well as their doctrines. They maintain that both the
Trinuriti and Buddhism are abominable modern inven-
tions, and mere travesties of the true and primitive
religion of India, which has remained pure and unimpaired
amongst them only. They also hold that they alone are
the real descendants of the old Brahmin Penitents, whose
doctrines, customs, and usages they protect from universal
degradation and from the monstrous innovations of Brah-
mins and Buddhists alike.

Brahminism underwent a hard struggle before it succeeded
in establishing its dominion in India, owing to the opposi-
tion offered to it by the Jains; but after a long and bloody
war the latter were crushed and had to submit to whatever
conditions the Brahmins chose to dictate. The jealousy
and animosity which these religious wars stirred up still
prevail as strongly as ever, even after a lapse of two or
three thousand years. Time, which generally softens the
strongest hatreds and brings together the greatest enemies,
has, in this case, failed to obliterate the traces of the
ancient wrongs of which each sect mutually accuses the
other. The daily prayer of a certain sect of Brahmins
contains a curse levelled at the heads of the Jains, who
retaliate by exclaiming, when they rise to pray, 'Brahma
kshayam!,' 'May the Brahmin perish.' If either sect
comes into power, it takes the opportunity of humiliating
its adversaries and of punishing them without mercy when-
ever occasion offers.

But whatever may be the respective claims of Buddhists,
Brahmins, and Jains with regard to the antiquity of their
religions and the differences of doctrine that divide them,
it appears highly probable that they all sprang originally
from the same source. All three believe in the funda-
mental doctrine of metempsychosis. The images they
worship bear a great likeness to one another, and most of
these seem to be merely allegorical emblems invented to
help them to remember their original divinities. All their
religious establishments are alike composed of priests,
monks, and hermits. All their sacrifices, and the cere-
monies which accompany them, are nearly identical. And,
lastly, there is the resemblance of the languages used by
the priests in their religious services; that is to say, the
Sanskrit of the Brahmans and Jains on this side of the Ganges, and the Pali, which is evidently derived from the Sanskrit, of the Buddhists beyond the Ganges. All these help to prove incontestably the affinity existing between the three religions.

As very little is known about the Jain cult by Europeans, although it is to be found in all parts of the Peninsula, I shall give in an appendix a short account of their doctines and of the principal controversial points between them and their sworn enemies, the Brahmans. I should like to be able to do the same with regard to the Buddhists, but I have not been able to procure authentic documents about their cult. Residents of Ceylon, where Buddhism predominates, ought to be able to supply the blank thus left in my work.

CHAPTER VIII

Different Kinds of Brahmans.—Outward Signs by which they are distinguishable.

BRAHMINS are subdivided into seven sects, each of which has for its patron one of the celebrated Penitents already mentioned. Besides this, they are split up into four classes, each class recognizing one of the four Vedas as its own. Thus there are Brahmans of the Yajur-Veda, of the Sama-Veda, of the Rig-Veda, and of the Atharva-Veda. Some are of opinion that this fourth class is extinct; but, as a matter of fact, it still exists, although there are but few representatives left, who are even more exoteric than the other castes, because they allow bloody sacrifices to be offered up, and do not even draw the line at human beings. Added to this, they teach a belief in witchcraft, and any one who is supposed to possess the art earns the odious reputation of being a sorcerer. When the yagnam sacrifice takes place, it is customary for Brahmans of all four Vedas to be present. The prayers which are offered up at the sandhya are quoted from the four Vedas, each

1 Later on I shall explain in what the yagnam and sandhya consist.—Dubois. [Yagnam literally means worship (in prayer or praise); sacrificial rite, or sacrifice; (to, of, by).—Ed.
Marks of the Brahmins

Brahmin repeating those of his own particular Veda, which accounts for the slight differences. Under ordinary circumstances the Brahmins do not appear to be very strict about these minor distinctions, or to prefer one Veda to another. Nor is this altogether surprising, considering that the author of the famous Indian poem Bhagavata declares that originally the four Vedas were one and the same. According to him it was the Penitent Vyasa who divided them into four books, and at the same time added introductions and commentaries to render them more intelligible. Indeed, owing to inherent faults, or to the mistakes made by ignorant and inattentive copyists, the Vedas are so obscure that even men of learning find it hard to fathom them. I shall have more to say about the Vedas presently. To Vyasa is also attributed the authorship of the eighteen Puranas. These are eighteen poems, all equally futile, containing most minute accounts of Hindu mythology with its gods and heroes. The fables contained in them are responsible for the gross forms of idolatry practised by the Hindus.

Brahmins are also distinguishable by their sect, by their names, by the marks which they trace on their foreheads and other parts of the body, and also by the high priest to whose jurisdiction they are subject. The four principal sects of Brahmins south of the Kistna are: the Vishnavites, the Smarthas, the Tatuvasis, and the Utrassas. The distinctive mark of the Vishnavite Brahmins is the namam. Their simhasana, that is, the place where their high priest resides and their chief school, is at Hobbala in the Northern Carnatic. The Smartha Brahmins trace three horizontal lines on the forehead with sandalwood paste. Their simhasana is at Singeri in North-west Mysore. Besides these horizontal lines on the brow, the Tatuvali Brahmins have ineffaceable marks branded on certain parts of their bodies with a red-hot iron. Their simhasana is at Sravenur.


2 See following chapter.
The Utrassa Brahmins draw a perpendicular line from the top of the forehead to the base of the nose.

There are also Brahmins known as Choliyas, who are more or less looked down upon by the rest. They appear to be conscious of their own inferiority, for they hold themselves aloof from other Brahmins. All menial work connected with the temples is performed by them, such as washing and decorating the idols, preparing lighted lamps, incense, flowers, fruits, rice, and other similar objects of which sacrifices are composed. In many temples even Sudras are allowed to exercise these functions, and men of this caste are always chosen for the office of sacrificer in pagodas where rams, pigs, cocks, and other living victims are offered up. No Brahmin would ever consent to take part in a sacrifice where blood has to be shed. It is perhaps on account of the work they condescend to do that the Cholia Brahmins have fallen into such contempt. According to the general view of the Brahmins, to do any work which can be left to the lowest amongst the Sudras is to put themselves on their level, and consequently to degrade themselves. In any case the work of a pujari is not thought much of, and by some it is considered absolutely degrading. However, some Brahmins have to accept this task on account of their poverty, but they only do so with extreme reluctance. It is a common proverb amongst them that for the sake of one's belly one must play many parts.

There are other Brahmins who are derisively called meat Brahmins and fish Brahmins. For instance, there are the Konkani Brahmins, who come from Konkana, who eat fish and eggs without the slightest compunction, but will not touch meat. And there are many Brahmins from the northern provinces who make no secret of the fact that they eat meat. People tell me, though I can hardly believe it, that such conduct does not lessen the esteem in which they are held in their own country by those of their own caste who abstain from such forbidden food. Anyhow, when these degenerate Brahmins visit Southern India, and their ways become known, all the other Brahmins keep them at a distance and refuse to have any dealings with

1 In Sanskrit: Udarav nimitam bahu krita svaham, which literally means, 'For the belly's sake many roles are played.'—Ed.
them. I wonder whether the first Hindu lawgivers forbade the eating of meat and of all other substances containing the germ of life. Do the southern Brahmins observe a rule strictly laid down, and do the northern Brahmins therefore break a law common to the whole caste? It is probable that the northern Brahmins, feeling the want of more substantial food, freed themselves from a custom which was not found irksome by their southern brethren in a hotter climate.

CHAPTER IX

The different Hindu Sects.—Vishnavites and Sivalites.—The Exterior Marks and Customs peculiar to each.—The Pavadam.—The Mutual Hatreds and Differences between the Sects.—Reason for the Dislike which ordinary Brahmins feel for Vishnavite Brahmins and those belonging to other Sects.—Subdivisions of the two Principal Sects.

The Brahmins recognize six sects, which they designate by the generic name of Shat Mata (the Six Sects, or Six Schools); and each of these sects has a numerous following. They are composed entirely of Brahmins, and each has its own particular doctrine of metapsychosis. However, they do not carry these purely scholastic differences to the point of reciprocal hatred or persecution, and the subjects under dispute are pretty much the same as those which provoke polemical discussions amongst scholars and dialecticians in other countries. I shall refer again to this matter elsewhere, and will now speak about the two great sects of the Sudras. It will be seen that they are far from being as calm and tolerant over points of doctrine as the Brahmins. As a general rule, Hindus profess to pay equal honour to the two great divinities of the country, Vishnu and Siva, without showing preference for either, though there are a great many sectarians who devote themselves exclusively to the worship of one or the other.

The one sect is usually called Vishnu-bhaktas, which means votaries of Vishnu; the other is called Siva-bhaktas, or votaries of Siva. The latter sect is also called Lingadaris, and the former Namadaris. These names are derived from the distinguishing marks which the sectarians wear.

1 It is impossible to conceive anything more obscene than the meaning
The followers of Vishnu wear the emblem called namam, which they paint on their foreheads. It consists of three lines, one perpendicular and two oblique, meeting at the base, and thus forming a sign which resembles a trident. The centre line is red, the two outer lines are white and are painted on with a sort of clay called namam; hence the name given to this emblem. The distinctive sign of the Sivaites is, generally speaking, the lingam. They sometimes wear it fastened to the hair or round the arm, enclosed in a little silver tube; but more often they hang it round the neck, and the silver box containing it rests on the chest.

Instead of the namam, some devotees of Vishnu paint a single red perpendicular line in the middle of their foreheads in a distinctive manner; and instead of the lingam many of the votaries of Siva rub their foreheads and various parts of their bodies with the ashes of cow-dung by way of showing their devotion.

The special devotees of Vishnu are to be found in great numbers in the southern provinces of India, where they are known by various names, such as Andi, Dasari, Ramanjogi, Bairagi, and many others.

Besides the namam, which is an unmistakable sign of this sect, most of the devotees may also be distinguished by the extraordinary costume that they affect. The clothes which they wear are dyed a deep yellow, shading into red; many cover their shoulders with a coloured patchwork blanket, which they partly use as a cloak; their turbans, too, are composed of a motley of many hues. Some wear a cheetah’s skin on their shoulders instead of the blanket. Most of them have long necklaces of black seeds, the size of nuts. Besides this ridiculous costume, which vies with a jester’s motley, the devotees of Vishnu always carry a bronze gong and a conch shell called a sangu when they are travelling or begging. Both of these are used to make of these two marks of Hindu worship, namely, the lingam and the namam; obscene, that is, from the European point of view. From the Hindu point of view they symbolize spiritual and religious truths connected with the divine origin and generation of mankind.—Ed.

1 The Abbé is wrong in saying that an Andi is a devotee of Vishnu; he is always a devotee of Siva. Among Bairagis too, there are devotees both of Vishnu and of Siva.—Ed.
a noise and to announce their approach. With one hand they strike the gong with a little drumstick, producing a bell-like sound; with the other they hold the sangu to their mouth, and blow through it shrill and piercing sounds, which are very monotonous. These two objects are always to be seen in the hands of those followers of Vishnu who are beggars by profession, and who in some way resemble the mendicant friars of old. On their breasts they wear a sort of brass plate, on which is engraved a likeness of the monkey Hanumanta, or else one of the Avatars, or incarnations, of Vishnu. Some of them wear a number of little bells either hanging from their shoulders or on their legs, the tinkling of which warns people of their approach. To all the above paraphernalia some add an iron rod, at each end of which hangs a little brazier of the same metal containing the fire for burning the incense of which their sacrifices are composed.

To ask for alms is looked upon as a right, and even an inherent duty, in this sect. Indeed, as a rule in India any one who assumes the cloak of religion can practise begging as a profession.

It is principally when they are making pilgrimages to some sacred spot that these religious beggars make use of their privileges. Sometimes you meet as many as a thousand in one party. They scatter themselves through the various villages within reach of their route, and each inhabitant takes in a certain number of them, so that all travelling expenses are saved. This is the only occasion on which they travel in such large numbers, though they never wander about quite alone. Their manner when demanding alms is most insolent and audacious, and often threatening. If their demands are not instantly complied with, they will noisily repeat their request, striking their gongs and producing the most deafening sounds from their sangu all the time. If such methods are not successful, they have been known to force their way into a house, break all the household utensils, and damage everything they can find. These religious mendicants generally pursue their begging to an accompaniment of singing and dancing. Their songs are a species of hymns in honour of their

1 Also devotees of Siva do this.—Ed.
deities; and they very often sing indecent ballads. The more freely the latter are interlarded with obscenities, the better are they calculated to attract offerings from the public.

The intemperance to which these religious beggars, and indeed all the devotees of Vishnu, are addicted, causes the better class of Hindus to regard them with great disfavour. In fact, such mendicants seem rather to pride themselves on their want of moderation in eating and drinking, from a feeling of opposition to the Lingayats, and in order to make the difference between themselves and their adversaries more apparent. The sobriety of the latter equals, if it does not surpass, that of the Brahmans. Vishnavites eat all kinds of meat ostentatiously, and drink arrack, toddy, or any other intoxicating liquors or drugs that they can procure, without scruple or shame. Excesses of all kinds are laid to their charge, and it is amongst them that that most abominable rite called sakti-puja¹ is practised, of which I shall speak at greater length further on.

The chief objects of veneration amongst the votaries of Vishnu are the monkey, the bird of prey called garuda, and the cobra. Should any one be so imprudent as to kill, or even injure, any one of these creatures in their presence, he might find the consequences very unpleasant, and he would only be able to expiate this supposed crime by offering the sacrifice called pavadam, which is only performed on very grave occasions, such as those just mentioned, or when it is a question of obtaining reparation for an injury done to some member of the sect, but felt to reflect on all the others. This expiatory sacrifice is a very serious affair; for it consists in immolating a human victim, and then resuscitating him!

When it is reported that any person has committed such an offence as renders the pavadam necessary, all the Vishnu-bhaktas flock in crowds to the culprit's house, round which as many as 2,000 and more have been known to assemble, each of them provided with his gong and his sangu. They

¹ Sakti-puja is the worship of Sakti, which is the active power or female energy of a deity (especially of Siva). This puja is observed largely among the Sivaites, and to some extent among the Vishnavites. —Ed.
begin by arresting the person who is the cause of the assem-
blage; and then they erect at a short distance from the
house a small tent, which is quickly surrounded by many
rows of Vishnavites. The chiefs select some member of
the sect who is willing to be sacrificed, and he is exhibited
to the crowd who have come to witness the spectacle.
They make a slight incision in his arm from which blood
flows, and the victim then appears to grow weaker and
weaker, until he falls fainting to the ground, where he
remains motionless. The victim, who of course is only
feigning death, is then carried to the tent which has been
erected for the purpose, and around which the Vishnu-
bhaktas group themselves, taking great care that no one
shall approach who does not belong to their sect. Others
watch the house of him who has been the cause of the
ceremony. All this time the whole multitude are shouting
and screaming at the top of their voices, which, added to
the banging of the gongs and the harsh and lugubrious
notes of the sangu, produces a din and confusion of sounds
as indescribable as they are unbearable. This fearful
hubbub continues until the offending party has paid the
fine imposed on him, which is generally far beyond his
means. However, the inhabitants of the village and neigh-
bourhood, exasperated beyond all measure, usually try and
make some agreement with the leader of the fanatics,
and, paying them part of the stipulated sum, entreat them
to bring the ceremony of the pavadam to a speedy termina-
tion, and to return to their homes. When their demands
have been satisfied the headmen retire to the tent, and
restore the dead man to life. To bring about this miracle
an incision is made in the thigh of somebody amongst them.
The blood which flows from it is collected in a vessel, and
then sprinkled over the body of the victim. By virtue of
this simple ceremony the pretended dead man comes back
to life, in the best possible health. He is then again shown
to the spectators, who appear thoroughly convinced of the
reality of this marvellous resurrection.

In order to consummate the expiation of the crime or

1 The pavadam is probably called after Pavadammal, a minor deity
of ferocious temper. The ceremony is not observed nowadays in any
part of the country.—Ed.
offence which has given rise to the ceremony, they give a great feast with the money derived from the fine, and every one departs as soon as it is over.

I once saw the pavadam celebrated with much solemnity in a village near my house. The offence which provoked it arose from an inhabitant of the village having unintentionally felled a tree called kaka-mara, which bears yellow flowers, and to which the followers of Vishnu offer sacrifices and worship.

The sect of Siva is just as numerous as that of Vishnu. It predominates altogether in several provinces. In the western parts of the Peninsula, along the whole length of the long chain of mountains which separates what are known in Europe as Malabar and Coromandel, the followers of Siva form at least half of the population for a distance extending for more than 100 miles from north to south.

Like the Brahmins they abstain from all animal food and from everything that has had even a germ of life, such as eggs, &c., some vegetable products being included under this head. Instead of burning their dead, as do most Hindus, they bury them. They do not recognize the laws relating to defilement which are generally accepted by other castes, such, for instance, as those occasioned by a woman’s periodical ailments, and by the death and funeral of relations. They have also other rules and regulations which differ from those generally in force. Their indifference to all such prescriptive customs relating to defilement and cleanliness has given rise to a Hindu proverb which says: ‘There is no river for a Lingayat’; meaning that the members of this sect do not recognize, at all events on many occasions, the virtues and merits of ablutions.

The point in the creed of the Sivaites which appears to me to be most remarkable is their entire rejection of that fundamental principle of the Hindu religion, marujanma, or metempsychosis. In consequence of their peculiar views on this point they have no titis, or anniversary festivals, to commemorate the dead and to afford them the benefit of the prayers, sacrifices, and intercessions of the living, of which festivals I shall speak more fully later on. A Lingayat is no sooner buried than he is forgotten.

1 Cassia fistula.—Ed.
Amongst the Sivaite sect known by the name of Vira-seiva, which refuses to recognize any caste distinctions, maintaining that the lingam makes all men equal. If even a Pariah joins the sect he is considered in no way inferior to a Brahmin. Wherever the lingam is found, there, they say, is the throne of the deity, without distinction of class or rank. The Pariah's humble hut containing this sacred emblem is far above the most magnificent palace where it is not.

The direct opposition of their religious tenets and rules of life to those of all other Hindus, and especially to those of Brahmins, renders the Lingayats peculiarly obnoxious in the eyes of the latter, who cannot endure the sight of the Jangamas and other headmen of the sect. Amongst the Lingayats, as amongst the Namadaris, are an immense number of religious beggars, called Pandarams, Voderus, Jangamas, &c. Many of these penitent Sivaite have no other means of subsistence except begging. They ply their trade systematically and in gangs. Some, however, live in retreat in the mutts (monasteries) or temples, which usually possess lands, the rents of which, added to the offerings of the faithful, are sufficient to maintain them.

The gurus, or priests of Siva, who are known in the western provinces by the name of Jangamas, are for the most part celibates. They have a custom which is peculiar to themselves, and curious enough to be worth remarking. When a guru travels about his district he lodges with some member of the sect, and the members contend amongst themselves for the honour of receiving him. When he has selected the house he wishes to stay in, the master and all the other male inmates are obliged, out of respect for him, to leave it, and go and stay elsewhere. The holy man remains there day and night with only the women of the house, whom he keeps to wait on him and cook for him, without creating any scandal or exciting the jealousy of the husbands. All the same, some scandal-mongers have remarked that the Jangamas always take care to choose a house where the women are young.

The costume worn by the ascetics of Siva is very much the same as that of the Vishnavites. Both are equally peculiar in their attire. They always wear clothes of
kavi colour, that is to say, dark yellow verging on red. This colour is obligatory, not only on the devotees of both Vishnu and Siva, but also on every one who is under a vow of penance. It is the colour affected by all gurus and Hindu priests of all denominations, by fakirs, also by all the priests and religious followers of Buddha who live on the other side of the Ganges.

Besides the lingam, there are several other outward signs by which the devotees of Siva may be recognized, such as the long necklaces of seeds called rudrakshas, which resemble a nutmeg in size, colour, and nearly in shape; also the cow-dung ashes with which they besmear their forehead, arms, and various other portions of the body. The two chief objects of their devotion are the lingam and the bull.

Though children usually follow the religion of their fathers, they do not become Vishnavites or Lingayats merely by right of birth. They are only admitted to the sect that their parents belong to when they have reached a certain age, and after being initiated by the guru. This ceremony of initiation is called diksha. It consists in repeating certain appropriate mantrams, or prayers, over the neophyte, and whispering some secret instructions in his ear. But these are all spoken in a language which is seldom understood even by the person who presides at the ceremony.

By the diksha the new member acquires a perpetual right to all the privileges of the sect into which he has been admitted. Persons of all castes can become Vishnavites, and after their admission can wear the namam or distinctive mark on their foreheads. Neither Pariahs nor even Chucklers are excluded; and it has been noticed that the lower castes are particularly numerous in this sect.

I do not think there would be any greater difficulty in becoming a member of the Siva sect, but as on initiation the members undertake to entirely give up eating meat and drinking any intoxicating liquor, the lower castes, who do both unhesitatingly, find the conditions too hard. Consequently, only high-class Sudras and scarcely any

1 This word means 'initiation.' Native Christians often call Baptismagwara diksha, which means 'spiritual initiation.'—Duroi.
Pariahs belong to this sect. It is no uncommon thing for people to change from one sect to the other, according as it suits their interest, or even out of spite or caprice. Either sect will take a convert from the other without asking any questions or making any difficulty. Sometimes one comes across missionaries scouring the country with written professions of faith in their hands, and using various means for gaining proselytes to their respective sects. In some parts a remarkable peculiarity is to be observed in reference to these two sects. Sometimes the husband is a Vishnavite and bears the namam on his forehead, while the wife is a follower of Siva and wears the lingam. The former eats meat, but the latter may not touch it. This divergence of religious opinion, however, in no way destroys the peace of the household. Each observes the practices of his or her own particular creed, and worships his or her god in the way that seems best, without any interference from the other. At the same time, each sect tries its best to magnify its own particular deity and to belittle that of its rivals. The devotees of Vishnu declare that the preservation of the universe is entirely due to him, and that to him Siva owes both his birth and existence, since Vishnu saved him several times under such circumstances that without his aid Siva must infallibly have perished. Therefore Vishnu is immeasurably above Siva in every respect, and to him alone should homage be offered.

The devotees of Siva, on their side, maintain obstinately that Vishnu is of no account, and has never committed any but the basest actions, which only disgrace him and make him hateful in the eyes of men. As proofs of their assertions they point to several facts in the life of this deity, which their adversaries cannot deny, and which certainly do not redound to his credit. Siva, according to them, is sovereign lord of all, and therefore the proper object of all worship.

According to the Vishnavites it is the height of all abomination to wear the lingam. According to their antagonists, whoever is decorated with the namam will be tormented in hell by a sort of fork similar in form to this emblem. These mutual recriminations often end in violent altercations and riots. The numerous bands of religious
mendicants of both sects are specially apt to provoke strife. One may sometimes see these fanatics collected together in crowds to support their opinion of the super-excellence of their respective doctrines. They will overwhelm each other with torrents of abuse and obscene insults, and pour forth blasphemies and imprecations, on one side against Siva, on the other against Vishnu; and finally they will come to blows. Fortunately blood is seldom shed on these battle-fields. They content themselves with dealing each other buffets with their fists, knocking off each other's turbans, and much tearing of garments. Having thus given vent to their feelings, the combatants separate by mutual consent.

That these religious dissensions do not set the whole country ablaze, or occasion those crimes of all kinds which were for centuries the result of religious fanaticism in Europe and elsewhere, is due no doubt to the naturally mild and timid character of the Hindus, and especially to the fact that the greater number compound with their consciences and pay equal honour to Vishnu and Siva. Being thus free from any bias towards either party, the latter serve as arbitrators in these religious combats, and often check incipient quarrels.

There is no doubt, however, that these controversies were wont to excite general ferment in several provinces at no very remote date. The agitation, excited in the first instance by fanatical devotees, was further fomented by the Rajahs and other princes, who became Vishnavites or Sivaites according as it suited their political interests.

Those who are acquainted with the character and disposition of the Bairagis and Goshaïs of the north, and of the Dasari, Andis, Jangamas, and Pandarams in the south, are fully persuaded that it would still be quite easy for two ambitious and hostile princes to arm these fanatics and persuade them to come to blows if they raised the standard of Basava (the bull) on one side, and of Hanumantha (the monkey) on the other.

In these religious squabbles, which still take place occasionally, the Vishnavites appear to be the more fanatical and fervent, and they are almost always the aggressors. The reason is, that this sect draws most of its members
from the very dregs of society, and so takes a delight in creating troubles or disturbances. The followers of Siva, on the other hand, who belong to the upper classes of the Sudras, are much more peaceable and tolerant.

The majority of the Hindus, and particularly the Brahmins, take no part whatever in these religious squabbles. The latter act on the principle of paying equal honour to the two chief deities of the country, and though, as a rule, they appear to have a preference for Vishnu, they never let a day pass without offering in their own houses a sacrifice to the lingam, which is Siva’s emblem.

It is very difficult to determine the origin of these two sects. Some authors have thought that they are quite a modern institution. Yet they are alluded to in several of the most ancient Puranas. One of the Avatars, or incarnations, of Vishnu, called Narasimha, that is to say, half-man half-lion, is the form under which this deity disguised himself when he came to deliver the earth from the giant Hiraniakaashiputra, who was ravaging it. We learn in the Bhagavata that this cruel monster had a good son called Prahlada, who belonged to the Vishnavite sect, and who made the greatest efforts to induce his father to embrace his special form of religion, but without success. However, the ill-feeling between the two sects seems not to have been so marked at the beginning.

Brahmins in general look upon the Vishnavite Brahmins (see Chapter VIII), who profess a special devotion for Vishnu if they do not worship him exclusively, as detestable schisms. The preference that the latter show for a sect composed almost entirely of Sudras and the lowest of the people, and their practice of appearing in public with their foreheads decorated with the namam, just like common Pariahs or Chucklers, are all offences which degrade them in the eyes of their noble confrères.

No doubt the same contempt would be felt for Brahmins who wore the lingam, but I have never seen one thus decorated, and I doubt whether one could be found anywhere in the south, from the banks of the Kistna to Cape Comorin. I have been told, however, that there are some districts in the north where persons of this caste are to be found who devote themselves exclusively to the worship
of Siva, and who always wear the emblem of this deity.

The sect of Vishnavite Brahmins appears to have originated in Dravida or Aravam (the Tamil country). From there they spread over the provinces up to the Kistna, where they have retained, to the present day, their own peculiar customs and language, as well as their own cult. The Brahmins who inhabit the country north of this river have never permitted these stubborn schismatics to settle amongst them.

The feeling of aversion which orthodox Brahmins entertain for the Vishnavite Brahmins is shared by Hindus of all castes. A stigma of reproach appears to cling to them. It cannot be the case, however, that the disfavour with which they are regarded is entirely due to their exclusive worship of Vishnu. I think it must be largely imputed to their excessive pride and arrogance, their extreme severity, and their supercilious manners; for though all Brahmins share these characteristics, it is generally acknowledged that the Vishnavites display them in an intensified form.

Be the reason what it may, there is no denying that the Vishnavites form a class by themselves in society. The antipathy which these two orders of Brahmins feel for each other is noticeable on all occasions. The members of one sect never invite members of the other to eat with them, or to participate in their civil or religious feasts; and when one of them is raised to a position of authority, it is on persons of his own sect that his patronage is bestowed.

The two sects of Vishnavites and Sivaites are each subdivided into several others, which are known under the general term of Mattias or Mattancharas. Amongst the Vishnavites, for instance, there are the Vaishnavas, the Tatuvadis, the Ramojus, the Satanis, &c., sub-sects which again are divided into a great many others. For instance, amongst the Vaishnavas there are the Vaishnava-triamalas, the Kandalas, the Nallaris, &c.

The Jogis, the Jangamas, the Voderus, the Viraktas, the Bolu-Jangamas, the Vira-seivas, &c., belong to the Sivaites.

Each of these sub-sects has its own peculiar tenets, mysteries, mantrams, sacrifices; in fact, some points of
variation in rites as in doctrines. The heads of these sub-sects dislike and avoid each other. They often quarrel over the various points of doctrine which cause such divisions. But these are forgotten, or, at any rate, allowed to remain in abeyance, should it be necessary to make common cause in defending the interests of the sect as a whole, during the disputes which occasionally arise between the Vishnavites and Sivaites.

CHAPTER X

The Gurus, or Hindu Priests.—The Portrait of a true Guru.—Their Temporal and Spiritual Power.—The Fear and Respect that they inspire.—Ecclesiastical Hierarchy composed of the Superior and Inferior Priests.—The Honours paid to them.—Priestesses.

I SHALL begin this chapter by giving an accurate description of a true guru belonging to the sect of Siva. This picture is taken from the Vedanta Sara¹, to which it serves as an introduction. At the same time I must warn my readers that it would be difficult to find any points of resemblance between this picture and the gurus of the present day, who are very far from attaining to this pitch of perfection. The sketch will, however, prove that even the very highest moral virtues were not unknown to the Hindus, though now they regard them only as subjects for speculative discussion.

A true guru is a man who is in the habit of practising all the virtues; who with the sword of wisdom has lopped off all the branches and torn out all the roots of sin, and who has dispersed, with the light of reason, the thick shadows in which sin is shrouded; who, though seated on a mountain of sins, yet confronts their attacks with a heart as hard as a diamond; who behaves with dignity and independence; who has the feelings of a father for all his disciples; who makes no difference in his conduct between his friends and his enemies, but shows equal kindness to both; who looks on gold and precious stones with the same indifference as on pieces of iron or potsherds, and values the one as highly as the other; whose chief care is

¹ A translation of this, by Jacobs, is included in Trübner’s Oriental Series.—Ed.
to enlighten the ignorance in which the rest of mankind is plunged. He is a man who performs all the acts of worship of which Siva is the object, omitting none; who knows no other god than Siva, and reads no other history than his; who shines like the sun in the midst of the dark clouds of ignorance which surround him; who meditates unceasingly on the merits of the lingam, and proclaims everywhere the praises of Siva; who rejects, even in thought, every sinful action, and puts in practice all the virtues that he preaches; who, knowing all the paths which lead to sin, knows also the means of avoiding them; who observes with scrupulous exactitude all the rules of propriety which do honour to Siva. He should be deeply learned, and know the Vedanta perfectly. He is a man who has made pilgrimages to all the sacred places, and has seen with his own eyes Benares, Kedaram, Conjeeveram, Ramésvaram, Srirangam, Sringeri, Gokarnam, Kalahasti, and other spots which are consecrated to Siva. He must have performed his ablutions in all the sacred rivers, such as the Ganges, the Jumna, the Sarasvati, the Indus, the Gódávari, the Kistna, the Nerbudda, the Cauvery, &c., and have drunk of each of these sanctifying waters. He must have bathed in all the sacred springs and tanks, such as the Surya-pushkarani, the Chandra-pushkarani, the Indra-pushkarani, and others, wherever they may be situated. He must have visited all the sacred deserts and woods, such as Neimisha-aranya, Badari-aranya, Dandaka-aranya, Goch-aranya, &c., and have left his footprints in them. He must be acquainted with all the observances for penance or asramas, such as are enjoined by the most famous devotees, and which are known by the names of Narayana-asrāma, Yamana-asrāma, Gautama-asrāma, Vaisishta-asrāma. He must be one who has practised these religious exercises, and who has derived benefit from them. He must be perfectly acquainted with the four Vedas, the Tarka-sastra (or logic), the Bhoota-sastra (exorcism), the Mimansa-sastra (exegetics, &c.), &c. He must be well versed in the knowledge of the Vedanga (six auxiliaries of the Vedas), of the Jyotisha-sastra (astrology), of Vaidya-sastra (medicine), of Dharma-sastra (ethics), of Kaviana-takam (poetry), &c., and he must know by heart the eighteen
Puranas and the sixty-four Kalais. This is the character of a true guru; these are the qualities which he ought to possess, that he may be in a position to show others the path of virtue, and help them out of the slough of vice.'

This is what the Hindu gurus ought to be, but are not. What follows is a description of them as they really are.

The word guru, properly speaking, means 'master' or 'guide,' and this is why parents are sometimes called the maha-gurus or grand masters of their families, and kings are called the gurus of their kingdoms, and masters the gurus of their servants.

The word is also used to designate persons of distinguished rank who are raised to a high position and invested with a character for sanctity, which confers both spiritual and temporal power upon them. The latter, which is exercised over the whole caste, consists in regulating its affairs, in keeping a strict watch to see that all its customs, both those for use in private as well as in public, are accurately observed, in punishing those who disregard them and expelling from caste those who have deserved this indignity, in reinstating the penitent, and several other no less important prerogatives. Besides this temporal authority, which no one disputes, they also exercise very extensive spiritual power. The sashita or prostration of the six members when made before them and followed by their asirvadam, or blessing, will obtain the remission of all sins. The very sight even of gurus will produce the same effect. Any prasadam or gift from them, though usually some perfectly valueless object, such as a pinch of the ashes of cow-dung with which they besmear their foreheads, the fruits or flowers that have been offered to idols, the remains of their food, the water with which they have rinsed out their mouths or washed their face or feet, and which is highly prized and very often drunk by those who receive it; in short, any gift whatever from their sacred hands has the merit of cleansing both soul and body from all impurities.

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1 These include all kinds of worldly wisdom.—Dubsam.
2 It has already been pointed out in a note to a former chapter that sashita does not mean the prostration of six members but of eight members.—Ed.
On the other hand, while the beneficial effects of their blessings or their trivial presents excite so large an amount of respect and admiration from the dull-witted public, their maledictions, which are no less powerful, are as greatly feared. The Hindus are convinced that their curses never fail to produce effect, whether justly or unjustly incurred. Their books are full of fables which seem to have been invented expressly to exemplify and strengthen this idea. The attendants of the guru, who are interested in making the part which their master plays appear credible, are always recounting ridiculous stories on this subject, of which they declare they have been eye-witnesses; and in order that the imposture may be the less easily discovered, they always place the scene in some distant country. Sometimes they relate that the person against whom the curse was fulminated died suddenly whilst the guru was still speaking; that another was seized with palsy in all his limbs, and that the affliction will remain until the anathema has been removed; or that the guru's malediction caused some woman to be prematurely confined; or that a labourer saw all his cattle die suddenly at the moment when the malediction was hurled at his head; or that one man was turned to stone and another became a pig; in fact, they will relate a thousand similar absurdities quite seriously 1.

If the foolish credulity of the Hindu will carry him to these lengths, can any one be surprised if his feelings of respect and fear for his guru are equally extravagant? He will take the greatest care to do nothing that might displease him. Hindus have been reduced to such terrible straits as to sell their wives or their children in order to procure the money to pay the imposts or procure the presents that their gurus remorselessly claimed from them,

1 The ideas of the Hindus on the subject of the blessings and curses of their gurus are analogous, at any rate in point of extravagance, to those which, according to Holy Scripture, were current in the time of the ancient Patriarchs. Noah's curse on his son Ham and his blessing on the other two, Shem and Japheth, bore fruit (Genesis ix). The value that Esau and Jacob set on their father Isaac's blessing is well known (Genesis xxvii); also the bitter regret of Esau when he found that he had been supplanted by Jacob.—Dubois.
rather than run the risk of exposing themselves to their much-dreaded maledictions.¹

Each caste and each sect has its own particular gurus: but the latter are not all invested with equal authority; a sort of hierarchy exists amongst them. Besides the vast numbers of subordinate priests who are to be met with everywhere, each sect has a limited number of high priests who exercise authority over the inferior gurus, deputing to them their powers of spiritual jurisdiction. These high priests have also the right of degrading their inferiors from their position and of putting others in their places. The residences of Hindu high priests are generally known by the name of simhasana ². These simhasanas are to be found in various provinces of India. Each caste and each sect acknowledges one that specially belongs to it. For instance, the Brahmans who belong to the Smartha sect have a different guru from the Tatwadi sect, and these again recognize a different one from the Vishnavite Brahmans.

The different branches of the sects of Vishnu and Siva have also their own particular gurus and high priests. The Sri-Vaishnavas, for instance, acknowledge four simhasanas and seventy-two pithas or supplementary establishments, where the inferior gurus reside, besides a multitude of subordinate ministers who are also called gurus.

The high priests, as well as the inferior priests belonging to the sect of Siva, are drawn entirely from the Sudra caste ³; but the greater number of the head gurus belonging to the Vishnavites are Vishnavite Brahmans, and they appoint the inferior clergy of that sect. The most famous

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¹ Times are changed since the days of the Abbé, and the gurus in most cases are the mere hangers-on of rich disciples. They may be able to exercise some influence over the illiterate and poor, but with the majority of the educated and well-to-do their influence is not very great.—Ed.
² This word may be translated ‘throne.’ It is derived from the two words simha, which means lion, and asana, which means a seat, because a high priest’s throne ought to be covered with a lion’s skin. Custom, however, has changed this for that of a tiger.—Dubois.
Simhasana is more correctly derived from the figure of a lion on the back of the seat.—Ed.
³ This is not true.—Ed.
**GURUS ATTACHED TO PRINCES**

*Simhasana* of the Vishnavites is in the sacred town of Tirupati in the Carnatic. There a kind of arch-pontiff (the Mahant) resides, whose jurisdiction extends over almost the whole of the Peninsula.

Brahmins are also, as a rule, the *gurus* of the various sects of Hindus who are more tolerant than those just mentioned, that is to say, those who worship both Vishnu and Siva.

The high priest or the *guru* belonging to one sect has no authority over any other. Neither his *prasadam*¹, nor his curse, nor his blessing would carry any weight with them; and it is very rarely that you hear of priests overstepping the limits of their own jurisdiction.

People of very high rank, such as kings or princes, have a *guru* exclusively attached to their households who accompanies them everywhere. They prostrate themselves daily at the *guru’s* feet and receive from him the *prasadam* or gift, and the *asirvadam*, or blessing. When they travel the *guru* is always in close attendance; but if they are going to take part in a war or any other dangerous expedition, the holy man takes care to remain prudently behind. He usually contents himself under these circumstances with bestowing his blessing and giving some small present or amulet, which he has consecrated, and which, if carefully preserved, possesses the infallible virtue of averting all misfortunes to which they might be exposed when far from their spiritual guide.

Princes, from motives of ostentation, affect to keep their *gurus* in great splendour, with the result that the latter’s extravagant pomp often exceeds their own. Besides giving them many very valuable presents, they also endow them with land yielding large revenues. Hindu high priests never appear in public except in magnificent state. They like best to show off all their splendour when they are making a tour in their districts. They either ride on a richly caparisoned elephant or in a superb palanquin. Many have an escort of cavalry, and are surrounded by guards both mounted and on foot, armed with pikes and other weapons. Bands of musicians playing all sorts of

¹ *Prasada* means literally serenity, cheerfulness, kindness, favour, &c., and it has come to mean ‘food or anything offered to an idol.’—Ed.
instruments precede them, and numberless flags of all
colours, on which are painted pictures of their gods, flutter
in the midst of the cavalcade. The procession is headed
by heralds, some of whom sing verses in the high priest's
honour, while the rest go on ahead and warn the passers-by
to clear the way and to pay the homage and respect that
are his due. All along the route incense and other per-
fumes are burnt in the high priest's honour; new cloths
are perpetually spread for him to pass over; triumphal
arches called toranams, made of branches of trees, are
erected at short intervals; bevies of professional prosti-
tutes and dancing-girls form part of the procession, and
relieve each other at intervals, so that the obscene songs
and lascivious dances may continue uninterruptedly.
This magnificent spectacle attracts great crowds of people,
who prostrate themselves before the guru, and, after
having offered him their respectful homage, join the rest
of the crowd and make the air ring with their joyful
shouts.

The gurus of inferior rank make a show in proportion to
their means. Those who belong to the sect of Vishnu
known by the name of Vaishnavas generally travel on
some sorry steed. Some are even reduced to walking on
foot. The Pandarams and Jangamas, priests of Siva, go
on horseback or in a palanquin, but their favourite mode
of progress is riding on an ox.

Gurus, as a rule, rank first in society. They often

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1 The custom amongst persons of high rank, such as gurus, kings,
princes, and governors of provinces, of being preceded on their march
by heralds, singing their praises, is very general in India. These heralds
give a long account of their master's noble origin, of his exalted rank, of
his boundless power, his virtues, and his many excellent qualities; and
they admonish the public to pay the respect and homage which are due
to so great a personage. This custom, though of Hindu origin, has been
adopted by the Mahomedans. It appears, as may be seen from the
writings of both sacred and secular authors, that the practice of being
preceded by heralds dates from very ancient times—see Genesis xii. 43;
Esther vi. 8; and there are several other passages in the Bible where
such heralds are spoken of.—DUBOIS.

2 This picture is greatly exaggerated. Nowhere do 'professional
prostitutes and dancing-girls' form part of processions in honour of
men.—Ed.
receive tokens of respect, or rather of adoration, that are not offered to the gods themselves. And this is not surprising when one remembers that every Hindu is fully persuaded that, under certain circumstances, the gurus have authority even over the celestial powers.

From time to time gurus make tours of inspection in those districts where their followers are most numerous. They sometimes go as much as a hundred miles from their habitual residence. The chief, if not the only, object of the expedition is to collect money. Besides the fines which they impose upon those who have committed some crime, or been guilty of breaking some rule of their caste or sect, they are merciless in extorting tribute money from their followers, which often greatly exceeds their means. They call this method of obtaining money dakshina¹ and pada-kanikai², and no one, however poor he may be, is exempt from paying it. There is no insult or indignity that gurus will not inflict upon any one who either cannot or will not submit to this tax. Deaf to all entreaties, they cause the defaulter to appear before them in an ignominious and humiliating attitude, publicly overwhelm him with insults and reproaches, and order that mud or cow-dung shall be thrown in his face. If these means do not succeed, they force him to give up one of his children, who is obliged to work without wages until the tribute money is paid. Indeed, they have been known to take away a man's wife as compensation. Finally, as a last and infallible resource, they threaten him with their malediction; and such is the Hindu's credulity, and so great his dread of the evils which he foresees will fall upon him if the curse be spoken, that, if it is not absolutely impossible, he submits and pays the required sum³.

The gurus also increase their revenue by means of taxes, called guru-dakshina, which are levied on the occasion of

¹ Dakshina literally means the sacrificial fee. It has now come to mean gift. The gift to the priest is enforced more or less among the Madhvas; but among the Sivaite and Vaisnavite the priests are more lenient.—Ed.
² This word means literally 'offering at the feet.' See Chapter III.—DUBOIS.
³ Nowadays gurus exercise less extensive powers over their disciples.—Ed.
a birth, at the ceremony of the diksha (initiation), at
a marriage, or at a death.

If these pastoral visits were of very frequent occurrence
it is evident that the resources of the poor flock would soon
be exhausted. Fortunately, those of the chief gurus, which
are the most expensive, take place but seldom. Some make
a tour of their districts once in five years, others once in
ten only, and others, again, only once in a lifetime.

Some gurus are married, but most are celibates. The
latter, however, do not appear to adhere very strictly to
their vow of chastity. Their conduct on this head is the
more open to misconstruction in that they can have one
or two women in their houses as cooks. According to the
customs and ideas of the country, for a man to keep a
female servant and to have her as his mistress are one and
the same thing. No Hindu can be persuaded of the possi-
bility of free, and at the same time innocent, intercourse
between a man and a woman.

But in spite of this, the common herd, who fancy that
gurus are not made of the same clay as other mortals and
are consequently impeccable, are in no wise shocked at
these illicit connexions. Sensible people take no notice,
but shut their eyes and say that allowances must be made
for human weakness.

The Brahmins pretend that they are the gurus for all
castes, and that they alone have a right to the rank and
honours appertaining to that profession; but, as I have
already mentioned, a number of common Sudras also con-
trive to raise themselves to that dignified position. The
Brahmins, of course, look upon them as intruders, but this
does not in the least prevent their enjoying all the honours
and advantages which belong to their rank in the caste
and sect by which they are acknowledged.

Except when they are making their tours of inspection,
most gurus live in seclusion, shut up in isolated hermitages
called mutts. They are rarely seen in public. Some of
them live in the vicinity of the large pagodas. But the
high priests, whose large households and daily hospitalities
entail considerable expenditure, generally live in the large
agrarahas or towns inhabited principally by Brahmins,
and for this reason called punyashalas, or abodes of virtue.
There they give audience to the numerous members of their flocks who come to perform worship, to receive their asirvadam (benediction) and their prasadam (gift), to offer presents, to bring complaints about the infraction of rules and customs, &c. Hindus, on presenting themselves before their guru, first perform the sashênta, and then touch the ground with each side of the forehead. The holy man replies to this mark of respect by gravely pronouncing the word 'Asirvadam!' On hearing this, his worshippers rise and receive the prasadam from him, which he gives, whispering the following words, if they belong to the Siva sect, in their ear: 'It is I who am thy guru, and whom thou art bound to worship.'

The followers of Siva, having thus done homage to their Jangamas and Pandarams, proceed to perform a very disgusting ceremony. They solemnly pour water over the feet of their guru and wash them, reciting mantrams the while; then carefully collecting the water so used in a copper vessel, they pour part of it over their head and face, and drink the rest.

The Vishnavites go through a similar ceremony with their gurus; and this is by no means the most revolting of the marks of respect which these idiotic fanatics delight in paying. A piece of food that a guru has already masticated, or the water with which he has rinsed out his mouth, at once becomes sacred in their eyes, and is swallowed with avidity.

About ten miles from the fort of Chinnerayapatam a hermitage is to be found, known by the name of Kudlu-gondur, where a Vishnavite guru has taken up his abode. This solitary mutt, though but a poor place to look at, is visited by a great number of devotees, who go there to offer their homage to the penitent, to receive his asirvadam and prasadam, and through them the remission of their sins. I have been informed by some of these pilgrims themselves, that the more enthusiastic amongst them watch for the moment when the old guru is about to expelorate, when they stretch out their hands, struggling as to who shall have the happiness and good luck to catch the superfluous fluid which the holy man ejects; the rest of the scene is indescribable.
**Gurus** sometimes authorize agents to collect the tributes and offerings of the faithful, and also give them power to impose fines on evil-doers.

After having discharged the duties to their followers which their position imposes, and performed their daily ablutions and sacrifices, both morning and evening, the **gurus** employ the rest of their time—or they ought to do so if they adhered to their rules—in the study and contemplation of their sacred books. In the case of married **gurus** the office descends from father to son. Successors to the unmarried **gurus** are nominated by their superiors, who generally choose one of their own creatures. A high priest is usually assisted by a coadjutor during his lifetime, who succeeds his chief as a matter of course.

To the sects both of Siva and Vishnu priestesses are attached, that is to say, women specially set apart, under the name of *wives of the gods*, for the service of one or other of these deities. They are quite a distinct class from the dancing-girls of the temples, but are equally depraved. They are generally the unfortunate victims of the immorality of the **Jangamas** or **Vaishnavas**. These priests, by way of keeping up a character for good behaviour, and conciliating the families upon whom they have brought dishonour, put the whole blame on Vishnu or Siva; and the poor gods, as is only fair, are forced to make amends. So the girls are given to the gods as wives, by the aid of a few ceremonies; and we know that these worthy **gurus** enjoy the privilege of representing in everything the gods whose ministers they are. The women who are thus consecrated to Vishnu are called **garuda-basavis** (wives of **garuda**), and have the image of this bird tattooed on their breasts\(^1\) as the distinctive mark of their rank.

The priestesses of Siva are called **linga-basavis**, or **women of the lingam**, and bear this sign tattooed on their thighs.

Though these women are known to be the mistresses of the priests and other dignitaries, still, for all that, they are treated with a certain amount of consideration and respect amongst their own sect.

\(^1\) This bird, which is consecrated to Vishnu, and of which I shall presently speak at greater length, is known by European ornithologists as the Malabar eagle.—[Dusor].
CHAPTER XI

Purohitas, or Priests who officiate at Public and Private Ceremonies.—The Hindu Almanac as published by the Purohitas.

To settle which are lucky or unlucky days on which to begin or put off an undertaking or expedition; to avert, by mantras and suitable prayers, the curses, spells, or other evil influences of the planets and elements; to purify persons who have become unclean; to give names to newly-born children and draw their horoscopes; to bless new houses, wells, and tanks; to purify dwellings and temples which have become polluted, and also to consecrate the latter; to animate idols and install in them their particular deities by the power of their mantras: these are but a few of the duties which come within the province of the Brahmin purohitas, whose services are indispensable on such occasions. The most important of their duties, however, is the celebration of weddings and funerals. The ceremonies on these occasions are so numerous and complicated that an ordinary Brahmin would never be able to get through them all; they can only be learned by special study. Besides, there are mantras and formulas connected with them which are known only to the purohitas, and which are described in books of ritual which they take great care to hide from the eyes of all persons outside their own sect. The father makes his son learn these formulas by heart, and thus they descend from generation to generation in the same family. The purohitas are not actuated by any pious motives in taking this jealous care of their knowledge and surrounding all their doings with so much mystery; their fear is that rivals may step in who would share the profits which these religious exercises yield.

The consequence is that there are very few Brahmin purohitas, and sometimes they have to be fetched from a great distance when their ministrations are needed.¹

¹ A purohita is now to be found in almost every village where Brahmins live. He enjoys a mandam or free grant of land. In course of time the original family is divided into many families of cousins, who hold office
If they have reason to expect a generous reward, they will start off at once, or at any rate they will send a son who is well versed in their ritual. Sometimes ordinary Brahmins pass themselves off as purohitas, especially amongst the Sudras, who are not very particular on this point. These interlopers are unacquainted with the formulas and correct mantrams, and so they mumble a few words of Sanskrit or some ridiculous and unintelligible sentences, believing that this is quite good enough for stupid Sudras. But if the real purohitas, who from self-interest are always on the alert, discover that their prerogatives have been invaded and their powers usurped, a violent quarrel ensues between them and their sacrilegious rivals.

One of the most valued privileges of the purohitas is the right of publishing the Hindu Almanac. The majority of them, being too ignorant to compile it, buy copies every year from those of their brethren who are sufficiently well versed in astronomy to be able to calculate the eclipses and variations of the moon. It must be admitted that these learned Hindus, unacquainted as they are with the analytical operations which in Europe facilitate the computation of the movements of the stars, and having only the most ancient tables wherewith to assist their calculations, require an enormous amount of patience and concentrated attention to produce results which are in any degree trustworthy.

This almanac is an absolute necessity to every purohita, since it tells him not only which are the lucky and unlucky constellations, and fortunate or inauspicious days, but also which are the propitious hours in each day; for it is only at these particular moments that the ceremonies can begin at which he is called on to preside. The Brahmins also draw inspiration from this book in predicting happy and unhappy events in life. Numbers of people come to con-

and enjoy the maniam in turn. The purohita is a Brahmin whose business it is to fix auspicious days for marriages, journeys, and undertakings generally. He presides at the marriage and funeral ceremonies of Sudras, but not at the marriage ceremonies of Brahmins. The Brahmin who presides at the latter is called upadhiaya. A purohita is sometimes called a panchangi, or one who has charge of the panchangam or almanac, not a very dignified office.—Ed.
sult them on points like these; and it is not the common people only on whom this superstition has such a strong hold, for princes and persons of the highest rank believe in it even more firmly, if that be possible. There is no one in high position who has not one or more official purohitas living in his palace; and these men act, so to speak, like rulers of the universe. They go every morning and with ludicrous gravity announce to the prince, to his state elephant, and to his idols, each in their turn, all that is written in the almanac relating to that particular day. Should the prince wish to hunt, walk, or receive visits from strangers, and the perspicacity of the purohita discovers in his infallible book that this is an unpropitious moment, the chase, the walk, or the visit is postponed. In large temples a purohita is specially retained to read to the idols every morning the predictions for that day contained in the almanac.

The Hindu calendar is known by the name of the panchangam, which means the five members, because it contains five leading subjects: to wit, the age of the moon in the month; the constellation near which the moon is situated on each particular day; the day of the week; the eclipses; and the positions of the planets. Lucky and unlucky days are also indicated; those, for instance, on which a person may travel towards one of the four cardinal points; for any one who could safely travel to-day towards the north would probably be overtaken by misfortune if he attempted to journey to the south. There are numberless other predictions of a similar nature in the almanac, which it would be tedious to give in detail.

1 The panchangam Brahmin is one who, by studying the almanac, is able to state propitious or unpropitious times. He gets his livelihood by going certain rounds, day by day, from house to house, declaring the condition of things, as per the almanac, and receiving in return a dole consisting, usually, of grain. He is not held in much respect by his own caste people, but he is much looked up to by other castes. He is consulted by his constituents, from time to time, when they wish to know the propitious period for any undertaking, as starting on a journey, making an important purchase, putting on new clothes or new jewels, or when about to take up a new appointment, or when any other important event is contemplated. He is a Smartha by sect; that is, he is really a worshipper of Siva and wears the marks of that god, but at the same time he respects and worships Vishnu.— Padfield.
On the first day of the Hindu year, called *Ugadi* 1, which falls on the first day of the March moon, the *purohita* summons all the principal inhabitants of the neighbourhood to his residence, and there solemnly announces, amidst much music, singing, and dancing, who will be king of the gods and who king of the stars for the year, who will be their prime ministers, and who will command the army; who will be the god of the harvest, and what crops will be most plentiful. He foretells, too, whether the season will be wet or dry, and whether locusts or other insects will, or will not, attack and devour the young plants; whether the insects and vermin, which disturb the repose of the poor Hindu, will be more or less troublesome, more or less numerous; whether it is to be a healthy or unhealthy year; whether there will be more deaths than births; whether there will be peace or war; from what quarter the country will be invaded; who will be victorious, &c.

Those who ridicule the *purohita* and his predictions are the very first to have recourse to him if the country is threatened with any great calamity, such as war, famine, drought, &c. Thus powerful is the sway which superstition exercises over the whole land. It is not only the idolatrous Hindus who give credence to these absurdities; Mahomedans, Native Christians, half-castes, and sometimes even Europeans, are not ashamed to consult the astrologer or *purohita*.

The high-class *purohita* only expound to Brahmins the oracles contained in the almanac, but many less fortunate Brahmins procure copies for themselves, and reap a rich harvest from the credulity of the lower classes. The *panchangam* serves as an excuse, but it is only another way of demanding alms. This method of earning a livelihood, however, causes them to be despised by persons of their own caste, and they only resort to it when other resources have failed. They always quote their favourite axiom: 'In order to fill one's belly one must play many parts.'

The *purohitas* appear to date back to very ancient times.

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1 *Ugadi* is the Telugu New Year's Day. Nowadays there is no music or dancing on the occasion of the *purohita* reading the almanac.—Ed.
Most Hindu writers mention them, and, if they are to be believed, the highest honours were paid to these Brahmans in times gone by. They and the gurus share the duty of preserving intact the ancient customs, and it is they who are loudest in condemning those who violate them.

To them also is due the credit of having preserved from destruction all the books of history or of science that have survived the revolutions by which the country has been so often convulsed.

All the purohitas are married, and I believe this to be obligatory, in order that they may minister in Brahmans' houses. A widower would not be admitted, as his very presence would be considered sufficient to bring misfortune 1.

CHAPTER XII

Mantrams.—Their Efficacy.—The Gayatri.—The word 'Aum.'—Magic Mantrams.

These famous mantrams, which the Hindus think so much of, are nothing more than prayers or consecrated formulas, but they are considered so powerful that they can, as the Hindus say, enchain the power of the gods themselves. Mantrams are used for invocation, for evocation, or as spells. They may be either preservative or destructive, beneficent or maleficent, salutary or harmful. In fact, there is no effect that they are not capable of producing. Through them an evil spirit can be made to take possession of any one, or can be exorcised. They can inspire with love or hate, they can cause an illness or cure it, induce death or preserve life, or cause destruction to a whole army. There are mantrams which are infallible for all these and many other things besides. Fortunately one mantram can counteract the effect of another, the stronger neutralizing the weaker.

The purohitas are more familiar with these mantrams than any other class of Hindus; but all Brahmans are supposed to be acquainted at any rate with the principal

1 This is only partially applicable nowadays.—Ed.
THE EFFICACY OF MANTRAMS

ones, if this Sanskrit verse, which one often hears repeated, is to be believed:

Devadhinam jagat sarvam,
Mantradhinam ta devata
Tan mantram brahmanadhinam
Brahmana mama devata.

Which means, 'The universe is under the power of the gods; the gods are under the power of mantrams; the mantrams are under the power of the Brahmins; therefore the Brahmins are our gods.' The argument is plainly set out, as you may see, and these modest personages have no scruples about arrogating to themselves the sublime title of Brahma gods, or gods of the earth.

As an instance of the efficacy of mantrams, I will cite the following example, which is taken from the well-known Hindu poem Brahmottara-Kanda, composed in honour of Siva:

'Dasarha, king of Madura, having married Kalavati, daughter of the king of Benares, was warned by the princess on their wedding-day that he must not take advantage of his rights as her husband, because the mantram of the five letters, which she had learned, had so purged and purified her that any man who ventured upon any familiarities with her would do so at the risk of his life, unless he had been previously cleansed from all defilements through the same medium. Being his wife she could not teach him this mantram, because by doing so she would become his guru, and consequently his superior. The next day the husband and wife both went in quest of the great Rishi, or penitent, Garga, who, on learning the object of their visit, bade them fast for one day and bathe the following day in the Ganges. Thus prepared the pair returned to the penitent, who made the husband sit down on the ground facing the east, and having seated himself by his side, but facing the west, he whispered these two words in his ear, "Namah Sivaya!" Scarcely had the king Dasarha heard these marvellous words when a flight of crows was seen issuing from different parts of his body, which flew away and disappeared; these crows being nothing more or less

1 This means, 'All hail to Siva!' and is the mantram of the five letters.—Dubois.
than the sins which the prince had previously com-
mittet.'

'This story,' continues the author, 'is really true. I had it from my guru Veda-Vyasa, who learned it himself from the Para-Brahma. The king and his wife, thus purified, lived happily together for a great many years, and only quitted this world to join Para-Brahma, the Supreme Being, in the abode of bliss.'

When one points out to the Brahmins that these much-vaulted mantrams do not produce startling effects in the present day, they reply that this must be attributed to the Kali-yuga, that is to say, to the Fourth Age of the world, in which we are now living, a veritable age of iron, when everything has degenerated; a period of calamities and disasters, when virtue has ceased to rule the earth. They maintain, nevertheless, that it is still not at all uncommon for mantrams to work miracles, and this they confirm by citing stories which are quite as authentic and credible as the one I have just related.

The most famous and the most efficacious mantram for taking away sins, whose power is so great that the very gods tremble at it, is that which is called the gayatri. It is so ancient that the Vedas themselves were born from it. Only a Brahmin has the right to recite it, and he must prepare himself beforehand by other prayers and by the most profound meditation. He must always repeat it in a low voice, and take the greatest care that he is not overheard by a Sudra, or even by his own wife, particularly at the time when she is in a state of uncleanness. The following are the words of this famous mantram:

\[\text{Tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya} \\
\text{Dhimahi dhiyo yo nah prachodayat.}\]

1 Long after I had finished my first work, I found in No. 27 of the Asiatic Journal of 1818 two different English translations of the gayatri, the exactitude of which I in no way vouch for, nor can I give any preference to either translation. This, at any rate, is the sense of them:

1. 'Let us worship the light of God, greater than you, O Sun, who can so well guide our understanding. The wise man always considers this (the Sun) the supreme manifestation of the divinity.'

2. 'Let us worship the supreme light of the Sun, the God of all things, who can so well guide our understanding, like an eye suspended in the vault of heaven.'—DUBOIS.
It is a prayer in honour of the Sun, one of whose names is Savitru. It is a great mystery. Each word, and indeed each syllable, is full of allusions which only a very few Brahmins understand. I have never met any one who was able to give me an intelligible translation or explanation of them. A Brahmin would be guilty of an unpardonable crime and the most terrible sacrilege if he imparted it to an unbeliever. There are several other mantrams which are called gayatri but the one mentioned above is that which is most generally used.

After the gayatri, the most powerful mantram is the mysterious monosyllable om or aum. Though it is to the interest of the Brahmins to keep the real meaning of this sacred word a profound secret, and though the greater number of them do not understand it themselves, there does not appear to be much doubt that it is the symbolic name of the Supreme Being, one and indivisible, like the word aum. This mystic word, which is always pronounced with extreme reverence, suggests an obvious analogy to that ineffable and mysterious Hebrew word Jehovah.

Though the Brahmins are supposed to be the sole guardians of the mantrams, many others venture to recite them. In some professions they are absolutely indispensable. Doctors, for instance, even when not Brahmins, would be considered very ignorant, and, no matter how clever they might be in their profession, would inspire no confidence, if they were unable to recite the special mantram that suited each complaint; for a cure is attributed quite as much to mantrams as to medical treatment. One of the principal reasons why so little confidence is placed in European doctors by the Hindus is that, when administering their remedies, they recite neither mantrams nor prayers.

1 The Hindu conception of the word aum is thus explained by one authority:—'As long as there has been a Hindu Faith the power of sound has been recognized in the Sacred Word. In that word lie all potencies, for the sacred word expresses the one and latent Being, every power of generation, of preservation, and of destruction. . . . Therefore was it never to be sounded save when the mind was pure, when the mind was tranquil, when the life was noble.'—Ed.

2 Failure to feel the pulse is also regarded by the Hindus as a sure proof of medical ignorance.—Ed.
Midwives must also be acquainted with a good many; and they are sometimes called mantradaris, or women who repeat mantrams; for there is no moment, according to Hindu superstitions, when mantrams are more needed than at the birth of a child. Both the new-born infant and its mother are peculiarly susceptible to the influence of the evil eye, the inauspicious combination of unlucky planets or unlucky days, and a thousand other unpropitious elements. A good midwife, well primed with efficacious mantrams, foresees all these dangers and averts them by reciting the proper words at the proper moment.

But the cleverest mantram reciters, and at the same time the most feared, are the charlatans who profess to be thoroughly initiated in the occult sciences, such as sorcerers, necromancers, soothsayers, &c. They have in their possession, if they are to be believed, mantrams which are capable of working all the wonders which I enumerated at the beginning of this chapter. They recite them for the purpose of discovering stolen property, thieves, hidden treasure, foretelling future events, &c. In a country where superstition, ignorance, and the most extravagant credulity reign supreme, it is no wonder that impostors abound and are able to make a large number of dupes.

The hatred which is felt for these mischievous sorcerers is only equalled by the fear that they inspire; and that is saying a great deal. Woe to any one who is accused of having injured another by his spells! The punishment that is usually inflicted consists in pulling out two front teeth from the upper jaw. When bereft of these two teeth, it is thought the sorcerer will no longer be able to pronounce his diabolical mantrams distinctly. If he mispronounces the words his familiar spirit will be angry, and the misfortune that he is trying to bring down upon some one else will, it is thought, fall on his own head.

One day a poor man who lived near me, and who had just undergone this painful punishment, came and threw himself at my feet, protesting his innocence and begging for protection and for advice as to how he could obtain justice. The unfortunate fellow certainly did not look like a sorcerer, but as I had neither the power nor the means of interfering in the affair, I could only offer him my sym-
pathy and assure him how indignant I felt at the iniquitous treatment to which he had been subjected.

There are certain mantrams which have a very special signification. They are called bija-aksharas, or radical letters; such, for instance, as hram, hrim, hrom, hroum, hraha, &c. To those who have the key to the true pronunciation of them and know how to use and apply them, nothing is impossible; there is no limit to the miracles they can perform. The following is an example:—

Siva had initiated a little bastard boy into all the mysteries of these radical letters. The boy was the son of a Brahmin widow, and on account of the stain on his birth had experienced the mortification of being excluded from a wedding feast, to which many persons of his caste had been invited. He revenged himself by simply pronouncing two or three of these radical letters through a crack in the door of the room where the guests were assembled. Immediately, by virtue of these marvellous words, all the dishes that had been prepared for the feast were turned into frogs. This wonderful occurrence naturally caused great consternation amongst the guests. Every one was convinced it was due to the little bastard, and fearing worse might happen they all rushed with one accord to invite him to come in. After they had apologized humbly for what had happened he entered the room and merely pronounced the same words backwards, when the frogs suddenly disappeared, and they saw with great pleasure the cakes and other refreshments which had been on the table before.

I will leave it to some one else to find, if he can, anything amongst the numberless obscurations of the human mind that can equal the extravagance of this story, which a Hindu would nevertheless believe implicitly.

CHAPTER XIII

Explanation of the Principal Ceremonies of the Brahmins and of other Castes.—The Sam-kalpa.—Puja.—Aratti.—Akshatas.—Pavitram.—Sesamum and Durka Grass.—Puniaha vachana.—Pancha-pavita.—Purification of Places where Ceremonies take place.—Pandals, or Pavilions made of Leaves.

Before entering into more particular details with regard to the ceremonies of the Brahmins, it is necessary, in order
to make the rest of this book intelligible, to begin by giving an explanation of certain terms pertaining to these ceremonies, and also a short summary of the chief objects aimed at. This sketch will suffice to indicate the peculiar tastes and inclinations of the Brahmins, and will no doubt cause my readers to inquire how these men were able to impose so many extravagant absurdities on a people whose civilization dates from such very ancient times, and yet to retain their full confidence.

The Sam-kalpa.

The chief preparatory ceremony amongst the Brahmins is the sam-kalpa, which means literally 'intensive contemplation'.

This method of mental preparation must in no instance be omitted before any religious ceremony of the Brahmins. When the sam-kalpa has been performed with due meditation, everything that they undertake will succeed; but its omission is alone sufficient to transform all the ceremonies that follow into so many acts of sacrilege which will not pass unpunished. The Brahmin must meditate preliminarily on the following points. He must think—

1. Of Vishnu, meditating upon him as the ruler and preserver of this vast universe, as the author and giver of all good things, and as he who brings all undertakings to a successful issue. With these thoughts in his mind he repeats thrice the name of Vishnu, and worships him.

2. He must think of Brahma. He must remember that there are nine Brahmans, who created the eight million four hundred thousand kinds of living creatures, of which the most important is man; that it is the first of these Brahmans who is ruling at the present time; that he will live for a hundred years of the gods; that his life is divided into four parts, of which the first and half the second are already gone. He must then worship him.

3. He must think of the Avatara, or incarnation, of Vishnu in the form of a white pig, which was the shape in

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1 Sam-kalpa literally means resolve of the mind, will, purpose, definite intention, determination, desire. It is no ceremony in itself, but is a prelude to every ceremony.—Ep.

2 Each day, according to the reckoning of the gods, is as long as several milliards of years.—Dubois.
which that deity slew the giant Hiranyaksha. After having thoroughly realized the idea that this *Avatara* is the most celebrated of all in the *Kali-yuga*, he worships the pig god.

4. He must think of Manu. He reminds himself that there are fourteen Manus, of which the names are *Svarochisha, Tamas, Svayambhuva, Raivata, &c. &c.*, and that they reign over the fourteen worlds during the hundred gods' years that Brahma's life will last. As *Vaivasvata Manu* is now in power in the *Kali-yuga*, in which the Hindus are living at this present time, he offers him worship.

5. He must think of the *Kali-yuga*. He must recollect that we are at present in the early part of this *yuga*.

6. He must think of *Jambu-Dwipa*. This is the continent in which India is situated. He pictures it to himself as surrounded by a sea of salt water, having in the centre a mountain of gold sixteen thousand *yojana*¹ high, called *Mahameru*, on the thousand summits of which the gods have fixed their abode. He must remember that at the foot of this mountain on the east side grows the *Jambuvruksha*, a tree which is a thousand *yojana* high and as many in circumference; that the juice of the fruits of this tree, which fall of their own accord when ripe, forms a large river which flows towards the west, where it mingles its waters with those of the sea; that the water of this river possesses the power of converting everything it touches into gold, for which reason it has been called the *Bangaru-nadi* or Golden River. The Brahmin must not omit to think of this sacred tree, nor yet of the continent of *Jambu-Dwipa*, where it is situated.

7. He must think of the great king Bharata, who at one time governed *Jambu-Dwipa* and whose reign forms one of the Hindu eras.

8. He must think of the side of the *Mahameru* which faces him, that is to say, of the west side of this sacred mountain, if he lives to the west of it, of the east, if he lives to the east of it, &c.

¹ The ordinary *yojana* is about nine miles, but the sacred *yojana* which is here mentioned, is very much longer.—Dubois.

*Yojana* literally means the distance driven at a yoking or stretch; equal to four *kroesas*, or about nine English miles.—Ed.
9. He must think of the corner of the world called *Agni-diku*, or the Corner of Fire, over which the god *Agni-Iswara* presides, and which is that part of the world in which India is situated.

10. He must think of the Dravida country, where the Tamil (*Arava*) language is spoken.

11. He must think of the moon's pathway, and the change of one moon to another.

12. He must think of the year of the cycle in which he is living. The Hindu cycle is composed of sixty years, each of which has its own particular name. And he must say aloud the name of the particular year of the cycle in which he is living.

13. He must think of the *ayana* in which he is. There are two *ayanas* in the year, each of which lasts six months—one called the *dakshina-ayana* or southern *ayana*, which includes the time during which the sun is south of the equinocial line, and the other called *uttara-ayana* or northern *ayana*, which comprises the rest of the year, during which the sun is north of this line. He must pronounce the name of the *ayana* which is then going on.

14. He must think of the *rutu*, or season of the year. There are six *rutus* in the year, each of which lasts two months. He must pronounce the name of the *rutu* in which he is performing the *sam-kalpa*.

15. He must think of the moon. Each moon is divided into two equal parts, one of which is called *Sukla-paksha* and the other *Krishna-paksha*. Each of these divisions lasts fourteen days, and each day has its own special name. He must call to mind the division and day of the moon, and pronounce their names.

16. He must think of the day of the week and pronounce the name.

17. He must think of the star of the day. There are twenty-seven in each lunar month, each of which has a name. He must pronounce the name of the one which is in the ascendant on that day.

18. He must think of the *yoga* of the day. There are twenty-seven of these, corresponding to the twenty-seven

1 *Yoga* means conjunction of stars.—Ed.
stars, each with its own name. He must pronounce the name of the yoga, as also that of the star.

19. He must think of the karana, of which there are eleven in each lunar month, each with its own name. The same formality must be gone through as with the star and the yoga.

All these divers objects to which the Brahmin must turn his thoughts when performing the sam-kalpa are so many personifications of Vishnu, or rather are Vishnu himself under different names. Besides this ordinary sam-kalpa, there is another more elaborate one, which is reserved for grand occasions, and which will be described further on.

This pious introduction to all their ceremonies averts, by virtue of its merits, every obstacle which the evil spirits and giants would put in the way. The name of Vishnu alone, it is true, is sufficient to put them to flight, but nothing can resist the power of the sam-kalpa.

PUJA, OR SACRIFICE.

Of all the Hindu rites, puja is the one that occurs most frequently in all their ceremonies, both public and private, in their temples and elsewhere. Every Brahmin is absolutely obliged to offer it at least once a day to his household gods. There are three kinds of pujas—the great, the intermediate, and the small.

The great sacrifice is composed of the following parts:—
1. Avahana. The evocation of the deity.
2. Asana. A seat is presented to him to sit on.
3. Swagata. He is asked if he has arrived quite safely, and if he met with no accident on the way.
4. Padya. Water is offered to him for washing his feet.
5. Arghya. Water is presented to him in which flowers, saffron, and sandalwood powder have been placed.
6. Achamania. Water is offered that he may wash his mouth and face in the prescribed fashion.
7. Madhu-parka. He is offered in a metal vessel a beverage composed of honey, sugar, and milk.
8 Snana-jala. Water for his bath.

1 Puja means honour, respect, homage, worship.—Ed.
15. Neivedyam. This last offering is composed of cooked rice, fruit, liquefied butter, sugar and other eatables, and betel.

Before offering these gifts, care should be taken to sprinkle a little water over them with the tips of the fingers. The worshippers then prostrate themselves before the deity.

For the intermediate puja the last nine articles are offered; for the lesser, only the last six.

When sacrifices of blood are necessary to appease ill-disposed gods or evil spirits, the blood and the flesh of the animals that have been sacrificed are offered to them.

ARTI OR ARATTI.

This ceremony is performed only by married women and courtesans. Widows would not be allowed, under any circumstances, to participate in it.\(^1\)

A lamp made of kneaded rice-flour is placed on a metal dish or plate. It is then filled with oil or liquefied butter and lighted. The women each take hold of the plate in turn and raise it to the level of the person’s head for whom the ceremony is being performed, describing a specified number of circles with it. Instead of using a lighted lamp they sometimes content themselves with filling a vessel with water coloured with saffron, vermilion, and other ingredients. The object of this ceremony is to counteract the influence of the evil eye and any ill-effects which, according to Hindu belief, may arise from the jealous and spiteful looks of ill-intentioned persons.

The arati is one of the commonest of their religious

\(^1\) Widows are not allowed to take part in any of the domestic ceremonies of the Hindus. Their presence alone would be thought to bring misfortune, and if they dared to appear they would be rudely treated and sent away.—Dubois.
practices, and is observed in public and private. It is performed daily, and often several times a day, over persons of high rank, such as rajahs, governors of provinces, generals, and other distinguished members of society. Whenever people in these positions have been obliged to show themselves in public, or to speak to strangers, they invariably call for the courtesans or dancing-girls from the temples to perform this ceremony over them, and so avert any unpleasant consequences that might arise from the baleful glances to which they have been exposed. Kings and princes often have dancing-girls in their employ who do nothing else but perform this ceremony.

The aratti is also performed for idols. After the dancing-girls have finished all their other duties in the temple, they never fail to perform this ceremony twice daily over the images of the gods to whom their services are dedicated. It is performed with even more solemnity when these idols have been carried in procession through the streets, so as to turn aside malignant influences, to which the gods are as susceptible as any ordinary mortal.

Aratti is also performed for the same purpose over elephants, horses, and other domestic animals.

This superstition about the evil eye is common enough in many European countries. I have seen simple French peasants hastily draw their children away from some stranger or ill-looking person, for fear his glance might cast some spell over the little ones. The same notion was prevalent at the time of the ancient Romans, as Virgil, amongst others, bears witness in the following verse:

‘Nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos.’

The Romans too had their god Fascinus, and amulets of the same name were given to children to wear to preserve them from spells of this nature. The statue of the god, placed on the triumphal car, preserved returning conquerors from the malignity of the envious. Hindus call this spell drishti-dosha, or the influence of the eye. And they invented the aratti to avert and counteract it. Their

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1 The word aratti itself means trouble, misfortune, pain.—Ed.
2 Aratti is performed also when people take children from one village to another, on visits to relations and friends.—Ed.
credulity on this subject is boundless. According to them it is not only animate objects that come under the influence of the *drishti-dosha*; vegetable substances are equally susceptible to it. It is to avert this spell that they stick up a pole in all their gardens and fields that are under cultivation. On the top of this pole they fix a large earthen vessel, well whitened on the outside with lime. This is to attract the attention of malicious persons who may be passing, as it will be the first thing to catch their eye and will thus prevent their spells from producing any disastrous effects on the crops, which otherwise would certainly be affected by the evil influence.

**Akshatas.**

This is the name given to husked rice coloured with a mixture of saffron and vermillion. There are two kinds of *akshatas*, one specially consecrated by *mantrams*, the other simple coloured rice. The first is used when performing *puja* and in other great ceremonies; the other kind is only a toilet requisite, or is used as an offering of politeness. It is considered good manners to offer some in a metal cup to any one to whom a ceremonious invitation is sent. The latter in return takes a few grains and applies them to the forehead.

**The Pavitram**

The object of the *pavitram* is to scare away giants, evil spirits, or devils, whose mission it is to bring disasters upon men and mar the ceremonies of the Brahmins. The very sight of the *pavitram* makes them tremble and take to flight.

This powerful amulet consists of three, five, or seven stalks of *darbha* grass plaited together in the form of a ring. Before beginning any ceremony the presiding *pucohita* takes the *pavitram*, and, after dipping it in sanctified water, places it on the ring finger of his right hand. The seeds and oil of sesamum are very nearly as efficacious as the

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1 The *pavitram* is made of stalks of *darbha* grass. It is worn simply as a mark of sanctification. Three stalks are generally used for funeral ceremonies; two for marriage ceremonies and other suspicious occasions.—Ed.
pavitram; but the grass they call darbha is the most efficacious, for it possesses the virtue of purifying everything that it touches. The Brahmans can do nothing without it. It is the basis of all those pious and meritorious acts which are known by the generic term of moksharthas, or deeds which lead to everlasting felicity, and which consist of the asva-medha (sacrifice of the horse), the vaja-peya, the raja-suya, the sattra-yaga, and other kinds of yagnas which are particularly pleasing to Vishnu.

No important action in life can take place without it. That is to say, it is necessary in the kamyarthas, which include the garbha-dana, the jata-karma, the nama-karma, the anna-prasana, the chaula, the upanayana, the simanta, and marriage. It is in frequent use in the various religious exercises of the Brahmans pertaining to their four states, namely, Brahmachari, Grahastha, Vana-prastha, and Sanyasi (vide p. 160 et seq.). In fact this sacred grass, the purity of which is considered unequalled, appears in every religious or civil ceremony.

Puniaha-vachana.

The literal translation of this word is 'the evocation of virtue,' and it is the name given to the ceremony by which the sacred water is consecrated. They proceed thus:—Having purified a place in the house in the ordinary manner, they sprinkle it with water. Then the officiating Brahmin purohita seats himself with his face to the east, and they place before him a banana leaf with a measure of rice on it. At one side is a copper vessel full of water, the outside of which has been whitened with lime; the mouth of the vessel is covered with mango leaves, and it is placed on the rice. Near the copper vessel they put a little heap of saffron, which represents the god Vigneshwara, to whom

1 Vaja-peya = trial of strength; a kind of soma sacrifice. Sattra-yaga = another great soma sacrifice. Raja-suya = royal inaugural sacrifice.—Ed.

2 Kamyarthas = deeds which lead to worldly happiness. Garbhada = pregnancy. Jata-karma = horoscope writing. Nama-karma = naming ceremony. Anna prasana = weaning or food-giving ceremony. Chaula = head-shaving ceremony. Upanayana = initiation of a pupil. Simanta = ceremony of parting the hair, in the case of women six or eight months in pregnancy.—Ed.
they perform puja, and for neivedhya they offer jaggery (raw sugar) and betel. They then throw a little sandalwood powder and akshatās into the copper vessel, while reciting appropriate mantrams, with the intention of turning the water which it contains into the sacred water of the Ganges. Finally they offer a sacrifice to the vessel, and for neivedhya they offer bananas and betel. The water thus sanctified purifies places and persons that have become unclean.

PANCHA-GAVIA.

I have already explained 1 of what disgusting materials the mixture known by this name is composed. This is the way in which it is consecrated. The house is purified in the usual way. They then bring five little new earthen vessels, into one of which they put milk, into another curds, into a third liquefied butter, into a fourth cow-dung, and into the fifth the urine of a cow. These five little vessels are then placed in a row on the ground on some darbha grass, and they perform puja in the following manner:—

First, they make a profound obeisance before the deity pancha-gavia, and they meditate for some time on his merits and good qualities. Some flowers are placed on the five vessels, and for asana they make the god an imaginary present of a golden seat or throne. They then offer to each vessel, as arghya, a little water, which is poured round them. For padya, a little more water is poured out for them to wash their feet, and achamania is offered immediately afterwards in the same way. The snana-jala is water in which a little garika grass has been steeped, which is presented to the god pancha-gavia, to enable him to perform his ablutions. The tops of the vessels are then covered with akshatās, while they are presented, in imagination of course, with jewels, rich garments, and sandalwood. In conclusion they offer them flowers, incense, a lighted lamp, bananas, and betel as neivedhya, and finally make another profound obeisance.

These preliminaries ended, the officiating priest addresses the following prayer to the god pancha-gavia, or, what is the same thing, to the substances contained in the five

1 Chapter III.
vessels: 'O god pancha-gāvia, vouchsafe to pardon the sins of all the creatures in the world who offer sacrifice to you and drink you, pancha-gāvia. You have come proceeding from the body of the cow; therefore I offer you my prayers and sacrifices, in order that I may obtain the remission of my sins and the purification of my body, which are accorded to those who drink you. Vouchsafe also to absolve us, who have offered you puja, from all the sins that we have committed either inadvertently or deliberately. Forgive us and save us!'

After this prayer they make another profound obeisance and put the contents of the five vessels into one. Then taking this vessel into his hands, the purohita performs the hari-smarana\(^1\), drinks a little of this precious liquid, pours a little into the hollow of the hands of all persons present, who also drink it, and keeps the rest for use during the ceremony. Betel is then presented to the Brahmans who are present, after which they disperse.

Nothing can equal the supposed purifying virtues of this mixture. Brahmans and other Hindus frequently drink it to remove both external and internal defilements.

There is also another lustral preparation called pancha-amrita, which is composed of milk, curds, liquefied butter, honey, and sugar mixed together. This is not filthy and disgusting like the one previously mentioned, but then it is much less efficacious. It however possesses a certain degree of merit under some circumstances.

**The Purification of Places.**

Before the performance of any ceremony the place where it is to take place must be previously purified. This is usually the duty of the women, and the principal ingredients required are cow-dung and darbha grass. They dilute the cow-dung with water and make a sort of plaster with it, which they spread over the floor with their hands, making zigzags and other patterns with lime or chalk as they go on. They then draw wide lines of alternate red and white over this and sprinkle the whole with darbha grass, after which the place is perfectly pure. This is the way in which

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\(^1\) Hari-smarana means meditating on Hari, or Vishnu.—Ed.
Hindus purify their houses day by day from the defilements caused by promiscuous goers and comers. It is the rule amongst the upper classes to have their houses rubbed over once a day with cow-dung, but in any class it would be considered an unpardonable and gross breach of good manners to omit this ceremony when they expected friends to call or were going to receive company.

This custom appears odd at first sight, but it brings this inestimable benefit in its train, that it cleanses the houses where it is in use from all the insects and vermin which would otherwise infest them.

**Pandalas.**

All the more important Hindu ceremonies, such as upanayana, marriages, &c., take place under canopies made of leaves and branches of trees which are erected with much pomp and care in the courtyard or in front of the principal entrance door of the house. The *pandal* is usually supported by twelve wooden posts or pillars, and covered with foliage and branches of trees. The top or ceiling is ornamented with paintings or costly stuffs, while the whole is hung with garlands of flowers, foliage, and many other decorations. The pillars are painted in alternate bands of red and white. The *pandal* of rich people are often exquisitely decorated. A propitious day, hour, and star are always chosen on which to erect these canopies. Then the relations and friends all assemble to set up the centre pillar, which is called the *muhurta-kal*, and to which they offer *puja* to the accompaniment of music. Under this canopy all the ceremonies connected with the fête take place, and the guests remain underneath it till the end of the performance. The houses of Hindus are not as a rule sufficiently spacious, or in any way well adapted for receiving large numbers of guests, so necessity has suggested this picturesque alternative.

Besides these *pandalas*, which are only used on grand occasions, upper-class people generally have a permanent

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1 Amongst the Sudras it is only those who belong to the Right-hand faction who are allowed to have twelve pillars or posts to their *pandalas*. If a Left-hand Sudra, who is only entitled to eleven, should take upon himself to put twelve, a frightful fracas would ensue.—Dubois.
one before their principal entrance door to protect from the
sun persons who may come to visit them, and who could
not with propriety and due regard to custom be invited to
come inside.

CHAPTER XIV

Ceremonies to be observed after a Woman's Confinement.—Ceremonies
performed over Infants.

JATA-KARMA.

When a Brahmanl begins to feel the pangs of child-birth
her husband should be near her, so that he may carefully
note the date of the month, the day, the star of the day,
the yoga, the karana, the hour, and the moment when the
child is born. And to prevent any of these details being
forgotten, he puts them down in writing.

The house where a woman is confined, as well as all
those who live in it, are unclean for ten days. Before this
time is up they must have no intercourse with any one.
On the eleventh day all the linen and clothes that have
been used during this period are given to the washerman,
and the house is purified in the manner I have already
described. Then they call in a Brahmin purohita. The
woman who has just been confined, holding the child in
her arms, and with her husband by her side, seats herself
on a sort of earthen platform, which is set up in the centre
of the house and covered with a cloth. The purohita then
approaches them, performs the sam-kalpa, offers puja to
the god Vigneshwara, and goes through the ceremony of
the puniaha-vachana, or consecration of the sacred water.
He pours a small quantity of this water into the hands of
the father and mother of the child, who drink a portion
and pour the rest over their heads. He also sprinkles this
water over the house and all who are living in it, and throws
what remains down the well. The purohita is then pre-
pared with some betel and a small gift, after which he
departs. This ceremony, which is called jata-karma, re-
moves all uncleanness, but the woman who has been
confined does not become perfectly pure before the end
of a month. Until that time has elapsed she must live apart and have no communication with any one.

**Nama-kaema.**

On the twelfth day after the birth of the child they give it a name. This is the *nama-karma* ceremony. The house having been duly purified, the father of the child invites his relatives and friends to be present at the ceremonies and at the feast which follows them. The guests go all together to perform their ablutions. On their return they first of all offer the sacrifice to fire called *homam*, in honour of the nine planets. Then the father of the child, holding it in his arms, seats himself on the little raised platform of earth and performs the *sam-kalpa*. By his side is a copper dish full of rice. With the first finger of his right hand, in which he holds a gold ring, he writes on this rice the day of the moon, the name of the day, that of the constellation under which the child was born, and finally the name that he wishes to give him. He then calls the child three times by this name in a loud voice.

This ceremony ended, he gives a present to the presiding *purohita*, distributes betel to all the Brahmins present, and then all take their places at the feast which has been prepared. As soon as it is finished the master of the house again offers betel to his guests, and also presents, if he is rich enough.

The mother of the child does not appear at this ceremony for the reason mentioned at the end of the preceding section.

**Anna-prasana.**

As soon as the child is six months old he is weaned. Then the *anna-prasana* takes place. The name of this ceremony expresses the idea of feeding the child on solid

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1 This custom closely resembles that which Jewish women were obliged to follow under similar circumstances (Leviticus xi), but the Hindus pay no attention, as did the Israelites, to the difference in the sex of the child. As regards the time during which the uncleanness of the mother lasts, it is just the same with the Hindus whether a boy or a girl is born.—DuBois.

This is wrong. When a mother gives birth to a girl, pollution lasts for forty days; in the case of a boy, only thirty days.—Ed.
food for the first time. For this occasion they choose a month, a week, a day, and a star which all combine to give favourable auguries. A *pandal* is erected, which is ornamented all round with *toranams*¹, or wreaths of mango leaves, some of which are also hung over the entrance door of the house, the inside of which has been carefully purified by the women. The father of the child sallies forth, provided with a cup full of *akshatas*, to invite his relations and friends to the feast. All the guests, having purified themselves by bathing, assemble under the *pandal*. The mother, holding the child in her arms, and accompanied by her husband, seats herself beside him on the little platform of earth which has been set up in the centre. The *purohita* advances towards them, performs the *samkalpa*, offers, firstly, *homa* in honour of the nine planets, then a sacrifice to fire, to which he presents clarified butter and betel for *neivedya*. When he has finished, the women sing verses expressing their good wishes for the future happiness of the child, and perform *arati*² over him.

The father offers *puja* to his household gods, and a portion of the dishes prepared for the general feast is set apart as *neivedya* for them.

Then the married women form a procession and sing, while they bring in a new dish of silver-plated copper, which is given by the maternal uncle of the child, and one of those cords made of cotton thread which all Hindus wear round their loins, and to which the little piece of calico is fastened which covers their private parts. They touch the child with these two articles, and then pour some *paramanna*, a mixture composed of rice, sugar, and other ingredients, into the vessel. Recommencing their song, they proceed in the same solemn order towards the household gods and place before them the dish, which is then known as the *dish god*. They make a profound obeisance all together to this new deity; then addressing it and the rest of the deities, they implore them to make the child grow, to give him strength, health, long life, and plenty of

¹ These *toranams* are always used at times of rejoicing. They are an outward sign of rejoicing, and an announcement that a feast is going on, inviting people to come.—Dusoirs.

² See last chapter.
this world’s goods. Then taking up again the dish god, they carry it back, still singing, to the child. They first of all fasten the little cord round its loins. Two of the women then make it open its mouth, while a third pours some of the mixture contained in the dish down its throat. Instruments of music are playing and the women are singing during the whole of this ceremony. It is terminated by the aratti, after which all the Brahmins present are offered akshatas consecrated by mantras. Each one takes a pinch of the coloured rice, part of which he puts on the child’s head and the rest on his own.

Then they sit down to a feast, and the ceremony is ended by a distribution of betel and a few presents given by the master of the house to his guests.

THE CHAULA.

Three years after the birth of the child the tonsure, or chaula, is made for the first time. The Brahmins who are invited assemble under the pandal after having performed their ablutions. The child is brought in by his father and mother, who seat him between them on the little earthen platform. The married women then proceed to perform his toilette. They begin by anointing him from head to foot with oil, after which they wash him with warm water. They then colour his forehead and sundry other parts of his body with powdered sandalwood and akshatas, deck him with ornaments, and finally put a long necklace of coral beads round his neck and two bracelets to match on his wrists.

The purohita then draws near the child thus adorned and performs the sam-kulpa, and also offers homam to the nine planets. He next traces on the floor in front of the child a square patch with red earth, which they cover with rice that has the husk on. The idol Vigneshwara is placed on one side, and to it they perform puja, offering brinjals, raw sugar, and betel for neiveddy.

The child is made to sit near the square patch, and the

1 Only the male child.—Ed.

2 Beringela in Portuguese, a purple vegetable shaped something like a fig.—DUBOIS.

This is wrong. Brinjals are never offered to an idol.—Ed.
barber, after offering worship to his razor
1, proceeds to shave the child's head, leaving one lock at the top, which is never cut. While the barber is performing his part of the ceremony, the women sing, musical instruments are played, and all the Brahmins present remain standing in perfect silence. As soon as the barber has finished, they throw him the money due to him. This he picks up, and before retiring he also carries off the rice that has been scattered over the square patch.

The child is immediately put into a bath to purify him from the defiling touch of the barber. Then his toilette is begun anew. The women perform the ceremony of aratti, and the purohita for the second time performs the homam to the nine planets. The entertainment generally ends with a feast and the distribution of presents to the Brahmins. The musicians are then paid, and receive besides their money a measure of rice each.

The ears of children of both sexes are pierced at about the same age. This is an occasion for another feast, very closely resembling the preceding ones. The goldsmith performs the operation with a very fine gold wire, and the size of the hole is gradually increased from time to time. The hole is generally made larger in the ears of girls, so that they may wear larger ornaments. In some provinces both men and women have the holes as large as a Spanish piastre.

However odd these customs may appear to us, at any rate they have the advantage of bringing the Brahmins often together and obliging them to fulfil their mutual obligations. And they certainly help to form a class of men who in tone and manners are infinitely superior to other Hindus.

1 This act of worship, which the barber always performs before shaving any one, consists in putting the razor to his forehead. — Dubois.

The same practice is observed by all artisans. — Ed.