AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Though Europeans have possessed settlements in India for more than three centuries, it is only within recent times that authentic details have been obtained with respect to the people who dwell in this vast country and whose ancient civilization, methods of government, manners, creeds, and customs, are nevertheless so well worthy of notice. It is impossible to doubt for a moment that science and art flourished amongst these nations at an epoch when our most civilized countries of the West were still plunged in the dark abyss of ignorance. The various forms of their institutions, both political and social; their knowledge of mathematics, especially of astronomy; their systems of metaphysics and ethics: all of these had long ago made the people of India famous far beyond their own borders; while the renown of Hindu philosophers had reached even Europe. The many ill-informed and often contradictory narratives about India which have been published in modern times have deservedly fallen into discredit. Yet, it must be admitted, some good work has been done by certain Literary Societies that have of recent years been established in India, the members of which, possessing access to original sources of information, have begun to survey with a more critical eye these records of divine and human knowledge, whose depositaries have hitherto guarded them with zealous care behind a veil of mystery. Without doubt the members of these Societies, distinguished as they mostly are by their erudition, will continue to devote special study to the languages of the country and to make abundant use of the sources of information open to them. Yet, it must be confessed, the information which we possess about the people of India is very meagre compared with that which it is most important for us to acquire. The
ancient history of their country is, for one thing, enshrined in chimera and fable, and, unfortunately, such incoherence and such obscurity prevail in their written records, which are our only means of really getting at the truth, that it is not too much to presume that we shall never succeed in throwing proper light on all this mass of absurdities. The most popular and best known of these written records are the Râmâyana, the Bhāgavata, and the Mahābhārata; but the information which their authors give about the dates, events, and duration of the different dynasties; about the heroes of India and their prowess in war; about the various revolutions which occurred in the country and the circumstances which led to them; about the beginnings of Hindu polity; about the discoveries and progress in science and art; in a word, about all the most interesting features of history,—all information of this kind is, as it were, buried amid a mass of fable and superstition.

My readers will see in the following pages to what extremes the people of India carry their belief in and love for the marvellous. Their first historians were in reality poets, who seem to have decided that they could not do better than compose their poems in the spirit of the people for whom they were writing. That is to say, they were guided solely by the desire to please their readers, and accordingly clothed Truth in such a grotesque garb as to render it a mere travesty from an historical point of view. The Indian Muse of History thus became a kind of magician whose wand performed wonders. The successors of these first poet-historians were actuated by the same motives, and even thought that it added to their own glory to improve on their predecessors and to surpass them in the absurdity of their fictions.

While waiting for inquirers, more skilful than myself, to find a way through this labyrinth, which to me is absolutely inextricable, I offer to the public a large number of authentic records which I have carefully collected, and which, for the most part, contain particulars that are either unknown or only partially known, in the hope that they will be found not altogether devoid of interest. I believe,

1 These are the three great Hindu Epic poems. Vide Part II, Chapter XXII, and Part III, Chapter V.
at any rate, that they will be acknowledged to contain some useful materials for future savants who may undertake a complete and methodical treatise on the people of India, a task which is far beyond my powers and which moreover I could not possibly have left upon myself, seeing that I was without literary aids of any kind during my long and absolute seclusion amongst the natives of the country.

In this new edition the contents of my first MS. have been carefully revised and corrected. They have, moreover, been considerably augmented by many curious details which did not appear in the original document. At the same time, I have made no substantial changes in the order and classification of the contents. Five or six additional chapters, and a number of corrections and improvements in the body of the work, constitute all the difference between this and the earlier draft. Since the English translation of the latter appeared, great political changes have taken place amongst the people whose manners and institutions I have sketched; but, as these changes were not taken into account in my original plan, I have not considered myself bound, when referring to them, to go beyond the limits which I prescribed for myself in the first instance. In all that I say about the administration of the Peninsula my readers will at once perceive that I have in mind the Governments preceding that which has now made itself master of the destinies of the Indian people, and which has freed them from the iron yoke of a long series of arbitrary rulers, under whose oppression they groaned during so many centuries.

This colossal dominion, which a European Government has succeeded in establishing in India without any very great difficulty and without any very violent shocks, has filled the people of India with admiration, and has fully convinced the Powers of Asia of the great superiority of Europeans in every way, and more especially in the art of subjugating and governing nations.

We too may well wonder at a conquest which appears indeed almost miraculous. It is difficult for us to imagine how a mere handful of men managed to coerce into submissive obedience a hundred millions of people, scattered
over a country which extends for twenty-four degrees of latitude north and south and for nearly the same number of degrees east and west. And it is still more difficult to understand how these few men are able to maintain within the bounds of duty and subordination a population whose creeds, habits, customs, and manner of life are so absolutely different from their own.

Yet one will have little or no difficulty in accounting for such a phenomenon if one examines on the one hand the spirit, character, and institutions of the people governed, and on the other the system adopted by those governing them. The people of India have always been accustomed to bow their heads beneath the yoke of a cruel and oppressive despotism and moreover, strange to say, have always displayed mere indifference towards those who have forced them to it. Little cared they whether the princes under whom they groaned were of their own country or from foreign lands. The frequent vicissitudes that befell those in power were hardly noticed by their subjects. Never did the fall of one of these despots cause the least regret; never did the elevation of another cause the least joy. Hard experience had taught the Hindus to disregard not only the hope of better times but the fear of worse. The fable of the ass urged by its master to escape from approaching robbers is most appropriate to these people. They have always considered themselves lucky enough if their religious and domestic institutions were left untouched by those who by good fortune or force of arms had got hold of the reins of government.

The European Power which is now established in India is, properly speaking, supported neither by physical force nor by moral influence. It is a piece of huge, complicated machinery, moved by springs which have been arbitrarily adapted to it. Under the supremacy of the Brahmans the people of India hated their government, while they cherished and respected their rulers; under the supremacy of Europeans they hate and despise their rulers from the bottom of their hearts, while they cherish and respect their government. And here I would remark that the rule of all the

1 This is illustrated in the familiar proverb, 'What matters it whether Rama reigns or the Rakshasa (Ravana) reigns?' —Ed.
Hindu princes, and often that of the Mahomedans, was, properly speaking, Brahminical rule, since all posts of confidence were held by Brahmins.

If it be possible to ameliorate the condition of the people of India I am convinced that this desirable result will be attained under the new régime, whatever may be said by detractors who are ready to find fault with everything. Whatever truth indeed there may be in the prejudiced charges, engendered by ignorance and interested motives, which are brought against the new order of things, and which are perhaps inseparable from every great administration, I for one cannot believe that a nation so eminently distinguished for its beneficent and humane principles of government at home, and above all for its impartial justice to all classes alike—I for one cannot believe that this nation will ever be blind enough to compromise its own noble character by refusing participation in these benefits to a subject people which is content to live peaceably under its sway.

At the same time I venture to predict that it will attempt in vain to effect any very considerable changes in the social condition of the people of India, whose character, principles, customs, and ineradicable conservatism will always present insurmountable obstacles. To make a people happy, it is essential that they themselves should desire to be made happy and should co-operate with those who are working for their happiness. Now, the people of India, it appears to me, neither possess this desire nor are anxious to co-operate to this end. Every reform which is obviously devised for their well-being they obstinately push aside if it is likely in the least degree to disturb their manner of living, their most absurd prejudice, or their most puerile custom.

Nevertheless the justice and prudence which the present rulers display in endeavouring to make these people less unhappy than they have been hitherto; the anxiety they manifest in increasing their material comfort; above all, the inviolable respect which they constantly show for the customs and religious beliefs of the country; and, lastly, the protection they afford to the weak as well as to the strong, to the Brahmin as to the Pariah, to the Christian,
to the Mahomedan, and to the Pagan: all these have contributed more to the consolidation of their power than even their victories and conquests.

There is another circumstance no less remarkable which may account for the stability and power of this Government, and that is the sagacity with which it has chosen persons to fill places of responsibility under it. For uprightness of character, education, and ability it would be hard to find a body of public servants better capable of filling with zeal and distinction the offices, more or less important, that are entrusted to them.

During the thirty years spent by me in the various provinces of India I have had the honour of knowing a very large number of these public servants, and it gives me much pleasure to testify here to the many excellent qualities which I have almost invariably found them to possess. Cast away, as it were, on the shores of this foreign land at a time when my own country was a prey to all the horrors of a disastrous revolution, I never failed to receive from them the warmest hospitality. Even when a desperate war might well have given rise to bitter prejudice against everything French, I never failed to find amongst the rulers of India many friends and benefactors. Would that the fear of offending their modesty did not forbid my mentioning here in testimony of my regards the names of many of them equally distinguished for their high merit and for their commanding position. But even at the risk of appearing indiscreet I cannot pass over one of them in silence. I cannot, in the fullness of my gratitude, abstain from mentioning publicly how much I owe to the Honourable Mr. Arthur Henry Cole, the British Resident in Mysore. This worthy official, whose public and domestic virtues, inexhaustible charity, and polished manners are recognized throughout the whole of the Peninsula, has found a fitting recognition of his fine character in the love and respect of the natives subject to his jurisdiction, who with one voice have hailed him as the father of their country. All that he has done for the natives of Mysore will be long remembered by them. As regards myself, nothing can equal the many acts of kindness which he has heaped upon me during my stay of twenty years in the province subject
to his authority. If these words ever reach him I trust that he will recognize in them the genuine feelings of respect and gratitude which I shall ever cherish towards him.

One might accuse me of blind prejudice: I went so far as to affirm that everybody vested with authority in this land was without exception worthy of high praise. The fact is, we do not live in an age of miracles. It is probable, it is even certain, that not all of those entrusted with the supervision of this huge political machinery are influenced by the purest motives. And yet the system of watchful control is such that any man who allows himself to be tempted from the path of duty by greed and avarice cannot hope to hide his corrupt doings from the eye of superior authority for any length of time. Every subject of the dominant power, however humble he may be, is allowed the right of free petition; and this is sufficient guarantee that any well-founded grievances will be set right, any well-proven abuses put a stop to.

It has been asserted that any great power based neither on a display of force nor on the affection and esteem of subject races is bound sooner or later to topple under its own weight. I am far from sharing this opinion altogether. The present Government occupies a position in which it has little or nothing to fear from extraneous disturbance. True it is that like all empires it is subject to possible chances of internal dissension, military revolt, and general insurrection. But I firmly believe that nothing of this sort will happen to it so long as it maintains amongst its troops the perfect discipline and the sense of comfort which at present exist, and so long as it does all in its power to make its yoke scarcely perceptible by permitting its subjects every freedom in the exercise of their social and religious practices.

It is the poverty of the country which in my opinion gives most cause for apprehension—a poverty which is accompanied by the most extraordinary supineness on the part of the people themselves. The question is, will

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1 Students of Indian History will bear witness to the wisdom of the Abbé's remarks, which subsequent history has so strikingly tended to confirm.—Ed.
a Government which is rightly determined to be neither unjust nor oppressive be able always to find within the borders of this immense empire means sufficient to enable it to meet the heavy expenses of its administration? But, after all, God alone can foretell the destiny of Governments!

But I must return to the contents of my work. During my long sojourn in India I never let slip any opportunity of collecting materials and particulars of all sorts. My information has been drawn partly from the books which are held in highest estimation amongst the people of India and partly from such scattered records as fell by chance into my hands and contained facts upon which I could thoroughly rely. But in regard to the majority of the materials which I now offer to the public I am chiefly dependent on my own researches, having lived in close and familiar intercourse with persons of every caste and condition of life. Probably many Europeans settled in India would have been more capable than myself of performing the same task; but I may be permitted to doubt whether there has been any person more favourably situated for gleaning information or more zealous in his pursuit of knowledge. I had no sooner arrived amongst the natives of India than I recognized the absolute necessity of gaining their confidence. Accordingly I made it my constant rule to live as they did. I adopted their style of clothing, and I studied their customs and methods of life in order to be exactly like them. I even went so far as to avoid any display of repugnance to the majority of their peculiar prejudices. By such circumspect conduct I was able to ensure a free and hearty welcome from people of all castes and conditions, and was often favoured of their own accord with the most curious and interesting particulars about themselves.

In publishing these records of my researches I have no wish to aspire to literary fame. I have noted down just what I saw, just what I heard, just what I read. I have aimed only at simplicity and accuracy. If I have here and there ventured to give a few opinions and conjectures

¹ Within these few lines the Abbé, with extraordinary insight, has embodied the great problem of British administration in India.—Ed.
of my own, I beg that my readers will not suppose that I have done so out of vanity and with the object of posing as a profound scholar, which I am not. However severely critics may attack my work, they cannot be more keenly aware of its imperfections than myself. I know well that my researches might have been presented in a form more agreeable, more animated, and more methodical. There are many matters mentioned by me which called for more profound discussion, clearer criticism, and wider treatment. A more correct and more brilliant style would have concealed the dryness of certain details. But I beg indulgent readers to consider the circumstances which have prevented me from satisfying such conditions. Separated as I was for more than thirty years from all intercourse with my fellow-countrymen, communicating only rarely and occasionally with Europeans, passing my whole life in villages in the midst of rude cultivators of the soil, deprived of all the advantages which great cities offer to those writers who are clever enough to profit by the labours of their predecessors, prevented from invoking the aid and counsel of intelligent men, having no books to refer to except my Bible and a few writings without merit and without interest which chance rather than choice put into my hands, compelled indeed to rely upon the imperfect recollection of what I had read and learned in my youth: with all these disadvantages it was only to be expected that my work would be defective. Nevertheless I am persuaded that the notes which I have taken so much trouble to collect will afford some useful material to others more favourably situated than myself; and I have therefore no hesitation in offering them to the public.

There is one motive which above all others has influenced my determination. It struck me that a faithful picture of the wickedness and incongruities of polytheism and idolatry would by its very ugliness help greatly to set off the beauties and perfections of Christianity. It was thus that the Lacedaemonians placed drunken slaves in the sight of their children in order to inspire the latter with a horror of intemperance.

There is every reason to believe that the true God was well known to the people of India at the time when they
first banded themselves together as a nation. For who can doubt that our blessed religion was originally that of the whole world? Who can doubt that it would have exercised universal sway from the days of Adam to the end of time if its original form as established by God Himself and its primitive traditions had been carefully respected? Unfortunately human passion gained the upper hand. Whole nations were corrupted, and men made for themselves a religion more suited to the depravity of their own hearts. Nevertheless, what has now become of the innumerable deities of Greece and Rome? They have vanished like an empty, transitory dream. Let us pray that the Almighty may be pleased to allow the torch of Truth to illumine the countries watered by the Ganges! Doubtless the time is still far distant when the stubborn Hindu will open his eyes to the light and tear himself away from his dark superstitions; but let us not despair, a day will come when the standard of the Cross will be flying over the temples of India as it flies now over her strong places.

Certain statements to be found in my work will seem almost incredible to my readers. All that I can say is that I have set down nothing without assuring myself most carefully of its truthfulness. For the rest, my readers will feel much less doubt as to the accuracy of these statements when they have learned to recognize how eminently original the people of India are in their manners and customs. So original are they, indeed, that one may search in vain for types, or anything approaching to types, of them amongst other nations of the world, ancient or modern.

With regard to caste usages I must warn my readers that my researches were confined to the provinces south of the Kistna River, where I passed most of the time that

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1 Yet even now the number of Christians in India is, comparatively speaking, small. They form about 75 per cent. of the whole population, and nearly 75 per cent. of the total are found in Madras, Travancore, Hyderabad, Mysore, and Cochin. And concerning the native Christians of these parts a distinguished and much-travelled member of the Civil Service recently remarked, 'Their Christianity, as I have seen it, too often breathes but little of the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount.' —Ed.
I was in India. I cannot say whether these usages are the same to the north of that river and in Hindustan proper; but if any differences there be it is probable that they exist only in form. There is no place in India which does not possess certain customs and practice of its own, and it would be impossible to give descriptions of them all. Fundamentally, however, caste constitutions are the same everywhere. Furthermore, however many the shades of difference between the various castes, however diversified the customs that control them, only slight differences exist between the various forms of religious belief. Indeed, the religion of the Hindus may be said to form a common centre for the numerous elements which constitute Hinduism in its widest sense. Moreover there is a certain general uniformity of rule and practice in everyday social matters, which compels one to look upon the different masses of the population as belonging in reality to one big family. Nevertheless, whatever I may say in the following pages must not be given a too general meaning, for it is hardly necessary to point out that in such a huge country there are many peculiarities of language and custom which are purely local in character. For instance, a careful observer would see less resemblance between a Tamil and a Canarese, between a Telugu and a Mahratta, than between a Frenchman and an Englishman, an Italian and a German.

Even when they migrate or travel from one province to another, natives of India never throw off what I may call the characteristics of their natal soil. In the midst of their new surroundings they invariably preserve their own language and customs.

On the Malabar coast one may count five different tribes, established from time immemorial, within a hundred leagues of territory north and south. They are the Nairs or Naimars, the Kurgas or Kudagas, the Tulus, the Konkanis, and the Kanaras. Although amalgamated in some degree, each of these tribes still preserves to the present day the language and mode of life peculiar to the place from which it originally sprang. The same thing may be remarked throughout the Peninsula, but especially in the Tamil country and in Mysore, where many families of Telugus are to be found whose ancestors were obliged for
various reasons to quit their native soil and migrate thither. The remembrance of their original birthplace is engraved on the hearts of these Telugus, and they always carefully avoid following the peculiar usages of their adoptive country. Yet they are invariably treated with the most perfect tolerance. Indeed, every native of India is quite free to take up his abode wherever it may seem good to him. Nobody will quarrel with him for living his own life, speaking what language he pleases, or following whatever customs he is used to. All that is asked of him is that he should conform generally to the accustomed rules of decorum recognized in the neighbourhood.

The Brahmin caste has seemed to me to merit particular attention. It is the caste whose rules and practices are most scrupulously observed. All persons who have visited India or who have any notion of the character of the Brahmins, of the high esteem in which they hold themselves, and of the distant hauteur with which they treat the common people, will be able to appreciate the difficulties which anybody must encounter who would become intimate, or ever acquainted, with these proud personages. The hate and contempt which they cherish against all strangers, and especially against Europeans; the jealous inquietude with which they hide from the profane the mysteries of their religious cult; the records of their learning; the privacy of their homes: all these form barriers between themselves and their observers which it is almost impossible to pass.

Nevertheless, by much diplomacy and perseverance I have succeeded in surmounting most of the obstacles which have turned back so many others before me. I therefore trust that the minute particulars which I have given in this work will be accepted as a record of all that it is useful to know about the religious ceremonies and ritual of the Hindus.

I have divided this work into three parts. The first presents a general purview of society in India, and contains details concerning all classes of its inhabitants. In

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1 Since the Abbé wrote, vast stores of Brahminical lore have been brought to light by enterprising savants in Europe, especially by Professor Max Müller.—Ed.
the second part I have discussed the Brahmins more particularly, both in themselves and in relation to other castes. The third part contains particulars of the religious tenets and deities of India.

Among the papers which are published separately, as Appendices, there is one on the Jains which I hope will be read not without interest. These schismatics are to be found in great numbers in the western provinces of the Peninsula, and especially in Malabar, where they represent the majority of the population. They form a perfectly distinct class, and differ widely from the Brahmins in many essential points of doctrine and practice.
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because the subdivisions vary according to locality, and a sub-caste existing in one province is not necessarily found in another.

Amongst the Brahmins of the south of the Peninsula, for example, there are to be found three or four principal divisions, and each of these again is subdivided into at least twenty others. The lines of demarcation between them are so well defined as to prevent any kind of union between one sub-caste and another, especially in the case of marriage.

The Kshatriyas and Vaisyas are also split up into many divisions and subdivisions. In Southern India neither Kshatriyas nor Vaisyas are very numerous; but there are considerable numbers of the former in Northern India. Howbeit, the Brahmins assert that the true Kshatriya caste no longer exists, and that those who pass for such are in reality a debased race.

The Sudra caste is divided into most sub-castes. Nobody in any of the provinces where I have lived has ever been able to inform me as to the exact number and names of them. It is a common saying, however, that there are 18 chief sub-castes, which are again split up into 108 lesser divisions.

The Sudras are the most numerous of the four main castes. They form, in fact, the mass of the population, and added to the Pariahs, or Outcastes, they represent at least nine-tenths of the inhabitants. When we consider that the Sudras possess almost a monopoly of the various forms of artisan employment and manual labour, and that in India no person can exercise two professions at a time, it is not surprising that the numerous individuals who form this main caste are distributed over so many distinct branches.

However, there are several classes of Sudras that exist only in certain provinces. Of all the provinces that I lived in, the Dravidian, or Tamil, country is the one where the ramifications of caste appeared to me most numerous. There are not nearly so many ramifications of caste in Mysore or the Deccan. Nowhere in these latter provinces have I come across castes corresponding to those which are known in the Tamil country under the
names of Moodelly, Agambady, Nattaman, Totiyar, Udayian, Valeyen, Upiliyen, Pallen, and several others.\(^1\)

It should be remarked, however, that those Sudra castes which are occupied exclusively in employments indispensable to all civilized societies are to be found everywhere under names varying with the languages of different localities. Of such I may cite, amongst others, the gardeners, the shepherds, the weavers, the Panchalas\(^1\) (the five castes of artisans, comprising the carpenters, goldsmiths) blacksmiths, founders, and in general all workers in metals), the manufacturers and venders of oil, the fishermen, the potters, the washermen, the barbers, and some others. All these form part of the great main caste of Sudras; but the different castes of cultivators hold the first rank and disdainfully regard as their inferiors all those belonging to the professions just mentioned, refusing to eat with those who practise them.

In some districts there are castes which are not to be met with elsewhere, and which may be distinguished by peculiarities of their own. I am not aware, for example, that the very remarkable caste of Nairs, whose women enjoy the privilege of possessing several husbands, is to be found anywhere but in Travancore.\(^2\) Amongst these same people, again, is another distinct caste called Nambudiri, which observes one abominable and revolting custom. The girls of this caste are usually married before the age of puberty; but if a girl who has arrived at an age when the signs of puberty are apparent happens to die before having had intercourse with a man, caste custom rigorously demands that the inanimate corpse of the deceased shall be subjected to a monstrous connexion. For this purpose the girl's parents are obliged to procure by a present of money some wretched fellow willing to consummate such a disgusting form of marriage: for were the marriage

\(^1\) Moodelly, 'chief man' or highly respectable trader. Agambady, he who performs menial offices in temples or palaces. Nattaman, a caste of cultivators. Totiyar, a caste of labourers. Udayian, a potter. Valeyen, a fisherman. Upiliyen, salt manufacturer. Pallen, agriculturist.—Ed.

\(^2\) It would be more correct to say West Coast. Moreover, although Nair women are commonly described as polyandrous, they are not really so, for though they enjoy the privilege of changing their husbands, they do not entertain more than one husband at a time.—Ed.
not consummated the family would consider itself dishonoured.

The caste of Kullars, or robbers, who exercise their calling as an hereditary right, is found only in the Marava country, which borders on the coast, or fishing, districts. The rulers of the country are of the same caste. They regard a robber's occupation as discreditable neither to themselves nor to their fellow castemen, for the simple reason that they consider robbery a duty and a right sanctified by descent. They are not ashamed of their caste or occupation, and if one were to ask of a Kullar to what people he belonged he would coolly answer, 'I am a robber!.' This caste is looked upon in the district of Madura, where it is widely diffused, as one of the most distinguished among the Sudras.

There exists in the same part of the country another caste, known as the Totiyars, in which brothers, uncles, nephews, and other near relations are all entitled to possess their wives in common.

In Eastern Mysore there is a caste called Morsa-Okkala-Makkalu, in which, when the mother of a family gives her eldest daughter in marriage, she is obliged to submit to the amputation of two joints of the middle finger and of the ring finger of the right hand. And if the bride's mother be dead, the bridegroom's mother, or in default of her the

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1 Whatever may have been the case in the days of the Abbé, these customs no longer exist. In regard to this, Mr. W. Logan, in his Manual of Malabar, writes thus: 'To make tardy retribution—if it deserves such a name—to women who die unmarried, the corpse, it is said, cannot be burnt till a tali string (the Hindu equivalent of the wedding-ring of Europe) is tied round the neck of the corpse, while lying on the funeral pile, by a competent relative. Nambudiris are exceedingly reticent in regard to their funeral ceremonies and observances, and the Abbé Dubois' account of what was related to him regarding other observances at this strange funeral-pile marriage requires confirmation.' Careful inquiries made of the leading members of the Nambudiri community and of others in Malabar who have an intimate knowledge of Nambudiri customs have convinced me that the Abbé must have misunderstood his informant in regard to the practice which he records here. What is done in such a case is merely to perform the religious rites, usually associated with Hindu marriages, over the dead body of the woman before the corpse is cremated. By marriage here is meant merely the tying of the tali (the emblem of marriage) and not the act of consummation of marriage.—Ed.
mother of the nearest relative, must submit to this cruel mutilation.¹

Many other castes exist in various districts which are distinguished by practices no less foolish than those above mentioned.

Generally speaking, there are few castes which are not distinguished by some special custom quite apart from the peculiar religious usages and ceremonies which the community may prescribe to guarantee or sanction civil contracts. In the cut and colour of their clothes and in the style of wearing them, in the peculiar shape of their jewels and in the manner in which they are displayed on various parts of the person, the various castes have many rules, each possessing its own significance. Some observe rites of their own in their funeral and marriage ceremonies: others possess ornaments which they alone may use, or flags of certain colours, for various ceremonies, which no other caste may carry. Yet, absurd as some of these practices may appear, they arouse neither contempt nor dislike in members of other castes which do not admit them. The most perfect toleration is the rule in such matters. As long as a caste conforms on the whole to the recognized rules of decorum it is permitted to follow its own bent in its domestic affairs without interruption, and no other castes ever think of blaming or even criticizing it, although its practices may be in direct opposition to their own.

There are, nevertheless, some customs which, although scrupulously observed in the countries where they exist, are so strongly opposed to the rules of decency and decorum generally laid down that they are spoken of with disapprobation and sometimes with horror by the rest of the community. The following may be mentioned among practices of this nature.

In the interior of Mysore, women are obliged to accompany the male inmates of the house whenever the latter retire for the calls of nature, and to cleanse them with water afterwards. This practice, which is usually viewed

¹ This custom is no longer observed; instead of the two fingers being amputated, they are now merely bound together and thus rendered unfit for use.—Ed.
with disgust in other parts of the country, is here regarded as a sign of good breeding and is most carefully observed.¹

The use of intoxicating liquors, which is condemned by respectable people throughout almost the whole of India, is nevertheless permitted amongst the people who dwell in the jungles and hill tracts of the West Coast. There the leading castes of Sudras, not excepting even the women and children, openly drink arrack, the brandy of the country, and toddy, the fermented juice of the palm. Each inhabitant in those parts has his toddy-dealer, who regularly brings him a daily supply and takes in return an equivalent in grain at harvest time.

The Brahmin inhabitants of these parts are forbidden a like indulgence under the penalty of exclusion from caste. But they supply the defect by opium, the use of which, although universally interdicted elsewhere, is nevertheless considered much less objectionable than the use of intoxicating liquors.

The people of these damp and unhealthy districts have no doubt learnt by experience that a moderate use of spirits or opium is necessary for the preservation of health, and that it protects them, partially at any rate, against the ill effects of the malarious miasma amidst which they are obliged to live. Nothing indeed but absolute necessity could have induced them to contravene in this way one of the most venerable precepts of Hindu civilization.

The various classes of Sudras who dwell in the hills of the Carnatic observe amongst their domestic regulations a practice as peculiar as it is disgusting. Both men and women pass their lives in a state of uncleanness and never wash their clothes. When once they have put on cloths fresh from the looms of the weavers they do not leave them off until the material actually drops from rottenness. One can imagine the filthy condition of these cloths after they have been worn day and night for several months soaked with perspiration and soiled with dirt, especially in the case of the women, who continually use them for wiping their hands, and who never change their garments until wear and tear have rendered them absolutely useless.

¹ If this custom ever existed, the spread of education has effectually put a stop to it.—Ed.
Yet this revolting habit is most religiously observed, and, if anybody were so rash as to wash but once in water the clothes with which he or she is covered, exclusion from caste would be the inevitable consequence. This custom, however, may be due to the scarcity of water, for in this part of the country there are only a few stagnant ponds, which would very soon be contaminated if all the inhabitants of a village were allowed to wash their garments in them.

Many religious customs are followed only by certain sects, and are of purely local character. For instance, it is only in the districts of Western Mysore that I have observed Monday in each week kept nearly in the same way as Sunday is among Christians. On that day the villagers abstain from ordinary labour, and particularly from such as, like ploughing, requires the use of oxen and kine. Monday is consecrated to Basava (the Bull), and is set apart for the special worship of that deity. Hence it is a day of rest for their cattle rather than for themselves.

This practice, however, is not in vogue except in the districts where the Lingayats, or followers of Siva,1 predominate. This sect pays more particular homage to the Bull than the rest of the Hindus; and, in the districts where it predominates, not only keeps up the strict observance of the day thus consecrated to the divinity, but forces other castes to follow its example.

Independently of the divisions and subdivisions common to all castes, one may further observe in each caste close family alliances cemented by intermarriage. Hindus of good family avoid as far as possible intermarriage with families outside their own circle. They always aim at marrying their children into the families which are already

1 Mr. L. Rice, in his Mysore and Coorg, remarks: 'Lingayats: The distinctive mark of this caste is the wearing on the person of a Jangama lingam, or portable linga. It is a small black stone about the size of an acorn, and is enshrined in a silver box of peculiar shape, which is worn suspended from the neck or tied round the arm. The followers of Basava (the founder of the sect, whose name literally means Bull, was in fact regarded as the incarnation of Nandi, the bull of Siva) are properly called Lingavanta, but Lingayats has become a well-known designation, though not used by themselves, the name Sivabhakta or Sivachar being one they generally assume.'—Ed.
CLOSE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS

allied to them, and the nearer the relationship the more easily are marriages contracted. A widower is remarried to his deceased wife's sister, an uncle marries his niece, and a first cousin his first cousin. Persons so related possess an exclusive privilege of intermarrying, upon the ground of such relationship; and, if they choose, they can prevent any other union and enforce their own preferential right, however old, unsuited, infirm, and poor they may be.

In this connexion, however, several strange and ridiculous distinctions are made. An uncle may marry the daughter of his sister, but in no case may he marry the daughter of his brother. A brother's children may marry a sister's children, but the children of two brothers or of two sisters may not intermarry. Among descendants from the same stock the male line always has the right of contracting marriage with the female line; but the children of the same line may never intermarry.

The reason given for this custom is that children of the male line, as also those of the female line, continue from generation to generation to call themselves brothers and sisters for as long a time as it is publicly recognized that they spring from the same stock. A man would be marrying his sister, it would be said, if the children of either the male or the female line intermarried amongst themselves; whereas the children of the male line do not call the children of the female line brothers and sisters, and vice versa, but call each other by special names expressive of the relationship. Thus a man can, and even must, marry the daughter of his sister, but never the daughter of his brother. A male first cousin marries a female first cousin, the daughter of his maternal aunt; but in no case may he marry the daughter of his paternal uncle.

This rule is universally and invariably observed by all castes, from the Brahmin to the Pariah. It is obligatory on the male line to unite itself with the female line. Agreeably to this a custom has arisen which so far as I know is peculiar to the Brahmans. They are all supposed to know the gotram or stock from which they spring: that is

1 This custom is gradually giving way now amongst the higher castes. —Ed.
to say, they know who was the ancient Muni or devotee from whom they descend, and they always take care, in order to avoid intermarriage with a female descendant of this remote priestly ancestor, to marry into a gotram other than their own.

Hindus who cannot contract a suitable marriage amongst their own relations are nevertheless bound to marry in their own caste, and even in that subdivision of it to which they belong. In no case are they permitted to contract marriages with strangers. Furthermore, persons belonging to a caste in one part of the country cannot contract marriages with persons of the same caste in another part, even though they may be precisely the same castes under different names. Thus the Tamil Vedeyers and the Canarese Uppararu would never consent to take wives from the Telugu Gollavaru and the Tamil Pillay, although the first two are, except for their names, identical with the second two.

The most distinguished of the four main castes into which the Hindus were originally separated by their first legislators is, as we have before remarked, that of the Brahmins. After them come the Kshatriyas, or Rajahs. Superiority of rank is at present warmly contested between the Vaisyas, or merchants, and the Sudras, or cultivators. The former appear to have almost entirely lost their superiority except in the Hindu books, where they are invariably placed before the Sudras. In ordinary life the latter hold themselves to be superior to the Vaisyas, and consider themselves privileged to mark their superiority in many respects by treating them with contumely.

With regard to the Vaisya caste an almost incredible but nevertheless well-attested peculiarity is everywhere observable. There is not a pretty woman to be found in the caste. I have never had much to do with the women of the Vaisya caste; I cannot therefore without injustice venture to add my testimony to that of others on this subject; but I confess that the few Vaisya women I have seen from time to time were not such as to afford me an ocular refutation of the popular prejudice. However, Vaisya women are generally wealthy, and they manage to make up for their lack of beauty by their elegant attire.
SUB-DIVISIONS OF CASTES

Even the Brahmins do not hold the highest social rank undisputed. The Panchalas, or five classes of artisans already mentioned, refuse, in some districts, to acknowledge Brahmin predominance, although these five classes themselves are considered to be of very low rank amongst the Sudras and are everywhere held in contempt. Brahmin predominance is also still more warmly contested by the Jains, of whom I have treated in one of the Appendices to this work.

As to the particular subdivisions of each caste it is difficult to decide the order of hierarchy observed amongst them. Sub-castes which are despised in one district are often greatly esteemed in another, according as they conduct themselves with greater propriety or follow more important callings. Thus the caste to which the ruler of a country belongs, however low it may be considered elsewhere, ranks amongst the highest in the ruler's own dominions, and every member of it derives some reflection of dignity from its chief.

After all, public opinion is the surest guide of caste superiority amongst the Sudras, and a very slight acquaintance with the customs of a province and with the private life of its inhabitants will suffice for fixing the position which each caste has acquired by common consent.

In general it will be found that those castes are most honoured who are particular in keeping themselves pure by constant bathing and by abstaining from animal food, who are exact in the observance of marriage regulations, who keep their women shut up and punish them severely when they err, and who resolutely maintain the customs and privileges of their order.

Of all the Hindus the Brahmins strive most to keep up appearances of outward and inward purity by frequent ablutions and severe abstinence not only from meat and everything that has contained the principle of life, but also from several natural products of the earth which prejudice and superstition teach them to be impure and defiling. It is chiefly to the scrupulous observance of such customs that the Brahmins owe the predominance of their illustrious order, and the reverence and respect with which they are everywhere treated.
Amongst the different classes of Sudras, those who permit widow remarriage are considered the most abject, and, except the Pariahs, I know very few castes in which such marriages are allowed to take place openly and with the sanction of the caste.

The division into castes is the paramount distinction amongst the Hindus; but there is still another division, that of sects. The two best known are those of Siva and Vishnu, which are again divided into a large number of others.

There are several castes, too, which may be distinguished by certain marks painted on the forehead or other parts of the body.

The first three of the four main castes, that is to say the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas, are distinguished by a thin cord hung across from the left shoulder to the right hip. But this cord is also worn by the Jains and even by the Panchalas, or five castes of artisans, so one is apt to be deceived by it.

From what has been said it will appear that the name of a caste forms after all its best indication. It was thus that the tribes of Israel were distinguished. The names of several of the Hindu castes have a known meaning; but for the most part they date from such ancient times that it is impossible to find out their significance.

There is yet another division more general than any I have referred to yet, namely, that into Right-hand and Left-hand factions. This appears to be but a modern invention, since it is not mentioned in any of the ancient books of the country; and I have been assured that it is unknown in Northern India. Be that as it may, I do not believe that any idea of this baneful institution, as it exists at the present day, ever entered the heads of those wise lawgivers who considered they had found in caste distinctions the best guarantee for the observance of the laws which they prescribed for the people.

This division into Right-hand and Left-hand factions, whoever invented it, has turned out to be the most direful

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1 Remarriage of virgin widows is one of the foremost planks in the platform of Social Reform, but it is opposed violently by the orthodox.—Ed.
disturber of the public peace. It has proved a perpetual source of riots, and the cause of endless animosity amongst the natives.

Most castes belong either to the Left-hand or Right-hand faction. The former comprises the Vaisyas or trading classes, the Panchalas or artisan classes, and some of the low Sudra castes. It also contains the lowest caste, namely, the Chacklers or leather-workers, who are looked upon as its chief support.

To the Right-hand faction belong most of the higher castes of Sudras. The Pariahs are its chief support, as a proof of which they glory in the title Valangai-Mougattar, or friends of the Right-hand. In the disputes and conflicts which so often take place between the two factions it is always the Pariahs who make the most disturbance and do the most damage.

The Brahmins, Rajahs, and several classes of Sudras are content to remain neutral, and take no part in these quarrels. They are often chosen as arbiters in the differences which the two factions have to settle between themselves.

The opposition between the two factions arises from certain exclusive privileges to which both lay claim. But as these alleged privileges are nowhere clearly defined and recognized, they result in confusion and uncertainty, and are with difficulty capable of settlement. In these circumstances one cannot hope to conciliate both parties; all that one can do is to endeavour to compromise matters as far as possible.

When one faction trespasses on the so-called rights of the other, tumults arise which spread gradually over large tracts of territory, afford opportunity for excesses of all kinds, and generally end in bloody conflicts. The Hindu, ordinarily so timid and gentle in all other circumstances of life, seems to change his nature completely on occasions like these. There is no danger that he will not brave in maintaining what he calls his rights, and rather than sacrifice a tittle of them he will expose himself without fear to the risk of losing his life.

I have several times witnessed instances of these popular insurrections excited by the mutual pretensions of the two
factions and pushed to such an extreme of fury that the presence of a military force has been insufficient to quell them, to allay the clamour, or to control the excesses in which the contending factions consider themselves entitled to indulge.

Occasionally, when the magistrates fail to effect a reconciliation by peaceful means, it is necessary to resort to force in order to suppress the disturbances. I have sometimes seen these rioters stand up against several discharges of artillery without exhibiting any sign of submission. And when at last the armed force has succeeded in restoring order it is only for a time. At the very first opportunity the rioters are at work again, regardless of the punishment they have received, and quite ready to renew the conflict as obstinately as before. Such are the excesses to which the mild and peaceful Hindu abandons himself when his courage is aroused by religious and political fanaticism.

The rights and privileges for which the Hindus are ready to fight such sanguinary battles appear highly ridiculous, especially to a European. Perhaps the sole cause of the contest is the right to wear slippers or to ride through the streets in a palanquin or on horseback during marriage festivals. Sometimes it is the privilege of being escorted on certain occasions by armed retainers, sometimes that of having a trumpet sounded in front of a procession, or of being accompanied by native musicians at public ceremonies. Perhaps it is simply the particular kind of musical instrument suitable to such occasions that is in dispute; or perhaps it may be the right of carrying flags of certain colours or certain devices during these ceremonies. Such at any rate are a few of the privileges for which Hindus are ready to cut each other's throats.

It not unfrequently happens that one faction makes an attack on the rights, real or pretended, of the other. Thereupon the trouble begins, and soon becomes general if it is not appeased at the very outset by prudent and vigorous measures on the part of the magistracy.

I could instance very many examples bearing on this fatal distinction between Right-hand and Left-hand; but what I have already said is enough to show the spirit which animates the Hindus in this matter. I once witnessed
PETTY CAUSES OF DISPUTE

a dispute of this nature between the Pariahs and Chucklers, or leather-workers. There seemed reason to fear such disastrous consequences throughout the whole district in question, that many of the more peaceful inhabitants began to desert their villages and to carry away their goods and chattels to a place of safety, just as is done when the country is threatened by the near approach of a Mahratta army. However, matters did not reach this extremity. The principal inhabitants of the district opportunely offered to arbitrate in the matter, and they succeeded by diplomacy and conciliation in smoothing away the difficulties and in appeasing the two factions, who were only awaiting the signal to attack each other.

One would not easily guess the cause of this formidable commotion. It simply arose from the fact that a Chuckler had dared to appear at a public ceremony with red flowers stuck in his turban, a privilege which the Pariahs alleged to belong exclusively to the Right-hand faction ¹!

CHAPTER II

Advantages resulting from Caste Divisions.—Similar Divisions amongst many Ancient Nations.

Many persons study so imperfectly the spirit and character of the different nations that inhabit the earth, and the influence of climate on their manners, customs, predilections, and usages, that they are astonished to find how widely such nations differ from each other. Trammelled by the prejudices of their own surroundings, such persons think nothing well regulated that is not included in the polity and government of their own country. They would like to see all nations of the earth placed on precisely the same footing as themselves. Everything which differs from their own customs they consider either uncivilized or ridiculous.

¹ These faction fights have gradually disappeared under the civilizing influences of education and good government; and if they ever occur at all, are confined to the lowest castes and never spread beyond the limits of a village. The distinctions between the two factions, however, still exist.—Ed.
Now, although man’s nature is pretty much the same all the world over, it is subject to so many differentiations caused by soil, climate, food, religion, education, and other circumstances peculiar to different countries, that the system of civilization adopted by one people would plunge another into a state of barbarism and cause its complete downfall.

I have heard some persons, sensible enough in other respects, but imbued with all the prejudices that they have brought with them from Europe, pronounce what appears to me an altogether erroneous judgement in the matter of caste divisions amongst the Hindus. In their opinion, caste is not only useless to the body politic, it is also ridiculous, and even calculated to bring trouble and disorder on the people. For my part, having lived many years on friendly terms with the Hindus, I have been able to study their national life and character closely, and I have arrived at a quite opposite decision on this subject of caste. I believe caste division to be in many respects the chef-d’œuvre, the happiest effort, of Hindu legislation. I am persuaded that it is simply and solely due to the distribution of the people into castes that India did not lapse into a state of barbarism, and that she preserved and perfected the arts and sciences of civilization whilst most other nations of the earth remained in a state of barbarism. I do not consider caste to be free from many great drawbacks; but I believe that the resulting advantages, in the case of a nation constituted like the Hindus, more than outweigh the resulting evils.

To establish the justice of this contention we have only to glance at the condition of the various races of men who live in the same latitude as the Hindus, and to consider the past and present status of those among them whose natural disposition and character have not been influenced for good by the purifying doctrines of Revealed Religion. We can judge what the Hindus would have been like, had they not been held within the pale of social duty by caste regulations, if we glance at neighbouring nations west of the Peninsula and east of it beyond the Ganges as far as China. In China itself a temperate climate and a form of government peculiarly adapted to a people unlike any
other in the world have produced the same effect as the distinction of caste among the Hindus.

After much careful thought I can discover no other reason except caste which accounts for the Hindus not having fallen into the same state of barbarism as their neighbours and as almost all nations inhabiting the torrid zone. Caste assigns to each individual his own profession or calling; and the handing down of this system from father to son, from generation to generation, makes it impossible for any person or his descendants to change the condition of life which the law assigns to him for any other. Such an institution was probably the only means that the most clear-sighted prudence could devise for maintaining a state of civilization amongst a people endowed with the peculiar characteristics of the Hindus.

We can picture what would become of the Hindus if they were not kept within the bounds of duty by the rules and penalties of caste, by looking at the position of the Pariahs, or outcasts of India, who, checked by no moral restraint, abandon themselves to their natural propensities. Anybody who has studied the conduct and character of the people of this class—which, by the way, is the largest of any in India \(^1\)—will agree with me that a State consisting entirely of such inhabitants could not long endure, and could not fail to lapse before long into a condition of barbarism. For my own part, being perfectly familiar with this class, and acquainted with its natural predilections and sentiments, I am persuaded that a nation of Pariahs left to themselves would speedily become worse than the hordes of cannibals who wander in the vast waste of Africa, and would soon take to devouring each other.

I am no less convinced that if the Hindus were not kept within the limits of duty and obedience by the system of caste, and by the penal regulations attached to each phase of it, they would soon become just what the Pariahs are, and probably something still worse. The whole country

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\(^1\) This is true only of Southern India, where the Pariahs number 5,000,000. They form one-seventh of the total population of the Madras Presidency. Of late years the degraded condition of these outcasts has attracted much attention, and a great deal is now being done to elevate them morally and materially.—Ed.
would necessarily fall into a state of hopeless anarchy, and, before the present generation disappeared, this nation, so polished under present conditions, would have to be reckoned amongst the most uncivilized of the world. The legislators of India, whoever they may have been, were far too wise and too well acquainted with the natural character of the people for whom they prescribed laws to leave it to the discretion or fancy of each individual to cultivate what knowledge he pleased, or to exercise, as seemed best to him, any of the various professions, arts, or industries which are necessary for the preservation and well-being of a State.

They set out from that cardinal principle common to all ancient legislators, that no person should be useless to the commonwealth. At the same time they recognized that they were dealing with a people who were indolent and careless by nature, and whose propensity to be apathetic was so aggravated by the climate in which they lived, that unless every individual had a profession or employment rigidly imposed upon him, the social fabric could not hold together and must quickly fall into the most deplorable state of anarchy. These ancient lawgivers, therefore, being well aware of the danger caused by religious and political innovations, and being anxious to establish durable and inviolable rules for the different castes comprising the Hindu nation, saw no surer way of attaining their object than by combining in an unmistakable manner those two great foundations of orderly government, religion and politics. Accordingly there is not one of their ancient usages, not one of their observances, which has not some religious principle or object attached to it. Everything, indeed, is governed by superstition and has religion for its motive. The style of greeting, the mode of dressing, the cut of clothes, the shape of ornaments and their manner of adjustment, the various details of the toilette, the architecture of houses, the corners where the hearth is placed and where the cooking pots must stand, the manner of going to bed and of sleeping, the forms of civility and politeness that must be observed: all these are severely regulated.

During the many years that I studied Hindu customs
I cannot say that I ever observed a single one, however unimportant and simple, and, I may add, however filthy and disgusting, which did not rest on some religious principle or other. Nothing is left to chance; everything is laid down by rule, and the foundation of all their customs is purely and simply religion. It is for this reason that the Hindus hold all their customs and usages to be inviolable, for, being essentially religious, they consider them as sacred as religion itself.

And, be it noted, this plan of dividing the people into castes is not confined to the lawgivers of India. The wisest and most famous of all lawgivers, Moses, availed himself of the same institution, as being the one which offered him the best means of governing the intractable and rebellious people of whom he had been appointed the patriarch.

The division of the people into castes existed also amongst the Egyptians. With them, as with the Hindus, the law assigned an occupation to each individual, which was handed down from father to son. It was forbidden to any man to have two professions, or to change his own. Each caste had a special quarter assigned to it, and people of a different caste were prohibited from settling there. Nevertheless there was this difference between the Egyptians and the Hindus: with the former all castes and all professions were held in esteem; all employments, even of the meanest kind, were alike regarded as honourable; and, although the priestly and military castes possessed peculiar privileges, nobody would have considered it anything but criminal to despise the classes whose work, whatever it happened to be, contributed to the general good. With the Hindus, on the other hand, there are professions and callings to which prejudice attaches such degradation that those who follow them are universally despised by those castes which in the public estimation exercise higher functions.

It must here be remarked, however, that the four great professions without which a civilized nation could not exist, namely, the army, agriculture, commerce, and weav-

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1 See what the illustrious Bossuet says on this point in his Discours sur l'Historie Universelle, Part III.—Dubois.
ing, are held everywhere in the highest esteem. All castes, from the Brahmin to the Pariah, are permitted to follow the first three, and the fourth can be followed by all the principal classes of Sudras.¹

These same caste distinctions observable amongst Hindus exist likewise, with some differences, amongst the Arabs and Tartars. Probably, indeed, they were common to the majority of ancient nations. Cecrops, it will be remembered, separated the people of Athens into four tribes or classes, while their great lawgiver, Solon, upheld this distinction and strengthened it in several ways. Numa Pompilius, again, could devise no better way of putting an end to the racial hatred between Sabines and Romans than by separating the body of the people into different castes and classes. The result of his policy was just what he had desired. Both Sabines and Romans, once amalgamated in this manner, forgot their national differences and thought only of those of their class or caste.

Those who instituted the caste system could not but perceive that with nations in an embryonic stage the more class distinctions there are the more order and symmetry there must be, and the more easy it is to exercise control and preserve order. This, indeed, is the result which caste classification amongst the Hindus has achieved. The shame which would reflect on a whole caste if the faults of one of its individual members went unpunished guarantees that the caste will execute justice, defend its own honour, and keep all its members within the bounds of duty. For, be it noted, every caste has its own laws and regulations, or rather, we may say, its own customs, in accordance with which the severest justice is meted out, just as it was by the patriarchs of old.

Thus in several castes adultery is punishable by death.² Girls or widows who succumb to temptation are made to suffer the same penalty as those who have seduced them. The largest temple of the town of Conjeeveram, in the Carnatic, an immense building, was constructed, so it is

¹ This statement is not quite correct, for in Southern India, at any rate, some classes of Pariahs are most expert weavers, and are honoured as such throughout the country.—Ed.
² This of course is no longer allowed by law.—Ed.
said, by a rich Brahmin who had been convicted of having had illicit intercourse with a low-caste Pariah woman. He was, however, sentenced to this severe penalty, not so much on account of the immorality of his action, seeing that in the opinion of the Brahmans it was not immoral at all, but on account of the low-caste person who had been the partner of his incontinence. There are various kinds of delinquencies in connexion with which a caste may take proceedings, not only against the principal offenders, but against those who have taken any part whatever in them. Thus it is caste authority which, by means of its wise rules and prerogatives, preserves good order, suppresses vice, and saves Hindus from sinking into a state of barbarism.

It may also be said that caste regulations counteract to a great extent the evil effects which would otherwise be produced on the national character by a religion that encourages the most unlicensed depravity of morals, as well in the decorations of its temples as in its dogmas and ritual.

In India, where the princes and the aristocracy live in extreme indolence, attaching little importance to making their dependants happy and taking small pains to inculcate in them a sense of right and wrong, there are no other means of attaining these desirable ends and preserving good order than by authoritative rulings of the caste system. The worst of it is, these powers are not sufficiently wide, or rather they are too often relaxed. Many castes exercise them with severity in cases that are for the most part frivolous, but display an easy and culpable indulgence towards real and serious delinquencies. On the other hand, caste authority is often a check against abuses which the despotic rulers of the country are too apt to indulge in. Sometimes one may see, as the result of a caste order, the tradesmen and merchants of a whole district closing their shops, the labourers abandoning their fields, or the artisans leaving their workshops, all because of some petty insult or of some petty extortion suffered by some member of their caste; and the aggrieved people will remain obstinately in this state of opposition until the injury has been atoned for and those responsible for it punished.
Another advantage resulting from the caste system is the hereditary continuation of families and that purity of descent which is a peculiarity of the Hindus, and which consists in never mixing the blood of one family or caste with that of another. Marriages are confined to parties belonging to the same family, or at any rate the same caste. In India, at any rate, there can be no room for the reproach, so often deserved in European countries, that families have deteriorated by alliances with persons of low or unknown extraction. A Hindu of high caste can, without citing his title or producing his genealogical tree, trace his descent back for more than two thousand years without fear of contradiction. He can also, without any other passport than that of his high caste, and in spite of his poverty, present himself anywhere; and he would be more courted for a marriage alliance than any richer man of less pure descent. Nevertheless, it is not to be denied that there are some districts where the people are not quite so particular about their marriages, though such laxity is blamed and held up to shame as an outrage on propriety, while those guilty of it take very good care to conceal it as much as possible from the public.

Further, one would be justified in asserting that it is to caste distinctions that India owes the preservation of her arts and industries. For the same reason she would have reached a high standard of perfection in them had not the avarice of her rulers prevented it. It was chiefly to attain this object that the Egyptians were divided into castes, and that their laws assigned the particular place which each individual should occupy in the commonwealth. Their lawgivers no doubt considered that by this means all arts and industries would continue to improve from generation to generation, for men must needs do well that which they have always been in the habit of seeing done and which they have been constantly practising from their youth.

This perfection in arts and manufactures would undoubtedly have been attained by so industrious a people as the Hindus, if, as I have before remarked, the cupidity of their rulers had not acted as a check. As a matter of fact, no sooner has an artisan gained the reputation of excelling
in his craft than he is at once carried off by order of the sovereign, taken to the palace, and there confined for the rest of his life, forced to toil without remission and with little or no reward. Under these circumstances, which are common to all parts of India under the government of native princes, it is hardly surprising that every art and industry is extinguished and all healthy competition deadened. This is the chief and almost the only reason why progress in the arts has been so slow among the Hindus, and why in this respect they are now far behind other nations who did not become civilized for many centuries after themselves.

Their workmen certainly lack neither industry nor skill. In the European settlements, where they are paid according to their merit, many native artisans are to be met with whose work would do credit to the best artisans of the West. Moreover they feel no necessity to use the many European tools, whose nomenclature alone requires special study. One or two axes, as many saws and planes, all of them so rudely fashioned that a European workman would be able to do nothing with them—these are almost the only instruments that are to be seen in the hands of Hindu carpenters. The working materials of a journeyman goldsmith usually comprise a tiny anvil, a crucible, two or three small hammers, and as many files. With such simple tools the patient Hindu, thanks to his industry, can produce specimens of work which are often not to be distinguished from those imported at great expense from foreign countries. To what a standard of excellence would these men have attained if they had been from the earliest times subjected to good masters!

In order to form a just idea of what the Hindus would have done with their arts and manufactures if their natural industry had been properly encouraged, we have only to visit the workshop of one of their weavers or of one of their printers on cloth and carefully examine the instruments with which they produce those superb muslins, those superfine cloths, those beautiful coloured piece-goods, which are everywhere admired, and which in Europe occupy a high place among the principal articles of adornment. In manufacturing these magnificent stuffs the artisan uses
his feet almost as much as his hands. Furthermore, the weaving loom, and the whole apparatus for spinning the thread before it is woven, as well as the rest of the tools which he uses for the work, are so simple and so few that altogether they would hardly comprise a load for one man. Indeed it is by no means a rare sight to see one of these weavers changing his abode, and carrying on his back all that is necessary for setting to work the moment he arrives at his new home.

Their printed calicoes, which are not less admired than their muslins, are manufactured in an equally simple manner. Three or four bamboos to stretch the cloth, as many brushes for applying the colours, with a few pieces of potsherd to contain them, and a hollow stone for pounding them: these are pretty well all their stock in trade.

I will venture to express one other remark on the political advantages resulting from caste distinctions. In India parental authority is but little respected: and parents, overcome doubtless by that apathetic indifference which characterizes Hindus generally, are at little pains, as I shall show later on, to inspire those feelings of filial reverence which constitute family happiness by enchaining the affections of the children to the authors of their existence. Outward affection appears to exist between brothers and sisters, but in reality it is neither very strong nor very sincere. It quickly vanishes after the death of their parents, and subsequently, we may say, they only come together to fight and to quarrel. Thus, as the ties of blood relationship formed so insecure a bond between different members of a community, and guaranteed no such mutual assistance and support as were needed, it became necessary to bring families together in large caste communities, the individual members of which had a common interest in protecting, supporting, and defending each other. It was thus that the links of the Hindu social chain were so strongly and ingeniously forged that nothing was able to break them.

This was the object which the ancient lawgivers of India attained by establishing the caste system, and they thereby acquired a title to honour unexampled in the history of
the world. Their work has stood the test of thousands of years, and has survived the lapse of time and the many revolutions to which this portion of the globe has been subjected. The Hindus have often passed beneath the yoke of foreign invaders, whose religions, laws and customs have been very different from their own; yet all efforts to impose foreign institutions on the people of India have been futile, and foreign occupation has never dealt more than a feeble blow against Indian custom. Above all, and before all, it was the caste system which protected them. Its authority was extensive enough to include sentences of death, as I have before remarked. The story is told, and the truth of it is incontestable, that a man of the Rajput caste was a few years ago compelled by the people of his own caste and by the principal inhabitants of his place of abode to execute, with his own hand, a sentence of death passed on his daughter. This unhappy girl had been discovered in the arms of a youth, who would have suffered the same penalty had he not evaded it by sudden flight.

Nevertheless, although the penalty of death may be inflicted by some castes under certain circumstances, this form of punishment is seldom resorted to nowadays. Whenever it is thought to be indispensable, it is the father or the brother who is expected to execute it, in secrecy. Generally speaking, however, recourse is had by preference to the imposition of a fine and to various ignominious corporal punishments. As regards these latter, we may note as examples the punishments inflicted on women who have forfeited their honour, such as shaving their heads, compelling them to ride through the public streets mounted on asses and with their faces turned towards the tail, forcing them to stand a long time with a basket of mud on their heads before the assembled caste people, throwing into their faces the ordure of cattle, breaking the cotton thread of those possessing the right to wear it, and ex-communicating the guilty from their caste 1.

1 The infliction of such punishments might nowadays be followed by prosecution in the Civil and Criminal Courts.—Ed.
CHAPTER III

Expulsion from Caste.—Cases in which such Degradation is inflicted.—
By whom inflicted.—Restoration to Caste.—Methods of effecting it.

Of all kinds of punishment the hardest and most un-
bearable for a Hindu is that which cuts him off and expels
him from his caste. Those whose duty it is to inflict it
are the gurus, of whom I shall have more to say in a sub-
sequent chapter, and, in default of them, the caste headmen.
These latter are usually to be found in every district, and
it is to them that all doubtful or difficult questions affecting
the caste system are referred. They call in, in order to
help them to decide such questions, a few elders who are
versed in the intricacies of the matters in dispute.

This expulsion from caste, which follows either an in-
fringement of caste usages or some public offence calculated
if left unpunished to bring dishonour on the whole com-
munity, is a kind of social excommunication, which deprives
the unhappy person who suffers it of all intercourse with
his fellow-creatures. It renders him, as it were, dead to
the world, and leaves him nothing in common with the
rest of society. In losing his caste he loses not only his
relations and friends, but often his wife and his children,
who would rather leave him to his fate than share his
disgrace with him. Nobody dare eat with him or even
give him a drop of water. If he has marriageable daughters
nobody asks them in marriage, and in like manner his sons
are refused wives. He has to take it for granted that
wherever he goes he will be avoided, pointed at with scorn,
and regarded as an outcaste.

If after losing caste a Hindu could obtain admission into
an inferior caste, his punishment would in some degree be
tolerable; but even this humiliating compensation is denied
to him. A simple Sudra with any notions of honour and
propriety would never associate or even speak with a
Brahmin degraded in this manner. It is necessary, there-
fore, for an outcaste to seek asylum in the lowest caste of
Pariahs if he fail to obtain restoration to his own; or else
he is obliged to associate with persons of doubtful caste.
There are always people of this kind, especially in the
quarters inhabited by Europeans; and unhappy is the man who puts trust in them! A caste Hindu is often a thief and a bad character, but a Hindu without caste is almost always a rogue.

Expulsion from caste is generally put in force without much formality. Sometimes it is due merely to personal hatred or caprice. Thus, when persons refuse, without any apparent justification, to attend the funeral or marriage ceremonies of their relations or friends, or when they happen not to invite the latter on similar occasions, the individuals thus slighted never fail to take proceedings in order to obtain satisfaction for the insult offered to them, and the arbitrators called in to decide the case usually pass a decree of excommunication. When a case is thus settled by arbitration, however, a sentence of excommunication does not bring upon the guilty person the same disgrace and the same penalties which are the lot of those whose offence offers no room for compromise.

Otherwise it matters little whether the offence be deliberate, whether it be serious or trivial, in determining that a person shall pay this degrading penalty. A Pariah who concealed his origin, mixed with other Hindus, entered their houses and ate with them without being recognized, would render those who had thus been brought into contact with him liable to ignominious expulsion from their caste. At the same time a Pariah guilty of such a daring act would inevitably be murdered on the spot, if his entertainers recognized him.

A Sudra, too, who indulged in illicit intercourse with a Pariah woman would be rigorously expelled from caste if his offence became known.

A number of Brahmins assembled together for some family ceremony once admitted to their feast, without being aware of it, a Sudra who had gained admittance on the false assertion that he belonged to their caste. On the circumstance being discovered, these Brahmins were one and all outcasted, and were unable to obtain reinstatement until they had gone through all kinds of formalities and been subjected to considerable expense.

I once witnessed amongst the Gollavurus, or shepherds, an instance of even greater severity. A marriage had been
arranged, and, in the presence of the family concerned, certain ceremonies which were equivalent to betrothal amongst ourselves had taken place. Before the actual celebration of the marriage, which was fixed for a considerable time afterwards, the bridegroom died. The parents of the girl, who was very young and pretty, thereupon married her to another man. This was in direct violation of the custom of the caste, which condemns to perpetual widowhood girls thus betrothed, even when, as in this case, the future bridegroom dies before marriage has been consummated. The consequence was that all the persons who had taken part in the second ceremony were expelled from caste, and nobody would contract marriage or have any intercourse whatever with them. A long time afterwards I met several of them, well advanced in age, who had been for this reason alone unable to obtain husbands or wives, as the case might be.

Let me relate another instance. Eleven Brahmins travelling in company were obliged to cross a district devastated by war. They arrived hungry and tired in a village, which, contrary to their expectations, they found deserted. They had with them a small quantity of rice, but they could find no other pots to boil it in than some which had been left in the house of the village washerman. To touch these would constitute in the case of Brahmins an almost ineffaceable defilement. Nevertheless, suffering from hunger as they were, they swore mutual secrecy, and after washing and scouring the pots a hundred times they prepared their food in them. The rice was served and the repast consumed by all but one, who refused to partake of it, and who had no sooner returned home than he proceeded to denounce the ten others to the chief Brahmins of the village. The news of such a scandal spread quickly, and gave rise to a great commotion amongst all classes of the inhabitants. An assembly was held. The delinquents were summoned and forced to appear. Warned beforehand, however, of the proceedings that were to be instituted against them, they took counsel together and agreed to answer unanimously, when called upon to explain, that it was the accuser himself who had committed the heinous sin and who had imputed it to them falsely and
maliciously. The testimony of ten persons was calculated
to carry more weight than that of one. The accused were
consequently acquitted, while the accuser alone was igno-
miniously expelled from caste by the headmen, who,
though they were perfectly sure of his innocence, were
indignant at his treacherous disclosure.

From what has been said, it will no longer be surprising
to learn that Hindus are as much, nay, even more, attached
to their caste than the gentry of Europe are to their rank.
Prone to using the most disgustingly abusive language in
their quarrels, they nevertheless easily forgive and forget
such insulting epithets; but if one should say of another
that he is a man without caste, the insult would never be
forgiven or forgotten.

This strict and universal observance of caste and caste
usages forms practically their whole social law. A very
great number of people are to be found amongst them, to
whom death would appear far more desirable than life, if,
for example, the latter were sustained by eating cow's flesh
or any food prepared by Pariahs and outcastes.

It is this same caste feeling which gives rise to the con-
tempt and aversion which they display towards all foreign
nations, and especially towards Europeans, who, being as
a rule but slightly acquainted with the customs and pre-
judices of the country, are constantly violating them.
Owing to such conduct the Hindus look upon them as
barbarians totally ignorant of all principles of honour and
good breeding.

In several cases, at least, restoration to caste is an
impossibility. But when the sentence of excommunication
has been passed merely by relations, the culprit conciliates
the principal members of his family and prostrates himself
in a humble posture, and with signs of repentance, before
his assembled castemen. He then listens without com-
plaint to the rebukes which are showered upon him, receives
the blows to which he is oftentimes condemned, and pays
the fine which it is thought fit to impose upon him. Finally,
after having solemnly promised to wipe out by good con-
duct the taint resulting from his degrading punishment,
he sheds tears of repentance, performs the sauktanga before
the assembly, and then serves a feast to the persons present.
When all this is finished he is looked upon as reinstated.
The *sashtanga*, by the way, is a sign or salute expressing
humility, which is not only recognized amongst the Hindus
and other Asiatic nations, but was in use amongst more
ancient peoples. Instances of it are quoted in Scripture,
where this extraordinary mark of respect is known as
oration, even when it is paid to simple mortals. (*Vide*
Genesis xviii. 2; xix. 1; xxxiii. 3; xlii. 6; xliii. 26; 1.
18, &c., &c.) In the same way the Egyptians, Chaldeans,
and other nations mentioned in Holy Writ were acquainted
with this method of reverent salutation and observed it
under the same circumstances as the Hindus. As I shall
often have occasion in this work to mention the *sashtanga*
I will give here a definition of it. The person who performs
it lies prostrate, his face on the ground and his arms ex-
tended beyond his head. It is called *sashtanga* from the
prostration of the six members, because, when it is performed,
the feet, the knees, the stomach, the chest, the forehead,
and the arms must touch the earth. It is thus that pro-
strations are made before persons of high degree, such as
princes and priests. Children sometimes prostrate them-
selves thus before their fathers. It is by no means rare
to see Sudras of different classes performing *sashtanga*
before Brahmins; and it often happens that princes, before
engaging an enemy, thus prostrate themselves before their
armies drawn up in battle array.

When expulsion from caste is the result of some heinous
offence, the guilty person who is readmitted into caste has
to submit to one or other of the following ordeals: his
tongue is slightly burnt with a piece of heated gold; he is
branded indelibly on different parts of his body with red-
hot iron; he is made to walk barefooted over red-hot
embers; or he is compelled to crawl several times under
the belly of a cow. Finally, to complete his purification,
his is made to drink the *pancha-gavia*. These words, of
which a more detailed explanation will be given later on,
signify literally the *five things or substances* derived from the

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1 Here and elsewhere the Abbé makes the mistake of interpreting
*sashtanga* to mean 'the six angas,' or 'parts of the body.' *Sashtanga*
(Sasahntange) really means with the *eight parts of the body*, which are the
two hands, the two feet, two knees, forehead, and breast.—En.
body of a cow; namely, milk, curds, ghee (clarified butter), dung and urine, which are mixed together. The last-named, urine, is looked upon as the most efficacious for purifying any kind of uncleanness. I have often seen superstitious Hindus following the cows to pasture, waiting for the moment when they could collect the precious liquid in vessels of brass, and carrying it away while still warm to their houses. I have also seen them waiting to catch it in the hollow of their hands, drinking some of it and rubbing their faces and heads with the rest. Rubbing it in this way is supposed to wash away all external uncleanness, and drinking it to cleanse all internal impurity. When this disgusting ceremony of the pancha-gavia is over, the person who has been reinstated is expected to give a great feast to the Brahmins who have collected from all parts to witness it. Presents of more or less value are also expected by them, and not until these are forthcoming does the guilty person obtain all his rights and privileges again.

There are certain offences so heinous in the sight of Hindus, however, as to leave no hope of reinstatement to those who commit them. Such, for example, would be the crime of a Brahmin who had openly cohabited with a Pariah woman. Were the woman of any other caste, I believe that it would be possible for a guilty person, by getting rid of her and by repudiating any children he had had by her, to obtain pardon, after performing many purifying ceremonies and expending much money. But hopeless would be the case of the man who under any circumstances had eaten of cow’s flesh. There would be no hope of pardon for him, even supposing he had committed such an awful sacrilege under compulsion.

It would be possible to cite several instances of strange and inflexible severity in the punishment of caste offences. When the last Mussulman Prince reigned in Mysore and sought to proselytize the whole Peninsula, he began by having several Brahmins forcibly circumcised, compelling them afterwards to eat cow’s flesh as an unequivocal token of their renunciation of caste. Subsequently the people were freed from the yoke of this tyrant, and many of those who had been compelled to embrace the Mahomedan religion made every possible effort, and offered very large
sums, to be readmitted to Hinduism. Assemblies were held in different parts of the country to thoroughly consider their cases. It was everywhere decided that it was quite possible to purify the uncleanness of circumcision and of intercourse with Mussulmans. But the crime of eating cow's flesh, even under compulsion, was unanimously declared to be irredeemable and not to be effaced either by presents, or by fire, or by the pancha-gavia.

A similar decision was given in the case of Sudras who found themselves in the same position, and who, after trying all possible means, were not more successful. One and all, therefore, were obliged to remain Mahomedans.

A Hindu, of whatever caste, who has once had the misfortune to be excommunicated, can never altogether get rid of the stain of his disgrace. If he ever gets into trouble his excommunication is always thrown in his teeth.

CHAPTER IV
Antiquity and Origin of Caste.

APPARENTLY there is no existing institution older than the caste system of the Hindus. Greek and Latin authors who have written about India concur in thinking that it has been in force from time immemorial; and certainly the unwavering observance of its rules seems to me an almost incontestable proof of its antiquity. Under a solemn and

1 Dr. Muir, in Old Sanskrit Texts, vol. i. p. 159, reviewing the texts which he had cited on this subject, says:—'First, we have the set of accounts in which the four castes are said to have sprung from progenitors who were separately created; but in regard to the manner of their creation we find the greatest diversity of statement. The most common story is that the castes issued from the mouth, arms, thighs, and feet of Purusha, or Brāhma. The oldest extant passage in which this idea occurs, and from which all the later myths of a similar tenor have no doubt been borrowed, is to be found in the Purusha Sukta; but it is doubtful whether, in the form in which it is there represented, this representation is anything more than an allegory. In some of the texts from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa traces of the same allegorical character may be perceived; but in Manu and the Purāṇas the mystical import of the Vedic text disappears, and the figurative narration is hardened into a literal statement of fact. In the chapters of the Vishnu, Vāyu, and Mārkandeya Purāṇas, where castes are described as coeval with
unceasing obligation as the Hindus are to respect its usages, new and strange customs are things unheard of in their country. Any person who attempted to introduce such innovations would excite universal resentment and opposition, and would be branded as a dangerous person. The

creation, and as having been naturally distinguished by different \textit{g	extsc{a}nas}, or qualities, involving varieties of moral character, we are nevertheless allowed to infer that those qualities exerted no influence on the classes in which they were inherent, as the condition of the whole race during the Krita age is described as one of uniform perfection and happiness; while the actual separation into castes did not take place, according to the V	extsc{a}yu Pur	extsc{a}na, until men had become deteriorated in the Treta age.

'Second, in various passages from the Br	extsc{a}hma\textsc{n}as epic poems, and Pur	extsc{a}nas, the creation of mankind is described without the least allusion to any separate production of the progenitors of the four castes. And whilst in the chapters where they relate the distinct formations of the castes, the Pur	extsc{a}nas assign different natural dispositions to each class, they elsewhere represent all mankind as being at the creation uniformly distinguished by the quality of passion. In one text men are said to be the offspring of Vivasat; in another his son Mami is said to be their progenitor, whilst in a third they are said to be descended from a female of the same name. The passage which declares Manu to have been the father of the human race explicitly affirms that men of all the four castes were descended from him. In another remarkable text the Mah	extsc{a}bh	extsc{a}rata categorically asserts that originally there was no distinction of classes, the existing distribution having arisen out of differences of character and occupation. In these circumstances, we may fairly conclude that the separate origination of the four castes was far from being an article of belief universally received by Indian antiquity.'

The following is the categorical assertion in the Mah	extsc{a}bh	extsc{a}rata (Santi parvan) above referred to. It occurs in the course of a discussion on caste between Br	extsc{h}r	extsc{u}gu and Bharadwaja. Bhr	extsc{r}igu, replying to a question put by Bharadwaja, says: 'The colour (\textit{v	extsc{a}r	extsc{a}na}) of the Brahmins was white; that of the Kshatriyas red; that of the Vaisyas yellow, and that of the Sudras black.' Bharadwaja here rejoins, 'If the caste (\textit{v	extsc{a}r	extsc{a}na}) of the four castes is distinguished by their colour (\textit{v	extsc{a}r	extsc{a}na}), then a confusion of all the castes is observable. . . .' Bhr	extsc{r}igu replies, 'There is no difference of castes: this world, having been at first created by Br	extsc{a}hma entirely Brahmanic, became (afterwards) separated into castes in consequence of works. Those Brahmins (lit. twice-born men) who were fond of sensual pleasure, fiery, irascible, prone to violence, who had forsaken their duty and were red limbed, fell into the condition of Kshatriyas. Those Brahmins who derived their livelihood from kine, who were yellow, who subsisted by agriculture, and who neglected to practise their duties, entered into the state of Vaisyas. Those Brahmins who were addicted to mischief and falsehood, who were covetous, who lived by all kinds of work, who were black and had fallen from purity, sank into the condition of Sudras.'—Ed.
task, however, would be such a difficult one that I can hardly believe that any proposal of the kind would ever enter an intelligent person's head. Everything is always done in exactly the same way; even the minutest details are invested with a solemn importance of their own, because a Hindu is convinced that it is only by paying rigorous attention to small details that more momentous concerns are safeguarded. Indeed, there is not another nation on earth which can pride itself on having so long preserved intact its social customs and regulations.

The Hindu legislators of old had the good sense to give stability to these customs and regulations by associating with them many outward ceremonies, which; by fixing them in the minds of the people, ensured their more faithful observance. These ceremonies are invariably observed, and have never been allowed to degenerate into mere forms that can be neglected without grave consequences. Failure to perform a single one of them, however unimportant it might appear, would never go unpunished.

One cannot fail to remark how very similar some of these ceremonies are to those which were performed long ago amongst other nations. Thus the Hindu precepts about cleanness and uncleanness, as also the means employed for preserving the one and effacing the other, are similar in many respects to those of the ancient Hebrews. The rule about marrying in one's caste, and even in one's family, was specifically imposed upon the Jews in the laws which Moses gave them from God. This rule, too, was in force a long time before that, for it appears to have been general amongst the Chaldeans. We find also in Holy Writ that Abraham espoused his niece, and that the holy patriarch sent into a far country for a maiden of his own family as a wife for his son Isaac. Again, Isaac and his wife Rebecca found it difficult to pardon their son Esau for marrying amongst strangers, that is, amongst the Canaanites; and they sent their son Jacob away into a distant land to seek a wife from amongst their own people.

In the same way to-day, Hindus residing in a foreign

1 Numbers xxxvi. 5-12.
country will journey hundreds of leagues to their native land in search of wives for their sons.

Again, as to the caste system, Moses, as is well known, established it amongst the Hebrews in accordance with the commands of God. This holy lawgiver had, during his long sojourn in Egypt, observed the system as established in that country, and had doubtless recognized the good that resulted from it. Apparently, in executing the divine order with respect to it he simply adapted and perfected the system which was in force in Egypt.

The Indian caste system is of still older origin. The Hindu sacred writings record that the author of it was the God Brahma, to whom they attribute the creation of the world, and who is said to have established this system when he peopled the earth. The Brahmans were the product of his brain; the Kshatriyas or Rajahs issued from his shoulders; the Vaisyas from his belly; and the Sudras from his feet.

It is easy to understand the allegorical signification of this legend, in which one can distinctly trace the relative degrees of subordination of the different castes. The Brahmans, destined to fulfil the high functions of spiritual priesthood and to show the way of salvation to their fellow-men, issue from the head of the Creator; the Kshatriyas, endowed with physical force and destined to undergo the fatigues of war, have their origin in the shoulders and arms of Brahma; the Vaisyas, whose duty it is to provide the food, the clothing, and other bodily necessities of man, are born in the belly of the god; and the Sudras, whose lot is servitude and rude labour in the fields, issue from his feet.

Besides this traditional origin of the different castes known to all Hindus, there is another to be found in their books, which traces the institution back to the time of the Flood. For, it should be noted, this terrible world-renovating disaster is as well known to the Hindus as it was to Moses. On this important subject, however, I shall have more to say subsequently; suffice it to remark that a celebrated personage, reverenced by the Hindus, and known to them as Mahanuru, escaped the calamity in an ark, in which were also the seven famous Penitents of India. After the Flood, according to Hindu writers, this
saviour of the human race divided mankind into different castes, as they exist at the present day.

The many subdivisions into which these four great original castes were broken up date undoubtedly from later times. They were due to the absolute necessity of assigning to each person in a special manner his particular place in the social organization. There are some Hindu authors who assert that the individuals composing the first ramifications of the large Sudra caste were the bastard offspring of the other higher castes, and owed their origin to illicit intercourse with the widows of the four great caste divisions. It is said that these bastard children, born of a Brahmin father and a Kshatriya mother, or of a Vaisya father and a Sudra mother, &c., were not recognized by any of the four primary castes, and so they were placed in other caste categories and were assigned special employments, more or less humble, according to their extraction.

A few of these many subdivisions are said to be of quite recent origin. For instance, the five artisan classes are said to have originally formed only one class, as also the barbers and washermen, the Gollavarus and Kurubas, and a large number of others who in recent times have split up into new sub-castes.

CHAPTER V

The Lower Classes of Sudraa.—Pariahs.—Chuclers, or Cobblers, and others equally low.—Contempt in which they are held.—Pariahs strictly speaking Slaves.—Washermen, Barbers, and some others.—Disrepute into which Mechanical Skill has fallen.—Nomads and Vagabonds.—Gypsies.—Quacks.—Jugglers.—Wild Tribes, &c.

We have already remarked that amongst the immense number of classes of which the Sudra caste is composed, it is impossible to give precedence to any one class in particular; the natives themselves not being agreed on that point, and the social scale varying in different parts of the country. There are certain classes, however, who, owing to the depth of degradation into which they have fallen,

1 The appellation Mahanuva is well worthy of remark. It is a compound of two words—Maha great, and Nuvu, which undoubtedly is the same as Noah.—Du Bois.
are looked upon as almost another race of beings, altogether outside the pale of society; and they are perfectly ready to acknowledge their own comparative inferiority. The best known and most numerous of these castes is the Parayer, as it is called in Tamil, the word from which the European name Pariah is derived. The particulars which I am about to give of this class will form most striking contrasts with those I shall relate subsequently about the Brahmins, and will serve to demonstrate a point to which I shall often refer, namely, how incapable the Hindus are of showing any moderation in their caste customs and observances.

Their contempt and aversion for these social outcasts are as extreme, on the one hand, as are the respect and veneration which they pay, on the other, to those whom their superstitions have invested with god-like attributes. Throughout the whole of India the Pariahs are looked upon as slaves by other castes, and are treated with great harshness. Hardly anywhere are they allowed to cultivate the soil for their own benefit, but are obliged to hire themselves out to the other castes, who in return for a minimum wage exact the hardest tasks from them.

Furthermore, their masters may beat them at pleasure; the poor wretches having no right either to complain or to obtain redress for that or any other ill-treatment their masters may impose on them. In fact, these Pariahs are the born slaves of India; and had I to choose between the two sad fates of being a slave in one of our colonies or a Pariah here, I should unhesitatingly prefer the former.

This class is the most numerous of all, and in conjunction with that of the Chucklers, or cobblers, represents at least a quarter of the population. It is painful to think that its members, though so degraded, are yet the most useful of all. On them the whole agricultural work of the country devolves, and they have also other tasks to perform which are still harder and more indispensable.

1 Parayer means one that beats the drum (parai).—Ed.
2 This is the case only in certain districts of Southern India, such as Chingleput and Tanjore. An appreciable percentage of the Pariahs has now migrated to the towns, where they serve as domestic servants in European and Eurasian households.—Ed.
However, notwithstanding the miserable condition of these wretched Pariahs, they are never heard to murmur, or to complain of their low estate. Still less do they ever dream of trying to improve their lot, by combining together, and forcing the other classes to treat them with that common respect which one man owes to another. The idea that he was born to be in subjection to the other castes is so ingrained in his mind that it never occurs to the Pariah to think that his fate is anything but irrevocable. Nothing will ever persuade him that men are all made of the same clay, or that he has the right to insist on better treatment than that which is meted out to him.

They live in hopeless poverty, and the greater number lack sufficient means to procure even the coarsest clothing. They go about almost naked, or at best clothed in the most hideous rags.

They live from hand to mouth the whole year round, and rarely know one day how they will procure food for the next. When they happen to have any money, they invariably spend it at once, and make a point of doing no work as long as they have anything left to live on.

In a few districts they are allowed to cultivate the soil on their own account, but in such cases they are almost always the poorest of their class. Pariahs who hire themselves out as labourers earn, at any rate, enough to live on; and their food, though often of the coarsest description, is sufficient to satisfy the cravings of hunger. But those who are their own masters, and cultivate land for themselves, are so indolent and careless that their harvests, even in the most favourable seasons, are only sufficient to feed them for half the year.

The contempt and aversion with which the other castes—and particularly the Brahmins—regard these unfortunate people are carried to such an excess that in many places their presence, or even their footprints, are considered sufficient to defile the whole neighbourhood. They are forbidden to cross a street in which Brahmins are living.

1 The Christian missionaries in India have done and are doing much to elevate the condition and character of this class. In Madras city there are now Pariah associations, and also a journal specially representing Pariah interests.—Ed.
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Should they be so ill-advised as to do so, the latter would have the right, not to strike them themselves, because they could not do so without defilement, or even touch them with the end of a long stick, but to order them to be severely beaten by other people. A Pariah who had the audacity to enter a Brahmin’s house might possibly be murdered on the spot. A revolting crime of this sort has been actually perpetrated in States under the rule of native princes without a voice being raised in expostulation.

Any one who has been touched, whether inadvertently or purposely, by a Pariah is defiled by that single act, and may hold no communication with any person whatsoever until he has been purified by bathing, or by other ceremonies more or less important according to the status and customs of his caste. It would be contamination to eat with any members of this class; to touch food prepared by them, or even to drink water which they have drawn; to use an earthen vessel which they have held in their hands; to set foot inside one of their houses, or to allow them to enter houses other than their own. Each of these acts would contaminate the person affected by it, and before being readmitted to his own caste such a person would have to go through many exacting and expensive formalities. Should it be proved that any one had had any connexion with a Pariah woman he would be treated with even greater severity. Nevertheless, the disgust which these Pariahs inspire is not so intense in some parts of the country as in others. The feeling is most strongly developed in the southern and western districts of the Peninsula; in the north it is less apparent. In the northern part of Mysore the other classes of Sudras allow Pariahs to approach them, and even permit them to enter that part of the house which is used for cattle. Indeed, in some places custom is so far relaxed that a Pariah may venture to put his head and one foot, but one foot only, inside the room.

1 Even to this day a Pariah is not allowed to pass a Brahmin street in a village, though nobody can prevent, or prevents, his approaching or passing by a Brahmin’s house in towns. The Pariahs, on their part, will under no circumstances allow a Brahmin to pass through their pancherries (collections of Pariah huts), as they firmly believe that it will lead to their ruin.—Ed.
occupied by the master of the house. It is said that still
further north the difference between this and other Sudra
castes gradually diminishes, until at last it disappears
altogether.

The origin of this degraded class can be traced to a very
early period, as it is mentioned in the most ancient Puranas.
The Pariahs were most probably composed in the first
instance, of all the disreputable individuals of different
classes of society, who, on account of various offences, had
forfeited their right to associate with respectable men.
They formed a class apart, and having nothing to fear and
less to lose, they gave themselves up, without restraint, to
their natural tendencies towards vice and excess, in which
they continue to live at the present day.

In very early days, however, the separation between
Pariahs and the other castes does not appear to have been
so marked as at present. Though relegated to the lowest
grade in the social scale, they were not then placed abso-
lutely outside and beyond it, the line of demarcation
between them and the Sudras being almost imperceptible.
Indeed, they are even to this day considered to be the
direct descendants of the better class of agricultural
labourers. The Tamil Vellalers and the Okkala-makkalu-
kanarey do not disdain to call them their children. But
one thing is quite certain, that if these classes share a
common origin with the Pariahs and acknowledge the
same, their actions by no means corroborate their words,
and their treatment of the Pariahs leaves much to be
desired.

Europeans are obliged to have Pariahs for their servants,
because no native of any other caste would condescend to
do such menial work as is exacted by their masters. For
instance, it would be very difficult to find amongst the
Sudras any one who would demean himself by blacking or
greasing boots and shoes, emptying and cleansing chamber
utensils, brushing and arranging hair, &c.; and certainly
no one could be found who for any consideration whatever
would consent to cook food for them, as this would necessi-
tate touching beef, which is constantly to be seen on the
tables of Europeans, who thereby show an open disregard
of the feelings and prejudices of the people amongst whom
they live. Foreigners are therefore obliged to have recourse to Pariahs to perform this important domestic service. If the kind of food which they do not scruple to eat lowers Europeans in the eyes of the superstitious native, much more are they lowered by the social status of the people by whom they are served. For it is a fact recognized by all Hindus that none but a Pariah would dare to eat food prepared by Pariahs.

It is undeniable that this want of consideration on the part of Europeans—or rather the necessity to which they are reduced of employing Pariahs as servants—renders them most obnoxious to other classes of natives, and greatly diminishes the general respect for the white man. It being impossible to procure servants of a better caste, foreigners have of necessity to put up with members of this inferior class, who are dishonest, incapable of any attachment to their masters, and unworthy of confidence. Sudras who become servants of Europeans are almost invariably vicious and unprincipled, as devoid of all feeling of honour as they are wanting in resource; in fact, they are the scum of their class and of society at large. No respectable or self-respecting Sudra would ever consent to enter a service where he would be in danger of being mistaken for a Pariah, or would have to consort with Pariahs. Amongst other reasons which contribute largely to the dislike that natives of a better class entertain for domestic service under Europeans, is the feeling that their masters keep them at such a great distance, and are generally haughty and even cruel in their demeanour towards them. But above all things they dread being kicked by a European, not because this particular form of ill-treatment is physically more painful than any other, but because they have a horror of being defiled by contact with anything so unclean as a leather boot or shoe. Pariahs, accustomed from their childhood to slavery, put up patiently with affronts of this kind which other natives, who have more pride and self-respect, are unable to endure.

Under other circumstances, it should be remarked, domestic service in India is by no means regarded as degrading. The servant has his meals with his master, the maid with her mistress, and both go through life on
an almost equal footing. The conduct of Europeans being in this respect so totally different, natives who have any sense of decency or self-respect feel the greatest repugnance to taking service with them. One cannot wonder therefore that only the very dregs of the population will undertake the work.

But to return to the Pariahs. One is bound to confess that the evil reputation which is borne by this class is in many respects well deserved, by reason of the low conduct and habits of its members. A great many of these unfortunate people bind themselves for life, with their wives and children, to the ryots, or agricultural classes, who set them to the hardest labour and treat them with the greatest harshness. The village scavengers, who are obliged to clean out the public latrines, to sweep the streets, and to remove all rubbish, invariably belong to this class. These men, known in the south by the name of totis, are, however, generally somewhat more humanely treated than the other Pariahs, because, in addition to the dirty work above mentioned, they are employed in letting the water into the tanks and channels for irrigating the rice fields; and on this account they are treated with some consideration by the rest of the villagers. Amongst the Pariahs who are not agricultural slaves there are some who groom and feed the horses of private individuals, or those used in the army; some are in charge of elephants; others tend cattle; others are messengers and carriers; while others, again, do ordinary manual work. Within recent times Pariahs have been allowed to enlist in the European and Native armies, and some of them have risen to high rank, for in point of courage and bravery they are in no way inferior to any other caste. Yet their bringing up puts them at a great disadvantage in acquiring other qualifications necessary for the making of a good soldier, for they are induced with difficulty to conform to military discipline, and are absolutely deficient in all sense of honour.

Pariahs, being thus convinced that they have nothing to

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1 The Abbé is too sweeping in many of his statements about Pariahs. For instance, in these days at any rate, the Pariah Sepoys in the Madras army are extremely well disciplined, especially the corps of Sappers. —Ed.
lose or gain in public estimation, abandon themselves without shame or restraint to vice of all kinds, and the greatest lawlessness prevails amongst them, for which they do not feel the least shame. One might almost say that, in the matter of vice, they outstrip all others in brutality, as the Brahmins do in malice. Their habits of uncleanliness are disgusting. Their huts, a mass of filth and alive with insects and vermin, are, if possible, even more loathsome than their persons. Their harsh and forbidding features clearly reveal their character, but even these are an insufficient indication of the coarseness of their minds and manners. They are much addicted to drunkenness, a vice peculiarly abhorrent to other Hindus. They intoxicate themselves usually with the juice of the palm-tree, called toddy, which they drink after it has fermented, and it is then more spirituous. In spite of its horrible stench they imbibe it as if the nauseous liquid were nectar. Drunken quarrels are of frequent occurrence amongst them, and their wives are often sufferers, the unhappy creatures being nearly beaten to death, even when in a state of pregnancy. It is to this brutality and violence of their husbands that I attribute the frequent miscarriages to which Pariah wives are subject, and which are much more common amongst them than amongst women of any other caste.

What chiefly disgusts other natives is the revolting nature of the food which the Pariahs eat. Attracted by the smell, they will collect in crowds round any carriion, and contend for the spoil with dogs, jackals, crows, and other carnivorous animals. They then divide the semi-putrid flesh, and carry it away to their huts, where they devour it, often without rice or anything else to disguise the flavour. That the animal should have died of disease is of no consequence to them, and they sometimes secretly poison cows or buffaloes that they may subsequently feast on the foul, putrefying remains. The carcasses of animals that die in a village belong by right to the toti or scavenger, who sells the flesh at a very low price to the other Pariahs in the neighbourhood. When it is impossible to consume in one day the stock of meat thus obtained, they dry the remainder in the sun, and keep it in their huts until they
run short of other food. There are few Pariah houses where one does not see festoons of these horrible fragments hanging up; and though the Pariahs themselves do not seem to be affected by the smell, travellers passing near their villages quickly perceive it and can tell at once the caste of the people living there. This horrible food is, no doubt, the cause of the greater part of the contagious diseases which decimate them, and from which their neighbours are free.

Is it to be wondered at, after what has just been stated, that other castes should hold this in abhorrence? Can they be blamed for refusing to hold any communication with such savages, or for obliging them to keep themselves aloof and to live in separate hamlets? It is true that with regard to these Pariahs the other Hindus are apt to carry their views to excess; but as we have already pointed out, and shall often have to point out again, the natural instinct of the natives of India seems to run to extremes in all cases.

The condition of the Pariahs, which is not really slavery as it is known amongst us, resembles to a certain extent that of the serfs of France and other countries of Northern Europe in olden times. This state of bondage is at its worst along the coast of Malabar, as are several other customs peculiar to the country. The reason is that Malabar, owing to its position, has generally escaped the invasions and revolutions which have so often devastated the rest of India, and has thus managed to preserve unaltered many ancient institutions, which in other parts have fallen into disuse.

Of these the two most remarkable are proprietary rights and slavery. These two systems are apparently inseparable one from the other: and, indeed, one may well say, no land without lord. All the Pariahs born in the country are serfs for life, from father to son, and are part and parcel of the land on which they are born. The land-owner can sell them along with the soil, and can dispose of them when and how he pleases. This proprietary right and this system of servitude have existed from the remotest times.

1 Things in this respect have, of course, changed a great deal for the better since the Abbé wrote.—Ed.
and exist still amongst the Nairs, the Coorogs, and the Tulus, the three aboriginal tribes of the Malabar coast. This is, I believe, the only province in India where proprietary right has been preserved intact until the present day. Everywhere else the soil belongs to the ruler, and the cultivator is merely his tenant. The lands which he tills are given to him or taken away from him according to the will of the Government for the time being. On the Malabar coast, however, the lands belong to those who have inherited them from their forefathers, and these in their turn possess the right of handing them down to their descendants. Here the lands may be alienated, sold, given away, or disposed of according to the will of the owners. In a word, the *jus utendi et abutendi*, which is the basis of proprietary right, belongs entirely to them. Every landed proprietor in that country possesses a community of Pariahs to cultivate his fields, who are actually his slaves and form an integral part of his property. All children born of these Pariahs are serfs by birth, just as their parents were; and their master has the right, if he choose, to sell or dispose of parents and children in any way that he pleases. If one of these Pariahs escapes and takes service under another master, his real master can recover him anywhere as his own property. If a proprietor happens to possess more slaves than he requires for cultivating his land, he sells some to other landlords who are less fortunate than himself. It is by no means uncommon to see a debtor, who is unable to pay his debts in hard cash, satisfy his creditors by handing over to them a number of his Pariah slaves. The price of these is not exorbitant. A male still young enough to work will fetch three rupees and a hundred seers of rice, which is about the value of a bullock.

But the landed proprietors do not usually sell their slaves except in cases of great emergency; and even then they can only sell them within the borders of their own country. In no case have they a right to export them for sale to foreigners.

Each land-owner in the province of Malabar lives in a house that is isolated in the middle of his estate. Here he dwells, surrounded by his community of Pariah serfs,
who are always remarkably submissive to him. Some land-owners possess over a hundred of them. They treat them usually in the most humane manner. They give them only such work as their age or strength permits; feed them on the same rice that they themselves eat; give them in marriage when they come of age; and every year provide them with clothing, four or five yards of cloth for the women and a coarse woollen blanket for the men.

In Malabar it is only the Pariahs who are thus condemned to perpetual slavery; but then there are no free men amongst them. All are born slaves from generation to generation. They have not even a right to buy their own freedom; and if they wish to secure their independence they can only do so by escaping secretly from the country. All the same, I have not heard that they often resort to this extremity. They are accustomed from father to son to this state of servitude; they are kindly treated by their masters; they eat the same food as they do; they are never forced to do tasks beyond their strength; and thus they have no notion of what freedom or independence means, and are happily resigned to their lot. They look upon their master as their father, and consider themselves to belong to his family. As a matter of fact, their physical condition, which is the only thing that appeals to their senses, is much better than that of their brethren who are free. At any rate, the Pariah slave of Malabar is certain of a living, the supreme requirement of nature, whereas the free Pariah of other provinces lives for half his time in actual want of the meanest subsistence, and is often exposed to death from starvation.

It is indeed a piteous sight, the abject and half-starved condition in which this wretched caste, the most numerous of all, drags out its existence. It is true that amongst

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1 The slaves spoken of here are not Pariahs but Cherumars, who claim to be somewhat superior in rank to the Pariahs. From 1792 the East India Company steadily endeavoured to emancipate the Cherumars. In 1843 an Emancipation Act was passed, but it was explained to the Cherumars that it was their interest, as well as their duty, to remain with their masters if treated kindly. 'Sections 370, 371, &c. of the Indian Penal Code,' writes Mr. Logan in his *Malabar Manual*, 'which came into force on Jan. 1, 1862, dealt the real final blow at slavery in India.'—Ed.
Pariahs it is an invariable rule, almost a point of honour, to spend everything they earn and to take no thought for the morrow. The majority of them, men and women, are never clothed in anything but old rags. But in order to obtain a true idea of their abject misery, one must live amongst them, as I have been obliged to do. About half of my various congregations consisted of Pariah Christians. Wherever I went I was constantly called in to administer the last consolations of religion to people of this class. On reaching the hut to which my duty led me, I was often obliged to creep in on my hands and knees, so low was the entrance door to the wretched hovel. When once inside, I could only partially avoid the sickening smell by holding to my nose a handkerchief soaked in the strongest vinegar. I would find there a mere skeleton, perhaps lying on the bare ground, though more often crouching on a rotten piece of matting, with a stone or a block of wood as a pillow. The miserable creature would have for clothing a rag tied round the loins, and for covering a coarse and tattered blanket that left half the body naked. I would seat myself on the ground by his side, and the first words I heard would be: 'Father, I am dying of cold and hunger.' I would spend a quarter of an hour or so by him, and at last leave this sad spectacle with my heart torn asunder by the sadness and hopelessness of it all, and my body covered in every part with insects and vermin. Yet, after all, this was the least inconvenience that I suffered, for I could rid myself of them by changing my clothes and taking a hot bath. The only thing that really afflicted me was having to stand face to face with such a spectacle of utter misery and all its attendant horrors, and possessing no means of affording any save the most inadequate remedies.

Oh! if those who are blessed with this world's goods, and who are so inclined to create imaginary troubles for themselves because they have no real ones; if the discontented and ambitious who are always ready to grumble and complain of their fate, because perchance they have only the mere necessaries and are unable to procure the luxuries and pleasures of life; it they would only pause for a moment and contemplate this harrowing picture of
want and misery, how much more gratefully would they appreciate the lot that Providence has assigned to them!

As for myself, for the first ten or twelve years that I was in India, I lived in such abject poverty that I had hardly sufficient means to procure the bare necessaries of life; but even then I was as happy and contented as I am now that I am better off. Besides the consolations which my religion gave me under these trying circumstances, my reason found me others in the reflection that nineteen-twentieths of the people among whom I was living were bearing far greater trials of all kinds than any that I was called on to endure.

Besides the Pariaths, who are to be found all over the Peninsula, there are in certain provinces other classes composed of individuals who equal and even surpass them in depravity of mind and customs, and in the contempt in which they are held. Such, for instance, is the caste of Pallers, who are only found in Madura and in the neighbourhood of Cape Comorin. The Pallers consider themselves superior to the Pariaths, inasmuch as they do not eat the flesh of the cow; but the Pariaths look on them as altogether their inferiors, because they are the scum of the Left-hand faction, whilst they themselves are the mainstay of the Right-hand.

These two classes of degraded beings can never agree, and wherever they are found in fairly equal numbers, the disputes and quarrels amongst them are interminable. They lead the same sort of life, enjoy an equal share of public opprobrium, and both are obliged to live far apart from all other classes of the inhabitants.

Amongst the forests on the Malabar coast there lives a tribe which, incredible as it may seem, surpasses the two of which I have just spoken in degradation and squalid misery. They are called Puliahs, and are looked upon as below the level of the beasts which share this wild country with them. They are not even allowed to build themselves huts to protect themselves from the inclemencies of the weather. A sort of lean-to, supported by four bamboo poles and open at the sides, serves as a shelter for some of them, and keeps off the rain, though it does not screen them from the wind. Most of them, however, make for
THE PULIAHS AND CHUCKLERS

themselves what may be called nests in the branches of the thickest-foliaged trees, where they perch like birds of prey for the greater part of the twenty-four hours. They are not even allowed to walk peaceably along the high-roads. If they see any one coming towards them, they are bound to utter a certain cry and to go a long way round to avoid passing him. A hundred paces is the very nearest they may approach any one of a different caste. If a Nair, who always carries arms, meets one of these unhappy people on the road, he is entitled to stab him on the spot. The Puliahs live an absolutely savage life, and have no communication whatever with the rest of the world.

The Chucklers, or cobblers, are also considered inferior to the Pariahs all over the Peninsula, and, as a matter of fact, they show that they are of a lower grade by their more debased ideas, their greater ignorance and brutality. They are also much more addicted to drunkenness and debauchery. Their orgies take place principally in the evening, and their villages resound, far into the night, with the yells and quarrels which result from their intoxication. Nothing will persuade them to work as long as they have anything to drink; they only return to their labour when they have absolutely no further means of satisfying their ruling passion. Thus they spend their time in alternate bouts of work and drunkenness. The women of this wretched class do not allow their husbands to outshine them in any vice, and are quite as much addicted to drunkenness as the men. Their modesty and general behaviour may therefore be easily imagined. The very Pariahs refuse to have anything to do with the Chucklers, and do not admit them to any of their feasts.

There is one class amongst the Pariahs which rules all the rest of the caste. These are the Valluvas, who are called the Brahmins of the Pariahs in mockery. They keep themselves quite distinct from the others, and only inter-marry in their own class. They consider themselves as

1 No native is nowadays allowed to carry arms without a licence. But even now the Puliahs are forbidden to approach a person of higher caste. They always stand at a distance of 20 to 30 yards.—Ed.
2 These are sometimes physicians and astrologers.—Ed.
the gurus, or spiritual advisers, of the rest. It is they who preside at all the marriages and other religious ceremonies of the Pariahs. They predict all the absurdities mentioned in the Hindu almanac, such as lucky and unlucky days, favourable or unfavourable moments for beginning a fresh undertaking, and other prophecies of a like nature. But they are forbidden to meddle with anything pertaining to astronomy, such as the foretelling of eclipses, changes of the moon, &c., this prerogative belonging exclusively to the Brahmans.

There are other classes too, which, though a trifle higher in the Hindu social scale, are for all that not treated with much more respect. Firstly, amongst the Sudras there are those who follow servile occupations, or at least occupations dependent on the public; secondly, those who perform low and disgusting offices, which expose them to frequent defilements; and, thirdly, there are the nomadic tribes, who are always wandering about the country, having no fixed abode.

Amongst the first I place the barbers and the washermen. There are men belonging to these two employments in every village, and no one exercising the same profession can come from another village to work in theirs without their express permission. Their employments are transmitted from father to son, and those who pursue them form two distinct castes.

The barber’s business is to trim the beard, shave the head, pare the nails on hands and feet, and clean the ears of all the inhabitants of his village. In several of the southern provinces the inhabitants have all the hair on different parts of their bodies shaved off, with the exception of the eye-brows; and this custom is always observed by Brahmans on marriage days and other solemn occasions. The barbers are also the surgeons of the country. Whatever be the nature of the operation that they are called on to perform, their razor is their only instrument, if it is a question of amputation; or a sort of stiletto, which they

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1 This custom of shaving the hair from all parts of the body, for ceremonies where absolute purity is required, is not peculiar to the Brahmans; it was also common amongst the Jews, for the same reason, and was part of their ceremonial law (Numbers viii. 6, 7).—DUBOIS.
use for paring nails, if they have to open an abscess, or the like. They are also the only accredited fiddlers; and they share with the Pariahs the exclusive right of playing wind instruments, as will be seen presently.

As to the washermen, their business is much the same here as everywhere else, except for the extreme filthiness of the rags that are entrusted to them to be cleaned.

Those engaged in these two occupations are in such a dependent position that they dare not refuse to work for any one who chooses to employ them. They are paid in kind at harvest time by each inhabitant of their village. No doubt the contempt in which they are held by men of other castes, who look upon them as menials, is due partly to this state of subjection, and also to the uncleanness of the things which they are compelled to handle.

The potters also are a very low class, being absolutely uneducated.

The five castes of artisans, of which I have already spoken, and also, as a rule, all those employed in mechanical or ornamental arts, are very much looked down upon and despised.

The Moochis, or tanners, though better educated and more refined than any of the preceding classes, are not much higher in the social scale. The other Sudras never allow them to join in their feasts; indeed, they would hardly condescend to give them a drop of water to drink. This feeling of repulsion is caused by the defilement which ensues from their constantly handling the skins of dead animals.

As a rule, the mechanical and the liberal arts, such as music, painting, and sculpture, are placed on very much the same level, and those who follow these professions, which are left entirely to the lower castes of the Sudras, are looked upon with equal disfavour 1.

As far as I know, only the Moochis take up painting as a profession. Instrumental music, and particularly that of wind instruments, is left exclusively, as I have already

1 Those who follow these liberal arts are treated with more respect in these days. At all events, they are not looked upon with disfavour. There are now many Brahmins in Southern India who are professional musicians, though they play on certain instruments only.—Ed.
mentioned, to the barbers and Pariahs. The little progress that is made in these arts is no doubt due to the small amount of encouragement which they receive. As for painting, one never sees anything but daubs. The Hindus are quite satisfied if their artists can draw designs of striking figures painted in the most vivid colours. Our best engravings, if they are uncoloured, or our finest miniatures or landscapes, are quite valueless in their eyes.

Though the Hindus much enjoy listening to music, and introduce it freely into all their public and private ceremonies, both religious and social, yet it must be admitted that this charming art is here still in its infancy. I should say Hindus are no further advanced in it now than they were two or three thousand years ago. They do not expect their musicians to produce harmonious tunes when they play at their feasts and ceremonies, for their dull ears would certainly not appreciate them. What they like is plenty of noise and plenty of shrill piercing sounds. Their musicians are certainly able to comply with their wishes in this respect. Such discordant noises are infinitely more pleasing to them than our melodious airs, which possess no charm whatever for them. Of all our various instruments, they care only for drums and trumpets. Their vocal music, too, is not a whit more pleasing to European ears than their instrumental. Their songs are chiefly remarkable for uninspiring monotony; and though they have a scale like ours, composed of seven notes, they have not tried to produce from it those harmonies and combinations which fall so deliciously on our ears.

Why is it, it may well be asked, that it should be considered shameful to play on wind instruments in India? I suppose it is on account of the defilement which the players contract by putting such instruments to their mouths after they have once been touched by saliva, which, as I shall show presently, is the one excretion from the human body for which Hindus display invincible horror. There is by no means the same feeling with regard to stringed instruments. In fact, you may often hear Brahmins singing and accompanying themselves on a sort of lute which is known

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1 Classes superior to the barbers and Pariahs also play wind instruments at the present time.—Ed.
by the name of vina. This instrument has a rather agreeable tone, and would be still more pleasing if the sounds extracted from it were more varied. It has always been a favourite amongst the better classes; and its invention must date from an extremely remote period, for it is often mentioned in Hindu books, where the gods themselves are represented as playing on the vina to soothe themselves with its sweet melodies. It is generally taught by Brahmins; and as their lessons are very expensive, and they persuade their pupils that a great many are necessary in order to attain proficiency, it is obvious that none but the rich can afford themselves this pleasure.

The vina of the Hindus is probably the same as the citāhara¹, or harp, of the Jews, in playing which King David excelled, and with which he produced those melodies which soothed and calmed his unfortunate master Saul, after God had given Saul up as a prey to his evil passions.

Besides the vina, the Brahmins have another stringed instrument called kinnahra, which is something like a guitar, and the tone of which is not unpleasant.

The Hindus do not use gut for the strings of their instruments, as Europeans do. They would not dare to touch anything so impure, for if they did they would consider themselves defiled by the contact. To avoid such a serious impurity they use metal strings.

I will now turn to the nomadic castes, which swell the number of wretched and degraded beings amongst the nation I am describing. Without any fixed abode, wandering about from one country to another, the individuals of which these vagabond tribes are composed pay little or no attention to the various customs which are obligatory on every respectable Hindu; and this is why they are so cordially detested.

One of the largest of these castes is that which is known in the south by the name of Kuravers or Kurumarus. This is subdivided into two branches, one of which carries on a trade in salt. Gangs of men bring this article from the coast and distribute it in the interior of the country, using asses, of which they possess considerable numbers,

¹ The Mahomedans of Northern India have a stringed instrument known as citākara.—Ed.
as their means of transport. As soon as they have sold or bartered this commodity, they reload the asses with different kinds of grain, for which there is a ready sale on the coast, and start off again at once. Thus their whole lives are spent in hurrying from one country to another without settling down in any place.

The occupation of the second branch of these Kuravers is to make baskets and mats of osier and bamboo, and other similar utensils which are used in Hindu households. They are obliged to be perpetually moving from one place to another to find work, and are without any fixed abode.

The Kuravers are also the fortune-tellers of the country. They speak a language peculiar to themselves, which is unintelligible to any other Hindu. Their manners and customs have much in common with those of the wandering tribes that are known in England as Gypsies, and in France as Egyptians, or Bohemians. Their women tell the fortunes of those who consult them and are willing to pay them. The person who wishes to learn his fate seats himself in front of the soothsayer and holds out his hand, while she beats a little drum, invokes all her gods or evil spirits, and gabbles aloud a succession of fantastic words. These preliminaries over, she studies with the most scrupulous attention the lines on the hand of the simple-minded person who is consulting her, and finally predicts the good or evil fortune that is in store for him. Many attempts have been made to trace the origin of these wandering tribes, who are to be found telling fortunes all over the world. The general opinion appears to be that they originally came from Egypt, but this view might possibly be changed if these Kuravers of India were to be closely examined, and their language, manners, and customs compared with those of the Gypsies and Bohemians.

The Kuraver women also tattoo the designs of flowers and animals which decorate the arms of most young Hindu women. The tattooing is done by first delicately tracing the desired objects on the skin, then pricking the outline gently with a needle, and immediately after rubbing in the juice of certain plants, whereby the design becomes indelible.

The Kurumarus are much addicted to stealing, and from
this tribe come the professional thieves and pickpockets known by the name of Kalla-bantrus. These people make a study of the art of stealing, and all the dodges of their infamous profession are instilled into them from their youth. To this end their parents teach them to lie obstinately, and train them to suffer tortures rather than divulge what it is to their interest to hide. Far from being ashamed of their profession, the Kalla-bantrus glory in it, and when they have nothing to fear they take the greatest pleasure in boasting of the clever thefts they have committed in various places. Those who, caught in the act, have been badly hurt, or who have been deprived by the magistrates of nose, ears, or right hand, show their scars and mutilations with pride, as proofs of their courage and intrepidity; and these men are usually the chosen heads of their caste.

They always commit their depredations at night. Noiselessly entering a village, they place sentinels along the different roads, while they select the houses that can be entered with the least risk. These they creep into, and in a few minutes strip them of all the metal vessels and other valuables they can find, including the gold and silver ornaments which the sleeping women and children wear round their necks. They never break open the doors of the houses, for that would make too much noise and so lead to their detection. Their plan is to pierce the mud wall of the house with a sharp iron instrument specially made for the purpose, with which they can in a few moments easily make a hole large enough for a man to creep through. They are so clever that they generally manage to carry out their depredations without being either seen or heard by any one. But if they happen to be surprised, the Kalla-bantrus make a desperate resistance and do their best to escape. If one of their number is killed in the scrimmage, they will run any risk to obtain possession of the corpse. They then cut off the head and carry it away with them to avoid discovery.

In the provinces which are governed by native princes, these villains are, to a certain extent, protected by the authorities, who countenance their depredations in return for a stipulated sum, or on condition that they pay the value of half the booty that they steal to the revenue
collector of the locality. But as such an understanding could not possibly be anything more than tacit in any civilized country, this infamous arrangement is kept secret. The culprits, therefore, can expect no compensation to be publicly awarded them by the magistrates for the wounds and mutilations which they may suffer in the course of their nocturnal raids; but these same magistrates will do their best to screen or palliate their offences, the profits of which they share, and will always protect their clients from well-deserved punishment when they appear before them in court.

The last Mussulman prince who governed Mysore had a regular regiment of Kalla-bantrus in his service, whom he employed, not to steal amongst his troops, but to despoil the enemy's camp during the night, to steal the horses, carry off any valuables they could find amongst the officers' baggage, spike the enemy's guns, and act as spies. They were paid according to their skill and success. In times of peace they were sent into neighbouring States to pilfer for the benefit of their master, and also to report on the proceedings of the rulers. The minor native princes called Poligars always employ a number of these ruffians for the same purposes.

In the provinces where these Kalla-bantrus are countenanced by the Government, the unfortunate inhabitants have no other means of protecting themselves from their depredations than by making an agreement with the head of the gang to pay him an annual tax of a quarter of a rupee and a fowl per house, in consideration of which he becomes responsible for all the thefts committed by his people in villages which are thus, so to say, insured ¹.

Besides the Kalla-bantrus of the Kurumaru caste, the province of Mysore is infested by another caste of thieves, called Kanojis, who are no less dreaded than the others.

But of all the nomadic castes which wander about the country, the best known and most detested is the Lambadis, or Sukalers, or Brinjaris. No one knows the origin of this caste. The members of it have different manners and

¹ This, of course, is no longer allowed. The thieving classes have, under a more rigid system of police, been compelled to take to more lawful pursuits. Ed.
customs, and also a different religion and language from all the other castes of Hindus. Certain points of resemblance, however, which are to be found between them and the Mahrattas, lead one to believe that they must have sprung from these people in the first instance, and have inherited from them their propensities for rapine and theft, and their utter disregard for the rights of property when they think they are stronger than their victims and are safe from retributory justice. However, the severe sentences that the magistrates have latterly passed on them in several districts have exercised a salutary influence. They no longer dare to rob and steal openly. But the lonely traveller who meets them in some lonely spot had better beware, especially if they have reason to think that he would be worth plundering.

In time of war they attach themselves to the army where discipline is least strict. They come swarming in from all parts, hoping, in the general disorder and confusion, to be able to thieve with impunity. They make themselves very useful by keeping the market well supplied with the provisions that they have stolen on the march. They hire themselves and their large herds of cattle to whichever contending party will pay them best, acting as carriers of the supplies and baggage of the army. They were thus employed, to the number of several thousands, by the English in their last war with the Sultan of Mysore. The English, however, had occasion to regret having taken these untrustworthy and ill-disciplined people into their service, when they saw them ravaging the country through which they passed and causing more annoyance than the whole of the enemy’s army. The frequent and severe punishments that were inflicted on their chiefs had no restraining effect whatever on the rest of the horde. They had been attracted solely by the hope of plunder, and thought little of the regular wages and other inducements which had been promised them.

In times of peace these professional brigands occupy themselves in trading in grain and salt, which they convey from one part of the country to the other on their bullocks; but at the least whisper of war, or the slightest sign of coming trouble, they are at once on the look-out, ready to
take advantage in the first moment of confusion of any opportunity for pillaging. In fact, the unfortunate inhabitants of the country fear an invasion of a hostile army far less than they do a sudden irruption of these terrible Lambadis.

Of all the castes of the Hindus this particular one is acknowledged to be the most brutal. The natural proclivities of its members for evil are clearly indicated by their ill-favoured, wild appearance and their coarse, hard-featured countenances, these characteristics being as noticeable in the women as in the men. In all parts of India they are under the special supervision of the police, because there is only too much reason for mistrusting them.

Their women are, for the most part, very ugly and revoltingly dirty. Amongst other glaring vices they are supposed to be much addicted to incontinency; and they are reputed to sometimes band themselves together in search of men whom they compel by force to satisfy their lewd desires.

The Lambadis are accused of the still more atrocious crime of offering up human sacrifices. When they wish to perform this horrible act, it is said, they secretly carry off the first person they meet. Having conducted the victim to some lonely spot, they dig a hole in which they bury him up to the neck. While he is still alive they make a sort of lamp of dough made of flour, which they place on his head. This they fill with oil, and light four wicks in it. Having done this, the men and women join hands, and, forming a circle, dance round their victim, singing and making a great noise, till he expires.

Amongst other curious customs of this odious caste is one that obliges them to drink no water which is not drawn from springs or wells. The water from rivers or tanks being thus forbidden, they are obliged in a case of absolute necessity to dig a little hole by the side of a tank or river and take the water that filters through, which by this means is supposed to become spring water.

Another nomadic caste is that of the Wuddars, whose trade is to dig wells, tanks, and canals, and to repair dykes. They, too, have to travel about in search of work. This caste is also much despised. The manners of the individuals
composing it are as low as their origin, and their minds as uncultivated as their manners. Their extreme uncouthness may, perhaps, account for the low estimation in which they are held.

In Mysore, and in the north-west of the Carnatic, another caste of nomads is to be met with, known as Pakanattis. They speak Telugu, and originally formed part of the caste of Gollavaru, or shepherds, and were agriculturists. They took to their present kind of life about a hundred and fifty years ago, and like it so much that it would be impossible to persuade them to change it for any regular occupation. The cause of their secession from the rest of their caste was that one of their headmen was grievously insulted by the governor of the province in which they lived. As they never received any redress at all commensurate with the affront, they determined to avenge themselves by deserting their homes in a body, and thus bringing all the agricultural work of the country to a standstill. From that time to this they have never attempted to return to their former mode of life, but are always wandering from place to place without settling anywhere. Some of their headmen, with whom I have conversed, have told me that they number about two thousand families, half of whom wander through the Telugu country and the rest through Mysore. The headmen meet from time to time to settle the differences which frequently arise amongst the members. However, the Pakanattis are the quietest and best behaved of all the wandering tribes. They are kept in excellent order; and though they always go about in bands, theft and pillage are unknown amongst them, and if any of them are found guilty of either, they are severely punished by the rest. They are all most miserably poor; the better off possess a few buffaloes and cows, the milk of which they sell, but the greater number of them are professional herbalists. They collect plants, roots, and other things in the different countries that they wander through, such as are used for medicine or dyes, or for salves, &c., for horses and cattle. These they sell in the bazaars, and the little money that they thus earn helps them considerably. They supplement their livelihood by hunting, fishing, begging, and charlatanry.

All these tribes live entirely isolated from the rest of
the world, with whom they hold no communication, except in order to obtain the bare necessities of life. They lead for the most part a pastoral life, and their headmen occasionally possess considerable herds of cattle, consisting of bullocks, buffaloes, and asses. They travel in bands of ten, twenty, thirty, or more families. They shelter themselves under bamboo or osier mats, which they carry everywhere with them. Each family has its own mat tent, seven or eight feet long, four or five feet broad, and three or four feet high, in which father, mother, children, poultry, and sometimes even pigs, are housed, or rather huddled together, this being their only protection against bad weather. They always choose woods or lonely places as sites for their camps, so that no one can see what goes on amongst them. Besides their mat tents and the other necessaries for camping, they always take care to be provided with small stores of grain, as well as with the household utensils necessary for preparing and cooking their food. Those who possess beasts of burden make them carry the greater part of their goods and chattels, but the unfortunate wretches who have no other means of transport are compelled to carry all their worldly possessions, that is to say, the necessaries for housing and feeding themselves. I have seen the husband carrying on his head and shoulders the tent, the provisions, and some earthen vessels, whilst the wife, her body half uncovered, carried an infant on her back, hanging behind her in the upper part of her cotton garment; on her head was the mortar for husking the rice; while following her came a child bending under the weight of the rest of the household chattels.

I have often seen this sad spectacle, and always with deep feelings of pity. Such is the kind of life which many Hindus are accustomed to, and which they bear without murmuring or complaining, and without even appearing to envy those whose lives are spent in pleasanter places.

Each one of these nomadic tribes has its own habits, laws, and customs; and each forms a small and perfectly independent republic of its own, governed by such rules and regulations as seem best to them. Nothing is known by the outside world of what happens amongst them. The chiefs of each caste are elected or dismissed by a
majority of votes. They are commissioned, during the
time that their authority lasts, to enforce the caste rules,
to settle disputes, and to punish all misdemeanor and
crime. But however heinous offences may be, they never
involve the penalty of death or mutilation. The guilty
person has only either to pay a fine, or suffer a severe
flogging or some other corporal punishment. Travelling
ceaselessly from one country to another, these vagrant
families pay no tax to any Government; the majority
possess nothing, and they have consequently no need of
the protection of a prince to guard them against spoliation.
Further, they have no claims to take before the courts,
since they administer justice themselves; and being with-
out any ambition, they ask neither pardon nor favour from
any prince. All these nomadic tribes stink in the nostrils
of other Hindus, owing to the kind of life which they lead,
to the small esteem in which they hold the religious practices
observed by other castes, and, lastly, to the vulgar vices
to which they are enslaved. But the heaviest indictment
against them is their excessive intemperance in eating and
drinking. With the exception of cow's flesh, they eat in-
discriminately of every kind of food, even the most revol-
ing, such as the flesh of foxes, cats, rats, snakes, crows, &c.
Both men and women drink to excess toddy and arrack,
i.e. the spirit of the country, and they will consume every
kind of liquor and enervating drug which they can procure.

The majority of these vagabonds live in a state of ex-
treme poverty. When no other resource remains to them
they beg, or else send their women to earn their livelihood
by prostitution.

Among the degraded beings who form the dregs of
society in India must be classed the jugglers, the charlatans,
mountebanks, conjurers, acrobats, rope-dancers, &c. There
are two or three castes which practice these professions,
travelling from country to country to find patrons or dupes.
It is not surprising, with a people so credulous and endued
with such a love of the marvellous as the Hindus, that such
impostors should abound. They are regarded as magicians
and sorcerers, as men versed in witchcraft and all the occult
sciences, and are viewed with fear and distrust; while the
hatred in which they are held is much greater than is
accorded in Europe to people of the same description. Some of these charlatans carry on a trade with a credulous public in quack medicines and universal panaceas. They may often be heard in the street haranguing the multitude and extolling their wares. They even surpass our own quacks in effrontery and barefaced imposture. Others are conjurers or acrobats; and both one and the other perform really astonishing feats of legerdemain and agility. European jugglers would certainly have to lower their colours before them.

The best known of these castes is that of the Dombers or Dombarus. To the earnings which the men make by their industry the women also add the sums that they gain by the most shameless immorality; their favours, if such a word be applicable, are accorded to any one who likes to pay for them. However, in spite of all this, the Dombers lead a wretched life; and their extreme poverty is caused by their boundless intemperance. They always spend in eating and drinking much more than they actually possess; and when all their means are exhausted they have recourse to begging.

Other troops of vagabonds of the same class adopt the profession of travelling actors. I once met a large party who were representing the ten Avatars (or incarnations) of Vishnu, on which subject they had composed as many sacred plays. The greater number of them, however, play obscene and ridiculous farces in the streets, with boards and trestles for their stage; or else they exhibit marionettes, which they place in disgusting postures, making them give utterance to the most pitiable and filthy nonsense. These shows are exactly suited to the taste and comprehension of the stupid crowd which forms the audience. Hindu players have learned from experience that they can never rivet the attention of the public except at the expense of decency, modesty, or good sense 1.

Some Hindu jugglers turn their attention to snake-charming, especially with cobras, the most poisonous of all. These they teach to dance, or to move in rhythm to

1 At the present time there are many Indian theatrical companies formed somewhat after the fashion of European companies. Their performances, too, have improved a great deal since the Abbé's time.—En.
music; and they perform what appear to be the most alarming tricks with these deadly reptiles. In spite of all their care and skill it sometimes happens that they are bitten; and this would infallibly cost them their lives, did they not take the precaution to excite the snake every morning, forcing it to bite several times through a thick piece of stuff so that it may rid itself of the venom that re-forms daily in its fangs. They also pose as possessors of the secret of enchanting snakes, pretending that they can attract them with the sound of their flutes. This craft was practised elsewhere in the very earliest times, as may be gathered from a passage in Holy Scripture, where the obstinacy of a hardened sinner is likened to that of a deaf adder that shuts its ears to the voice of the charmer. Be that as it may, I can vouch for it that the pretended power of Hindu snake-charmers is a mere imposture. They keep a few trained tame snakes, which are accustomed to come to them at the sound of a flute, and when they have settled the amount of their reward with the persons who think, or have been persuaded, that there are snakes in the vicinity of their houses, they place one of these tame reptiles in some corner, taking care not to be observed. One of the conditions on which they always insist is that any snake which they charm out of a hole shall not be killed, but shall be handed over to them. This point settled, the charmer seats himself on the ground and begins to play on his flute, turning first to one side, then to the other. The snake, on hearing these familiar sounds, comes out of its hiding-place, and crawls towards its master, gliding quietly into the basket in which it is usually shut up. The charmer then takes his reward and goes off in search of other dupes.

I will now give some particulars about the wild tribes which inhabit the jungles and mountains in the south of India. They are divided into several castes, each of which is composed of various communities. They are fairly

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Even to this day there is a class of village servants called Kudimis, whose business it is to collect medicinal herbs and other plants that might be required by the people. These Kudimis are also professional snake-catchers, and are supposed to possess infallible antidotes against snake-poison.—Ed.
numerous in many places in the Malabar hills, or Western Ghauts, where they are known by the generic name of *Kadu-Kurumbar*é. These savages live in the forests, but have no fixed abode. After staying a year or two in one place, they move on to another. Having selected the spot for their temporary sojourn, they surround it with a kind of hedge, and each family chooses a little patch of ground, which is dug up with a sharp piece of wood hardened in the fire. There they sow small seeds, and a great many pumpkins, cucumbers, and other vegetables; and on these they live for two or three months in the year. They have little or no intercourse with the more civilized inhabitants of the neighbourhood. The latter indeed prefer to keep them at a distance from their houses, as they stand in considerable dread of them, looking upon them as sorcerers or mischievous people, whom it is unlucky even to meet. If they suspect a *Kadu-Kurumbar* of having brought about illness or any other mishap by his spells, they punish him severely, sometimes even putting him to death.

During the rains these savages take shelter in miserable huts. Some find refuge in caves, or holes in the rocks, or in the hollow trunks of old trees. In fine weather they camp out in the open. At night each clan assembles at a given spot, and enormous fires are lit to keep off the cold and to scare away wild beasts. Men, women, and children all sleep huddled together anyhow. The poor wretches wear no clothes, a woman’s only covering being a few leaves sewn together and tied round the waist. Knowing only of the simple necessities of existence, they find enough to satisfy their wants in the forest. Roots and other natural products of the earth, snakes and animals that they can snare or catch, honey that they find on the rugged rocks or in the tops of trees, which they climb with the agility of monkeys; all these furnish them with the means of satisfying the cravings of hunger. Less intelligent even than the natives of Africa, these savages of India do not possess bows and arrows, which they do not know how to use.

It is to them that the dwellers in the plains apply when they require wood with which to build their houses. The jungle tribes supply them with all materials of this kind, in exchange for a few valueless objects, such as copper
THE KADU-KURUMBARS

or brass bangles, small quantities of grain, or a little tobacco to smoke.

Both men and women occupy themselves in making reed or bamboo mats, baskets, hampers, and other household articles, which they exchange with the inhabitants of more civilized parts for salt, pepper, grain, &c.

According to the people of the plains, these savages can, by means of witchcraft and enchantments, charm all the tigers, elephants, and venomous snakes which share the forests with them, so that they need never fear their attacks.

Their children are accustomed from their earliest infancy to the hard life to which nature appears to have condemned them. The very day after their confinement the women are obliged to scour the woods with their husbands in order to find the day’s food. Before starting they suckle the new-born child, and make a hole in the ground, in which they put a layer of teak leaves. The leaves are so rough that if they rub the skin ever so gently they draw blood. In this hard bed the poor little creature is laid, and there it remains till its mother returns in the evening. On the fifth or sixth day after birth they begin to accustom their infants to eat solid food; and in order to harden them at once to endure inclement weather, they wash them every morning in cold dew, which they collect from the trees and plants. Until the infants can walk, they are left by themselves from morning till night, quite naked, exposed to sun, wind, rain, and air, and buried in the holes which serve them for cradles.

The whole religion of these savages seems to consist in the worship of bhootams, or evil spirits, which worship they perform in a way peculiar to themselves. They pay no regard whatever to the rest of the Hindu deities.

Besides the Kadu-Kurumbars there is another tribe of savages living in the forests and mountains of the Carnatic, and known by the name of Irulers, or in some places Soligurus. Their habits are identical with those of the Kadu-Kurumbars. They lead the same kind of life, have the same religion, customs, and prejudices; in fact, one may say that the difference between the two tribes exists only in name.

1 These transactions are now regulated by the forest laws.—Ed.
In several parts of Malabar a tribe is to be found called the *Malai-Kondigaru*, which, though as wild as those mentioned above, has perhaps a little more in common with civilized humanity. They live in the forests, and their principal occupation is to extract the juice of the palm-tree, part of which they drink, the rest they sell. The women climb the trees to obtain it, and they do so in a surprisingly agile manner. These people always go about naked. The women only wear a little rag, which flutters about in the wind and most imperfectly covers that portion of their bodies which it is supposed to hide. During one of the expeditions which the last Sultan of Mysore made into the mountains, he met a horde of these savages, and was much shocked at their state of nudity; for, however depraved Mahomedans may be in their private life, nothing can equal the decency and modesty of their conduct in public. They are horrified at word or look that even verges on indecency or immodesty, especially on the part of their women. The Sultan therefore caused the head-men of the *Malai-Kondigarus* to be brought before him, and asked them why they and their women did not cover their bodies more decently. They excused themselves on the plea of poverty, and that it was the custom of their caste. Tippu replied that he must require them to wear clothing like the other inhabitants of the country, and that if they had not the means wherewith to buy it, he would every year provide them gratuitously with the cotton cloths necessary for the purpose. The savages, however, though urged by the Sultan, made humble remonstrances, and begged hard to be allowed to dispense with the encumbrance of clothing. They finally told him that if they were forced to wear clothing, contrary to the rules of their caste, they would all leave the country rather than put up with so great an inconvenience; they preferred to go and live in some other distant forest, where they would be allowed to follow their customs unmolested. The Sultan was accordingly obliged to give way.

In and around Coorg is another tribe of savages known by the name of *Yeruvaru*. It is akin to the Pariah caste, and is composed of several communities scattered about in the jungles. These people, however, work for their
living, and make themselves useful to the rest of the population. They leave their homes to get food from the more civilized inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who, in return for a small quantity of rice given as wages, make them work hard at agricultural pursuits. The indolence of these savages is such, however, that as long as there is a handful of rice in their huts they absolutely refuse to work, and will only return to it when their supply of grain is entirely exhausted. Nevertheless, the other inhabitants are obliged to keep on good terms with them, because they perform all the hardest manual labour, and because if one of them was affronted or thought himself ill-treated, all the rest of the clan would take his part, and leave their usual abode and hide in the forest. The civilized inhabitants, to whom they are thus indispensable, would not be able to persuade them to resume their work until they had made friendly overtures and agreed to pay damages. These wild yet simple-minded people find it so difficult to procure the bare necessaries of life that they never even think of small luxuries which most other Hindus are so fond of, such as betel, tobacco, oil to anoint their heads, &c. They do not even appear to envy those who enjoy them, and are satisfied if they can get a little salt and pepper to flavour the tasteless vegetables and roots which form the principal part of their food.

All these wild tribes are gentle and peaceable by nature. They do not understand the use of weapons of any sort, and the sight of a stranger is sometimes sufficient to put to flight a whole community. No doubt the climate in which they live is in a great measure responsible for their timid, lazy, and indolent character. They are very unlike the savages who people the vast forests of America or Africa, inasmuch as they do not know what war means, and appear to be quite incapable of returning evil for evil. For, of course, no sane person believes the accusation brought against them that they can injure their neighbours by means of spells and enchantments. Hidden in thick forests, or in dens and caves in the rocks, they fear nothing in the world so much as the approach of a civilized being, and far from envying the happiness which the latter boasts of having found in the society of his fellow-men,
they shun any intercourse with him, fearing lest he should try to rob them of their liberty and independence, and lest they should be condemned to submit to a civilization which to them is only another term for bondage.

At the same time, these wild tribes of Hindus retain a few of the prejudices of their fellow-countrymen. For instance, they are divided into castes, they never eat beef, they have similar ideas about defilement and purification, and they keep the principal regulations relating to them.

CHAPTER VI

The Poverty of the Hindus.

India has always been considered a most wealthy and opulent country, more favoured by nature than any other in the world, a land literally flowing with milk and honey, where the soil yields all that is necessary for the existence of its happy people almost without cultivation. The great wealth accumulated by a few of its native princes, the large fortunes so rapidly acquired by many Europeans, its valuable diamond mines, the quality and quantity of its pearls, the abundance of its spices and scented woods, the fertility of its soil, and the, at one time, unrivalled superiority of its various manufactures: all these have caused admiration and wonder from time immemorial. One would naturally suppose that a nation which could supply so many luxuries would surpass all others in wealth.

This estimation of the wealth of India has been commonly accepted in Europe up to the present day; and those who, after visiting the country and obtaining exact and authentic information about the real condition of its inhabitants, have dared to affirm that India is the poorest and most wretched of all the civilized countries of the world, have simply not been believed. Many people in Europe, after reading what various authors have to say about India's manufactures and about the factories which turn out the delicate muslins, fine cloths, and beautiful coloured cottons, &c., which are so much admired all the world over, have supposed that the establishments producing such magnificent stuffs must have supplied models
for those which are to be found at Manchester, Birmingham, Lyons, and other cities in Europe. Well, the truth is (and most people are still unaware of the fact) all these beautiful fabrics are manufactured in wretched thatched huts built of mud, twenty to thirty feet long by seven or eight feet broad. In such a work-room the weaver stretches his frame, squats on the ground, and quietly plies his shuttle, surrounded by his family, his cow, and his fowls. The instruments he makes use of are extremely primitive, and his whole stock in trade could easily be carried about by one man. Such is, in very truth, an exact picture of an Indian factory. As to the manufacturer himself, his poverty corresponds to the simplicity of his work-shop. There are in India two or three large classes whose only profession is that of weaving. The individuals comprising these classes are, for the most part, very poor, and are even destitute of the necessary means for working on their own account. Those who deal in the products of their industry have to go to them, money in hand, and after bargaining with them as to the price, quality, and quantity of the goods required, are obliged to pay them in advance. The weavers then go and buy the cotton and other necessaries with which to begin work. Their employers have to supervise their work and keep a sharp look-out lest they decamp with the money, especially if the advances happen to be in any way considerable.

As regards the condition of the Hindus generally, I think that the following account may make things plain. It is based on a long acquaintance with the inhabitants of a large tract of country. Still, the casual observer may find fault with it if he judges it by what he has noticed in large towns, more especially on the coast. There, at least, most of the natives possess houses of more or less value which they can dispose of if necessary, an advantage not shared by the rural classes. Besides, the towns are the rendezvous of the rich and industrious, and of those who intend to become so by fair means or foul, so it is not surprising to find a higher standard of comfort prevailing there. It is from experience of the masses of the population that I have been able to present this sketch of the different degrees of poverty or wealth amongst the people.
I should class the inhabitants of the Indian Peninsula in the following manner. The first and lowest class may be said to be composed of all those whose property is below the value of £5 sterling. This class appears to me to comprise nine-twentieths, or perhaps even a half, of the entire population. It includes most of the Pariah class and nearly all the Chocklors (leather-workers); and these together form at least a quarter of the population. To them must be added a considerable portion of the Sudras, all the poorest members of the other castes, and the multitude of vagrants, beggars, and impostors who are to be met with everywhere.

Most of the natives of this class hire themselves out as agricultural labourers, and are required to do the hardest manual labour for the smallest possible wage. In the places where they are paid in coin, they receive only just enough to buy the coarsest of food. Their wage varies from twelve to twenty rupees a year, according to locality. They are better paid along the coast. With this amount they are obliged to feed and clothe themselves. In some places they are paid half in coin and half in grain, or else they get their keep, and over and above that receive from four to eight rupees a year.\(^1\)

Some of the younger members of this class hire themselves out without wages, on condition that, after working faithfully for seven or eight years, their master will provide them with a wife of their own caste and defray all nuptial expenses. Married servants who are fed by their masters carry home their daily rations. This food is supposed to be sufficient for the wants of one person, or, to quote the native saying, ‘to be enough to fill the belly’; but they have to share it with their wives and children, who also have to work and thus add to the provision. When they are in actual want, as often happens, they go and seek for food in the woods, or on the banks of the rivers and tanks, where they find leaves, shrubs, roots, and herbs. These they boil, as often as not without even salt or any kind of condiment; and this primitive food forms, for the

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\(^{1}\) The scale is higher everywhere nowadays, but so also is the cost of food-stuffs. Nowhere in India does the common labourer earn much more than a ‘living wage.’—Ed.
greater part of the year, the most substantial part of their meals. Clumps of bamboo abound in the woods, and its shoots form, for two or three months of the year, a great resource to the poor people who live near the places where it grows.

As soon as the children belonging to the class living in a state of servitude have reached the age of eight or nine, they join the same master who employs their father, the boys looking after the cattle and the girls sweeping out the byres, collecting the dung, grinding the grain, &c.

The well-to-do cultivators always employ men of this class; and, in order to keep them in perpetual bondage, they lend them money either on the occasion of a marriage or for other purposes. The poor wretches find themselves, on account of their small wages, quite unable to pay back the capital thus advanced, and in many cases even the interest, which soon exceeds the original loan, and are therefore reduced to the necessity of working, with their wives and children, until the end of their days. From the time this happens their masters look upon them as actual slaves, and refuse to grant them manumission until they have repaid both the principal and interest of the sum which they or their fathers borrowed perhaps twenty or thirty years before.

Those natives belonging to this class who are in a state of independence live by various industries. The greater number are carriers and coolies, or casual agricultural labourers in receipt of a small daily wage. The last-named are generally paid in grain, but when they receive money their wage varies from a penny to twopence a day, according to the district. However, they only work in proportion to their wage, and, whatever the task, a good European workman would, in most cases, do as much as four natives. But as the independent labourer is often out of work, and as the smallness of his wage or his improvidence does not allow of his putting by anything, his lot is no better, perhaps even worse, than that of his brother in slavery, and he is often in absolute want. Most of them have nothing of their own, or at the best only a wretched hut twelve or fifteen feet long by five or six broad, and from four to five feet high, which is full of insects and vermin and exhaled
an awful stench. Into this hovel they, with their wives and children crowd higgledy-piggledy. Their belongings consist of a few earthen vessels, one or two sickles, and the rags in which they stand. Those who are a little less poverty-stricken have a brass lotah for drinking purposes, and another out of which they eat, a hoe, two or three sickles, a few silver bracelets, worth three or four rupees, belonging to the women, and two or three cows. These people are agriculturists and farm Government lands, on which they pay a tax varying from two to twenty-five shillings.

Such, in truth, is the state of misery in which half the population of India passes its life.

I place in the second class all those whose property ranges from £5 to £25 sterling. This class, I should say, includes about six-twentiths of the entire population and is composed chiefly of Sudras. Those included in it are mostly agriculturists on their own account. Their poverty does not allow of their hiring others to work under them. They cultivate Government land, and pay a yearly tax of from one to twenty pagodas, according to the value of the land. They sometimes require as many as three ploughs. Their entire property consists of a few cattle, a few small gold and silver trinkets, one or two copper vessels for

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1 Many Hindus own a few oxen and cattle, which are supposed to be the most valuable part of their property; in fact their degree of comfort is judged, more or less, by the number of these valuable animals which they possess. As soon as a Hindu has acquired a sufficient sum of money, he spends it as a rule on a pair of draught oxen and a cow. But the intrinsic value of these animals is small. The country oxen are, as a rule, stunted, weak, and incapable of enduring much fatigue. Four or five rupees is their outside value.—Dunoir.

2 In this connexion the reader will do well to refer to an excellent Blue Book entitled, Progress of the Madras Presidency during the Forty Years from 1853 to 1892, by the late Dewan Bahadur S. Srinivasa Raghavaiengar, C.I.E., a distinguished Government official, who clearly proves therein that a very great advance has been made by the country during the last four decades. Emigration also offers large fields of profitable employment to the Indian coolie nowadays—Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, Africa, the West Indies, Mauritius, &c., all competing for his services. The difficulty is to induce him to leave his miserable home. Those who do emigrate sometimes return with comparatively large savings, and become either petty shopkeepers or petty cultivators.—Ed.
pledging of crops

drinking and a few more for eating purposes, and some iron farm implements. They live in thatched mud huts, rather more commodious and a little less filthy than those previously described. Weavers, barbers, washermen, and other workmen who cater for the wants of the public may also, for the most part, be included under this head.

The cultivators of this second class, although better off than those of the first, find it hard to make both ends meet even in the best seasons. They are obliged to sell at least half their crop beforehand at low prices, to enable them to pay their taxes, and the miserly usurers who profit by their poverty leave them hardly sufficient for the wants of their family during six or eight months of the year; in fact, many of them have only food enough to last four months. Some never even gather the harvest from the field they have sown, for as soon as the corn has formed in the ear they are day by day driven by hunger to cut off some of the green ears, with which they make a sort of soup. Consequently, by harvest time there is nothing but stubble left to gather, and to save themselves the trouble of cutting it they merely turn three or four cows into the field to graze. If by dint of self-denial they allow their crops to grow up intact, it is not they who benefit by them, for as soon as the grain has been threshed the money-lenders step in and take their due, and afterwards come those who lent them grain when they had nothing to eat, and demand payment of the original quantity plus twenty-five per cent. interest; that is to say, a man borrowing twenty measures of corn has to repay twenty-five.

The grain takes about four months to ripen, and this period is called the time of prosperity, or sukha kala. It is about the only season in the year when the poor have enough of even the coarsest kinds of food, consisting of various sorts of small pulse, much the same as that which is used in Europe to fatten pigs and fowls, and in India to feed horses. Hence the well-known proverb, 'Do not approach a Pariah during the sukha kala season, nor go within range of an ox during the Divuligai.'

1 This feast will be specially mentioned later on. Its celebration takes place in November, when the country is clothed in verdure.—Dusoirs.
It is also called Deepavali and Divali.—Ed.
because both become unmanageable then, from an un-
wonted state of prosperity.

In most provinces those who cultivate rice do not eat it, but sell it to pay their taxes. During the four months the sukha kala lasts, they live on the pulse and millet which they cultivate in their fields. During the rest of the year their only daily sustenance; in almost all cases, consists of a plateful of millet, seasoned with a little pounded salt and chillies. When after paying their taxes and debts they come to the end of their store of grain, supposing there has been any remnant, they are reduced to living from hand to mouth. Some of them borrow grain, which they promise to repay with interest after the next harvest; others explore the woods and the banks of rivers and tanks in search of leaves, bamboo shoots, wild fruits, roots, and other substances which help them to exist, or rather, prevent them from dying of hunger.

Thus for about three months of the year almost three-quarters of the inhabitants of the Peninsula are on the verge of starvation. In the south these three months are July, August, and September; and the saying is that those who have grain to eat then are as happy as princes. The scarcity begins to be less felt by October, for then several of the smaller species of grain are ready for harvesting, and the rains have brought out in the fields quantities of edible herbs, which suffice to allay the pangs of hunger.

Nor are men alone exposed to want during a great part of the year; domestic animals have to bear the same privations. Most families own cattle, and each hamlet possesses considerable herds which can only graze within the narrow limits assigned to them. The small amount of straw which the crops produce does not last long, and the animals are then reduced to nibbling at the few plants scattered here and there in the barren fields. During the three or four months when the sun is especially hot, all vegetable life is scorched up, and the wretched animals can scarcely find enough fodder for their daily sustenance. They may then be seen searching for clayey soil, impregnated with salt, which they proceed to lick with avidity, and that, together with the water they drink, comprises almost all their food. This is why, throughout the hot
weather, they are mere skeletons and can hardly stand. I have often, at this time of the year, been in villages where there were more than a hundred cows, and yet sometimes I could not procure so much as half a measure of milk for my breakfast.

Thirdly, I may reckon together those Hindus whose property varies in value from £25 to £50 sterling. They comprise about one-tenth of the population, and are principally agricultural. They farm lands large enough to require two, three, or even four ploughs, and their rental is from ten to thirty pagodas. This class lives in fairly comfortable circumstances, and most of the people are able to lay in sufficient grain for the whole year after meeting their taxes. Many of them have even more than they require for their own consumption, and are able to sell or lend the surplus to those in their village who have run short of food. We have seen on what outrageous terms these loans are effected. The well-to-do amongst them employ as servants one or more of those who come under the first class. They have larger, more comfortable, and slightly cleaner thatched dwellings than the others, and they and their wives have at least a change of raiment, which is more than rare in the two preceding classes. But even their possessions are far from betokening wealth; they consist of a few gold and silver trinkets, some copper vessels, and a great many earthenware pots piled up in a corner of the house; and besides these they own ploughs and other farming implements, some cotton-spinning wheels, and various primitive tools of small value. Cattle are their chief source of wealth. As to their comfort, it is at best a relative term, for the contraction of debts is a custom common to all the Hindus we have hitherto spoken of. Most of them are debtors as well as creditors, but their assets seldom exceed their liabilities, and they are in no greater hurry to pay their creditors than their debtors are to pay them.

Besides tilling the land, many Hindus of this class keep

1 The fact is, the slaughter of cattle being forbidden by the Hindu religion, large herds of old and useless animals are maintained, which deprive the healthy and useful animals of their proper share of food.—Ed.
goats and sheep, and their young, added to the one or two calves they are able to sell from time to time, bring in a small income. Two or three milch-kine and one or two buffaloes supply them with a certain quantity of butter for four or five months in the year, of which they make good use. The sale of pigs, fowls, eggs, &c., also contributes to their support, and even enables them to save for future needs, or to meet matrimonial expenses. Nevertheless, after a bad harvest numbers of these cultivators are reduced to the same state of want as those below them, and are obliged to have recourse to the same shifts.

In these times of distress the Hindus have only their wonderful constitutions to fall back upon. Accustomed from their earliest infancy to privations of every kind, they are able to keep body and soul together on the smallest pittance of food. A pound a day of millet flour, boiled in water and reduced to a thin gruel, is enough to prevent a family of five or six persons from dying of hunger. With no food besides this gruel and water the majority of the natives manage to keep hale and hearty for months together. Furthermore, they possess the no less valuable faculty of sleeping at will. An idle Hindu invariably goes to sleep, and so does the man who has nothing to eat. If the homely proverb 'he who sleeps dines' can be taken literally, the Hindus certainly find consolation in it in times of scarcity.

The fourth class comprises those whose property varies in value from £50 to £100 sterling, and I should say it forms three-fortieths of the population. These people live in comfort, being chiefly Brahmans or well-to-do Sudras. They all keep servants belonging to the lowest class to aid them in cultivation. Besides this, some of them are rich enough to embark on commercial speculations in connexion with grain or other commodities, while others lend small sums of money at high interest. This class provides the villages with their Sudra headmen, and these men are at the same time the largest holders of Government lands. They also exercise in their villages the functions of collectors of revenue, petty magistrates, and public arbitrators. As they are usually held responsible by Government for the due payment of all taxes levied on their villages, they are
obliged to conciliate the villagers, to prevent their secretly migrating elsewhere, which would mean the non-cultivation of the land, and consequent inability on their part to furnish the revenue due to the State. These men have quite a patriarchal authority in their villages, but those who attempt to abuse their power are soon confronted with deserted homesteads, waste lands, and ruin staring them in the face.

A striking example of this happened when a new and detested system was established by the creation of Muttadars, or hereditary farmers of revenue, which caused the ruin of most of the districts where it was enforced. No sooner were these Muttadars raised to what they considered an exalted position than they began to give themselves great airs and tried to carry things with a high hand. Men who had formerly been in a low position, or in obscurity, now indulged in horses, palanquins, trumpeters, and peons; in fact they gave themselves up, without any justification, to such pomp and splendour as the native delights in. As the crops produced by the lands whose revenue they had farmed could not possibly defray the cost of this expensive mode of life, they had recourse to a system of blackmailing to increase their incomes. The consequence of this arbitrary and unprecedented behaviour was the flight of their victims, who left the lands uncultivated. The final result was the ruin of the Muttadars.

The Sudra headmen of the villages are usually sensible, polite, and well-educated men. Most of them know how to read and write. Although they have the failings, common to all natives, of cunning and deceit, they are far from being proud, intolerant, and haughty like the Brahmins. By nature they are gentle, shy, and insinuating, and they behave with marked respect and submission towards their superiors. Towards their equals they are polite and complaisant, and towards their inferiors affable and condescending. In fact, they know well how to adapt themselves to their surroundings.

The class occupying the fourth rung on the ladder which I have used to describe the various degrees of civilization in India is the one which, to my mind, is the most respectable and the most interesting. It is this class, chiefly,
which influences public opinion amongst the Sudras, and maintains order throughout all ranks of society. One can tell at a glance that the natives of this class are all well-to-do and independent. As a rule, they are a more polite, better-educated, and better-mannered race, and they look happier and more contented than the members of the other three classes. Most of the latter have thin, drawn faces, a heavy carriage, coarse minds, low manners, and a melancholy and stupid appearance, all of which bespeak plainly enough the privations and sufferings of their lot. Just the reverse is noticeable amongst the natives of the fourth class.

In the fifth class I should include all those whose property varies in value from £100 to £200 sterling. It comprises about one-thirtieth of the whole population, and is composed chiefly of Brahmans or Vaisyas, and of the wealthiest among the Sudras. Agriculture, trading in grain or other commodities, money-lending on such usurious terms as twenty-five, thirty, and even fifty per cent.: such are the different forms of livelihood they thrive upon. Their cleanly appearance betokens comfort, and most of them live in tiled houses. They are also careful to conform to the rules of polite society. They perform daily ablutions, and their houses are kept ceremoniously clean by smearing the floors regularly with cow's dung. To appear more worthy in the eyes of the public the Sudras of this class usually abstain from all animal food, and, in imitation of the Brahmans, live entirely on milk and vegetables.

The natives belonging to this and the following classes constitute what may be called the gentlefolk of Hindu society, and some of the faults which characterize the Brahmans, such as pride and intolerance, are noticeable in them. Those amongst them who are agriculturists do not till their own lands, unless very urgent works are necessary; they employ servants from the lowest class to do it for them.

The sixth class may be said to comprise individuals whose tangible property varies in value from £200 to £500 sterling, and it represents, I should say, about one-fiftieth of the population. Brahmans form quite half of this class, and the remainder is made up of the best representatives
of the other castes. Their wealth consists partly of maniams, or hereditary lands exempt from taxation, partly of gardens planted with arecas, cocoanut and other fruit trees, and partly also of trinkets, money and cattle. Besides this, they speculate in the same way as the natives of the preceding class. Some of them occupy the position of assistant collectors of public revenue, magistrates' clerks, and other posts in the public service. They are proud of the comfort they enjoy, and their arrogance is unrivalled.

Properties valued at more than £500 sterling are rarely to be met with in the villages. Natives who possess more than this live in agraharams, or Brahmin villages, in towns, or in district boroughs, where they have more opportunity for commercial speculations, and for furthering their ambitious schemes to procure posts under Government.

The seventh class may be said to be composed of those whose property varies in value from £500 to £1,000 sterling. I should say, only one-hundredth part of the population belongs to this class, and at least half of them are Brahmins. The rest are the wealthiest among the Vaisyas and Sudras.

The eighth class includes those whose properties range in value from £1,000 to £2,000 sterling, and it comprises one two-hundredths of the population. It is almost entirely composed of Brahmins, with a small percentage of Vaisyas and Sudras, who live in towns and capitals where they devote themselves almost entirely to commerce or are employed under Government. Properties valued at five to ten thousand pagodas are extremely rare, even in the towns, and are confined to the richest merchants and to those who have held for a long time the highest offices under Government. Still, there are some which exceed even ten thousand pagodas, but these are so few that they can easily be counted in each province.

Speaking generally, the following proportion may be established between properties in India and properties in Great Britain:

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But a difference, more essential even than that between the characters of the two nations, is observable in connection with properties. In Europe they are preserved intact, and are, with but few exceptions, transmitted from father to son generation after generation. In India, on the other hand, there is nothing permanent about them, especially among the Sudras. The latter make their money either by their industry, talents, or cunning, and once it is made they do not know how to spend it wisely. Realizing that, do what they may, they will necessarily be looked down upon as parvenus, they soon acquire all the characteristic vices of the nouveaux riches. In time they become as proud and arrogant as any Brahmin, and their sole object seems to be to win a name for lordly extravagance. Money becomes no object to them, so long as it procures the gratification of their vanity. Immense fortunes seldom survive the second generation, owing to the manner in which the sons foolishly squander the wealth laboriously gained by their fathers. It is not uncommon to find sons who have inherited millions from their father end their days in beggary.

A native's house is besieged as soon as he is known to be a wealthy man, and this not only by his own relatives, but also by the indigent of his caste, and by a horde of parasites of every description, including poverty-stricken Brahmins, religious mendicants, ballad-mongers, and low flatterers, who feed his vanity by writing odes to his honour and glory, and by lavishing on him praise of the most fulsome nature. All these dependants stick to the wealthy native like leeches, fighting with each other as to who shall carry off the largest share of the prize, and never releasing their hold on their victim until they have stripped him of everything.

As to the general condition of the natives now, as compared with what it was thirty years ago, the question arises, has it improved or has it deteriorated? I have occasionally heard this important question discussed amongst thoughtful and well-informed Europeans, but they could rarely agree with one another on the subject. Some maintained that the masses are enjoying greater prosperity than ever they did before; others that they have never been in a more
wretched state; while a few hold that things are practically where they were before the change of government took place. But it is evidently absurd to suppose that a well-meaning, just, and equitable Government, which has succeeded one that was arbitrary, oppressive, and tyrannical, has produced no amelioration in the condition of the people, whatever peculiarities of character and disposition the latter may possess, and however great an obstacle their institutions may be to the philanthropic endeavours of the new régime to make their lives more bearable, if not actually happier. This common-sense view of the case is borne out by my own observations. To me it seems undeniable that the condition of the people has improved in many important directions at least, and I have found that the most sensible natives themselves admit it. I do not mean to imply that the lowest classes in the land are better off, for in some provinces close observation will reveal an increase of misery: but where that is the case, I attribute it to causes beyond the power of any Government to prevent or put an end to; and further, I think that, given the same causes, the misery would have been more acute under the old régime.

Of these causes the chief one is the rapid increase of the population. Judging by my own personal knowledge of the poorer Christian populations in Mysore and in the districts of Baramahil and Coimbatore, I should say that they have increased by twenty-five per cent. in the last twenty-five years. During this period Southern India has been free from the wars and other decimating calamities which had been dealing havoc almost uninterruptedly for centuries before.

Some modern political economists have held that a progressive increase in the population is one of the most unequivocal signs of a country's prosperity and wealth. In Europe this argument may be logical enough, but I do not think that it can be applied to India; in fact, I am persuaded that as the population increases, so in proportion do want and misery. For this theory of the economists to hold good in all respects the resources and industries of the inhabitants ought to develop equally rapidly; but in a country where the inhabitants are notoriously apathetic
and indolent, where customs and institutions are so many insurmountable barriers against a better order of things, and where it is more or less a sacred duty to let things remain as they are, I have every reason to feel convinced that a considerable increase in the population should be looked upon as a calamity rather than as a blessing.

It is in the nature of things that, in times of peace and tranquillity, when the protection of a just Government is afforded both to person and property, an increase in the population of India should take place at an alarming rate, since it is an indisputable fact that no women in the world are more fruitful than the women of India, and nowhere else is the propagation of the human race so much encouraged. In fact, a Hindu only marries to have children, and the more he has the richer and the happier he feels. All over India it is enough for a woman to know how to cook, pound rice, and give birth to children. These three things are expected of her, especially the last, but nothing more. It would even appear displeasing if she aspired to anything else. No Hindu would ever dream of complaining that his family was too large, however poor he might be, or however numerous his children. A barren woman is made to feel that there can be no worse fate, and barrenness in a wife is the most terrible curse that can possibly fall on a family.

Another serious cause of the poverty of modern India is the decrease in the demand for hand labour, resulting from the introduction of machinery and the spread of manufactures with improved methods in Europe. Indeed, Europe no longer depends on India for anything, having learnt to beat the Hindus on their own ground, even in their most characteristic industries and manufactures, for which from time immemorial we were dependent on them. In fact, the rules have been reversed, and this revolution threatens to ruin India completely.

Just before returning to Europe I travelled through some of the manufacturing districts, and nothing could equal the state of desolation prevailing in them. All the work-rooms were closed, and hundreds of thousands of the inhabitants, composing the weaver caste, were dying of hunger; for through the prejudices of the country they could not adopt
another profession without dishonouring themselves. I found countless widows and other women out of work, and consequently destitute, who used formerly to maintain their families by cotton-spinning. Where I went the same melancholy picture confronted me.

This collapse in the cotton industry has indirectly affected trade in all its branches by stopping the circulation of money, and the cultivators can no longer reckon on the manufacturers who, in the days of their prosperity, were wont to buy up their surplus grain, and even to lend them money when they were in arrears with their taxes. This has led the cultivators to the hard necessity of relinquishing their grain to, and thus becoming the prey of, remorseless usurers.

Such is the deplorable condition into which the poor Hindus have sunk; and it grows worse daily, thanks to the much-vaunted improvements in machinery which some nations glory in. Ah! if only the inventors of these industrial developments could hear the curses which this multitude of poor Hindus never tire of heaping upon them! If only, like me, they had seen the frightful misery which has overtaken whole provinces, owing entirely to them and their inventive genius, they would no doubt, unless they were entirely wanting in human pity, bitterly repent having carried their pernicious innovations so far, and having thereby enriched a handful of men at the expense of millions of poor people, to whom the very name of their competitors has become odious as the sole cause of their utter destitution!

And let no one venture to assert that the unfortunate Hindus can, if they choose, find a recompense in the fertility of their soil. The sight of vast plains lying fallow and waste may induce the superficial observer to accuse the natives of indolence or the Government of mismanagement, but he is not aware that the greater part, if not the whole, of these vast plains are sterile, bare, and incapable of cultivation through want of water during most of the year. In Southern India, at the present time, there are few lands in the neighbourhood of wells, tanks, and rivers which are not under cultivation, even on the summits of the highest hills; and if by any chance a few fields still lie
unreclaimed, it is due to the hopeless sterility of the soil, which, even in the best seasons, would never repay the labourer for his trouble, or else because, to yield any profit at all, they would require more capital and more courage than most of the people possess.

It is, to my mind, a vain hope to suppose that we can really very much improve the condition of the Hindus, or raise their circumstances of life to the level prevailing in Europe. The efforts of a Government which is humane and generous, as well as just, may succeed up to a certain point in lessening some of their hardships; but as long as it is in the nature of the Hindus to cling to their civil and religious institutions, to their old customs and habits, they must remain what they have always been, for these are so many insurmountable obstacles in the path of progress and to the attainment of a new order of things better calculated to bring them happiness. They will continue to grovel in poverty as long as their physical and intellectual faculties continue in the same groove.

Therefore, to make a new race of the Hindus, one would have to begin by undermining the very foundations of their civilization, religion, and polity, and by turning them into atheists and barbarians. Having accomplished this terrible upheaval, we might then perhaps offer ourselves to them as lawgivers and religious teachers. But even then our task would be only half accomplished. After dragging them out of the depths of barbarism, anarchy, and atheism into which we had plunged them, and after giving them new laws, a new polity, and a new religion, we should still have to give them new natures and different inclinations. Otherwise we should run the risk of seeing them soon relapse into their former state, which would be worse, if anything, than before.

Let our theoretical philanthropists, with their mistaken and superficial notions concerning the genius and character of the Hindus and the varied and multitudinous social links that bind them together, exclaim as much as they please in their unreflecting enthusiasm, that nothing has been done for the physical and spiritual improvement of the race. My reply is, 'Why do you expound your shallow theories in Europe?' Come and study the question on the
spot. Make personal inquiry into the manners and customs of the people; realize for yourselves whether all possible means have been tried with a view to gaining this desirable end. And then, but not till then, make up your minds on the question."

Since our European ways, manners, and customs, so utterly different from theirs, do not allow of our winning their confidence, at least let us continue to earn their respect and admiration by humane examples of compassion, generosity, and well-doing. Let us leave them their cherished laws and prejudices, since no human effort will persuade them to give them up, even in their own interests, and let us not risk making the gentlest and most submissive people in the world furious and indomitable by thwarting them. Let us take care lest we bring about, by some hasty or imprudent course of action, catastrophes which would reduce the country to a state of anarchy, desolation, and ultimate ruin, for, in my humble opinion, the day when the Government attempts to interfere with any of the more important religious and civil usages of the Hindus will be the last of its existence as a political power.

CHAPTER VII

The Mythical Origin of the Brahmins.—Their Name and their Original Founders.—Conjectures on their True Origin.—Buddhists and Jains.

The real origin of the Brahmins is wrapped in mystery, and one can only hazard conjectures on the subject, or put belief in myths. The story most generally accepted says that they were born from Brahma's head, which accounts for their name. One would suppose that as all castes were born from this same father they would be privileged to bear the same name; but as the Brahmins were the first-born, and issued from the noblest part of the common parent, they claimed special privileges from which all others were rigorously excluded. They have another theory to bear out the accepted belief that no one else is entitled to the illustrious name of Brahm. They say that no one knows anything about Brahma's attributes.
and virtues beyond what they themselves choose to teach mankind, and that this knowledge in itself gives them the right to bear his name. Anyhow, their name is undoubtedly derived from Brahma's. The old writers call them 'Brahmanahas,' or 'Brahmahahas,' which some of the Latin authors turned into 'Brachmanes.' The great difference between their caste and all others is that a Brahmin only becomes a Brahmin after the ceremony of the triple cord, which will be described hereafter. Until this essential ceremony has been performed he ranks only as a Sudra. By mere birth he is no different from the rest of his race; and it is for this reason that he is called Dvija (Bis genitus, or Twice-born). His first birth only gives him his manhood, whereas the second raises him to the exalted rank of Brahmin, and this by means of the ceremony of the triple cord. Indeed, two out of the seven famous Penitents, who are supposed to have been the original founders of the various sects of Brahmins of the present day, did not originally belong to this caste at all; but by reason of the length and austerity of their term of penance, they were rewarded by having their state of penitent Kshatriyas changed to that of penitent Brahmins by the investiture of the triple cord. These seven Penitents, or Rishis, or Munis, of Hindu history (I shall often refer to them in the pages of the present work) are the most celebrated personages recognized by the people of India. Their names are Kasyapa, Atri, Bharadwaja, Gautama, Viswamitra, Jamadagni, and Vasishta. The last-named and Viswamitra are those who were considered worthy of being admitted into the high caste of Brahmins. These far-famed Rishis must be of great antiquity, for they existed even before the Vedas, which allude to them in several places. They were the favoured of the gods, and more especially of Vishnu, who at the time of the Deluge made them embark on a vessel which he piloted, and thereby saved them from destruction. Even the gods were called to account for having offended these holy men, who did not hesitate to curse the deities who committed infamies.

The seven Penitents, after setting a virtuous example on earth, were finally translated to heaven, where they occupy a place amongst the most brilliant constellations.
They are to be recognized in the seven stars that form the Great Bear, which, according to Hindu tradition, are neither more nor less than the seven famous Rishis themselves. They are, according to Hindu legend, ancestors of the Brahmans in reality and not by metamorphosis, and it is believed that without ceasing to shine in the firmament they can, and occasionally do, revisit the earth to find out what is occurring there.

Are there any families in Europe which can, notwithstanding the mythical origins which heraldic science professes to discover, pride themselves on the possession of such ancestors? And seeing that in our own aristocracy a man with a noble lineage is not above assuming an air of extreme hauteur and exclusiveness, we ought not to be surprised at a Brahmin’s vanity or at the contempt with which he treats any one belonging to an inferior caste. This idea of handing down to posterity the names of their great men by immortalizing them, and assigning to them a place among the constellations, appears to have been an almost universal practice amongst ancient races.

Astronomy has played an important part in the history of almost all idolatrous nations; and of all false creeds it certainly is the least unreasonable, and has survived the longest. The religious and political lawgivers of these races were clever enough to perceive that the worship of the stars had taken a great hold upon mankind, and that the simplest and most effectual way of perpetuating the memory of their heroes would be to transform them into outward objects that were always before the eyes of the people. It was thus that the Greeks and Romans consecrated the memory of their divinities and demi-gods; and no doubt the Hindu lawgivers were prompted to immortalize their seven Rishis by means of the brightest stars in the sky because they realized that a Hindu imagination is only appealed to through the visible, and therefore that was the best way to perpetuate the veneration due to these illustrious beings. But whatever may have been the claims of Brahmans to a celestial origin, it is a well-authenticated fact that neither their caste nor any other existed in the countries to the north-east of Bengal four or five centuries ago. About that time the inhabitants of those
parts, thinking that it might be to their advantage to adopt the customs of their neighbours, began to clamour for Brahmins. Accordingly, some were made to order out of the youths of the country, who, after conforming to the customs and rites of the Brahmins, were incorporated into their caste by the investiture of the triple cord. The descendants of these ready-made Brahmins have ever since been considered on an equality with the rest. The southern Brahmins do not care to be reminded of the fact; yet they are obliged to admit it, as well as that two of the Rishis were originally Kshatriyas. An objection which people often put to them is that if nothing but the investiture of the triple cord can make Brahmins of them, then their wives, who do not go through the ceremony, really belong to the Sudras; and this means that all Brahmins are obliged to marry out of their caste and by so doing violate their most sacred principles. The reply they invariably make to this, as to other embarrassing questions, is that they are but following time-honoured customs and institutions.

One is certainly justified in expressing doubt on the subject of the Brahmins’ origin, but I, for one, should be sorry to oppose my conjectures to their absurd fables. Far be it from me to start any theories. My only desire is to collect materials which may help those who are trying to lift the veil which shrouds from view the cradle of the universe. It is practically admitted that India was inhabited very soon after the Deluge, which made a desert of the whole world. The fact that it was so close to the plains of Sennaar, where Noah’s descendants remained stationary so long, as well as its good climate and the fertility of the country, soon led to its settlement. I will say nothing of the conquests of Hercules, Bacchus, and Osiris, as most learned men look upon them as fabulous beings, and those who admit an element of truth in the tales carefully denude them of all the extravagant details which tradition assigns to them. The history of Sesostris, although equally full of impossibilities, has something more truthful and authenticated about it. The few ancient monuments which have been preserved make him out to

1 See Plutarch’s Isis and Osiris, chap. xxxv.
have been the bravest, not to say the only, warrior that peaceful Egypt had to boast of for a period of more than sixteen centuries, and they also lead one to believe that he was the greatest of all conquerors, with an empire extending from the Danube to the Ganges. But his Indian conquests were as temporary and unstable as those of his illustrious rival Alexander the Great much later on in the world’s history.

As to the settlements that the Arabs are supposed to have made in India, according to some authors, I think only superficial students will be found ready to believe in them. The fact that they are nomads, who have always lived a wandering life within reach of India, gives some appearance of reality to the theory. Some indeed believe that the caste system was borrowed from them, since it still exists in Arabia; but, as a matter of fact, it is a custom common to all the ancient races of the earth.

I do not trace the origin of the Brahmins either to Egypt or to Arabia, and I believe them to be the descendants not of Shem, as many argue, but of Japheth. According to my theory they reached India from the north, and I should place the first abode of their ancestors in the neighbourhood of the Caucasus.

Two famous mountains situated in Northern India, known as Great Meru (Maha-Meru) and Mount Mandara (Mandara Parvata), are frequently mentioned in their old books and in their prayers, liturgies, and civil and religious ceremonies. These mountains, which I believe to be one and the same under slightly different names, are so far away that their precise whereabouts is unknown to the Brahmins of to-day. And this is not surprising in a country where geographical science is confined to knowledge of the places situated between Benares and Cape Comorin. The Hindus themselves claim to be descended from the inhabitants of these distant northern regions, and they believe that it was there that the seven illustrious ancestors of the Brahmins were born, whose descen-

1 There can be no doubt that these mountains, and others mentioned as lying around them, belong to the great ranges of Central Asia, from which flow the great rivers that water Siberia, China, Tartary, and Hindustan.—Ed.
dants have spread little by little throughout the length and
breadth of the land. This opinion of the Hindus as to the
origin of the Brahmins is confirmed by the Brahmins
themselves, by the manner in which they treat one another.
The northern Brahmin considers himself nobler and of
higher rank than his southern brother, inasmuch as, having
originated closer to the cradle of the race, there is less room
for doubt concerning the fact of his direct descent from
the Rishis. Surely these seven Hindu Penitents, or philo-
sophers, must be the seven sons of Japheth, who, with their
father at their head, led one-third of the human race
towards the West, when men began to disperse after the
Flood. They did not all reach Europe. Some of them on
their way there turned northwards, under the guidance of
Magog, second son of Japheth, and penetrated into Tartary
as far as the Caucasian Range, in which vast tract of
country they made several settlements.

I hazard no conjectures here which are not borne out
by the Scriptures or by the commentaries of its wise in-
terpreters, with whose aid I might easily pretend to much
erudition; it would only be necessary to copy out verbatim
what Bochart and the savant Dom Calmet have written
on this subject.

Any one believing in the connexion between names and
facts will be struck with the similarity existing between
Magog's name and Gautama's, commonly called Gotama.
Ma, or maha, signifies great, so that Gotama must mean
the Great Gog or Magog.¹

Furthermore, pagan history adds weight to these con-
jectures of mine on the origin and antiquity of the Brah-
minds. Learned men allude to more than one Prometheus.
According to the Greeks the most celebrated of them all
is a son of Japheth. He created man out of the soil, and
instilled life into him with the fire stolen from heaven.
This bold enterprise irritated Jupiter, who punished him
by chaining him to one of the Caucasian Mountains, where
a vulture devoured his liver as fast as it renewed itself.
Hercules killed the vulture, and thereby put the son of
Iapetus, or Japheth, out of his torture.

¹ Much of this seems extremely fanciful. Max Müller and other
modern authorities should be consulted.—ED.
Why should not Brahma and Prometheus be one and the same person? The Hindu divinity is known also under the names of Brema and Prumē in some of their tongues. All these names bear resemblance to Prometheos, or the god Promē of the Greeks. Brahma, like Prometheus, is looked upon as the creator of man, who is supposed to have issued from the various parts of Brahma's body. Brahma was also their great lawgiver, being the author of the Vedas, which he wrote with his own hand. He had more than once to appeal to Vishnu for help, just as Prometheus relied on Hercules to deliver him from his enemies.

This pretension on the part of the Hindu Prometheus to be regarded as the maker of man, and therefore a god, has been handed down in some part to his eldest sons, the Brahmins, who humbly call themselves the Gods Brahma, or the Gods of the Earth. At certain times the people prostrate themselves before them in adoration, and offer up sacrifices to them.

Again, several authors, both sacred and profane, have tried to prove that the Prometheus who wished to pass as the creator of man was no other than Magog himself. It is hardly likely that so near the time of the Deluge the real Creator should have been so completely forgotten that a son of Noah was able to pass himself off as a god; but it is quite possible that his descendants deified him, when the spirit of idolatry began to reign on earth. It was Magog who settled in Tartary with all those who elected to follow him, having decided to separate from Japheth's other children. From thence he or his descendants spread over India and other countries, which had rightly fallen to Shem's lot. This verified Noah's prophecy that Japheth's dominion would be far-reaching, and that his posterity would dwell in the tents of Shem (Gen. ix. 27). But admitting that Tartary or the neighbourhood of the Caucasus was the birthplace of the Brahmins, it is not easy to decide the precise date of their arrival in India. It appears certain, however, that they were already established there in a flourishing condition more than nine centuries before the Christian era, as that was about the time of Lycurgus's visit to them; and it is not likely that one of the wisest
of the ancient philosophers would have undertaken such a long and tedious journey unless the reputation of the learned men he was going all that way to consult was an old and established fact.

The ancient Hindu works teach us that the Brahmins of those times differed essentially in matters of principle and conduct from their brethren of to-day. The original Brahmin is described as a penitent and a philosopher, living apart from the world and its temptations and entirely engrossed in the pursuit of knowledge, leading a life of introspection and practising a life of purity. At that period of their history the Brahmins were not such an intolerant and exclusive race that penitents belonging to other castes could not be initiated by the Diksha ceremony\(^1\), or the investiture of the triple cord. There are many examples of this in their literature. The simple and blameless lives led by the primitive Brahmins, their contempt for wealth and honours, their disinterestedness, and, above all, their extreme sobriety, attracted the attention of the princes and the people. The greatest kings were not above rendering homage to them and treating them with more respect than they would have dared to demand for themselves from their own subjects. These philosophers, living secluded from the world with their wives and children, multiplied exceedingly.

Although the modern Brahmin has degenerated considerably, he still acts up to a great many of the customs and institutions of his ancestors. Like them, he prefers to live in retired places, far from the noisy haunts of man; and that is the reason why he settles in isolated villages, from which all natives belonging to other castes are excluded. There are numbers of these villages in the different provinces of the Indian Peninsula, and they are known by the names of \textit{agraaras} or \textit{agraharas}\(^2\). Still more do the Brahmins resemble their ancestors in the way in which they fast frequently and wash themselves daily, and in all that concerns their sacrifices; but, perhaps, most of all in

\(^1\) \textit{Diksha} means consecration; (undergoing) a religious observance for a particular purpose; solemn preparation.—Ed.

\(^2\) \textit{Agrara} is merely a corruption of the word \textit{agrahara}, which literally means 'land-grant to Brahmins.'—Ed.
their scrupulous abstinence, not only from meat and all forms of living food, but even from anything with which superstition or prejudice may have connected any idea of pollution.

The religious system of the Brahmins and the absurd theogony which they have propagated in India seem to be the points on which they have gone most astray from the teachings of their predecessors. I cannot believe that the original lawgivers of the Hindus intended to introduce a creed so abominable and palpably absurd as that which at present exists amongst them. Their mythology originally consisted of allegories made intelligible by means of visible and material objects, so that religious knowledge should not die out of the minds of men who appeared to be little influenced by anything that failed to make a direct impression on their senses. But a coarse, ignorant, indolent, and superstitious race soon forgot the spirit of its creed, and ended by believing solely in the forms and emblems which had been employed; so that, before long, they quite lost sight of the spiritual beings of which these emblems were only symbolical. But I shall have occasion to refer to this question again, and so shall merely state here that the long tissue of fables on which the present religion of the Hindus is founded is not, to my mind, very ancient; at least, the greater part of it is not. Although some authors think differently, nothing will persuade me that their mythology is much older than that of the Greeks.

The primitive creed of the ancient Brahmins seems to have been utterly corrupted by their successors. The first form of idolatry into which all nations fall, after forgetting their traditions concerning the unity of God and the absolute and exclusive worship He expects from all His creatures, is the adoration of the stars and conspicuous elements, such as earth, fire, and water. Apparently the first Brahmins practised the purer cult, but afterwards their descendants reached the lowest stage of idolatry by adoring images and statues, which were intended only as the emblems of the objects of their worship. It was when this came to pass that India and the greater part of Asia probably split up into the two beliefs which still exist,
one embracing the fables of the Trimurti and the other
the religion of Buddha.

The creeds of these two sects probably sprang from the
common source of Brahminism, and are only corruptions
of it. Some modern authors believe that originally Bud-
dhism reigned supreme throughout India, on either side
of the Ganges, and, perhaps, even throughout the whole
of Asia, from Siberia to Cape Comorin and the Malacca
Straits, and from the Caspian Sea to the Gulf of Kamt-
chatka. In any case, Buddhism appears to have been as
ancient as the cult of the Trimurti. In both Tibet, in
Tartary, and in China, we know that Buddhism still pre-
dominate. According to the historian La Loubère, it
was introduced into China from Siam in bygone ages, and
not, as is generally supposed, from Cape Comorin. In
Burma, Siam, Laos, Cambodia, Cochin China, Japan,
Corea, and in most of the kingdoms beyond the Ganges,
Buddhism is the recognized religion. The Sinagalese in-
habitants of Ceylon are also Buddhists, and the cult was
introduced to them by missionaries and colonists, who
a long time ago came over from Burma to settle there.
In fact, this religion, with the immortal Grand Lama ¹ of
Tibet as its sovereign pontiff, is still beyond dispute of all
existing creeds the one that embraces the greatest number
of adherents.

If the last census published by order of the Chinese
Government is correct, their vast empire numbers about
300,000,000 inhabitants, and if one estimates the popula-
tion of the remaining Asiatic dominions where Buddhism
prevails at 150,000,000 only, which is a very moderate
calculation, then about one-half of the human race has
Buddhism for its religion.

Besides these two predominant creeds, there exists
a third about which, until recently, little was known.
I refer to the religion of the Jains. This sect stands quite
aloof, hating equally both Brahmins and Buddhists, as

¹ Like a second Phoenix the Grand Lama never dies. When he is
about to divest himself of his earthly coil, the Bonzes choose a child of
three or four into whose body they cause his soul to migrate, and this
child is declared his successor. All faithful Buddhists believe implicitly
in this miraculous rebirth.—Dubarz.