, while others keep them erect, and help their movements by shoving them from behind in the most unceremonious manner. Balbhadra, as the elder brother, enjoys a kind of precedence which it would be dangerous to withhold, owing to the fanaticism of the Sivaites, who honour in him their favourite divinity. He is brought out first, occupies the largest car, and takes the lead in the procession which is to follow, but neither he nor his sister receives a tithe of the adoration which is paid to Juggernaut, whose appearance is hailed with an universal shout, to be likened only to that which at the council of Pandemonium "tore hell's concave." The cars, respectively 43, 41, and 40 feet high, move on ponderous wheels, of which Balbhadra's has sixteen, and each of the others fourteen wheels. To put them in motion strong cables have been provided, and the moment the signal is given, first the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts, whose peculiar duty and privilege it is, and then the multitudes generally, make a rush, and seizing the cables, drag forward the *raths* or cars. The shoutings which they raise, the clatter of hundreds of harsh-sounding instruments, and the creaking, crashing sound of the ponderous machines are absolutely deafening. The violent effort required in dragging cannot be continued without alternate pauses, at each of which the *dytaks*, or charioteers of the god, advance to a projecting part of the stage, and, by words and gestures, give utterance and display to gross obscenity. The multitude shout applause, and the dragging is resumed. At one period numerous instances of self-immolation occurred. Devotees, throwing themselves in front of the cars while in motion, were in a moment crushed to death beneath the wheels. Such cases are now so rare that they cannot be fairly represented as forming part of the regular celebration of the festival, but numerous other abominations and extravagances remain to justify the worst that can be said of it. The following description of an eye-witness, in June, 1814, is given in the *Asiatic Journal* :—

"The sights here beggar all description. Though Juggernaut made some progress on the 19th, and has travelled daily ever since, he has not yet reached



the place of his destination. His brother is ahead of him, and the lady in the rear. One woman has devoted herself under the wheels, and a shocking sight it was. Another also intended to devote herself, missed the wheels with her body, and had her arm broken. Three people lost their lives in the crowd. The place swarms with fakirs and mendicants, whose devices to attract attention are, in many instances, ingenious. You see some standing for half the day on their heads, bawling all the while for alms; some having their eyes filled with mud, and their mouths with straw; some lying in puddles of water; one man with his foot tied to his neck, another with a pot of fire on his belly, and a third enveloped in a network made of rope."

A.D. —

Festival of
Rath Jatra.

When the question is asked, At whose instigation, and for whose benefit is this monstrous festival celebrated? the answer must be, That of the Brahmins, who are maintained in idleness and luxury on the endowments of the temple, and the immense revenue obtained by levying a pilgrim tax. Upwards of 3000 of their families subsist in this way, and manage to have not only lodging, but also board, free of expense. The appetite of the idol is so insatiable that he eats fifty-two times a day, and gives sufficient occupation to nearly 400 cooks. It is needless to say that their cookery goes to other mouths than that of Juggernaut, and that the voluntary presents of rice which pilgrims are encouraged to make as a means of propitiating his favour, besides sufficing for the priests, leaves a surplus, which, deriving additional value from having been consecrated, finds numerous and eager purchasers. Even such palpable imposture suffices not to satisfy the Brahminical avarice, and votaries are allured to the temple by means of a far more disgraceful nature. Among the regular attendants of the temple are 120 dancing girls. The nature of their employment is thus explained by Dubois:—"The service they perform consists of dancing and singing. The first they execute with grace, though with lascivious attitudes and motions. Their chanting is generally confined to the obscene songs which relate to some circumstance or other of the licentious lives of their gods. They perform these religious duties at the temple to which they belong twice a day—morning and evening. They are also obliged to assist at all the public ceremonies, which they enliven with their dance and merry song. As soon as their public business is over, they open their cells of infamy, and convert the temple of worship into a den of licentiousness."

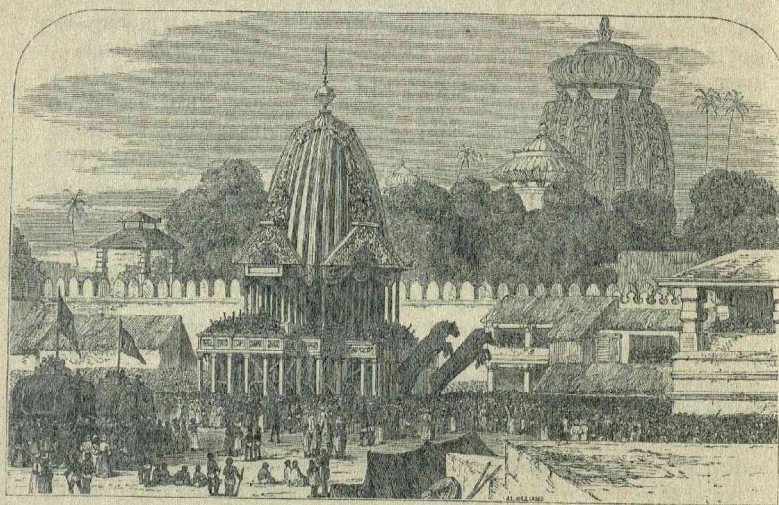
The interest
of the Brah-
mins in the
festival.

In reading such descriptions as the above, one would fain forget how closely connected the British government once was with this very temple. When, in the course of conquest, the territory in which it was situated became an integral part of our Indian empire, it was necessary that some precautions should be taken against the disturbance of the public peace, by the vast crowds brought together from all parts of the country to celebrate the festivals. Had the East India Company, acting with the consent, or rather by the direct authority of the government at home, confined themselves to interference for this purpose alone,

Connection
of the
British
government
with it.

Connection
of British
government
with the
festival of
Juggernaut.

it could not have been misunderstood, and would in itself have been unobjectionable. Most unwisely, and we need not hesitate to add, impiously, they virtually took the grim and obscene idol under their protection, by undertaking to levy his revenues, and defray all the expenses of his establishment. In consequence of the connection thus formed they not only appointed one of their servants to collect the pilgrim tax, and pay over any residue which might accrue into their own treasury, but furnished part at least of the trappings used in the festival. There can be no doubt of the fact; and hence Stirling, in his excellent account of Orissa, inserted in volume xv. of the *Asiatic Researches*, when alluding incidentally to the appearance of the *raths* or cars, says, that "every part of the ornament is of the most mean and pætry description, *save only the*



CAR AND PROCESSION OF JUGGERNAUT.—From Fergusson's *Hindoo Architecture*.

covering of striped and spangled broadcloth furnished from the export warehouse of the British government, the splendour and gorgeous effect of which compensate in a great measure for other deficiencies of decoration." The cutting censure here implied is afterwards distinctly pronounced when he describes the difficulty of dragging the cars from the flagging zeal of the pilgrims; and then adds—"Even the gods' own proper servants will not labour zealously and effectually without the interposition of authority. I imagine the ceremony would soon cease to be conducted on its present scale and footing, if the institution were left entirely to its fate, and to its own resources, by the officers of the British government." In other words, a government professedly Christian was



engaged in the unhallowed task of not only countenancing idolatry in its most abominable form, but of propping it up when it was falling by its own weight. It is needless to examine the arguments, partly mercenary and partly Machiavellian, employed to justify this alliance with idolatry, since the moral sense revolts against it, and public opinion, once blinded, has become alive to its enormity, and extinguished it for ever.

The character of the gods and the kind of worship deemed acceptable to them having been explained, it will now be necessary to examine the other leading articles of the Hindoo creed, and thus obtain a key to the motives by which those who profess it are influenced in their religious observances. Man never sinks so low as not to have some religion. The idea of the existence of a higher order of beings than himself is so natural that some have conceived it to be innate, and there is an easy transition from this idea to the conviction, that such beings, besides being cognizant of human affairs, exercise a direct and powerful influence over them. Hence the important question arises—According to what rule do they act in distributing their favours? or, By what course of conduct may these be most effectually secured? The importance of this question is greatly increased by the consideration of a future state. When the body dies, the spirit which animated it is not extinguished. It only departs from the tabernacle in which it dwelt, or escapes from the prison-house in which it was confined, and has thereby, in all probability, been rendered more susceptible than ever of pleasure and pain. The belief that these are not dispensed indiscriminately, but awarded according to desert, gives meaning, and is in fact the great incentive to religious observance. Some homage might indeed be paid to a higher nature from instinctive respect and veneration, without expectation of ulterior benefit, but formal and regular worship never would be performed by any one not persuaded that he might by means of it promote at once his present and his future welfare. All systems of religion, therefore, how widely soever they may differ in their particular features, must be based on certain fundamental beliefs—an over-ruling providence belonging exclusively to one Supreme Being, or ascribed by a foolish imagination to an indefinite series of so-called deities—a future state—and a distribution of rewards and punishments, according to some fixed rule of favour or supposed desert. In the Christian system each of these is exhibited in its most perfect form—one only God, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness—a future state, in which the destiny of every individual, the moment he quits the present life, is irrevocably fixed—and a distribution of happiness and misery, not indeed according to a desert of which human nature is incapable, but as the completion of a wondrous plan in which truth meets with mercy, and righteousness with peace. In all these respects Hindooism presents not a resemblance, but a hideous contrast. The nature of its gods has been seen. Turn now to its future state.

Fundamental principles of religious belief.

The great peculiarity of the Hindoo creed in regard to a future state is its



Dogma of
transmigra-
tion.

Its pernici-
ous effects
on society
and

On indivi-
duals.

doctrine of a transmigration of souls, which, having been borrowed from them by the Greeks, has received the name of metempsychosis. According to this doctrine, the present life is intended not so much for probation as for transition. As a general rule, the soul on quitting the body passes into another, and thus commences a new life, no longer, it may be, in the form of a human being, but in that of a lower animal, or even of a vegetable. There is no necessity for confining this curious process to the future, and hence it is actually extended to both the present and the past. All the forms of life now existing are animated by beings who, though utterly unconscious of the fact, previously existed, and owe their present place in the scale of being to the course of conduct which they then pursued. Those in the lower and more degrading forms are paying the penalty of former misdeeds; those more favourably situated are entitled, besides congratulating themselves on their good fortune, to take credit for a fund of merit of which they are now reaping the reward. This strange doctrine leads directly to important practical results. Poverty, misfortune, and all the ills which flesh is heir to, we have been taught to regard as divine dispensations, sent more in mercy than in judgment, and designed for the moral improvement, both of the sufferers themselves, and of those who only witnessed their sufferings. While the former are invited to look upward, and aspire to a better happiness than this world can bestow, the latter are enjoined to sympathize with the distresses, and minister as stewards of the divine bounty to the necessities of their less fortunate brethren. The Hindoo view does not allow any such lessons to be taught. It first identifies misfortune with crime, committed in the present or in a former life, and then refuses to relieve it, on the hypocritical pretext that to do so were to thwart the design of the deity by whom the penalty is inflicted. This is not a theoretical inference, but a well ascertained fact; and hence, when, as not unfrequently happens, the flesh of one of the swinging devotees gives way, and he is dashed down to instant death, the spectators either look on with apathy, or give utterance to their belief that he would not have been killed in this way if he had not deserved it.

This hardness of heart, steeling a man against his fellow, and making him indifferent to his fate, is not the only pernicious consequence of the dogma of transmigration. While it destroys mutual sympathy, and thus deprives society of one of the strongest bonds by which its stability and good order are maintained, it operates still more injuriously on the individual. Life has an object truly worthy of the name, when it is regarded as the period during which immortal happiness must be gained, or for ever forfeited. On the contrary, when it is regarded as nothing more than one in a series of metamorphoses, of which many have already taken place and others are to follow in almost endless succession, its main interest is destroyed, and it becomes incapable of furnishing the necessary incentive to piety and virtue in the shape of a final and eternal reward. What the human soul longs for, after it has been made sensible of its



original dignity and desirous of regaining it, is a haven of purity and felicity, where it may rest secure after all the toils and trials of the present life are ended; whereas Hindooism only offers a repetition of the same toils and trials under a new form—a repetition which indeed has some imaginary limits assigned to it, but those so remote, that it may after the lapse of ages give no signs of drawing to a close.

A less unfavourable view of the dogma of transmigration is sometimes taken, and it has been said that by it "hope seems denied to none; the most wicked man, after being purged of his crimes by ages of suffering and repeated transmigrations, may ascend in the scale of being, until he may enter into heaven, and even attain the highest reward of all the good, which is incorporation in the essence of God."¹ Such a result being certainly possible, it may be worth while to trace the steps of the process by which it is to be obtained. In the twelfth chapter of the Institutes of Menu, which treats at length of transmigration and final beatitude, the explanation of the dogma is as follows:—"A rational creature has a reward or a punishment for mental acts in his mind; for verbal acts in his organs of speech; for corporeal acts in his bodily frame. For sinful acts corporeal, a man shall assume a vegetable or mineral form; for such acts verbal, the form of a bird or a beast; for acts mental, the lowest of human conditions." Again: "Be it known, that the three qualities of the rational soul are a tendency to goodness, to passion, and to darkness; and endued with one or more of them, it remains incessantly attached to all these created substances." "When a man perceives in the reasonable soul a disposition tending to virtuous love, unclouded with any malignant passion, clear as the purest light, let him recognize it as the quality of goodness; a temper of mind which gives uneasiness, and produces disaffection, let him consider as the adverse quality of passion, ever agitating embodied spirits; that indistinct, inconceivable, unaccountable disposition of a mind naturally sensual and clouded with infatuation, let him know to be the quality of darkness." Each of these three qualities or dispositions of mind admits of three degrees—a highest, a middle, and a lowest. The corresponding transmigrations are thus described:—1. "Vegetable and mineral substances, worms, insects and reptiles, fish, snakes, tortoises, cattle, shakals, are the lowest forms to which the dark quality leads; elephants, horses, men of the servile class, and contemptible *Mlech'has* (barbarians), lions, tigers, and boars, are the mean states procured by the quality of darkness; dancers and singers, birds, and deceitful men, giants and blood-thirsty savages, are the highest conditions to which the dark quality can ascend." 2. "*Jhallas* or cudgel-players, *mallas* or boxers and wrestlers, *natas* or actors, those who teach the use of weapons, and those who are addicted to gaming and drinking, are the lowest forms occasioned by the passionate quality; kings, men of the fighting class, domestic priests of kings, and men skilled in the war of controversy, are the

True nature
of transmi-
gration.

Mode in
which its
changes are
regulated.

Qualities of
darkness
and passion.

¹ Elphinstone's *History of India*, vol. i. pages 189, 190.

Quality of
passion.

middle states caused by the quality of passion; *gandharvas* or aerial musicians, *ghuyacas* and *yaeshas* or servants and companions of Cuvera, genii attending superior gods, as the *vidyadhavas* and others; together with various companies of *apsarases* or nymphs, are the highest of those forms which the quality of passion attains." 3. "Hermits, religious mendicants, other Brahmins, such orders of demigods as are wafted in airy cars, genii of the signs and lunar mansions, and *daityas*, are the lowest of the states procured by the quality of goodness; sacrificers, holy sages, deities of the lower heaven, genii of the Vedas, regents of stars, divinities of years, *pitris* or progenitors of mankind, and the demigods named *sadhyas*, are the middle forms to which the good quality conveys; Brahma with four faces, creators of worlds, as *Marichi*, the genius of virtue, the divinities presiding over *Mahat* or the *Mighty*, and *Avyacta* or *Unperceived*, are the highest conditions to which, by the good quality, souls are exalted."

Quality of
goodness.

In regard to those possessing the quality of goodness, it seems to be held that as soon as the present body dies, the soul rises at once to its destined elevation, and hence goodness in the highest degree exempts its possessor from transmigration of any kind, and gives him what is conceived to be the greatest of all possible rewards—immediate absorption into the divine essence. Where goodness is possessed in its middle and lowest, and passion in its highest degree, the reward, though immediate, requires a transmigration. Persons thus qualified are admitted to some kind of celestial mansion, where they either act as ministering servants in the form of aerial musicians, nymphs, and genii, or become demigods, wafted in airy cars, occupants of the lunar mansions, regents of stars, deities of the lower heaven, &c. Here doubtless their happiness is great, for Hindoo imagination has done its best to furnish the habitations of the gods with everything that ministers to enjoyment—with palaces of gold resplendent with gems, magnificent gardens watered by crystal streams and producing all kinds of delicious fruits, lovely flowers and fragrant perfumes, music chanted by aerial choristers, and perpetual feasts, by which the appetite is always gratified and never cloyed. The abode of Yama must indeed be visited before these heavens can be reached; but for them it has no terrors, since their path lies along delightful meadows, under the shade of magnificent trees, and by the banks of streams covered with the lotus. The mansions which those possessing only the lower degrees of goodness are taught to anticipate, are in fact far more attractive than the final reward of absorption, which, in any view that can be taken of it, looks very like annihilation. It is not therefore surprising that the number who would be contented with the former is far greater than that of those who aspire to the latter. In the Hindoo system, however, even the happiness of heaven has a canker in it. It is not immortal. After a period, which, however long it may be, is so fixed and definite, that its days and years can be counted, a new cycle begins. The inhabitants, in the midst of their enjoyments, cannot forget the fact that they must sooner or later quit them, and be

Hindoo
heaven.Its limited
duration.



driven into exile, to enter on some new state of being, in which it may be their lot to sink to some unfathomable abyss of misery. When thus taught that blessedness, even when attained, is held by a precarious tenure, the worshipper does not reason very illogically when he resolves to give up all thoughts of the future, and confine his aspirations to the present life.

Besides those who are at once united to Brahma by absorption, without transmigration, and those who possess merit sufficient to obtain temporary admission into some kind of heaven, there are others—forming, it is to be suspected, the far greater number—to whom the future presents itself only as a period of fearful retribution. These consisting chiefly of those in whom the quality of darkness predominates, are not considered fit even for transmigration till they have, in part at least, expiated their guilt in one of the numerous hells provided for that purpose. When after death they set out for the court of Yama, who is to sit in judgment on them and fix their doom, they perform the journey amid inconceivable horrors, and rend the air with shrieks and wailing. The sentence passed consigns them to a hell where the torment is adapted to the guilt which it is meant to punish. One sticks in the mud with his head downward, another is plunged in boiling oil, another is being sawed in two; some stand among molten metal, some have their toe nails or tongues wrenched out, and numbers have their entrails perpetually gnawed by ravenous beasts, birds, and reptiles. It is only after “having passed,” as the Institutes of Menu express it, “through terrible regions of torture for a great number of years,” that they are condemned to new births. And what births? Some migrate “a hundred times into the forms of grasses, of shrubs with crowded stems, or of creeping and twining plants, of carnivorous animals, of beasts with sharp teeth, or of cruel brutes;” others “pass a thousand times into the bodies of spiders, of snakes and cameleons, of aquatic monsters, or of mischievous blood-sucking demons.” Again, “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 weasel,” and so on through a long list, in some of which a congruity between the crime and the punishment may be detected, while in others the birth seems to have been selected at random by fancy run riot. It is added that “women who have committed similar thefts incur a similar taint, and shall be paired with those male beasts in the form of their females.” Such, then, is the future state which Hindooism has prepared for those who embrace it. An absorption into the divine essence, destructive of personal identity, and consequently equivalent to annihilation, is the highest blessedness to which its greatest saints can aspire; a heaven furnished with all that is most captivating to the senses, but not destined for perpetuity, constitutes its next highest reward; and a hell of unspeakable misery, to be followed after thousands of years by reappearance in the world, under some degenerate form, is the only



Hindoo hell.

doom which the great majority of worshippers can anticipate. As even this doom is not fixed beyond the possibility of change, there is a sense in which it may be said, that "hope is denied to none;" but the truth of the case would be more accurately expressed by saying, that to all professing Hindoos, with the exception of a comparatively small number, to whom peculiar favour is shown, the natural tendency of their creed is not to cherish hope, but to produce indifference or despair. This will be made manifest by attending to the mode in which its rewards and punishments are distributed.

Hindoo
moral sys-
tem.

All actions not indifferent, naturally range themselves under the two great heads of "virtuous" and "vicious." Every form of religion, false as well as true, recognizes this important classification, and professes to distribute rewards and punishments in accordance with it. In this respect Hindooism follows the common rule, and presents a system of morality which, notwithstanding some glaring defects and excrescences, does not suffer by comparison with any other system derived from the mere light of nature. Thus, not only is the fundamental principle laid down, that, "for the sake of distinguishing actions, He (the supreme Ruler) made a total difference between right and wrong;" but the peculiar qualities belonging to each are enumerated with considerable accuracy and fulness. Even from the Institutes of Menu, though not specially intended to furnish a complete moral code, it would be possible to extract a series of precepts enjoining the observance of almost all individual and relative duties. The following quotations give a sufficient specimen. In regard to the natural tendencies of virtue and vice, it is declared that "even here below an unjust man attains no felicity;" and, therefore, though a man should be "oppressed by penury, in consequence of his righteous dealings, let him never give his mind to unrighteousness; for he may observe the speedy overthrow of iniquitous and sinful men. Yes; iniquity once committed, fails not of producing fruit to him that wrought it; if not in his own person, yet in his sons, or if not in his sons, yet in his grandsons. He grows rich for a while through unrighteousness; then he beholds good things; then it is that he vanquishes his foes; but he perishes at length from his root upwards." To these observations, equally sound in principle and confirmed by experience, it is immediately added, "Let a man continually take pleasure in truth, in justice, in laudable practices, and in purity; let him chastise those whom he may chastise in a legal mode; let him keep in subjection his speech, his arm, and his appetite; wealth and pleasures repugnant to law, let him shun; and even lawful acts, which may cause future pain or be offensive to mankind. Let him not have nimble hands, restless feet, or voluble eyes; let him not be crooked in his ways; let him not be flippant in his speech, nor intelligent in doing mischief; let him walk in the path of good men." Should the discharge of duty involve the loss of life, it is expressly decided that the former must be preferred. "On a comparison between death and vice, the learned pronounce vice the more dreadful, since after death a

Its compara-
tive ful-
ness and
accuracy.



vicious man sinks to regions lower and lower, while a man free from vice reaches heaven." In a similar spirit the superiority of moral obligations to ritual observances is thus declared—"A wise man should constantly discharge all the moral duties, though he perform not constantly the ceremonies of religion; since he falls low if, while he performs ceremonial acts only, he discharge not his moral duties." And again, "To a man contaminated by sensuality, neither the Vedas, nor liberality, nor sacrifices, nor strict observances, nor pious austerities, ever procure felicity."

A.D. —

It ought also to be observed, that the morality inculcated is not that which consists merely in outward act, but that which has its seat in the heart, and controls its secret purposes. Accordingly, it is forbidden to "injure another in deed or in thought;" and in several passages some approach is made to a celebrated declaration in the "Sermon on the Mount," by stigmatizing lascivious looks and thoughts as a species of adultery. A still more marked resemblance to the morality of the New Testament is observable in the homage paid to what are called the passive virtues. One of those specially recommended is "returning good for evil;" and in describing the course which a Brahmin ought to follow in the last stage of his appointed discipline, it is said, "Let him not wish for death; let him not wish for life; let him expect his appointed time, as a kind servant expects his wages; let him utter words purified by truth; let him by all means keep his heart purified." Again, "Let him bear a reproachful speech with patience; let him speak reproachfully to no man; let him not, on account of this frail and feverish body, engage in hostility with any one living. With an angry man let him not in his turn be angry; abused, let him speak mildly. Delighted with meditating on the supreme Spirit, sitting fixed in such meditation, without needing anything earthly, without one sensual desire, without any companion but his own soul, let him live in this world seeking the bliss of the next."

Remarkable
inculcation
of internal
purity and
the passive
virtues.

From the pure and elevated tone pervading these quotations, it might be supposed that Hindooism demands from all its votaries a strict observance of moral precepts, and confers its highest future rewards, without distinction of persons, on those who make the greatest progress in true piety and virtue. The rule actually followed is very different. In the lives of the favourite deities, licentiousness prevails to such an extent as to counteract, by its example, the practical effect of any precepts opposed to it; and hence, while morality is in a great measure discarded, a substitute for it has been found in mummeries and austerities which, though dignified with the name of devotion, are merely mechanical, inasmuch as the performance of them does not require any act of the understanding or call forth any emotion of the heart. This so-called devotion is thus eulogized—"All the bliss of deities and of men is declared by sages who discern the sense of the Veda, to have in devotion its cause, in devotion its continuance, and in devotion its fulness." "Perfect health or unfailing medi-

Hindoo
devotion.



Hindoo
devotion.

cines, divine learning, and the various mansions of deities, are acquired by devotion alone; their efficient cause is devotion. Whatever is hard to be traversed, whatever is hard to be acquired, whatever is hard to be visited, whatever is hard to be performed, all this may be accomplished by true devotion; for the difficulty of devotion is the greatest of all. Even sinners in the highest degree, and of course the other offenders, are absolved from guilt by austere devotion well practised. Worms and insects, serpents, moths, beasts, birds, and vegetables, attain heaven by the power of devotion. Whatever sin has been conceived in the hearts of men, uttered in their speech, or committed in their bodily acts, they speedily burn it away by devotion, if they preserve devotion as their best wealth."

Its exclu-
siveness.

In regard to this devotion, it is to be observed in the *first* place, that the portion of it which is conceived to constitute the highest perfection, and for which, consequently, the greatest rewards are reserved, is utterly impracticable to the great body of the Hindoo population. It requires free access to the Veda, but in point of fact this access is so far from being free that it is fenced round by an impassable barrier. The whole Sudra class—in other words, the people generally—are strictly prohibited from forming any acquaintance with it. It must not be read in their presence; and the Brahmin presuming to teach it to them, commits a sin so heinous as to sink him to one of the lowest hells. Even the mode of expiating sin must not be taught to a Sudra; and in any religious act in which he may "imitate the practice of good men," he must not make mention of "any holy text," though it is again and again declared that on such mention the efficacy of the act itself mainly depends. Hence it appears that Hindooism, so far from placing all men on an equal footing, and rewarding them according to their deserts, is a system of unvarnished and revolting favouritism, confining the means of attaining final felicity to the few, and consigning the many to a state of helpless ignorance, which makes their perdition all but inevitable.

Its true
character.

It is to be observed, in the *second* place, with regard to this lauded devotion, that when it is closely examined the praises bestowed upon it are found to be undeserved. In some passages quoted above from the Institutes of Menu, the insufficiency of mere ritual observances is distinctly declared. The following passage goes still farther; for it declares that forgiveness cannot be obtained without a repentance proved genuine by its fruits:—"In proportion as a man who has committed a sin shall truly and voluntarily confess it, so far he is disengaged from that offence, like a snake from his slough; and in proportion as his heart sincerely loathes his evil deed, so far shall his vital spirit be freed from the taint of it. If he commit sin, and actually repent, that sin shall be removed from him; but if he merely say, 'I will sin thus no more,' he can only be released by an actual abstinence from guilt." Such passages, however, prove only to be lights shining in a dark place. Many other passages breathe so different



a spirit, that they look as if they had been introduced for the mere purpose of A.D. —
contradicting them or neutralizing their effect; and devotion, so far from depending for its efficacy on purity of heart and amendment of life, derives one of its chief recommendations from its supposed ability to act as a substitute for them. So little, indeed, does this devotion partake of the nature of a reasonable service, that in a passage which has been already quoted, the lower animals are supposed capable of performing and profiting by it. The chief ingredients in it are suppressions of the breath, inaudible utterances, repetitions by rote, irksome or painful postures, voluntary privations, and austerities.

In justification of the character thus ascribed to Hindoo devotion, it will again be necessary to make a few quotations from the Institutes of Menu. "Even three suppressions of breath, made according to the divine rule, accompanied with the triverbal phrase and the trilateral syllable, may be considered as the highest devotion of a Brahmin." The "triverbal phrase" consists of three Sanscrit words, *bhur, bhurah, swer*, meaning *earth, sky, heaven*. The trilateral syllable is A U M, contracted into *om*, and considered, as already mentioned, emblematic of the godhead. Again:—"A priest who shall know the Veda, and shall pronounce to himself, both morning and evening, that syllable (*om*), and that holy text (the *gayatri*), preceded by the three words, shall attain the sanctity which the Veda confers." Lest the words, "know the Veda," used in this passage, should be supposed to mean a thorough practical knowledge, it is elsewhere said that "this holy scripture is a sure refuge even for those who understand not its meaning;" and that "a priest who should retain in his memory the whole Rig Veda would be absolved from guilt, even if he had slain the inhabitants of the three worlds, and had eaten food from the foulest hands." The same spirit prevails in all the various modes employed for the expiation of guilt, and whatever the offence, the offender may always purge away the guilt of it by some device which only touches him in his purse or his person, without tending in the least to purify his mind. It is true that many of the penances enjoined are not only severe, but horrible; and that by a kind of will-worship devotees have made a large addition to the number, so that there is scarcely a form of human suffering to which recourse is not had in the vain hope of thereby pacifying the conscience, and conciliating the divine favour. The number of persons engaged in this hopeless task, and the aggregate amount of suffering which they must endure, attest the existence of a deep religious feeling in the Hindoo, since it is this alone which makes him so ingenious in the art of self-tormenting. The more melancholy, therefore, is the fact, that this religious feeling has only made him the prey of religious impostors, and bound him in the chains of a superstition so full of absurdity, obscenity, and cruelty. Considering the character of Hindooism, nothing seems so extraordinary as the hold which it takes of its votaries. The monstrosities of its beliefs, and the painful sacrifices which its worship demands, seem only additional inducements to cling to it with pertina-

Irrational
character
of Hindoo
devotion.

Deep but
perverted
religious
feeling of
the Hindoos.

A.D. —

Hindooism.

Alleged tol-
 erant spirit
 of Hindoo-
 ism.

city; and while almost on every other subject a general listlessness and apathy prevail, Hindooism, without one particle of rational evidence to support it, keeps its head erect, and stands its ground even when confronted with Christianity. This tenaciousness of life is doubtless owing in part to the way in which it gratifies the wishes of our fallen nature; but there is reason also to suspect that a nervous anxiety to avoid everything that might tend to awaken suspicion or alarm in the native mind has often operated as a direct encouragement to Hindooism, and placed it on a kind of vantage ground which it is not entitled to occupy.

Hindooism is precluded by its very nature from attempting to gain converts from other religions. Every individual who professes it must have been born a Hindoo, and belong to one or other of its numerous castes. The admission of a foreigner is consequently impossible, and there can be no such thing as conversion in the ordinary sense of the term. Men not born Hindoos cannot possibly become so by any other kind of process. Occasionally some eccentric European has renounced his own civilization, and become a professed worshipper of Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, and others of the multifarious gods of the Hindoo pantheon; but nothing could remove the taint of his birth, or make him anything better than an outcast. From not attending to this fact, or drawing the proper inference from it, some writers have launched out in the praises of Hindooism as a tolerant system, and contrasted it in this respect with the intolerance and persecution which figure so frequently and prominently in the history of the Christian church. A Hindoo, it is said, bears no enmity to a Mahometan or a Christian. Neither to the one nor the other does he apply the opprobrious epithets of heretic and infidel. On the contrary, he liberally expresses his belief that the supreme Being who gave him his religion gave them theirs, and that each, therefore, does right in worshipping according to his own. This talk is specious but hollow. The Hindoo, regarding his religion as his birthright, cannot think that any disparagement is cast upon it when those born without its pale, and consequently incapable of belonging to it, worship differently. The true way to test his toleration is to attend to the feelings with which he regards those who, born Hindoos like himself, differ with him in regard to some of the essential points of their common faith. Here only there is risk of collision, and therefore here only is there full scope for the exercise of toleration. Brought to this test, it will be found that Hindoos are as illiberal, virulent, and blood-thirsty as the worst persecutors who have disgraced the Christian name.

Though the Hindoos do not, like the Roman Catholics, pretend to be under the guidance of a living infallible head, who, by deciding points of faith, secures a species of external unity, they possess standards which they believe to be inspired, and to which, therefore, whenever questions arise, the ultimate appeal must be made. These are the writings of which some account has already been given. They are included under the general name of Sastras or Shasters, and



are both voluminous in bulk and multifarious in contents, consisting of the Vedas and the Puranas. The latter are alleged to have been, like the former, compiled by Vyasa, but are evidently of various later dates, between the eighth and the sixteenth centuries of our era, and though regarded as authentic, disfigured by sectarian fables. Those who profess to receive all those Shasters, and to worship in conformity to them, are considered orthodox. Not being easily reconcilable with themselves or with each other, the Shasters afford large room for latitude of opinion, and for the selection of favourite divinities out of the long list of those to whom worship is authorized. To this latitude and this selection no objection is made, and the great body of the Brahmins, while holding their peculiar views and gratifying their particular fancies, treat each other with mutual forbearance. There are many, however, whom this kind of forbearance does not satisfy. It is not enough for them that they may be worshippers of Vishnu, or of Siva, or of any of the old recognized divinities, according as their choice may be; they also claim the right of insisting that their favourite divinity is supreme, and ought consequently to be worshipped to the exclusion of every other. Some go still farther, and introduce not only old gods under new forms, but new gods altogether. Here forbearance having reached its limit stops, collision becomes inevitable, and in the strife which ensues, though a body of so-called orthodox remains, a number of distinct sects are formed. The Hindoo sects are usually ranged in four classes—Vaishnavas, or worshippers of Vishnu; Saivas, or worshippers of Siva; Saktas, or worshippers of Saktis, the consorts or energies of the male divinities; and Miscellaneous, including all who do not belong to any of the other three. A very complete account of these sects has been given by Professor Wilson, in the sixteenth and seventeenth volumes of the *Asiatic Researches*; and all that need be done here is to select from it a description of some features common to all the sects, and of the more remarkable opinions and practices by which some of the leading sects are distinguished.

Division of
Hindoo vo-
taries into
orthodox
and hetero-
dox.

The leading
sects.

Of the common features there is one which, as it strikes the eye, is the first that attracts notice. All sects are in the practice of discriminating themselves from the orthodox and from each other by various fantastical streaks on their faces, breasts, and arms. For this purpose all the Vaishnavas employ a white earth called *gopichandana*. To be of the purest form it should be taken from a pool in which the *gopis*, or milkmaids, are said to have drowned themselves when they heard of Krishna's death; but as this is not easily attainable, a substitute is found in a material to which the same name is given, though it is only a magnesian or calcareous clay. In using it, one sect draws two vertical lines from the root of the hair to the commencement of each eyebrow, and unites them by a transverse streak across the root of the nose; in the centre between the vertical lines a parallel streak of red is introduced. The breast and each upper arm are similarly marked. Some, not satisfied with these marks, have impressions of the shell, discus, club, and lotus, which Vishnu bears in his four

Modes of
distinguish-
ing sects.

Hindoo sects.

hands, stamped on their bodies by carved wooden blocks, or sometimes even burned in by heated metallic plates. Such marks not only serve for distinction, but are supposed to possess great virtue; and hence it is asserted in the work called Kasi Khand, that Yama directs his ministers to avoid such as bear them, and that no sin can exist in the individuals who make use of them, be they of whatever caste. This mention of caste suggests another feature common though not universal among all sects. For the most part the distinction of caste is utterly disregarded by them, and the Brahmins as a class are eyed with hatred and treated with contempt, especially by the sectarian devotees of greatest pretensions.

Monastic institutions.

Another more important feature common to the sects, is the subdivision of their members into various classes, especially into two, which Professor Wilson, for want of a better name, calls *clerical* and *lay*. The latter includes the great bulk of the votaries; the former are divided as in the Romish church into secular and regular, but without having the yoke of celibacy imposed on them. The unmarried, however, are in highest estimation as teachers, and as a general rule, the most influential members of each sect are solitaries and cenobites, who have secluded themselves from the ordinary cares and enjoyments of life, and live either by themselves as hermits, or in communities as monks. Convents are of course required, and under the name of *maths*, *asthals*, and *akaras*, are scattered over the whole country. Each *math* is under the control of a *mahant* or superior, with a certain number of resident *chelas* or disciples. By those, and



1, NAGA FAKIR. 2, RAMANANDI FAKIR AT HIS PRAYERS.
 From Soljyn, Les Hindous.

from among their own number, he is usually elected; but in some instances, where the *mahant* marries, he transmits the office to his descendants. There is nothing like compulsory residence within the *math*, and hence most of the members spend the earlier part of their life wandering over the country singly or in bodies, and subsisting by alms, merchandise, or more questionable means. When old and infirm, they retire into some *math* previously existing, or found a new one. Among their mendicant and monastic

orders of all sects, are certain devotees professing more than usual austerity, and distinguished by the names of *Sanyasis*, *Vairagis*, and *Nagas*. In a similar sense, the term *fukir* is also used by Hindoos, though being of Mahometan origin it is more properly descriptive of the mendicants of that faith. The only

one of these classes which it is necessary particularly to notice are the Nagas, who, as their name implies, throw off every kind of covering and go naked. Having eradicated the sense of shame, they give free indulgence to all the vices which it might have helped them to cover, and are unquestionably the most worthless and profligate members of their respective religions. They always carry weapons—usually a matchlock, and sword, and shield, and wander in troops, soliciting alms, or rather levying contributions. The hatred which those of opposite sects bear to each other, has often led to sanguinary conflicts, in one of which, at Hurdwar, it is said that 18,000 of the Vaishnava Nagas were left dead on the field.

The sects of Vaishnavas are ranked by Professor Wilson under twenty different heads, but as many of them are ramifications of a single sect, the whole number may be greatly reduced. The most ancient and respectable of all is the Sri Sampradaya, founded about the twelfth century by the Vaishnava reformer, Ramanuja Acharya, from whom the members take the name of

VAIRAGIS.—From original drawing in East India House.



Vaishnava sects.

Ramanujiyas. Ramanuja was a native of the south of India, and is the subject of many legends. According to one of these, he is an incarnation of the serpent Sesha, and had for his chief companions and disciples the embodied discus, mace, lotus, and other insignia of Vishnu. His usual residence was at Sri Ranga or Seringham. Here he composed his principal works, and hither, after visiting various parts of India, and reclaiming to Vishnu various shrines which the Saivas had usurped, he returned. During his absence, the disputes between the Vaishnavas and Saivas had become extremely violent, and the King of Chola, attached to the latter sect, issued an order to all the Brahmins in his dominions, to

The Ramanujiyas.



SANTASI OR SOONASSIE.
From original drawing, Asiatic Society.

sign an acknowledgment of Siva's supremacy. Ramanuja refused; and when armed men were sent to seize him, escaped to the Ghauts. On the death of the Chola king, his persecutor, he wandered back to Seringham, and there ended his days as a recluse. His followers are numerous, particularly in the Deccan,

The Rama-
nuyias.

where they have many establishments. Their worship is addressed to Vishnu and Lakshmi, and their respective incarnations either singly or conjointly; the most striking peculiarities in their practice are the individual preparation and scrupulous privacy of their meals. Each person cooks for himself, and if seen by a stranger while thus engaged, or while eating, would bury the viands in the ground. Beside the marks above mentioned, they wear a necklace of the wood of the *tulasi*, and carry a rosary composed of its seeds or those of the lotus. Their chief religious tenet is that Vishnu was before all worlds, and the creator of all, and is, in fact, Brahm, the one self-existent principle, not however devoid of form or quality, but endowed with all good qualities, and with a twofold form—the supreme Spirit, or cause, and the universe or matter, the effect.

The Rama-
wats.

The most important branch of the Ramanuyias is the Ramawats or Ramnandis, so called from their founder, Ramanand, who, though sometimes said to be an immediate disciple of Ramanuja, seems not to be earlier than the end of the fourteenth century. He was, however, of the sect of Ramanuja, till the scruples of some of its members drove him from its communion. As he had travelled much, they thought it impossible that he could have observed that privacy in his meals to which they attach so much importance. On this ground they condemned him to take his food by himself. He resented the treatment, and breaking off all connection with the Ramanuyias, founded a sect of his own. He resided at Benares, where he is said to have had a math which the Mahometans destroyed, and where a stone platform bearing the supposed impression of his feet is still shown. In Benares, as well as in many parts of Upper Hindoostan, his followers are numerous and influential. In their worship they recognize all the incarnations of Vishnu, but attach themselves particularly to that of Ramachandra. Hence their name of Ramawats. They also take the name of Aradhuta, or liberated, from discarding the peculiar strictness of the Ramanuja sect as to eating, leaving every one in this to follow his own inclination, or comply with common practice.

The Kabir
Panthis.

The most celebrated of Ramanand's disciples was Kabir, the founder of a Vaishnava sect known by the name of the Kabir Panthis. He is entitled to particular notice from the boldness with which he assailed the whole system of idolatrous worship, and ridiculed the learning of the Pundits and the doctrines of the Shasters. As usual, his followers have given him a divine origin, by making him an incarnation of Vishnu. The legend is—that Nima, the wife of Nuri, a weaver, found him when an infant floating on a lotus in a pond near Benares. From this circumstance he has received the surname of the "Weaver." It is not easy to fix the date when he flourished, because a life protracted to three hundred years is gravely claimed for him; but he probably belongs to the first half of the fifteenth century. The distinguishing feature of the sect is the refusal to worship any Hindoo deity, or perform any Hindoo rite. At the same time, the members enjoy considerable latitude, and if so disposed, may

conform to the usages of the sect or caste to which they may happen to belong. This they justify on the ground, that as the state of the mind and heart is alone important, all outward acts are matters of indifference. In all sects implicit submission to the *guru* or spiritual guide is considered indispensable; but even in this, the Kabir Panthis give proof of an independent spirit, by refusing to acknowledge the authority of the *guru* until by previous examination his fitness has been fully tested. In the simplicity of this sect, and the Quaker-like spirit and demeanour of its members, there is little to captivate the populace; and hence, though widely diffused, it plumes itself more upon the character than the number of its adherents. Few of these are within the limits of Bengal proper; but at Benares, where the sect originated, it has still its principal seat, and is said to have on one occasion mustered its members to the number of 35,000. The importance of the sect is greatly increased by the number of branches which it has thrown out, and of other sects which sometimes with, and oftener without acknowledgment, have borrowed from its doctrines and been emboldened by its example.

A.D. —

The Kabir Panthis.

The above subdivisions of Vaishnavas have their chief adherents in professed ascetics, or among those of the general mass of society, who are of a bold and curious spirit; but the opulent and luxurious among the men, and the far greater part of the women, confine their worship to Krishna and his mistress Radha. The only worship which rivals it in popularity is that of the infant Krishna, or the Bala Gopala. It originated with Vallabha Acharya, the founder of a sect called after him Vallabhaচারি, but better known under the two other names of Radra Sampradaya, or Gokulasta Gosains. One singular article of their creed is, that privation forms no part of sanctity, and that it is the duty of the teacher and his disciples to worship their deity "not in nudity and hunger, but in costly apparel and choice food—not in solitude and mortification, but in the pleasures of society and the enjoyment of the world." Their practice corresponds. Most of their Gosains or teachers are married, and possessing unlimited influence over their followers, whom they bind to subjection of *tan*, *man*, and *dhan*, or *body*, *mind*, and *wealth*, are maintained in ease and luxury. Great numbers of the mercantile class belong to this sect, and while constantly wandering over the country in the professed character of pilgrims, have a keen eye to the profits of trade. One of their dogmas is, that Golaka, the residence of Krishna, is far above the three worlds—Vaikunta and Keilas, the respective heavens of Vishnu and Siva, being no less than 500,000,000 of *yoganas* below it. While all else is subject to annihilation, Golaka is indestructible, and in its

Worshippers of Krishna.



GOSAIN.
 From Pennock's Views in Hindoostan.



Worship of
Krishna.

centre dwells Krishna, "of the colour of a dark cloud, in the bloom of youth, clad in yellow raiment, splendidly adorned with celestial gems, and holding a flute. Radha was produced from his left side, and 300 *gopas*, or male companions, exuded from the pores of his skin. The pores of Radha were equally prolific, and produced the same number of *gopis*, or female companions. In the temples and houses of the sect are images of Gopal, Krishna, and Radha, and other relative incarnations. The image of Krishna, not unfrequently of gold, represents him as a chubby boy, of a dark hue, richly decorated. In the temples he receives homage eight times a day. The nature of this homage is curious, and proceeds on the figment that the image is the living god, performing all the ordinary functions of life. Thus, in the morning, about half an hour after sunrise, the image, taken from the couch on which it is supposed to have slept, is washed and dressed, and being placed upon a seat is presented with slight refreshments. About an hour and a half afterwards, being anointed, perfumed, and richly dressed, he holds his public court. A visit is again paid him, when he is supposed to attend his cattle; and at midday, when he is supposed to return, a dinner, composed of all sorts of delicacies, is placed before him. A *siesta* is now deemed necessary, and is followed at intervals by an afternoon meal, an evening toilet, and preparations for going to bed. This accomplished, the worshippers retire, and the temple is shut till the following morning, when the same routine begins. At stated times, festivals of great celebrity are held. One of these, in which Krishna, in his form of Juggernaut, holds the principal place, has already been described. Another commemorates his nativity, and a third his dance with sixteen *gopis*. Both of these, but particularly the latter, when celebrated at Benares, attract immense crowds. The sect has many subdivisions, which form separate communities, but agree with it in all essential particulars. The most celebrated of its shrines is that of Sri Nath Dwar, in Ajmere. Hither the image is said to have transported itself from Mathura or Muttra, when Aurungzebe ordered the temple there to be destroyed. All the members of the sect are bound annually to visit this shrine, and of course contribute to it, in return for a certificate of their visit; the high-priest, or chief Gosain, holds the office by descent, and to this alone is indebted for the veneration paid to him. So little are peculiar sanctity and learning required, that the office has been frequently held by individuals destitute of both. At the time when Professor Wilson drew up his sketch, the actual chief was said not to understand the certificate he signed.

Vaishnavas
of Bengal or
Chitanyas.

The only other Vaishnavas whom it seems necessary to mention, are those entitled by way of distinction Vaishnavas of Bengal, where they are supposed to form at least one-fifth of the whole population. Their founder was Chitanya, the son of a Brahmin originally from Silhet. He was born in 1485; but as he had been thirteen months in the womb, and was ushered into the world during an eclipse of the moon, his birth was regarded as a supernatural event. His

followers accordingly regard him as an incarnation of Krishna, who assumed the form of Chitanya, for the purpose of instructing mankind in the true mode of worshipping him in this age. Chitanya, whose simplicity and enthusiasm fitted him for being a tool, had been put forward by two leading individuals of the names of Adwaitanaud and Nityanaud; and hence, in order to complete the connection, it has been deemed necessary that Krishna, besides incarnating Chitanya, should also animate the other two as *ansas* or portions of himself. At the age of twenty-four, Chitanya became a Vairagi, and spent six years wandering between Muttra and Juggernaut. At the end of this period, having appointed his two coadjutors to preside over the Vaishnavas of Bengal, he fixed his residence at Cuttack, and allowed his imagination to get so much the better of his judgment, that he was perpetually seeing beatific visions of Krishna, Radha, and the *gopis*. In one of these he mistook a river for the sea, and fancying that he saw Radha sporting in its blue waters, walked in till he was floated off his legs, and very narrowly escaped drowning by being dragged to shore in a fisherman's net. His death, of which there is no distinct account, may be presumed to have happened in some similar way.

The Chitanyas.

The Chitanyas regard Krishna as the Paramatma, or supreme Spirit, at once the cause and substance of creation. As creator, preserver, and destroyer, he is Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; but besides these greater manifestations, has assumed specific shapes, as *avatars*, or descents; *ansas*, or portions; *ansansus*, or portions of portions; and so on, *ad infinitum*. His principal appearance as Krishna was renewed in Chitanya, who is therefore worshipped as that deity himself. His other form, as Gopal the cow-herd, or Goponath the lord of the milkmaids of Vindrabhan, are not forgotten; and due prominence is given to his juvenile feats under the name of Lila, or sport. The whole religious and moral code of the sect is comprised in the word *bhakti*, "a term that signifies a union of implicit faith with incessant devotion," and "is the momentary repetition of the name of Krishna, under a firm belief that such a practice is sufficient for salvation." Hence Krishna himself declares in the Bhagavat Gita that the worship of him alone gives the worshipper "whatever he wishes—paradise, liberation, godhead, and is infinitely more efficacious than all or any observances, than abstraction, than knowledge of the divine nature, than the subjugation of the passions, than the practice of the Yoga, than charity, than virtue, or than anything that is deemed most meritorious." Besides the divisions which may be considered to belong to the sect, there are in Bengal three classes, which, though agreeing with it in many respects, differ so much in others, that they ought to be ranked as seceders from it. One of these, the Spashtha Dayakas, presents two remarkable singularities—first, a denial of the divine character and despotic authority of the guru; and, secondly, the residence of male and female coenobites in the same math. The latter practice professes to be platonic. The male and female members regard each other as brothers and sisters, and have no

Their tenets.

other intercourse than that which arises from community of belief and interest, and the joint celebration of Krishna and Chitanya, with song and dance. The sisters act as the spiritual instructors of the females of respectable families, to which they have unrestricted access. The effect of this influence is manifested in "the growing diffusion of the doctrines of this sect in Calcutta, where it is specially established."

The sects of
Saivas.

The Saivas being far less numerous than the Vaishnavas, will not require to occupy so much space as has been given to their rivals. To judge by the number of shrines dedicated to the Linga, the only form under which Siva is worshipped, it might seem to be the most prevalent of all modes of adoration; but these shrines have comparatively few votaries, and are not regarded with much veneration. The temple of Visweswara at Benares is indeed thronged with a never-ceasing crowd of worshippers; but even here, though the most celebrated resort of Siva's votaries, no enthusiasm is displayed, and the votive offerings of flowers or fruit are thrown before the image with no appearance of solemnity and veneration. Among the Brahmins, indeed, and the orthodox generally, Siva is a favourite divinity, and the Linga receives their adoration in temples, private houses, and by the banks of streams; but in Upper India he has never been a popular deity. His emblem, little understood or regarded by the uninitiated, neither interests the feelings nor excites the imagination, and none of the legends recorded of him are of a pleasing and poetical character. The number of the Saiva sects in Professor Wilson's list amounts to nine, but only a few of these are so important or independent as to require separate notice.



DANDI.—From Solvyn, *Les Hindous*

The Dandis, distinguished by carrying a small *dand* or wand, with several processes or projections, and attached to the wand a piece of cord dyed with red ochre, in which the sacrificial cord is supposed to be enshrined, are legitimate representatives of the last stage of Brahminical life. According to rule, they should live,

The Dandis. not in but only near towns, as solitaries; but generally disregarding the rule, they live like other mendicants collected in maths. The worship of Siva as Bhairava is their prevailing form; and their common ceremony of initiation consists in inflicting a small incision on the inner part of the knee, and presenting the blood which flows as an acceptable offering. The use of fire being absolutely prohibited to them, they dispose of their dead by putting them into



coffins, and burying them or committing them to some sacred stream. The Dasnami Dandis, regarded as descendants of the original fraternity, derive their origin from the celebrated teacher Sankara Acharya, who figures much in the religious history of Hindoostan, though his influence has been overrated. The period when he flourished cannot be fixed with certainty, but seems to have been about the eighth or ninth century. From him ten classes of mendicants have descended. Three of these and part of a fourth, regarded as the only genuine Sankara Dandis, are numerous at Benares and in its vicinity, and besides distinguishing themselves as able expounders of the Vedanta, have rendered important service to different branches of Sanscrit literature. Others of them are notorious as sturdy beggars, and claiming a close connection with the Brahmins, never fail, when a feast is given to them, to appear, and insist on a share of the good things which have been provided.

The Dandis.

The Yogis are so called from the Yoga or Patanjala school of philosophy, which maintains the practicability of acquiring, even in this life, entire command over elementary matter. The modes of accomplishing this are very various, consisting chiefly "of long-continued suppressions of respiration; of inhaling and exhaling the breath in a particular manner; of sitting in eighty-four different attitudes; of fixing the eyes on the top of the nose, and endeavouring by the force of mental abstraction to effect a union between the portion of the vital spirit residing in the body and that which pervades all nature." On effecting this union, the Yogi, though in a human body, is liberated "from the clog of material incumbrance." He can make himself light or heavy, vast or minute, as he pleases; traverse all space, animate a dead body, render himself invisible, become equally acquainted with present, past, and future, and by final union with Siva exempt himself from all future transmigration. Few Yogis lay claim at present to this perfection, and therefore, as a substitute, most of them content themselves with mummeries and juggling tricks which cheat the vulgar into a belief of their powers. One of these tricks, of which the explanation has not been discovered, is *sitting in the air and remaining for a considerable period under water*. One individual has made extraordinary displays of this kind, but the secret has not been communicated to his fellow-devotees. As a popular sect the Yogis acknowledge Gorakhnath as their founder. He probably flourished in the beginning of the fifteenth century. They are usually called *Kanphatas*, from having their ears bored and rings inserted in them at the time of their initiation.

The Yogis.

The next important sect of Saivas is that of the Lingayets or Jangamas, whose essential characteristic is the wearing a representation of the Linga on some part of their dress or person. They are very numerous in the Deccan, but are rarely met with in Upper India except as mendicants, "leading about a bull, the living type of Nandi, the bull of Siva, decorated with housings of various colours, and strings of cowrie shells." Accompanying a conductor, who carries a

The Lingayets.

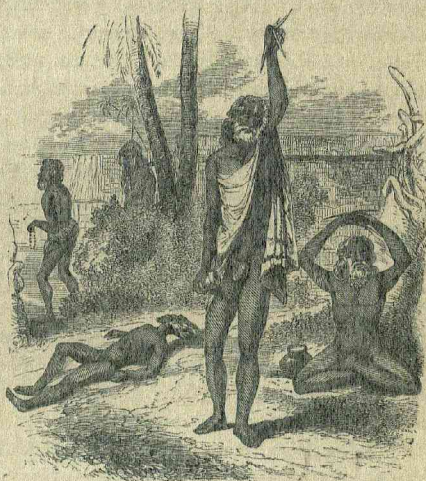
bell in his hand, they go about from place to place, subsisting upon alms. The Paramahansas, another sect, pretend to be solely occupied with the investigation



LINGAYETS OR JANGAMAS.
From original drawing in East India House.

of Brahma, or spirit, and to be equally indifferent to pleasure or pain. Some, in proof of having acquired this perfection, go naked in all weathers, never speak, and never indicate any natural want. They are hence fed by their attendants, as if they were helpless as infants. Under this pretended helplessness much knavery is practised. But superstition assumes a still more offensive form in the Aghoris. Their original worship was paid to Devi, in some of her more terrific forms, and is said to have consisted partly in offering human victims. Hence they assumed a corresponding appearance, and carried about for

a wand and water-pot a staff set with bones and the upper half of a human skull. The abominable worship has long been suppressed, but traces of it still exist in disgusting wretches who go about extorting alms. They eat and drink whatever is offered to them, should it be carrion or ordure. With the latter they smear their bodies, and carry it about with them in a wooden cup or skull, either to swallow it, if by so doing they can gain a few pice, or to throw it on the persons or into the houses of those who refuse to comply with their demands. They also inflict gashes on their limbs, that the crime of blood may rest on those who deny them charity; and by means of this and similar devices, work upon the timid and credulous Hindoo. Other Saivas are distinguished by similar though less disgusting enormities, and practise the tortures which have been mentioned in describing the festivals of Kali and Juggernaut. Thus the Urdhabahus are the devotees who extend one or both arms above their heads till they remain of themselves thus elevated,



URDHAHABUS OR Ocloobahogs.—From Solvyn, Les Hindous.

The Aghoris.



and allow their nails to grow till they completely perforate the hand; and the Akasmukhis hold up their faces to the sky till the muscles of the back of the neck become contracted and retain it in that position.

The Saktas, or worshippers of the Sakti, the wives, or active energies of the male deities, are numerous among all classes. If their bias is in favour of the supremacy of Vishnu, their worship is offered to Lakshmi; on the other hand, if the bias is towards Siva, the worship is offered to Parvati, Bhavani, or Durga. In Bengal the latter worship is by far the more popular. Saraswati, also, is not so much forgotten as Brahma her lord; and among the populace generally a great number of malevolent and hideous demons are regularly worshipped. One great authority for the Sakti worship is the Brahma Vaivartta Purana, one section of which, the Prakriti Khanda, is devoted to the subject. According to it, Brahma having determined to create the universe, became twofold—the right half male, and the left half female. The latter was Prakriti, illusion, eternal and without end, and under her various forms, chiefly of Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati, has produced all other female existences. Besides her principal avatars, she has also subdivided herself into almost endless portions, and thus given rise not only to the whole body of goddesses, and nymphs of every order, but to every creature, human or brutal, of the female sex: while Purusha, the other half of Brahma, has in like manner given rise to all males. Another still more important series of authorities for the Sakti worship are an immense body of writings called the Tantras, which those who follow them regard as a fifth Veda, as ancient as the others, and even of superior authority. A few of them may have existed before the tenth century, but most of them are of recent origin, and appear to have been written chiefly in Bengal and the eastern districts. They are all in the form of a dialogue between Siva and his bride, the former in answer to questions proposed by the latter, explaining, under a strict injunction of secrecy to all but the initiated, the various ceremonies, prayers, and incantations that are to be employed.

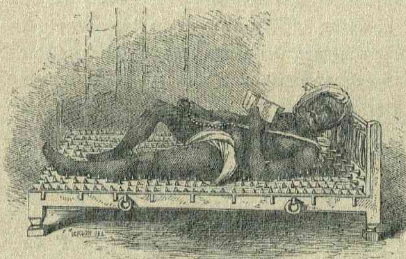
The leading sect of the Saktas forms two branches, the Dakshinacharis and Vamacharis, or the followers of the right-hand and left-hand ritual. The Dakshinacharis, called also Bhaktas, have the credit of worshipping agreeably to Vaidik or Puranik ritual, and abstaining from the impure practices of other votaries of Sakti. Their *bali* or oblation should consist only of pulse, rice and milk, with what are called the three sweet articles—ghee, honey, and sugar; but many make offerings of blood, particularly kids killed by decapitation, except where the still more barbarous practice is used of pummelling the animal to death with the fists. The immense carnage at the festival of Kali, already described, is part of the worship of the Dakshinacharis, and it is therefore difficult to draw the line of demarcation between them and the more heterodox branch of Vamis or Vamacharis. After what has been said, it is obvious that the shedding

Leading
branches of
Saktas.

or non-shedding of blood cannot be the main distinction; and accordingly we learn that the left-hand worshippers are guilty of abominations which they dare not publicly avow, and practise in secret orgies. One of the least objectionable forms is where the adept goes alone at midnight to a place where dead bodies are buried or burned, or where criminals are executed, and then, seated on a corpse, makes the usual offerings to Siva's consort. If he does this without fear, the Bhutas, Yogines, and other male and female goblins become his slaves. On other occasions, where a naked female is worshipped as a representative of the Sakti, men and women meet together, and are guilty of the most scandalous excesses. The *Sakti Sodhana* or *Sri Chakra*, at which these excesses are chiefly committed, is expressly prescribed by one of the Tantras; but Professor Wilson, while admitting that "it is said to be not uncommon, and by some of the more zealous Saktas it is scarcely concealed," differs from Mr. Ward as to its ordinary character, and asserts that "it is usually nothing more than a convivial party, consisting of the members of a single family, at which men only are assembled, and the company are glad to eat flesh and drink spirits under the pretence of a religious observance." Be this as it may, it is allowed on all hands that the Vamacharis, while admitting all classes indiscriminately, without distinction of caste, "are very numerous, especially among the Brahminical tribe." The worst suspicions of the real character of the sect are justified by the fact that many of its members, ashamed or afraid to avow their connection with it, "conceal their creed and observe its practices in privacy."

The Keraris.

The only other sect of Saktas requiring notice is that of the Keraris who were at one time notorious for sacrificing human victims to some of the hideous



PARIS ON BED OF SPIKES.—From Gold's Oriental Drawings.

personifications of Siva's consort. The only persons who can now be considered representatives of the sect are "miscreants who, more for pay than devotion, inflict upon themselves bodily tortures, and pierce their flesh with hooks or spits, run sharp-pointed instruments through their tongues and cheeks, recline upon beds of spikes, or gash themselves with knives; all

which practices are occasionally met with throughout India, and have become familiar to Europeans from the excess to which they are carried in Bengal at the Charak Pujahs."

Miscellaneous
sects.

Of the sects classed as miscellaneous, our notice will be confined to the two most important—the Sikhs and the Jains. The former, indeed, as they will again make their appearance in a political character, may at present be disposed



of summarily. They take the name of Nanak Shahis, from their founder Nanak Shah, who was born in 1469 at Talwandi, now Rayapur, situated in the Punjab, on the banks of the Beyah or Hyphasis. He had early shown strong devotional feeling, which increased as he grew up. Though a Hindoo by birth, he was early brought into connection with the Mahometans, and seemed at first disposed to embrace their faith by becoming a fakir; but neither the Hindoo nor Mussulman creed satisfied him; and after a long course of travels, during which he visited the most celebrated places of worship of both religions, he became an independent religious reformer, took up his residence at Khutipur Dekra, on the banks of the Ravee, and died there, after performing numerous miracles. His great object is said to have been to reconcile the jarring principles of Hindooism and Mahometanism, by recommending to the followers of both exclusive attention to the great principles of "devotion to God and peace towards men." The only means he employed for this purpose was "mild persuasion." His doctrines, after receiving many modifications from his successors, were moulded anew by Govind Sinh, who succeeded his father, Tegh Behadur, as *sat-guru* or chief spiritual leader, in 1675, and ranks as the tenth in descent from Nanak. The persecutions which the Sikhs had suffered from the Mahometan rulers had changed their peaceful character, and converted their tenets into a kind of military code. Govind Sinh followed out this policy, and placed it on a firmer basis. Nanak, in order to conciliate the Hindoos, had left their civil institutions untouched. Govind Sinh adopted a bolder course; and in order to arm the whole population against the Mahometans, with whom he and his followers were at open war, proclaimed his determination to admit converts from every tribe, and make worldly wealth and rank equally accessible to all. One of his sayings was, that the four classes—Brahmins, Chatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, "would, like *pan* (betel-leaf), *chunam* (lime), *supari* (betel-nut), and *khat* (*terra japonica* or *catechu*), become all of one colour when chewed." Instead of the peaceful spirit of Nanak, he made war the profession of all his followers, binding them "always to have *steel* about them in one shape or other." Nanak admitted that Mahomet was a prophet "sent by God to this world to do good, and to disseminate the knowledge of one God through means of the Koran; but he, acting on the principle of free-will which all human beings exercise, introduced oppression and cruelty, and the slaughter of cows, for which he died." He added—"I am now sent from heaven to publish unto mankind a book, which shall reduce all the names given unto God to one name which is God; and he who calls Him by any other, shall fall into the path of the devil, and have his feet bound in the chains of wretchedness." After adverting to the hatred subsisting between Mahometans and Hindoos, he continues thus—"I am sent to reconcile your jarring faiths, and I implore you to read their scriptures as well as your own; but reading is useless without obedience to the doctrine taught; for God has said, No man shall be saved except he has performed good works.

The Sikhs,
and their
founder Na-
nak Shah

Leading
tenets of
Nanak.



The Almighty will not ask to what tribe or persuasion he belongs. He will only ask, What has he done? Therefore, those violent and continued disputes which subsist between the Hindoos and Moslemans, are as impious as they are unjust.”¹

Govind Sinh.

Govind Sinh, while adopting the leading principle of Nanak as to the acceptableness of all sincere worship to the supreme Being, is chiefly distinguished from him by the abolition of the distinction of castes, the mode of admitting proselytes, and not only permitting the use of arms, but making it the religious duty of all his followers. As to the mode of admitting a proselyte, it may be sufficient to mention, that he required him to clothe himself from head to foot in a blue dress, to allow his hair to grow, put into his hand five weapons—a sword, a firelock, a bow, an arrow, and a pike; and after reading some of the first chapters of a work composed by Nanak, and of another composed by himself, concluded the initiation by exclaiming—*Wa! Guruji ka Khalsa! Wa! Guruji ki Fateh* (*Success to the state of the Guru! Victory attend the Guru!*) The forms still observed differ little from the above. At present, the Sikhs consist of seven distinct branches, all professing to follow the doctrines of Nanak, though separated by differences in practice or the choice of a teacher. The Ulasis, professing, as their name denotes, indifference to worldly vicissitudes, are purely religious characters, devote themselves to prayer and meditation, practise celibacy, and are usually collected in sanjats, colleges, or convents. They may be regarded as the genuine disciples of Nanak. The Suthrek Shahis, distinguished by wearing a perpendicular black streak down the forehead, and carrying two small black sticks, about half a yard long, which they clash together when they solicit alms, lead a vagabond life, begging and singing songs, mostly of a moral or mystic tendency. They bear a bad name, and must deserve it, as many of them are gamblers, drunkards, and thieves. The great body of the nation are both politically and religiously Govind Sinhs, or followers of the celebrated chief of whom some account has been given. In addition to what has been said of their tenets, it will be sufficient here to observe, that though they have their own sacred books and eat all kinds of flesh, except that of kine, and treat the distinction of castes as imposture or delusion, they are still, to a certain extent, Hindoos. They worship Hindoo deities, celebrate Hindoo festivals, and derive their legends and their literature from Hindoo sources.

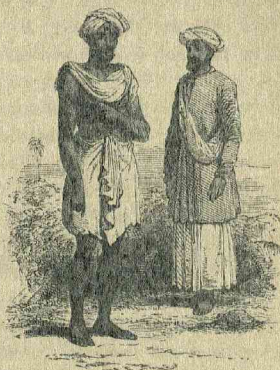
Different
branches
of Sikhs.

The Jains.

The religion of Buddha, who, as we have seen, is often ranked as one of the avatars of Vishnu, at one time gained an ascendancy in India, and has left in many parts of the country, and particularly in some of the rock caves, remarkable monuments of its power and popularity. These having brought it into collision with the Brahmans, a fierce contest ensued, and terminated in its expulsion. In many adjoining countries, it still holds undisputed sway, and counts

¹ Sir John Malcolm's Sketch of the Sikhs, *Asiatic Researches*, vol. xi. p. 274, 275.

its followers by hundreds of millions; but in India its extermination has been so complete, that it has almost ceased to be one of its existing forms of religion. Before it fell, however, a kindred faith, exhibiting many of its peculiar features, had arisen, and after many vicissitudes it still maintains its ground. The faith referred to is that of the Jains, who form a large section of the Hindoo population, and are still more influential by wealth than by numbers. Holding much in common with Brahmins and Buddhists, and at the same time differing with them in several important particulars, they may be regarded as intermediate to both. In all the three religions, the final blessedness aspired to is a state of perfect apathy, differing more in name than in reality from absolute annihilation, and the ordinary process of attaining it is by a series of transmigrations, previous to which, or in the intervals between them, the good enjoy the solace of various heavens, and the bad suffer the torments of numerous hells. The only other prominent point in which they all agree, is in their tenderness of animal life. In regard to this point, however, the Jains and Buddhists take much higher ground than the Brahmins; and in order to guard against the accidents by which animal life might be unintentionally destroyed, employ numerous precautions of an extravagant and ludicrous nature. They must not drink water until it has been thrice strained; nor leave any liquor uncovered lest an insect should be drowned in it; nor eat in the dark lest they should swallow a fly. Their priests and devotees are still more scrupulous—wearing a piece of cloth over their mouths to prevent insects from flying into them, and carrying a brush to sweep any place on which they are about to sit down, and thus give ants, or any other living creatures that may be upon it, timely warning of their danger. Even this does not satisfy them; and as if to show the extreme absurdity to which scrupulosity, when it has taken a particular direction, may be carried, the Jains, in particular, have actually built and endowed hospitals for the reception of animals of all kinds. Fleas, maggots, and similar vermin, are specially favoured, and parts of the establishment are set apart for their habitation and maintenance. It is even said, though it is difficult to credit the statement, that the more zealous devotees occasionally pass the night in these places, in order to regale the inmates with a feast on their own persons.



JAINS.—From original drawing in E. I. House.

The views which the Jains take of the divine nature border, like those of the Buddhists, on atheism. Without actually denying the existence of God, they render their belief of it unavailing, by denying his activity and providence, and



Nature of
worship of
the Jains.

by reserving their divine honours for deified saints. In this respect their system is peculiar. These saints, who by practices of self-denial and mortification, acquire a station superior to that of the gods, are called Tirtankeras. Their aggregate number cannot be defined, but they are conceived to rule for a certain period only, and in classes, each of which consists of twenty-four individuals. There are thus twenty-four who presided over the past period or age, twenty-four actually presiding over the present, and twenty-four who are destined to preside over the future. The whole seventy-two are enumerated by name, but those only presiding over the present attract much attention. Even among them, for some reason not well explained, a choice has been made; and in Hindoostan, the worship of the Jains is confined almost exclusively to Parswanath, the twenty-third, and Mahavira, the twenty-fourth, on the list of present Tirtankeras. The statues of all, however, sometimes of colossal size, and usually of white or black marble, are placed in the temples, and receive such adoration as the Jains are disposed to bestow. This is very meagre; for while the Yatis or devotees dispense with outward acts of worship at pleasure, the lay votaries are only bound daily to visit a temple in which Tirtankeras are placed, walk round it three times, accompany an obeisance to the images with some trifling offering, and repeat some short form of prayer or salutation.

Their prac-
tice as to
caste.

In regard to caste, the Jains act inconsistently. They have no hereditary priesthood, and leave it accessible to men of every class; but their members have distinctions among themselves, which, though they have not the name, are castes in effect, since the members of these different divisions avoid intermarriages and other intercourse with each other. Moreover, in the south and west of India, the distinction of caste is in full operation among them, in the same manner as among other Hindoos; and even in the north-east, it is not so much abolished as in abeyance. This is proved by the fact, that a Jain becoming a convert to Hindooism takes his place in one of the castes, as if he had always belonged to it. This necessarily implies that he must all along have retained proofs of his descent.

Their par-
tial respect
for the Vedas.

The point which must have brought both Buddhists and Jains into most direct collision with the Brahmins, is their rejection of the authority of the Vedas, and of their fundamental doctrines in regard to worship. The rejection of the Buddhists is absolute, admitting of no compromise; but the Jains, according to their usual mode of proceeding, have taken an intermediate course. In so far as their tenets are countenanced by the Vedas, they readily avail themselves of their support, and appeal to them as if they were of infallible authority; but the moment a competition arises between the doctrines of the Vedas and their own practices, and either the one or the other must be abandoned, they have no difficulty in making their choice. For instance, the oblations by fire, which form so important a portion of the regular Hindoo ritual, are regarded by the Jains as an abomination, both because they are often the prelude to bloody sacrifices,



and also because the fire employed can hardly fail to occasion even unintentionally a destruction of animal life.

The Jains have no monastic establishments, and profess to follow a moral code of great simplicity, consisting of five *mahavratas* or great duties, four merits, and three restraints. The duties are, refraining from injury to life, truth, honesty, chastity, and freedom from worldly desires; the merits are, liberality, gentleness, piety, and penance; and the restraints are, government of the mind, government of the tongue, and government of the person. Their system seems to have originated about the sixth or seventh century, to have become powerful about the ninth, when Buddhism was suppressed, to have attained its greatest prosperity in the eleventh, and to have begun to decline in the twelfth. Its followers are still numerous, particularly in Gujerat, Rajpootana, and Canara, and, numbering among them many bankers and opulent merchants, possess a large portion of the commercial wealth of the country.

Moral system
of the Jains.

In the course of this brief survey of the Hindoo religion, it is impossible not to have been struck with the numerous changes of form which it has undergone. As it was originally brought into India by strangers, its very first introduction was a great and successful innovation on the beliefs of the earlier inhabitants. As unfolded in the Vedas, it assumes the form of an almost pure theism, or acknowledges only personifications of the elements as emblems of deity. In course of time, the Hindoo triad appears, and Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, recognized as three distinct forms of one God, or three distinct beings sharing the godhead among them, become the great objects of worship. The process of multiplication then begins to be rapidly carried on, and the pantheon becomes crowded with myriads of fabulous existences, male and female, embodying in their persons all imaginable qualities, virtuous as well as vicious. The old gods of the triad were then involved in a struggle for supremacy. Brahma first gave way, and ceased to have any external worship paid to him. Vishnu and Siva, though they at first seemed to fare better, ultimately shared a similar fate, their place being usurped partly by the consorts arbitrarily given to them, and partly by younger deities, who, though said to be only their avatars or incarnations, did, in fact, push them from their stools and reign in their stead. Idolatry now had full scope, and the mere image became, instead of a figurative representation of some spiritual nature, the very god himself, being lodged and clothed, and fed, and served, as if it were a living being. Amid this degeneracy, a so-called orthodoxy was still recognized; but numbers disdained to be bound by its rules, and sects, setting them at nought, sprung up in every quarter. Many of these sects, though of comparatively recent origin, have gained multitudes of converts; and Hindooism, instead of forming one compact whole, consists, in fact, of discordant religions in almost endless variety, battling with each other for supremacy or existence. Nothing, therefore, can be more erroneous than the representation often given. Hindooism, we are told, is one of the

Hindooism
not fixed,
but variable.

Its numerous
changes.



CSL

most ancient things now existing in the world; and while all around has been decaying, it has stood firm and unshaken. The inference meant to be drawn is, that it is equally hopeless and sacrilegious to attempt its overthrow. To this representation and inference it is sufficient to reply, that the whole history of Hindooism records only a series of changes, by means of which it has been deprived of all that ever gave it any claim to veneration. As it now exists, it is not one uniform system, but a thing of shreds and patches— not a religion bearing the impress of a high antiquity, but a grovelling superstition, full of monstrosities and abominations, many of them of a comparatively recent date. It has thus neither the respectability nor the stability which great age might have given it; and therefore there is good reason to hope, that its power of resistance to the efforts made to overthrow it, becoming gradually weaker and weaker, it will at no distant period tumble into ruins. No one who desires the welfare of India can wish for any other result; and no one who confides, as he ought, in the power of divine truth, will despair of its accomplishment.

Hope of
Rund over-
throw of
Hindooism.

CHAPTER III.

The Government of the Hindoos.



GOVERNMENT will in this chapter be taken in its most general acceptation, and will include not merely the form of government, properly so called, but the administration of it in its various departments, civil and military, judicial and fiscal. A subject so wide requires far more space than can be here allowed to it, and

Subject of
Hindoo gov-
ernment
still impor-
tant.

yet it seems necessary to make some apology for mentioning it at all. Since British supremacy was established in India, Hindoo government has ceased to exist, and it may therefore be thought that any account given of it can only gratify curiosity without furnishing information of practical value. This inference is plausible—so plausible, indeed, that the East India Company, in the early management of the territories acquired by them, acted upon it, and thought they were giving their new subjects the best proof of their wisdom and justice by endeavouring to govern them in accordance with European ideas. It was not long, however, before they discovered their mistake, and learned, by an experience which cost them dear, that a thorough acquaintance with the principles on which government had previously been conducted was absolutely necessary, in order both to conciliate good-will and prevent gross mismanagement. Even after they had arrived at this conclusion, many serious mistakes were committed, and it would not be difficult to trace some of the worst grievances



of which the population of India have had to complain, to rash tampering with the modes of government to which they had been accustomed, and the rights which they had acquired under them. After the lapse of nearly a century, there is reason to suspect that, within the limits of the three provinces of which the dewannee was obtained by Clive from Shah Alum, abuses still exist, and much unintentional injustice is committed, merely because the tenures under which property was held and occupied in early Hindoo times were imperfectly understood. So far, therefore, from thinking that the subject of the present chapter might have been omitted, our only regret is, that it must be treated within limits bearing no proportion to its intrinsic importance.

In form Hindoo government was an absolute monarchy, the nature of which is fully described in the Institutes of Menu. The rajah or king, though presumed to rule in accordance with a code of written laws, is represented as holding his power immediately from the Supreme Being, and subject to no restraint but that which his sense of duty or fear of the consequences of misgovernment might impose. As if he were of a different nature from his subjects, he is said to have been formed "of eternal particles drawn from the substance of Indra, and seven other named divinities;" and in consequence "surpasses all mortals in glory." "Like the sun, he burns eyes and hearts; nor can any human creature even gaze on him." "He is a powerful divinity, who appears in a human shape." He must not suppose, however, that he is born only for himself. He was created, because, "if the world had no king, it would quake on all sides through fear;" and because, if the guilty were not punished, "the stronger would roast the weaker, like fish on a spit." His great duty therefore is, to "prepare a just compensation for the good, and a just punishment for the bad." The latter of these two appears to be regarded as the more important and efficacious, and is hence eulogized in such terms as the following:—"Punishment governs all mankind; punishment alone preserves them; punishment wakes while their guards are asleep; the wise consider punishment as the perfection of justice."

Hindoo government
monarchical

Should the king, instead of faithfully discharging his duty, be "crafty, voluptuous, and wrathful," he must not hope to escape with impunity; for "criminal justice, the bright essence of majesty, . . . eradicates a king who swerves from his duty, together with all his race; punishment shall overtake his castles, his territories, his peopled land, with all fixed and moveable things that exist on it; even the gods and the sages will be afflicted and ascend to the sky." In all this, however, he suffers only by a kind of divine retribution. His own will, if he chooses to make it so, may be his only law. No hint is given of the existence of any constitutional check on the abuse of his power, and it is hence left to be inferred that if he played the tyrant his subjects were entirely at his mercy. Having no recognized right to call him to account for misconduct, they had no alternative but to submit, and wait patiently for the

No constitutional check

Moral re-
 straints on
 the king.

vengeance which in some shape, human or divine, would sooner or later overtake him.

The unlimited power possessed by the king made it all the more necessary that he should be surrounded with every species of moral restraint; and accordingly the whole course of conduct which he ought to pursue is carefully prescribed. "Let the king, having risen at early dawn, respectfully attend to Brahmins, learned in the three Vedas and in the science of ethics." From Brahmins "who have grown old, who know the scriptures, who are pure, let him continually learn habits of modesty and composure." From Brahmins who know the three Vedas, "let him learn the triple doctrine comprised in them, together with the primeval science of criminal justice and sound policy, the subject of logic and metaphysics, and sublime theological truth; from the people he must learn the theory of practical arts." But mere knowledge will not suffice; and therefore "day and night must he strenuously exert himself to gain complete victory over his own organs," especially shunning the vices which proceed from love of pleasure and from wrath, and labouring to suppress "a selfish inclination which all wise men know to be the root of those two sets" of vices.

The king's
 counsellors.

Having been thus instructed how to acquire the knowledge and self-command necessary for the discharge of his duty, the king is next told how to proceed in actually administering the government. Since "even an act easy in itself is hard sometimes to be performed by a single man, especially if he have no assistant near, how much harder a kingdom with great revenues;" he must appoint a council of "seven or eight ministers, who must be sworn—men whose ancestors were servants of kings, who are versed in the holy books, who are personally brave, who are skilled in the use of weapons, and whose lineage is noble." The head or president of the council is to be a learned Brahmin; and though the king is constantly to be consulting with all its members "on peace and war, on his forces, on his revenues, on the protection of his people, and on the means of bestowing aptly the wealth which he has acquired," to the president alone as prime minister is he to give "full confidence" and "intrust all transactions."

Other principal
 functionaries.

Besides the council, whose business is to deliberate, various other functionaries are necessary. In particular, there must be an ambassador, to transact "the business by which kingdoms are at variance or in amity;" a commander-in-chief, by whom "the forces of the realm must be immediately regulated;" and "officers of criminal justice," for "the actual infliction of punishment." The ambassador being apparently regarded as the most important of all these functionaries, the qualities which he ought to possess, and the manner in which he ought to conduct himself, are specified. He must be "pure within and without, dexterous in business, and endued with an excellent memory;" one "who knows countries and times, is handsome, intrepid, and eloquent." In the transaction of affairs he must be able to "comprehend the visible signs and hints,



and discover the acts of the foreign king, by the signs, hints, and acts of his confidential servants, and the measures which that king wishes to take, by his ministers."

After the appointment of proper officers, the next thing considered is the selection of a locality for the king's residence. On this subject a number of injunctions are given, of which the following are the most prominent:—"Let him fix his abode in a district containing open champaigns, abounding with grain, inhabited chiefly by the virtuous, not infected with maladies, beautiful to the sight, surrounded by submissive neighbours; a country in which the subjects may live at ease." Within this district he is to take up his residence, in a capital rendered difficult of access by natural or artificial barriers, as a desert, a mound of earth, water, trees, and above all, "a fortress of mountains," which is said to have "many transcendent properties." Here he may live secure, having built a fort, which he is recommended to do, because "one bowman placed on a wall is a match in war for a hundred enemies; and a hundred for ten thousand." The centre of the fort is the proper site for the royal palace, which is to be "well finished in all its parts, completely defended, habitable in every season, brilliant, surrounded with water and trees." Such a palace having been prepared for his mansion, the king is to establish his household, beginning with the choice of "a consort, of the same class with himself, endued with all the bodily marks of excellence, born of an excellent race, captivating his heart, adorned with beauty and the best qualities." The only members of the royal household specially mentioned are "a domestic priest," and "a performer of sacrifices."

The king's residence.

The ordinary routine of the king's life while he resides in his palace deserves to be described. Having risen "in the last watch of the night," or, as the same thing is elsewhere expressed, "at early dawn," and performed his religious duties, he is to enter his hall, and standing there, "gratify his subjects before he dismiss them with kind looks and words." After they are dismissed he is to "take secret counsel with his principal ministers." For this purpose, and that he may be able to consult with them unobserved, he climbs up the back of a mountain, or goes privately "to a terrace, a bower, a forest, or a lonely place." This secrecy is deemed of paramount importance; for it is declared that "that prince, of whose weighty secrets all assemblies of men are ignorant, shall obtain dominion over the whole earth." The other measures which the king takes to secure secrecy are rather curious. "At the time of consultation let him remove the stupid, the dumb, the blind, and the deaf, talking birds, decrepit old men, women, and infidels, the diseased and the maimed; since those who are disgraced (in this life by reason of sins formerly committed) are apt to betray secret counsel; so are talking birds; and so above all are women; them he must for that reason diligently remove." After the consultation, the king having taken exercise and bathed, retires at noon to his private

The king's daily life.



The king's
daily life.

apartment for the purpose of taking food. This favourite employment must have lost much of its relish from the precautions deemed necessary. "Let him," it is said, "eat lawful aliment, prepared by servants attached to his person, who know the difference of times and are incapable of perfidy, after it has been proved innocent, and hallowed by texts of the Veda repulsive of poison. Together with all his food let him swallow such medical substances as resist venom; and let him constantly wear with attention such gems as are known to repel it. Let his females, well tried and attentive, their dress and ornaments having been examined (lest, says the commentator, some weapon should be concealed in them), do him humble service with fans, water, and perfumes." These precautions were not confined to the time of taking meals, for it is immediately added, "thus let him take diligent care, when he goes out in a carriage, or on horseback, when he lies down to rest, when he sits, when he takes food, when he bathes, anoints his body, and puts on all his habiliments." After eating, and "having idled a reasonable time" in the recesses of the palace among his women, public affairs again occupy his attention, and he comes forth completely dressed, to "review his armed men, with all their elephants, horses, and cars, their accoutrements, and weapons." The mode of spending the remainder of the day is thus described: "At sunset, having performed his religious duty, let him privately, but well armed, in his interior apartment, hear what has been done by his reporters and emissaries; then having dismissed those informers, and returning to another secret chamber, let him go, attended by women, to the inmost recess of his mansion, to his evening meal; then, having a second time eaten a little, and having been recreated with musical strains, let him take rest early, and rise refreshed from his labour." The king's day, as now described, has left several intervals not filled up, and it is therefore necessary to mention, that any leisure which may remain to him, and more especially at noon, or at midnight, when "his fatigues have ceased and his cares are dispersed," he is enjoined to employ partly on his private affairs, such as the marriage of his daughters, the education of his sons, and the behaviour of his women in the private apartment, and partly in meditating alone, or holding converse with his ministers on important questions of ethics and policy.

Division of
kingdom
into mili-
tary and
civil dis-
tricts.

For administrative purposes the whole kingdom is portioned out into military and civil districts. Over two, three, five, or a hundred of the military districts, according to their extent, is placed a body of guards, commanded by an approved officer. The management of the civil districts being rather more complicated is more fully detailed. Ascending by a regularly graduated scale, the officers are ranked as follows:—"A lord of one town with its district, a lord of ten towns, a lord of twenty, a lord of a hundred, and a lord of a thousand." Each of these, beginning with the lowest, is enjoined to report on the state of his district to his immediate superior; and in this way the actual condition of all the districts throughout the country being made known, the



means necessary for the suppression of any evils existing in them could be provided. The salary or perquisite paid to the lord of one town consists of "such food, drink, wood, and other articles as should be given each day to the king by the inhabitants of the township." The payment of the other officers is arranged as follows:—To the lord of ten towns "the produce of two plough-lands"—that is, according to the commentator, the produce of as much ground as can be tilled with two ploughs, each drawn by six bulls; to the lord of twenty towns, the produce of ten plough-lands; to the lord of a hundred towns, the produce of a village; and to the lord of a thousand, the produce of a large town. It is easy to conceive the abuses to which such a system must give rise, and hence to understand the necessity of an additional appointment explained as follows:—"In every large town or city let him (the king) appoint one superintendent of all affairs, elevated in rank, formidable in power, distinguished as a planet among the stars; let that governor from time to time survey the rest in person, and by means of his emissaries, let him perfectly know their conduct in their several districts. Since the servants of the king whom he has appointed guardians of districts are generally knaves, who seize what belongs to other men, from such knaves let him defend his people; of such evil-minded servants as wring wealth from subjects attending them on business, let the king confiscate all the possessions, and banish them from his realm."

One of the principal duties assigned to these lords of towns was the collection of the public revenue, and to it therefore our attention must now be turned. The different sources from which it is derived are pointed out in the Institutes of Menu; but considerable changes have taken place since their date; and it will therefore be necessary, after making an abstract of the information which the Institutes furnish, to render it more complete by having recourse to later authorities. According to the Institutes the public revenue consisted of taxes on all kinds of agricultural produce and merchandise, a trifling annual exaction from petty traffickers, a day's work every month from "low handicraftsmen, artificers, and servile men, who support themselves by labour;" and a twentieth part, or five per cent. (not, as Elphinstone erroneously says, twenty per cent.) on the estimated profit of all sales. The mode in which the revenue was to be levied is thus explained:—"As the leech, the suckling calf, and the bee take their natural food by little and little, thus must a king draw from his dominions an annual revenue." "Let him not cut up his own root, nor the root of other men by excess of covetousness; for by cutting up his own root he makes both himself and them wretched." The taxes on traffic were to be levied after "having ascertained the rates of purchase and sale, the length of the way, the expenses of food and of condiments, the charges of securing the goods carried, and the nett profits of trade." On produce, and various other specified articles, the taxes were to be as follows:—"Of cattle, of gems, of gold and

Sources of
revenue.¹ Elphinstone's *India*, vol. i. p. 41.

silver, a fiftieth part may be taken by the king, of grain an eighth part, a sixth or a twelfth" (said by the commentator to be regulated according to the difference of the soil and the labour necessary to cultivate it). "He may also take a sixth part of the clear annual increase of trees, flesh meat, honey, clarified butter, perfumes, medical substances, liquids, flowers, roots and fruit, of gathered leaves, pot-herbs, grass, utensils made with leather or cane, earthen pots, and all things made of stone."

Property in
 land.

Agricultural produce, on which a maximum rate of a sixth might have been levied, must have been by far the most productive of these taxes, but it has been maintained that the tax on produce was by no means the only revenue derived from land, because the property of the soil belonged exclusively to the king, and must have yielded him an immense return in the shape of rent, or at least enabled him to meet the expenses of the public establishments, by paying the officers with grants of land, instead of giving them salaries in money. The question thus raised is of great importance, and having direct practical bearings on the actual administration of the government, has been discussed at great length and with much keenness. It would be out of place here to take part in the discussion further than to say, that the leading advocates on both sides have taken too high ground. By regarding India as if it were a single territory, they have first imagined that one uniform system of land tenure was practicable, and then, in support of the view which they advocate, have appealed to the kinds of tenure prevalent in particular provinces or districts. In this way it has been possible to maintain with almost equal plausibility that the property of the soil is in the sovereign, in zemindars, supposed to mean landed proprietors similar to those of Europe, and in the ryots or actual cultivators; whereas the only inference ought to have been, that the tenures were not uniform but various, and that the necessary consequence of recognizing any one of them as exclusive of the others was to commit wholesale injustice. The ryots, as the class least able to defend themselves, have been the greatest sufferers by this rage for uniformity on the part of their rulers; and Sir Thomas Munro did not describe the injustice which has been done in too strong terms when he said, "We have, in our anxiety to make everything as English as possible, in a country which resembles England in nothing, attempted to create at once throughout extensive provinces a kind of landed property which never existed in them; and in the pursuit of the object we have relinquished the rights which the sovereign always possessed in the soil; and we have in many cases deprived the real owners, the occupant ryots, of their proprietary rights, and bestowed them on zemindars and other imaginary landlords: changes like these never can effect a permanent settlement in any country; they are rather calculated to unsettle whatever was before deemed permanent."¹

¹ Minute on the *State of the Country, and Condition of the People under the Presidency of Fort St. George*, dated 31st Dec. 1824, and ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 17th May, 1830; p. 26.



Besides the sources of revenue above mentioned, the king had mines, in A.D. —
which he is recommended to employ "the brave, the skilful, the well-born, and the honest;" and was moreover entitled, "by reason of his general protection, and because he is the lord paramount of the soil," to half "of old hoards and precious minerals in the earth." "Treasure anciently repositied in the ground" belonged to him, subject to two limitations in favour of Brahmins, who, if they were the discoverers of the treasure, took it all without deduction, and if others were the discoverers, received a half. The revenue was, moreover, occasionally increased by certain casualties, of which the most important was derived from property for which, after distinct proclamation, no owner appeared in three years. Even when an owner appeared, the king might, at his discretion, retain a twelfth, a tenth, or a sixth part of the value, as a compensation for having secured it. In the above system of taxation and revenue, a considerable degree of natural equity appears; and yet it must be admitted that little wisdom is displayed in the selection of the articles to be taxed, or the special percentages to which they are made liable. It would also seem that there must have been much injustice and oppression in the levying of taxation by means of the lords of towns above described. Accordingly, in a passage already quoted, the "appointed guardians of districts" are described as "generally knaves who seize what belongs to other men."

Royal mines.

It is rather curious to find that this part of the system, though the only one of which any disapprobation is expressed, has survived all the revolutions which India has undergone. The higher lordships, indeed, with the exception of the still recognized *pergunnah*, or lordship of 100 towns, have left only traces of their existence; but the townships themselves "remain entire, and are the indestructible atoms, from an aggregate of which the most extensive Indian empires are composed." For a description of a township, we cannot do better than continue this quotation. "A township is a compact piece of land, varying in extent, inhabited by a single community. The boundaries are accurately defined and jealously guarded. The lands may be of all descriptions—those actually under cultivation and those neglected, arable lands never yet cultivated and land which is altogether incapable of cultivation. These lands are divided into portions, the boundaries of which are as carefully marked as those of the township; and the names, qualities, extent, and proprietors of which are minutely entered in the records of the community. The inhabitants are all assembled in a village within the limits which, in many parts of India, is fortified or protected by a little castle or citadel. Each township conducts its own internal affairs. It levies on its members the revenue due to the state; and is collectively responsible for the payment of the full amount. It manages its police, and is answerable for any property plundered within its limits. It administers justice to its own members, as far as punishing small offences, and deciding disputes in the first instance. It taxes itself to provide funds for its own expenses; such as repairs

Description
of Indian
township
or village.



of the walls and temple, and the cost of public sacrifices and charities, as well as of some ceremonies and amusements on festivals. It is provided with requisite officers for conducting all those duties, and with various others adapted to the wants of the inhabitants; and though entirely subject to the general government, is in many respects an organized commonwealth complete within itself.”¹

Antiquity
and perman-
ence of
the village
system.

Mr. Elphinstone's account is thus confirmed by Lord Metcalfe:—“The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they can want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolution; Hindoo, Patan, Mogul, Mahratta, Sikh, English, are all masters in turn; but the village community remains the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves; an hostile army passes through the country; the village communities collect their cattle within their walls, and let the enemy pass unprovoked. If plunder and devastation be directed against themselves, and the force employed be irresistible, they flee to friendly villages at a distance; but when the storm has passed over, they return and resume their occupations. If a country remain for a series of years the scene of continued pillage and massacre, so that the villages cannot be inhabited, the scattered villagers nevertheless return whenever the power of peaceable possession revives. A generation may pass away, but the succeeding generation will return. The sons will take the places of their fathers; the same site for the village, the same positions for the houses, the same lands will be reoccupied by the descendants of those who were driven out when the village was depopulated; and it is not a trifling matter that will drive them out, for they will often maintain their post through times of disturbance and convulsion, and acquire strength sufficient to resist pillage and oppression with success. This union of the village communities, each one forming a little separate state in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India, through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence.”²

Administra-
tion of jus-
tice.

The next important branch of internal government to be considered is the administration of justice. On this subject the Institutes of Menu treat largely, and continue, notwithstanding the changes introduced subsequently to its date, to be the most valuable text-book. The principal court of justice was held in the capital, and the king himself, if “desirous of inspecting judicial proceedings,” presided over it in person. For this purpose he was to enter it each day, “together with Brahmins and counsellors, who knew how to give him advice;” and “there, either sitting or standing, holding forth his right arm without ostentation, in his dress and ornaments,” to “examine the affairs of

¹ Elphinstone, *India*, vol. i. pages 121, 122.

² *Report of Select Committee of House of Commons, 1832*, vol. iii. Appendix 84, page 331.



litigant parties," and decide causes, "by arguments and rules drawn from local usages and from written codes." Where he could not preside himself, he was to appoint a Brahmin of eminent learning, who, sitting as "chief judge, accompanied by three assessors," should fully consider and dispose of all causes brought into the royal court. The mode of administering justice in places at a distance from the capital is not explained; but it appears from other sources, that in different parts of the country there were local judges who decided in the first instance, but whose decisions might be brought under review by appeal to the court of the capital. The defendant who, after allowing the action to be brought into court, admitted the debt, paid a fine of five per cent; if he continued to deny it, and it was proved against him, the fine was doubled. These fines being payable to the king, probably went to the judges, and formed part, if not the whole of their official income.

Administration of justice.

On the subject of judicial procedure, much sound advice is given. The king or his judge, while "understanding what is expedient or inexpedient," is to consider "only what is law or not law," and decide accordingly. He is at the same time to have an equitable jurisdiction, and consider himself as the guardian of those who, from nonage or their unprotected situation, labour totally or partially under legal incapacity. The persons thus entitled to his special protection are infants and students; women whose husbands have married other wives because they have proved barren, or had no sons; women without kindred, or whose husbands are in distant places; widows true to their lords; and women afflicted with illness. In examining witnesses and weighing evidence, he is to endeavour, "by external signs," to "see through the thoughts of men, by their voice, colour, countenance, limbs, eyes, and action." Neither "himself nor his officers must ever promote litigation, nor ever neglect a lawsuit instituted by others;" but "as a hunter traces the lair of a beast by the drops of blood, thus let a king investigate the true point of justice by deliberate argument; let him fully consider the nature of truth, the state of the case, and his own person; and next, the witnesses, the place, the mode, and the time; firmly adhering to all the rules of practice."

Judicial procedure.

The plaintiff being bound, especially in a question of debt, to prove his case, may act in such a way as to justify a nonsuit, and thus render further proceedings unnecessary. He may, for instance, after having raised his action, delay to proceed with it, and thereby deserve to be fined or corporally punished. Or he may assert "confused and contradictory facts," change his ground after "having stated what he designs to prove," or when "questioned on a fact which he had before admitted, refuse to acknowledge that very fact." He may, moreover, have tampered with the witnesses, by conversing with them "in a place unfit for such conversation," or after alleging that he had witnesses, fail, when called upon, to produce them, or stand mute on being "ordered to speak," or decline "answering a question properly put." A plaintiff thus behaving, the

Cases of nonsuit.

Competency
of witnesses.

judge must "declare nonsuited." On the other hand, should the action proceed, great care is necessary in determining "what sort of witnesses must be produced," and "in what manner those witnesses must give true evidence." The good sense which characterizes many of the regulations of the Hindoo code on this head, is sadly marred by others of an unreasonable and fantastical nature. The persons who are to be considered competent witnesses are "married house-keepers, men with male issue, inhabitants of the same district"—"just and sensible men of all the classes, men who know their whole duty and are free from covetousness." The persons to be rejected as incompetent are those "who have a pecuniary interest," "familiar friends," "menial servants," "enemies," "men formerly perjured," "persons grievously diseased," and "those who have committed heinous offences." Among the more fantastical arrangements are the exclusion of mean artificers, public dancers and singers, a priest of deep learning in Scripture, a student in theology, an anchorite secluded from all worldly connections, one who follows a cruel occupation, a decrepit old man, and a wretch of the lowest mixed class." Women also, though they "should regularly be witnesses for women," are excluded generally, on the ground that "female understandings are apt to waver." In a penury of witnesses, however, "evidence may be given by a woman, by a child, or by an aged man, by a pupil, by a houseman, by a slave, or by a hired servant;" and several of the more injudicious restrictions are virtually removed by an injunction to the judge not to "examine too strictly the competence of witnesses" in "all cases of violence, of theft and adultery, of defamation and assault;" and a declaration that "any person whatever who has positive knowledge of transactions in the private apartments of a house, or in a forest, or at a time of death, may give evidence between the parties." The weight of testimony is to be determined by the following rule:—"If there be contradictory evidence, let the king decide by the plurality of credible witnesses; if equality in number, by superiority in virtue; if parity in virtue, by the testimony of such twice-born men as have best performed public duties."

Proceedings
in court.

The proceedings in court are conducted with great decorum and solemnity. "The witnesses being assembled in the middle of the court-room, in the presence of the plaintiff and defendant, let the judge examine them, after having addressed them in the following manner:—'What ye know to have been transacted in the matter before us, between the parties reciprocally, declare at large and with truth; for your evidence in this cause is required. A witness who gives testimony with truth shall attain exalted seats of beatitude above and the highest fame here below; such testimony is revered by Brahma himself; the witness who speaks falsely shall be fast bound in the cords of Varuna, and be wholly deprived of power during a hundred transmigrations; let mankind therefore give no false testimony. By truth is a witness cleared from sin; by truth is justice advanced; truth must therefore be spoken by witnesses of every class. The



soul itself is its own witness; the soul itself is its own refuge; offend not thy conscious soul, the supreme internal witness of men. The sinful have said in their hearts, 'None sees us.' Yes; the gods distinctly see them, and so does the spirit within their breasts. The guardian deities of the firmament, of the earth, of the waters, of the human heart, of the moon, of the sun, and of fire, of punishment after death, of the winds, of night, of both twilights, and of justice, perfectly know the state of all spirits clothed with bodies.'" After this address the examination takes place, and is conducted in a manner in which the deference paid to the different classes is curiously marked. To a Brahmin, the judge must begin with simply saying, "Declare;" to a Cshatriya, with saying, "Declare the truth;" to a Vaisya, with comparing perjury to the crime of stealing kine, grain, or gold; to a Sudra, with comparing it to every crime that men can commit, and addressing him in such language as the following:—"Headlong, in utter darkness, shall the impious wretch tumble into hell, who, being interrogated in a judicial inquiry, answers one question falsely." "Marking well all the murders which are comprehended in the crime of perjury, declare thou the whole truth with precision as heard and seen by thee." Such adjurations go far to prove the prevalence of perjury in native Hindoo courts in very early times; and indeed what else could be expected, when the code itself, immediately after inserting these adjurations, neutralizes them by adding—"In some cases, a giver of false evidence from a pious motive, even though he know the truth, shall not lose a seat in heaven; such evidence wise men call the speech of the gods. Whenever the death of a man, either of the servile, the commercial, the military, or the sacerdotal class would be occasioned by true evidence, falsehood may be spoken; it is even preferable to truth. Such witnesses must offer, as oblations to Saraswati, cakes of rice and milk, addressed to the goddess of speech; and thus will they fully expiate that venial sin of benevolent falsehood." Commentators endeavour to qualify this lax morality by assuming that the falsehood sanctioned is only to favour a man "who had not been a grievous offender," and to deceive a king notorious for rigour, "even though the fault arose from inadvertence or error." While a false witness might avail himself of the above lax permission, a true witness might be subjected to gross injustice in consequence of the following absurd and superstitious provision:—"The witness who has given evidence, and to whom, within seven days after, happens disease, fire, or the death of a kinsman, shall be condemned to pay the debt and a fine."

Taking of evidence.

Where no witness could be had, the judge might "acquire a knowledge of the truth by the oath of the parties." Here the great danger to be guarded against was false swearing; and hence, in order to maintain the sacredness of an oath, it is properly said—"Let no man of sense take an oath in vain; for the man who takes an oath in vain, shall be punished in this life and the next." Unfortunately, as in the former case, however, the effect of the injunction is

Oath of parties.

Trial by
 ordeal.

neutralized by the following strange declaration:—"To women, however, at a time of dalliance, or on a proposal of marriage, in the case of grass or fruit eaten by a cow, of wood taken for a sacrifice, or of a promise made for the preservation of a Brahmin, it is no deadly sin to take a light oath." Sometimes when the oath was not deemed satisfactory, another test might be employed—a test most absurd and nugatory, though used for ages, and not long ago abolished for the first time in our own country. It was what is called the trial by ordeal, with reference to which it is said—"Let him (the judge) cause the party to hold fire, or to dive under water, or severally to touch the hands of his children and wife; he whom the blazing fire burns not, whom the water soon forces not up, or who meets with no speedy misfortune, must be held veracious in his testimony on oath."

Written
 codes.

The written codes, conformably to which the judge was to decide, contain a complete system of law arranged under distinct heads, and making it impossible to doubt, notwithstanding its numerous defects, that the people employing it were considerably advanced in civilization. In the Institutes of Menu, eighteen "titles of law" are enumerated, and said to be "settled as the groundwork of all judicial procedure in this world." These titles are classed in the following order:—1. Debt on loans for consumption; 2. Deposits and loans for use; 3. Sale without ownership; 4. Concerns among partners; 5. Subtraction of what has been given; 6. Non-payment of wages or hire; 7. Non-performance of agreements; 8. Rescission of sale and purchase; 9. Disputes between master and servant; 10. Contests on boundaries; 11 and 12. Assault and slander; 13. Larceny; 14. Robbery and other violence; 15. Adultery; 16. Altercation between man and wife, and their several duties; 17. The law of inheritance; 18. Gaming with dice, and living animals. A mere glance at these titles reveals a comprehensive and complicated course of jurisprudence; but the arrangement is not drawing a proper line of demarcation between civil and criminal matters is inconvenient; and it will therefore be proper, in pointing out some of the leading features of the Hindoo code, to disregard this arrangement, and substitute for it our own more natural division of—1. Civil law; and 2. Criminal law.

Leading
 axiom.

One of the leading axioms of our law is, that no man is to seek redress at his own hand. The axiom of Hindoo law is the very opposite; for it seems to be implied, that a creditor need not raise his action till other means of redress have failed. Artful management, the mediation of friends, distress, and other compulsory means, may be used by him; and if he thus succeed in retaking his property, the king must not only not rebuke him, but ratify his possession as "payment by the debtor." Among five modes of recovery which he may employ, "legal force" is mentioned last. "This law" says Mr. Elphinstone,¹ "still operates so strongly in some Hindoo states, that a creditor imprisons his debtor in his private house, and even keeps him for a period without food,

¹ Elphinstone's *India*, vol. i. pages 61, 62.



and exposed to the sun, to compel him to produce the money he owes." The interest lent on money without security is to be proportioned to the risk, or "in the direct order of the classes." Thus, the monthly interest exigible from a Brahmin is 2 per cent.; from a Cshatriya or soldier, 3; from a Vaisya or merchant, 4; and from a Sudra, 5 per cent. It is added, "never more," and, as one should think, superfluously, since this so-called maximum is at the enormous rate of 60 per cent. per annum. Where a pledge has been taken as a security merely, the interest must not exceed $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. monthly, and where the pledge is beneficial—in other words, is used by the pawnee for his profit—he is not entitled to any interest at all. Interest must not be allowed to accumulate till it "be more than enough to double the debt;" but the rule as to a maximum will not apply in the case of extraordinary risks, and therefore "whatever interest shall be settled by men well acquainted with sea voyages or journeys by land, with times and with places, such interest shall have legal force." A prescriptive right to ordinary moveables may be established; and therefore "whatever chattel the owner sees enjoyed by others for ten years, while, though present, he says nothing, that chattel he shall not recover," provided he was at the time of legal capacity; but "a pledge, a boundary of land, the property of an infant, a deposit either open or in a chest sealed, female slaves, the wealth of a king, and of a learned Brahmin, are not lost in consequence of adverse enjoyment."

Amount of
interest
exigible.

Prescription.

On the subject of obligations, many nice and important distinctions are made. A contract may be null from being entered into under the influence of force or fraud, or by parties labouring under incapacity; and the judge is bound, on discovering the flaw, to "annul the whole transaction." For the same reason, "that plaint can have no effect, though it may be supported by evidence, which contains a cause of action inconsistent with positive law or with settled usage." In some cases, however, a contract, which might not of itself be legally binding, will be enforced. Thus in the ordinary case, when a debtor dies without leaving the means of paying his debt, his family are not bound; but should it be proved that the money borrowed was expended for their use, then "it must be paid by that family, divided or undivided, out of their own estate." In like manner, "should even a slave make a contract for the behoof of the family, the master, whether in his own country or abroad, shall not rescind it." On the other hand, there are cases in which an obligation which might have been enforced against the original obligant will not be binding on his representatives. For instance, money "idly promised, or lost at play, or due for spirituous liquors, the son shall not be obliged to pay." The same rule holds in cases of surety for appearance; but "if a surety for payment should die, the judge may compel even his heirs to discharge the debt."

Obligations.

Bargains of sale or purchase, though completed by delivery, may be rescinded at the wish of either seller or buyer within ten days; but after that period

Sale and
 purchase.

become so absolute, that the party attempting to rescind is subjected to a fine. It may happen that a seller is not the true owner. If he was aware of the fact, he is of course to be treated as a thief; but what becomes of the sale? The buyer may have paid full value, and been totally ignorant of the theft. Ought he in that case to be the loser? The question is one of some nicety, and is thus answered:—The purchaser, if he has bought “in open market,” and “paid the price,” is entitled to “the absolute property,” provided he produce the seller; but if the seller is not produced, the purchaser, on proving the public sale, only escapes punishment, and the property returns to the original owner. In treating of bargains not fulfilled in terms of the agreement, some curious cases are mentioned. One of these is:—“After one damsel has been shown, another is offered to the bridegroom;” the decision is, that “he may become the husband of both for the same price.” Another case of a similar nature is that of “a kinsman who gives a damsel in marriage,” without having “told her blemishes.” A third case is that of a hired servant or workman who “fails to perform his work according to his agreement.” If the failure is owing to indolence, a fine shall be inflicted, and the wages or hire shall not be paid. On the other hand, if “he be really ill, and, when restored to health, shall perform his work according to his original bargain, he shall receive his pay even for a very long time.”

Hiring.

Master and
 servant.

The title relating to master and servant is very meagre, being confined almost entirely to questions “arising from the fault of such as own herds of cattle, and of such as are hired to keep them.” The general rule is, that “by day the blame falls on the herdsman, and by night on the owner,” if the cattle are kept at home, but “if the place of their food and custody be different, the keeper bears the blame.” As a specimen of the way in which the rule is applied, the following case may be mentioned:—“A flock of goats or of sheep being attacked by wolves, and the keeper not going to repel the attack, he shall be responsible for every one of them which a wolf shall violently kill; but if any one of them, while they graze together near a wood and the shepherd keeps them in order, shall be suddenly killed by a wolf springing on it, he shall not in that case be responsible.”

Boundaries.

On the subject of boundaries nothing of much interest occurs. The thing most necessary is to fix boundaries at first in such a manner as to make it almost impossible to mistake them. With this view they ought to be marked both above and below ground; above by natural objects, as streams and lakes, or artificial objects, as pools and wells, temples, planted trees, and earthen mounds; and below by “large pieces of stone, bones, tails of cows, bran ashes, potsherds, dried cow-dung, bricks and ashes, charcoal, pebbles and sand, and substances of all sorts which the earth corrodes not even in a long time.” In the event of a contest between two villages, such marks, and “long-continued possession,” may enable the judge to find the limit; but “should there be a doubt,”



recourse must be had to the declarations of witnesses, who "must be examined concerning the landmarks in the presence of all the townsmen or villagers, or of both the contending parties." The evidence "must be recorded in writing," and when the witnesses are about to give it, "let them, putting earth on their heads, wearing chaplets of red flowers and clad in red mantles, be sworn by the reward of all their several good actions, to give correct evidence concerning the metes and bounds." If there be no witnesses, "four men who dwell on all the four sides of the two villages" must "make a decision concerning the boundary, being duly prepared, in the presence of the king." Should there be "no such neighbours on all sides, nor any men whose ancestors had lived there since the villages were built, nor other inhabitants of towns, who can give evidence on the limits, the judge must examine the following men who inhabit the woods:—hunters, fowlers, herdsmen, fishers, diggers for roots, catchers of snakes, gleaners, and other foresters." By such means the king may be able to fix the precise boundary between the two villages. When the dispute is between individuals "as to the bounds of arable fields, wells or pools, gardens and houses," the testimony of next neighbours on every side will suffice. As a last resource, should all other means fail, "let the king, knowing what is just and consulting the future benefit of both parties, make a bound line."

A.D. —

Boundaries.

The subject of husband and wife, though in some respects the most important of all, is not treated with much judgment in the Institutes of Menu. The wife in particular is degraded from her natural position, and made to be the slave rather than the companion of her husband. The very first announcement of this part of the Hindoo code is as follows:—"Day and night must women be held by their protectors in a state of dependence; but in recreations, though rather addicted to them, they may be left at their own disposal. Their fathers protect them in childhood, their husbands protect them in youth, their sons protect them in age; a woman is never fit for independence." Again, "Women must, above all, be restrained from the smallest illicit gratification: for not being thus restrained, they bring sorrow on both families; let husbands consider this as the supreme law ordained for all classes, and let them, how weak soever, diligently keep their wives under lawful restrictions." It is admitted indeed that "no man can wholly restrain woman by violent measures," and that "those women are truly secure who are guarded by their own good inclinations." Such inclinations, it would seem, they must have from nature, for they are precluded from the use of the means which, even the Brahmins being judges, are best fitted to instil them, it being expressly declared that "women have no business with the texts of the Veda." Their social position is only too significantly expressed by the classification adopted and the treatment enjoined in the following passage:—"For women, children, persons of crazy intellect, the old, the poor, and the infirm, the king shall order punishment with a small whip, a twig, or a rope."

Husband and wife.

Forms of
marriage.

Eight forms of marriage are mentioned, but two of them only to be stigmatized. Of these two, the last and basest, called *paisacha*, is where advantage is taken of a "damsel sleeping, or flushed with strong liquor, or disordered in her intellect;" the other, called *asura*, is vitiated by the mercenary spirit in which it is transacted, "the bridegroom having given as much wealth as he can afford to the father and paternal kinsmen, and to the damsel herself." In the four most approved forms the father simply gives his daughter away with certain prescribed ceremonies. One or other of these forms must be used when the bridegroom is a Brahmin. The fifth and sixth forms, called respectively *gandharvas* and *rachshases*, seem competent only to a soldier or member of the Cshatriya class. The former of these is the only one in which the inclinations of the bridegroom and bride receive effect, for it is defined to be "the reciprocal connection of a youth and a damsel, with mutual desire;" the latter not only requires no consent, but takes place in circumstances which preclude the possibility of it, since it is nothing less than "the seizure of a maiden by force from her home, while she weeps and calls for assistance, after her kinsmen and friends have been slain in battle, or wounded, and their houses broken open." As a general rule the father disposes of his daughter absolutely, and is under no obligation to consult her inclinations, though he is advised to give her "to an excellent and handsome youth of the same class," and reminded that though marriageable it is better she "should stay at home till her death than that he should ever give her in marriage to a bridegroom void of excellent qualities." The marriageable age was fixed at eight, but if after waiting three years beyond that period, she was not provided with a husband, she was entitled to choose for herself. In so acting "neither she nor the youth chosen commits any offence," though as a kind of penalty for the irregularity, she cannot without committing theft "carry with her the ornaments which she received from her father, nor those given by her mother or brethren." In all cases intermarriage between individuals of the same class is to be preferred, but the rule of law is unequally applied, and while men may, women are absolutely interdicted from marrying into classes inferior to their own.

Inferior posi-
tion of the
wife.

In married life the idea of equality is altogether scouted, and as Mrs. Spier justly says, "obedience is the beginning and the middle and the end of female duty."¹ Her proper business is to be "employed in the collection and expenditure of wealth, in purification and female duty, in the preparation of daily food, and the superintendence of household utensils," but her person and rights are wholly sunk in those of her husband, and she is classed with a son and slave as one of the three persons "declared by law to have no wealth exclusively their own; the wealth which they may earn is acquired for the man to whom they may belong." Marriage is said to be indissoluble, and what is called "the supreme law between husband and wife" is thus summarily expressed:—

¹ *Life in Ancient India*, page 169.



"Let mutual fidelity continue until death." But even in this point gross inequality is apparent. A husband, though married in legal form, may abandon his wife on the ground of blemish or disease fraudulently concealed from him. He may also supersede her by another wife on the vague charges of drinking spirituous liquors, acting immorally, showing hatred, being mischievous and wasting his property, or speaking unkindly. In all these cases, indeed, some degree of blame attaches to her, but she may in like manner be superseded when the worst that can be said of her is that she is unfortunate. Thus she may be superseded in the eighth year if she has proved barren, or in the tenth if all her children are dead, and in the eleventh if she has borne only daughters. Should she resent this harsh usage, and depart in wrath from the house, "she must either instantly be confined, or abandoned in the presence of the whole family." On the other hand, whatever be the husband's faults, though "inobstant of approved usages, or enamoured of another woman, or devoid of good qualities," he "must constantly be revered as a god by a virtuous wife." Though addicted to gaming, fond of spirituous liquors, or diseased, she is liable, if she neglect him, to be "deprived of her ornaments and household furniture," and cannot get quit of him except in the not very probable case of his not only deserting her, but living abroad without reasonable cause for at least three years. On the dissolution of marriage by death the woman is still made the principal sufferer. He, if the survivor, may immediately supply her place, but she, if once a widow, is expected to spend the remainder of her life in the painful austerities "becoming a woman devoted to one only husband," and must not "even pronounce the name of another man." Nothing, indeed, is said of any obligation to submit to the horrible sacrifice of *suttee*, but her second marriage, if not absolutely illegal, is stigmatized in such language as the following:—"The marriage of a widow" is not "even named in the laws concerning marriage." Another practice, however, not unknown to the Jewish law, that of raising up issue to a brother, appears, though not without considerable hesitation, to have been permitted, not only to the higher classes, in the special case of a husband dying "after troth verbally plighted, but before consummation," but to all Sudras, whenever the husband died without male issue. The practice, while permitted, being reprobated as "fit only for cattle," afterwards fell into desuetude.

Relation
of husband
and wife.

Immediately connected with the law of husband and wife is that of inheritance. In the Hindoo code the rights of succession are considered subservient to the due performance of obsequies to ancestors, and hence the heir to whom the performance of these obsequies properly belongs is always preferred. To this is to be ascribed the important place occupied by the eldest son as the representative of the family. "By the eldest, at the moment of his birth, the father, having begotten a son, discharges his debt to his own progenitors; the eldest son, therefore, ought to manage the whole patrimony," and the other

Law of
succession.

sons "may live under him as under their father." If they do not choose so to live, a division takes place according to certain rules. Two modes of division are mentioned as being equally legal. According to the one, a deduction from the whole patrimony is first made—the eldest son receiving a twentieth, together with the best chattel, the youngest son an eightieth, and each intermediate son a fortieth—and then the residue is distributed in equal shares. If the division is made without any previous deduction, the eldest son receives a double share, the next born a share and a half, and the younger sons a share each. Married daughters appear to be excluded, but the unmarried daughters are provided for by their brothers, each of whom is bound to contribute for this purpose "a fourth part of his own distinct share," and "shall be degraded" if he refuse. The existence of more wives than one gives rise to curious complications. One of these is stated as follows:—"A younger son being born of a first married wife, after an elder son had been born of a wife last married, it may be a doubt, in that case, how the division shall be made." The decision is that the son of the elder wife is to be preferred, but in a less degree than he would have been if he had been also the eldest born.

A man who has no son may appoint his daughter to raise up a son for him, by saying "the male child who shall be born from her in wedlock shall be mine, for the purpose of performing my obsequies." In this case the son succeeds to all the wealth of his maternal grandfather: should she have no son she takes the succession in her own right, for, as it is justly asked, "How, if a man have no son, can any inherit his property but a daughter, who is closely united with his own soul?" Here, however, a question arises. Suppose that the father, after a son is thus raised up to him by his daughter, has a son of his own body, which of the two sons shall be his heir? The answer is, that they shall divide the heritage between them. Failing either of these sons, a man may obtain a son by adoption. Such a son enjoys all the rights of a son in the family into which he has been adopted, but "must never claim the family and estate of his natural father." In the event of there being no son, actual or adopted, and no son raised up by a brother or kinsman, as under the Jewish law, a series of substitutes, called sons only by an extraordinary legal fiction, are provided, "for the sake of preventing a failure of obsequies," such a failure being regarded by a Hindoo as the greatest of all possible calamities. Instead of attending farther to these substitutes, it is of more consequence to trace the order of succession should there be no son of any kind nor daughter to take it. First in order come grandsons, then nephews, then parents, then brothers, then grandfathers and grandmothers, then kinsmen so near as to be entitled to perform obsequies to ancestors. On complete failure of kindred, the spiritual preceptor, the pupil, or the Brahmins succeed. Last of all comes the king, as *ultimus hæres*, subject, however, to the important limitation, that the deceased was not a Brahmin, for "the property of a Brahmin shall never be taken by the king:"



this is a fixed law, but the wealth of all other classes, on the failure of all heirs, the king may take. It is rather singular, that though the right of a father to dispose absolutely of his property, or distribute it among his children, in his lifetime, is implied by various passages in the Institutes, there is not the least hint of his being able to dispose of it by will. A.D. —

The criminal law of the Hindoos is much more defective than the civil, and is characterized throughout by partiality, caprice, and cruelty. Punishments are regulated not so much by the heinousness of the offence as the cast of the offender; and thus, while some of the worst crimes escape with comparative impunity, the most venial are visited with barbarous mutilations and tortures. The principal heads under which criminal law is arranged are, slander and assault, larceny, robbery and other violence, adultery, and gaming. This arrangement is arbitrary and incomplete, classing together crimes which have little in common, and omitting many by which the peace of society is disturbed and individuals are seriously injured. A few specimens selected from each head will show the spirit which pervades the whole. Criminal law

Defamatory words are punished by fine if the offender belong to a superior class, and corporeally if he be a Sudra. In fixing the fine, the rule is to deal most leniently with the Brahmin who offends, and most severely with the person with whom he is offended. Thus, a Brahmin for slandering a soldier was fined fifty panas, for slandering a merchant twenty-five, and for slandering a Sudra twelve. If he was slandered, the fine imposed on the soldier was 100 panas, and on the merchant 150 or 200. For the very same offence "a mechanic or servile man" was whipped. He might even be glad to escape so easily, for, if convicted of insulting "the twice-born with gross invectives," or of mentioning "their names and classes with contumely," he is in the former case to "have his tongue slit," and in the latter to have "an iron style ten fingers long thrust red hot into his mouth." With regard to assault the general rule is, that "with whatever member a low-born man shall assault, or hurt a superior, even that member of his must be slit." Accordingly, "he who raises his hand or a staff against another shall have his hand cut; and he who kicks another in wrath shall have an incision made in his foot." Even the meaning of the word "assault" is stretched, for the purpose of making it reach offences not properly included under it. In this way it is provided that "a man of the lowest class who shall insolently place himself on the same seat with one of the highest, shall either be banished with a mark on his hinder parts, or the king shall cause a gash to be made on his buttock." For a variety of insults in more aggravated forms, lips, hands, and other offending members are to be similarly gashed. In some cases treatment which might amount to assault, may be justified by the authority of the person who inflicts it, and be nothing more than legitimate chastisement. The only case mentioned, apparently by way of illustration, is so singular as to be worth quoting. It runs thus:—"A Defamation.

wife, a son, a servant, a pupil, and a whole brother may be corrected, when they commit faults, with a rope or the small shoot of a cane; but on the back part of their bodies, and not on a noble part by any means."

Theft.

In introducing the subject of theft and robbery, the code labours to impress the king with the importance of the duty of restraining them, reminding him that "by restraining thieves and robbers his fame and domain are increased;" and that a king "who receives taxes in kind or in value, market duties and tolls, the small daily presents for his household, and fines for offences," without protecting his people by the punishment of offenders, "falls directly to a region of horror." On the other hand, it is gravely asserted, not only that "by restraining the bad and by encouraging the good, kings are perpetually made pure," but that "men who have committed offences, and have received from kings the punishment due to them, go pure to heaven, and become as clear as those who have done well." Minor thefts are punished by fine, and it is very remarkable that this is a penalty which the king himself may incur, for it is expressly said that "where another man of lower birth would be fined one *pana*,¹ the king shall be fined a thousand" "This," it is added, "is a sacred rule." But who, it may be asked, was to enforce it? The commentator answers: "He shall give the fine to the priests, or cast it into the river." In more serious cases of theft a fine was not considered sufficient, and imprisonment, confinement by fetters, and various kinds of corporal punishment were added. These last, according to the usual practice, consisted of mutilations, such as the amputation of a hand or a limb. It deserves to be noticed, that in imposing fines for theft the rule adopted is much more equitable than in the case of assault, inasmuch as the amount is increased with the rank of the criminal, the fine of a Sudra being only eight fold, while that of a Vaisya is sixteen, that of a Cshatriya two-and-thirty, and that of a Brahmin four-and-sixty fold." The object, doubtless, was to deter the Brahmin from the commission of a crime by which, as it is essentially mean and despicable, he reflected disgrace on his order.

Violence.

The next branch of criminal law considered in the code is that relating to crimes of violence. It is disposed of in a few sentences, and is only deserving of notice on account of the manner in which a just self-defence is sanctioned. While it is said that "neither on account of friendship, nor for the sake of great lucre, shall the king dismiss the perpetrators of violent acts, who spread terror on all creatures," it is distinctly intimated that "the twice-born may take arms when their duty is obstructed by force," and "in their own defence;" and that "in a war for a just cause and in defence of a woman or a priest, he who kills justly commits no crime." That there may be no mistake as to what is meant by killing justly, it is explained to be "killing an assassin who attempts to kill, whether in public or in private."

The subject of adultery is treated at large, and, it must be confessed, with

¹ The *pana* weighs about four dwts., and if of copper, is at present equal in value to eighty cowries.



more particularity than delicacy. One thing deserving of notice is the importance attached to what are called "overt acts of adulterous inclinations," such as talking with the wife of another man "at a place of pilgrimage, in a forest, or a grove, or at the confluence of rivers;" sending her "flowers or perfumes;" sporting and jesting with her; touching "her apparel and ornaments;" and sitting "with her on the same couch." In all such cases a fine is exigible. A very proper distinction, however, is made. If a man before noted for adultery "converses in secret with the wife of another," his guilt is presumed and he incurs the penalty; but "a man, not before noted, who thus converses with her for some reasonable cause, shall pay no fine, since in him there is no transgression." In like manner it is intimated that husbands have themselves to blame if their wives are not "most especially guarded;" and that therefore the laws against adultery "relate not to the wives of public dancers and singers, or of such base men as live by intrigues of their wives; men who either carry women to others, or lying concealed at home, permit them to hold a culpable intercourse." The actual commission of the crime is punished with little regard to equity, the punishment being generally light in proportion to the rank of the male, and rigorous in proportion to the rank of the female offender. Hence a Brahmin, even for forcing a guarded woman, incurs only a fine, and at the very worst is subjected to "ignominious tonsure;" whereas, "should a wife, proud of her family, and the great qualities of her kinsmen, actually violate the duty which she owes to her lord," her sentence is "to be devoured by dogs in a place much frequented;" and that of her paramour to be placed "on an iron bed well heated, under which the executioners shall throw logs continually till the sinful wretch be there burned." When the crime is committed under similar circumstances by a soldier or a merchant, the form of the punishment is slightly varied, and the adulterer is "burned in a fire of dry grass or reeds." After treating of the subject of "gaming either with inanimate or animated things, and recommending the king to exclude it wholly from his realm, because "both those modes of play cause destruction to princes," and to "punish corporally at discretion both the gamester and the keeper of a gaming-house," the code enumerates various crimes not included under the previous titles, and specifies their punishments. Ministers "who are employed in public affairs, and, inflamed by the blaze of wealth, mar the business of any party concerned," are to be stripped of all their property. Such as "forge royal edicts, cause dissensions among the great ministers," or join the king's enemies, are to be put to death. Whatever business "has at any time been transacted according to law" is to be considered as "finally settled," and the king should refuse to re-open it; but when his ministers or a judge have acted illegally it is his duty to re-examine the case, and fine them for their misconduct.

For the purpose of detecting crime, and bringing offenders to justice, a system of internal police must be established. In all communities there are

Police and espionage.

"two sorts of rogues—the open and the concealed;" open, who "subsist by cheating in various marketable commodities;" and concealed, "who steal and rob in forests and the like secret places." There are also "receivers of bribes, extorters of money by threats, debasers of metals, gamesters, fortune-tellers, impostors, and professors of palmistry;" in short, "scoundrels with depraved souls, who secretly prowls over this earth"—worthless men, all the more dangerous from often "bearing the outward signs of the worthy." As a security against their machinations, and for the prevention of robberies, the king must employ soldiers, stationary and patrolling, as well as secret watchmen at "much-frequented places, cisterns of water, bake-houses, the lodging of harlots, taverns, and victualling shops, squares where four ways meet, large well-known trees, assemblies and public spectacles, old courtyards, thickets, the houses of artists, empty mansions, groves and gardens." It will also be requisite to employ "able spies." The description given of them is curious. They are to be men who were "once thieves," and thus "knowing the various machinations of rogues, associate with them and follow them," for the purpose of enabling the king to "detect and draw them forth." Even their mode of proceeding is detailed. On some pretext or other, such as the promise of "dainty food and gratifications," the spies are to procure an assembly of rogues. Being thus brought within the grasp of the law, the king is to seize them all at once, as well as any of their gang whose suspicions may have deterred them from joining the assembly, and do summary justice by putting them to death, "with their friends and kinsmen, paternal and maternal."

Prisons.

After recommending a number of other executions, conceived in the same sanguinary spirit, the code disposes of a variety of minor delinquencies, properly falling within the department of police; such as taking away the water of an ancient pool, obstructing a water-course, breaking down a foot-bridge, or removing a public flag. For all these fines are appointed. In other cases offenders are punished by imprisonment. Of course, prisons are necessary, but the only information given with regard to them is, that they are to be placed "near a public road, where offenders may be seen wretched or disfigured." From the subject of police the code adverts to various forms of meditated crime, which, though they may have failed of their effect, deserve punishment. Those particularly mentioned are, "sacrifices to destroy innocent men," "machinations with roots," and "witcheries." From these an abrupt transition is made to several fraudulent practices. After specifying the sale of bad grain for good, the placing of good seed at the top of the bag to conceal the bad below, and the removal of known landmarks, and declaring that those guilty of such offences "must suffer such corporal punishment as will disfigure them," the code concludes its denunciations of fraud with the following startling sentence:—"But the most pernicious of all deceivers is a goldsmith who commits frauds; the king shall order him to be cut piecemeal with razors." The barbarous punishment

Fraudulent practices.



thus reserved for the goldsmith may be thought justifiable from the difficulty of detecting his frauds, and the value of the materials with which he is intrusted; but most persons will see in this shocking punishment, only an exemplification of the barbarous manner in which criminal justice was, and still is administered by Hindoo sovereigns.

Another important branch of government, not yet considered, is its foreign policy, or the measures rendered necessary by the relations, peaceful or warlike, which it may bear to other states. For it must always be remembered that India did not form one single undivided empire, but was composed of a number of separate and independent sovereignties, always jealous of each other, and often engaged in open hostilities. The importance attached to the office of ambassador, and the qualifications necessary for the performance of its duties, have already been adverted to. Incidental notice has also been taken of the division of the kingdom into military districts, and the appointment of a commander-in-chief with a "company of guards," evidently of the nature of a standing army, to act as "the protectors of the realm." The leading principle by which the king is to be guided in his foreign policy is to be "always ready for action." While acting on all occasions "without guile and never with insincerity," he is to keep himself "ever on his guard." In the exercise of this caution he is to consider "the power immediately beyond him, and the favourer of that power" as hostile, "the power next beyond" as amicable, and all powers still more remote as neutral. His troops are to be "constantly exercised; his prowess constantly displayed; what he ought to secure, constantly secured; and the weakness of his foe constantly investigated." At the same time he must be careful not to disclose his own "vulnerable part." On this subject the advice is, "Like a tortoise, let him draw in his members under the shell of concealment, and diligently let him repair any breach that may be made in it; like a heron, let him muse on gaining advantages; like a lion, let him put forth his strength; like a wolf, let him creep towards his prey; like a hare, let him double to secure his retreat." In short, "Let him so arrange all his affairs, that no ally, neutral prince, or enemy may obtain any advantage over him; this, in a few words, is the sum of political wisdom." He must not be satisfied, however, with acting on the defensive. Glory and conquest rather than peace must be his object, since "those rulers of the earth, who, desirous of defeating each other, exert their utmost strength in battle, without ever averting their faces, ascend after death directly to heaven." With such a stimulus added to the innate ambition of rulers, it is not strange that war seems to be contemplated as their natural and necessary employment. Accordingly, the principles on which the king is to act are thus inculcated: "What he has not gained, let him strive to gain; what he has acquired, let him preserve with care; what he preserves, let him augment; and what he has augmented, let him bestow on the deserving."

In accordance with these principles, the existence of war being assumed, a



War.

very minute and curious account is given of the manner in which it is to be carried on. The king having made all the necessary preparations for conquest, is to invade the enemy's country in the fine months when autumnal or vernal crops are on the ground. He may indeed set out "even in other seasons, when he has a clear prospect of victory, and when any disaster has befallen his foe." Having secured "the three sorts of ways," that is, over water, on plains, and through forests, and placed what is called "his six-fold army" (elephants, cavalry, cars, infantry, officers, and attendants) in complete military form, he is to "proceed by fit journeys toward the metropolis of his enemy," keeping "much on his guard against every secret friend in the service of the hostile prince, and against emissaries who go and return." The line of march, as stated in the text, and explained by the commentator in the words here placed in brackets, is curious: "On his march let the king form his troops either like a staff [in an even column]; like a wain [in a wedge with the apex foremost]; like a boar [in a rhomb, with the van and rear narrow and the centre broad]; like a *macara* [a sea monster, that is, in a double triangle with apices joined]; like a needle [in a long line]; or like the bird of Vishnu [in a rhomboid, with the wings far extended]." The king's own position, meanwhile, is more secure than dignified, for he is always to conceal himself "in the midst of a squadron like a lotus-flower."

Military tactics.

Having arrived at the scene of action the king is to proceed thus:—"On all sides let him station troops of soldiers in whom he confides, distinguished by known colours and other marks, who are excellent both in sustaining a charge and in charging; who are fearless and incapable of desertion. Let him at his pleasure order a few men to engage in a close phalanx, or a large number of warriors in loose ranks; and having formed them in a needle or in a thunderbolt, let him give the orders for battle," fighting on a plain "with his armed cars and horses," on watery places "with manned boats and elephants," on ground full of trees and shrubs "with bows," and on cleared ground "with swords and targets and other weapons." When the troops are formed in array, he is to encourage them (with short animated speeches), and then "try them completely" by risking the encounter. Sometimes it may be more advisable to block up the enemy. In that case the king is to "sit encamped and lay waste the hostile country," spoiling its "grass, water, and wood;" destroying "the pools, wells, and trenches," harassing the foe by day and alarming him by night. Meanwhile he is secretly to bring over to his party as many of the enemy as he can, and acquaint himself by means of spies of all their movements, and "when a fortunate moment is offered by Heaven" give battle, "pushing on to conquest and abandoning fear." This bold course, however, he is not to adopt till other expedients—negotiation, well-applied gifts, and creating divisions—have failed; since there is always hazard in a decisive action, "and victory or defeat are not surely foreseen on either side, when two armies engage in the field."



When a battle does take place the rules of honourable warfare must be observed. No combatant is to "smite his foe with weapons concealed, nor with arrows mischievously barbed, nor with poisoned arrows, nor with darts blazing with fire." Neither is one who is mounted "to strike his enemy alighted on the ground; nor an effeminate man; nor one with closed palms (suing for life); nor one whose hair is loose; nor one who sits down; nor one who says 'I am thy captive.'" In these, and various similar cases which are enumerated, mercy is to be shown. With the exception of gold and silver, all the articles taken in war are "the lawful prizes of the man who takes them;" but he "must lay the most valuable before the king," and the king "should distribute among the whole army what has not been separately taken." Should the country against which the expedition was undertaken be conquered, the king must not play the tyrant in it, but conciliate favour by respecting "the deities adored in it and their virtuous priests, by distributing largesses, and by loudly proclaiming a full exemption from terror." In settling the future government of the country he may send a prince of the royal race to rule over it, not leaving him, however, to exercise his own discretion, but giving him "precise instructions," and taking care, moreover, that the laws previously in force shall be maintained. The confiscation of property causing hatred in those who lose it, and love in those to whom it is granted, "may be laudable or blamable on different occasions." Instead of ruling the conquered country as a province added to his former territories, the king may find it more expedient "to form an alliance with the vanquished prince, and proceed in union with him, using diligent circumspection," since "by gaining wealth and territory a king acquires not so great an increase of strength, as by obtaining a firm ally, who, though weak, may hereafter be powerful." It may happen that the expedition proves unfortunate, and the king, sustaining a serious reverse, is obliged instead of attacking other territories to defend his own. In that event, the expediency of abandoning "even a salubrious and fertile country, where cattle continually increase," for the sake of preserving himself, is easily perceived, but some doubt may not unreasonably be felt as to the soundness and good taste of the following singular advice:—"Against misfortune let him preserve his wealth; at the expense of wealth let him preserve his wife; but let him at all events preserve himself even at the hazard of his wife and his riches."

Before quitting the subject of Hindoo government, it may be necessary to refer to the more important changes which have been introduced into its different departments in comparatively modern times, and of which notice has not yet been taken. In its form the government remains as despotic as ever, while the administration of it has in some respects become more arbitrary. Instead of a regular council, composed of a fixed number of members, a prime minister, probably indebted for the appointment not so much to his qualifications as to caprice, favouritism, and court intrigue, rules almost as

Modern
changes in
Hindoo gov-
ernment.

Modern
 changes in
 Hindoo gov-
 ernment.

absolutely as his master over the heads of the different departments. The military divisions no longer exist, but the civil divisions bear a considerable resemblance to those of Menu's time, though the name of governments has been substituted for the highest lordships. The townships themselves, however, as already shown, still subsist. The burden of taxation has been greatly increased. The revenue exigible from land, which could not exceed a sixth, except in times of war or public distress, when it might be raised to a fourth, has been increased by means of taxes and cesses, falling chiefly on cultivators, till it amounts usually to a half, and seldom falls below a third of the whole produce. Worse than this, demands are made on frivolous pretexts, and the villagers thus exposed to arbitrary exactions can only evade them by concealing their income, bribing collectors, or throwing their lands out of cultivation. The only effect of this monstrous system is to produce oppression on the one hand, and fraud and wretchedness on the other. These evils are greatly aggravated by farming out the revenue to the highest bidder who offers sufficient security to the treasury. The contractor, by subletting, introduces a body of middlemen of different grades, each of whom endeavours to squeeze out a larger amount than his immediate superior, till at last all their extortions fall with accumulated weight on the poor cultivator.

Changes in
 law.

The law though still based on the code of Menu, has been much modified by the interpretations of commentators, who have thus become the founders of distinct law schools, named from the provinces in which their authority is recognized. There is thus the school of Bengal, of Mathila or North Behar, of Benares, of Maharashtra or the Mahratta country, and of Draveda or south of the peninsula. Many of the changes introduced are the natural result of a more complicated state of society; but others of them are very questionable improvements. Thus, marriage formerly allowed between unequal castes is now prohibited, and the power of a father over his property, particularly when it is ancestral, is greatly restricted if not wholly annulled. Indeed, the Draveda school, making no distinction between property which the father has inherited and property which he has himself acquired, places him in respect of the power of disposal on the same footing as his sons, and gives him no privilege superior to theirs, except that of present enjoyment. The power of making a will, of which no hint is given by Menu, is still denied by all the schools except that of Bengal, which admits it only in certain cases. The criminal law has fallen into desuetude, but unfortunately nothing better has been substituted for it; and punishments are regulated partly by custom and partly by arbitrary will. Regular law courts have also been in a great measure superseded by commissions, the members of which obtaining them by court favour, usually exercise their powers in accordance with the wishes of their patrons. They are therefore interested partizans rather than impartial judges. Almost the only cases in which justice can be said to be impartially administered is by bodies of arbitra-



tors called *panchayets*, when the parties themselves select them and agree to abide by their decision. A.D. —

In no department have the changes been so great as in that of war. From the account given above it is manifest, that at the date of the code, the art itself was in a very rude state. Every expedition being limited to a few weeks' duration, when the weather was favourable, was an isolated inroad rather than a campaign, and therefore could not form part of a systematic and comprehensive plan, to be pursued through a series of years till the object was accomplished. A marked improvement in this desultory mode of warfare was apparent in the resistance which the Hindoos made to the early Mahometan invaders. Besides forming extensive confederacies, they brought powerful armies into the field; and when one campaign ended, kept these armies ready to commence another as soon as the season for renewed operations should arrive. As yet, however, the implements of war were rude and ineffective. Any position strong by nature might by a little art be rendered impregnable. The use of ordnance, by introducing a new and powerful engine of destruction, made it impossible to act any longer on the previously received axiom that "one bowman placed on a wall is a match in war for a hundred enemies, and a hundred for ten thousand." For the last great improvement, the introduction of regular battalions, by which the whole face of war has been changed, the Hindoos are indebted to their European conquerors.

Changes in mode of carrying on war.

Though a considerable advance has been made in the mere art of war, discipline has rather degenerated, and the generosity and mercy so strongly inculcated on the victor by Menu are seldom experienced by the vanquished. Owing to the longer duration of campaigns the wants of armies are greatly increased, and the numbers assembled are out of all proportion to the effective force. On the march they form a disorderly crowd spread over the country for ten or twelve miles in length, by two in breadth, while parties scattered to greater distances scour the fields and villages for forage and plunder. "The main body," to borrow Mr. Elphinstone's graphic description, "is in some places dense, and in others rare, composed of elephants and camels, horse and foot, carts, palanquins, and bullock-carriages, loaded oxen, porters, women, children, droves of cattle, goats, sheep, and asses, all in the greatest conceivable disorder, and all enveloped in a thick cloud of dust that rises high into the atmosphere, and may be seen for miles. When there are regular infantry they march in a body, or at least by regiments; and the guns form a long line, occasioning continual obstructions, from the badness of the roads or the breaking down of carriages. The rest of the troops straggle among the baggage. Two tall standards, accompanied by kettle-drums (all perhaps on elephants), represent a body which ought to be from 500 to 5000 horse, but are followed by from five to fifty. The other horsemen belonging to them are riding singly or in groups, each, perhaps, with his spear poised on his shoulder, to the imminent danger of

A Hindoo army on march.



those who press behind, while the owner is joking with his companion, or singing in a voice that may be heard amidst the surrounding din." With all this want of order, "good intelligence and numbers of light troops" prevent surprise; and "these apparently unwieldy masses," even when warring with European troops, "have often gained great advantages from the secrecy and celerity of their movements."¹

A Hindoo
camp.

When the ground for encampment is reached, the place allotted to each chief or department is marked by conspicuous flags. The camp itself is thus described:—"The camp, when pitched, is a mixture of regularity and disorder. The bazaars are long and regular streets, with shops of all descriptions, as in a city. The guns and disciplined infantry are in lines, and the rest scattered about, without any visible regard to arrangement. The tents are mostly white, but often striped with red, green, or blue, and sometimes wholly of these colours. Those of the poor are low and of black woollen; sometimes merely a blanket of that description thrown over three spears stuck in the ground, though the owners of spears are seldom so ill-lodged. The tents of the great are splendid; they are disposed in courts formed of canvas screens, and some are large and lofty for public receptions, while others are low and of moderate size, with quilted, and sometimes double walls, that secure privacy, while they exclude the dust and wind. They are connected by covered passages, and contain every accommodation that would be met with in a palace." The Hindoos excel particularly in artillery, and hence the most important part of their battles is a cannonade. Skirmishing is also a favourite mode of fighting; but the most characteristic mode, and usually also the most decisive, is a general charge of cavalry. When they move on at speed "the thunder of the ground, the flashing of their arms, the brandishing of their spears, the agitation of their banners rushing through the wind, and the rapid approach of such a countless multitude, produce sensations of grandeur which the imagination cannot surpass." At first the whole appear coming at full speed against their adversaries' front, but by a sudden and dexterous movement part wheel inwards so as to bring the charge at once on front and flanks. This manoeuvre, however, is more grand than effective, and is easily resisted by disciplined troops standing in regular array. In the art of conducting sieges the Hindoos have made little progress; and when places of any strength fall, it is far less frequently by regular assault than by blockade, surprise, or an unsuccessful sally.

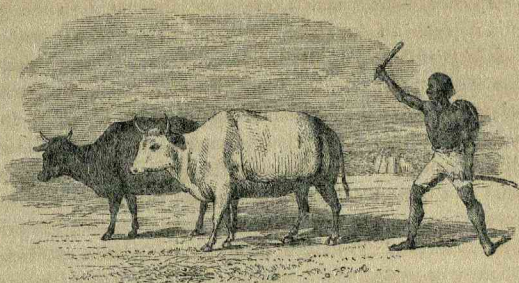
Hindoo com-
missariat.

What may be called the commissary department is very efficient. Though the government scarcely interferes, the supplies of armies and camps are in general abundant. The *brinjaries* or carriers of grain, collecting from all quarters, and often in distant countries, sell it wholesale to the larger dealers, while smaller dealers buy from the inhabitants of the surrounding districts. These regular sources of supply are eked out by plundering, which is carried on in the most

¹ Elphinstone's *India*, vol. i. p. 153.

merciless manner. The inhabitants of the village, aware of what awaits them, flee with whatever property they can carry; the rest is pillaged. Doors and rafters are carried off for firewood; the ground is probed by iron rods to find the

pits where grain is buried, or dug over in the hope of discovering treasure. Desolation spreads on every side. "In a tract often traversed by armies the villages are in ruins and deserted; and bushes of different ages scattered over



BRINJARIE.—From Von Orlich's Travels.

the open country show that cultivated fields are rapidly turning into jungle."

In the code no information is given as to the pay of soldiers. By the present practice cavalry are sometimes paid by assignments of the rent or revenue of particular districts, but more frequently by direct payments from the treasury. These payments are made either to military leaders, who receive according to a fixed rate for each soldier serving under them, or to individual troopers, who, providing their own horse and accoutrements, and being generally fine men, well mounted, expect more than ordinary pay. Bodies of cavalry are sometimes raised, equipped, and maintained entirely at the expense of the government. Being thus entirely dependent on it, they rank lower than the single troopers, but often surpass them both in obedience and general efficiency. The best foot are also mercenaries, from the banks of the Jumna, Ganges, and Indus.

Mode of paying soldiers.

CHAPTER IV.

Philosophy, Science, Literature, and Fine Arts of the Hindoos.



QUESTIONS of an abstract and metaphysical nature being intimately connected with the theology of the Hindoos, have at all times received a large share of attention from those among them who were most distinguished by acuteness and originality of mind. The existence of a Supreme Being; the mode of his existence; his creative power and agency; the nature of matter, whether created, uncreated, or merely illusive; the nature of mind, its capability of separate exist-



Chief sub-
jects of
Hindoo
philosophy.

ence, its various faculties, and the laws according to which it exercises them; its volitions, whether free or necessitated; the distinctions between truth and falsehood, virtue and vice, whether essential and eternal, or only conventional and temporary;—these and kindred speculations form the great bulk of Hindoo philosophy. In such matters where there was no proper recognition of any infallible authority to which the final appeal could be made, unanimity, or even the least approach to it, was impossible, and hence a great number of different schools have arisen, sometimes agreeing, but far more frequently at variance with each other in regard to fundamental principles. These schools, if their subdivisions and ramifications are included, are very numerous; but Mr. Colebrooke,¹ who is the highest authority on the subject, has limited those which seem entitled to special notice to the following six:—1. The prior Mimansa, founded by Jaimini. 2. The latter Mimansa or Vedanta, attributed to Vyasa. 3. The Niyaya, or logical school of Gotama. 4. The atomic school of Canade. 5. The atheistical school of Capila. 6. The theistical school of Patanjali. This number may be still further reduced; for the first and second, the third and fourth, and the fifth and sixth, properly form only three separate schools, distinguished by the respective names of the Vedanta, the Niyaya, and the Sankhya. Premising that all these schools have professedly one common object in view—to teach the art of attaining happiness by setting the soul free from corporeal incumbrances—we proceed to give a very summary account of them; an account all the more summary from its being given under the conviction, that while it is difficult to make it intelligible, it is scarcely possible to make it interesting.

The Vedanta
school.

The Vedanta is considered as the orthodox school, because it professes to teach nothing that is not contained expressly or inferentially in the Veda, and constantly endeavours to strengthen the reasonings employed by appealing to its texts. Indeed the prior or Purva Mimansa is rather a theological than a philosophical school, since its main object is to apply the art of reasoning to the Hindoo scriptures, and ascertain the duties which they enjoin. The latter or Uttara Mimansa is the only Vedanta philosophical school properly so called. Vyasa, the alleged compiler of the Vedas, is claimed as its founder. Were this claim good it would carry back its origin to twelve or fourteen centuries before the Christian era. This, however, seems to be a common Hindoo exaggeration, since the writings in which this system is first explained under its present form are not earlier than the sixth century B. C., and none of the numerous treatises and commentaries written in defence or explanation of it appeared more than 900 years ago. The Vedanta system is pantheism in its plainest and most absolute form. It sets out with the important doctrine that “God is the omnipotent and omniscient cause of the existence, continuance, and dissolution of the universe; and then deprives the doctrine of all its importance by confounding him with his creatures. Individual souls, though created

¹ *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. i. p. 19.



by an act of his will, have no separate existence. They issued from him like sparks from a flame, and being still portions of his substance, will return, and be finally absorbed by it. The separate activity of the soul is more apparent than real; for, though it acts conformably to its own volitions, these are only links in a chain of causes extending backwards to infinity.

The soul when struck off from the divine substance is "deposited in a succession of sheaths enveloping one another like the coats of an onion." In the first sheath intellect is associated with the five senses; in the second mind; and in the third the organs of sense and the vital faculties are added. The fourth sheath is the gross external body, which is shuffled off at death, while the other three constitute a subtle body which is not affected by death, and accompanies the soul through all its transmigrations to its ultimate absorption. Preparatory to these transmigrations, the soul enveloped in its three sheaths goes to the moon, and being there clothed with an aqueous body, falls in rain. In this form it is absorbed by some vegetable, and is thence transferred, apparently by being used as food, into an animal embryo. The number of subsequent changes which it undergoes before final liberation by absorption depends on its deeds.

A.D. —
Nature of the soul according to the Vedanta system.

On the subject of matter there is some difference of opinion among the Vedantis. They all hold that it is not eternal, and that it is entirely a creation of the divine will; but they are not agreed whether it is in itself a real substance or merely a semblance and illusion. Those of the former opinion say, that the Supreme Being having created matter from his own essence, formed the world out of it, and left it to make its varied impressions on the mind; those of the latter opinion cannot admit the creation of matter, because they deny that matter exists, and maintain that the thing to which we give the name, instead of possessing inherent qualities, is nothing more than a series of impressions produced directly and immediately by divine agency. This latter view, with all its absurdities, is adopted by the great majority of the Vedantis, and hence their prevailing creed must be first, that the Supreme Being has divided himself into an infinite number of portions, and then by giving to each of these portions a consciousness of individual and separate existence, has deluded them with a host of imaginary beliefs. As human souls, according to this hypothesis, always remain integral parts of the Divinity, it necessarily follows that the Supreme Being must, while producing these delusions, share in them, and consequently be at once the deceived and the deceiver. Where all appearances are thus at variance with fact, an universal ignorance must prevail, and it is therefore easy to understand why the Vedanta school attach so much importance to knowledge as the effectual means of working out the soul's liberation. In fact, the great object must be to unlearn as well as learn—unlearn by suppressing all natural beliefs, and learn by assuming that every thing is the very opposite of what it seems. The individual, whatever he imagines himself to be, has no separate existence, and all the world around him

Its views in regard to matter.



is illusion. Brahm, the Supreme Being, is the one only existence, and therefore so long as a man entertains any idea of his own individuality he is in ignorance. It is only when he has succeeded in identifying himself with Brahm, and in getting rid of the habit of making himself even a subject of thought," that he becomes truly enlightened. The magnitude of the object at which he is thus to aim contrasts curiously with the means which he is instructed to employ in order to accomplish it. Meditation will do something, but much more may be expected from postures, and mutterings, and suppressions of breath.

The Niyaya
school of
philosophy.

The Niyaya school deals much more in dialectics than in metaphysics; and aims rather to furnish a system of rules for the investigation of truth, than to give a dogmatical exposition of the truth itself. It consists, as has already been observed, of two leading branches, headed respectively by Gotama and Canade, and so closely connected that the one is usually considered to be the complement of the other. The agreement, however, is not so much in the subjects of which they treat as of the principles recognized in the treatment of them. Gotama's text, forming a system of logic, or what may be called the philosophy of reasoning, consists of a collection of sutras or aphorisms, divided into five books, on which his disciples have written many volumes of commentaries; Canade's text, consisting also of sutras, similarly commented upon, assumes the existence of eternal atoms, by the aggregation of which a transient world has been constructed, and his system has therefore been designated by the names both of the atomic theory and the philosophy of individuality.

Gotama's
logic.

Gotama, confining himself chiefly to the investigation of truth, and the different kinds of evidence by which it is established, enumerates sixteen logical categories in the following order:—1. Proof; 2. The object of proof; 3. Doubt; 4. Motive; 5. Instance or example; 6. Demonstrated truth; 7. Regular argument or syllogism; 8. Proof by negation or *reductio ad absurdum*; 9. Determination or certainty; 10. Thesis or discussion; 11. Controversy; 12. Objection; 13. Fallacy; 14. Perverse construction or sophism; 15. Futility or evasion; 16. Confutation. This list is very complete, and shows that Gotama had viewed his subject in all its principal bearings, but the heads are too numerous to be here separately explained, and a few must therefore be selected for illustration.

Proof.

Proof or evidence is of four kinds—perception; inference, obtained either by analysis in ascending from the effect to the cause, or by synthesis in descending from the cause to the effect, or by analogy; comparison, and affirmation or testimony. The objects of proof are classed under twelve heads, each of which is discussed at length. Full scope is thus given for the enunciation and explanation of the peculiar views by which the Niyaya school is characterized. The objects of proof, indeed, must necessarily include all the possible subjects of knowledge, and accordingly we find in the enumerated list of them the soul, the body, the senses and the objects of them, the will, merit and demerit, reward, transmigration, and liberation. In treating of the soul as one of the objects of proof, not only is a full



exposition given of its nature and faculties, but the existence of God as the one Supreme Soul, the seat of eternal knowledge, the Maker and Disposer of all things, is asserted, and his relations to other existences are explained. Here, however, many startling propositions are advanced, and the infinity and eternity ascribed to the Supreme Soul are virtually withdrawn, by asserting that they are shared by all other souls, since soul by its very nature is not only immaterial, but also infinite and eternal. In treating of the body the existence of matter naturally falls under consideration. The view taken is, that it is real, not illusive, and that the atoms of which it is composed, though aggregated and moulded into bodily shapes in time, existed from eternity. The cause of the aggregation and moulding is left in doubt, and it is difficult to say whether it is meant to be regarded as the result of divine agency or of properties originally inherent in themselves. The discussion of the subject of matter, and of the objects formed out of it, involves many points which properly belong to physics, and which will therefore be noticed when Canade's branch of the Niyaya school is considered. The only other category possessing particular interest is the seventh. Gotama's syllogism differs from that with which we are familiar, in being composed not of three but of five members, placed thus:—the proposition, the reason, the example, the application, the conclusion. The following specimen has been given:—1. The mountain burns; 2. For it smokes; 3. That which smokes burns, as the kitchen fire; 4. Accordingly the mountain smokes; 5. Therefore it burns. If the first two terms be omitted, the other three will form the common European syllogism. The effect will be the same if the last two terms be omitted, and starting from the third, as before, the process is continued backwards from the third to the second, and from the second to the first. What the Hindoos construct as one is thus in fact two syllogisms, which, teaching no more than the one, only double the labour without giving any compensation. The example introduced into the third term cannot be considered as an improvement, since the extraneous fact, so far from making the proposition clearer, tends rather to cumber and perplex it. The best thing that can be said for the Hindoo syllogism is, that it is an exact imitation of the process which the mind naturally pursues. Setting out with a particular proposition, it arrives by analysis at a general truth; and then assuming the general truth, descends from it by synthesis to the particular proposition.

A.D. —
Gotama's
logic.His syllo-
gism.

Canade, who was a pupil of Gotama, has been contented to follow his master in his leading doctrines, and is entitled to the honour of a founder chiefly on account of the larger development which he gave to some of them. On the subject of logic, in treating of the objects of the senses, which Gotama has ranked as the fourth of his objects of proof, he enumerates six categories or predicaments—substance, quality, action, community, particularity, and intimate relation or aggregation. There are nine different substances—earth, water, light, air, ether, time, place, soul, and mind. Material substances are composed of simple indi-

Canade.



Canada's
atomic
theory.

His physics.

Sankhya
school.

visible and eternal atoms, which of course were never created, and cannot be annihilated. The forms, however, which have been produced by their aggregation is transient. How this aggregation was effected, whether by native affinities in the atoms themselves, or by a creative power in the Supreme Being, is not distinctly explained. The atomic theory of Canada is not cumbered with some of the difficulties which perplexed Democritus and Epicurus, and obliged them not only to set their atoms in motion, but to give them a slanting direction in order that they might meet and form aggregates. By endowing the atoms themselves with peculiar properties he gave them, as it were, a power of choice, by which those of kindred nature approached each other of their own accord and amalgamated, while those of an opposite nature mutually repelled each other, and, of course, when brought accidentally into juxtaposition refused to coalesce. In a few points Canada made some approach to modern discoveries in physics. Contrary to Aristotle, who made levity and gravity separate principles, the one being a tendency to rise and the other to descend, Canada regarded levity as only the absence of gravity. He also held that there are seven primary colours, erroneously giving white and black a place among them. He was more correct in regard to sound, and distinctly taught that it is propagated by undulations, sent wave after wave in all directions from a central point. The Niyaya school, agreeing in many fundamental points with the Vedas, occupies an intermediate place between the Vedanta school, which claims to be orthodox, and the Sankhya school, which is stigmatized as heterodox; of this last some account must now be given.

The Sankhya school, as mentioned above, forms two leading branches, distinguished by the names of atheistical and theistical. These very names would seem to imply that a wide and deep gulf lies between them, and that the points which they hold in common dwindle into insignificance when compared with the momentous truth on which they differ. It can only be by a misnomer, or an extraordinary abuse of terms, that those who believe and those who deny a God can be classed as belonging to the same school of philosophy. Capila, the founder of the atheistical branch, having endeavoured in vain to find the final liberation, which was his highest aim, by acting in accordance with the Vedas, became convinced that the fault was not so much in him as in them, and resolved to supply their deficiencies. With this view he promulgated six books of sutras. These, or others which bear his name, are still extant, but are so oracular and obscure as to be unintelligible without the aid of the commentaries which have been written on them. One of them, a work in verse, called the *Sankhya Karika*, is the chief source from which a knowledge of Capila's system is derived.

Capila's fundamental position is, that final deliverance can only be gained by true and perfect knowledge, which consists in discriminating the principles, perceptible and imperceptible, of the material world, from the sensitive and cog-



nitive principle, the immaterial soul. True knowledge is derived from three great sources—perception, inference, and affirmation or testimony; and comprehends twenty-five first principles:—1. Nature or Prakrite, the root or plastic origin of all, eternal matter, undiscete, destitute of parts, not produced but productive, the universal material cause; 2. Intelligence, the first production of nature, increate and prolific; 3. Consciousness, giving the sense of self-existence, and said to be a product of intelligence; 4 to 19, said to be products of consciousness, include five rudimentary perceptions, and eleven organs of sense and action; 20 to 24 are the five elements—space, air, fire, water, and earth. The 25th and last principle is soul, which is said to be multitudinous, individual, sensitive, unalterable, and immaterial, neither produced nor producing.

A.D. —

Capila's
dogmas.

By the union between nature and the soul creation is effected; and in order to satisfy the longing of the soul for fruition or liberation, it is invested with a subtile person, such as was described in treating of the Vedanta school—a person unconfined, and free from all hinderance, but incapable of enjoyment until invested with a gross corporeal body. The corporeal creation, consisting of souls lodged in gross bodies, comprehends, besides man, thirteen orders of beings, eight superior and five inferior. The superior are gods and other spirits; the inferior are animals, plants, and inorganic substances. Besides the subtile and the gross corporeal there is an intellectual creation, consisting of the affections of the intellect, its sentiments and faculties. These are very numerous, and form four classes distinguished from each other by their tendency to obstruct, disable, content or perfect the understanding. The obstructions—error, conceit, passion, hatred, and fear—are explained under sixty-four divisions. Disabilities arising from defect or injury of organs, as blindness, deafness, &c., are of twenty-eight kinds. The contentment of the intellect has its source in a total or partial omission of exertion producing some degree of tranquillity, but inadequate to work out final deliverance. The perfection of the intellect has eight sources. Three of these are merely preventive of evil. The remaining five are reasoning, oral instruction, study, friendly intercourse, and external and internal purity.

Nature of
creation.

In the Sankhya, as in all the other Hindoo philosophical schools, much attention is paid to three essential qualities or modifications of nature, distinguished by the names of goodness, passion, and darkness. Not merely living but inanimate beings also are affected by them. Thus, when fire ascends, and man acts virtuously, it is by *goodness*; when the tempest rages, and man is hurried into vice, it is by *passion*; and when heavy bodies descend, and man is affected by stolidity or sorrow, it is by *darkness*. These three qualities, though opposites, are represented as concurring to the same purpose, just as in a lamp, oil, wick, and flame concur in the production of light. It is difficult in the extreme to reconcile the discrepancies of the Sankhya school, and give its doctrines a systematic form. Nature (*prakrite*) and soul (*atma*) appear at

Three essen-
tial qualities
of nature.



The soul's
liberation.

Atheistic
and theistic
schools.

first to be two real substances, equally distinct, independent and eternal. Nature by an inherent property puts forth certain principles, and soul by an inherent property uses these principles as a means of obtaining a knowledge of nature. Ultimately, however, when this knowledge has been attained, the soul, which has been made individual by its connection with a corporeal body, is released, and the connection between the individual soul and nature is dissolved. What then? "As a dancer, after exhibiting herself to the spectator, retires, so does nature retire, after manifesting herself to the soul." On this the soul is finally liberated. This liberation has been not inappropriately termed by Cousin "absolute nihilism," since the perfect knowledge which gives the liberation amounts to nothing more than a denial of individual existence, expressed by the soul in such terms as these, "I have nothing, and am nothing: I do not exist."

Capila, while he admits the separate existence of souls, and represents intellect as employed in moulding matter into its various forms, distinctly denies that there is any Supreme Being by whose will the universe was produced. "Such a Being," he says, "if detached from nature and unaffected by consciousness and the other principles, would have no motion, and if enchained in nature would not have the power to create." By this dogma he has earned the unenviable title of atheist, and is distinguished from his pupil Patanjali, who founded the second branch of the Sankhya school, and ranks as a theist, because he holds that distinct from other souls there is One who is infinite, eternal, and omniscient, and therefore truly God. He is, however, a god only in name, inasmuch as he is "indifferent to actions good or bad, and their consequences, and to the ephemeral thoughts of man, which are but as dreams." It might hence be supposed that a Supreme Being thus sitting aloof from his creatures, and beholding all their movements as an unconcerned spectator, would be neglected by them in their turn, and never become the object of serious thought. This inference, though reasonable, would be erroneous, for Patanjali and his followers plume themselves on devotion. There is thus a marked distinction between the practices of the so-called atheistical and theistical sects. The former, professing to aim only at the liberation of the soul from the bonds of nature, is occupied chiefly with abstruse reasonings on the nature of mind and matter; whereas the latter, aiming at absorption into the Supreme Being, gives the first place to devotional exercises and *yoga* or mental abstraction. By means of this *yoga*, which has procured for those who practise it the name of *yogis*, the adept raises himself far above the ordinary condition of humanity. All knowledge past and future is revealed to him, and he is able even to divine the thoughts of others. But his knowledge, wonderful as it is, is surpassed by his power. He possesses the strength of an elephant, the courage of a lion, and the swiftness of the winds. All the elements are subject to his control, and yield obedience to him. The air supports him as he wings his flight through it; he floats in water, and



penetrates without resistance into the solid earth. All worlds are seen by him at a glance, and whatever he desires he has only to will and it is accomplished. These wonderful gifts are attained by comparatively simple means—prescribed postures, suppressions of breath, mortification, and profound meditation. There may be fanatics who have deluded themselves into the belief that they may thus succeed in acquiring miraculous powers, or even that they have acquired them; but the greater number of the yogis are mere pretenders, and have no scruple in endeavouring to gain a reputation by gross imposture. In this way the Patanjali branch of the Sankhya school, though in some respects the better of the two, has suffered in character.

A. D. —

Practice of
the Yoga.

The Hindoo presents many striking resemblances to the Greek philosophy. The professed object of Pythagoras was to teach how the soul might be freed from all incumbrances and assimilated to the divinity. In undergoing this process it was subjected to numerous purgations and transmigrations, and finally returned to its original source by a kind of absorption. The prohibition of animal food, except for sacrifice—the tenderness not only to animals but to plants as beings possessed of life—the long course of probation undergone by students, and followed by a mysterious initiation—are common to both philosophies, and evidently indicate not accidental coincidence but real affinity. In the same way the logical systems of Gotama and Canade are closely allied to that of Aristotle. It is not impossible, however, that the resemblances might have been produced not directly by communication with one another, but indirectly from a more primal source; hence some have imagined that Egypt, which stood as it were half way between India and Greece, when the commerce of Europe and the East was carried on across the Isthmus of Suez, furnished both of them with the dogmas in which they so remarkably agree. It would be presumptuous to decide positively between those competing claimants, but the presumption of originality is certainly in favour of the Hindoos, and Mr. Colebrooke seems justified in asserting that in this instance they were “the teachers and not the learners.”

Resemblances between
Hindoo and
Greek phil-
osophers.

It was at one time supposed that the Hindoos were entitled to take still higher ground in science than in mental philosophy, and that in astronomy in particular they were thousands of years in advance of all other nations. In the year 1687, M. de la Loubere, sent by Louis XIV. on an embassy to Siam, procured a copy of the rules of the Brahmins for the calculation of eclipses. These were submitted to the celebrated Cassini, who succeeded in unravelling them, and finding them accurate, hastily inferred that they must be as ancient as they professed to be. In 1772 a much more complete set of tables and rules was brought by M. le Gentil, from Trivatore, on the Coromandel coast. Two other sets of tables had been obtained by the Jesuits at an earlier date, but had been lost sight of from having been deposited in the Marine Dépôt of Charts and Plans at Paris. From these four sets of tables, Bailly composed his *Astro-*

Hindoo
astronomy.

Hindoo
astronomy:

nomie Indienne et Orientale, and startled the world by claiming for them an antiquity which could not be reconciled with the history of the human race as recorded in the Sacred Volume. Bailly's view was adopted and maintained with equal zeal and ability by Professor Playfair, who, however, saw reason subsequently to modify his support of it in consequence of its rejection by La Place and Delambre, and the thorough examination to which it was subjected by some writers in the *Asiatic Researches*. The result at which they arrived was, that the earliest date in the Indian tables was assumed in order to correspond with a supposed conjunction of the heavenly bodies. La Place, whose authority on such a subject is decisive, says, "the Indian tables have two principal epochs, one 3102 years before our era, the other 1491. These epochs are connected by the motions of the sun, the moon, and the planets, in such a manner, that departing from the position which the Indian tables assign to the stars at the second epoch, and returning to the first by means of these tables, we find the general conjunction which is supposed at that epoch." He then adverts to Bailly's opinion that the "first epoch was founded on observations," and adds in opposition to it, "I consider it as very probable that it (the first epoch) has been imagined in order to give a common origin in the zodiac to the celestial motions. Our latest astronomical tables, improved by a comparison of theory with a great number of very precise observations, do not allow us to admit the supposed conjunction in the Indian tables." His conclusion is:—"The whole structure of the tables, and especially the impossibility of the conjunction which they suppose, prove that they have been formed, or at least rectified in modern times."

Not scientific but empirical.

Still, after exaggeration is duly curtailed, it seems impossible to deny that the Hindoos had made some progress in astronomy in the fourteenth century before the Christian era. Their division of the belt of the heavens corresponding to our zodiac into twenty-seven equal portions, called lunar houses, and each marked by a group of stars or constellations, could not have been made when astronomy was in its infancy, and yet is admitted on all hands to be as early as 1442 B.C. Parasara, the first Hindoo astronomer of whose writings any portion remains, must have flourished about the same date. Unfortunately, however, the part of astronomy which is most interesting in a scientific point of view has been almost entirely neglected by the Hindoos. They give no theory, and confine themselves to the calculation of eclipses and other changes in the heavens, thus degrading astronomy from its proper place, and making it subservient to the dreams and impostures of astrologers. "The Brahmin," says Professor Wallace, "seated on the ground with his shells before him, repeats the enigmatical verses which are to guide his procedure, and from his little tablets of palm leaves takes out the numbers which are to be employed in it. He obtains his result with certainty and expedition; but having little knowledge of the



reason of his rules, and no wish to be better informed, he is perfectly satisfied if, as it usually happens, the actual commencement and duration of the eclipse agree within a few minutes with his prediction. Beyond this his inquiries do not extend; and his observations, if he make any, go no further than the determination of a meridian line, or the length of the day at the place of his residence."

The most complete ancient astronomical work of the Hindoos is the Surya Sidhanta, fabled by the Brahmins to have been communicated by divine revelation above two millions of years ago, but now believed to be not older than the fifth or sixth century. From the practice of veiling everything in mystery, and making all kinds of knowledge subservient to Brah-



DYBECK OR ASTRONOMER.—Solyyn, Les Hindous.

minical priestcraft, the information furnished by the Surya Sidhanta, and a commentary upon it called Tika, is unsatisfactory and obscure; but there is enough to show that some of the leading facts in astronomy were well understood. Among these may be mentioned the precession of the equinoxes, the rate of which estimated at 54" annually (it is only 50") led them to calculate a complete revolution of the equinoctial points and fix it at about 24,000 years—the revolution of the moon on her axis only once in a month, and the necessary consequence that she presents always the same side to the earth—and the globular form of the earth itself, which they hang in space, but erroneously imagine to be the centre of the universe.

The claim of the Hindoos to original discovery is better established in regard to mathematics than in regard to astronomy. The Surya Sidhanta contains a very rational system of trigonometry. The circle is divided in the same manner as by the Greeks into 360 equal parts, each of which is subdivided into 60, as still practised. The common adoption of this division is remarkable, as there is nothing in the nature of the circle itself to suggest it, unless it be that in an early age the number of days in the sun's annual revolution may have been roughly estimated at 360. In another arrangement, also arbitrary, the superiority of the Hindoo to the Greek mathematicians is apparent. The Greeks divided the radius of the circle into sixty equal parts, but did not in this division express any relation between the radius and the circumference. The Hindoos, on the contrary, in a manner peculiar to themselves, adopt a common measure and unit for both, and by means of it express the relation between them with considerable nicety. The circumference, divided as has been seen into 360 equal parts, gives at the rate of 60 of these parts to a degree,

Hindoo mathematics.



Hindoo mathematics.

21,600 minutes. The radius, supposed to be in like manner calculated in minutes, is found by the Hindoos to contain 3438. The proportion of the radius to the circumference is thus said to be as 3438 to 21,600, or 1 to 3.14136. This proportion is as near an approximation to the truth as can be made when no lower subdivision than minutes is employed, and is the proportion according to which the Hindoo trigonometrical tables are framed. It appears, however, that the Brahmins, while considering this proportion as sufficiently accurate for practical purposes, were aware of the error in it, and supposed the true ratio to be that of 1 to 3.1416. This, it is almost needless to observe, is the greatest accuracy attainable when the calculation is not carried further than four decimal places. The use of sines in framing tables, and not of chords, as practised by the Greeks, is a striking distinction in favour of the Indian trigonometry, and the rule for computing them justifies the remark of Professor Playfair, that "it has the appearance, like many other things in the science of those eastern nations, of being drawn up by one who was more deeply versed in the subject than may at first be imagined, and who knew much more than he thought it necessary to communicate." On the same point Professor Wallace observes, "He who first formed the idea of exhibiting in arithmetical tables the ratios of the sides and angles of all possible triangles must have been a man of profound thought and of extensive knowledge. However ancient, therefore, any book may be in which we meet with a system of trigonometry, we may be assured that it was not written in the infancy of the science. Hence we may conclude that geometry must have been known in India long before the writing of the *Surya Sidhanta*."

Hindoo arithmetic.

In arithmetic the Hindoo claim to the invention of the decimal notation is generally acknowledged. The advantage which this discovery gave them over the Greeks is very striking, and is particularly manifested in the *Lilavati*, a work on arithmetic and practical geometry, written by Bhascara Acharya in the twelfth century. This treatise not only gives the fundamental rules of arithmetic, but applies them to the subjects of interest, barter, mixtures, combination, permutation, progression, indeterminate problems, and the mensuration of surfaces and solids. In algebra, Hindoo superiority, in respect both of priority of discovery and general excellence, is very decided. Arya Bhatta, who is proved to have lived as early as the fifth century, and may probably have been a contemporary of Diophantus, who wrote the first Greek work on algebra, and flourished about A.D. 360, was able to resolve equations containing several unknown quantities, and had a general method of resolving indeterminate equations of at least the first degree. Apparently in regard to both of these, and certainly in regard to the latter, he was far in advance of Diophantus. Indeed, Arya Bhatta's general method, called in Sanscrit *cuttaca*, and declared by Professor Wallace to be a "refined process," was not known in Europe till 1624. The work of Arya Bhatta does not exist, and what is known of it is learned from



quotations by Brahma Gupta, who lived in the sixth century, and Bhascara Acharya, already mentioned. Their works, translated from the Sanscrit, have been published by Mr. Colebrooke. Those of Bhascara consist of the *Lilavati*, of which some account has been given above, and the *Bija Ganita*, devoted expressly to algebra. From this treatise it appears that the Hindoos at a very early period had made as near an approach to the general solution of indeterminate problems as was made to the time of La Grange. In attempting to solve equation of the higher orders they had not been successful, but they had learned to apply algebra to astronomy and geometry, and had, as Mr. Colebrooke expresses it, "hit upon some matters which have been re-invented in modern times."

A.D. —
Algebra.

In discussing the date of Hindoo discoveries in algebra, Playfair and Delambre take opposite sides. Playfair says, "It is generally acknowledged that Diophantus cannot have been himself the inventor of all the rules and methods which he delivers; much less is Arya Bhatta to be held the sole inventor of a system that was still more perfect than that of Diophantus. Indeed, before an author could think of embodying a treatise of algebra in the heart of a system of astronomy, and turning the researches of the one science to the purposes of the other, both must be in such a state of advancement, as the lapse of several ages and many repeated efforts of invention were required to produce." Delambre endeavours to take off the force of this observation by saying, that when an author has created a new science among a people considerably advanced in civilization, men of genius will not be long in acquiring the new notions, in order to extend and multiply their application. There is something in this, but Delambre makes too much of it, and Professor Wallace seems to place the matter on its proper footing, when, after adverting to the fact "that algebra made little or no progress among the Arabians, though an ingenious people, and particularly devoted to the study of the sciences, and that centuries elapsed from its first introduction into Europe before it reached any considerable degree of perfection," he concludes that "this branch of arithmetic may have existed among the Hindoos, in one form or another, long prior to the time of Arya Bhatta."

Under the head of science many other branches of knowledge, in addition to those which have been considered, are included; but the proficiency which the Hindoos have made in them is in general so small that it is scarcely entitled to a separate notice. Were an exception to be made, it would be in regard to one or two branches of physics. In referring to Canade's work on this subject, his theories of gravity, colour, and sound, were mentioned as superior to those which were received in Europe at the same period. It may be added, that in botany and chemistry, not so much as speculative sciences, but as practical arts available in medicine, some considerable progress had been made. Their knowledge of simples was extensive, and Europe has, in several instances, been indebted to

Other
branches of
science.



A.D. —

Hindoo
chemistry.Medicine
and surgery.Hindoo
literature.

Sanskrit.

them for their application to purposes previously unknown. From Hindoos was first learned the use of cowitch as a vermifuge, and the benefit of smoking datura in asthma. Their chemical skill is chiefly displayed in mineral and metallic preparations, obtained by processes, for the most part peculiar to themselves, and employed with much boldness in curing disease. Among these preparations may be enumerated sulphuric, nitric, and muriatic acid; oxides of copper, iron, lead, tin, and zinc; sulphuret of iron, copper, mercury, antimony, and arsenic; sulphate of copper, zinc, and iron; and carbonates of lead and iron. By cinnabar, in the form of fumigations, they produced speedy and safe salivation; and they were the first who administered mineral substances internally, employing not only mercury in this manner, but preparations of arsenic in intermittent fevers. Though precluded by their religious creed from acquiring a knowledge of anatomy by dissection, they performed various surgical operations, many of them with instruments invented by themselves. Inoculation they had long practised before it was superseded by vaccination. In general, however, both their surgery and medicine were merely empirical, and even proper rules of art have always been considered subordinate to astrology and magic. The supposed efficacy of mystical verses and charms have brought rational remedies into disrepute, and in waiting for lucky hours and days, diseases which might be removed by instantaneous applications, gain strength, and become fatal.

The literature of the Hindoos is a subject of such boundless extent that it is impossible to do more than glance at a few of its leading features. One of its most remarkable peculiarities is the language in which the far greater part of it is written. Sanscrit must at one time have been a vernacular tongue, but has long ceased to be spoken by any except the learned, and by them is spoken only as Latin used to be in Europe, when modern tongues were considered too rude and imperfect to serve as proper vehicles of thought. How Sanscrit, after being once a living, became a dead language, is a point still involved in mystery—a mystery all the more perplexing from the impossibility of discovering in Indian history any period corresponding to that of the great irruption which overthrew the Roman empire, broke it up into separate kingdoms, changed the whole face of Europe, and gave it, instead of one dominant language, a number of languages more or less engrafted upon it, but still so different from it, and from each other, that those who spoke them had no longer any common medium of oral communication. If Sanscrit was ever spoken, some exterminating process similar to that of our northern invaders must have been necessary, either to root out the races who spoke it, or so completely revolutionize them as to banish it from their lips and memories. This extinction of Sanscrit is the more wonderful when we consider the extent of the area over which its sway must have extended. Not only must it have penetrated far to the West, before the languages of Greece and Rome could have been so deeply imbued with it as they are now known to be, but the whole inhabitants of India, including races which have little else in common,



must have either spoken it as their mother tongue, or been brought into such immediate contact with it as to borrow a large part of their speech from it. The five northern languages of India, those of the Punjab, Kanoje, Mithila or North Behar, Bengal, and Gujerat, do not differ more from Sanscrit than Italian from Latin; and of the five languages of the Deccan, while two of them, those of Orissa and Maharashtra, are so full of Sanscrit words that their existence as languages would be destroyed by expunging them, the other three, the Tamul, Telugu, and Carnata, though so different in structure as to indicate a distinct origin from Sanscrit, have incorporated many of its words in the same way as English has borrowed from Latin.

Sanskrit:

Now only a
dead lan-
guage.

While Sanscrit might thus have been expected to hold its ground in consequence of the vast area over which it was spoken or understood, it had a strong additional security for its permanence as a living language from the exclusive use of it in all branches of knowledge, sacred and profane. Even when the selfishness and ambition of the Brahmins succeeded in excluding the other classes from access to the Veda, it might have been expected that the language in which they were written would still be kept alive among the great body of the people, by the numerous legends, hymns, and poems embodied in it, and made familiar to them from their earliest years by being rehearsed in ordinary life and at public festivals. Another guarantee for permanence was given in the excellence of the language itself, which is pronounced by Sir William Jones, perhaps with some degree of hyperbole, to be "more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either." All these circumstances, however, have proved unavailing, and the Sanscrit, banished from the tongues of Hindoos, owes its preservation not to them but to the literary treasures which it contains.

Almost everything among the Hindoos that deserves the name of literature is composed in verse; and therefore, without stopping to take any notice of their prose, we pass at once to their poetry. In forming an estimate of it it is necessary to remember that for poetical compositions, when viewed through the medium of translation, great allowance ought to be made. Homer and Virgil, if known only through the translations of Pope and Dryden, would not be thought worthy of a tithe of the encomiums which all who read them in the original are ready to pronounce upon them; and there is no ground to suppose that any of the translators from the Sanscrit have performed their task so well as Pope and Dryden. Where the two languages vary so much in structure as English and Sanscrit, and not merely the whole train of thought, but all the figures that can be used in the way of ornament and illustration, differ so widely, a translator cannot hope to do much more than give the sense. The reader consequently knows nothing of the melody of the versification, nor of the facility of forming compounds, which are said to give Sanscrit compositions a peculiar charm and add greatly to their richness, and is hence apt to be

Hindoo
poetry.

Hindoo
poetry.

startled if not offended by combinations which cannot but seem to him unnatural. Presented only with the bare ideas, stripped of everything that adorns them, he peruses a work designed by its author merely to captivate the imagination, as if it were some grave didactic treatise in prose, and thus feels somewhat like the mathematician, who after reading one of the finest passages of the *Æneid* contemptuously asked, What does it prove? In common fairness we should endeavour to believe in the existence of graces and excellences which we know must have evaporated in the process of translation; and then, though we may still hesitate to speak in such rapturous terms as zealous orientalists employ, we will be ready to admit that there have been Hindoo poets truly worthy of the name.

Earliest
poems of
the Vedas.

The earliest form of Hindoo verse is to be found in the Vedas. In general it is of a very prosaic description, and never makes an approach to the dignity of poetry except in the hymns. Even these display little vigour of thought or fancy, and no felicity of diction, and deserve the character given by Mr. Colebrooke to the Vedas generally—their “general style is flat, diffuse, and no less deficient in ornament than abundant in repetitions.” Next in antiquity to the Vedas is the heroic poem or epic of the “*Ramayana*.” It has for its subject the conquest of Ceylon, by Rama, and was written by Valmiki, who, though believed by the Hindoos to have been contemporary with the events which he celebrates, evidently belongs to a much later period. The leading details are as follows:—Dasaratha, King of Kosala, resided in his capital of Ayodhya, the ancient name of the modern Oude. There surrounded by eight counsellors, such as Menu describes, he “shone resplendent as the sun irradiating the world.”

The Rama-
yana.

One thing was wanting to complete his happiness—he had no son. To obtain one he had recourse to the *aswamedha*, or horse-sacrifice, which, when duly performed, never fails, and on this occasion proved more than successful, inasmuch as four sons were born to the king by his three wives, Kausalya, the first and favourite wife bearing two, Rama and Lakshman. Rama, thus regarded as the heir, was in his sixteenth year when a rishi, named Viswamitra, asked permission to take him with him to his hermitage in the hills, for the purpose of expelling rakshasas, or demons, who were haunting him, and polluting his sacrifices. The king offers to go in person, but refuses to send Rama, “my Rama,” begotten “by me, an old man,” and “dearer to me than life itself.” Viswamitra, offended, gives such portentous signs of wrath, that the king repents of his refusal, and all his four sons set out for the hermitage. As Rama is the destined hero, Viswamitra makes him proof against all fatal casualties, endues him with supernatural strength, and presents him with celestial weapons. The encounter then takes place, and the rakshasas are destroyed. After this exploit the young princes are conducted by Viswamitra to Mithila, situated four days’ journey from Ayodhya. Janaka, the king, had a most lovely daughter, called Sita, whom he had promised to give to the man who should lift and bend

Its subject.



his bow. This was no ordinary feat, for when it was sent for it required an eight-wheeled carriage, drawn by 800 men, to transport it. Rama, however, accomplished it. Lifting the bow with one hand, he snapped it in sunder with a noise like the crash of a falling mountain, and Sita became his bride. Three other princesses of the court were given to his brothers. The nuptials were celebrated with the greatest splendour, and the happy pairs were welcomed with acclamations on arriving at Ayodhya.

Dasaratha was preparing formally to acknowledge Rama as his successor, when a serious difficulty arose. Kaikeyi, the second wife, claimed the throne for her son Bharata. She had at one time obtained a promise from the king of any two boons she should ask, and was determined to use it in enforcing her son's claim. Accordingly, the first boon she asked was the banishment of Rama for fourteen years, and the second a public acknowledgment of Bharata as heir-apparent. Dasaratha could not refuse. Rama and Sita depart as exiles for the forest, and the king sits for six days pining and bewailing the banishment of his favourite son. On the seventh day a crime or rather misfortune of his youth rises to his remembrance, and believing it to be the cause of his present affliction, he narrates it at length to Kausalya. While hunting in the woods on the banks of the Surayu or Goggra, he heard a sound which he supposed to be made by an elephant in drinking, and let fly an arrow, which mortally wounded a youth who had come to draw water. His parents were living as recluses in the neighbourhood, and he was their only support. The king, horror-struck at hearing a moan, hastens to the spot. The youth, though his life-blood was flowing, recognizes the king, and is only anxious to save him from the consequences of being the innocent cause of his untimely end. His father's curse he knows to be irresistible, and he therefore begs Dasaratha to deprecate it by being himself the bearer of the dismal news. The father on hearing them is unable wholly to restrain his curse, and tells the king that he too shall one day sorrow for a son. The parents of the youth burn themselves on his funeral pile. The king, after divulging his secret, takes affectionate leave of Kausalya, and dies, exclaiming, "Ah, Rama! ah, my son!"

Exile of
Rama and
Sita.

After Dasaratha's obsequies had been performed with great pomp, but without any suttee, none of the wives except Kausalya expressing any wish to burn along with him, the council, summoned by Vasishtha, the principal Brahmin, invite Bharata to occupy the vacant throne. He generously declines to usurp the rights of his brother Rama, and being told that as he refuses to reign it is his duty to find the lawful sovereign, he sets out in quest of him with a splendid retinue of soldiers and attendants. He meets with numerous adventures, and at length discovers Rama living with Sita and his brother Lakshman in the forests of the Deccan. The interview is affecting, and gives occasion to the utterance of many noble and generous sentiments. Rama refuses to accept a throne, which he could not occupy without breaking his father's vow.

Their residence in
the Deccan.

Poem of
 Ramayana.

Ravana,
 King of
 Ceylon,
 carries off
 Sita.

Bharata remonstrates, and not succeeding, has recourse to a curious device. He had brought a pair of golden shoes with him, and asks Rama to put them on and then return them. This done, Bharata says he will go back to Ayodhya, "not to reign, but to live without the city as a devotee, waiting till the fourteen years of Rama's exile should expire, meanwhile committing the kingdom to thy shoes."

After Bharata's departure, Rama incurred the hostility of the natives by barbarously cutting off the nose and ears of a princess who had presumed to make love to himself and his brother. She vowed revenge, and finding that in open warfare Rama could not be matched, called in the aid of sorcery, in which she appears to have been all but omnipotent, and bewitched her brother Ravana, the demon King of Lanka or Ceylon, to become enamoured of Sita, Rama's lovely wife. Ravana, who had extended his power into the Indian peninsula, and ruled it like a cruel tyrant, had first recourse to force, but experienced the same reverses as his sister, and saw the necessity of having recourse to stratagem. Accordingly he took with him an assistant sorcerer disguised as a deer. Rama was fond of the chase, but, aware of the wiles of his enemy, took what he deemed a sufficient precaution against them, by committing Sita, while he was absent on his hunting excursions, to the protection of his brother Lakshman. One day the wily deer exposed itself to Rama's arrow, and being wounded, exclaimed in a voice resembling Rama's, "Oh, Lakshman, save me!" Sita, hearing the cry, begged Lakshman to flee to the rescue. Ravana's object was now gained. Assuming the dress of an ascetic, he came upon Sita sitting alone in tears, bemoaning the supposed disaster which had befallen her lord. Thrown off her guard by Ravana's disguise, she hails him as a "holy Brahmin," and not only entertains him hospitably, but opens her whole heart and recounts the history of her life. Suddenly Ravana throws off his disguise, and announcing himself as the demon monarch of the earth, "at whose name heaven's armies flee," seizes her shrieking, and carries her aloft through the sky to Ceylon.

Exploits of
 Hanuman,
 a monkey-
 general.

Rama, determined on recovering her, but knowing the power of the enemy with whom he had to deal, sought to strengthen himself by alliances. Strange to say, the woods of Dandaka, where he then dwelt, were inhabited, not by human beings, but by demons and monkeys. At the head of the latter was the monkey-king, Sugriva, who cordially espoused Rama's cause, and placed a mighty army of quadrumanous subjects at his disposal. Their general, Hanuman, was a host in himself. After ascertaining by emissaries that Sita was confined in a palace in Ceylon, he proceeded with Rama at the head of the allies to Cape Comorin, overcame all the difficulties of the passage by bridging the straits, defeated the armies of demons sent to oppose them, and slew Ravana himself. Sita was thus recovered. Rama was doubtless overjoyed, but his joy was alloyed by a suspicion which haunted him. Considering the



kind of hands into which Sita had fallen, was it possible that she could have maintained her purity unsullied? He could not satisfy himself on this point till he had subjected her to the ordeal of a blazing fire. She passed through it unscathed. Lest any suspicion might still have lurked, Brahma and the other gods attested her fidelity, and Rama again received her with all his former affection. The fourteen years of exile had now expired, and the whole party returned to Ayodhya. Bharata, faithful and generous as ever, at once resigned the government, but Rama, aware that he was not what he seemed to be, but of divine origin, in fact an incarnation of Vishnu, disdained to rule, and returned to heaven, his native seat.

Recovery of
Sita, and
ascent of
Rama to
heaven.

The absurdities, incongruities, and extravagances which occur throughout the poem are so glaring as to be seen at a glance; and it is therefore less important to notice them than to advert to some of the many passages which are conceived and expressed in the spirit of genuine poetry. The descriptions of natural scenery are in general excellent, being distinguished both by beauty and accuracy, and many of the metaphors borrowed from it are striking and appropriate. Domestic feelings, particularly the attachment of husband and wife, and parent and child, are sometimes exhibited in their purest and most interesting form, and it would be difficult to find incidents more affecting than those which are presented where Dasaratha relates the death of which he had been the unhappy but innocent cause, when roaming the forest as a hunter "in youth's delicious prime." Seldom, too, have noble and generous sentiments received more emphatic utterance than at the interview between Rama and Bharata, while the latter declares his determination not to accept a throne which he could not occupy without usurping a brother's rights; and the former cheerfully resigns these rights, because he could not avail himself of them without injuring his father's memory. It would be easy to furnish extracts in illustration of all these enumerated excellences; but in order not to exceed due bounds our extracts must be few and brief. They are taken from Dasaratha's account of the tragical death of the youthful devotee; and, in order to come as near as possible to the spirit of the original, are borrowed from the admirable translations which Mr. Griffith has published under the title of *Specimens of Indian Poetry*.

Merits of the
Ramayana.

The day on which Dasaratha set out on the hunting excursion which terminated so fatally is thus described:—

Extracts
from the
poem.

"A day of summer rain time, filling my young soul with love;
The great sun had dried the earth-dews with his hot beams from above,
And in highest heaven turning, journeyed on his southward road,
Racing towards the gloomy region, the departed's sad abode;
Balmy cool the air was breathing, welcome clouds were floating by,
Humming bees with joyful music swell'd the glad wild peacock's cry."

After the rash arrow was shot and the king had seen the unhappy youth expire, he proceeds to be the bearer of the dismal tidings to the parents, who

were sitting helpless and sightless, waiting the return of their boy, and wondering what could detain him. Dasaratha's feelings, and the scene which awaited him, are thus described:—

“Sadly, slowly I approached them, by my rash deed left forlorn;
 Crushed with terror was my spirit, and my mind with anguish torn;
 At the sound of coming footsteps, thus I heard the old man say,
 ‘Dear son, bring me water quickly, thou hast been too long away,
 Bathing in the stream, or playing, thou hast stayed so long from home;
 Come, thy mother longeth for thee; come in quickly, dear child, come!’”

The dreadful truth being made known, the half-distracted father, hanging over the dead body, and as if forgetting the irreparable calamity which had befallen him, speaks thus:—

“‘Come, dear child, embrace thy father, put thy little hand in mine,
 Let me hear thee sweetly prattle some fond play-word of thine;”

and then recalled to a sense of the reality, exclaims—

“‘Ah! who'll read me now the Vedas, filling my old heart with joy?
 Who, when evening rites are over, cheer me, mourning for my boy?
 Who will bring me fruits and water, roots and wild herbs from the wood?
 Who supply the helpless hermit, like a cherished guest, with food?
 Can I tend thine aged mother till her weary life is done?
 Can I feed her, soothe her sorrow, longing for her darling son?’”

The Mahabharata.

The Mahabharata, the other great Sanscrit epic, though not believed to be so ancient as the Ramayana, bears the impress of a venerable antiquity. It is of enormous length, consisting of more than 100,000 verses, and contains various episodes, which, both from the nature of their subjects and the internal evidence they furnish of having been written by different authors and at distant periods, ought to be viewed as separate poems. Tradition makes Vyasa, the supposed compiler of the Vedas, the author of the whole; but there is in the poem itself an acknowledgment that not more than a fifth part of it was composed by him, and that its present form was given it by Santi, who received it from Vyasa by a third hand. Without attempting to fix a precise date, the most competent authorities are agreed that both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were well known in India in the second century before our era.

Its subject.

The subject of the Mahabharata, or, as the word means, Great Battle, is the war waged between the Pandus and Curus, two branches of what is called the Lunar race. The prize contended for was the right to rule in Hastinapura, a territory understood to be situated north-east of Delhi. In the course of the contest all the leading princes of India become engaged as allies. Krishna, now the most popular of Hindoo deities, because fabled to have been an incarnation of Vishnu, takes part with the Pandus, and performs exploits which make him the great hero of the poem. The origin of the war is thus explained. The King of Hastinapura having been afflicted with leprosy, was obliged to abdicate. The five Pandus were his sons, but the government—perhaps because they were too young to undertake it—was given to their uncle, the father of a



hundred Curus. The cousins were brought up together at court under the guidance of a learned Brahmin named Drona, who was admirably qualified for the office, from being not only learned in the Vedas, but perfectly acquainted with all the accomplishments in which young princes ought to be instructed. Accordingly, he taught them "to rein the steed, to guide the elephant, to drive the chariot, launch the javelin, hurl the dart, wield the battle-axe, and whirl the mace." When Drona deemed his pupils sufficiently expert, he proposed that a public trial of their skill should be made, and accordingly a splendid tournament was held for this purpose. Many noble feats were performed, but Arjuna, the third of the Pandus and Drona's favourite pupil, far outstripped all the others. Next to him, however, were Yudisthira, his eldest, and Bhima, his second brother. The Curus had early conceived the idea of usurping the rights of their cousins, and, when mortified at the inferior position which they had held in the tournament, made an atrocious attempt to extirpate the whole race of Pandus, by setting fire to the house in which they resided. It was generally believed that they had accomplished their object; for, when the bodies of five males and one female were discovered among the ruins, they were at once concluded to be those of the Pandus and their mother. This, however, was a mistake. The persons who had perished were a woman of low caste and her five sons who chanced to be passing the night in the house. All the Pandus had made their escape. Being aware of the deadly hate with which they were pursued, they allowed the belief of their death to remain uncontradicted, and sought an asylum in the woods. Here they continued to live, subsisting on the produce of the chase, till they accidentally learned that the King of Panchala, situated somewhere between Delhi and the Punjab, was about to hold a swayambara, in other words, was inviting visitors to his court, with the view of selecting from among them a husband for his daughter Draupadi, whose surpassing loveliness was the theme of all tongues.

The Pandus
and Curus.

The information respecting the swayambara had been given to the Pandus by a party of Brahmins, who were on the way to share in the festivities of the occasion. On being invited, the Pandus resolved to accompany them; and, assuming the character of mendicants, took up their residence at Panchala, in the house of a potter. The king had many years before given mortal offence to Drona. They had once been sworn friends, and Drona, presuming on ancient intimacy, made his appearance at the court of Panchala. Having announced himself without ceremony, he had the mortification to find that the king, elated with the new dignity which the throne had conferred upon him, was no longer disposed to treat him as an equal, or even recognize him as an acquaintance. Drona departed in wrath, and the King of Panchala, aware how fearful the vengeance of a Brahmin might prove, was anxious, in wedding his daughter, to choose a son-in-law on whose aid he might rely. It would seem that, notwithstanding the rumoured destruction of the Pandus, the king believed

A swayam-
bara.



A.D. —

Poem of
the Mahā-
bhārata.Claimants
for the hand
of Draupadi

some of them to be still alive; for he desired above all things to give his daughter to a Pandu. The race was famous for prowess, and he was convinced that with a Pandu to defend him, he might set even Drona at defiance. But how was a Pandu to be obtained? The king, as the best way of answering this question, had recourse to the following device:—He caused a ponderous bow to be made by magic art, and set up for a mark a plate of metal which revolved on an axle, feeling assured that none but a Pandu would have strength to wield the one and hit the other.

On the day fixed for the swayambara a magnificent scene presented itself. Within a vast area, inclosed by a deep ditch and lofty walls, myriads from all quarters were assembled. Around the king, who was mounted on his throne, sat neighbouring potentates on seats emblazoned with gems and gold. Princes, among them the hundred Curus of Hastinapura, and other illustrious chiefs, occupied glittering pavilions as candidates, while temporary scaffolds, house-tops, and every vacant space without the barriers were crowded by spectators. The king, hoping to the last that the Pandus would appear, spun out the time by preliminary entertainments, music, dancing, dramatic exhibitions, and games; but after sixteen days had thus elapsed further delay became impossible, and the great prize to be competed for, the lovely Draupadi, took her place in the arena. The bow which the king had prepared was now brought forth; but none succeeded in bending it except a youth named Kerna. To him, however, there was a fatal objection. Though in fact one of the children of the sun, his reputed birth was low, and on this ground his other merits were disregarded. Draupadi herself burst forth with the exclamation—"I wed not with the base-born!" On this Kerna, after glancing upwards to his sire, cast down the bow and shafts, and sternly walked away.

Success of
Arjuna.

The list of competitors being exhausted it seemed that the swayambara was to prove a failure. Suddenly Arjuna advanced. He was dressed like a Brahmin student, and many Brahmins believing him to be so, and afraid of the disgrace which his failure would bring upon their order, endeavoured to dissuade him from entering the lists. He stood unmoved, and then going up to the bow, lifted it, bent it, and placing an arrow on the string, sent it right into the mark. Being a Brahmin, there could be no objection to him on the score of birth. Both Draupadi and her father liked his appearance, and the prize was about to be awarded to him. On the other hand, the baffled suitors set no limits to their rage. Was royalty to be insulted in order that a Brahmin boy might be preferred? Sooner than permit it, they would slay the king and all his race, and burn his daughter in the flames. The scene of festivity was thus suddenly converted into a battle-field. Mainly by the prowess of Arjuna and his brothers, the princely suitors are defeated, and Draupadi becomes his bride.

The Pandus having declared themselves, were reinstated in their hereditary kingdom, and Yudisthira, who, as the eldest brother, held the sovereignty, built



a beautiful city called Indraprastha, on the site now occupied by Delhi. After a period of peace and prosperity a change took place. Yudisthira, forgetting his former moderation, became inflated with pride, and insisted that the neighbouring kings should do homage to him as their lord paramount. When they refused, he sent forth his brothers to compel them by force. He thus succeeded in his object, and a day was fixed on which the kings were to bring tribute, and acknowledge their inferiority, by doing some act of menial service. The Curus professed acquiescence in these proceedings, but the old enmity was rankling in their hearts. Not venturing to manifest it by open hostility, they adopted a method which was at once safer and more effective. Yudisthira had a propensity for gambling, and the Curus taking advantage of it, led him on from stake to stake, till he pledged his kingdom for twelve years. He lost, and he and his brothers were in consequence forced into exile.

A.D. —

Arrogance of
Yudisthira.

When the twelve years had elapsed, the Pandus claimed restitution of their kingdom, but were answered with scorn, and told that they should not have as much as would cover the point of a needle. There was therefore no alternative but force. As this was meant to be the decisive struggle, alliances were sought in the most distant quarters, and there was not a king between the Himalaya and the ocean who was not enlisted on one or other of the sides. The Curus had gained one great advantage. Drona's hatred to the King of Panchala was greater than his attachment to his old favourite pupils; and therefore, since the Pandus, by the marriage of Draupadi, had made common cause with her father, the Curus had little difficulty in persuading Drona to become the leader of their host. This advantage was more than counterbalanced by another which the Pandus had gained. Krishna was their steady friend, and, when the battle was about to be waged, took his place beside Arjuna as his charioteer. Wonderful displays of prowess were made on both sides. Drona, disdaining the place of safety which his position allotted to him, appeared in front, on a car framed by immortal art, and, supported by the redoubtable Kerna, drove back the Pandus "like clouds before the gale." Arjuna and his charioteer did equal execution upon the Curus. At last, after the struggle had been maintained for eighteen days, the Pandus proved victors, but at a very heavy loss, which so grieved Yudisthira, that after placing the younger members of the family on the thrones of Hastinapura and Indraprastha, he set out with his brothers and Draupadi for Mount Meru, expecting that he might thus reach Indra's heaven, and there find the repose which had been denied them on earth. The journey was long and disastrous. After coming in sight of the lofty Himalavat, crossing it, and getting a distant view of rocky Meru, lying beyond a sea of sand, Draupadi was killed by falling on the face of the earth. By a similar fate, or "pierced through with sorrow," four of the brothers perished, and Yudisthira was left alone, followed by his faithful dog. He moves on, never casting a look behind, and at last Indra appears, and bids him ascend

Great battle
between the
Pandus and
the Curus.Yudisthira's
journey to
Mount
Meru.



Yudisthira
reaches
heaven.

The king refuses, unless Draupadi and his brothers who had died go with him. On being assured that he will find them there before him, he asks that his dog may accompany him. Indra, scandalized at such a request, answers, "My heaven is no place for dogs." The king, however, insists, and the difficulty, after it had become apparently insurmountable, is removed by the dog himself. He was not what he seemed to be, but Yama in disguise, and now assumes his proper form. Even in heaven Yudisthira is disappointed. On looking round, he not only misses Draupadi and his brothers, but sees his cousins, the hated and hating Curus. This was no heaven for him; and he has made up his mind to exchange its joys for the gloom of the shades below, when the scene suddenly changes. All that he had yet beheld was illusion, designed to try his faith. The illusion vanished, he suddenly finds himself with his friends, in the possession of immortal bliss.

Merits of
the Maha-
bharata.

As an epic, judged by the strict rules of art, the Mahabharata is still more defective than the Ramayana. Not only does it sin more against unity, and present simultaneously a series of subjects which distract the reader, and make it often difficult for him to ascertain which of them is principal and which only subordinate; but many of the episodes introduced have no visible connection with the main story, and are much more allied to didactic than to epic poetry. One of them, the Bhagavat Gita, is an exposition of the doctrines of a particular school of theology; and though in itself a work of great merit, has no title to the place which it now occupies, since it must have been written in the seventh or eighth century, and therefore in all probability seven or eight hundred years later than the main body of the poem. The poetry of the Mahabharata is loudly praised, not merely by oriental scholars, but by such competent judges as Milman and Schlegel, who have furnished specimens which justify their encomiums. The only extract which we can afford to introduce here is from the description of the last great battle between the Pandus and Curus. The translation is by Professor Wilson:—

"Now, as on either side the hosts advanced,
A sudden tumult filled the sky; earth shook;
Chafed by wild winds, the sands upheaved to heaven,
And spread a veil before the sun. Blood fell
In showers; shrill-screaming kites and vultures winged
The darkling air, while howling jackals hung
Around the march, impatient for their meal;
And ever and anon the thunder roar'd,
And angry lightnings flash'd across the gloom,
Or blazing meteors fearful shot to earth.
Regardless of these awful signs, the chiefs
Rushed on to mutual slaughter, and the peal
Of shouting hosts commingling shook the world.
Contending warriors, emulous for victory
And great in arras, wielded the sharp-edged sword,
And hurled the javelin; frequent flew the dart,
And countless arrows canopied the combat."



The Hindoos boast of many other poets of more modern date, and make mention in particular of nine who lived at Oojein, under a celebrated prince, of the name of Vicramaditya, and are said, in oriental hyperbole, to have shone like jewels around his throne. It is evident from the wide difference in the dates of the transactions ascribed to his reign that there must have been several sovereigns of the name; but the one who appears, from the splendour of his court, and the number of distinguished literary men whom he gathered around him, and liberally patronized, to have made the strongest impression on his own age, and also on posterity, flourished about the middle of the first century before the Christian era. Of the nine jewels, the most celebrated is Kalidasa, whose Meghaduta, or "Cloud Messenger," and Ritusanhara, or "Circle of the Seasons," are characterized as excellent specimens of descriptive poetry. The former, founded on the very fanciful idea that a spirit banished from heaven sends a message to his consort, has long been a special favourite in India. The messenger employed is a cloud, and the spirit in directing his course describes the various countries over which it will be necessary to pass. In this way full scope is given for introducing all the varieties of landscape, the most renowned cities, the characters of their inhabitants, and even many of the legends connected with their history. The exiled spirit, at the same time, often calling to mind the happiness he had once enjoyed, and lamenting the loss of it, ever and anon indulges in early remembrance, and draws splendid pictures of the heavenly mansions.

A.D. —

More modern Hindoo poets.

Kalidasa.

The Hindoos appear not to have possessed any poetry to which the name of pastoral could be properly applied, till a comparatively recent period. The Gita Govinda, a collection of songs in which the loves of Krishna are celebrated, was written in the fourteenth century; but the author, Jaya Deva, has succeeded so well in accommodating his muse to the superstitious spirit, as well as the voluptuous tastes of his countrymen, that he is, perhaps, the most popular of all their authors. His merits, however, are not equal to his popularity, and his luxuriant imagery often fails to compensate for his feebleness and conceits. There is another species of literature in which the Hindoos may more justly boast both of excellence and originality. Their fables and tales are undoubtedly the sources from which the nations both of the East and West have derived almost all that they possess in this department. The most ancient known fables, those of Bidpai, occur almost entire in the Sanscrit "Hitopadesa," which was published by Mr. Wilkins; and the invention of the scheme of story-telling exemplified in the *Arabian Nights*, as well as the subject and materials of many of the most celebrated tales, are justly claimed for India.

Jaya Deva.

The Hitopadesa.

The only other species of literature which remains to be noticed, is that of the drama. In this department the two most celebrated names are those of Kalidasa, mentioned above as one of the ornaments of Vicramaditya's court, though he probably lived some centuries later, and of Bhavabhuti, who flourished in the eighth century. To each of them only three dramas are

The Hindoo drama.



The Hindoo
drama.

A.D. — ascribed, and of four of these excellent English translations have appeared. The *Sakontala*, the most celebrated production of Kalidasa, was early made familiar to Europe by the translation of Sir William Jones, and has recently been translated anew by Monier Williams, from a much more accurate copy of the original. It abounds in fine poetical description, and in many of its scenes displays the utmost tenderness and delicacy. The *Mikramorvasi*, or the "Hero and the Nymph," also by Kalidasa, has been translated by Professor Wilson, and is distinguished by the same qualities, though perhaps in an inferior degree. *Bhavabhuti*, in addition to Kalidasa's tenderness and exuberant fancy, possesses a vigour and sublimity which are exceedingly rare in Hindoo literature. His most celebrated drama is *Malati and Madhava*. *Malati*, the heroine, is daughter of the prime minister of Malwah; *Madhava*, the hero, is son of the King of Behar, who sends him to Oojein, the capital of Malwah, to study logic under a celebrated female Buddhist, who had been *Malati's* nurse, and still continues to be her confidante. Her logic soon becomes the least attractive of *Madhava's* studies, and a mutual attachment is formed, which gives rise to incidents of a singular and interesting nature. Oojein, as seen from a neighbouring height, is thus described under its ancient name of *Padmavati* —

"How wide the prospect spreads—mountain and rock,
Towns, villages, and woods, and glittering streams.
There where the Para and the Sindhu wind,
The towers, and pinnacles, and gates,
And spires of *Padmavati*, like a city
Precipitated from the skies, appear
Inverted in the pure translucent wave.
There flows *Lavana's* frolic stream, whose groves,
By early rains refreshed, afford the youth
Of *Padmavati* pleasant haunts, and where,
Upon the herbage brightening in the shower,
The heavy-udder'd kine contented browse."

As a specimen of the darker colouring which *Bhavabhuti* frequently employs, the following passage from a wild goblin scene will bear quotation:—

"And now I see the goblin host; each stalks
On legs like palm-trees—a gaunt skeleton,
Whose fleshless bones are bound by starting sinews,
And scantily cased in black and shrivell'd skin;
Like tall and wither'd trees, by lightning scathed,
They move, and, as amidst their sapless trunks
The mighty serpent curls, so in each mouth,
Wide-yawning, rolls the vast blood-dripping tongue."

Its defects.

These extracts are taken from Professor Wilson's *Hindoo Theatre*, which contains translations of most of the other Hindoo dramas possessed of any interest, and furnishes full information on the whole subject in the introduction and the explanatory notes. One circumstance on which the drama, considered as a representation of national character, depends, is unfortunately wanting in the case of Hindoo plays. With the exception of occasional pas-

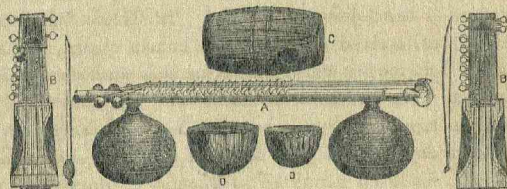
sages, they were composed in Sanserit at a time when it had ceased to be a living language, and had of course become unintelligible to the great body of the people. From this fact we may easily infer another—that the plays were intended only for select audiences, and for a single performance on some special occasion. There was no stage, as with us, where the same piece might be again and again repeated, and where every one who chose to pay the fee for admission had a right to be present, but only some temporary stage erected within the great hall or inner court of a palace, into which none but invited guests durst presume to enter. The author having thus no public taste to consult, could very imperfectly perform the office which Hamlet attributes to the player, to show “the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.” If he succeeded in pleasing his patron his object was gained, and it was superfluous to look beyond it. It may be owing to this want of the popular element, and the encouragement which would have accompanied it, that though some Hindoo plays certainly were written before the Christian era, and during the eighteen hundred years which have since elapsed many more must have been demanded by grantees, to form part of particular festivities, the whole number now extant does not exceed sixty. The drama, therefore, how important soever it may have been deemed in early times, does not hold any prominent place in modern Hindoo literature.

A.D. —

Defects of the Hindoo drama.

In the fine arts, comprehending music, painting, sculpture, and architecture, the Hindoos cannot take high ground. The science of music was in early times reduced to a system, and the Hindoos themselves are so satisfied with their proficiency in it as to affirm, “that the Europeans are superior to them in everything except music.”¹

Hindoo music.



MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.—From originals in the Museum of the East India House.
 A, Vina or Bheem. B B, Saringhees or violins. C D D, Drums or Tam-tams.

Few who have listened to it subscribe to this opinion. Their melodies are distinguished by a peculiar sweetness and plaintiveness, and when sung by a single voice or accompanied only by the *vina*, or Indian lyre, are very pleasing; but unfortunately, when a concert is given, the usual accompaniments are fiddles, and drums beaten with the fingers, which would completely drown the voices of the singers, if they did not have recourse to a kind of unnatural screeching. This at least is the only music which the Europeans are in the way of hearing; but it is said that it is not a fair specimen, and that the performers “are

¹ Von Orlich's *Travels in India*, vol. i. page 226.



regarded by their scientific brethren in much the same light as a ballad-singer at the corner of the street by the primo soprano of the Italian opera."

Hindoo
painting
and sculp-
ture.

The mythology of the Hindoos furnishing innumerable subjects for painting and sculpture, it might have been expected that these arts would be in great demand, and would consequently have made rapid progress. This is not the case. The productions are numerous, but they display no proficiency. "Painting," to use the language of Mr. Elphinstone,¹ "is still in the lowest stage. Walls of houses are often painted in water colours, and sometimes in oils. The subjects are mythology, battles, processions, wrestlers, male and female figures, and animals, with no landscape, or at best a tree or two, or a building, stuck in without any knowledge of perspective, or any attention to light and shade." They are more successful with pictures of a smaller size, painted in a sort of destemper, in which likenesses or the scenes of daily life are exhibited with accuracy, as well as with some freedom both of design and expression. Sculptures, executed in connection with prevailing superstitions, are innumerable. Besides images standing apart, all temples are covered internally, and, when not caves, externally also, with statues and high reliefs. Some of the latter are spirited, and display taste in their figures, attitudes, and expressions. In none of these, however, is there the least knowledge of anatomical skill indicated; even the external appearance of the muscles and limbs is disregarded, and the proportions are so inaccurate that it would be ludicrous to institute any comparison between the best of Indian sculptures and those which in Europe rank only as second-rate. One great obstacle in India has arisen from the nature of the objects represented. In Greece, the deities, however great the attributes ascribed to them, had human shapes, and the artist had only to select from models which were constantly under his eye, and make them ideally perfect. The Indian artist had a very different task. The objects which he had to represent were mere monsters of incongruous shapes, and often of hideous aspects. To give them an attractive appearance was impossible, and he was not even permitted to attempt it, since the more repulsive they were the better did they accord with the popular belief. The Hindoo artist, obliged to gratify this depraved taste, must have been strongly tempted to substitute mere mechanical dexterity for all other kinds of excellence.

Hindoo ar-
chitecture.

On the subject of Hindoo architecture opinions are much divided. Some, denying that it has any just claim to originality, think that they have discovered in Egypt the models of the most venerable of Indian structures; while others, allowing themselves to be imposed upon by a fabulous chronology, assign dates which the structures themselves, and the historical events visibly stamped on them, completely disprove. Avoiding both extremes, we may readily admit that the Hindoos have from a very early period possessed an architecture which is peculiarly their own, and is embodied in written treatises as a regular system.

¹ Elphinstone's *India*, vol. i. page 365.



These treatises, bearing collectively the name of Silpa Sastra, or "Science of Manual Arts," are said to have been sixty-four in number, and were supposed by Sir William Jones to furnish instruction in as many distinct trades. It would seem, however, from the *Essay on the Architecture of the Hindoos*, published by Ram Raz, under the auspices of the Royal Asiatic Society, that several of the treatises are devoted to the same subject, and more especially to architecture, to which various other arts were held to be subservient. As has happened in India in other instances, the progress of architecture from earlier to more recent times has been retrograde, and the Sanscrit works which treated of it have in a great measure disappeared. After careful search, Ram Raz was only able to recover portions of a few, and these so mutilated and full of errors that he does not venture to describe them as anything better than "shattered remains." By far the most complete was a work entitled *Manasara*; but of the fifty-eight chapters into which it appears from the table of contents to be divided, the copy which he procured contains only forty-one. From these, and fragmentary portions of those other works, all the information given in his essay was derived, and therefore, in the use of it, some degree of caution is necessary. He has not been able to fix the date either of his manuscripts or of the originals, in a satisfactory manner; and there is necessarily a lurking suspicion that a more thorough acquaintance with their history might not raise them in our estimation. Still, they are certainly sufficient for the purpose for which they are here adduced. Taken in connection with the structures which have been actually reared in accordance with their rules, they make it impossible to doubt that among the Hindoos architecture early attained great proficiency, and besides being practised as an art, was studied as a science. The systematic form which it assumed cannot be better explained than by giving a short account of the manner in which it is treated in the *Manasara*.

Hindoo
treatises on
architecture.

The
Manasara.

After a series of introductory chapters on mensuration—on the qualifications of a *silpi*, or manual artist—on the kinds of soils to be preferred as building sites—on the mode of ascertaining the four cardinal points by means of a sundial, so as to make the walls astronomically true—on the laying out of ground plans for cities, towns, temples, palaces, and private dwellings—on the sacrifices and other religious acts to be performed before any building is actually undertaken—and on the ceremonies which ought to be observed in laying the foundation stone—the subject of architecture, properly so called, is entered upon, and all the separate parts of which a building is composed, their forms, their dimensions, and the proportions which these ought to bear to each other, are minutely explained. Thus one chapter is devoted to pedestals, another to basements, another to pillars or shafts, and another to entablatures. In determining these four principal parts, a great variety of forms is recognized; but the measure invariably used in fixing their relative heights is the diameter of the shaft. Thus it is said that the base may be the height of a whole, or of three-fourths,

Analysis of
the *Manasara*.

Hindu
architecture.Pyramidal
temples or
vimanas.Parts of
temples.

or of one-half of a diameter; and that pillars, besides being of various forms, as square, round, or octagonal, plain or variously fluted, may be of seven different kinds, according as they measure in height any number of diameters from six to twelve. No proper orders of architecture are recognized. The above varying proportions between the thickness and the height of pillars constitute the only essential differences; while the capitals and other ornaments, instead of being subjected to strict rules, as in Grecian and Roman architecture, are left in a great measure optional. After describing the principal parts of every building, the *Manasara* proceeds to treat of complete structures, as temples and palaces. No fewer than twelve successive chapters are devoted to descriptions of temples surmounted by pyramidal domes, and consisting of from one to twelve stories. In another work called the *Casyalpa*, the number of stories is extended to sixteen. These pyramidal temples or *vimanas* are constructed on the plan of diminishing in breadth at each successive story, and terminating in a cupola surmounted by a pinnacle. All the stories may be uniformly square, oblong, circular, oval, or polygonal, or they may be of a mixed nature, part of one form and part of another. They may also be of the same, or of different materials, and receive different names accordingly—a *vimana* of a single material, as brick or stone, being called *sudha*, or pure—of two materials, as stone and brick, or stone and metal, *misra*, or mixed—and of three or more kinds of materials, *sancirna*, or anomalous. Other more minute distinctions are recognized, and different names are given, according as the idol of the temple receives a standing, a sitting, or a recumbent posture.

Temples generally consist of the *garb'hagriha*, literally the womb of the house, the *antarala*, or ante-temple, and the *ard'ha mantapa*, or front portico. In fixing their respective dimensions, the whole length of the building is divided into four and a half, or six parts—two, two and a half, or three of these being given to the *garb'hagriha*, one and a half or two to the *antarala*, and one or one and a half to the *ard'ha mantapa*. The heights of the *vimanas* bear a certain fixed proportion to these breadths. Thus, when there is only one story, the height measured from the base to the apex, exclusive of the pedestal, is equal to one and a half of the breadth, and when there are two or three stories, the height is twice the breadth. In apportioning the different parts of the whole heights many subdivisions are made. Thus, in a *vimana* of twelve stories, the whole height is divided into eighty-seven parts. Of these four are given to the base, eight to the pillar, and four to the entablature of the first story—seven to the pillar, and three and a half to the entablature of the second story—six to the pillar, and three to the entablature of the third story; and so on, gradually diminishing in each successive story. On arriving at the last story, one part is to be given to the upper base, two to the *cant'ha* or neck of the cupola, three to the cupola itself, and one and a half to the pinnacle.

In subsequent chapters of the *Manasara* various adjuncts and appendages



of temples are described with equal minuteness. Thus one chapter is devoted to outer courts, another to *gopuras* or pyramidal gateways, another to *sulas* or halls, another to porticoes, and another to stances for deities. The concluding chapters are somewhat miscellaneous in their contents, and seem to follow each other without any distinct principle of arrangement. Hence, after several chapters properly enough devoted to cities, private dwellings, gates and doorways, palaces and their appendages, the fortieth abruptly announces its subject to be "of princes, with their titles." This is followed by chapters treating in succession of the building of cars and other vehicles of the gods, couches and cushions, and thrones for the gods and for princes. The forty-fourth chapter bears more directly on the subject, for it treats of ornamental arches; but the next is completely away from it, and treats of the "Calpataru, or the all-productive tree which is supposed to be planted in Indra's heaven, and to supply all the wants of those who have the happiness of taking shelter under it." It is needless to continue the detail of contents any further than to mention that the fifty-eighth chapter, the last of all, concludes "with rules for chiselling the eyes of the statue" of each god, and "the ceremonies to be performed on the occasion." From the rules of the art a natural transition leads to their exemplification in practice; and we shall therefore conclude the notice of the architecture of the Hindoos with a brief account of some of their most celebrated structures.

As the earliest, and in some respects also the most interesting specimens of Indian architecture, the rock-cut temples and monasteries, the former called *chitayas* and the other *viharas*, first claim attention. Strictly speaking, they are not Hindoo but Buddhist, the oldest of them having unquestionably originated with the worshippers of Buddha. Still, as on the expulsion of the Buddhists, their temples were appropriated by their persecutors, and also furnished the models of similar structures for Brahminical worship, there is no great inaccuracy in classing them as if they had originally been Hindoo. They exist in so many localities that nearly fifty different groups are counted, and the number of distinct specimens has been estimated at not less than a thousand. Their geographical distribution is singular. Nine-tenths of the known groups are situated within the presidency of Bombay, while the other presidencies possess only three groups, of which one only, that of Mahabalipoorani or Mahavellipore, belongs to Madras, and two, those of Behar and Orissa, to Bengal. In this unequal distribution some have endeavoured to find a confirmation of the hypothesis that Egypt and Ethiopia, lying nearest to that part of India where the cave-temples are most numerous, furnished it with the original models of them; but Mr. Fergusson, though once inclined to this opinion, now thinks the localities of the caves sufficiently accounted for by the nature of the strata. "The whole cave district of India," he says,¹ "is composed of horizontal strata of amygdaloid and other cognate trap formations, generally speaking of very

Rock-cut
temples and
monasteries.

¹ Fergusson, *The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture*, vol. i. p. 23.

A.D. —
 Hindu rock-
 temples.

considerable thickness and great uniformity of texture, and possessing, besides, the advantage of their edges being generally exposed in perfectly perpendicular cliffs, so that no rock in the world could either be more suited for the purpose, or more favourably situated than these formations are. They were easily accessible and easily worked. In the rarest possible instances are there any flaws or faults to disturb the uniformity of the design; and when complete, they afford a perfectly dry temple or abode, singularly uniform in temperature, and more durable than any class of temple found in any other part of the world. With these advantages, we need hardly look further for an explanation of the phenomenon, though some collateral points of explanation may perhaps reveal themselves to future explorers."

Cave-temple
 of Karli.

Referring to the illustrations of cave-temples which have been already given in pages 17-19, vol. I, of our History, we now select for fuller description the cave at Karli, situated on the road between Bombay and Poonah. It is not the oldest, for the date assigned to it is the first century of our era, but it has other important recommendations. It is the largest, as well as the most complete, and seems to have been executed when the style was in its greatest purity. It is approached by a narrow path, winding among trees, brushwood, and fragments of rocks, and entered by three doorways, the one in the centre leading to the main area or nave, and the others to the side aisles. Immediately above the doorways is a gallery, from the extremities of which springs an arch in the form of a horse-shoe. This arch left open forms the only window for the admission of light. The outer porch is closed in front by a screen, composed of two stout octagonal pillars, which support what is now only a plain mass of rock, but is understood to have once been faced with a richly ornamented wooden gallery. In advance of these pillars is a shaft with thirty-two faces or flutes, known by the name of the Lion Pillar, from having a capital surmounted by four lions. A space on the opposite side, where another similar pillar probably stood, is at present occupied by a little temple. The interior measures 126 feet in length, 45 feet 7 inches in breadth, and from 42 to 45 feet in height. It consists of a nave and two aisles, each of them separated from it by a row of fifteen pillars. Towards the extremity, opposite the entrance, is an apse or semi-dome, round which the aisles are continued by a curve of seven smaller pillars. Immediately under the semi-dome of the apse is the shrine, consisting of a plain dome, slightly stilted on a circular drum, and surmounted by a terminal, on which a wooden umbrella, decayed and distorted by age, still stands.

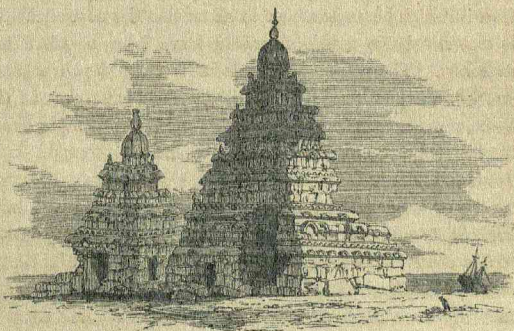
The pillars of the aisles have each "a tall base, an octagonal shaft, and a richly ornamented capital, on which kneel two elephants, each bearing two figures, generally a man and a woman, but sometimes two females, all very much better executed than such ornaments usually are." Four pillars, two on each side of the entrance-gallery, differ considerably from those forming the aisles, and the seven which curve behind the apse are plain octagonal shafts,

without base or capital. The roof is semicircular, but being somewhat stilted where it springs from the summit of the pillars, has a greater height than a semi-diameter. From a series of wooden ribs which still cross it, and appear to be as old as the whole excavation, it is inferred that the whole roof was originally of wood, and therefore the existing roof could not have been intended as a copy of a masonry arch. The general effect is thus described by Mr. Fergusson:—"The absence of wooden ornaments, as well as our ignorance of the mode in which this temple was finished laterally, and the porch joined to the main temple, prevents us from judging of the effect of the front in its perfect state. But the proportions of such parts as remain are so good, and the effect of the whole so pleasing, that there can be little hesitation in ascribing to such a design a tolerably high rank among architectural compositions. Of the interior we can judge perfectly, and it is certainly as solemn and grand as any interior can well be, and the mode of lighting the most perfect—one undivided volume of light coming through a single opening overhead, at a very favourable angle, and falling directly on the altar or principal object in the building, leaving the rest in comparative obscurity. The effect is considerably heightened by the closely-set and thick columns that divide the three aisles from one another, as they suffice to prevent the boundary walls from ever being seen, and as there are no openings in the walls, the view between the pillars is practically unlimited."

A.D. —

Cave temple
of Karli.

The formation of temples out of the solid rock has not been confined to the process of excavation. In some cases the solid rock has not only been hollowed out, but hewn down into shape, and ornamented so as to present externally, as well as internally, all the features of a magnificent and gorgeous structure. Some remarkable specimens are furnished



PAGODAS AT MAHABALIPOORAM.
From Fergusson's *Picturesque Illustrations of the Ancient Architecture of India*.

by what are called the Rathas, or Seven Pagodas of Mahabalipooram, situated near Sadras, about half-way between Madras and Pondicherry. The name is given to seven masses of granite which protrude from the sands near the seashore, and have been carved and hollowed by the Hindoos into isolated structures. One of them is an exact representation of a Buddhist monastery of

The Seven
Pagodas.



A. D. —

Rock-cut
temples.

The Kylas.

Compara-
tive cost of
rock-cut and
built
temples.

five stories. The lowest is occupied by a great square hall, and the other three by central halls, diminished in proportion to their height, and surrounded by cells on the outside, while the fifth and last story is crowned by a kind of dome. They are supposed to be not older than the thirteenth century, and yield, both in antiquity and interest, to the rock-cut temple at Ellora, generally known as the Kylas, which belongs to the ninth or tenth century, and is almost of unrivalled magnificence. Though wholly hewn out of the rock, it is in fact a complete temple, such as might have been erected on the plain. In a structure thus formed there is necessarily one great disadvantage. Its site is nothing else than a vast quarry or pit, in which it lies buried, and is not seen till it is approached. The depth of this pit at the inmost side is about 100 feet, and on the outer, where it is diminished by the slope of the hill, about 50 feet. The floor is 270 feet long by 150 wide, and in its centre stands the temple, properly so called. In approaching it, the first thing seen is a lofty *gopura* or gateway, connected by a bridge with a detached porch, which is flanked by two pillars and two elephants about the size of life. Another bridge behind this leads to a second porch of larger dimensions, supported by sixteen massive columns, and leading immediately to the *vimana*, which is between 80 and 90 feet in height. All around the court is a cloister with cells and halls, "which give to the whole a complexity and, at the same time, a completeness which never fail to strike the beholder with astonishment and awe." Such is the remark of Mr. Fergusson, and yet he takes off the effect of it by a calculation in which he endeavours to show that the cost of the Kylas, as it now stands, is not nearly so much as would have been required to construct it of solid masonry. The whole length, breadth, and depth which have been excavated would, he says, form an area of 100,000 cubic yards. Of these only a half require to be removed, and therefore "the question is simply this—Whether is it easier to chip away 50,000 yards of rock, and shoot it to spoil (to borrow a railway term) down a hill-side, or to quarry 50,000 cubic yards of stone, remove it probably a mile at least to the place where the temple is to be built, and then to raise it and set it? The excavating process would probably have cost about one-tenth of the other. The sculpture and ornament would be the same in both instances, more especially in India, where buildings are always set up in block, and the carving executed *in situ*." If this calculation is correct, it places the claims of the Hindoo architects to originality in a new light, since it proves that, by means of such structures as the Kylas, they have produced the greatest effect by the least expensive means. This is tacitly admitted by Mr. Fergusson, when he adds:—"Nevertheless, the impression produced on all spectators by these monolithic masses, their unalterable character and appearance of eternal durability, point to the process as one meriting more attention than it has hitherto received in modern times; and if any rock were found as uniform and as easily worked as the Indian amygdaloidal traps, we might hand down

to posterity some more durable monument than many we are now erecting at far greater cost."

A.D. —

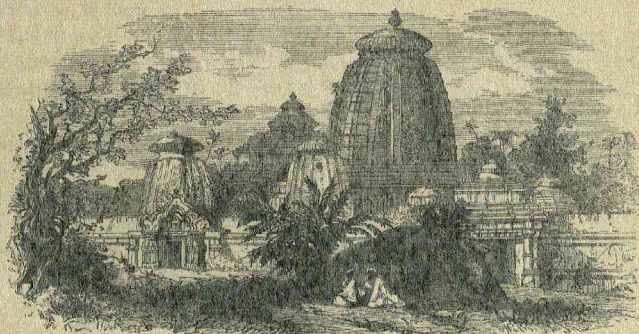
Other styles of architecture, differing essentially from the rock-cut temples, are seen in the temples regularly constructed of solid masonry. One of these, of vast extent, situated on the island of Seringham, was incidentally mentioned in a former part of the work. Many others are equally deserving of notice, but our limits admit of little more than a simple mention of a few of the most remarkable. The first of these is the *vimana*, or pyramidal temple, properly so called, exhibited in its most splendid forms in the southern part of the peninsula, and above all in the great pagoda of Tanjore, which, rising from a square base, ascends through fourteen stories to the height of nearly 200 feet. Temples built on this plan usually receive their only light through the doorway, before which artificial obstructions are placed to deepen the gloom, and thereby enhance the mystery of the sanctuary. Thus in front of the doorway stands a single or double porch, nearly identical in plan with the *vimana*, but very much lower, and again in front of the porch a lofty pyramidal gate or *gopura*. One of the most remarkable of these is the twelve-storied *gopura* of the principal temple of Combaconum, situated twenty miles north-east of Tanjore. Another appendage of these temples is the *choultry*, or pillared colonnade, occupying the spaces between the various inclosures, and varying in shape and size "from the little pavilion supported on four pillars, up to the magnificent hall numbering a thousand." One of the oldest and most elegant of these forms the porch of the pagoda of Chillambaram; another, displaying less taste, but more celebrated, is the hall built by Trimul Naik, at Madura. It is 333 feet long by 81 feet 10 inches wide, and is supported by 128 pillars, all differing from each other, and

Regularly constructed temples.

The pagoda of Tanjore.

Temple of Combaconum.

Chillambaram and Madura.



GREAT TEMPLE AT BHOBANJER.—From Fergusson's Hindoo Architecture.

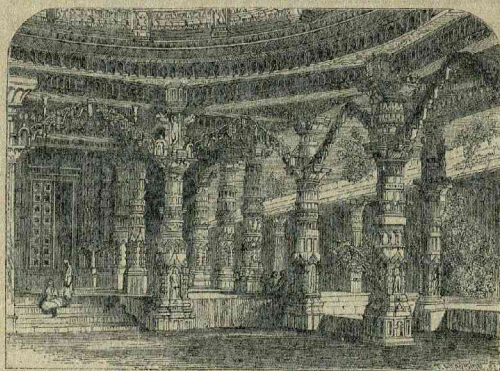
covered with the most elaborate and minute architectural ornaments. Twenty-two years, and nearly £1,000,000 sterling, were expended in its erection. A form of *vimana*, differing greatly from that usual in Southern India, is found

The temples
 of Orissa.

within the presidency of Bengal, and more especially in Orissa. In this form the outline is no longer a pyramid composed of a definite number of stories, but a curve resembling a cone with divisions, not horizontal as in stories, but vertical. The earliest specimen of this style is the great temple of Bhubaneser, built by Lelat Indra Kesari in 657. In the same vicinity more than 100 other temples, built on the same plan, and varying in height from 50 to 150 feet, still exist; but they are all eclipsed, at least in celebrity, by the temple of Juggernaut, which was built on the same model in 1198.

The only other temples to which it seems necessary to refer, are those of the Jains, who must at one time have established their ascendancy over a large part

of both Northern and Southern India, but have now their principal seats in Mysore and Gujerat. On the borders of the latter territory the granite mountain Aboo rises abruptly from a sandy desert to the height of about 5000 feet. On this mountain the Jains have a number of temples.



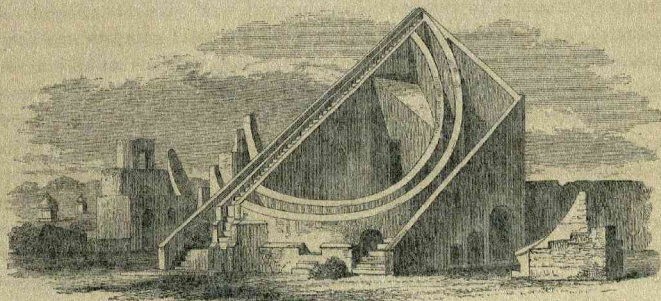
VIMALA SAH JAIN TEMPLE, MOUNT ABOO — Fergusson's Hindoo Architecture.

Jain temples
 on Mount
 Aboo.

Two of them, composed of white marble, are pre-eminently beautiful. The older of the two, built about 1032 by a merchant prince of the name of Vimala Sah, is said to have occupied fourteen years in its erection, and to have cost £18,000,000 sterling. Externally it is perfectly plain, but within nothing can exceed the magnificence and richness of decoration. The principal part of the temple is a cell, containing a cross-legged seated figure of Parswanath, to whom it is dedicated. It is lighted only from the door, and terminated upwards by a pyramidal spire-like roof. In front of the cell is a portico composed of forty-eight pillars, and inclosed, together with the cell, in an oblong court, surrounded by a double colonnade of smaller pillars. These form porticoes to a range of fifty-five cells, which are similar to those of a Buddhist *vihara*, but instead of being intended for monks, contain each a cross-legged image of Parswanath, the scenes of whose life are sculptured over the doors, or on the jambs. Eight great pillars of the portico support a magnificent dome, which forms the principal feature in the architecture. Fergusson's admiration of the porch may be estimated from his observation that the church of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, London, Sir Christopher Wren's master-

piece, "would have been greatly improved, had its resemblance to a Jaina porch been more complete." In another place he says of the whole temple, that it is as "elaborate as good taste would allow in any purely architectural subject." The second temple, built by two rich merchant brothers between 1197 and 1247, is characterized by Colonel Todd, who employs it as the ornamental title-page of his *Travels in Western India*, as "beyond controversy the most superb of all the temples of India," and unapproached by any edifice except the Taje Mahal; and, by Mr. Fergusson, as standing, "for delicacy of carving and minute beauty of detail, almost unrivalled, even in this land of patient and lavish labour." The only other Jain temple which we shall notice is that of Sadru, situated in a deserted glen of the Aravulli range, below the fort of Komulmeer in Odeypore. It was built about the middle of the fifteenth century by Khumbo Rana, whose long and prosperous reign was distinguished by the erection of numerous beautiful buildings, and is of large dimensions, covering an area of more than eight acres. Its effect is not imposing, in consequence of the minuteness and immense number of its parts, but nothing can surpass these in variety, beauty of detail, graceful arrangement, and the tasteful admixture of domes of different heights with flat ceilings. "Indeed," adds Mr. Fergusson, "I know of no other building in India of the same class that leaves so pleasing an impression, or affords so many hints for the graceful arrangement of columns in an interior."

Temples are not the only edifices in which the architectural magnificence of the Hindoos has been displayed, and some notice therefore is due to their palaces, of which that of Deeg, in Bhurtpoor, surpasses all others in grandeur of conception and beauty of detail—their observatories, of which those of Jey Sing, erected at Delhi and Benares, are particularly distinguished, though, from

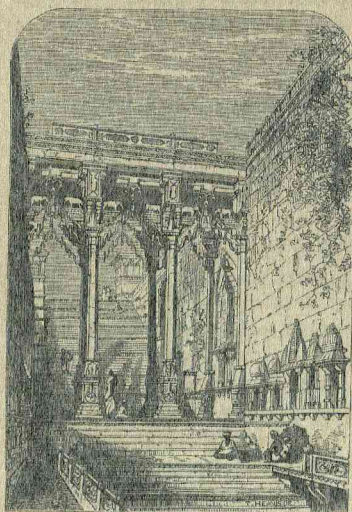


OBSERVATORY AT DELHI, BUILT BY JEY SING.—From original drawing by T. Longcroft, Esq.

having been erected under the Mogul dynasty, they present Mahometan features, and therefore properly belong to what has been called the mixed Hindoo style—their *ghauts* or landing-places, which, in addition to a magnificent flight of steps, are always backed by a building more or less remarkable for

Ghaats or
landing
places.

architectural display, but are nowhere so numerous and splendid as at Benares—their wells or reservoirs, which, though necessarily devoid of external display, exhibit, in flights of steps often from 20 to 40 feet wide, and continued to the depth of 80 or 100 feet, as well as in the galleries and ornamental niches



BOWLES AT BOONDEE.—Fergusson's *Hindoo Architecture*.

constructed in the adjoining walls, many elaborate and most expensive pieces of architecture—and their great tanks or artificial lakes, which, while furnishing the means of an irrigation on which the fertility of whole districts depends, are often as remarkable for magnificence and beauty as for utility, the embankments sometimes consisting of flights of steps composed of marble, and relieved of their monotonous appearance by the intervention of temples, choultries, fountains, and statues.

The result of all that has been here said on the subject of Hindoo architecture cannot be given better than in the words of Mr. Fergusson—"It stands so completely alone, so entirely separate from the other forms of architecture of the world, that it cannot well be compared with any of them, without the risk

of false and erroneous impressions being conveyed, more likely to mislead than to instruct. It does not, however, possess either the solid grandeur and simple magnificence of the Egyptian style, or any of that sublime aspiration after eternity that strikes with awe every visitor to the valley of the Nile. It would be as reasonable to compare the Indian epics and dramas with those of Homer and Sophocles, as to compare the Indian style of architecture with the refined elegance and intellectual superiority of the Parthenon and other great works of Greece. Probably a nearer comparison might be instituted with the Gothic styles of the middle ages; yet, while possessing the same rich irregularity and defiance of all rule, it wants that bold manliness of style and loftiness of aspiration which dignifies even the rudest attempts of those enthusiastic religionists. Though deficient in these respects, the Indian styles are unrivalled for patient elaboration of the details, which are always designed with elegance, and always executed with care. The very extent of ornamentation produces feelings of astonishment, and the smaller examples are always pleasing, from the elegance of the parts and the appropriateness of the whole. In no styles is the last characteristic more marked than in those of India; for whether the architects

Summary
view of
Hindoo ar-
chitecture.



had to uphold a mountain of rock, or the airiest dome, or merely an ornamental screen-work, in all instances the pillars are exactly proportioned to the work they have to do, and the ornaments are equally suited to the apparent strength or lightness of effect which the position of the mass seems to require. No affectation, and no imitation of other styles, ever interfere to prevent the purpose-like expression of every part, and the effect consequently is always satisfactory and pleasing, and, when the extent is sufficient, produces many of the best and highest modes of expression of which the art of architecture is anywhere capable."

CHAPTER V.

Agriculture, Manufactures, and Commerce of the Hindoos.



EXCEPT in the rudest states of society, when population is thinly scattered, the earth does not spontaneously yield a sufficient supply of food, and its produce must therefore be increased by artificial means. Under the spur of this necessity, the fundamental processes of ploughing, sowing, and reaping are soon learned, and have accordingly been practised in almost all countries from time immemorial. But though agriculture is thus one of the earliest of human arts, it is certainly not the first in which any great degree of proficiency is attained. So long as land can be procured without difficulty, and in consequence pays little or no rent, there is scarcely any inducement to bestow much care on the cultivation of it, and the imperfect routine once adopted is handed down unaltered from age to age. It is only when population has increased so as to press on the means of subsistence, that the importance of performing all the operations of husbandry in the most efficient manner is fully understood. Then necessity once more becomes the mother of invention, and various important improvements are introduced. By means of new implements and a more skilful application of the mechanical power employed in working them, the labours of the field are performed at once more perfectly, more expeditiously, and more cheaply; crops are made to succeed each other in the order best fitted to give the largest amount of profitable produce without exhausting the soil; and the various materials available as manures are not only carefully collected at home or imported from abroad, but applied in accordance with the laws of the vegetable economy, so as to furnish each plant which is raised with its most appropriate food. Agriculture, as thus understood, requires for its full development a very advanced state of civilization; and hence some of its highest departments cannot be said to have made any approach to perfection till our own times. It is almost unnecessary to observe, that when

Slow progress of agriculture.



Peculiar
features of
Hindoo
Agriculture.

Hindoo agriculture is mentioned something very different is meant. Indeed, any attempt to test its merits by comparing it with British agriculture, tends only to mislead. Owing to the wide difference in climate, and in the course of the seasons, the deep ploughing and thorough draining to which we justly attach so much importance, would in India be wholly out of place. There nature co-operates much more powerfully than with us, and by abundant supplies of heat and moisture, the two great agents of vegetation, makes the task of the Hindoo husbandman comparatively easy. After the inundation which flooded the lowlands in the rainy season has retired, the deposit of mud which it leaves behind often forms of itself a sufficient seed-bed, and grain, thrown broadcast into it without previous preparation, yields in due season a luxuriant harvest. In like manner, when, in grounds not regularly flooded, a plough of the simplest and rudest form has, by one or more scratchings, sufficiently pulverized a soil which is, for the most part, of light and porous texture, the seed, deposited usually in drills, quickly germinates, and when threatened with destruction by excessive drought, is easily carried with success through all its stages by artificial irrigation. This irrigation, without which a large part of the country would be doomed to absolute sterility, has been provided for in a manner which goes far to prove that Hindoos, when urged by the stimulus of necessity, are not deficient in skill and enterprise. No people in the world have done more to overcome the difficulties of their position in respect of the moisture necessary to secure fertility; and when we see how much they have done for irrigation by means of embankments, raising the level or changing the course of streams, and by means of vast reservoirs, in which the superfluous water of the rainy season is carefully husbanded for future use, it seems only fair to infer that if they had encountered similar difficulties in other departments of agriculture, they would have been equally energetic and successful in surmounting them.

Its antiquity.

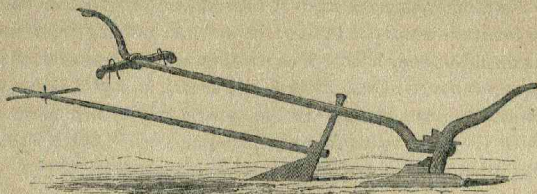
When due effect is given to such considerations as the above, it will be found that Hindoo agriculture, if it does not deserve much praise, is not justly liable to all the censure which has been passed, or to the ridicule which has sometimes been thrown upon it. Several passages in the Rig Veda leave no room to doubt that in India more than three thousand years ago, the land was laid out in fields for regular cultivation; that ploughs and other implements, worked by animals which had been trained to the yoke, were in constant use; and that the principal crops consisted then, as now, partly of the plants whose seeds furnish the staple articles of human food, and partly of those whose fibres are best fitted for being woven into clothing. It is doubtful, however, if from that time to the present any very marked advance has been made. The plough, apparently, retains its primitive form, consisting mainly of a wooden beam bent at its lower extremity into a kind of share, usually, though not always, shod with iron, and totally unprovided either with coulter to cut a furrow, or with mould-board to turn it over. This plough is so light that the ploughman takes it to the field

Implements
employed.

and brings it back on his shoulders; and yet, when a full day's work is done, it taxes the strength of three pairs of cattle, each pair working it in succession for only three hours. This enormous waste of animal power is owing partly to the

A.D. —

The plough.



Ploughs.—From native models in East India House.

unskilful manner in which it is applied, and still more to the wretched condition of the cattle, which, instead of being fully and properly fed, are left for the most part to extract a miserable subsistence from the merest husks. When the kind of crop intended to be raised requires a greater depth of soil than is attainable by the scratching of a single plough, there is no alternative but to make plough follow plough in the same furrow, each scratching a little deeper than that which preceded it.

When the soil has thus been stirred, it becomes necessary, at least when it is of tenacious texture, to pulverize it. For this purpose the harrow and roller would be the most efficient instruments, but nothing deserving the name being known to the Hindoo husbandman, he supplies their place by two very clumsy substitutes. One of these is what is called the *moyi*, an implement which is made of two pieces of bamboo about six feet in length, and joined together by some cross bars like a ladder. When in operation, this ladder, to which a pair of oxen are yoked, is drawn transversely across the field, while the driver stands upon it to give it weight. The other, a still ruder contrivance, is merely a thick narrow plank. It is in universal use both in Northern and Southern India, and though not always contrived so rudely and worked so clumsily as appears in the following description by Dr. Francis Buchanan, certainly deserves the character he gives it, when he calls it "the most awkward machine that I have ever beheld." Speaking of it in his report on the district of Purneah, he says:—"There is no handle to it, as there is to the planks used for a similar purpose in the south of India; nor have the natives had the ingenuity to fasten a beam to it, by which it might be drawn. They tie ropes to the necks of the cattle, usually two pair to each plank, while two men stand on this to give it weight, and to save themselves the trouble of walking; and they secure themselves from falling by holding an ox's tail in each hand; and by twisting this they can guide and accelerate the motions of the cattle. So totally devoid of ingenuity have they been, that they have not fallen upon any contrivance to fasten the rope to

Substitutes
for harrow
and roller.

¹ Montgomery Martin's *Eastern India*, vol. iii. page 266.

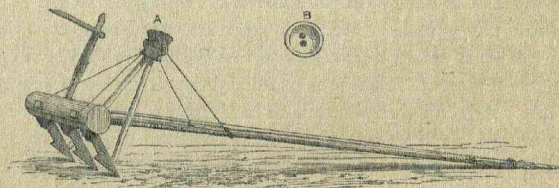
Chainsness
 of Hindoo
 agriculture.

Modes of
 sowing

The drilling-
 machine.

the upper side of the beam, so as to prevent it from rubbing on the earth; but fairly tie it round the plank, so that, owing to the friction, an ordinary rope would not last a moment. They therefore have been under the necessity of employing the tanners to make ropes of hide which resist the friction, but come high. The tanner is usually paid in grain, and the making these ropes is the chief employment that they have. This plank is called a *chauki*." The extreme stupidity thus manifested by the Hindoos of Purneah is doubtless an exceptional case; but under no circumstances can the general use of such an implement as the *chauki*, as the main agent for pulverizing and smoothing the soil, indicate anything but a wretched system of culture.

The soil having been prepared for the seed, some ingenuity is displayed in the mode of depositing it. Sometimes it is sown broadcast, and afterwards formed into a kind of drills by means of a large rake, which, drawn by oxen, tears out the superfluous plants, and leaves the others standing apart in tolerably regular intervals; but more frequently it is drilled at once by a machine, which the Hindoos claim, and apparently deserve the honour of having invented. It consists principally of a transverse beam, pierced by a number of holes, in each of which a hollow bamboo is inserted. These bamboos are placed obliquely, so as to meet with their upper extremities in a cup containing the seed, which, descending through them, is deposited in the drills formed by their lower extremities, when the whole machine is in motion. The mechanical part displays little ingenuity, and the whole labours under serious defects; but the idea of a drilling-machine is certainly conveyed, and the purposes which it is designed to serve to some extent accomplished. In Europe, these purposes mainly are to



DRILL OF BAROACH.—From native model in East India House.

A, Cup of drill, having two bamboos inserted in it. B, Interior of cup, showing holes where bamboos are inserted.

secure economy of seed, and unoccupied intervals, which allow the weeding and cleaning processes to be effectually performed while the plants are growing. In India the intervals, though sometimes employed in the same way, are too often turned to a different account. From the nature of the climate, vegetation is never entirely suspended, as in higher latitudes, and hence, by making the necessary selection of crops, cultivation is carried on as successfully in the cold as in the hot season. There is thus a twofold produce, and the Hindoo cultivator, in order to secure it, has recourse to the very injudicious practice of raising two



or more crops simultaneously from the same ground. The intervals which ought to have been reserved for cleaning the principal crop of rice, or some other kind of grain, are sown, probably with pulse; and in this way, while the opportunity of effectually keeping down weeds is almost entirely lost, the plants forced to contend with each other, are hampered in their growth, and yield only a scanty produce. If the different crops attain maturity about the same time, they must be reaped together, and can only form incongruous mixtures; if they are harvested separately, the evil is still worse, as the straw of the one which is first reaped must be sacrificed in order to prevent the irreparable injury which would be done by its removal to the other which is still growing. The greed of the husbandman is thus its own punishment; and the loss of one good crop is very inadequately compensated by two sickly and scanty crops, which, besides being of inferior quality, have robbed the soil, and impaired its future productiveness. Where the weeding process receives due attention, it is sometimes performed by means of a weeding-plough, bearing some resemblance to our more perfect horse-hoe; but the more common implement is the ordinary hoe, which resembles our own in shape, but has a handle so absurdly short that the hoers in using it must take a sitting posture.

Excessive cropping.

In all other farming operations similar slovenliness is exhibited. Grain when reaped is thrashed by the primitive mode of causing cattle to tread upon it, is winnowed by exposing it to the wind, and is freed from its husk, and prepared for use, by means of the pestle and mortar. The necessity of manure to maintain the fertility of the soil is well known, but owing to many concurrent circumstances, the supply is limited in the extreme. The straw which ought to have been used for litter is often lost through the preposterous mode of cultivation already referred to. Even where wood can easily be obtained in abundance, cow-dung, instead of being reserved for the fields, is employed chiefly as fuel; and owing to the disuse of animal food, stall-feeding, from which alone an adequate supply of manure could be obtained, is either unknown or abominated. Besides these obstacles, with which agriculture has to contend, through the habits and prejudices of the people, there are others for which government is more immediately responsible. Not only has the disturbed state of the country frequently left the husbandman without any reasonable hope that if he sowed the land he would be permitted to reap the crop, but the burdens to which he has been subjected have been rendered intolerable, both by their amount and their uncertainty. Under these circumstances his poverty has generally been so extreme as to leave him utterly destitute of the capital which might have at once prompted and enabled him to attempt improvement; and even when enjoying some degree of prosperity, he has too often found it necessary to assume an appearance of wretchedness as his best security against extortion.

Thrashing.

Waste of straw and manure.

Though India has many tracts which, if not absolutely sterile, would not repay the labour and expense of cultivation, there is no country of equal extent



Great
variety of
vegetable
produce in
India.

Rice.

Modes of
cultivating.

from which a greater variety and a larger amount of vegetable produce are obtained. Almost all plants possessed of economic value may be successfully raised within it—those of the tropics during its hot, and those of the temperate zones during its cold season. Where the capabilities of cultivation are so great, the plants actually cultivated are, as might be expected, too numerous to allow any detailed account to be here given of them. It seems necessary, however, briefly to notice a few of the more important. Among culmiferous crops the first place belongs to rice, which, wherever the land admits of its successful cultivation, from being either inundated during the rains or easily irrigated, is the prevailing crop, and forms the principal food of the inhabitants. This is peculiarly the case in Bengal, in which the failure of the crop of rice has repeatedly proved far worse than that of the potato in Ireland, and cut off the population by millions and tens of millions. Such failures seem to imply that the cultivation, however well its details may be understood, is not conducted on the system best calculated to insure success; and that the husbandman, instead of calculating contingencies, and employing skill and industry in endeavouring to provide against them, is too much disposed to follow an indolent routine, which places him at the mercy of the seasons, and leaves him without resource when these prove unfavourable. Under the common name of *rice*, numerous varieties of the plant are cultivated, and require corresponding differences of treatment. Some of the varieties ripen in the hot and others in the cold season, and advantage is often taken of the circumstance to obtain two crops in a single year. The ground having been prepared as for a summer crop, both kinds are sown in the same field, and coming to maturity at different times are reaped successively. The best apology offered for this proceeding is, that it gives an additional security against famine, inasmuch as the weather which proves injurious to the one may be favourable to the other. The sacrifice, however, is necessarily great, since double seed is thus wasted to provide against a mere contingency; and the usual result is, as observed above, to substitute for one full crop two of scanty amount and indifferent quality. Another mode of cultivating often adopted, in the same parsimonious spirit, under the idea of economizing the ground, is by transplantation. The seed is at first sown thickly in beds, and when they have germinated and attained sufficient growth to admit of removal, are planted out at proper distances in the field for a regular crop. Could the removal be effected without injuring the health of the plants, it would not only not be objectionable, but an important object might be gained by it. The field while left unoccupied might recruit its impaired powers, or receive, by means of repeated harrowings and ploughings, a more thorough preparation. Unfortunately, a different use is generally made of it. The land, instead of being allowed to rest, is kept in the interval under some other crop, and consequently when planted out for rice, is both foul and exhausted. When these objectionable modes of cultivation are avoided the crop raised is



generally abundant, and besides supplying the wants of a dense population, leaves a considerable surplus for export. Accordingly, East India rice, particularly that of Patna, is well known in commerce.

Wheat and barley are chiefly grown in the north-western provinces, and upon the cultivable slopes of the Himalayas, and are not entitled to rank high among the culmiferous crops of Hindoo agriculture. A far more important place is due to a grain of very inferior quality, cultivated almost universally throughout India, and to such an extent, more especially in the more southern districts, as to furnish the staple article of food. This culmiferous plant, *Eleusine coracana* of Lindley, known in Bengal by the name of *maruya*, and in the south by that of *ragee*, appears to attract far more attention than its intrinsic importance deserves, and hence furnishes perhaps the most favourable specimen of the skill and industry of which the Hindoo husbandman is capable, when raising a crop which promises to repay him, and placed in circumstances which promise him a fair share in the fruits of his labours. Having already given from Dr. Buchanan's report an account of the slovenly husbandry practised in Purneah, it is only fair to produce as a contrast to it the following account of the culture of ragee, extracted from the work of Colonel Wilks:¹—“The whole world does not, perhaps, exhibit a cleaner system of husbandry than that of the cultivation of ragee (*Cynosurus coracanus* of Linnæus) in the home-fields of Mysore. On the first shower of rain after harvest, the home-fields are again turned up with the plough, and this operation, as showers occur, is repeated six successive times during the dry season, at once destroying the weeds, and opening the ground to the influence of the sun, the decomposition of water and air, and the formation of new compounds. The manure of the village, which is carefully and skilfully prepared, is then spread out on the land, and incorporated with it by a seventh ploughing, and a harrowing with an instrument nearly resembling a large rake, drawn by oxen, and guided by a boy.” When the field is completely pulverized, the drill-plough, of which some account has already been given, is put in requisition. Colonel Wilks, after describing it, and the mode in which it “performs the operation of sowing twelve rows at once,” continues thus:—“If the crop threatens to be too early or too luxuriant, it is fed down with sheep. Two operations of a weeding-plough, of very simple construction, at proper intervals of time, loosen the earth about the roots, and destroy the weeds; and afterwards, during the growth of the crop, at least three hand-weedings are applied. This laborious process rewards the husbandman in good seasons with a crop of eighty-fold from the best land. The period between seedtime and harvest is five months.” The only other culmiferous crops which it is necessary to mention are various species of millet, and maize, which, though not indigenous to India, has been

Wheat and
barley.

Ragee.

Careful cul-
ture of ragee
in Mysore.

¹ *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, vol. i. page 209.

— successfully introduced, and promises, notwithstanding the obstinacy of native prejudice, to provide a valuable substitute for some inferior kinds of food.

Leguminous plants. The leguminous plants under regular culture are still more numerous than the culmiferous, and scarcely less important, though they are generally raised, in the way already mentioned, rather as supplementary than as principal crops. Those most in favour are gram (*Cicer arietinum*), various species of pease and beans, vetches, and lentils. Many plants also are cultivated for the oil extracted from their seeds, and are sometimes made subservient to the improvement of agriculture, by leaving a refuse, or oil-cake, which is partly used as food for cattle and partly for manure. It is needless, however, to dwell on these, or on

Other crops. the different plants which are more or less extensively cultivated for their bulbs or tubers; and we therefore hasten to notice several vegetable products which, besides holding an important place in Hindoo agriculture, derive an adventitious interest from the extent to which they actually supply, or are deemed capable of supplying some of the most pressing demands of our home market. At the

Cotton. head of the list stands cotton, which, furnishing the main articles of Hindoo clothing, has been extensively cultivated throughout India from the remotest antiquity. It is repeatedly alluded to in the Veda, and is mentioned by Herodotus, who, speaking of it, according to the imperfect information which had reached him, as one of the remarkable products of India, says that "the wild trees there produce as fruit a wool, which is superior both in beauty and excellence to that of sheep, and the Indians use clothing obtained from these trees."¹ Long after the establishment of the East India Company, cotton was known in England only in its manufactured state; and little interest was felt in the raw material until the wondrous inventions of Arkwright and Cartwright had enabled the British manufacturer to supplant the Hindoo, not only here, but in his own native market. The revolution thus produced having deprived the Company of a most important part of their investment, they were naturally desirous to adapt themselves to the altered circumstances; and, knowing the

Inducements to cultivate. unlimited capabilities of India for the production of cotton, endeavoured to establish a new branch of trade, by importing it in a raw state. There were many obstacles in the way. Even in the depressed state to which the native manufacture was reduced by British competition, it was still carried on to such an extent that all the cotton raised within the Company's possessions barely sufficed to furnish it with the necessary supply. When at length a surplus for export was obtained, the quality, owing to the imperfect manner in which it had been prepared for market, proved indifferent. Under these discouraging circumstances the export of cotton from India was commenced, and to some extent, notwithstanding the efforts which have been made, it still continues to labour under them. The first object of the Hindoo husbandman naturally is to

¹ Herodotus, book iii. cap. 106.



raise the necessaries of life for his family. Very probably the small patch of land which forms his whole farm scarcely enables him to do more; and hence, when he attempts the cultivation of cotton at all, it is on so limited a scale as to make it scarcely worth his while to be very careful in the mode of conducting it. It is at best but a secondary object, and receives a very subordinate share of his attention. In some districts, however, where the soil is peculiarly adapted for its culture, cotton has always been regarded as a principal crop, and its culture might doubtless be almost indefinitely extended, if a remunerating price could be obtained. It is here that the great difficulty lies. After a long and expensive land carriage to the shipping port, Indian cotton, when it arrives at Liverpool, sells at not much more than half the price of cotton of the same description from the United States. Thus, in 1850, while New Orleans cotton was selling at 5½d. to 9d. per lb., that of Surat realized only 3½d. to 5½d. Were this immense difference owing to an intrinsic inferiority in quality, the idea of successful competition might be abandoned as hopeless, but as it has been clearly established that the present inferiority is accidental, rather than permanent, arising much more from imperfection of culture and of subsequent manipulation, more than from any other cause, the remedy is in a great measure in our own hands. By taking the necessary means to instruct the natives of India in the most approved modes of raising the crop, and preparing it for market—by convincing them how much their own interest may be promoted by adopting these modes—and by improving the navigation of rivers and constructing railroads, so as to afford a cheap and easy transit from all parts of the interior of the country—our possessions in India may soon compete more successfully in the cotton market, and deprive American slave-states of the monopoly which they have too long enjoyed. The progress already made, though less than was sanguinely anticipated, is not to be despised. In 1783, when the importation of cotton from the East Indies appears to have commenced, the amount was only 114,133 lbs.; in 1793 it was 729,634 lbs.; in 1803, 3,182,960 lbs.; in 1813, from some accidental failure, only 497,350 lbs.; but two years after (1815), 8,505,000 lbs.; in 1823, 13,487,250 lbs.; and in 1833, 33,139,050 lbs. Since then the progress has been equally rapid, the imports of the three years ending 1850 having been respectively 84,101,961 lbs., 70,838,515 lbs., and 118,872,742 lbs.

Obstacles to cultivation of cotton.

Extent of its culture.

Another article which India cultivates on a very extensive scale, and in which she contributes to supply one of the most important demands of our home market, is sugar. In the cultivation of this article, indeed, she seems to have taken precedence of all other countries, and hence not only the English name, but also those which designate it in other languages, are corruptions of the Sanscrit word *sarkara*. As there is nothing deserving of special notice in the Hindoo mode of culture, it is necessary only to give some idea of the extent to which the culture is carried on, and the progress which it continues to make, by



Extent of
cultivation
of sugar.

mentioning a few of the statistics of its export. In 1832, when the quantity of sugar entered for consumption in the United Kingdom amounted to 3,655,534 cwts., India furnished only 79,600, or little more than a forty-fifth part of the whole. In 1842, when, owing to injudicious taxation, the aggregate quantity imported was still short of 4,000,000 cwts., the supply furnished by India had risen to 935,948 cwts., or nearly one-fourth of the whole import. A great increase has since taken place, but the rate of one-fourth is still maintained, and hence in 1852, when the aggregate import was 6,898,867 cwts., the share furnished by India amounted to 1,532,012 cwts. It is impossible to doubt that, when new facilities of transport are given, Hindoo agriculture will contribute still more largely to the supply of the British sugar market.

Extent of
export.

Silk, which, though not strictly speaking a vegetable product, can only be obtained intermediately by the aid of agriculture, is another of the articles for which the home market is largely indebted to the Hindoo husbandman. The mulberry, on which the silkworm is fed, occupies an important place in his system of culture, and in several districts forms the crop on which he mainly depends for the payment of his rent. In a question of precedence as to the origin of the culture, the Hindoo would probably be obliged to yield to the Chinese, who, having early established a decided superiority in the production of raw silk, still maintains it, and furnishes the United Kingdom with nearly a half of its annual import. Thus in 1852, when the aggregate of raw silk imported was 5,832,551 lbs., China furnished 2,418,343 lbs. India, however, holds the next place, having furnished in the same year 1,335,486 lbs. This position was not attained without considerable exertions on the part of the East India Company; and as many of the improvements introduced into the mode of winding the silk from the cocoons originated with agents which they employed for that purpose, the share of merit still due to the Hindoos in its production cannot easily be apportioned. The progress which has been made is, however, another striking proof of the success with which, by well-directed efforts, the productive resources of India may be developed. The first silk imported by the Company was what is now technically called "country wound," from being wound from the cocoons and reeled into skeins after the rude manner immemorially practised by the natives of India. Its quality was so indifferent that it could be used only for a few inferior purposes, and it gradually fell into such disrepute as to oblige the Directors to intimate to the Bengal government that unless its defects were remedied, the exportation of it must be abandoned. For a time improvement seems to have been considered hopeless, for only desultory and not very judicious efforts were made; but at length, about 1775, the Italian method of winding silk was in full operation in Bengal. At the same time strong inducements were held out to the extended cultivation of the mulberry plant. In this way the production of silk in India took a sudden start, and received a stimulus of which the effects are still felt. During the ten years ending with 1802, the quantity of raw silk

Improvements in
management.



annually imported into London from Bengal averaged about 400,000 lbs. From that time the quantity, though subject to considerable fluctuations, continued to increase, and amounted in 1830 to 1,186,163 lbs. As already observed, China is now the only country which, in the article of raw silk, still competes successfully with India in the British market. A.D. —

In indigo, the next article claiming notice, India has so far outstripped other countries as almost to establish a monopoly. The native name of the dye extracted from the plant is *nili*, meaning *blue*; but the native seat of it is clearly indicated by the name indigo, which is believed to be a corruption of *indicum*, the term under which it was designated by Pliny, because in his day it was well understood to be a product of India. Many centuries before the Cape of Good Hope was doubled, it was imported into Europe by way of Alexandria; but it was only after that event that it began to attract much notice. At first this notice was not of a favourable kind. Woad was then extensively cultivated as a dye, particularly in Germany, and the growers of it perceiving how formidable a rival indigo might prove, stigmatized it under the name of "devil's dye," and in 1654 procured an imperial edict prohibiting its importation, on the ground that through the use of it "the trade in woad is lessened, dyed articles injured, and money carried out of the country." These and similar prohibitions issued by other governments, proved unavailing to prevent the use of a commodity whose value was soon recognized. It is rather remarkable, however, that though the knowledge of it was first received from India, Europe long drew its chief supply, not from India, but from the islands and mainland of America. It had attracted the attention of the colonists in that continent, and was both cultivated and manufactured with much success by the British planters there. The East India Company, in consequence, withdrew from a competition which was perhaps thought to be invidious, and ceased to be importers of indigo. At a later period, when the West India planters had discovered a more profitable culture, and the American colonists had achieved their independence, the interest of the East India Company in indigo revived. Great efforts were accordingly made to encourage its cultivation. With this view the Company continued, from 1779 to 1788, to contract for the purchase of it, on terms so favourable to the producers as to be virtually equivalent to a bounty. The culture was greatly extended, and the quality of the dye much improved under this system; but the losses which it entailed on the Company were so heavy that they felt compelled to abandon it, and throw the trade open to their servants and persons under their protection, on payment of freight, duties, and charges. At the same time, to foster this rising trade, the Company continued for many years to make large advances on the security of indigo. The soundness of the practice may well be questioned; but whether by means of it, or in spite of it, the indigo of India has in a great measure superseded that of other countries. The principal seats of the culture are Bengal proper, the districts of Tirhoot and Benares, and the kingdom of Culture of indigo.

A D. —

Culture of
 indigo.

Oude. The total quantity shipped from Calcutta in 1851-52 was 9,633,371 lbs., and had an estimated value of £1,821,653. Of this large sum, however, only a very small portion can be said to be realized by Hindoo agriculture. The raising of the plant is all that properly belongs to its province; the subsequent manufacture requires a considerable amount of capital, and though conducted in the same methods as have been known and practised in India from time immemorial, the works in which it is carried on belong, for the most part, to Europeans. Any quantity which the natives manufacture on their own account is usually reserved for internal consumption.

Opium.

Since the establishment of the plantations in Assam, tea ought certainly to be included among the agricultural products of India; but as it is confined at present to a single remote province, and must still be regarded as an experimental rather than an established crop, we shall pass it without further notice. Pepper, too, though one of the most important articles in which the Company traded at their first establishment, and still cultivated to a large extent on the Malabar coast, will, in like manner, be omitted; and our list of articles of Hindoo agriculture will be concluded with opium, which, from adventitious circumstances, has acquired an importance to which it has certainly no natural claim. The white poppy, which furnishes it, is probably a native of Asia, but is found in other parts of the world, and thrives well under considerable diversities of climate. In Europe, Turkey opium bears the highest name, and containing nearly three times as much *morphia*, is greatly superior to that of India, for which the great demand at present existing is factitious, and may therefore prove only temporary. The large consumption of the noxious drug in China, while both the cultivation and use of it in that country are strictly prohibited, was early taken advantage of by the East India Company, who, by stimulating the cultivation within their own territories and then monopolizing the sale of the produce, succeeded in deriving from it a large amount of revenue. The monopoly has since been abandoned, but only after providing an efficient substitute for it in the form of a fixed tax; and thus the British government in India exhibited itself in the disreputable position of fostering a species of cultivation the produce of which could only be disposed of by violating the laws of another country, and tempting its inhabitants to an indulgence known to be alike injurious to their health and to their morals. The recent treaty with China, in removing the illegality of the opium traffic, will probably have the ultimate effect of suppressing it altogether, since the Chinese, if once permitted, will soon be able to supply their own consumption. Meanwhile the Indian cultivation continues in full vigour, and over large tracts of the presidency of Bengal, particularly the districts of Patna and Benares, and throughout Malwah, or Central India, it forms one of the most important branches of husbandry. It seems more than questionable whether, independent of its other demerits, it ought not to be discouraged for the sake of the cultivators themselves. From the delicacy of the poppy plant,



and the injuries which it may sustain from insects, storms of wind or hail, and deficiency as well as superfluity of moisture, the crop is one of the most precarious which can be raised, and hence is constantly either exceeding or mocking the hopes of the husbandman. His poverty induces him, often against his better judgment, to engage in the cultivation, not so much on its own account, as for the money which those who are ultimately to profit by the crop are ready to advance on the prospect of it, and he is thus too often led to exchange the habits of an industrious peasant for those of a gambling speculator. During the first ten years of the present century, the export of opium from India averaged only about 2500 chests. The present export exceeds 50,000 chests, and yields government a free revenue of above three millions sterling. It is impossible to think of this enormous consumption without being horrified at the misery and crime which must follow in its train.

A D. —

Culture of
opium.

In the above account of Hindoo agriculture, no mention has been made of one department which we are accustomed to regard as essential to every good system of husbandry. This department is the breeding and grazing of cattle, both for the shambles and the dairy. The former object, of course, is not to be thought of, since the Hindoos regard it as an abomination; and the latter, notwithstanding the great use they make of milk, and the *ghee* or clarified butter prepared from it, is so little understood and attended to that it is impossible to say one word in praise of it. By this repudiation of stall-feeding and neglect of the dairy the Hindoos are rendered incapable of availing themselves of the alternate system of husbandry, by which grain and grass are grown in succession, and a regular rotation of the crops least exhausting to the soil is established. Some writers, indeed, assert that the Hindoos are aware of the benefit of a rotation, and to some extent practise it; but we suspect that they have allowed themselves to be misled by the name, and when they speak of a rotation, mean only that bastard form of it which consists in raising several crops simultaneously or successively from the same field in the course of a single year. A rotation, properly so called, extends over a series of years, and arranges the crops in the order which both experience and theory suggest as the best calculated to obtain the largest amount of produce at the least expense. It is very questionable if the solution of any such problem has been attempted in India. On this subject the authority of Mr. Colebrooke should be conclusive. In his *Remarks on the Husbandry and Internal Commerce of Bengal*, he observes (p. 39):—"The rotation of crops, which engages so much the attention of enlightened cultivators in Europe, and on which principally rests the success of a well-conducted husbandry, is not understood in India. A course extending beyond the year has never been dreamed of by a Bengal farmer." He goes still farther, and we rather think too far, when he adds that even "in the succession of crops within the year he is guided by no choice of an article adapted to restore the fertility of the land impoverished by a former crop." On the whole, there cannot

Rotation of
crops.

Hindoo
agriculture.Improvements re-
quired.Hindoo
manufac-
tures.

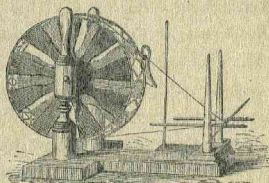
Cotton.

A.D. — be much error in holding that, though from time immemorial the Hindoos have had an agriculture, and display a considerable degree of expertness in managing its details, and adapting them to the peculiar circumstances of soil and climate, they have never reduced it to a regular system, or learned to conduct it on scientific principles. In some important departments it is consequently still in its infancy, and requires many improvements which, as the natives themselves are not likely to introduce them, deserve—and even in a pecuniary point of view, by leading to an increase of revenue, would well repay—the interference of government. Without any direct exercise of authority, which might excite distrust or offend native prejudice, it surely might be possible to show how, by means of better-contrived implements, and an improved breed of cattle to work them, the labours of the field may be much more effectually performed; and how, by increasing the size and lengthening the leases of farms, a race of tenants might be created, who, instead of being doomed, as the mere serfs of money-lenders, to maintain a constant struggle with poverty and wretchedness, would acquire an interest in the prosperity of their country, and thus become the best security for the stability of its government.

On the subject of the manufactures and commerce of the Hindoos it will not be necessary to dwell long, as the latter, in consequence of a superstitious dislike to distant voyages, has never acquired much importance, and the former, after attaining, at least in one department, an excellence which has not been surpassed, has been all but extinguished by a competition not conducted on equitable terms. Before the manufactures of Great Britain had made the rapid strides which have astonished the world, the East India Company were large importers of the cottons and silks of India, and continued, even after a heavy duty was imposed upon them, to find in this branch of trade very lucrative returns. Year after year, however, home manufactures, which were not only untaxed but fostered by bounties, gained upon those which, besides being heavily taxed, were burdened with the expenses of a difficult inland transit and a sea voyage of nearly ten thousand miles. The issue of this struggle could not be doubtful; and ultimately, with the exception of some articles of luxury which British skill had not succeeded in equalling, the import of textile fabrics from the East entirely ceased. Nor was this all; not satisfied with excluding Indian cottons from his own market, first by loading them with oppressive duties, and afterwards by underselling them, the British manufacturer assumed the offensive, and appeared as seller in the markets of India. After a struggle his ascendancy was completely established, and the natives themselves have voluntarily become his best customers. In 1852 the imports into the British territories in the East Indies were—of plain and dyed cotton cloths 352,637,240 yards, and of cotton-twist and yarn 24,802,091 lbs., valued respectively at £4,242,272 and £1,070,068, or together at £5,312,340. The total declared value of cottons exported from the United Kingdom to all countries in the same year was £29,878,087, and

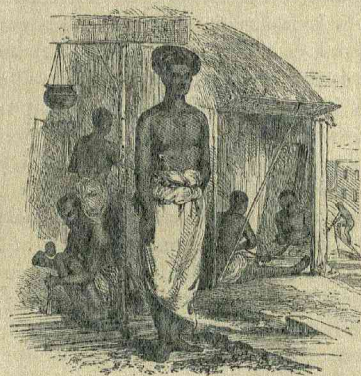
consequently nearly a sixth of the whole export is taken by India. The change from exporters of cottons to that of importers to an enormous amount, cannot have been effected without something equivalent to a vast social revolution among the Hindoos, and accordingly it is notorious that many of their most celebrated seats of the cotton manufacture have undergone a great and rapid decay. Still, from the great difference between the quantity of cotton raised in India, and the comparatively small quantity exported from it, and still more from the quantity of cotton yarn which is either hand spun by the natives, or, as the above figures show, imported, it is plain that no inconsiderable part of the population must still be wholly or partially employed in weaving. The early introduction of the art into India, and the extent to which it was practised as a domestic employment, are attested by numerous passages of the Vedas. Thus we find it familiarly referred to in the way of proverb or illustration, as when an individual exclaims, "Cares consume me as a rat gnaws a weaver's thread," or when it is said that "Day and night, like two famous female weavers, interweave the extended thread." The antiquity of the art, however, is not so remarkable as the perfection to which it was carried by means apparently inadequate. The spinning-wheel, from which, from the rudeness of its structure, only the coarsest threads might be anticipated, produces them as fine as those of the

A.D. —
Cotton.



SPINNING-WHEEL, BOMBAY.
From native model in the East India House.

Skill in spinning and weaving it.



HINDOO CARPENTER.—From Solvyns, *Les Hindous*.

gossamer; and the loom which seems even less fitted for the performance of any delicate operation, weaves the threads thus spun into a fabric of such aerial texture, that the Hindoos themselves have designated it, without much extravagance of hyperbole, "as woven air." In the weaving of silk, similar excellence is displayed. This perfection of workmanship, by the use of a few simple instruments, is in fact the greatest achievement of the Hindoos, and is strikingly exemplified in various other articles of manufacture, as trinkets, cabinet work, and cutlery.

Silk and other manufactures.

The excellence of the last is perhaps more owing to the superiority of the steel known by the name of *woolz*, than to the skill of the workman; but, in other instances, it is impossible not to admire the wondrous dexterity which is displayed when the carpenter, for instance,

Hindoo
 manufac-
 tures.

Foreign
 trade.

seated awkwardly on the floor, and provided only with five tools—a hatchet, hammer, saw, gimblet, and knife—produces not only elegant furniture, but “the prettiest boxes of sandal-wood inlaid with steel and ivory, in the most delicate and elegant patterns.”¹ Many other trades furnish equally remarkable instances of dexterity; but, for the purpose of illustrating mechanic skill, enough has been said. Partly from the peculiar frame of their society, and partly from their want of enterprise, the Hindoos are not likely ever to form any of those great factories and manufacturing establishments which, combined with the remarkable cheapness of labour, might enable them to regain the position they have lost, and once more compete successfully with their European rivals. The cultivation of the soil, and the production of the articles for which their soil and climate are so admirably adapted, must henceforth be their chief resource; and in the development of these, seeing that British capital and enterprise have ruined their staple manufacture, they are certainly entitled to expect from the British government better encouragement than has yet been given them.

The internal resources of India being sufficient to supply its inhabitants with almost every article of necessity, comfort, and luxury, there was little to induce them to engage in foreign commerce. It would seem, however, that as early as the time of the Rig Veda they had heard of voyages made in waters where no land could be seen, and were acquainted with merchants whose ships were said, doubtless by a figure of speech, “to crowd the ocean.” It is probable, however, that these were not native but foreign merchants; though it is scarcely to be presumed that the Hindoos did not to some extent share in the traffic carried on in the commodities of their own country. Indeed, sufficient evidence of their having early engaged in foreign trade is furnished by the settlements which they are known to have established on the island of Java. We also learn from the Portuguese accounts of their early voyages to the East, that, after doubling the Cape of Good Hope, they fell in with Indian vessels trading to Africa from the coasts of Malabar and Gujerat. At the same time, where it was practicable, land transport was preferred, and an extensive trade with foreign countries was carried on by means of caravans. What the principal articles of traffic were can only be conjectured, but as the Greek word for ivory and elephant, as well as the Hebrew names employed to designate the apes and peacocks, and other items of the cargoes which King Hiram procured for Solomon, are of Sanscrit origin, it has been plausibly maintained that the country from which they were brought was India. A passage in the Institutes of Menu, which refers to “men well acquainted with sea voyages or journeys by land,” seems to intimate that the ocean had at the date of their compilation become to the Hindoos a well-known thoroughfare; but it has been maintained, on the other hand, that the sea voyages referred to were only to the different ports of India itself, and at the utmost amounted not to a foreign but only to a coasting

¹ Von Orlich's *Travels in India*, vol. i. page 35.



trade. This opinion is strengthened by the fact that the Hindoos, so far from being a seafaring people, have still an instinctive and superstitious dread of the ocean, and that though not a few of their wealthy merchants are ship-owners, the vessels belonging to them are usually commanded by European officers.

A.D. --

CHAPTER VI.

Manners of the Hindoos.



MUCH of what properly belongs to this head has been incidentally introduced in previous chapters, especially those which treat of religion and laws, and it is therefore only necessary here to refer to a few detached particulars. And first of all, it is important to remember that under the general name of Hindoos is included a vast population, probably belonging to distinct races, and at all events presenting numerous diversities, both physical and mental. From this fact it necessarily follows, that almost every general observation respecting them must be received with some modification. The virtues or vices which may prevail to such an extent in certain districts as to form characteristic features, may be unknown or repudiated in others, and thus praise and censure indiscriminately applied may produce most erroneous impressions. This, however, is a danger against which it is very difficult to guard, since it would be impossible, without exceeding all due bounds, to enumerate all the exceptions by which every general statement would require to be modified in order to be rendered strictly accurate. It must suffice, then, to put the reader on his guard, by reminding him that in treating of the manners of the Hindoos, nothing more is attempted than to select those which, whether exhibited by the great mass or only by particular sections of the population, present the greatest contrast to our own manners, and may hence be presumed to be the best fitted at once to gratify curiosity and convey useful instruction.

Manners of
the Hindoos.

The best physical type of the Hindoo is found in the upper basin of the Ganges. Here he is of tall stature, well formed, and of a complexion which, though tanned, may still be designated as fair. Here also he excels in those qualities which seem to be in a great measure the result of physical constitution, and is of a bold, manly spirit. Occupying the tracts in which his race are understood to have fixed their earliest settlement, he may probably owe part of his superiority to his greater purity of descent from the original stock; but a more adequate cause of it may be found in the possession of a climate better fitted to develop the human frame, and in the intimate relations into which he was early brought

Physical
type of the
Hindoos.

Physical
 type of the
 Hindoos.

with conquerors from the West. By these his martial spirit, even while it failed to secure his independence, was more stimulated than crushed, and he was made acquainted with a civilization which, however imperfect, was in several respects superior to his own. Thus, partly from natural and partly from artificial causes, the Hindoo of the north-western provinces furnishes the most favourable specimen of his race. On descending from the upper to the lower basin of the Ganges, or the immense plain of Bengal proper, a striking contrast is observed. The Bengalee, though undoubtedly belonging to the same original stock, looks as if he had been dwarfed. His stature is diminutive and slender, his complexion of a darker hue, and his whole appearance effeminate. As if conscious that in him a dignified and manly bearing would be altogether out of place, he seems to confess by his timidity that he stands in need of a protector, and by his insinuating manners that he is ready to make any sacrifice of independence that may be necessary to procure one. His features, perhaps even more regular than those of his more northern countryman, are of a thoughtful, intellectual cast, but indicate the possession of faculties more subtle than vigorous, and a disposition in which pliancy and obsequiousness are substituted for sterner and better qualities. The Hindoo of the Deccan varies much in different localities, sometimes approaching the higher, but more frequently degenerating into the lower physical type, without compensating for its defects, like the Bengalee, by a larger development of mental subtlety.

Food and
 clothing.

The three great divisions of Hindoo population just mentioned are distinguished by other differences than those of physical form. In the north, the principal food is unleavened wheaten bread—in Bengal, rice—and in the Deccan, at least when rice cannot be easily cultivated, a variety of pulse and inferior grains, among which ragee holds a prominent place. In the north, again, the use of the turban, and of a dress resembling that of the Mahometans, seems to separate the inhabitants from the great body of their Hindoo countrymen, who, leaving the rest of the body uncovered, think it sufficient for comfort and decency to wrap one scarf round the body, and throw another over the shoulders. The ordinary dwellings of all the divisions are arranged nearly upon the same plan, and afford very indifferent accommodation. Each dwelling contains, for the most part, only a single apartment, with the addition, perhaps, of a shed for cooking, and when it is intended to be used as a shop, of another shed open to the front for the exhibition of the wares. In general, the only aperture for light and air is the entrance, which is seldom provided with a door, and is only partially closed by means of a kind of hurdle. The furniture is of the most meagre description. A few mats and hurdles supply the place of beds and bedsteads, and a few paltry utensils, partly of brass, but mostly of earthenware, answer all other domestic purposes. This description of course applies only to the great body of the lower classes; but it is rather singular that in many parts of the country, where an individual possessed of some means seeks to enlarge his ac-

Dwellings.

commodation, instead of building a larger and more commodious house, he only builds one or more additional cottages, each consisting as before of a single apartment, and having a separate entrance. There being thus no internal communication, the different apartments, though occupied by the same family, cannot be reached by the inmates without passing into the open air. The inconveniences of this mode of building are, however, too apparent to allow it to be general; and the Hindoo whose means enable him to possess something better than a single hut, usually accomplishes his object in the same way as in other countries, by having recourse to a larger, loftier, and more substantial erection. Though the plan of the ordinary dwellings is very similar, in respect of accommodation, in all parts of the country, the materials used in their construction, and the forms given to them are different. In the



INTERIOR OF A NATIVE HUT.
From Mrs. Belin's Illustrations of Hindoo Manners in Bengal.

north the walls are formed of clay or unburned bricks, and the pent roofs are covered with tiles. In the Deccan, where stone is more abundant, it is much employed even in the humblest dwellings, which thus are substantially built, but display little taste, having flat roofs, which are not seen, and in consequence cause every house to look as if it were an uncovered ruin. In the more southern districts of the peninsula the heaviness of this mode of building is relieved, and an appearance of neatness and cleanness imparted, by the practice of painting the walls externally in alternate broad and vertical belts of white and red. The Bengal cottage has only cane walls and a thatched roof. It is thus the flimsiest of all, and being formed throughout of combustible materials, seldom escapes from being sooner or later destroyed by fire. Still, with all its defects, it is, in external appearance, the most tastefully constructed cottage in India, and has so far captivated the fancy of resident Europeans that its name of *banggolo*, said to have been given to it from its being peculiar to Bengal, has by them been corrupted into *bungalow*, and applied indiscriminately to all their build- ings in the cottage style.

Dwellings of
the Hindoos.

The great body of the Hindoo population has always been agricultural. Even when manufactures were flourishing, many of the weavers divided their time between the loom and the plough; and now that the foreign demand for the product of the former has in a great measure ceased, a larger proportion of the



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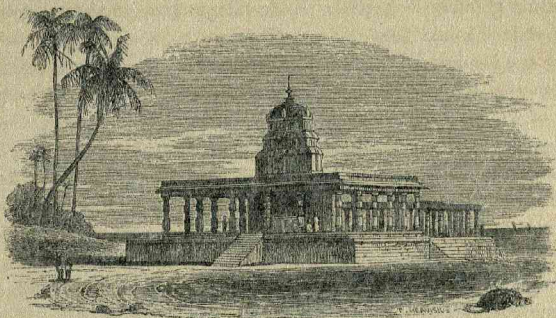
population than formerly must have become entirely dependent on the latter. The general appearance of the country, however, does not at first sight seem reconcilable with this conclusion. On whatever side the traveller turns his eye he looks in vain for farm homesteads, and sees only villages and towns. His natural inference is that the population must be thus congregated into masses, from being occupied with trades and other industrial labours, which are best carried on in communities of some extent. This inference, though natural, would be erroneous. The absence of rural dwellings indicates, not that the cultivators are few, but that it is more agreeable to their habits, and also more conducive to the security of their persons and property, to live grouped together in masses, rather than in families isolated from each other, and resident on the lands which they cultivate. This mode of living at some distance from the scene of their daily labours must be attended with many inconveniences, of which not the least serious is the time that must be consumed in passing to and fro with the cattle and the implements of labour, in carting out manure, and bringing home the crops. On the other hand, both in the very early ages, when it must have been originally adopted, and during the periods of disturbance which have ever since been breaking out at comparatively brief intervals, this system presents advantages which more than compensate for its inconveniences, and it has accordingly proved the most durable of all Hindoo institutions.

The village system.

The villages thus occupied are of various descriptions. In the north they stand in open ground, and are built in close compact groups; in Bengal, on the contrary, they are not placed in juxtaposition, but scattered through woods of bamboos and palms. In some localities they are walled, so as to be capable of resisting any sudden inroad, and occasionally provided with still more effectual means of defence; in others they are open, or only inclosed with a fence sufficient to keep in cattle. All of them are provided with a bazaar, in which the ordinary articles of village consumption are sold; and most of them with one or more temples, and a *choultry* or shed, in which strangers are lodged. This choultry sometimes serves as a town-house, though all kinds of public business are usually transacted in the open air beneath some shady trees. Each village possesses many of the powers of self-government, and has a regular gradation of officers for the superintendence of its affairs. First in order is the headman, designated in the Deccan and in the west and centre of Hindoostan by the name of *patel*, and in Bengal by that of *mandel*. Though regarded as an officer of government, and usually appointed by it, the selection is made from some family which claims it as an hereditary right. Sometimes the villages are permitted to select the particular individual of the family—a privilege the more readily conceded to them, because a headman not enjoying their confidence would be incapable of performing the duties of his office. These are numerous, and include all parts of municipal authority. He settles with the government the whole amount of revenue for the whole land belonging to the village, appor-

Principal officers under the Hindoo village system

tions it among the inhabitants according to the extent and value of the lands occupied by them, regulates the supplies of water for irrigation, settles disputes, apprehends offenders, &c. In the performance of these duties he is not left to the headman.



CHOULTRY AT RAMISSERAM.—From Daniell's Oriental Album, 1834.

his own judgment, but is expected to act in free consultation with the villagers, especially in all matters of public interest. In settling private disputes he usually avails himself of the aid of a *punchayet*, or a kind of jury, composed of individuals who act as his assessors when they are chosen by himself, and as arbitrators when they have been selected by mutual agreement among the parties. The office of headman, though it evidently requires special qualifications, is saleable. The temptations to a purchase are not merely the respectability and influence which the possession of it implies, but the emoluments which accompany it. These consist, in addition to the land which may be held by hereditary right, of a small pension from government, and a considerable amount exigible from the villagers in regular or casual fees. Subordinate to the headman are the accountant, who keeps the village accounts, and the village register (in which all lands and rights of lands, as well as their liabilities, are entered), acts as a notary in executing legal deeds and other documents, and is generally employed in all kinds of business, public and private, in which the use of the pen is required; the watchman, who has charge of the boundaries, the crops, and all matters of police, and in particular, when any property has been stolen, is bound to capture the thief, if within the limits of the village, or trace him beyond them; the priest, who usually acts also as teacher; the astrologer, who casts nativities and determines the days which are lucky and unlucky; the minstrel, who, besides reciting or composing verses, traces pedigrees, for the purpose both of determining the succession to property and the restrictions on intermarriage; the money-changer, who assays all the money received in payment, and acts also in the ordinary capacity of silversmith; the barber, carpenter, and various other tradesmen, who, instead of living by their handicrafts in the ordinary way, are recognized as public servants, and paid a fixed amount,

Subordinate
officers.

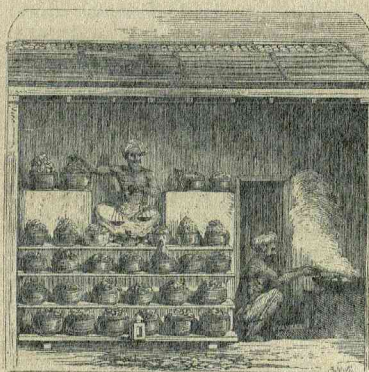
either of money or produce, levied proportionably from all the inhabitants. A common fund is also levied for religious and charitable purposes, such as the giving of alms to religious mendicants, and for the expenses occasioned by the celebration of public festivities. Each village, thus complete within itself, is truly a republic in miniature.

Village
aristocracy.

Besides the headman and his leading assistants, who may be considered as the aristocracy of the village, there are others of the inhabitants to whom the possession of wealth gives distinction. These, instead of retaining the lands in their own possession, may let them out to tenants; other lands, too, belonging to the village in common, may be similarly occupied; and thus in a lower grade than those who, possessing hereditary shares of land in their own right, constitute the only proper proprietors of the village, are the actual occupants distinguished as permanent tenants, temporary tenants, labourers, and shop-keepers, the last being mere householders, who have no connection with land, and have become voluntary residents in the village in order to follow their calling. These distinctions are important, and imply differences of right. From overlooking these differences, and confounding all classes of tenants and occupants under the common name of *ryots*, grave errors and gross injustice have been committed.

Condition of
the villagers.

The condition of the villagers generally is not prosperous. Here and there indications of wealth appear, and dwellings of two stories with a court-yard intimate that the lot of their possessors is superior to that of those who occupy the surrounding huts. It is not impossible, however, that the prosperity of the former may be one main cause of the poverty of the latter, and that the



HINDOO SWEETMEAT SHOP.
From model in the Museum of the East India House.

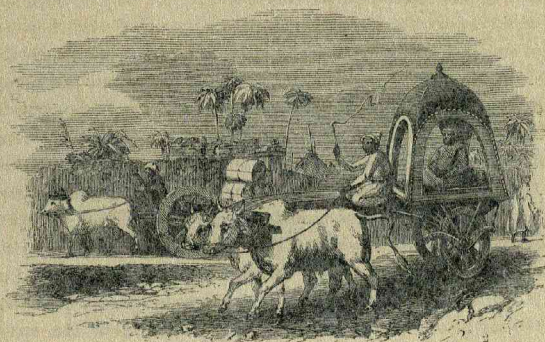
houses which rise thus ostentatiously may belong to money-lenders, who draw enormous profits by taking advantage of the necessities of their neighbours. Few of the tenants are able to pay their rent and procure the necessary means of subsistence, without borrowing money on the security of their growing crop. They thus become involved in debt, and either suffer from extortion, or endeavouring to resist it, are tempted to engage in litigation, which proves still more disastrous. Many are thus kept constantly in bondage, while others who may have managed to

escape from it seldom profit so much by the bitter lesson taught them, as to be able long to avoid a recurrence of similar entanglements. From a kind

of childish improvidence, the passing day only is attended to, and what ought to have been treasured up as a provision for the future, is too often squandered in gratifying the whim of the moment, or on some ostentatious extravagance in the celebration of a festival, or it may be, the performance of a funeral. Still, it is undeniable that humble life in India nowhere appears to so much advantage as among its rural population. Its ordinary routine is thus described by Mr. Elphinstone:—"The husbandman rises with the earliest dawn, washes and says a prayer, then sets out with his cattle to his distant field. After an hour or two he eats some remnants of his yesterday's fare for breakfast, and goes on with his labour till noon, when his wife brings

A.D. —

Rural life
in India.



CARRIAGES DRAWN BY OXEN. 1, Hackery. 2, Dooley.—From Bourriouf, &c.

out his hot dinner; he eats it by a brook, or under a tree, talks and sleeps till two o'clock, while his cattle also feed and repose. From two till sunset he labours again; then drives his cattle home, feeds them, bathes, eats some supper, smokes, and spends the rest of the evening in amusement with his wife and children, or his neighbours."

Hindoo towns differ little from those of other eastern countries. The houses, generally of brick or stone, are lofty, and being lighted only by a few small and high-placed windows, have no architectural merit. The streets, along which they are ranged in long lines, are narrow, and either badly paved with large uneven stones, or not paved at all. When the population is great, the thoroughfares are crowded, and the passenger, with difficulty and some degree of danger, makes his way among carriages drawn by oxen, palanquins, running footmen, busy traffickers, and idle loungers. The shops, consisting of the lower part of the house, left entirely open for the purpose, or merely of the verandah in front of it, make little display, as the most showy articles, if of great value, are not exposed, and cloths, shawls, and other stuffs are kept in bales. Each town has

Hindoo
towns.

¹ Elphinstone's *History of India*, p. 335.

Hindoo towns.

Their inhabitants.

Condition of the lower class of Hindoos in towns.

a surrounding district, of which it is the capital, and is under the charge of a government agent, whose jurisdiction extends to all matters of revenue and police. In exercising it, he has the aid of assistants, who are always more numerous than the work allotted them requires, and too often, instead of administering justice, lend themselves, for bribes, to the perversion of it. Among the inhabitants, bankers and merchants, the same individuals usually acting in both capacities, take the lead. Both in transactions with government, to which they make loans, on the security or assignment of revenue, and in ordinary dealings with individuals, they stipulate for enormous profit, and though, instead of fully realizing it, they are often obliged to accept of a compromise, enough still remains to enable them to accumulate rapidly, and acquire immense wealth. Meanwhile their ordinary expenditure is seldom increased, and they continue to live frugally, except when a marriage or some other domestic festival calls for ostentatious display. On such occasions the sums expended are sometimes of almost fabulous amount. Occasionally the expenditure of the wealthy capitalist is more judicious, and the erection of some work of general utility transmits his name to posterity as a public benefactor. The lower classes in towns are inferior to those of the country, and seldom lead lives so simple and blameless as that above ascribed to the village husbandman. Surrounded by temptations which they have never been trained to resist, they soon become a prey to them, and give free indulgence to their passions. Still, there are forms of vice from which they are in a great measure exempt. Drunkenness is almost unknown among them, and the use of other stimulants, though practised, is seldom carried so far as to produce intoxication. Naturally submissive to authority, they are not easily provoked to resistance, even when it has become justifiable, and hence never proceed to breaches of the peace, unless on very extraordinary occasions. Their ignorance and credulity, no doubt, give great facilities to those who have an interest in imposing upon them; and their childish fears and superstitions have often been worked upon by designing men to such an extent, as not only to tempt them into open resistance against regular authority, but to make them guilty of horrible atrocities. Mr. Elphinstone says, that "there is no set of people among the Hindoos so depraved as the dregs of our great towns;" but it may be doubted if he would have continued to retain this opinion had he lived to be a witness of recent events. It must now be considered proved, that beneath the exterior mildness of the Hindoo, a savage and vindictive temper too often lurks, and that at the very moment when he is making the strongest protestations of attachment and unalterable fidelity, he may be meditating treachery, murder, and every form of abominable wickedness.

Having taken a general survey of the Hindoos as they appear congregated in masses, whether in villages or in towns, we may now proceed to view them in their more private and domestic relations. The family arrangements of the Hindoos present many remarkable peculiarities. One of these is the very early

age at which the family relation is formed. Mere boys and girls, who probably had never met before, are brought together as man and wife, by no act of choice on their own parts, but merely by the arbitrary determination of their parents. Previous mutual attachment is, of course, impossible. The parents, influenced merely by family pride, or some equally selfish motive, cause the marriage to be celebrated with a pomp which taxes their means to the utmost, and perhaps involves them deeply in debt; and the young couple are left to commence



MARRIAGE FESTIVAL.—From native drawing in East India House.

married life under the most untoward circumstances. It is true, indeed, that the youth of the parties makes it very unlikely that the affections of either of them have been otherwise engaged, and hence there is no room for the kind of misery which is entailed when, in our own country, forced or ill-assorted marriages take place. The Hindoo bride, in receiving a husband for better or for worse, without being consulted, only follows the custom of her country, and is unconscious of the injustice she sustains when the happiness of all her future life is thus sported with. If kindly treated by her husband, she soon becomes reconciled to her lot, and often repays his kindness by an ardour of attachment which errs only in excess. The misfortune is, that from the marked inequality of the parties, this kind treatment must be regarded as the exception rather than the rule. The wife of a Hindoo is rather the slave than the companion of her husband. She must not sit with him at meals, but remain standing ready to obey his commands. However harsh his usage may be, patient endurance is her only remedy. The law, so far from affording any legal relief, expressly declares that no degree of worthlessness on his part can either dissolve the marriage, or justify her in refusing to yield him the utmost deference as her lord and master. It must not, however, be supposed that the marriage is indissoluble. On the contrary, when the husband wishes to be free, frivolous

Condition of
Hindoo
wives.



Domestic life
among the
Hindoos.

pretexts are sufficient, and the wife may either be unceremoniously turned adrift, or subjected to the cruel degradation of seeing herself supplanted. Polygamy being legalized, the husband may choose wife after wife till his caprice or voluptuousness is satisfied, or indulge to an unlimited extent in illicit connections. It is impossible that, under such circumstances, any domestic virtue can flourish, or domestic happiness be enjoyed; and though many have been found ready to vouch that the evils which may be anticipated are not realized, there cannot be a doubt that the purity and peace of Hindoo families are sadly marred by the jealousies of rival wives and the jarring interests of their rival families.

Degradation
of the
female sex.

The degradation to which the Hindoo wife is subjected is only part of a general system of treatment, adopted throughout India, towards all the female sex. Practically they are regarded as an inferior part of the creation. The birth of a son is hailed with delight, that of a daughter is not unfrequently received as a disappointment. At the proper period, most parents endeavour to give their sons some kind of elementary instruction, and hence reading, writing, and arithmetic are common attainments; daughters, on the contrary, are systematically excluded from them, on the barbarous principle, that knowledge in a woman is not only superfluous, but dangerous, inasmuch as it only puts her in possession of additional means of mischief. Under this idea it has even grown into a maxim, that an educated wife is unlucky. The consequence is, that even women who have received education are shy of owning it, and deem it necessary to protect their reputation by feigning ignorance. The degradation thus tyrannically inflicted on the female sex carries its punishment along with it, and all the more important domestic duties are imperfectly performed. Mothers, confined almost entirely to domestic drudgery, are unable to take an efficient part in the training of their offspring. The studied ignorance in which they have been brought up, leaves them destitute of the necessary qualifications; while the contemptuous treatment which they too often receive from the head of the family, weakens the authority which they ought to possess over its younger members. For a time nature may assert her rights, and give the mother the largest share in her children's affections; but the bad example set them will be sooner or later imitated, and they will cease to obey her commands on perceiving that she has no power to enforce them. A tyrannical father, a degraded mother, and ill-trained children, are thus the natural results and just punishments of the barbarism which Hindoos display in depriving woman of her proper place in the family. It may, indeed, happen that the tendency to produce these evils is not realized. Many husbands may have the good sense to disclaim the superiority which they might legally assert; others, without directly renouncing it, may yield to an influence which renders it inoperative; and cases will even occur where the supposed superiority is reversed, and the husband is obliged to be satisfied with something less than equality.



The history of India furnishes many examples of Hindoo women who, by the ascendancy obtained over their husbands or sons, have made themselves virtually the rulers of kingdoms; and it is not to be doubted that ordinary life furnishes numerous analogous cases, in which the wife, if not the actual head of the household, has at least her full share of authority. Still the general rule is unquestionable. Both by Hindoo law and Hindoo custom, woman is defrauded of her proper rights, and treated in every relation of life as if she were an inferior. When married, the inequality between her and her husband is marked, even though she should be his only wife, and it is almost needless to say how much this inequality and consequent maltreatment must be increased when polygamy introduces its abominations.

Degradation
of the fe-
male sex.

Before quitting this subject, it is necessary to mention, that among the Nairs on the coast of Malabar, a custom still more brutalizing than polygamy prevails. There marriage cannot be said to exist even in name, and the intercourse between the sexes is nearly as promiscuous as that of the brutes. Tippoo Sultan did not inaccurately describe the nature and effects of this enormity when, in a proclamation addressed to the Nairs, ordering them to abandon it and "live like the rest of mankind," he said, "It is a practice with you for one woman to associate with ten men, and you leave your mothers and sisters unconstrained in their obscene practices, and are thence all born in adultery, and are more shameless in your connections than the beasts of the field."¹ Not unfrequently, by a form of marriage, the same woman becomes the common wife of a whole family of brothers, and even then is under no restraint in regard to other lovers, provided their rank be equal or superior to her own. Colonel Wilks, whose leanings are decidedly Hindoo, endeavours to qualify the common account "by the explanations of several highly enlightened correspondents, who have favoured the author with the result of their personal observations, after a long residence in Malabar, and who bear honourable testimony to the respectable conduct of the Nair ladies of Northern Malabar." This honourable testimony, however, does not amount to much, since it is accompanied with the admission of an "occasional prevalence of lax morals, and a tendency to various intercourse;" while it is not attempted to deny that in Southern Malabar the worst that has been said is completely substantiated. The account given by Colonel Wilks (vol. iii. p. 7) is as follows:—"The parties are betrothed in childhood, and united at the age of puberty; but if, after a short cohabitation, the lady disapproves the choice of her parents, she is at liberty to make her own, by accepting a cloth (a dress) from the man of her own selection, and declaring, in the presence of four witnesses, that she discards her husband, and accepts the donor of the cloth; and this she may repeat as often as the donor of a new cloth can be found." This attempt to give a veil to shameless profligacy is not successful. So little are the women accustomed to confine their favours

Disgracing
habits of
the Nairs.

¹ Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, vol. iii. page 4.



Single order
of succession
among the
Nairs.

True charac-
ter of the
"Nairs."

Female in-
fanticide.

to any single donor of the cloth, that the very idea of paternity is suppressed, and no child born is understood to have any certain father. The consequence is, that the ordinary rules of succession cannot be observed. Hence we are told that "the natural marks of tenderness and affection to children are lavished by the men on nephews and nieces, and scarcely ever on reputed sons and daughters." While the latter are in all probability spurious, there cannot be any mistake as to the former, since the mother is always known. Succession, accordingly, takes place, not in the paternal, but the maternal line, and in order to secure something like continuity and purity of descent, the children of sisters are recognized as heirs. After contemplating a state of society so extraordinary and so revolting, one is startled at being assured by Colonel Wilks, that "the Nairs, or military class, are perhaps not exceeded by any nation on earth in a high spirit of independence and military honour."¹ Human nature is certainly full of contradictions, and the most opposite qualities are sometimes possessed by the same individual; but in such a monstrous state as that of the Nairs, even the inferior virtues designated by "a high spirit of independence and military honour," must be of a bastard description. In them this high spirit seems only to be another name for pride; and we are therefore inclined to correct the eulogy of Colonel Wilks by the more credible statements of Dr. Francis Buchanan, when he says:—"Their chief delight is in arms, but they are more inclined to use them for assassination or surprise than in the open field." And again:—"A Nair was expected to cut down a Tiar or Mucria who presumed to defile him by touching his person; and a similar fate awaited a slave who did not turn out of the road as a Nair passed." It thus appears that the barbarism of the Nair was not confined to his family arrangements, but was conspicuous in all parts of his conduct. It has always been, and ever will be so. The degradation of the female sex may be regarded as the invariable indication of a state of society bordering on barbarism; and therefore, notwithstanding the high authority of Sir Thomas Munro, we cannot help thinking that he drew far too flattering a picture, when he described the treatment of the female sex in India as "full of confidence, respect, and delicacy," and committed himself to the still bolder asseveration, that "if civilization is to become an article of trade between the two countries, I am convinced that this country will gain by the import cargo." To show how ill this opinion accords with fact, it will be proper to notice other enormities caused or fostered by the place assigned to woman in the social arrangements of the Hindoos.

We begin with female infanticide. In almost all nations, before the light of Christianity has dawned upon them, the sacrifice of children to some grim and bloody idol has prevailed. India has certainly not been an exception; but the infanticide to which we now refer is of a different, and it must be

¹ Wilks, *Historical Account of India*, vol. i. page 470.

² Buchanan, *Journey from Madras, through Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, vol. ii. page 44.



added, of a still more revolting description, since the demands of religion are not pleaded in defence of it, and the only justification offered is an alleged expediency, in compliance with which infants who would have been carefully nurtured if they had been males, no sooner see the light than they are barbarously murdered, merely because they happen to be females. This horrid crime, of which parents themselves were usually the actual, and always the consenting perpetrators, has, we trust, been extirpated within the limits of the British Indian empire, government having to its honour turned a deaf ear to all the precautions which selfish policy suggested, and put it down by main force, where its own authority was paramount, and by means of persuasion and legitimate influence, where it had to deal with independent native states. Strange to say, the practice of female infanticide prevailed, not among the mere dregs of the population, but among the Rajpoots, who plume themselves on their chivalrous spirit, and are admitted on all hands to furnish the finest specimens of the Hindoo race. For thus systematically stifling one of the strongest instincts of our nature, the Rajpoot had no excuse to offer but the anticipated difficulty of finding a husband for his daughter when she should become marriageable. By the absurd and tyrannical rules of caste she could not be married within her own tribe, nor without it in any tribe of inferior rank. While the field of choice was thus artificially limited, she could not be permitted to remain unmarried, because a family with an unmarried marriageable daughter in it was held to be disgraced. Even if a suitable husband could be found another serious difficulty remained. The expenditure of the father of the bride, when the marriage ceremony took place, behoved to be proportionate to the position which he held in society, or to which ambition inclined him to aspire, and he was thus tempted to make a display which bore hard upon his means, or perhaps involved him permanently in debt, since, in addition to the expense of the ceremony, a handsome dowry was always expected. Hence both pride and poverty being arrayed against daughters, proved an overmatch for all better feelings, and female infants no sooner saw the light than the hand of the murderer was upon them. A bath of milk sufficient for immersion, or a bit of opium fixed on the palate to be sucked, were the means usually employed. It is scarcely credible that this inhuman practice could become established, without calling in the aid of some religious sanction, and accordingly in some districts the murder was represented as a sacrifice acceptable to "the evil powers." In general, however, the plea of expediency was found sufficient, and Colonel Walker, who stands distinguished among those who have contributed to the suppression of the crime, found nothing stronger in support of it than such a legend as the following:—

"The Jharigahs," he says, "relate that a powerful rajah of their caste, who had a daughter of singular beauty and accomplishments, desired his raj-goor or family priest to affiance her to a prince of rank and descent equal to her own.

A.D. —

Female infanticide.

Causes of its former prevalence.

Legend in support of it.



Legend in
support of
infanticide.

The raj-goor travelled over many countries without discovering a chief possessed of the requisite qualities. In this dilemma the rajah consulted the raj-goor, and he advised him to avoid the disgrace which would attend the princess's remaining unmarried by having recourse to the desperate expedient of putting his daughter to death. The rajah was long averse to this expedient. The raj-goor at length removed his scruples by consenting to load himself with the guilt, and to become in his own person responsible for all the consequences of the sin. Accordingly the princess was put to death, and female infanticide was from that time practised by the Jharigahs."

First official
notice of it.

The first official notice of this horrid crime took place in 1789, when Jonathan Duncan, afterwards governor of Bombay, but then resident at Benares, wrote to Lord Cornwallis—"I am well assured, and it is, indeed, here generally believed (and being so, it is my duty not to keep such enormities, however sanctioned by usage, from the knowledge of the government) that it is no unfrequent practice among the tribe of Rajkoomar to destroy their daughters, by causing the mothers to refuse them nurture." Not satisfied with announcing and denouncing the atrocity, he lost no time in taking steps against it, and succeeded in obtaining from those of the tribe within the British frontier a formal renunciation of female infanticide, by their signature of the following singular document:—"Whereas it hath become known to the government of the Honourable East India Company, that we of the tribe of Rajkoomar do not suffer our female children to live; and whereas this is a great crime, as mentioned in the Brehma Bywant Purana, where it is said that killing even a foetus is as criminal as killing a Brahmin; and that for killing a female or woman, the punishment is to suffer in the *naraka* or hell called *Kat Shutala*, for as many years as there are hairs on the female's body, and that afterwards such person shall be born again, and successively become a leper, and afflicted with the *jakhima*; and whereas the British government, whose subjects we are, hold in detestation such murderous practices, and we do ourselves acknowledge that although customary among us they are highly sinful: we do therefore hereby agree not to commit any longer such detestable acts, and any among us who shall (which God forbid) be hereafter guilty thereof, or who shall not bring up and get our daughters married to the best of our abilities among those of our own caste, shall be expelled from our tribe, and shall neither eat nor keep society with us, besides suffering hereafter the punishments denounced in the above Purana and Shastra. We have therefore entered into this engagement."

Singular
document
abjuring
the practice

Exertions of
Mr. Duncan.

Such an engagement, though certainly a step in the right direction, could not be very effective, and at all events could not be of any avail except in the tribe which had become bound by it. The subject, however, was lost sight of, and when again brought prominently into notice, owed it to the interference of Mr. Duncan. He had become governor of Bombay, and believing that the means he had employed for the suppression of infanticide when he was at Benares



had proved successful, felt naturally desirous to use the higher influence which he now possessed in suppressing it among the Jharigahs of Cutch and Kattywar. In this philanthropic work he found a zealous and able agent in Colonel, then Major Walker, who entered upon his task with sanguine expectations that the practice as a deed of darkness would not bear the light, and that the fear of exposure would of itself induce a voluntary and speedy abandonment of it. He soon found that in cherishing such a hope he only showed how little he had sounded the depths of human depravity, and was obliged to confess that "sentiments of nature and humanity have no influence with the Jharigah." When urged on the subject they had the effrontery to reply—"Pay our daughters' marriage portions and they shall live." Mr. Duncan was rather inclined to entertain this proposal, but the court of directors at once negatived it, justly inferring that the prospect of such a dower might tempt other tribes to acquire a title to it by the same atrocious means. Ultimately, not without reluctance, and after much mercenary higgling, a document similar to that above given was signed.

It was mere delusion to imagine that, because such documents had been signed and regulations passed for the prevention and punishment of female infanticide, the unnatural crime was suppressed. From time to time new disclosures of the frightful extent to which it prevailed were brought to light, and it was proved by statistical returns, that partly by murder perpetrated at the time of birth, and partly by the still more cruel practice of allowing female infants to perish through neglect, the proportion of female to male children was a mere fraction of what it ought to have been according to the well-known law of births. According to that law the number of each sex born is nearly equal; whereas among the whole Jharigah population of Kattywar, though exceeding 8000, not more than sixty-three female children had been preserved in the course of ten years. On some of the largest estates only one, and on others containing more than 400 families, not one female child was found.

The iniquity was too shocking to be longer neglected; but in what way was it to be successfully encountered? It was the deed of a moment, done for the most part in Rajpoot forts, in the recesses of female chambers to which no access could be had. By what kind of evidence, then, could guilt be substantiated? It was proposed to employ hired informers, but it was feared that such a cure might prove worse than the disease; and one of the ablest of Indian statesmen, while admitting that "no effectual check can be imposed on this atrocious practice, so long as it is so congenial to the general feelings of the people, unless by employing hired agents," saw so many abuses in such a measure, as well as danger of disaffection from the intrusion to which it would lead "into the most private and domestic proceedings of the inferior castes (among whom alone infanticide prevails)" that he could only counsel patience. "We must therefore," he says, "be content to follow the footsteps of our predecessors (without attempting to go beyond them), in their most meritorious endeavours to discountenance this

A.D. —

Exertions of
Mr. Duncan
and Colonel
Walker to
suppress in-
fanticide.

Imperfect
remedies.

Difficulty of
dealing with
the crime.



Difficulties
of dealing
with the
crime of in-
fanticide.

A.D. —

enormity; and we may safely flatter ourselves, that as the manners of the people become softened by a continuance of tranquillity and good order, they will gradually discontinue a practice which is not more inconsistent with reason than repugnant to natural instinct." There is reason to suspect that if this advice had been acquiesced in, the enormity would never have been sensibly diminished. A softening of the manners of men systematically murdering their infant offspring, never could have been effected by such inadequate means as "a continuance of tranquillity and good order." The absence of these had not originated the abominable practice, and the presence of them had no direct tendency to abolish it. It is true that force could not be used, as the guiltiest of the Rajpoot tribes were not the subjects but the allies of the East India Company. This distinction, however, was technical rather than practical, and when the task of suppression was once undertaken in earnest many difficulties disappeared. As soon as the Rajpoot chiefs were made to understand that they must either renounce the practice, or be scouted by the Company as barbarians with whom they could hold no friendship, they became forward in offering promises and pledges, and not a few of them issued proclamations denouncing infanticide, and threatening it with punishment as a heinous crime. Something, however, was still wanting; and it is mortifying to think that these so-called chivalrous Rajpoots were never recalled to feelings of humanity and natural affection till they found that their interests would not suffer by indulging them.

Exertions
of Mr. Wil-
loughby.

The first great triumph over infanticide was gained in Western India, mainly through the judicious and energetic measures carried out by Mr. J. P. Willoughby, after his appointment as political agent in Kattywar. By obtaining an accurate census of the Jharigah population, to form a standard from which the progress made in future years in eradicating the evil might be calculated—by obliging the Jharigah chiefs, under a severe penalty, to furnish a half-yearly register of all marriages, births, and deaths within their districts—by issuing a proclamation enforcing the written obligation which had been given for the suppression of infanticide, and guaranteeing protection and reward to all who should inform against those who were guilty of it—by enjoining every father, on giving his daughter in marriage to a Jharigah chief, to stipulate in the contract that all the children born should be preserved—and by establishing an infanticide fund, out of which presents, pecuniary assistance on the marriage of daughters, and other benefits are bestowed on chiefs who preserve their children, the crying iniquity has been successfully combated. To prove that government was no longer to be trifled with in regard to this matter, several offenders have been tried and convicted. One chief was fined 12,000 rupees, and another, besides being fined 3000 rupees, was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. Thus, both the hope of reward and the dread of punishment have been brought to bear powerfully on this great cause of humanity. In the "Infanticide Report for Kattywar," in 1849, it is stated, that "The proportion of female



children to males in all the tribes is now so nearly equal, and the progressive increase of the female population so regular, that if the returns can be depended upon in other respects, there would appear to be every ground for believing that the practice of infanticide must have become almost entirely extinct in this province." From other quarters satisfactory results have been obtained. One monster crime, which, from the secrecy with which it was perpetrated, seemed destined to baffle all measures adopted for its suppression, has thus been grappled with, and if not wholly extirpated, been confined within comparatively narrow limits. At one time it carried on its murders by wholesale, and must annually have slain its hundreds, whereas now, if it ever finds a victim, it can only be by shrouding itself in the deepest darkness, and doing the horrid deed while trembling at the punishment with which it will certainly be visited if it be discovered. Here, then, is one point in which India has certainly been benefited by British ascendancy. Murder in the most revolting form which it could assume—murder committed by a parent on his own offspring at the very moment when nature was pleading most powerfully in its behalf—was systematically perpetrated throughout whole provinces, by a class of the population to which, from its chivalrous character, such a crime might have been supposed to be most abhorrent. This atrocious system of murder, though fostered by pride and rendered inveterate by custom, has been all but extirpated by British firmness and philanthropy. The fact should teach valuable lessons. It should both moderate the eulogies of those who see so much excellence in Hindooism that they would have no objection to perpetuate it; and also encourage those who, aware of the enormities which it sanctions or overlooks, are labouring to effect its overthrow.

Satisfactory
results.

Another Hindoo enormity, only less shocking than infanticide, and of which, as before, woman was the victim, is *suttee*, or the burning of widows on the funeral pile of their husbands. Happily, through the interference of our Indian government, it is an historical fact rather than an existing practice; but it formed so remarkable a feature in Hindoo manners while it existed, and still excites so much interest, that some account of it is indispensable. The word *suttee* is a corruption of the Sanscrit *sati*, meaning wife or consort, and there is thus little difficulty in explaining how it came to be applied by way of eminence to the last and, as it had come to be considered, the most meritorious act of woman's life; but the origin of the practice itself is variously explained. According to one tradition, the wife of Siva, and according to another, the wives of Brahma, set the example; the wives of some great rajahs imitated it, and the Brahmins, ever on the alert to turn every practice, however abominable, to profitable account, gave it the character of a religious act, by promising immediate bliss in heaven to those who performed it. In this way it became a vulgar belief that there was no mode in which a woman could so effectually honour the memory of her husband, and secure her own future felicity, as by

Suttee, or
burning of
widows.

Burning of
widows.

refusing to survive him. This act of suicide receives no countenance either from the Veda or from the Institutes of Menu. On the contrary, there are passages in both in which the survivance of widows is evidently assumed, and in the latter work in particular the kind of life which they are to lead is distinctly prescribed. Still it cannot be denied that the practice of suttee is of very ancient date, since an instance of it is distinctly described by Diodorus Siculus, who wrote before the Christian era. At a later period it began to figure in the Puranas as one of the most meritorious acts of devotion, and thus resting on the same authority as many of the other superstitions of the Hindoos, undoubtedly formed an integral part of their religious creed. Though thus sanctioned, the practice of suttee never became universal throughout India. It is said to have been unknown south of the Kistna, and to have very rarely occurred in any other part of the Deccan. In the north-western provinces it was not uncommon, but its chosen seat was Bengal. Here, as if it meant at once to court the inspection and defy the censure of the British government, it was openly practised in the immediate vicinity of Calcutta.

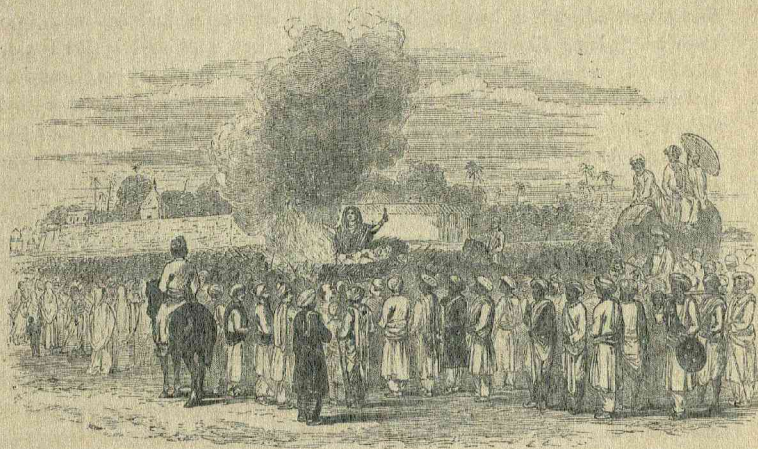
Hindoo
funerals.

Suttee by burning is impracticable where, as with us, the bodies of the dead are committed to the grave. This mode of funeral is not unknown among Hindoos. Men of the religious orders are buried in a sitting posture, cross-legged; and Professor Wilson has declared it to be "almost certain" that the ancient Hindoos "did not burn but bury their dead." Hence suttee was sometimes performed, not by burning the widow, but by burying her alive. In modern times, however, the body is usually disposed of by burning. A man supposed to be dying is placed in the open air on a bed of sacred grass, or, if near the Ganges, carried to its banks; often in the latter locality, if death does not immediately follow, the relatives becoming impatient, depart and leave the body unconsumed, to be carried down the stream; but in general more humanity and natural affection are displayed. The sufferer is soothed in his last moments by the recital of hymns and prayers. As soon as death takes place, the body, after being bathed, perfumed, and decked with flowers, is carried to the funeral pile and stretched upon it, carefully covered up in all parts except the face, which is painted with crimson powder. In the south of India the procession is accompanied by music; elsewhere the attendants only utter their grief in short exclamations. The pile, usually from four to five feet high, and composed of the most combustible materials, is lighted, after many ceremonies, by a relation. Clarified butter and scented oils thrown upon the flames increase their energy, and the whole process is soon over. In a case of suttee the ceremonial was at once more minute and ostentatious. Its nature, and all the accompanying circumstances will be best understood from the following graphic description which Mr. Holwell has given of a suttee of which he was an eye-witness at Cossimbazar, when Sir Francis Russell was chief of the Company's factory there, and Ali Verdy Khan was Soubahdar of Bengal.

At five of the clock, on the morning of the 4th of February, 1742-43, died Ram Chund Pundit, of the Mahratta tribe, aged twenty-eight years; his widow (for he had but one wife), aged between seventeen and eighteen, as soon as he expired, disdaining to wait the time allowed her for reflection, immediately declared to the Brahmins and witnesses present her resolution to burn. As the family was of no small consideration in Cossimbazar, and her relations left no argument to dissuade her from it, Lady Russell, with the tenderest humanity, sent her several messages to the same purpose; the infant state of her children

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Holwell's
account of
a suttee.



SUTTEE.—From native drawing in East India House.

(two girls and a boy, the eldest not four years of age), and the terrors and pain of the death she sought, were painted to her in the strongest and liveliest colouring. She was deaf to all. She gratefully thanked Lady Russell, and sent her word she had now nothing to live for, but recommended her children to her protection. When the torments of burning were urged *in terrorem* to her, she, with a resolved and calm countenance, put her finger into the fire, and held it there a considerable time; she then, with one hand, put fire in the palm of the other, sprinkled incense on it, and fumigated the Brahmins. The consideration of her children left destitute was again urged to her. She replied that 'He who made them would take care of them.' She was at last given to understand she would not be permitted to burn. This, for a short space, seemed to give her deep affliction; but soon recollecting herself, she told them death was in her power, and that if she was not allowed to burn, according to the principles of her caste, she would starve herself. Her friends, finding her thus peremptory and resolved, were obliged at last to assent.



Holwell's
account of
a suttee.

The body of the deceased was carried down to the water side early the following morning. The widow followed about ten o'clock, accompanied by three very principal Brahmins, her children, parents, and relations, and a numerous concourse of people. The order of leave for her burning did not arrive till after one o'clock, and it was then brought down by one of the soubah's own officers, who had orders to see that she burned voluntarily. The time they waited for the order was employed in praying with the Brahmins, and washing in the Ganges. As soon as it arrived, she retired, and stayed for the space of half an hour in the midst of her female relations, amongst whom was her mother. She then divested herself of her bracelets and other ornaments, and tied them in a cloth which hung like an apron before her, and was conducted by her female relations to one corner of the pile. On the pile was an arched arbour, formed of dry sticks, boughs, and leaves, open only at one end to admit her entrance. In this the body of the deceased was deposited, his head at the end opposite the opening. At the corner of the pile to which she had been conducted, the Brahmins had made a small fire, round which she and the three Brahmins sat for some minutes. One of them gave into her hand a leaf of the bale-tree (the wood commonly consecrated to form part of the funeral pile), with sundry things on it, which she threw into the fire; one of the others gave her a second leaf, which she held over the flame, while he dropped three times some ghee on it, which fell and melted into the fire (these two operations were preparatory symbols of her approaching dissolution by fire); and whilst they were performing this, the third Brahmin read to her some portions of the *Aughtorrah Bhade*, and asked her some questions, to which she answered with a steady and serene countenance; but the noise was so great that we could not understand what she said, although we were within a yard of her. These over, she was led with great solemnity three times round the pile, the Brahmins reading before her; when she came the third time to the small fire, she stopped, took the rings off her toes and fingers, and put them to her other ornaments. Here she took a solemn, majestic leave of her children, parents, and relations; after which one of the Brahmins dipped a large wick of cotton in some ghee, and gave it ready lighted into her hand, and led her to the open side of the arbour. There all the Brahmins fell at her feet. After she had blessed them, they retired weeping. By two steps she ascended the pile, and entered the arbour. On her entrance she made a profound reverence at the feet of the deceased, and advanced and seated herself by his head. She looked, in silent meditation, on his face for the space of a minute, then set fire to the arbour in three places. Observing that she had set fire to leeward, and that the flames blew from her, instantly seeing her error she rose, set fire to windward, and resumed her station. Ensign Daniel, with his cane, separated the grass and leaves on the windward side, by which means we had a distinct view of her as she sat. With what dignity and undaunted a countenance she set fire to the pile the last time, and assumed her seat, can only



be conceived, for words cannot convey a just idea of her. The pile being of combustible materials, the supporters of the roof were presently consumed, and tumbled in upon her."

Another case in which equal resolution was shown, and the circumstances were in some respects still more affecting, is mentioned by Sir John Malcolm, in his account of Ahalya Bae, a Mahratta princess, who was daughter-in-law to the founder of the Holkar family; and, after the death of her husband and son, ruled their dominions for thirty years—from 1765 to 1795—with the greatest ability and success. Beside the son, who had died insane, she had an only daughter, Muchta Bae, who was married, and had a son, an only child. Muchta Bae, after she had been rendered childless, by the death of her son, became a widow, and immediately declared her resolution to burn with the corpse of her husband. After stating the circumstances, Sir John Malcolm continues thus—"No efforts (short of coercion) that a mother and a sovereign could use were untried by the virtuous Ahalya Bae to dissuade her daughter from the fatal resolution. She humbled herself to the dust before her, and entreated her, as she revered her god, not to leave her desolate and alone upon earth. Muchta Bae, though affectionate, was calm and resolved. 'You are old, mother (she said), and a few years will end your pious life. My only child and husband are gone, and when you follow, life, I feel, will be insupportable; but the opportunity of terminating it with honour will then have passed.' Ahalya Bae, when she found all dissuasion unavailing, determined to witness the last dreadful scene. She walked in the procession, and stood near the pile, where she was supported by two Brahmins, who held her arms. Although obviously suffering great agony of mind, she remained tolerably firm till the first blaze of the flame made her lose all self-command; and while her shrieks increased the noise made by the exulting shouts of the immense multitude that stood around, she was seen to gnaw in anguish those hands she could not liberate from the persons by whom she was held. After some convulsive efforts, she so far recovered as to join in the ceremony of bathing in the Nerbudda, when the bodies were consumed. She then retired to her palace, where for three days, having taken hardly any sustenance, she remained so absorbed in grief that she never uttered a word. When recovered from this state, she seemed to find consolation in building a beautiful monument to the memory of those she lamented."

Suttee of a
Mahratta
princess.

Aburd
eulogies
of suttee.

In the above two cases there can be no doubt that the immolation was voluntary. The unhappy women, deluded into the belief that they could not perform a more meritorious act, courted death, and met it, without shrinking, in its most terrific form. This, according to ordinary ideas, was heroism, though, in strict propriety, there cannot be true heroism where the object aimed at is delusive, and the sacrifice made to obtain it is truly a crime. It is difficult, therefore, to

¹ Malcolm's *Central India*, vol. i. pages 190, 191.



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Absurd
eulogies
of suttee.

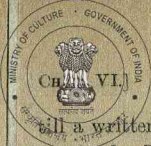
admit the justice of the comparison made by Mr. Kaye,¹ when he says that "No martyr, in the grand old times of apostolic Christianity, died with a nobler fortitude, than often did these unhappy women, under the curse of a degrading superstition;" or to sympathize with the indignation of Colonel Wilks when he asks²—"What judgment should we pronounce on the Hindoo, who (if our institutions admitted the parallel) should *forcibly* pretend to stand between a Christian and the hope of eternal salvation? And shall we not hold him to be a driveller in politics and morals, a fanatic in religion, and a pretender in humanity, who would *forcibly* wrest this hope from the Hindoo widow?" Mr. Holwell uses language which is, if possible, still more extravagant; and after insisting that widows who destroy themselves by suttee, "act upon heroic as well as upon rational and pious principles," and have their ideas "raised to a soothing degree of dignity befitting angelic beings," appeals to the "natural goodness of heart, generosity, and candour" of his "fair countrywomen," in the confident expectation "that they will in future look on these, their Gentoo sisters of the creation, in a more favourable and consistent light than probably they have hitherto done; and not deem that action an infatuation which results from principle." In short, Mr. Holwell seems to insinuate that his "fair countrywomen," so far from condemning or deploring sutteeism, might do worse than put it in practice. It was absurd to speak thus, even on the assumption that the self-immolation was always deliberate and voluntary; but the general eulogy becomes monstrous when it is considered that it frequently took place under circumstances which made it murder. Even in the above cases the active part taken by the Brahmins, who ought to have known that their own so-called sacred books gave no sanction to their conduct, and the exulting shouts of the populace during a scene which ought, at all events, to have filled them with pity, and awed them into silence, afford strong ground for suspicion; and it has been ascertained that in numerous other cases the most iniquitous means were employed to gain or force consent. Often by the use of opium the woman was kept in a state of stupor or intoxication by relations desirous to relieve themselves from the burden of her future maintenance, or seize upon the succession to her property. The consent to burn was thus extorted from her when she had been rendered incapable of acting rationally. Not unfrequently, too, when awakened to the dreadful reality by being brought to the pile, she not only hesitated, but endeavoured to escape; screaming for mercy, she was thrust into the flames by those about her, and violently held down, while the noise of drums and shouting multitudes drowned her cries.

The perpetration of murder under the form of suttee was so well known, that under the Mahometan government, though the burning of widows was not absolutely prohibited, restrictions were imposed upon it, and it could not take place

¹ Kaye, *Administration of the East India Company*, page 524.

² Wilks, *Historical Sketches*, vol. i. page 499.

Suttee often
compulsory.



all a written permission, presumed not to be granted without due inquiry, was obtained. The exaction of a fee for this permission was not unreasonable, but unfortunately, from the rapacity of the Mahometan officials, the temptation offered by the fee was seldom resisted. In practice the payment of the money superseded the inquiry which ought to have preceded it, and the permission followed almost as a matter of course. Such was the state of the law when the East India Company obtained the grant of the dewannee. For many years no change was attempted, or rather the subject was in a great measure overlooked, and the prohibition was enforced with even more laxity than in Mahometan times. Meanwhile the practice had never been expressly legalized, and it remained doubtful in what light suttee was viewed by the government. In an evil hour it was resolved to clear up this doubt, and a circular was issued, specifying the cases in which it would be held to be illegal, and punished as a crime. The inference was too obvious not to be soon drawn. If only certain special cases were prohibited, all others must by necessary implication be permitted. Under this injudicious sanction suttee increased. In 1815, the reported cases from Bengal, Behar, and Orissa were 378. In 1819, those reported for Calcutta alone amounted to 421, and those for Bengal to 650. The fact was at once astounding and humiliating, and public feeling, thoroughly awakened by the exposure which had been made, was no longer to be satisfied without the application of some stringent remedy. It was deemed necessary, however, to use caution. Some Europeans had, during a long residence in India, become, as Sir James Mackintosh expressed it, *brahminized*, and like Mr. Holwell hung, as it were, in a trembling balance, unable to decide between Christianity and Hindooism, and therefore not inclined to go further than to admit that each might be best for the countries which had adopted them. If the Hindoo widow thought she could gain eternal life by burning herself with her husband's corpse, by all means let her have her own way. To prevent her by force would be intolerant and cruel. Others, unable to carry absurdity so far, did not propose the continuance of suttee as a benefit to the widow, but feared that by consenting to the abolition of it they might do serious damage to themselves, and to all who like them had a serious stake in Indian revenue. The women might perhaps not be displeased at the abolition of a practice which doomed them in a certain event to a violent and excruciating death, but what would the Brahmins say, and how would those men feel who expected by burning the widow to enrich themselves by her property, or at all events escape from the burden of maintaining her?

Alarmed at these and similar bugbears, the court of directors were afraid to give explicit orders on the subject, and though decidedly in favour of the abolition, shrunk from the responsibility of pronouncing for it. Governors-general could not reasonably be expected to be more resolute, and one of them, in 1827, when the subject was keenly agitated, returned to the

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Mahometan
restrictions
on suttee.

Views of
brahmin-
ized Euro-
peans.

Cautious in-
terference
of the
Company.

Suttee.

Its successful
abolition.

advice which had been given in 1821 on the subject of infanticide, "I must frankly confess, though at the risk of being considered insensible to the enormity of the evil, that I am inclined to recommend our trusting to the progress now making in the diffusion of knowledge among the natives, for the gradual suppression of this detestable superstition. I cannot believe that the burning or burying alive of widows will long survive the advancement which every year brings with it in useful and rational learning." Had this opinion been acquiesced in, Hindoo widows would have waited long for relief from a crying iniquity; but the next governor-general was animated by a more energetic spirit, and a regulation was issued, "declaring the practice of suttee, or of burning or burying alive the widows of Hindoos, illegal, and punishable by the criminal courts" throughout British India. As might have been anticipated, the regulation produced a strong sensation; and those who had prophesied mischief thought they were on the eve of seeing it realized, when a number of natives at Calcutta formed themselves into a society for restoring suttee, described by them as a sacred rite which had been continued millions of years under the four successive yugas. It proved, however, only an expiring effort, and was moreover counteracted by an address from a body of natives far surpassing the others, if not in wealth at least in intelligence, cordially approving of the suppression of suttee, and declaring that it formed no part of their ancient and genuine religious system. The native states still remained to be dealt with, and as nothing stronger than persuasion and influence could be used, the process of suppression was retarded by many obstacles. In these states proclamations have been issued condemnatory of suttee, and steps more or less active have been taken to suppress it. It were too sanguine to believe that they have always been effectual; it may even be questioned whether the princes who issued them have in all cases been sincere. Still, much has been gained by impressing on suttee the stamp of criminality. It cannot now be practised in the face of the sun, amid crowds of admiring spectators, nor be extolled by hindooized Europeans as an act done "upon heroic as well as upon rational and pious principles," but must shun the light as a deed of darkness—a deed which when voluntary is mere suicide, and when compulsory is murder.

Thugges.

A third practice of a very singular and atrocious character—*Thuggee*—may here be mentioned, though, while it prevailed, it was not confined to Hindoos, but common both to them and to Mahometans. Indeed, according to the traditions of the Thugs themselves, they derived their origin from seven tribes who lived in the vicinity of Delhi, and were all of the Mahometan faith; but in whatever way the change was produced, the Koran was laid aside, and all their legends, as well as the superstitions founded upon them, savoured decidedly of Hindooism. There cannot, therefore, be any great error in giving a brief account of them in a chapter of which the manners of Hindoos is the special subject. Their

patron goddess is Kali, the blood thirsty consort of Siva. According to the legend, Kali encountered a monstrous giant, every drop of whose blood as it fell became a destructive demon. The blood of each demon thus produced possessed the same property, and an enormous brood was generated, threatening the world with destruction. The evil would have been without remedy—for the more they were slain the more they multiplied—had not Kali fallen upon the notable device of creating two men, and giving them handkerchiefs or waistbands with which they were able to strangle the demons. As by this process not a drop of blood was shed, the race of demons, which could only be propagated by blood, was extinguished. The instruments of strangulation became the property of the men who had used them so successfully; and to make this gift of value, the goddess authorized them and their descendants to make strangulation their trade. Thuggee.

In accordance with this strange legend, the Thugs became hereditary murderers, and spread throughout Central India and into part of the Deccan. Though formed into fraternities by initiatory rites, and able to recognize each other by the use of particular signs, they lived as the ordinary inhabitants of the country, following the peaceful occupations of agriculture or trade. At the same time they had spies in all quarters, and were constantly on the outlook to entrap unwary travellers. When an expedition was resolved on, they quitted their Procedure of the Thugs.



THUGS DIVIDING THEIR SPOIL.—From native model in British Museum.

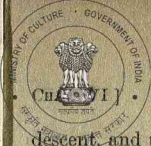
homes, in bands more or less numerous, and, concealing their true character by various disguises, fell in, as if by accident, with the persons whom they had previously marked out for their victims. Being adepts in the art of lulling suspicion and winning confidence, they had seldom much difficulty in finding a favourable opportunity for effecting their purpose. On a sudden a strip of cloth or an unfolded turban was thrown round the neck of the unsuspecting traveller, tightened, and held fast till he was suffocated. Every one of his com-

The Thugs.

panions was murdered in the same way, and to remove all evidence of the crime, the bodies, after being plundered of everything of value, were carefully buried out of sight. Many other precautions, to insure secrecy, were employed. Possessing the most extensive means of information, they endeavoured, as much as possible, to avoid the risk of detection, by murdering persons who they had learned were not likely to be much inquired after, or soon missed, or whose disappearance would probably be attributed to voluntary flight. A soldier on leave was a safe victim. His family, not expecting him, could not be surprised at his not arriving; and when the leave had expired, his continued absence from his regiment would perhaps be attributed to desertion. It is true that the whole plunder anticipated was only the small sum saved from his pay, and wrapped up in his waistband; but it was enough to tempt a Thug, and the poor soldier was never again heard of. In the same way, a servant intrusted with treasure was considered a safe victim, because, though he would certainly be soon missed and inquired after, the conclusion would probably be, when no trace of him could be discovered, that the money had tempted him to betray his trust and run off.

Regular
training of
children to
Thuggee.

The Thugs were not like ordinary bands of robbers, who, having committed crimes against society, or broken loose from its restraints, were brought together perhaps by accident, and have no common tie except the love of plunder. They formed a regular confederacy of criminality, and though not all of one caste, considered themselves entitled, and even bound, to follow murder as their hereditary trade. The feeling of guilt, and its accompanying remorse, was eradicated from their minds; and, at all events, if it happened momentarily to arise, was easily suppressed by the conviction that they could not avoid their destiny. With them, therefore, murder and robbery were not iniquities to be confessed and repented of, but achievements to be gloried in and merits to be rewarded. The more atrocious their deeds, the more approvingly did Kali smile upon them. The very name of religion was thus employed to give a sanction to Thuggee, and those who practised it were regular and zealous worshippers of their patron goddess, under one or other of her hideous and terrific forms. They held special feasts in her honour, and by making liberal offerings at her shrines, had little difficulty in bribing the connivance, and even purchasing the active co-operation of the priests who ministered at them. Before undertaking any expedition, they waited for some sign or omen which was thought to intimate that Kali approved of it; and when the atrocity was permitted, no time was lost in sending her an offering by the hand of the person who had thrown the fatal noose, and was therefore deemed to be for the time her special favourite. The greatest criminals have sometimes been known carefully to guard the purity of their own families, by keeping them in ignorance of the kind of life they were leading, or at least prohibiting them from becoming sharers in their crimes. Not so the Thug. His occupation had come to him by



descent, and the son must do as the father had done before him. Accordingly, the domestic hearth of every Thug was a school of murder. The training commenced at the earliest possible period, and was continued without interruption till the course of education was completed. At first, the boy, kept aloof from the scene of action, was employed only as a scout. The next stage was to allow him to see the corpse of the victim, to handle it, and assist in burying it. By and by he accompanied the gangs, took part in the deceptions employed to insnare the traveller, and when the deed was done, was permitted to display his strength and resolution, by taking some subordinate part in it. Last of all, what had now become the great object of his ambition was attained, and he was intrusted with the application of the noose. Before he was thus recognized as a member of the fraternity, he received a formal initiation from some elder of the gang, who acted as his guru or spiritual guide. A kind of sacrament was administered, by giving the novice a species of coarse sugar, which was supposed to have changed its natural properties by a transubstantiating consecration, and become an embodiment of Kali herself. Its efficacy was irresistible, and the recipient could no more contend against it than he could against fate. "Let any one once taste of that sugar," exclaimed one of them, "and he will be a Thug, though he know all the trades and have all the wealth in the world." "My father," said another, "made me taste of that fatal sugar, when I was yet a mere boy; and if I were to live a thousand years, I should never be able to follow any other trade."

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children to
Thuggee.

The Thugs, besides gaining over priests and Brahmins to their interests, provided still more effectually for their escape from the hands of justice, by bribing the officers of government. In Western India especially, the subordinate chiefs and officials not only connived at their crimes, but regularly shared in their spoils. These often formed a considerable item in the revenue which they derived from their offices, and in order to obtain it, they even encouraged the Thugs to settle within their jurisdictions. The only stipulation was, that they should pay well for this protection, and not compromise their protectors by committing murders and depredations within the district. Provided they preyed at a distance, their return with the fruits of their atrocities was heartily welcomed by all classes. Bankers did not scruple to make advances on the security of the pillage which they knew could be obtained only by murder, and merchants regularly paid their visits to Thug villages at the period when the gangs, engaged in distant expeditions, were expected to return. All classes, from the highest to the lowest, were thus leagued together, and shared without remorse in the proceeds of heinous crimes. In such circumstances, the detection of the actual criminals was difficult, and their conviction all but impossible. Those who, from their connection with Thugs, best knew the facts, intentionally concealed them, while those who would otherwise have been willing witnesses, were intimidated by threats of vengeance. Extensive tracts of

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and officials
interested
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The Thugs.

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descent, and the son must do as the father had done before him. Accordingly, the domestic hearth of every Thug was a school of murder. The training commenced at the earliest possible period, and was continued without interruption till the course of education was completed. At first, the boy, kept aloof from the scene of action, was employed only as a scout. The next stage was to allow him to see the corpse of the victim, to handle it, and assist in burying it. By and by he accompanied the gangs, took part in the deceptions employed to ensnare the traveller, and when the deed was done, was permitted to display his strength and resolution, by taking some subordinate part in it. Last of all, what had now become the great object of his ambition was attained, and he was intrusted with the application of the noose. Before he was thus recognized as a member of the fraternity, he received a formal initiation from some elder of the gang, who acted as his guru or spiritual guide. A kind of sacrament was administered, by giving the novice a species of coarse sugar, which was supposed to have changed its natural properties by a transubstantiating consecration, and become an embodiment of Kali herself. Its efficacy was irresistible, and the recipient could no more contend against it than he could against fate. "Let any one once taste of that sugar," exclaimed one of them, "and he will be a Thug, though he know all the trades and have all the wealth in the world." "My father," said another, "made me taste of that fatal sugar, when I was yet a mere boy; and if I were to live a thousand years, I should never be able to follow any other trade."

Training of children to Thuggee.

The Thugs, besides gaining over priests and Brahmins to their interests, provided still more effectually for their escape from the hands of justice, by bribing the officers of government. In Western India especially, the subordinate chiefs and officials not only connived at their crimes, but regularly shared in their spoils. These often formed a considerable item in the revenue which they derived from their offices, and in order to obtain it, they even encouraged the Thugs to settle within their jurisdictions. The only stipulation was, that they should pay well for this protection, and not compromise their protectors by committing murders and depredations within the district. Provided they preyed at a distance, their return with the fruits of their atrocities was heartily welcomed by all classes. Bankers did not scruple to make advances on the security of the pillage which they knew could be obtained only by murder, and merchants regularly paid their visits to Thug villages at the period when the gangs, engaged in distant expeditions, were expected to return. All classes, from the highest to the lowest, were thus leagued together, and shared without remorse in the proceeds of heinous crimes. In such circumstances, the detection of the actual criminals was difficult, and their conviction all but impossible. Those who, from their connection with Thugs, best knew the facts, intentionally concealed them, while those who would otherwise have been willing witnesses, were intimidated by threats of vengeance. Extensive tracts of

Brahmins and officials interested in Thuggee.

Probable
number of
Thuggee
victims.

country were hence roamed over with comparative impunity, by bands of professed murderers; and it was not until British ascendancy was established, that any effectual measures could be taken to suppress them. It is impossible, from the nature of the case, to form an accurate estimate of the number of persons who must have been annually strangled. A native writer conjectures that it cannot have been less than 10,000. This seems almost too horrible to be credited, and yet well-authenticated facts will not allow us to assume a lower number. In the course of six years, during which our Indian government made strenuous exertions for the suppression of Thuggee, both within its own dominions and in native states, 2000 Thugs were arrested and tried at Indore, Hyderabad, Saugur, and Jubbulpoor. Of these, no fewer than 1500 were convicted and sentenced to death, transportation, or imprisonment. These formed only a portion of the whole fraternities, and there is, therefore, little extravagance in believing that they must have counted their victims by thousands. Happily, this other monster evil has also been successfully grappled with, and Thuggee, as a regularly organized fraternity of murderers, no longer exists.

Dacoitee.

Dacoitee, another form of crime, strongly resembling Thuggee, and only less atrocious, inasmuch as simple robbery was contemplated, and murder was not perpetrated when robbery could be effected without it, has in like manner been all but extirpated. The Dacoits, like the Thugs, formed a regular fraternity, and belonged to certain castes, which practised robbery as their hereditary privilege or destiny. It may easily be supposed that in such a state of society as usually existed in India under its native princes, these castes were not allowed to make robbery a monopoly. Many robbers from other castes were accordingly associated with them; and the gangs, thus composed, being somewhat heterogeneous, were not so strict in their superstitious observances, nor so systematic in committing crime, as the Thugs. Still, however, there were regular tribes who considered themselves born to robbery, and regularly trained their children to the practice of it. In their preliminary arrangements, they proceeded very much in the same way as the Thugs. When, after a number of religious observances, they had satisfied themselves that the omens were favourable, they set out in gangs, under various disguises. Their principal weapon was the spear, the head of which they carried concealed about their persons, while they were able to carry the handle openly, by giving it the appearance of a walking-staff. The object of their attack was not a travelling party, but some house, or it might be whole village, when it had been ascertained by previous inquiry that a rich spoil might be anticipated. On arriving near the locality, they separated for a time to avoid suspicion, and met again after night at some fixed place of rendezvous. At the appointed hour, usually at the dead of the night, they sallied forth, and suddenly appeared with flaming torches and glittering spears. Their measures were so well concerted that resistance was seldom possible, and the work of plunder went on without interruption. The utmost that the unhappy

Procedure of
the Dacoits.



victims could attempt was concealment of property; but the only effect was to add bodily suffering to pecuniary loss, because the Dacoits were always ready, on the least suspicion of concealment, to employ any means, however violent, in order to extort disclosure. These midnight robberies, committed as it were in defiance of government, could not remain unknown; but from the connivance of officials who shared in the spoil, and the reluctance of witnesses, conviction could seldom be obtained. Ultimately, however, when by the establishment of British authority justice was more efficiently administered, Dacoitee yielded to the same means of suppression as were used against Thuggee, and its robber castes were broken up and dispersed. Robbery itself will of course always exist to a greater or less degree in every state of society, and in India derives particular facilities from the number of lawless characters who wander over the country as mendicants and pilgrims; but even in India it no longer ventures to indulge in wholesale rapine and in wanton cruelty. Though Dacoitee was understood to be sparing of bloodshed, it was at one period carried on with horrible barbarities. Torture of the most excruciating kind was frequently employed, and instances occurred where the victims who had been subjected to it were afterwards hewn to pieces, and suspended piecemeal as bloody trophies on the adjoining trees. Such atrocities serve to indicate the fearful cruelty which too often lurks in the heart of the Hindoo, and may be expected to display itself whenever, from any cause, his bad passions are fully roused; but it is certainly one of the greatest triumphs of our Indian government, that under it these atrocities, which were once common events, are now of rare occurrence, and that in many districts which used to be regularly pillaged by gangs of Dacoits, life and property have been made perfectly secure.

Dacoitee.

Its suppression.

Atrocities indicative of national character.

Infanticide, Suttee, Thuggee, and Dacoitee, the four forms of heinous crime which have now been described, though never universal throughout India, prevailed to such an extent in many of its provinces, that it was impossible to pass them unnoticed while taking a survey of Hindoo manners. Great injustice, indeed, would be done by hasty generalization, and yet it may, without any breach of charity, be concluded that the people among whom such crimes can take deep root, and be committed not only without remorse, but with some kind of religious sanction, are deficient in that moral sensitiveness which revolts at every outrage on humanity, and is quick to resent and punish it. Whether from natural temper or habit, cruelty in its most savage forms does not seem to be viewed by the Hindoo with any great degree of abhorrence. When he cannot be charged as an actual participant in the crime, he speaks of it in a way which shows that he neither is indignant against him who commits it, nor feels much pity for him who suffers by it. The doctrine of fate, carried to its absurdest extreme, destroys all moral distinctions, and reconciles him to every abomination as soon as he gives it the name of destiny. With this for an excuse, the Dacoit robbed and the Thug murdered without any feeling of compunction. Human life, too, was regarded with comparative indifference, and the loss of it, therefore, did not seem



ceremony, that it is difficult, without giving serious offence, to assign to each guest the place to which his rank entitles him; and even when this has been successfully accomplished, the rigid adherence to caste raises up so many obstacles to unconstrained intercourse, that social enjoyment is almost impossible.

On public festivals, when vast multitudes of all classes are brought together, a good idea of popular manners may be obtained. The misfortune is, that most of these festivals are more or less intimately connected with prevailing superstitions, and hence are seldom unaccompanied with exhibitions of a cruel and disgusting nature, such as have already been described in the chapter treating of religion. Apart from these exhibitions, which offend both the ear and the eye, the impression produced is decidedly favourable; and it is impossible to witness the happy looks and peaceable demeanour of the almost countless multitudes—their delight at the gaudy shows and processions—the keen relish with which they enter into the various amusements—and the total absence, not only of drunkenness, but of every appearance of riot and rudeness—without believing that they possess many good qualities, and if freed from sinister influences, would be simple-hearted, gentle, good-natured, and easily governed. As a specimen of the kind of festivals in which they delight, the *Hootee* or *Holi*, as the most prominent, though by no means the least exceptionable, may be selected. Mr. Elphinstone, after referring to the sports “in which all descriptions of people eagerly join,” continues thus:—“Perhaps the chief of these is the *Holi*, a festival in honour of the spring, at which the common people, especially the boys, dance round fires, sing licentious and satirical songs, and give vent to all sorts of ribaldry against their superiors, by whom it is always taken in good part. The great sport of the occasion, however, consists in sprinkling each other with a yellow liquid, and throwing a crimson powder over each other’s persons. The liquid is also squirted through syringes, and the powder is sometimes made up in large balls covered with isinglass, which break as soon as they come in contact with the body. All ranks engage in this sport with enthusiasm, and get more and more into the spirit of the contest, till all parties are completely drenched with the liquid, and so covered with the red powder that they can scarcely be recognized. A grave prime minister will invite a foreign ambassador to play the *Holi* at his house, and will take his share in the most riotous parts of it with the ardour of a schoolboy.”¹ This description is undoubtedly accurate, so far as it goes; but to make it complete, it ought to be added, that it too frequently presents grosser features than any which Mr. Elphinstone has introduced into his picture, and that in addition to licentious songs there is much licentious practice. Drunkenness, though not an habitual Hindoo vice, begins to show itself for some days before the festival commences, and is more or less prevalent during its continuance. Bishop Heber says² that “during all the time of the

¹ Elphinstone’s *India*, vol. i. pages 351, 352.

² Heber, *Indian Journal*, vol. ii. page 80 of *Colonial and Home Library*.

Hindoo
festivities.

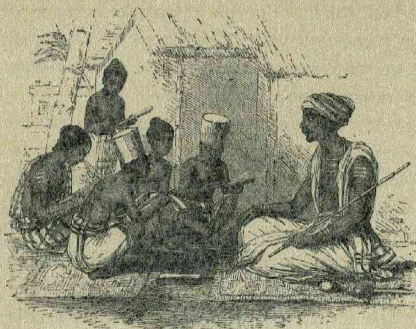
The Hootee.



Hoolee, drunkenness is common among the Hindoos;" and in another passage (vol. ii. p. 66), thus alludes to a still more disgusting practice:—"I had seen very few drunken men in India before; but the time of Hoolee is now coming on, which is the Hindoo carnival, and in which the people of Central India more particularly indulge in all kinds of riot and festivity. The sepoys of my guard have begun to assail the women whom they pass on their march, with singing and indecent language—a thing seldom practised at other times."

Some account has already been given of the domestic arrangements of the Hindoos, and it has been seen how injuriously the inferior position assigned to the wife, and the introduction of rival families by the sanction given to polygamy, must operate. It is alleged, however, that many of the evils which might be anticipated are not realized. Polygamy, though permitted, is too hazardous as a speculation, and too expensive as a luxury, to become a common practice; and in most Hindoo families marriage is just what it is among ourselves—the indissoluble union of a single pair. The superiority allowed to the husband is also said to exist only in theory, and the wife seldom fails to obtain her full share of influence. When the evils of domestic inequality and rivalry in the heads of the family are thus prevented or counteracted, the home of the Hindoo is happy, and many of the domestic virtues are fully developed. He treats his wife with a gentleness, and even delicacy, seldom equalled by individuals of the same class in any other country; dotes on his children, often carrying his fondness beyond due bounds, and spoiling them by excessive indulgence; and, perfectly satisfied with his own hearth, has no idea of seeking pleasure beyond it. Often, when the business of the day is done, he assumes the office of teacher, and is generally sufficiently qualified to give his children at least a smattering of reading, writing, and arithmetic. When, either from want of qualification or opportunity, he does not himself act as teacher, he is often sufficiently alive to the value of education to be willing to expend part of his very limited income in giving his children the benefit of public schooling. The means, though far from adequate, have to some extent been provided. In all towns, and in some villages, there are schools, where the teachers are paid by small fees, either in money or in grain and uncooked vegetables. The system of education pursued in these schools, so long at least as they were entirely in the hands of the natives, was indeed extremely defective, and aimed at nothing more than to communicate the lowest possible amount of human knowledge by a very rude process. No books were used. The boy (not the girl, for it must be remembered that the male sex only was deemed fit to be instructed), learned his letters by copying them from a board on sand, or on palm leaves. Reading and writing were thus taught simultaneously. Spelling and the rudiments of arithmetic were acquired by repeating syllables and figures aloud, after the teacher or monitor. In such a process, the exercise of memory alone was required, and all the other faculties were left dormant. Miserably imperfect as this instruction was, careful statis-

tical inquiries proved that the number of boys receiving it was only a fraction of those of the proper age for school. In the Madras presidency, where the monitorial system, with which the labours of Bell and Lancaster have made us



BRAHMIN SCHOOLMASTER.—FROM BUXLOFF, *L'Inde Française*.

familiar, was in full operation, the number of children educated at public schools was estimated by Sir Thomas Monro at less than one in three. In Lower Bengal, the proportion was nearly the same. Thus, in those parts of the country which were admitted to be the best educated, two thirds of the children capable of receiving instruction were left absolutely destitute of it. This, however, was the most favourable view. In

Upper Bengal, the proportion of boys receiving instruction amounted only to one in twenty, and in the presidency of Bombay varied from one in eight to one in fourteen.

Hindoo
 children.

Assuming that in such a Hindoo family as that referred to above, the children were privileged to receive this amount of elementary instruction, either at home or abroad, the domestic happiness which we have supposed might exist for some years without alloy, but sooner or later a change for the worse would, in all probability, supervene. In respect both of physical and mental qualities, the Hindoo appears to most advantage in the first stage of his life. As a child or boy he is often remarkably handsome, and in quickness of intellect is usually superior to Europeans of his own age. Unfortunately his passions also are more precocious, and are fostered by native customs, which force on him a premature manhood. He is married when a mere boy, and, becoming his own master before he can have learned the art of self-restraint, too often gives way to vicious indulgence. The promise of his boyhood is thus belied. The enervating influences to which he is subjected suddenly arrest all further progress, and he settles down to take part in all the ordinary duties of life while destitute of the qualifications necessary to perform them aright. It is probable that, for a time at least, even after he has become the head of a family, he may continue to reside under the paternal roof; but his position is entirely changed, and new interests arise by which the former peace of the family is broken up. He was previously treated as a child, and could repay all his father's fondness; whereas, he is now a man, possessed of rights which he is desirous to maintain, or it may be to overstretch. Family feuds consequently ensue. The father sees a rival in his son, the mother in her daughter-in-law; and what was formerly a peaceful home

Unfavourable influences to which they are subjected.



becomes a scene of brawling and intrigue. While the grown-up son insists on his legal right of control over the family property, and the father resents an interference which, if legal, does not seem the less harsh and ungrateful, it is well if the alienation is not carried so far as to hurry one or other of them into crime.

Family feuds.

In conducting the ordinary intercourse of life with his fellows, the Hindoo does not differ much from individuals of his own class in other countries. It has been already observed that his natural timidity disposes him to pursue his ends by peaceful and too often by tortuous means. Where force might effect his object, he prefers persuasion; and where persuasion, fairly employed, proves unavailing, he has no scruple in resorting to any kind of cunning which promises to be effectual. One of the most singular methods, in which a species of compulsion less violent than open force, and yet stronger than mere persuasion, gains more than either of these singly would be able to effect, is known by the name of *dherma*. It is founded on the superstitious sacredness which attaches to the persons of Brahmins, and the consequent horror of being directly or indirectly the cause of their death. When a demand is not complied with, some Brahmin, either because he is himself the party interested, or it may be because he has been hired for the purpose, seats himself in *dherma* before the door of the person against whom the demand is made; in other words, appears with poison or a dagger in his hand, and intimates his determination to commit suicide if that person presumes to taste food before he has satisfied the claim. The only alternative thus left him is either to comply or commence a course of fasting. He might, indeed, set the Brahmin's threat at defiance, but this seems too impious ever to be thought of. There is every reason to believe that the Brahmin would put his threat in execution, and would, in consequence, be honoured as a martyr, while his presumed murderer would be covered with infamy. Such a risk is too fearful to be encountered, and hence the almost invariable result is that *dherma* proves effectual. A mitigated form of *dherma* is sometimes employed to enforce payment of an ordinary debt. The creditor appears as before at the door of his debtor; but instead of threatening self-murder, simply intimates that he means to remain there without food till the debt is paid. As a point of honour, which it is deemed impossible to violate, the debtor must in like manner remain without food; and if payment is not made, the parties immediately begin to put their mutual power of enduring hunger to the test. This trial might sometimes prove elusory, and therefore the creditor usually makes sure that the fasting of the debtor is real, by cutting off his supplies. This kind of *dherma*, employed by troops against their paymaster, or the prime minister, or the sovereign himself, has often been effectual in obtaining their arrears of pay.

Practice of
dherma.

Dherma is, from its very nature, an extraordinary remedy. On ordinary occasions, when disputes arise, other means of settlement must be employed.

The punchayets.

Before British ascendancy was established, the ordinary method of obtaining redress, more especially when the village system was in full operation, was by calling in the aid of *punchayets*, a kind of courts so called from consisting originally of five members, and in which the judges, selected by the mutual consent of the parties, were truly arbitrators. As such they were not bound down by formal rules, and were understood to decide in accordance with the principles of natural equity. Different opinions have been given as to the expediency of these courts, and the mode in which they performed the duties intrusted to them. As they were undoubtedly popular, it may be fairly inferred that they were on the whole entitled to public confidence, and probably better accommodated to native customs than any of the more regularly constituted courts by which they have been supplanted. It has, indeed, been alleged that they were open to undue influences; and, more especially in questions which affected the interests and inflamed the passions of the communities to which they belonged, were apt to disregard the claims of justice, and decide arbitrarily in the spirit of mere partizans. This, however, is not saying more than may be said of every institution under the management of Hindoos. One of the greatest defects in their character is a comparative indifference to moral obligations. Where they have an end to serve, they lose sight of everything but the means of promoting it. Truth and falsehood are thus regarded by them as mere names, and they will utter the one or the other with equal composure. This deadness of the moral sense operates disastrously in all the relations of life, and opposes serious obstacles to the administration of justice.

Settlement of quarrels among the Hindoos.

Though the Hindoo is not naturally rude or quarrelsome, and on the contrary is rather chargeable with carrying the forms of courtesy to excess, he is always keenly alive to his own interests, and when suspicious of any encroachment on them, is not slow in giving utterance to his feelings, both by words and by overt acts. If the supposed encroachment is made by one invested with authority, or greatly his superior in rank, fear of the hazard he might incur by boldly asserting his right will probably induce him to conceal his resentment, and seek redress by appealing to the justice and compassion, or otherwise working on the feelings of his antagonist. When not thus restrained by prudential considerations, as when he considers himself insulted or injured by an individual of his own class, the tongue is his favourite weapon, and there is no limit to the intemperance of his language and the violence of his gesticulations. His opponent probably defends himself in the same manner, and a war of words ensues. A spectator unacquainted with native habits would expect it to terminate in blows, but this is a mode of settlement not suited to the taste of the combatants, and they separate, each probably satisfied that his volubility has given him the victory. If the ground of quarrel involves some interest of which the law takes cognizance, vituperation is only a preliminary to a more serious contest, and a course of obstinate litigation ensues. In the mode of



conducting it all the worst passions are brought into play, and too often everything like honour and honesty is thrown aside. The spirit of litigiousness once evoked gathers strength by continuance; and when at last the paltry question at issue has been decided, one, or probably both parties find that, partly by the expense incurred, and partly by the neglect of their proper business, they are hopelessly involved in debt.

Nor is debt the worst of it. An action at law in the manner in which the natives of India carry it on is little better than a public nuisance. In the statements made not the least regard is paid to truth, and the whole process degenerates into mere chicanery. For very paltry bribes witnesses are always ready to come forward and testify, with the utmost effrontery, in favour of the party who pays them. Even where the testimony is not venal, it is so conflicting that no dependence can be placed upon it. Each party is prepared with a most circumstantial detail of facts, and will swear without scruple to the truth of every iota of it, though carrying falsehood, and consequently perjury, on its very face. This enormous lying probably finds its fullest scope in legal proceedings, but is by no means confined to them. At all times truth seems to have but a feeble hold of the Hindoo mind, and any temptation, however slight, is thought to justify a deviation from it. So well, indeed, is this understood, that the imputation of falsehood is scarcely regarded as a reproach, and as Mr. Elphinstone expresses it, "the same man would calmly answer to a doubt by saying, 'Why should I tell a lie?' who would shed blood for what he regarded as the slightest infringement of his honour." So many other witnesses, whose competency is indubitable, bear similar testimony, that this want of veracity must be regarded as one of the most prominent vices, or rather as the very besetting sin of Hindoos.

Hindoo
lawenita.

This vice, certainly one of the most contemptible of which human beings can be guilty, is to a certain extent the natural result of a bodily and mental constitution in which feebleness and timidity predominate. To speak the truth regardless of consequences is an act of moral courage, and where this courage is wanting, an attempt is usually made to supply its place by studying concealment. If by telling the whole truth offence would be given, or the risk of loss incurred, the objectionable part is kept back, and the rest is disguised in such a way as is expected to make it palatable. A vicious habit is thus formed, and continues to grow, till at last the lie comes to be in a manner loved for its own sake, and language, conferred as a crowning gift for the purpose of enabling us mutually to communicate our thoughts, is not unfrequently used as a means of disguising them. In so far, therefore, as falsehood is engendered and fostered by timidity, the Hindoo is, from natural temperament, under strong temptation to indulge in it; but this of itself is a very inadequate account of the matter. The want of veracity never could have prevailed among Hindoos to such an extent as to become a most glaring national defect, had

Disregard to
truth.



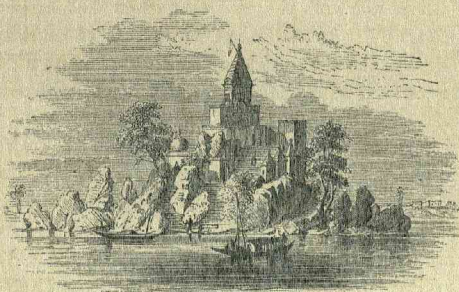
Disregard to
truth among
the Hindoos.

they not learned it from their religious teachers, and been in a manner forced to resort to it as a means of self-defence against the tyranny and extortion of their rulers. In passages quoted in a previous chapter from the Institutes of Menu, we have seen it authoritatively declared that, "in some cases, the giver of false evidence from a pious motive, even though he know the truth, shall not lose a seat in heaven;" that falsehood may not only be spoken, but "is even preferable to truth," and that on certain specified occasions "it is no deadly sin to take a light oath." Such teaching, enforced by numerous examples in the lives of popular deities, and instilled into disciples only too much disposed to act upon it, cannot have failed to exert a disastrous influence on public morals. In like manner the despotic form of government, the frequent change of masters by sudden and violent revolutions, the rapacity of rulers, the venality of judges, and the general insecurity of property made the whole body of the population virtually slaves. As a necessary consequence they habitually practised slavish vices—dissimulation, fraud, perfidy, and falsehood. When nothing could be gained by adherence to the truth, and lying in some form, direct or indirect, was found to be the only resource against oppression and injustice, it is easy to understand how all the manly virtues disappeared, and a state of morals similar to that which prevails among Hindoos was produced. It is to be feared that, even under British government, the vices to which they became habituated under native and Mahometan rulers have not been materially diminished. The changes in the mode of administering justice have in some instances, by increasing the number and strictness of technical forms, given additional facilities to a spirit of litigiousness; while Europeans, most familiar with the proceedings of native courts, are almost unanimous in denouncing the venality of native officials, and the prevalence of falsehood in its most aggravated form of false swearing.

Singular con-
trasts in the
Hindoo
character.

In concluding the survey of Hindoo manners, it is proper to advert for a moment to the singular contrast which they present, not only in different localities, but sometimes in the very same individual. The man who accepts a bribe will often, from a sense of honour, endure any amount of punishment sooner than betray him from whom he has received it; the servant who cheats his master in his accounts will faithfully return the last farthing intrusted to him in deposit; the Rajpoot, pluming himself on his chivalry and nice sense of honour, will, without scruple, and merely to avoid a contingent inconvenience, rid himself by violence of his infant daughters; the husband who treats his wife with harshness or indifference, as if she were an inferior being, will not only resent the slightest conventional insult which may be offered to her by another, but shed blood like water in avenging her dishonour; the coward who flees at the first sight of danger will, when a violent death becomes inevitable, prepare for it with calmness, and meet it with heroism. The number of singular contrasts thus presented is perhaps one great cause of the very different colours in which the native character has been portrayed. According to some, it

includes almost everything that is amiable; according to others, it is little better than a compound of all that is diabolical. Proceeding on the ground that human nature, however much it may be modified by circumstances, possesses certain essential properties, we may safely conclude that both pictures are exaggerations, and that while nothing can be more absurd than to speak of Hindoos as if they were models of primeval innocence, there are many points in which they contrast favourably with other heathen nations, and even a few in which Europeans might profit by imitating them. The comparative facility with which some of their worst practices have already been suppressed certainly gives good ground to hope that the barriers to improvement, once supposed to be insurmountable, have been at least partially broken down, and that the degrading superstition which still holds their minds in thralldom, and is directly or indirectly the cause of all that is most offensive in their conduct, will itself be at length overthrown.



THE PAKIE'S ROCK ON THE GANGES—From an original drawing by Capt. R. Smith, 44th Regt.