PART II

THE FOUR STATES OF BRAHMINICAL LIFE

CHAPTER I

The Brahmachari.—Ceremony of the Upanayana, or Investiture of the Triple Cord.

In this Second Part I will bring to notice the most remarkable peculiarities of the Brahmin caste, the one of all others which clings most tenaciously to long established customs. Europeans have possessed up to the present time but very imperfect information on this subject, and what little information has been obtained has been taken as it were by stealth from the Brahmins, whose constant endeavour it is to veil their customs in mystery. I think that the details I am about to give will in consequence be found of considerable interest. These customs, however, do not belong exclusively to the Brahmin caste; some of them are common to other castes as well.

The life of a Brahmin has to be considered under four important aspects. The first is that of the young Brahmin who has been invested with the triple cord, and who is from that time called Brahmachari. The second is that of the Brahmin who has married, and who is thenceforward, but especially after he has become a father, called Grahastra. The third is that of the Brahmin who, renouncing the world, retires into the jungles with his wife, and who is then known as Vana-prastha (or dweller in the jungle). The fourth, and last, is the state of Sannyasi, or that of the Brahmin who decides to live entirely in solitude, apart even from his wife, a mode of life considered even more edifying than Vana-prastha.

It is well known that all Brahmans wear a thin cord, hung from the left shoulder and falling on to the right hip. It is composed of three strands of cotton, each strand

1 This cord is called yagnopavitam in Sanskrit, jandemu in Telugu, punul in Tamil, jenivara in Canarese.—DuBois.
formed by nine threads. The cotton with which it is made must be gathered from the plant by the hand of a pure Brahmin, and carded and spun by persons of the same caste, so as to avoid the possibility of its being defiled by passing through unclean hands. After a Brahmin is married his cord must have nine and not three strands.\(^1\)

Brahmins, and all the other castes which have the right to wear this cord, prize it more highly and are certainly more proud of it than are many Europeans who by noble birth or great deeds possess the right to wear the *corden* of the knightly orders.

Children from the age of five to nine are invested with this cord. March, April, May, and June are considered the most favourable months for the investiture. As the ceremony entails a considerable outlay, the poorer Brahmins go from house to house begging and collecting funds with which to defray the necessary expenses; and natives of all castes believe that in making such contributions they are performing a pious act.

This ceremony is called the *upanayana*, which means ‘introduction to knowledge,’ for by it a Brahmin acquires the right to study. Several of the rites performed on this occasion are also performed at the marriage ceremony, so I will only describe here those which are peculiar to the cord ceremony, and I will describe later on those common to both. The following details are extracts from the ritual of the *purohitas*, which bears the title of *Nitya Karma*.

To begin with, the father of the candidate must provide himself with many pieces of cotton cloth and plenty of small gold and silver coins, to be given as presents to the guests. He must also have a large supply of rice, flour, fresh and dried vegetables, fruit, oil of sesame, clarified

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\(^1\) The number three, adopted, and so to say consecrated, in this and in many other instances, is evidently used in an allegorical sense. I am rather inclined to believe that it refers to the three principal divinities of India—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva.—*Dubois.*

The Abbé is incorrect as to the number of strands. After marriage a Brahmin must wear six, and may wear nine. The triple cord is thus explained by one authority: ‘It symbolizes the body, speech, and mind. It symbolizes the control of each; and therefore when the knots are tied in it, it means that the man who wears the thread has gained control over body, speech, and mind.’—*Ed.*

L.B. 1989
butter; and milk in various forms, &c., for the feast; sandalwood, vermillion, saffron; and, above all things, plenty of betel-leaf and areca-nut. Further, there must be in abundance earthen vessels of all kinds, shapes, and sizes, seeing that on each of the four days that the feast lasts new ones will be required; those which have been once used on this occasion, as on that of a marriage, being always broken into little pieces. When everything is ready, the father goes to consult the purohita, or family priest, to ascertain what day will be most propitious. The purohita having fixed a day, a pandal, or pavilion, is erected. The preliminary ceremonies and purifications are gone through, and the invitations issued in the customary manner. Meanwhile, the women decorate the walls of the house, both inside and out, with alternate broad bands of red and white paint. When the guests have arrived and are all assembled under the pandal, the purohita makes his appearance, bringing with him a cord and an antelope’s skin.

Having performed the sam-kalpa, he offers puja, or adoration, to Vigneshwara, who is represented by a small conical heap of fresh cow-dung, placed in the centre of the pandal. He also makes to him offerings of garika, sandalwood, akshatas, or coloured rice, incense, and a lighted lamp.

This god Vigneshwara, or Pillayar, or Ganesa, &c., of whom we shall frequently have occasion to speak, is the god of obstacles, as his name (Vigna-iswara) denotes. He is of a morose and irascible disposition, and always ready to annoy and thwart those who fail to pay him sufficient respect. It is for this reason that so much deference is shown to him, and that on grand feast-days his good offices are the first to be invoked, his worshippers fearing lest he should take it into his head to disturb the feast and bring it to an untimely end.

1 The antelope’s skin is used as a mat on which the priest sits. The skins of both the antelope and the tiger are considered extremely pure; consequently one may sit on them without fear of defilement.—Dubsom.

2 Garika in Canarese, arugu in Tamil, dura in Sanskrit—a kind of millet-grass, Panicum dactylon.—Ed.

3 Ganesa literally means god of the inferior deities.—Ed.
The sacrifice to Vigneshwara ended, the master of the house presents betel-nut to the Brahmins, and then they all proceed to make their ablutions. On their return, the neophyte is made to sit on a raised platform of earth in the centre of the pandal. The married women chant sacred songs, while they proceed to adorn him as for the ceremony of the chaula, though on this occasion the garments are even richer and more costly; and finally they delicately pencil his eyelids with antimony 1.

His toilette finished, the father and mother of the candidate seat themselves by his side on the dais, and the women perform the ceremony of the aratti. Puja is offered to the household gods, and for neiveddyas, or votive offering, portions of all the dishes prepared for the feast are set aside. The guests then seat themselves on the ground, in rows, the women placing themselves so as not to be seen by the men. The women belonging to the household bring in the rice and the various dishes which have been prepared for the feast, helping everything with their fingers, the use of spoons being unknown amongst them. Each guest receives his portion on a banana leaf, or on other leaves sewn together, which are never used more than once. When the meal is over, betel and areca-nut are distributed, and the guests then separate.

The following day is called the muhurta, or great day; it is that on which the actual investiture takes place. The guests are invited to reassemble as on the preceding day.

The would-be recipient is seated on the dais, between his father and mother, all three having their faces turned towards the east. His loins are girt with a ‘pure’ cotton cloth, that is to say, either a new one, or at least one that has been newly washed 2. The married women perform his toilette, singing all the while.

1 This is a kind of ointment formerly used by other nations. It is still a common practice amongst the people of India to ornament the faces of their children with it. Courtesans and beauties, too, often use it. It certainly enhances the brilliancy of the eyes, and is a pleasing addition to a handsome face.—Dubois.

2 It is not only on this occasion that a ‘pure’ cloth is obligatory. Each time that a Brahmin bathes he washes his clothing, to purify it.—Dubois.
The purohita then approaches, holding in his hands an earthen chafing-dish full of hot embers. He performs the sam-kalpa, and then formally consecrates the pan of hot coals, which by virtue of his mantram becomes a god. To this he offers the sacrifice called homam, throwing on the fire some pieces of the aswatta, or sacred fig-tree, some cooked rice, and some melted butter. After this nine specially selected Brahmins offer the same sacrifice of the homam in honour of the nine planets. Then each having chosen a married woman, they all go off together, still singing, to convey the sacred fire to some place apart, where it must be carefully attended to and kept burning until the last day of the festival. It would be considered a very bad omen if, from inattention or any other cause, this fire were to be extinguished sooner.

The inauguration of the ishta devata (or tutelary deity) immediately follows. The married women provide themselves with a large copper vessel, which must be new and whitewashed outside. They take it, preceded by instruments of music, to be filled from a well or river. On returning to the house they place some mango leaves over the mouth of the vessel, and on the top of the leaves a cocoanut, coloured yellow with powdered saffron. The vessel is then wrapped in a woman's cloth which has been dyed the same colour, and is placed on the ground, on the top of a small heap of rice. Round its neck are then hung two palm leaves, rolled up and coloured red, and also a necklace of small black seeds, and a few other female ornaments. The purohita then invokes the tutelary deity and invites him to settle on the vessel, which becomes from that moment a female divinity, to whom the women promptly make an offering of flowers, incense, akshatas, a lighted lamp, and some betel-leaf. The mother of the young man then places the vessel, i.e. the new goddess, on her head, and accompanied by the other women, all singing in chorus, and preceded by the musicians, makes a solemn progress round the village, under a kind of canopy. On returning to the house she replaces the vessel, and, with the assistance of some of the other women, drapes round the two central pillars of the pandal two perfectly new cloths of the kind worn by women. The same procession then starts
again to fetch some mould from ant-heaps raised by kar-
raiyan \(^1\). With this they fill five small pots. These again
are sown with nine kinds of seed, which are well sprinkled
with milk and water, to make them sprout quickly. The
purohita approaches the five pots, and by virtue of his
mantrams, or incantations, turns them also into divinities.
The women then perform the customary acts of puja before
them, and after prostrating themselves place them close to
the tutelary deity. Then comes the invocation of gods,
planets, and ancestors. I shall give full particulars of this
ceremony when describing a marriage.

During the invocation to the gods a piece of saffron-
coloured thread is attached to the right wrist of the neo-
phyte. A barber then cuts the nails of his fingers and toes
and shaves his head, to the sound of instrumental music
and the songs of the women.

The young Brahmin next proceeds to bathe, in order to
purify himself after having been defiled by the barber's
touch. After his ablutions the women again dress him in
pure new cloths.

He is then purified by the purohita's incantations from
all the sins committed through youthful ignorance since
the day of his birth. The purohita also makes him a girdle
of plaited darbha, or sacred grass (Poa cynosuroides), and
winds it three times round his body, reciting mantrams all
the time. At this juncture some small coins are distributed
to all the Brahmins present. A muduga \(^2\) stick, three
cubits long, is then produced, and also ten pieces of rag
such as are used by men in the East to cover their private
parts \(^3\). These are dyed yellow in saffron water, and are
hung in a row on the muduga stick, which the candidate
puts over his shoulders. The purohita then recites the
'neck mantram' and invests the youth with the triple
cord, which constitutes him a Brahmin. During this
solemn performance the women sing, the musicians play,
bells are rung, and to add to the uproar all present make

\(^1\) These are the white ants so common in India, and so destructive.—
Dubois.

\(^2\) Butea frondosa. In Sanskrit palasa.—Ed.

\(^3\) Many natives only wear this diminutive covering. It is as small
as is compatible with any regard to modesty.—Dubois.
as much noise as they can by striking gongs or anything else they can lay their hands on.

After his investiture the newly initiated member takes part in what is known as the young men's feast, which is prepared for him and for other young Brahmins who have recently been invested with the cord.

At the termination of the repast the young man again seats himself on the raised platform of earth, facing the east. His father seats himself by his side, but with his face turned towards the west. A cloth is then thrown over them, hiding them from the eyes of the assembly. Meanwhile the women begin to sing, and the musicians to play. Meanwhile the father is whispering in his son's ear the secrets and mantras which in his new position as a duly initiated Brahmin it is fitting for him to know. It is said that the following remarkable words form part of the discourse:

'Remember, O my son, that there is only one God, who is the Creator, Lord, and Source of all things; whom every Brahmin should worship in secret. But know also that this is a great mystery that must never be revealed to the vulgar and ignorant people. Should you ever reveal it, surely great misfortune will fall upon you.'

These instructions, however, being given in Sanskrit, are not likely to be understood by the youth in whose ears they are uttered.

The Brahmins present then place akshatas, consecrated by mantras, on the head of their new colleague, and the women perform the ceremony of arati. Betel is afterwards served out to the guests, who, after bathing, return for the feast, which should on this day be on a particularly splendid and liberal scale.

The same evening, just when the lamps are being lighted, parents and friends again assemble under the pandal, and the newly initiated member seats himself on the earthen dais once more. The married women then go and fetch the pan containing the sacred fire, which is solemnly placed beside him, much singing going on the while. The purohita performs the sam-kulpa and recites mantras over this fire,

1 In Sanskrit kumara bhojanam. Only Brahmacharis partake of this feast, each being presented also with a new cloth.—Ed.
while singers and musicians start afresh with renewed vigour. The young Brahmin, standing over the coals, offers for the first time in his life the sacrifice called homam, which, by his investiture with the cord, he has now acquired the right to do. After this sacrifice, and another, which the youth performs specially to the fire, the women make a procession and carry back the pan of coals to its place, returning to perform aratti to the young Brahmin. The day terminates with a further distribution of betel to the Brahmins, after which they all separate.

On the third day there is the same assembly again, and for the most part a repetition of the ceremonies of the preceding day, particularly that of the homam; while the day's proceedings are terminated as before by a feast.

The ceremonial of the fourth and last day has a few additional peculiarities. After a repetition of the usual preliminaries, the women of the party form a procession and, singing all the time, go and fetch the sacred fire, which they set down close to the newly initiated member, who, standing up, places a few stalks of darbha grass round the pan of hot embers. He then performs homam by throwing on to the brazier some twigs of the sacred fig-tree, some cooked rice, some liquefied butter, and some coarse sugar.

Thence they go to the tutelary deity, and having offered puja to him, they invite him to depart as he came. At the same time a little of the sacramental water from the deified vessel is poured into the hand of each person present, who forthwith drinks it, the remainder being thrown away. The deity is also despoiled of his yellow cloth and of the saffron thread with which he was decorated. After a few prayers have been addressed to these different objects, the divine essence is supposed to escape from them.

The saffron-coloured thread which was fastened round the wrist of the new member is now taken off and put to soak in some milk.

One large new earthen vessel and five smaller ones, all with lids, are then brought, smeared on the outside with lime. The five smaller vessels are filled with water to begin with, and are then all emptied into the larger one. The lid of the larger vessel is put on, and it is then placed
against the central pillar of the pandal, to which is suspended a wreath of flowers falling exactly over the mouth of the vessel. An offering is made to it of sandalwood, coloured rice, and flowers, and for neivedyam, or votive offering, cakes and cooked rice. All those present are then sprinkled with the ceremonial water contained in the vessel. Then they go on to the five little vessels before mentioned, which are filled with earth. Puja is offered to them, and they are then placed in a row, receiving severally the name of one of the following five divinities: Brahma, Vishnu, Varuna, Rudra, and Devendra. They are then carried separately, and placed at the foot of five of the pillars supporting the pandal. They are invoked in the names which have just been given them, puja is offered to them, and the divinities are finally invited to return whence they came. Puja is offered to the five little pots, and the celestial beings they have been representing are also invited to retire. Then comes the turn of all the gods in general, the planets, and the ancestors whose presence was invoked at the beginning of the feast. Litanies are recited in their honour, and they too are politely invited to depart. Then the praises of the mantapam deity, that is to say, of the pandal itself, are sung; and he also is dismissed. Then the women, singing all the time, perform the arati to the new member; and every one being seated for the feast, the new Brahmin takes his place amongst the elders of the caste. After the meal is over he is presented to each of the principal guests in succession, and does sashtanga, or prostration, to them; they, on their part, congratulate him on his promotion, and wish him every good fortune. In conclusion, the master of the house distributes money amongst his guests, also pieces of cloth, the value of which is in proportion to the wealth of the giver. A cow is occasionally added to the other gifts.

Brahmins everywhere are unsurpassed in the art of flattery; and on these occasions they laud to the very skies those who have been prodigal in their gifts. Their liberality is exalted in all directions, and the most exaggerated eulogies are lavished on them. The recipients of all this ridiculous flattery are generally sufficiently idiotic to be gratified by it, and consider that it amply repays them
for the enormous outlay which their childish vanity has caused them to incur.

Before separating, all the guests, both men and women, accompany the new Brahmin, who is seated in an open palanquin, richly ornamented, on a solemn procession through the streets. On their return, the women, in songs, tell him of all the prayers that they have offered for his future happiness, and they wind up the feast by the ceremony of aratti. As for the new Brahmin, he must be careful to perform the homam, evening and morning, for the next thirty days.

Such are the formalities which accompany the most important and solemn event in a Brahmin's life. As we have remarked already, it is not by birth alone that a Brahmin is superior to other men. It is this regenerating ceremony which gives him a new existence and makes him worthy to be elevated in his capacity as a dvija, or twice-born (bis genitus), to the sublime status of his ancestors.

All this long ceremonial, besides many other foolish trifles which I have not thought worth mentioning, is strictly obligatory. Were a single detail omitted, the whole community would raise a chorus of protest. It would be labour lost to endeavour to discover the origin of these ceremonies. Some few traces of it might be discovered in the old pagan times; but assuredly no other nation in the world has preserved so completely the minutest details of its ancient superstitions.

Some other Hindus share with the Brahmins the honour of wearing the triple cord. They are the Jains, the Kshatriyas or Rajahs, the Vaisyas, and even the Panchalas. Rajahs receive the cord from the hands of a Brahmin purohita; but the only ceremony necessary on this occasion is the sacrifice called homam. The new member then gives a great feast to the Brahmins to celebrate the event, but he is not allowed to be present himself; and further, he also distributes gifts amongst them. Before they depart he is admitted to their presence, and performs the sash-tanga, perhaps in token of gratitude for the honour they have done him, or else merely to abase himself before these 'gods of the earth.'

If the Hindu books are to be believed, the Brahmins
used formerly to exercise such supreme power over the kings and rulers of the country that they were looked upon by the latter as beings of a different order, and superior to other mortals; princes accounting it an honour to receive some mark of distinction from them. And the Brahmins, on their part, either to enhance their own dignity, or perhaps from gratitude for the favours they received from the Rajahs, granted them the special privilege of wearing, like themselves, the triple cord.

As for the Vaisyas, they do not receive it till the day of their marriage, when the officiating Brahmin presents it to them. The Panchalas are also decorated under similar circumstances, but it is conferred on them by the guru, or priest, of their own caste.

After a Brahmin has been invested, he is expected to keep the anniversary every year at the time of the full moon in the month of Sravana, or August. This anniversary is always celebrated by a feast, for which there are many prescribed ceremonies; but I will spare the reader any further wearisome details. Suffice it to say that the Brahmin has to change his cord, the small rag in front of his private parts, and the cloth with which his loins are girt, all of which is done with much solemnity. The performance of this periodical duty obtains for him the remission of all the sins committed during the year, and it is therefore called the Feast of the Annual Atonement.

The Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas also keep this annual feast like the Brahmins.

CHAPTER II

Conduct of the Brahmacari.—Rules to be followed.—Rights acquired by investiture with the Cord.—The Six Privileges of Brahmins.—The Vedas.

The state of Brahmacari continues from the ceremony of the upanayana until marriage. This period of his life is looked upon as a time of study, of trial, of subordination, and of initiation into the rules and regulations of caste. To learn to read and write; to commit the Vedas and mantrams to memory; to study in those branches of
knowledge for which he shows any aptitude, that is, if his parents are sufficiently wealthy to be able to give him masters; above all things, to learn arithmetic in its elementary forms, and to study the various idioms of the language: these are the occupations that fill up his days. The Brahmins have their separate schools, to which children of other castes, particularly Sudras, are never admitted. The nature of their studies, the discipline and mode of teaching, the very principles of education, are all totally different in the one and in the other. The Brahmachari must never chew betel; he must never put flowers in his turban or in his hair, or ornament his forehead with the paste of sandalwood; and he must never look in a looking-glass. Every day, morning and evening, he must perform the homam, or sacrifice of fire. He must take the greatest pains to conform to the rules and customs of his caste; he must show the most absolute and prompt obedience to his parents and his teachers; he must be modest, deferential and respectful to his superiors, and affable to his equals. His family and his masters take particular care to instruct him in the art of lying and dissimulation, cunning and deceit, qualities which are fully developed in all Brahmins, and form the principal traits in their character. There are, besides, hundreds of minute details most essential in a Brahmin's education, comprising rules of good manners and decorous conduct, the art of speaking and conversing in well-chosen language, the appropriate demeanour to assume on different occasions, how to hold oneself and how to use one's eyes, the different degrees of hauteur or humility which should be shown under various circumstances and at different times and places according to the people who are present.

Nevertheless, in spite of the stress which is laid upon these petty precepts governing the conduct of young Brahmins, there are few who conform to them in all essentials. Even of the rules of conduct many are merely

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1 This is incorrect. The use of this paste on the forehead is obligatory, though the smearing of it on the body is forbidden until after marriage.
---Ed.

2 There is no truth in such an assertion. These evil qualities are never deliberately inculcated.—Ed.
matters of form. Nothing is more common than to see their foreheads ornamented with sandalwood paste and their mouths full of betel.\(^1\)

If, from want of means or other causes, a young Brahmin is still unmarried at the age of eighteen or twenty, he ceases to be a Brahmachari, but at the same time he does not become a Grahastha. For all that, be his age and condition what they may, from the time that he receives the cord, he obtains the right to the six privileges which are inherent in this status. These privileges are: (1) to read the Vedas, (2) to have them read to him, (3) to perform the sacrifice of the _yagnam_, (4) to cause the _yagnam_ to be performed, (5) to give, and also (6) to receive, presents and alms. Three of these privileges, (2), (4), and (5), are also shared by the Kshatriyas or Rajahs. As to the despised Sudras, they possess only one of them, namely, that which allows them to give alms or presents to those Brahmins who will condescend to accept them from their impure hands.

To the Brahmins alone belongs the right of reading the Vedas, and they are so jealous of this, or rather it is so much to their interest to prevent other castes obtaining any insight into their contents, that the Brahmins have inculcated the absurd theory, which is implicitly believed, that should anybody of any other caste be so highly imprudent as even to read the title-page, his head would immediately split in two. The very few Brahmins who are able to read these sacred books in the original only do so in secret and in a whisper. Expulsion from caste, without the smallest hope of re-entering it, would be the lightest punishment for a Brahmin who exposed these books to the eyes of the profane.

These four marvellous books are held to be the work of Brahma himself, who wrote them with his own hand on pages of gold. Brahma, it is said, explained their meaning to four famous _Munis_, or penitents, to whom the books were entrusted, and to whom was confided the task of explaining them to the Brahmins. Sumantu, the first of these celebrated personages, was given the _Yajur-Veda_;\(^1\)

\(^1\) The chewing of betel by Brahmacharins is, nevertheless, an uncommon occurrence.—Ed.
Pailada, the *Rig-Veda*; Jaimini, the *Sama-Veda*; and Angirasa, the *Atharva-Veda*.  

But let it not be imagined for one moment that these books contain matter of much interest. Their antiquity alone, real or pretended, is their sole recommendation. A lengthy exposition of Hindu polytheism as it existed originally, the most contemptible and ridiculous stories concerning the fanciful penances to which their hermits subjected themselves, the metamorphosis of Vishnu, the disgusting *lingam*, &c.; such are, according to the evidence which I have acquired, more or less an epitome of the contents of these books, of which the Brahmins make such a great mystery.

The fourth of these books, the *Atharva-Veda*, is the most baneful work of all in the hands of a people already given over to the grossest superstition. It is a sort of conjuring book, professing to teach the magic art of injuring by means of spells and enchantments. Bloody sacrifices are also ordained in it.

It is from these books that the Brahmins have unearthed the greater number of those *mantrams* which bring them in so much money, and cause them to be held in such high esteem. This, in fact, is what renders the Vedas so precious to the Brahmins.

Such Brahmins as devote themselves to the higher branches of knowledge learn the Vedas by heart; and though the greater number do not understand the real meaning of what they have learnt, still they are looked upon in some sort as doctors of theology, and are given the name of *Vedikas*. It is true, nevertheless, that those who devote themselves to the study of these books cannot hope to extract any instruction from them, for they are

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1 Mahidhara, on the *Vajasaneyi Sanhita* (Weber's ed. p. 1), says in regard to the division of the Vedas: 'Veda-Vyasa, having regard to men of dull understanding, in kindness to them, divided into four parts the Veda which had been originally handed down by tradition from Brahma, and taught the four Vedas, called *Rig*, *Yajush*, *Saman*, and *Atharvan*, in order, to *Paila*, *Vaisampayana*, *Jaimini*, and *Sumantu*; and they again to their disciples. In this way, by tradition, the Veda of a thousand *Sakhas* was produced.'—Ed.

2 The Vedas and other sacred Hindu writings are now, of course, available to any student. The Abbé's sweeping assertion would not now be endorsed.—Ed.
written in ancient Sanskrit, which has become almost wholly unintelligible; and such numberless mistakes have been introduced by copyists, either through carelessness or ignorance, that the most learned find themselves quite unable to interpret the original text. Out of twenty thousand Brahmins I do not believe that one could be found who even partially understood the real Vedas.

The original text must not, as is often done, be confounded with the more modern introductions and commentaries written by the penitent Vyasa. These were interpolated with the view of rendering the text more intelligible. They are known under the general name of Upanishads, and are three in number—the Upa-Veda, the Karma-Veda, and the Sakha-Veda. It is not much more than these commentaries that the most learned of modern Brahmins are capable of explaining. Their meaning is unintelligible except to those who have a considerable acquaintance with Sanskrit, the language in which they are written. Many learn to read and recite them mechanically, without understanding a word of them.

In the agraharas, or Brahmin villages, and other places where Brahmins congregate in large numbers, you may perhaps come across some who are Sanskrit scholars, but even they would be unable to produce a good interpretation of the Vedas. Some Brahmins give gratuitous instruction in those parts of the Vedas which, thanks to the commentaries, have been made intelligible, while other Brahmins, too poor to forgo remuneration, hold classes in which the same instruction is given to paying pupils.

Rich Brahmins make a point of encouraging the study of the Vedas by offering prizes and other rewards, this being in the eyes of their fellows a work of the greatest merit.

The Brahmins have done the Rajahs the honour of allowing them also to encourage the study of the Vedas by founding schools for that purpose and paying the professors. And I am convinced that nowadays they would not refuse a similar honour even to a common Sudra. But be that as it may, there is not much eagerness displayed amongst the Brahmins for this tedious kind of study. Poverty prevents some from taking it up, while indifference and idleness prevent others.
In the *yagam*, a name which comprises the third and fourth Brahminical privileges, the sacrifice called *homam* is apparently included, for the *homam* of the Rajahs is totally different. Every Brahmin must perform the *homam* at least once a day. It is a sacrifice offered to fire under various circumstances.  

This sacrifice is made by lighting a brazier, which is then consecrated by *mantrams*. Into this are thrown small pieces of wood, gathered from one of the seven sacred trees, and afterwards a little melted butter and cooked rice; these offerings being accompanied by suitable *mantrams*. The *homam* is almost invariably followed by another sacrifice, which is specially offered to fire, but only the ordinary *puja* is performed. I think by the word *yagam* may be understood all sacrifices which are accompanied by *mantrams*.

The fifth privilege of the Brahmins, namely, the giving of alms and presents, is much less to their taste than the sixth, in which the operation is reversed. It must, however, be admitted that rich Brahmins display a lavish hospitality, besides being charitable in other ways. But this is only to members of their own caste; the rest of the human race is, if not detested, at least absolutely of no account so far as they are concerned.

Amongst the gifts which Brahmins are willing to receive there are some which are more specially acceptable. They are called the *pancha-danas*, or the five gifts; and they are gold, land, clothes, grain, and cows. The last-mentioned gift causes them particular pleasure, seeing that milk in various forms is their principal food. Brahmins also possess large landed properties originally given them by generous princes and on which they pay no taxes. These descend from father to son, and always retain their immunity from taxation. As a rule Brahmins do not cultivate their lands themselves, but lease them out to the Sudras, taking half the crops as rent.

The Brahmins generally live on their lands, which are

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1 The sacrifice made to fire, or by means of fire, is a form of idolatry by no means peculiar to the Hindus. It is well known to what great lengths Persians, Chaldeans, and other ancient races carried superstition with respect to it.—DuBois.
called agraharas. Numbers of these estates are to be found in the various provinces of the Peninsula.

Then again, in their character as high priests, the Brahmins gather in the greater part of the revenue of the lands belonging to the different temples, and furthermore receive all the offerings brought by devotees to the various idols.

A Brahmin sees nothing humiliating in asking for or receiving alms. According to his ideas it is a right, of which he may make free use. His attitude when begging is also very unlike that of the poor wretch amongst ourselves, who fawns and grovels for the smallest trifle. The Brahmin asks for alms as for something that is his due, and not as if imploring a favour or benefit. At the same time he displays none of the importunity or impertinence to which people are subjected by the Mahomedan fakirs, or by the Sudra beggars who belong to the sects of Siva or Vishnu. The begging Brahmin boldly enters a house and states what he wants. Should he receive anything, he takes it without saying a word, goes away without any acknowledgement and without showing the smallest sign of gratitude. Should he meet with a refusal, however, he retires without any complaint or grumbling.

But woe betide any one who ventures to make the Brahmins promises which he subsequently fails to perform! That would be a fearful sin, which could not fail to draw down the divine wrath upon the guilty person. A Hindu author gives the following example as a proof. 'Hata! Hata!' cried a monkey one day, seeing a fox devouring a rotten carcase. 'In a former state of existence you must

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1 Manu says: 'Let every man, according to his ability, give wealth to Brahmins, detached from the world and learned in Scripture; such a giver shall attain heaven after this life' (xi. 6). Very early in the statutes, a universal law is proclaimed, the spirit of which pervades the whole code. This law calmly lays down that whatever exists in the universe is all, in effect, though not in form, the wealth of the Brahmins; since the Brahmin is entitled to it all by his primogeniture and eminence of birth. 'The Brahmin eats but his own food; wears but his own apparel; and bestows but his own alms; through the benevolence of the Brahmin indeed other mortals enjoy life' (i. 100–101). This is a pretty broad principle to enunciate, so it is easy to see how there is nothing derogatory in a Brahmin receiving alms, since he takes but what is his own, besides leaving a blessing to the giver.—PADFIELD.

2 A kind of exclamation.—DUBOIS.
BRAHMIN PRIVILEGES

have committed some atrocious crimes to be condemned in your present life to eat such disgusting food.' 'Alas!' replied the fox with a groan, 'it is only what I deserve. Once upon a time I was a man, and I then promised a Brahmin a present, and failed to keep my word; that is why I was born again in my present condition, which you find so revolting.'

Brahmins declare that he who fails to keep faith with them, or who injures them in any way, will be condemned after death to be born again as a devil. Such a person could live neither on the earth nor yet in the air, but would be reduced to dwelling in a thick forest, for ever hidden amongst the foliage of a leafy tree. Day and night he would groan and bewail his unhappy fate. His only food would be the filthy juice of the palm tree, mixed with the saliva of dogs; and he would have to use a human skull as a cup.

Brahmins, as a rule, are exempt from all taxes on houses and other personal property. In many districts they pay no customs duty. They are, again, not liable to be impressed into compulsory service, or called upon for those requisitions which fall so heavily on the other inhabitants, who are obliged to labour at public works, such as the making and mending of the high-roads, the repairing of temples, tanks, canals, &c., and who also have to carry provisions for the troops when on the march, or for magistrates and other public servants, more often than not without any payment for their labour, or even sufficient food, and with no compensation for the losses which these requisitions cause them. Such general servants of the public as carpenters, blacksmiths, barbers, and washermen are often obliged, at least in many districts, to work gratuitously for the Brahmins.

In countries governed by native princes Brahmins are rarely condemned to any serious corporal punishment; and however heinous their crimes may be, they are never liable to the penalty of death. The murder of a Brahmin,

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1 This, of course, is no longer the case under British rule.—Ed.

2 This, however, is not due to any actual pressure, but to the fact that these public servants enjoy grants of land (mansams), and they work gratuitously for the whole village.—Ed.
no matter for what reason, would be considered absolutely unpardonable, for it is the greatest of all known crimes and would not fail to bring some terrible calamity to the whole country in which it had been committed.

However, in those countries which are under European or Mahomedan rule, where the sacred character of the Brahmin is held in much less reverence, they are liable like any other native to punishments proportioned to their misdemeanours. Sometimes the Mahomedans beat them to death, unless they pay considerable sums to buy themselves off, a process which suits their persecutors, who are much better pleased to have their money than their blood. But sometimes either from avarice, or because they are afraid that if they once let their oppressors fleece them in this manner they will never be rid of such persecutions until they are despoiled of all that they possess, they prefer to suffer all kinds of torture, even death itself, rather than part with their money. When Brahmins find themselves in this sorry plight there are no lies, no false statements, oaths, and protestations that they will not employ in the hope of extricating themselves. Such conduct can excite no surprise when one remembers that they do not hesitate to teach publicly that lies and perjury, if used to gain personal advantage, are virtuous and meritorious. This convenient doctrine has spread marvellously, for there is not a native of India who would scruple to make use of both, to serve his own ends ¹.

CHAPTER III

External Defilements.—The care that a Brahmin should take to avoid them.—His Conduct in this respect.—Means of Purification.

All that pertains to external and internal defilement, bodily and spiritual, is the very beginning and foundation of a Hindu's education, both religious and civil. They have invented numberless minute and ridiculous precautions to prevent the possibility of coming in contact with anything which, according to their views, would defile their

¹ No respectable persons (Brahmins included) are known to preach such doctrines nowadays. And the Abbé's assertions are altogether too sweeping.—Ed.
persons, their clothes, their furniture, their temples, &c., &c. It is principally this ineradicable prejudice which has raised such an insurmountable barrier between them and the rest of mankind. Obliged by their religious tenets to hold themselves aloof from every one who does not share their beliefs, they can never, under any circumstances, be on such friendly or confidential terms with any stranger as would arise from feelings of mutual esteem and respect. It is undoubtedly from the Brahmins that the other Hindus have picked up this absurd prejudice, for it is in strongest force amongst them (the Brahmins). The predominating idea in their general conduct, and in their every action in life, is what they call cleanliness; and it is the enormous amount of care that they take to keep themselves 'clean,' to prevent any sort or kind of defilement, and to purify themselves from any uncleanness that they may have contracted, which gives them their ascendancy over other castes. It is one of the special duties of the Brahmachari to be well versed, at an early age, in the customs and practices regulating this important branch of Hindu law.

In all countries the sight of a human corpse produces a thrill of horror. Every one has a strong aversion, amounting almost to repugnance, to touching a dead body. But Hindus consider that the mere fact of assisting at a funeral is sufficient to defile them. When the ceremony is over, they immediately hasten to plunge themselves into water, and no one would dare to return home without having thus purified himself. Even the news of the death of a relative, though it may have happened a hundred miles away, produces the same effect, and every member of the family who receives the news must purify himself. Friends and simple acquaintances, however, are not contaminated thereby.

The moment a Hindu has breathed his last the necessary preparations for his funeral begin, for as long as the body remains in the house, neither the inmates, nor even their neighbours, can eat or drink or attend to their usual occupations. I have seen the service in a temple, where a large congregation had assembled, entirely suspended until the body of a man who had died not far off had been removed. Neither incense nor any other perfume would purify a house
where a death had taken place. A Brahmin *purohita* must come to remove the impurity with which all the inmates are contaminated. To this end he offers sacrifices, recites *mantrams* suitable to the occasion, and at frequent intervals makes copious libations of holy water.

The monthly period, and the after-effects of child-birth, as I have remarked before, render women for the time being unclean.

The mother of the newly-born child lives entirely apart for a whole month or more, during which time she may touch neither the vessels nor the furniture of the house, nor any clothes, and still less any person whatsoever. The time of her seclusion being over, she is immersed in a bath, or else a great quantity of water is poured over her head and body. Women are similarly isolated during the time of their periodical uncleanness. In all decent houses there is a sort of small gynaecium set apart for them; but amongst the poor, in whose huts there is no such accommodation, the women are turned into the street, under a sort of shed or outhouse, or else they are allowed a corner of the cowshed.

When the time of uncleanness is passed, all the garments that the woman has worn are given to the washerman. Her clothes are not allowed inside the house; in fact, no one would even dare to look on them.

When the washerman brings the clothes back, the Brahmins never fail to put them into water again, inasmuch as

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1 According to the law of Moses, when an Israelite died in a house or in a tent, all the people living therein, and all the furniture it contained, were unclean for seven days (Numbers xix. 14, 15). Any one who touched the body, the bones, or the tomb of a dead man was also unclean for seven days. For purification, the ashes of a red heifer, which had been offered up as a sacrifice by the high priest on the Day of Atonement, were cast into a vessel full of pure water (Numbers xix. 3–6). And an undefiled person, free from all impurity, dipped a bunch of hyssop into this water, and besprinkled the furniture, the room, and the people who were defiled. On the seventh day these latter bathed themselves in water, and washed their clothes, after which they were considered perfectly cleansed.—DuBois.

2 Jewish women were considered unclean under similar circumstances; and the law of Moses gives clear directions as to the manner in which they were to purify themselves.—DuBois.

3 The Jews shared the same views on this subject. Isaiah lxiv. 6. Esther xiv. 16.—DuBois.
the washerman, by the touch of his hand, has defiled them anew. The same thing happens with new cloths which come straight from the unclean hands of a Sudra weaver.

Wives of Lingayats, however, content themselves with rubbing their foreheads with the ashes of cow-dung to purify themselves on similar occasions; and by this simple act, which they call bhasma snana, or the bath of ashes, they consider that they are completely purified. In this way a precautionary measure most beneficial to health in this hot country becomes perverted by superstition. On the one hand it is minutely observed by those who do not in the least appreciate its real utility, while it is neglected by others who think it only a pious practice, to be replaced with equal advantage by another.

Earthen vessels, by reason of the material of which they are composed, can never be purified when once they become unclean, and in this they differ from metal ones. Washing will purify the latter, but should the former become defiled, they must be destroyed.¹

As long as earthen vessels are new, and in the hands of the potter, any one, even a Pariah, may handle them with impunity; but from the moment that they have contained water, they can only be used by the person who filled them, or by members of the same caste. Brahmins carry their scruples on this point so far as never to allow strangers to enter their kitchens, the doors of which are always kept carefully shut, lest some profane and unclean person should cast an eye on the earthenware inside, which, rendered unclean by that one look, would be only fit to be immediately broken to pieces.² It is to avoid the risk of a similar disaster that their women never draw water in earthenware vessels, but always use those made of brass and copper.

It is just the same with their clothes as with their vessels. Some can be defiled, others cannot. Silk, for instance, remains always pure, also cloth made of the fibres of

¹ Beds, furniture, clothes, and vessels became, under the Jewish law, unclean by contact with anything that was impure, and often were the means of contaminating other objects (Leviticus xi. 32).—Duhm.
² Brahmins and rich Sudras are gradually abandoning the use of earthenware vessels for cooking, and are using vessels of brass and bell-metal. These are even sometimes cleaned by Sudras nowadays.—Ed.
certain plants. For this reason the ancient Brahmin hermits always wore clothes made of either one or the other material. Brahmins at the present day, too, prefer to wear silk, particularly at meals. When a Brahmin doctor wishes to feel the pulse of a sick Sudra, he first wraps up the patient's wrist in a small piece of silk so that he may not be defiled by touching the man's skin. The cotton clothes which are worn by most natives are peculiarly susceptible of defilement. It is quite sufficient to render them unclean if a person of an inferior caste, or, above all, a European or a Pariah, touch them. In the eyes of a Hindu, a Pariah and a European are on the same level. It is impossible to help laughing at the ridiculous care and perpetual pains which an orthodox Brahmin will take to preserve his person and his clothes from contact with anything unclean. But, whatever they may do, it is impossible for them to escape contamination in a populous town. Hence the more scrupulous are obliged to quit the towns and take up their abode in the villages. Others, however, from motives of self-interest, compound with their conscience, and disregard the rules. Exposed as they must be to continual contact with people of all sorts, in the busy haunts where their business takes them, they content themselves with changing their garments on their return home. These are immediately dipped into water, and the uncleanness is removed.

Leather and skins of all kinds, except those of the tiger and the antelope, are considered particularly unclean. Caste Hindus must never touch with their hands the slippers or sandals that are worn on the feet. A person riding must always carefully cover with cloth any part of the harness or saddlery that is made of leather. So it is that caste Hindus do not understand how any one can possibly wear anything made, as they say, of the remains of dead animals, such as boots, gloves, or leather breeches, without a feeling of horror and repugnance. The ordinary costume of a European greatly contributes to increase the low opinion that Hindus have formed of the delicacy of our tastes. A scrupulous Brahmin must look very carefully where he

1 And so, too, when a Sudra doctor feels the pulse of a Brahmin patient.—Ed.
puts his feet when walking. He would be defiled and obliged to bathe if by accident his feet should touch a bone, a piece of broken glass or earthenware, a rag, a leaf from which any one had eaten, a bit of skin or leather, hair, or any other unclean thing. The place where he sits must also be chosen with great care. Some penitents always carry with them the 'pure' skin of a tiger or antelope on which to sit; others use a common mat, while the rich have carpets; but any one may sit on the ground without fear of defilement, if the place has been recently rubbed over with cow-dung.

The way in which they take their food is also a matter of some moment. However, many guests there may be, it would be considered very rude to speak to any one. They eat in silence, and conversation only begins at the end of the meal, after they have washed their hands and mouths. Nothing must be touched with the left hand, for reasons to be given later on, unless it be the copper vessel which contains water. Hindus drink only once, that is when they have finished eating, and they do so by pouring the liquid into their mouths from a distance. To drink as we do, by putting the glass or cup to the lips, would in their eyes be the height of indecency. While eating great care must be taken that not a fragment falls into the leaf serving as a neighbour's plate. One single grain of rice, one crumb even, would effectually prevent the latter from continuing his meal; or at any rate he would have to take a fresh leaf and another portion of food.

No doubt the same cause which makes Hindus of the higher castes so extremely particular about their manner of eating and drinking, accounts for their strong aversion to wind instruments of music. This cause is their insurmountable horror of saliva. They would look on a man who spat upon the floor as quite destitute of good manners. Spittoons are to be found in every house; but should none be provided and any one require to spit he would have to go outside. However, from a sanitary point of view

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1 This is not now the case; conversation does go on during meals. Occasionally, however, an individual makes a resolve always to abstain from talking while at meals.—Ed.

2 Spittoons are not often found in Brahmin houses.—Ed.
there is nothing astonishing in this excessive scrupulosity. No properly brought-up European would dream of expectorating on the floor of a room. But with a Hindu it is less from a due regard to cleanliness than from his ever-recurring fear of bodily defilement.

The remains of food are never put aside and kept after a meal, nor are they given to the servants. As has been already stated, to be a servant is no degradation. A servant generally eats with his master, and what he left could not be offered to the poor, unless they were Pariahs, who take anything. Food remnants, in fact, are thrown to the crows and the dogs. Rice that is to be given away to the poor of the same caste, or any other persons with whom it is allowable to eat, is boiled separately. Rice given to other castes is always uncooked; and it is thus that a Brahmin receives it from persons of an inferior caste, who make him a present.

High-caste Hindus, and particularly Brahmins, rarely use plates and dishes at their meals. Sometimes, but only when quite alone in their own houses, they may use a service of copper or other metal; but they are forbidden to use earthenware or china. Usually the rice and other dishes are served on a banana leaf, or on the leaves of some tree neatly sewn together in the form of a plate. To offer a Brahmin food on a metal plate which some one had already used, would be considered a deadly insult. Naturally the use of spoons and forks is also forbidden. Fingers are used instead, and Hindus cannot at all understand how we can use these implements a second time, after having once put them to our mouths, and allowed them to be touched with saliva. If Hindus should happen to eat dry food or fruits between meals, they break off pieces and throw them into their mouths, fearing if they put them into their mouths with their fingers the latter might be tainted with saliva. A European once wrote a letter to some friend of his, recommending a Brahmin acquaintance of mine to his notice. When he had finished his letter he sealed it with a wafer, which he moistened by placing it on the tip of his tongue. The Brahmin, who saw him do

1 This practice, like others, becomes mechanical. Hindus never give a thought to them.—Ed.
it, would not take or touch the letter, and left in anger, considering he had been grievously insulted. He preferred to lose any advantage he might have gained from this letter of recommendation, rather than be the bearer of a missive that had been thus defiled.

There are several kinds of animals, especially dogs⁴, to touch which would defile a Brahmin. It is very interesting to watch their movements, and the care they will take to avoid the familiar caresses of these faithful companions of man. If, in spite of their efforts, the dog really does touch them, they are obliged to hurry off immediately and plunge, with all their clothes on, into water, and thus remove from both their person and their garments the stain which they had involuntarily acquired by the touch of one of these unclean animals.

There is an infinity of other kinds of exterior defilement to which Brahmins are exposed, but I think what has been already said is sufficient to make known their views on the subject.

It is obvious that so many external defilements necessitate endless ablutions. There are certain rivers and tanks which are held to possess peculiarly cleansing properties, and those Brahmins who live near them are perpetually bathing in their waters, while those who from living at a greater distance are deprived of this advantage, have to content themselves with whatever water or tank is nearest to their dwelling-place. In many places they do not allow Sudras to approach the place where they bathe, either for the purpose of drawing water or to make their own ablutions. But they are obliged to be less exclusive in places where they are not supreme.

A Brahmin rarely passes a day without bathing at least once², while those who wish to call public attention to

⁴ Amongst the many animals looked upon as unclean by Jews, the dog was particularly numbered. But it was only by eating the flesh, or touching the dead carcass of one, that they were defiled. The touch of a living dog did not matter. Furthermore, every commentator of the Holy Scriptures has agreed that these defilements were only figurative of other and far more important uncleannesses, namely, the sins and offences which we commit against God and our neighbour.—Dusoir.

² One bath every day is compulsory, and is invariably taken.—Ed.
their minute observance of religious customs must bathe three times a day.

It is a common practice amongst natives to anoint themselves occasionally from head to foot with either oil of sesameum or sometimes castor oil. They remove the dirt which results from it by rubbing it off with certain herbs. They then have hot water poured over their bodies, and finally bathe in cold water. At their grand ceremonials Brahmins are in the habit of offering some such oily mixture to all their guests, who rub themselves over from head to foot with it, and then plunge into a bath. Dead bodies are similarly anointed before being conveyed to the funeral pile or burying ground; and this office is always performed by the nearest relatives.

CHAPTER IV

Internal Defilements.—Abstinence from all Intoxicating Liquors, and from everything that has had Life.—Particular Horror of the Brahmins for the Flesh of the Cow.—Their abhorrence of Europeans who eat it as Food.

Besides those external defilements which only affect the outer skin, there are others which Brahmins and other Hindus say insinuate themselves into the body, and which can only be got rid of by proper methods ordained by rule and custom. There is no doubt that it was for the sake of health and cleanliness, in the first instance, that Hindu lawgivers inculcated these principles of defilement and purification. The heat of the Indian climate, the profuse perspiration which is the natural result, and the diseases which are endemic in consequence of it, all help to impoverish the blood of the inhabitants; and from these causes doubtless originated those obligatory precautions which have since been strengthened by custom and superstition, and which are considered to be best calculated to counteract these deadly influences. If the salutary rules at first prescribed have in the course of ages become perverted into the present childish and puerile ceremonial, which common sense rejects, the fault must be attributed partly to popular superstition which exaggerates and distorts everything, partly to popular ignorance, and partly
to the cunning and avarice of the hypocritical charlatans who mislead the people.

Water may be said to be a Brahmin's sole beverage. In order that it may be pure and may not defile the person who drinks it, it is indispensable that it should be drawn and carried by a member of his own caste; to drink water drawn by strange hands would be a great sin, the remission of which could only be obtained at the cost of elaborate and expensive ceremonies. In some places Brahmins and Sudras fetch their water from the same place, but if by chance the water-pot of the latter should touch that of the former, the Brahmin immediately breaks his, if it is made of earthenware, or, if of brass or copper, gives it a thorough scouring with sand and water. In those parts of the country which are under the rule of native princes, Brahmins forbid any one of another caste to approach their wells; but where Mahomedans are in power, and more particularly in the large towns under European rule, it is not unusual to see Brahmins, Sudras, and even Pariahs, all drawing water from the same source. But all the same, I once witnessed on the coast a violent disturbance caused by the inconceivable effrontery of a Pariah woman who had dared to draw water from the common well.

Curdled milk diluted with water is a very favourite drink with Hindus. It is usually Sudras who prepare and sell this refreshing beverage. Although, generally speaking, there is more water than milk in the mixture, Brahmins have no scruples in partaking of it, and if any one reproaches them with thus using water drawn and handled by Sudras, they reply that the curdled milk, which has come from the body of a cow, cleanses it from all impurities.

On the other hand, they have an invincible repugnance to the liquor which is obtained by tapping cocoanut and other palms and several other trees of the country. This juice is sweet and refreshing if drunk before it has begun to ferment, but if taken in excess it is intoxicating. A spirit called arrack is distilled from it, and for this also there is the same repugnance. As a rule, a respectable Hindu will not touch spirits or any intoxicating drink, considering that they cause one of the greatest internal defilements
that it is possible to contract. In consequence of this praiseworthy opinion drunkenness is looked upon as a degrading and infamous vice, and any one would be promptly and ignominiously expelled from his caste were he found guilty of giving way to it. It is only Pariahs and men of the lowest classes who dare publicly to consume intoxicating drinks. Nevertheless, one does see occasionally in European settlements and in the large towns high-caste natives, and even Brahmins, breaking the law of temperance; but it is only in strict privacy, and after every precaution has been taken to conceal the unpardonable weakness.

The air one breathes may also be the means of internal defilement; for instance, it would mean defilement if the olfactory nerves of a Brahmin became sensible of the smoke arising from a funeral pyre where a body was being burned, or from the fire on a Pariah's hearth where food was being cooked.

In certain parts of the country, if Pariahs perceive that a Brahmin is coming their way, they make a long détour, in fear lest the effluvia which is given off by their unclean persons should defile the exterior and interior of this noble personage. When Sudras speak to a Brahmin etiquette obliges them to keep at a respectful distance, or at least that they should put the right hand before their mouths, so that the taint of their poisonous breath may not reach him. It were very desirable, for the peace and honour of Sudra husbands, that this excessive delicacy extended also to their wives; but Brahmins are far from feeling the same superb disdain towards them. As for the wives of Pariahs, the feeling of antipathy for everything connected with this class is so strong, and the defilement which results from even an innocent and accidental touch is so difficult to remove, that one very rarely hears of a Brahmin who has been so blinded by passion as to have had any intercourse with a woman of this class.

It is with regard to their food that Brahmins take the most excessive precautions. They are never allowed to touch meat, and this excludes not only anything that has had life, fish included, but also anything that has contained a germ of life, such as eggs of all sorts. Vegetables, which
form their principal food, are also subject to numerous exceptions. Thus they reject any vegetable whose root or stem grows in the shape of a head, such as onions, garlic, mushrooms, &c. Is it because they have discovered some hurtful properties in these plants? I think not. The greater number of such vegetables are, on the contrary, considered by other people to possess, in that very hot climate, antiseptic and health-giving qualities.

I have often tried to find out the reason why these vegetables are avoided, but I have never been able to extract any other answer from those I have questioned than that it was the custom and rule to avoid them. ¹

To adhere strictly to all these rules of abstinence is what is called eating properly. Whoever eats of forbidden things cannot, according to Brahminical doctrine, keep his body really pure. However, I am quite satisfied by experience that there are some who occasionally relax the severity of these rules; but the extreme care which is taken to conceal the fact proves what a strong hold the rules have over the greater number.

These strict rules of abstinence are observed by all the respectable people of this large Hindu nation; they are most scrupulously obeyed in the family circle, without any one daring to think of violating them, even under the most pressing necessity. They appear to have existed from the time when the natives of India were formed into one nation; that is to say, at no very distant date from the Flood, and it seems to me they show a strong indication of the great antiquity of this people.

And this law of abstinence, far from losing force and falling into abeyance, has gained many additional adherents from among the better class of Sudras. Its minute observance is the surest way of gaining respect even amongst those who do not feel called upon to impose similar priva-

¹ Whatever the motive may be, there are no doubt some superstitions attached to it. Every one knows the extreme veneration in which the Egyptians held onions and other vegetables of the same family. They even swore by the leeks and onions in their gardens. Juvenal (Satires, xv) laughs at them about it:

Porrum et cepæ nefas violare, et frangere morsu,
O sanctas gentes quibus haec nascuntur in hortis
Numina ! ¹—DUBOIS.
tions upon themselves. Only Sudras of the very lowest class eat meat openly; and many of these do not venture to cook it in their own houses, but in a secluded corner of their cowsheds. To ask a Hindu if he eats meat, even when it is a well-known fact that he does so, is to insult him deeply; while to offer meat at a meal to a guest with whom one is not intimate, would be the height of rudeness. Hindus who eat meat do so only in the privacy of their own families or in company with near relatives or intimate friends. Even the common Sudras do not offer meat at their festive gatherings such as wedding feasts. Were they to do so their guests would consider themselves insulted, and would leave immediately.

The Lingayats, or votaries of Siva, are strict abstainers from anything that has possessed the principle of life. But the careful manner in which they thereby try to maintain perfect internal purity does not profit them much, as they are credited at the same time with neglecting some of the precautions necessary to preserve their external purity. They are blamed, for instance, for allowing their women to come and go about the house during the time of their periodical uncleanness, and for not insisting on purifying ablutions afterwards; the same also during and after confinements. In fact, they neglect a great many cleanly customs which, putting superstition aside, are most beneficial to health in hot climates.

People who abstain entirely from animal food acquire such an acute sense of smell that they can perceive in a moment from a person’s breath, or from the exudation of the skin, whether that person has eaten meat or not; and that even after a lapse of twenty-four hours.

In some parts there is a peculiar custom which allows men to eat meat, but strictly forbids it to women.

To eat the flesh of the cow is an ineffaceable defilement. The bare idea of tasting it would be abhorrent to any devout Hindu. This invincible repugnance, based as it is now solely on the superstition which places the cow among the principal Hindu deities, had most probably at first a much more sensible but not less forcible motive, namely self-interest. The Hindu lawgivers recognized, of course, that these animals, so useful to man in all places and under
all circumstances, were particularly valuable in a country where there is no other beast available for tilling or for transporting agricultural and commercial products. Besides which, the milk was an indispensable addition to the food of the multitude of poor natives who would otherwise have no other food than insipid vegetables.

Perhaps we may also add another motive besides that of preserving the species of these valuable animals, and that is the indigestible nature of beef. Indeed, in a climate where the organs of the stomach are so much weakened by excessive perspiration, the habitual use of heavy food would have soon destroyed the health of the people. I have known many Europeans who entirely left off eating meat for this reason, because they found that they could not eat it without suffering afterwards from indigestion.

At the same time the Hindu lawgivers knew the character of their compatriots too well to imagine that simple prohibitions and punishments would suffice to save the lives of these precious animals. So, calling religion to their aid, they deified them. To kill a cow—according to the principles of Hindu law—is not only a crime, but an awful sacrilege, a deicide, which can only be expiated by the death of the offender; while to eat of the flesh of a cow is a

1 Montesquieu says: "There are many local laws peculiar to different religious beliefs. The tenet of metempsychosis is particularly suited to the Indian climate. The excessive heat burns up all the pasture, and there is little left with which to feed the cattle. There is always a danger of there being too few beasts to till the ground. Cattle multiply but slowly in that country, and are subject to many diseases. Hence it is that a religious law which protects them is very necessary from an economical point of view. But while the pastures are all burnt up, rice and vegetables grow very well by the help of irrigation. Thus a religious law which only allows of this kind of food is useful to the people of the country. Furthermore, while meat is usually tasteless in hot climates, milk and butter, which are obtained from these animals, form the chief items of food. The law forbidding cows to be killed and eaten as food is therefore not without reason in India" (Esprit des Lois, book xxiv. ch. 24).—Dubois.

Sir M. Monier-Williams in his book on Hinduism says in a footnote: "Happily for the Hindus, the cow which supplies them with their only animal food—milk and butter—and the ox which helps to till their ground, were declared sacred at an early period. Had it not been so, this useful animal might have been exterminated in times of famine. What is now a superstition had its origin, like some other superstitions, in a wise forethought."—Ed.
defilement which cannot be purified. Pariahs, however, are tacitly allowed to feast on the flesh of those animals which die of old age or disease. In their case this is not looked upon exactly as a crime; but, as we have already seen, this privilege, of which these miserable outcasts avail themselves without scruple, contributes a good deal towards keeping up that sort of curse which overshadows them.

The flesh of the buffalo, camel, horse, elephant, &c., in fact everything that comes under the head of large meat, inspires all Hindus, Pariahs excepted, with almost as great an abhorrence as the flesh of the cow or ox. There is the same idea of defilement connected with it.

I have already pointed out that Europeans do not seem disposed to adopt the same rules of abstinence as are followed by the people among whom they live, and that, without paying any attention to the disgust which they cause, they continue to eat beef openly. It is certain that this conduct estranges them from all the better classes of Hindus, who, consequently, in this respect place them far below the Pariahs. It is true that the first conquerors of India, in defiance of the most sacred and long-established customs of the country, killed oxen and cows without exciting a general insurrection against such an insult as the slaughter of animals worshipped by Hindus as their gods; and it is also true that for several succeeding centuries the handful of foreigners established among them have been allowed to kill these sacred animals with impunity to satisfy their own appetites; but they have only to thank the mild, temperate, and indolent character of the nation which has spared them.

Amongst ancient nations there are few who would with so much patience have allowed their religious beliefs to

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1 This horror of cow-killing is as strong among Hindus throughout India to-day as it ever was. The remarkable revival of Hinduism during the last few years has been characterized by the formation of innumerable secret religious societies for the protection of the cow, and the riots among Hindus and Mahomedans in recent years are more or less directly traceable, it is asserted, to the propaganda of these societies. It may be mentioned that in Kashmir, until quite recently, cow-killing was punishable with death, and imprisonment for life is now the penalty. —Ed.
be openly set at naught. The Israelites, when in captivity
in Egypt, begged for permission from Pharaoh to make
a pilgrimage into the desert, there to sacrifice to God
without fear of interruption, because they would have been
liable to be all massacred or stoned had they dared to
perform such sacrifices in the sight of the idolatrous Egy-
prians, who worshipped as gods some of the very animals
that they required for their sacrifices 1.

Cambyses made himself more execrable in the eyes of
the Egyptians by killing the ox Apis, than by all the
cruelties and acts of tyranny of which he was guilty in
dealing with this peaceable people 2.

The Egyptians considered that to kill, even by accident,
one of their sacred animals was the most heinous of crimes.
Whoever was guilty of such an act was invariably put to
death. A Roman soldier was torn in pieces by the popu-
lace, in spite of the terror that the name of Rome inspired,
for having by mischance killed a cat. Diodorus, who
records this incident, also mentions that during a famine
the Egyptians preferred to devour each other rather than
touch the animals they held sacred.

The Hindus would also carry their scruples to the same
point. In whatever straits they might be they would
prefer to die rather than save their lives by killing cattle.
From this we may conclude that, though they daily witness
the slaughter of these sacred animals by Europeans, without
uttering any loud complaint, they are far from being in-
sensible to the insult. But restrained by the fear which
these foreigners have always inspired in them, they con-
tent themselves with complaining in secret and storing up
in their hearts all the indignation that they feel. Pious
Lingayats have often come to me, imagining that my title
of European priest gave me great influence over my fellow-
countrymen, to implore me, in earnest terms, and often
with tears in their eyes, to do everything in my power to

1 Exodus viii. 26.

‘Did Cambyses do well,’ asks Voltaire, ‘when after conquering
Egypt he killed the ox Apis with his own hand? Why not? He
showed the idiots that their gods could be brought to the pit without
nature rising in her wrath to avenge the sacrilege!’ This is Voltaire’s
smart criticism, but I think few wise statesmen or sensible persons would
share his opinion.—DUBOIS.
put a stop to this sacrilege. In States which are still ruled
by heathen princes on no pretext whatever is it permitted
to kill a cow. In fact, this act of sacrilege, so hateful to
Hindus, is only permitted in provinces where Europeans
or Mahomedans hold sway.

To purify the body from any interior defilement that
may have been contracted there is no more efficacious way
than by the performance of the *pancha-gavia*.

As to other ordinary defilements, from which one can
never quite escape, they may be removed in several ways,
which I shall speak of in the next chapter. If these cere-
monies can purify the soul from sin, so much the more
will they be capable of purifying the body from all un-
cleanness, both external and internal.

CHAPTER V

Defilements of the Soul, and the Means of Purification.—Places of
Purification.—Sins for which there is no Forgiveness.—Conjectures
on the Origin of Brahmin Customs connected with Defilement and
Purification.—Defilement by Europeans, and an Incident which
happened to the Author from this Cause.

The doctrine is laid down in Hindu books, is endorsed
by the philosophers of the country, and is admitted also
sometimes by Brahmins, that the only real defilement of
the soul proceeds from sin, which is caused by perversity
of the will. One Hindu poet, Vemana, expresses himself
thus on the subject: —*‘It is water which causes mud, and
it is water which removes it. It is your will that makes
you commit sin, and it is by your will alone that you can
be purified.’* This doctrine, though imperfectly carried
out in practice, certainly proves that Hindus acknowledge
that it is only by an effort of the will and by a renunciation
of sin that pardon and purification of the soul can be
obtained.

But this enlightenment, which reason will never allow to
be entirely extinguished even in the midst of the deep
shadows of gross idolatry, has become, if not extinguished,
at any rate entirely obscured by the religious formulariza-

1 This is not to be found among the verses of Vemana, but any Telugu
verse of which the author is unknown is ascribed to him.—Popz.
tion to which the Brahmins have become slaves. The Brahmins have allowed themselves to believe that without either the wish or the intention of renouncing evil it is possible for the soul to be purified by various means, which, through the extreme facility with which they can be employed, can only tend to lessen the real abhorrence of sin and give a false sense of security to the sinner. The panchagavia, for example, is sufficient to obtain the remission of any sin whatever, even when the sin has been committed deliberately; and that is really why the use of such a disgusting liquid (the urine of the cow) is so strongly upheld. Looking as they do upon sin as a material or bodily defilement, it is not surprising that they consider mere ablutions of the body sufficient to wipe it out. Ablutions performed in certain sacred rivers, such as the Ganges, the Indus, the Godavari, the Cauvery, and others, purify both soul and body from any defilements they may ever have contracted. It is even possible for a person living at a distance to obtain the advantages conferred by their cleansing waters without leaving his house; he has only to transport himself thither in intention, and to think of the place while bathing.

There are several celebrated streams and tanks in India credited with the same purifying virtue; but some of them only possess this virtue at intervals more or less frequent. Thus the waters of the famous tank of Combaconum, in Tanjore, are only endowed with cleansing properties once in twelve years; while those of the spring which rises in the hill Tirutanimalai, in the Carnatic, are efficacious every three years. There are few provinces in India which do not possess sacred tanks. When the year and the day arrive for people to bathe in these sanctifying waters, a pilgrimage is made to the spot by enormous crowds of devotees, who have been warned beforehand by messengers sent in all directions by the Brahmins, who are interested in keeping up this holy fervour. On the appointed day they all stand round the tank, awaiting the propitious moment to plunge into it. Directly the purohita gives the signal, all present, men and women, rush into the water, shouting and screaming, and making an indescribable uproar. They soon find themselves heaped one on top of the other, so that they can hardly move. It almost
always happens that in the midst of this frightful confusion several are drowned or suffocated, and many come out with broken or dislocated limbs. Happy are those accounted who lose their lives on such an occasion! Their fate is more to be envied than lamented; for these victims of religious ardour go straight to the realms of bliss.

The time of an eclipse is also considered a particularly opportune moment for purifying oneself from sin. Bathing at that time, wherever it may be possible, but especially in the sea, possesses the merit of cleansing the soul from all defilements. To bathe during the solstices or equinoxes, at the time of a new or of a full moon, or on the eleventh day of the moon, is also considered efficacious. The mouth of a river, the point where it joins another, or where in its windings its course runs from east to west, are also peculiarly propitious.

To read the Puranas and other sacred writings, to make pilgrimages to certain temples and holy places called punya-sthala, to climb to the top of certain very high mountains, and even simply to gaze at them: all these procure the forgiveness of sins. There is one of these holy mountains in the Carnatic, in the district of Coimbatore. It is called Nilagiri-malai, and is believed to be the highest in the province. For this reason alone the Hindus have made it a punya-sthala, or place of virtue, their custom being to deify everything extraordinary in nature. As it is very difficult to reach the top of this mountain, a view of the summit alone (and it is visible a long way off) is considered sufficient to remove the burden of sin from the conscience of any person who looks at it; provided that he looks at it with that intention.

In connecting religious sentiment with everything which has any distinctive peculiarity or grandeur, they have not forgotten to include the magnificent waterfalls which surprise and charm the eye. Thus the Cauvery Falls, and

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1 This is the Maha-makham festival. A benevolent Government now takes the precaution of reducing the depth of the water to a few inches, to prevent such disasters. At the celebration of the festival in 1897, 500,000 people were present.—Ed.

2 The Nilgiris, or Blue Mountains—now a sanatorium, the summer headquarters of the Madras Government.—Ed.
several others, are supposed to be pre-eminently suitable for ablutions. In a word, one everywhere comes across places consecrated by superstition, where the greatest sinners can, with the most perfect ease, extinguish in a limpid and accommodating stream the burning fires of remorse by which they may be troubled.

To recite *mantrams*; to exercise the happy privilege of looking at the great ones of the earth, especially *gurus*; to think of Vishnu and the other principal deities: these are all most efficacious in purifying the soul. A Brahmin who happened to go three times round a temple of Siva merely in pursuit of a dog that he was beating to death, obtained the remission of all his sins, and also the special favour of being transported immediately to Kailasa.¹

Admittance into Vaikuntha² was once granted to a great sinner simply for having pronounced, even in blasphemy, the name of Narayana and the name of Vishnu. All this is vouched for in the sacred Hindu books.

There are, however, some sins so heinous, according to Hindu ideas, that they cannot be expiated by any of the means before mentioned. These unpardonable sins are five in number:—

1. *Brahmahattya*, the murder of a Brahmin.
2. *Sisuhattya*, the destruction of an unborn child, i.e. wilfully causing an abortion.
3. *Swapana*, to drink toddy, the juice of the palm-tree.
5. *Guru-talpa-gamana*, to have sexual intercourse with the wife of one’s *guru* or of one’s spiritual or temporal superior.

Some add a sixth, which consists in holding communication with any one guilty of any of these five sins, commonly called *pancha-patakas*, the five crimes. These fearful crimes cannot be wiped out in the lifetime of the offenders by any of the usual means employed for the purification of the soul. Those who are guilty of them expiate them after death, by one or more transmigrations of the soul into some vile animal, or by the torments of Naraka, i.e. hell.

Besides the sins committed during his present existence, from which a Brahmin must be constantly purifying him-

¹ The paradise of Siva.
² The paradise of Vishnu.
self, he must also think of expiating those committed in a former state. To become a Brahmin by reincarnation is the happiest destiny possible for a human being. It is a reward which is only granted for the accumulated merits of many successive generations. Yet the fact of the reincarnation is in itself a proof that there still remains in that person some fault to be expiated: otherwise the soul would have been transported to the Sattyaloka, or paradise of Brahma, and thereby would have been spared the trouble of animating another mortal body here below. Actual good deeds, such as giving alms to Brahmins, constructing wells or tanks, building temples, or contributing to the cost of religious services, and various other works of charity, are held to add considerably to the efficacy of the various methods of purification which we have just spoken of, when performed in conjunction with them.

I will say nothing here of the many hindrances to the perfect purification of the soul caused by a man's wife or children, by his worldly possessions, by his caste, and by his passions. They will be referred to elsewhere.

Defilements and purifications form together one of the most important articles in Brahmin doctrine and the Hindu creed. The practices and opinions with regard to these subjects are so extraordinary and so unique that it would be most interesting to thoroughly investigate the motives which originally gave rise to them; but, either from prudence or from ignorance on their part, I have never been able to gather from Hindus any authentic information about them. Everything that I have been able to ascertain has been founded more or less on conjecture. But I have often had occasion to remark, that, after allowing for exaggeration, many Hindu rites bear a strong resemblance to those practised by other nations in bygone ages. Thus Jacob at Bethel, when preparing to offer up a sacrifice, commanded his household to purify themselves, and to change their garments. When the Israelites were warned that God would appear to them in the desert of Sinai, God commanded them by Moses to wash their clothes, and not to touch their wives for three days beforehand.

Many passages in the Hindu sacred writings recall the rules

1 Genesis xxxv. 2.  
2 Exodus xix. 10, 14.
THE HINDU RELIGION NOT BORROWED

which the law of Moses laid down for the children of Israel concerning the various kinds of defilements, real and technical.

It is, in fact, impossible to deny that there are many striking points of resemblance between Jewish and Hindu customs. Should one then conclude that the latter copied them from the former? I think not. If they are alike in some essentials, they display great dissimilarity in their outward forms. Besides, there is nothing that I know of in the history either of the Egyptians or of the Jews to show that these people existed as a nation prior to the Hindus. The peculiarity of the dogmas and rites of the Hindu religion, the strong antipathy which the Hindus feel for anything that savours of imitation, the unshaken firmness with which they cling to ideas which originated at a date now lost in the darkness of antiquity, the intolerance, the pride, the presumption of the Brahmins, and above all their detestation and contempt for foreigners and foreign customs: all these make me confident that the Hindus never borrowed anything from other nations. Everything connected with the Hindus is stamped with the impress of originality and independence. Never could this vain and self-sufficient people, who are so filled with the idea of their own moral ascendancy, have condescended to model their habits and customs on those of foreigners, whom they have always kept at the greatest possible distance. How, then, came the Hindus to originate these singular notions of defilement and purification? I feel that I possess neither the necessary learning nor the necessary talent to cope satisfactorily with this difficult question. I must therefore beg my readers' indulgence in briefly laying before them the conjectural opinions which I have formed on the subject.

Even before the Flood men were imbued with these notions of defilement and purification. Amongst animals there were the clean and the unclean. God recognized this distinction when He dictated to Noah the number of each species that was to go into the ark.

It is probable that the tradition of this classification of things clean and unclean was handed down by the descen-

1 Leviticus xv. 11-15.  
2 Genesis vii. 2.
dants of the men who escaped the Flood. When they began to eat animal food, and noticed that the flesh of some beasts was not as wholesome or palatable as that of others, their opinions with regard to this tradition were strengthened, and, beginning by giving up what they found was deleterious to their health, they finally persuaded themselves that they could not even touch the unclean thing without being defiled.

These ideas about defilement were common to several other ancient nations. They, like the Hindus, had recourse to water and fire as means of purification. They also had their sacred rivers. At the time when the Hindus began to regard the waters of the Ganges, the Indus, and Godávari as peculiarly sacred, and to attribute to them those cleansing properties which could purify both soul and body, the inhabitants of Colchis and other peoples living near the Phasis credited the waters of that river with the same virtues, while those of the Nile were considered equally efficacious amongst the Egyptians.

Cleanliness is a most important factor in preserving public health. The luxury of clothes in those primitive times was reduced to just what was necessary to cover the body, or to protect it from atmospheric changes; and garments were rarely changed. The habits of the people therefore naturally tended to counteract the unhealthy consequences which would ensue from their prolonged use, by the frequent washing of these garments in pure water.

Everything in nature had deteriorated after the Flood. There were many more diseases, and in searching for the causes of them people thought that the unwholesome nature of certain kinds of food might be partly answerable for it. Therefore the use of such food was forbidden. They also realized that some of these diseases were contagious; therefore the persons who were attacked by them were isolated. The science of medicine was at that time in its infancy, but it was soon seen that the greater number of these maladies were caused by the unhealthy condition or poverty of the blood, owing to excessive perspiration; and the salutary effects of a bath being fully recognized, a bath was finally considered as a sovereign remedy for all complaints.
ORIGIN OF HINDU CUSTOMS

Men were at length obliged to disperse in different directions, and gradually peopled the various countries of the globe. India, being close to the plains of Sennaar and enjoying a good climate and a fertile soil, was doubtless one of the first countries thus inhabited. The very high temperature made those in authority feel that here, even more than in the country they had left, the rules of abstinence from certain meats, and attention to personal cleanliness, must be strictly enforced under pain of severe punishments.

In all probability, therefore, these Hindu notions about defilement and purification originated at some date anterior to the Flood, and after being handed down from generation to generation, undergoing various alterations and modifications either from superstition, the whim of some important person, or from motives of expediency to suit purely local conditions, they at length crystallized themselves into their present form, and still continue to have the strongest hold on the people.

Though the Hindus are fairly tolerant so far as the actual dogmas of their religion are concerned, they do not allow the smallest divergence of opinion on the subject referred to in the present chapter. If Europeans living in India, simply for the good of their health, would or could condescend so far as to make their mode of life conform to that of the higher classes of natives, at any rate in all essential matters, how much more cordial and friendly the relations between the two peoples would be! When I was travelling in districts where Europeans were as yet but little known I generally met with an agreeable welcome. Indeed, sometimes I was received with the most generous hospitality. Brahmins themselves have not disdained to offer me shelter in their own houses on seeing my long beard and my native costume. I must own, however, that my attendants took care that people should be favourably disposed towards me by publishing abroad that though I was a European priest,

1 The influence thus acquired by the Abbé is testified to by Colonel Wilks, thus: 'Of the respect which his irreproachable conduct inspires, it may be sufficient to state that when travelling, on his approach to a village the house of a Brahmin is uniformly cleared for his reception without interference, and generally without communication to the officers of government, as a spontaneous mark of deference and respect.'—Ed.
a Feringhi guru, I was also the priest of all those castes of natives who had embraced the religion of Sarveswara; that I adhered strictly to all the Brahmin rules, made frequent ablutions, just as they did, abstained from meat and all intoxicating drinks, &c., &c.

These last assertions were pure falsehoods, which, on my honour, I had never sanctioned; but all the same they were made and repeated unknown to me, whenever my followers thought it to their interest or mine. Nevertheless, in spite of the greatest attention and circumspection on my part to avoid giving offence to my hosts, I occasionally found myself involved in a difficulty without its being in the least my fault. Here is a curious case in point. Travelling in South Mysore, I arrived one evening at a village, where I was obliged to pass the night. As there was no public lodging in the place, my people asked the village headman to provide some shelter. The headman was a Brahmin, and at first made some difficulties; but to gain his help my people told the usual falsehoods about myself. The Brahmin, before making any promise, came to the place where I was waiting, and after gazing at me from head to foot silently and attentively, asked me simply if I was accompanied by any Pariahs or dogs (for these both occupied the same level in his opinion). I told him that I allowed neither Pariahs nor dogs near me, and that all my followers were men of good caste. After a few moments' reflection, during which he fixed his eyes with evident predilection on my beard and my native costume, he said to me: 'You are a European, but out of respect for your dignity as guru, and in consideration of what your people tell me with regard to your strict conformity to the customs of the country, I will give you lodging in my own house. Take off your shoes and follow me.' I entered his house with my followers, and installed myself in a tidy part of the house which he assigned to me. Shortly afterwards my host, hearing me cough, ran to me in great haste, and with a very serious air expressed the hope

1 A word which Native Christians employ to express God. It means literally, 'the Ruler of all things' (the Lord of all). Protestant missionaries have objected to the use of the word, because it is one of the titles of the god Siva.—Dubois.
that I would not defile the house by spitting in it. I did my best to calm his fears, assuring him that he had no reason to fear my transgressing any of the strict rules of Hindu custom. Despite my assurances, however, I noticed that he charged one of his sons to keep watch over me. Another spy was charged with observing the conduct of my servants. At sundown one of these latter left the village to answer a call of nature. Hardly had he returned when the person watching my servants, having seen him in the distance, ran to tell his master that his house had been polluted, that he had admitted into it people of low habits, for had he not seen with his own eyes one of my servants return from answering a call of nature without having washed himself and enter the house in this horrible state of defilement? On this my host rose in great wrath, and with gestures and looks of anger repeated to me what he had been told, ending by exclaiming: 'Is any sin equal to this! Behold the kind of gratitude which I ought to have foreseen in offering you hospitality. I had a presentiment that my good-nature would bring me trouble. To do such a thing without washing afterwards! What a crime! What a scandal! What an infamy! What shame for my house!... You must punish severely the low person who has so horribly defiled my house. You shall pay me all the cost of purification! And depart, quit my house at once!'

I let him vent his choler without interrupting him, and when he had ceased I answered him calmly that, if his complaints were well founded, reparation should be made him. But first of all he must prove that the offence had really been committed. My servant denied it strenuously, and indignantly demanded on his own part that his accuser should be punished. He had, he asserted, simply stooped down to answer a call of nature different from that alleged. His accuser nevertheless stuck to his assertion with horrible oaths. The Brahmin, believing him rather than my servant, insisted on my leaving the house. Thereupon, in a firm tone, I declared that I would neither punish my servant nor pay compensation for an injury which had not been proved. As to the order which he had given that I should leave his house, it was, I told him, an unreason-
able violation of the laws of hospitality. I was ready to obey it, seeing that he was master of his own house, but he was also headman of the village, and he was therefore bound to find me another lodging for the night.

The Brahmin went out repeating his complaints for the hundredth time. Shortly afterwards he returned with a number of the villagers, who were even louder than himself in their protestations. They demanded that my servant should be delivered up to them for severe punishment, and that I should pay compensation, repeatedly exclaiming: 'What shame! What wickedness! What abomination!'

My servant, fearing the consequences that might ensue, racked his brains for some way of proving his innocence. At last he found one which would have been conclusive before less prejudiced judges. 'If I am guilty of what you say,' he exclaimed, 'let two of you come away with me and examine my person.' The Brahmin, anxious to prove him guilty, refused on unreasonable grounds to sanction such an unanswerable argument. Finally, after a long and useless discussion, we decided to adjourn the dispute until the morning. I left the Brahmin's house, and went and lodged, together with my people, in a cowshed outside the village, in which I was allowed as a great favour to pass the night. My people, even more alarmed than myself, left the cowshed to see what was happening in the village, and came and reported to me that a great disturbance was taking place: that everybody was talking about the incident; that everywhere punishment and compensation were demanded, and that if we stayed there until the morning my servant would run the risk of being severely beaten. To save myself such a vexation I was quite ready to sacrifice a few rupees, though I would never have consented to have my poor servant exposed to maltreatment for such an offence, whether guilty or not. Consequently I thought the most prudent thing to do was to flee. At one o'clock at night, when the cowherd was sleeping peacefully in a corner of the shed, we left quietly. I mounted my horse and we decamped in all haste. Before sunrise we had passed the borders of the district where this unfortunate occurrence took place, and were therefore out of danger.
CHAPTER VI

Marriage amongst Brahmins and other Hindus.—Celibacy.—Those who may remain unmarried.—Polygamy tolerated only amongst the Upper Classes.—The two Sexes nearly equal in numbers.—Indissolubility of the Marriage Tie.—How Marriages are arranged.—Preparatory Ceremonies.—Solemn Ceremonies for the first and following Days.—Marriage amongst Sudras.—Marriage amongst Kshatriyaa.—Duties after Marriage.

To a Hindu marriage is the most important and most engrossing event of his life; it is a subject of endless conversation and of the most prolonged preparations. An unmarried man is looked upon as having no social status and as being an almost useless member of society. He is not consulted on any important subject, and no work of any consequence may be given to him. A Hindu who becomes a widower finds himself in almost the same position as a bachelor, and speedily remarries.

Though marriage is considered the natural state for the generality of men, those who from pious motives remain unmarried are looked up to and treated with the utmost respect. But it is only those persons who have renounced the world, and have chosen to lead a life of contemplation, who can take vows of celibacy. In any other case marriage is the rule, and every one is under the obligation of discharging the great debt to his ancestors, namely, that of begetting a son. No doubt it will be asked whether the Hindu devotees who take vows of celibacy do really remain as chaste as they are supposed to be. I should say without hesitation, No. Many have concubines under various pretexts, and many give themselves up in secret to vices which would disgust the most shameless libertine. Amongst this latter class are the greater number of the gurus and sannyasis, who wander about the country and live on the credulity of the public. Others shut themselves up in seclusion and lead idle and easy-going lives, their sole occupation being to receive the abundant offerings flowing in from the ignorant and foolish who believe in the false

1 The Sanskrit word for son, putra, means literally, 'one who saves from pur or hell'—the hell into which parents without sons fall.—En.
reputation for holiness which such people have acquired. But persons of sense are not taken in by their hypocrisy, and it is fairly notorious that these knaves, in the seclusion of their retreats, give themselves up to the grossest immoralities.

It must not be supposed, however, that I am accusing all unmarried Hindus without exception of leading dissolute lives. On the contrary, I have been credibly informed by those whose word may be relied on, and who know what they are talking about, that some few may be found who deny themselves all intercourse with women; but, on the other hand, one is led to believe that they allow themselves other infamous pleasures of such an abominable character that delicacy forbids one to accept the accusation except under strong proof; so I prefer to think that there are a few unmarried Hindus who are able to resist all sensual pleasures.

And why, after all, should one refuse to believe that some of these *sannyasis* or penitents are able to exercise such self-control, however difficult it may be to subdue one's passions in a country where the warm climate and the corrupt state of morality continually serve to arouse them? Do not these men, either from ostentation or from fanaticism, subject their bodies to the most cruel ordeals? And the harsh, self-inflicted *tapasas*, or penances, do they not prove, as far as one can see, their wish and intention to subdue their sinful lusts? All the same, in spite of their hypocritical affectations of piety, the greater number of these *sannyasis* are looked upon as utter impostors, and that by the most enlightened of their fellow-countrymen.

But this privilege which men possess of remaining single, and giving themselves up to a life of contemplation, is not shared by women. They at all events cannot, under any circumstances, take vows of celibacy. Subjected on all

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1 Montesquieu says that our natural human tendency is to prefer in the cause of religion anything that presupposes effort. So in the matter of morality, we incline theoretically to anything that bears the impress of asceticism. Celibacy, for instance, has taken the greatest hold on those to whom it seems most unsuited, and on whom it might have the most disastrous results (*Esprit des Lois*, xxv. 4).—ABBÉ DUBOIS.
sides to the moral ascendency of man, the very idea that they could possibly place themselves in a state of indepen-
dence and out of men's power is not allowed to cross their
minds. The opinion is firmly established throughout the
whole of India, that women were only created for the
propagation of the species, and to satisfy men's desires.
All women therefore are obliged to marry, and marriages
are carefully arranged before they arrive at a marriage-
able age. If by that time they have not found a husband,
they very rarely keep their innocence much longer. Ex-
perience has taught that young Hindu women do not
possess sufficient firmness, and sufficient regard for their
own honour, to resist the ardent solicitations of a seducer.
Therefore measures cannot be taken too early to place them
intact in their husbands' hands. Those who are unable
to enter into any lawful union form a connexion as con-
cubines with any man who cares to receive them as such.

Polygamy is tolerated amongst persons of high rank,
such as rajahs, princes, statesmen, and others. Kings are
allowed five legitimate wives, but never more. None the
less this plurality of wives amongst the great is looked
upon as an infraction of law and custom, in fact, as an
abuse. But in every country in the world those in power
have always been able to twist the law in their own favour,
however definitely it may be laid down. The principal
Hindu gods had only one wife. Brahma had only Saras-
vati; Vishnu, Lakshmi; and Siva, Parvati. It is quite
true that under their different forms these venerable per-
sonages committed frequent breaches of their marriage
vow; but this only serves to prove that from the earliest
times marriage was looked upon by the Hindus as a legal
union between two persons of opposite sexes.

If in the present day any person of inferior rank cohabits
with several women, one only of them bears the name and
title of wife; the others are merely concubines. In several
castes the children of the latter are illegitimate, and if the
father dies without having previously settled some of his
property upon them, they have no share when it comes to
be divided. I only know of one case in which a man can
legally marry a second wife, his first being still alive;
and that is when, after he has lived for a long time with
his wife, she is certified to be barren, or if she has only
borne female children; for in the latter case the debt to
one's ancestors—that is to say, the birth of a son—is con-
sidered to have been imperfectly paid. But even in this
case, before a man contracts a second marriage it is neces-
sary that he should obtain the consent of the first; and
she is always regarded as the chief wife and retains all her
prerogatives.

It may be remembered that for the same reason Abraham
took Hagar to be his wife during the lifetime and with the
consent of Sarah, his lawful wife. One may also remember
what dissensions arose in the family of the holy patriarch
as the result of this marriage with two women. It is
exactly the same in Hindu families where there are two
legal wives. Consequently the majority of Hindu husbands
prefer, under such circumstances, to give up the hope of
having a son, rather than be subjected to the numberless
troubles which are the invariable result of the remedy
permitted by law.

Some modern writers have hazarded the theory that in
hot countries the number of women greatly exceeds that of
men. It is Bruce, I think, who first advanced this opinion
in his account of his travels in Arabia and Abyssinia.
Even before my own experience had led me to a totally
different conclusion on this point, it had always appeared to
me that his deductions were wrong, or at any rate doubtful.
If my memory does not deceive me, this author tried to
prove the numerical excess of the female sex from the fact
that in the families of some Arab princes, amongst a large
number of children hardly one-sixth were males; and from
this particular instance he drew a general conclusion. It
is evident that the calculation is fundamentally wrong.
To obtain a sound basis on which to found such a conclu-
sion, a census must be taken of a large number of families
of all classes, and upon that alone can such a rule of pro-
portion be drawn. The proportion of births in the harems
of a few Eastern princes, with many wives, cannot furnish
any standard from which to determine what takes place
amongst the people themselves, where conjugal union is
restricted to what it ought to be according to the laws of
healthy morality and true civilization.
Some sceptics, however, turning this pretended discovery of Bruce to account, have drawn from it what they consider an incontrovertible argument to prove that religion is merely a question of geography, and that Christianity cannot be suitable for all countries and all nations; for marriage being the natural state of all human beings, a religion that forbids polygamy would in hot countries reduce more than half of one sex to a state of enforced celibacy. But supposing the hypothesis on which this objection to the universality of Christianity is based to be as true as I believe it to be false, it seems to me that it would prove the existence of little or nothing contrary to Divine Providence, who in giving us the inestimable benefit of divine revelation, as manifested by the teaching of an Incarnate God, appears to have manifested that this precious gift of Christianity should be shared by all the inhabitants of the terrestrial globe. It seems to me that, for this objection to have any weight, it is necessary to prove that amongst the whole of the human race, taken collectively, there is a much larger number of the female than of the male sex; for it is upon the whole human race, taken collectively, that the Creator looks as on one large family. In each individual member of this family He sees only the being created in His own image, without distinction of country, colour, language, or bodily form; and His intention was that all men should form one common brotherhood, united by all the ties of a common nature and common origin.

At the same time I have reason to believe, from my own personal observation, that the view is utterly wrong which holds that in hot climates the number of women far exceeds that of the men. For many years I exercised my religious calling in many parts of the Indian Peninsula, and I paid particular attention to the point in question. From exact registers which I kept of all baptisms, it may be seen that I yearly administered this sacrament to two or three hundred children of all castes; and I have been able to prove that during any single year the preponderance in births of one sex over the other never exceeded fifteen to twenty-five, and that it was sometimes one and sometimes the other sex which predominated within these narrow
limits. These registers, which extended over a period of more than twenty-five years, are no longer within my reach; but I am convinced that out of perhaps 6,000 children baptized by me, one sex did not outnumber the other by more than 200. Another convincing proof that the proportion of the two sexes is about equal in India, is furnished by the Brahmins, who can only have one legitimate wife, and for whom marriage is obligatory. One hardly ever meets with a woman who is not, or has not been, married. Blind, dumb, deaf, or lame, all find husbands amongst poor Brahmins, whose low fortunes do not allow them to aspire to an alliance with any more attractive spouse.

It may, it is true, be retorted that amongst Brahmins a widow cannot remarry, whereas a widower may at once take to himself another wife. The consequence is, it may be urged, that the women of this caste must be more numerous than the men. But I reply that the age at which the two sexes marry compensates for this difference. Girls are married when seven or even five years old, whilst boys wait till they are sixteen, twenty, or even older. I am therefore decidedly of opinion that in hot as well as in temperate climates the births of the two sexes are nearly equal; and that polygamy is opposed to all laws, both natural and divine¹.

This unnatural custom of polygamy, which finds a place amongst some nations, may be attributed to sinful lust, to abuse of the power of the strong over the weak, and to the dominion of the one sex over the other. It is evidently altogether contrary to the intention of the Creator, who, when He created the father of mankind, gave him only

¹ According to the Census Report of 1891, to every 1,000 males there are returned only 953 females; and the tables show that there are in the country fewer females than males to the number of, speaking roundly, 6½ millions. The deficiency is greatest in the Punjab, N.W. Provinces, and Rajputana. In Bengal, Madras, and Upper Burma, however, females are in excess to the extent of something under three-quarters of a million. The conclusion arrived at with regard to the deficiency of females is that it is to a large extent due to deliberate concealment and deliberate omission from the Census returns. But the Report remarks: 'The subject of sex is a very intricate one, and the more one studies it the less inclined is a cautious statistic to adopt any single explanation.' The Report examines the whole question at considerable length.—Ed.
one woman to wife, and indeed ordained that man and his one companion should form but one flesh 1.

A celebrated statesman of the last century (Burke), speaking on this subject from a political point of view, said that the Christian religion, by bringing marriage back to its primitive and only legitimate state, had contributed more by that alone to the general peace, happiness, stability, and civilization of the human race, than it would have been possible for it to do in any other department of divine providence.

The indissolubility of the marriage tie is also an essential principle which it seems to me is not less firmly established amongst the Hindus than that which limits this important act to the legal union of one man with one woman. A Hindu can only put away his legitimate wife for one cause, and that is adultery. If this rule is violated, it is only among the most degraded of the lower castes. A marriage can also be annulled if it has been contracted in violation of the prohibitory degrees which are laid down by custom, and which of themselves are sufficient to nullify the union.

I have never yet heard of a divorce being permitted on account of incompatibility of temper, nor have I ever heard of a man being allowed to put away his wife, however vicious she might be, simply in order to marry another woman. Hindus, as I shall presently show, put too serious a value on this solemn contract to allow it to be thus degraded to a state which would be nothing more or less than concubinage. A Hindu, and especially a Brahmin, would hardly be inclined to repudiate his wife even for adultery, unless her guilt were very notorious. As a general rule, when the wife of a Brahmin gives occasion, by injudicious behaviour, for remarks of a kind damaging to her character, her friends and relatives do their utmost to excuse her conduct and to hush up all scandal about her, so as to avoid the necessity of such an extreme measure as a divorce, the disgrace of which would reflect on the whole caste.

I will now give a detailed account of the principal ceremonies which take place both before and at the time of a wedding.

1 Genesis ii. 24.
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1 Genesis ii. 24.
A young Brahmin should, ordinarily speaking, be married when he is about sixteen years of age, but the ceremony is often postponed till he is older than this. The wife chosen for him is generally five, seven, or at the utmost nine years old.¹

This custom of marrying girls in their early childhood, and as soon as possible, though common to all castes, is most strictly observed by the Brahmins. When once a girl has passed the marriageable age, it is very difficult for her to find a husband. In this caste there is often an enormous difference in age between the husband and the wife. It is no uncommon thing to see an old man of sixty or more, having lost his first wife, marry for the second time a little child five or six years old, and even prefer her to girls of mature age. What is the result of this? The husband generally dies long before his wife, and often even before she has attained the age which would allow him to exercise his rights as a husband. So the poor girl becomes a widow before she has even become a wife, and as by the custom of her caste she may not marry again, she is oftentimes tempted to lead a dissolute life, thereby reflecting discredit on the whole caste. Everybody recognizes these abuses, but the idea of remedying them, by allowing a young widow to break through the stern rule of custom and marry again, would never even enter the head of a Hindu, more especially of a Brahmin.² It is true that the strange preference which Brahmins have for children of very tender years would make such a permission almost nominal in the case of their widows.³

¹ The Jews also married their children at an early age. A youth who was not married before he was eighteen was considered by them to be sinning against the command of the Creator, which says: 'Increase and multiply.' He was free to marry as soon as he had attained the age of thirteen. Their daughters were betrothed in childhood, and were married as soon as they had arrived at a suitable age, which was usually fixed by them at twelve.—Dubois.

² Hindu social reformers are now agitating for virgin-widow remarriages, and in a few instances such marriages have been brought about.—Ed.

³ Amongst the Jews it was permissible for widows to marry again; but those who voluntarily, out of respect and affection for their dead husbands, refrained from marrying again, were looked up to with very great respect.—Dubois.
The expenses of a wedding are so considerable that in all castes one often sees young men, who are without the necessary means, using the same expedient to procure a wife that Jacob employed with Laban. Just like the holy patriarch a Hindu without means will enter the service of one of his relations, or of some other person of the same caste who has daughters to marry, and will engage himself to serve for a certain number of years without wage, on condition that, at the end of that time, he is to receive one of the daughters in marriage. When the time agreed upon has expired the father fulfills his promise, undertakes the whole expense of the marriage, and then allows the young couple to go away and live where they please. At their departure he gives them a cow, a pair of oxen, two copper vessels (one for drinking, the other for their food), and enough rice to feed them for the first year of their married life. It is very remarkable that in India the term which a man has to serve for his wife is the same as that for which Jacob bound himself to Laban, namely seven years (Genesis xxix. 20) ¹.

The inclinations of the persons about to be married are never consulted. In fact, it would be ridiculous to do so amongst the Brahmins, seeing the age at which they marry their daughters. But even the Sudras, who often do not marry their daughters until they have attained full age, would never dream of consulting the tastes and feelings of their children under these circumstances. The choice is left entirely to the parents. That which chiefly concerns the young man’s family is the purity of the caste of his future wife. Beauty and personal attractions of any kind count for nothing in their eyes. The girl’s parents look more particularly to the fortune of their future son-in-law, and to the character of his mother, who after the marriage becomes the absolute mistress of the young wife ².

The same months are chosen for a wedding as are selected for the ceremony of the upanayana, that is to say, the

¹ No such custom exists now.—Ed.
² A Sanskrit verse, commonly quoted, says: ‘The girl courts beauty; the mother, riches; the father, knowledge; relatives, good lineage; other people, sumptuous marriage-feasts.’—Ed.
months of March, April, May, and June, and especially the two last.

However, it is possible in a case of urgency for a marriage to take place in November or February. But in both these months there are so many precautions to be observed, so many calculations to be made according to the signs of the Zodiac, the phase of the moon, and other ridiculous follies, that it is far from easy to find a day on which all the auspices are propitious.

There are four different ways of arranging the preliminaries of a marriage. The first, the most honoured and respected of all, is for the father of the bride not only to refuse to receive the sum of money to which he is entitled from the young man's parents, but to undertake to bear all the expenses of the ceremony, to purchase all the jewels and other ornaments which it is customary to give a girl on this occasion, and also to make handsome presents to the son-in-law and his parents. But this can only be done by the rich and people of high position.

The second way is for the parents of both the contracting parties to agree to share all the expenses. The third method is that usually adopted by people of all castes who are not rich. The parents of the girl insist not only on the youth's parents bearing all the expenses of the wedding and of the jewels, but they also exact payment of a sum of money in return for their daughter, the amount of which is laid down by caste custom. This method is the commonest of all; for to marry and to buy a wife are synonymous expressions in India. Most parents make a regular traffic of their daughters. The wife is never given up to her husband until he has paid the whole of the sum agreed upon. This custom is an endless source of quarrels and

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1 It is probable that the original reason why the Hindus selected these four months as the most auspicious for marriages, is that during these months all agricultural work is either finished or suspended on account of the great heat, and also because the crops, which have just been gathered in, help to defray the expenses of the wedding.—Dubois.

2 It was the custom also among the Jews for the husband to give the wife her dower. Genesis xxxiv. 8, 9, &c., xxxi. 15; 1 Samuel xviii. 25; Hosea iii. 2.—Dubois.

This is not true in the majority of instances, though there may be extreme cases of the kind. The following words were uttered recently
PAYMENT TO A FATHER-IN-LAW

disputes. If a poor man, after the marriage has taken place, cannot pay the stipulated amount, his father-in-law sues him for it, and takes his daughter away hoping that the desire to have her back again will induce the man to find the money. Sometimes this succeeds, but it pretty often happens that the son-in-law, being always unable to pay the debt, leaves his wife for years as a pledge with his father-in-law, and at last the latter, convinced that by this means he will get nothing, and fearing lest his daughter should succumb to the temptations to which her youth exposes her, withdraws his demands. A compromise is effected and the husband at length regains his wife.

The fourth method, to which none but the very poorest have recourse, is very mortifying to the girl’s parents, for they go themselves and hand her over to the tender mercies of the young man’s parents, leaving it to them to do what they will with her, to marry her when and how they like, to spend as little or as much as they choose on the wedding, and begging them at the same time to pay them something for their daughter.

As soon as the parents have discovered a suitable girl, and have ascertained if the family are likely to assent, they choose a day when all the auguries are favourable, and go to formally ask for her. They provide themselves with a new cloth, such as is worn by women, a cocoanut,

by one of the speakers at an annual conference of the Kistna District Association: ‘Gentlemen! The monstrous custom of selling girls needs no words of mine to make you try to root it out from our society. I will give you one particular case which will show you the advisability of taking proper steps to remove the evil. A certain gentleman, in a certain village, married his daughter, ten years old, to an old man of eighty-one, and received Rs. 2,000 for the bargain. In due course the girl matured, and the nuptial ceremony was performed. The girl was sent to her hated husband, much against her will. She escaped from the room in the dead of night and throw herself into a well. When the old man awoke in the morning he missed his young wife, and, on search being made, her dead body was found floating in a well. There are several instances of this sort. In some cases, if the ill-assorted pair be seen together, the bride will appear as a daughter, or even a grand-daughter. The young brides become widows even in a week after their marriages. These evils are too apparent to me, and I think you will enthusiastically carry this resolution.’—Ed.

1 I do not believe that any Hindu father of respectability would take such a step.—Ed.
five bananas, some vermillion, and some powdered sandal-
wood. While on the way, they pay great attention to any
omens that they may notice. If they consider them to be
unfavourable they retrace their steps, and postpone the
business till another day. Thus, for instance, if a snake
cross their path, or a cat, or a jackal, or if they should
happen to see anything that is regarded as an evil omen,
they decide that the best thing to do is to return to their
home.

If nothing of this sort has disturbed them on the way,
they present themselves at the house of the girl's parents
and make known the object of their visit. The latter,
before giving any answer, look steadfastly towards the
south, and wait till one of those little lizards which one
sees running about the walls of a house has uttered a certain
sharp cry, such as these reptiles often make. Then when
the Lizard of the South has spoken, the parents of the girl
give their consent to the marriage, and accept the present
which has been brought by the other parties.

In the evening of the same day, about dusk, they call
together a few relatives and friends, and summon a purolita
in order to consult him about the marriage. Whilst the
men, seated on mats or carpets, are talking together, the
women purify a part of the house; that is to say, they
rub the floor well with cow-dung mixed with water, and
then draw lines of red and white upon it. As soon as they
have finished, they bring in the god Vigneshwara, to whom
they do puja, and for neivedaya they offer peas, sugar,
a cocoanut, and a sweet beverage called paramanna. All
present worship this god, and pray him to remove any
obstacles which might interfere with the projected marriage.
If during this ceremony the Lizard of the South again utters
his cry they think it a favourable omen.

After this ceremony, the purolita fixes on a lucky day
on which to begin to celebrate the marriage. The parents

1 All Hindus are full of these superstitions. No matter how important
the business may be that they are about to undertake, they will never
hesitate for a moment to put it off, if they catch sight of one of these
objects or one of these animals. I have several times seen labourers
take their oxen back to their sheds, and remain idle all day, simply
because when leaving the village in the morning, a snake had crossed
their path.—Dubois.
of the girl then definitely give their permission, and in token of their promise they offer betel to all those who are present. These preliminaries ended, they begin to think of making preparations for the wedding. Gold and silver ornaments are ordered for the couple, and form the subject of endless discussion. The wedding garments are also got ready, a large number of cloths, such as are worn by both men and women, are bought to be given away as presents to relations and friends, a large store is laid in of rice; wheat flour, liquefied butter, oil of sesamum, peas of all kinds, dried and fresh vegetables, fruits, groceries, pickles, and in fact every sort of edible that a Brahmin is permitted to use. They also provide saffron, or turmeric, vermilion, antimony, sandalwood powder, incense, quantities of flowers, akshatas, or coloured rice, betel, areca-nut, &c., &c.; also a great quantity of small silver and copper coins. Further, they buy new baskets, and above all, plenty of new earthen vessels of all shapes and kinds; for these vessels may never be used a second time, and are immediately broken after being once used, no matter to what purpose they have been put.

When everything is ready, they begin to put up a pandal or canopy. The god Vigneshwara is carried into it, and to him they do puja, entreating him to ward off any hindrance or misfortune which might happen during the celebration of the marriage.

The purohita who presides at the ceremony must be one of the first to take up his place under the pandal; he must be provided with some darbha grass, small pieces of wood from the seven sacred trees, and a few other indispensable objects for the sacrifices he is about to offer up.

In the first place, due honour is paid to the household gods. To this end all the Brahmins present, both men and women, anoint their heads with oil of sesameum, and then bathe. The women, after preparing the various dishes for the feast, take a portion from each, which they

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1 Amongst the many kinds of vegetables which Brahmins eat, there are three which are considered particularly choice; these are a species of small round pea, the katris he (the belingela of the Portuguese, a sort of brinjal or egg-plant), and pumpkins. Among fruits they also have a preference for three—bananas, mangoes, and jack-fruit.—Dubois.
place on a metal dish, and proceed, singing songs and accompanied by all the guests to offer it as neivedya to these gods, having first, of course, done puja to them. They even go so far as to place to the right of them pickles, to give a relish to their rice, while on their left they place a cup full of the sweet drink called paramanna, with which to quench their thirst. The master of the house then performs the sam-kalpa and offers sandalwood, akshatas, flowers, and lustral water to his guests, who, ought, when receiving all this, to think of the household gods, in whose honour the feast immediately following is spread, great pains having been taken to make it bountiful and magnificent. Betel is distributed at the termination of the repast, after which the guests disperse.

The second day, nine Brahmins specially chosen for the purpose perform the sacrifice of homam and another to fire, in honour of the nine planets, as at the ceremony of the upanayana. Two women take the consecrated fire and carry it, singing the while, to the centre of the pandal, placing it on the raised dais of earth. Each of the women then receives a present of a new cloth, and a little bodice called ravikai. All present then walk round the brazier of hot coal reciting mantrams, scattering darbha grass and bowing to the ground. Presents are given to the nine Brahmins who have sacrificed to the planets, and, as usual, the meeting ends with a feast.

The third day the father of the bridegroom, having made his ablutions, takes some akshatas in a cup, and goes out early to call together relatives and friends. As soon as all are assembled under the pandal, a pure cloth or carpet is spread on the raised earthen dais, and the future husband and wife are seated thereon facing the east. The married women then approach them and rub their heads with oil, singing the while, and then proceed with the important ceremony known as nalangu, which consists in smearing the naked parts of their bodies with powdered saffron, and immediately after pouring a great quantity of warm water over their heads. The women never cease singing the

\[1\] Nalangu is not a religious ceremony. The powdered saffron is mixed with quicklime, and made into a paste which is red in colour. It is rubbed only on the feet.—Ed.
whole time, and are accompanied by musical instruments.
After the *nalangu* is over the women array the young couple
in new clothes, as has already been described in the chapter
on the *upanayana*. The evening of the same day, at the
moment when the lamps are being lighted, the guests
return to assist at the following ceremony:—The married
women, singing all the time, take a wooden cylinder which
they cover with lime and then paint with red longitudinal
stripes. On this they tie small twigs of the mango-tree.
They next sprinkle a great quantity of powdered saffron
over the cylinder, which they immediately afterwards dip
into a new earthen vessel. This they carry with much
solemnity, singing the while, to the centre of the *pandal*,
where they offer it a sacrifice of incense, and offer
some betel for *neivedhya*. Every person present makes
a profound obeisance to the vessel. No other saffron
but what is thus consecrated is used during the whole
ceremony.

All these proceedings are merely preparatory to the
marriage ceremony itself, which lasts for five days.
The first day is called *muhurtas*, that is to say, the great
day, or the happy and auspicious day. It is on this day
that the most important and solemn ceremonies take place.
The head of the family goes out early to invite his guests,
while the women busy themselves with purifying the house
and the *pandal*, which they decorate all round with wreaths
of mango leaves. The guests having arrived stand in a row,
and first adorn their foreheads with *akshatas* and sandal-
wood. They next anoint their heads with the oil of sesa-
mum which is provided for them, and then they go and
perform their ablutions. On their return the *purohita* per-
forms the *sam-kalpa* and invokes all their gods, beginning
with Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Devendra, and then the
twelve Adityas, the eight Vasus, the nine Brahmas, the
eleven Rudras, the Gandharvas, the Siddhas, the Saddhyas,
the Naradas, the seven great Penitents, the nine planets;
in fact, every deity whose name occurs to his memory.
With low obeisance he invites them all to come to the
marriage-feast, makes many flattering speeches to them,
and begs them to remain under the *pandal*, and to preside
over the ceremony during the five days that it lasts.
Then comes the invocation of ancestors. The couple about to be married are seated on the earthen dais in the centre of the pandal, having on each side of them their fathers and mothers, all with their faces turned towards the east. The father of the bride rises, places the pavitram amulet on the ring-finger of his right hand, performs the sam-kalpa, and puts a certain quantity of rice in a metal dish, and on this rice a cocoanot dyed yellow, three areca-nuts in their shells, and five others without their shells ¹.

Then, taking one of the nuts in one hand and the metal dish in the other, he repeats three times in a loud voice the names of his father, his grandfather, and his great-grandfather. Each time he pronounces their names he raps the copper dish three times with the areca-nut, and at last, again invoking them by name, he says: 'O my ancestors, you who dwell in the pitraloka (or paradise of ancestors), deign to come to this pandal, bringing with you all the other ancestors who preceded you. Be present, I beseech you, during the five days of this marriage-feast, preside at the festivity, and grant to it a happy termination!' He then gives the rice, the cocoanut, and the areca-nut which were on the dish to the purohita.

This done, the married women bring some fire on a new earthen chafing-dish, and, singing, place it in the centre of the pandal. The purohita then consecrates it by scattering all round it some darbha grass. To the north of it he places some small pieces of the sacred fig-tree, by the side of which are placed three small earthen vessels and one of copper. The first contains milk, the second liquefied butter, the third curds, and the fourth a certain quantity of cooked and uncooked rice mixed together. To the south of the brazier are spread nine portions of rice on a large banana leaf. These are tastefully arranged in squares, each portion being destined for one of the nine planets. Puja is done to each of these nine planets individually, and offerings of bananas and betel are made to

¹ These various objects are an offering which he makes to his ancestors when inviting them to the wedding. It is always considered polite to offer a present to any distinguished guest whom you invite to any ceremony.—Dubois.
them as *neiveddyā*, after which they receive the same invitation as the gods and the ancestors.

The *purohita* places on the east side of the brazier another banana leaf, on which he spreads *darbha* grass and *akshatas*. This is an offering to Brahma, to whom is presented a *neiveddyā* of raw sugar and betel. Then follows the invocation of the *ashta-dik-palakas*, or the eight divine guardians of the eight corners of the world; and *puja* is offered them on the same banana leaf. Then comes the inauguration of the *ishta-devata* or tutelary deity, and the deification of the five little pots in the manner that has already been described for the *upanayana*.

These ceremonies ended, the father of the girl performs the *homam* in honour of Brahma, Vishnu, and Rudra, of the eight gods who guard the eight compass-points of the world, of the eight Vasus, and of Indra, taking care to mention all these gods by name, and also to repeat *mantrams* suitable to the occasion. He again does *homam* to the nine planets, makes a sacrifice to fire, and offers the latter some liquefied butter as *neiveddyā*.

A new earthen chafing-dish is then brought, to which they fasten a piece of saffron thread, and on it is placed the consecrated fire. Women carry this fire away to a place apart, singing, of course, the while. Great care is taken not to let the fire go out till the end of the festivity. It would be considered a terribly bad omen if, through negligence or any other cause, it should be extinguished.

Now comes the *muhurta*, that is to say, the most essential ceremony of the marriage. To begin with, a sacrifice is offered to Vigneshwara. The bride and bridegroom are seated on the earthen dais, their faces towards the east, and the married women proceed, singing the while, with the young people’s toilette, which is of the most elegant and sumptuous description. When attired the bridegroom rises, performs the *sam-kalpa*, prays to the gods to pardon all the sins he has committed since he received the triple cord; and, to be the more sure of this pardon, he recites a *mantram*, and gives fifteen *fanams* to a Brahmin as alms. He then dresses himself up as a pilgrim, and makes all preparations as if he were really going to take a long journey, announcing that he is going to start on a holy
pilgrimage to Kasi, that is Benares. He leaves the house accompanied by the married women singing in chorus, and by his parents and friends, and preceded by instruments of music. After passing the outskirts of the village he turns his steps to the east.

But here his future father-in-law meets him, and asks him where he is going, and on learning the object of his journey, begs him to give it up. He tells him that he has a young virgin daughter, and that if he wishes it he will give her to him in wedlock. The pilgrim accepts the proposal with joy, and returns with his escort to the place whence he set out. On his return the women perform the ceremony of the aratti.

The bride and bridegroom having again taken their places on the daïs, and the sam-kalpa having been performed, they then begin the important ceremony called kankana. For this purpose they obtain two pieces of saffron or turmeric, round which they tie a double thread. They place on a metal dish two handfuls of rice, and on this rice a cocoanut painted yellow, and on the cocoanut the two pieces of saffron. Prayers are offered to all the gods collectively, who are implored to come and place themselves on this kankana, and to remain there till the five days of the marriage ceremony have been accomplished. The bridegroom then takes one of the pieces of saffron and ties it on his wife's left wrist, who in her turn ties the other piece on his right wrist. The rice and cocoanut on which the kankana has been lying are then given to the purohitā.

Then follows the procession of the tutelary deity. The mother of the bride, accompanied by the other women and the Brahmins who are present, go and fetch the copper vase which represents the ishta-devata. The women begin to sing and the musicians to play, and forming a procession they march to the end of the street, where, after choosing a clean spot, they pour out some of the water contained in the vase. They do puja to the deity while it rests on the ground, and then it is taken back with the same pomp to the place whence it came. Then follows the most important

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1 The ceremony is actually called kankana-dharana, that is, the tying or wearing of the kankana.—Ed.
ceremony of all, which is called kania-dana, or the gift of the virgin. This is what takes place. The bridegroom being seated facing the east, his father-in-law performs the sam-kalpa, places himself in front of him, and looks at him fixedly for some time without speaking. He is supposed to imagine that he sees in his son-in-law the great Vishnu; and with this in his mind, he offers him a sacrifice of arghya, padya, achamania, akshalas, sandalwood, and flowers. A new copper vessel is then brought. In this the young man places his feet, which his father-in-law washes first with water, then with milk, and then again for the third time with water, while reciting suitable mantrams.

He performs the great sam-kalpa, which consists in adding to the ordinary sam-kalpa (vide Part I, Chapter XIII) the names and attributes of the Bharata Varsha, the Salivahana, the seven islands, the seven seas, the seven puras or cities, the seven Penitents, the seven mountains, the sacred places (punyasthalas), and the holy cities (punya puras).

He next thinks of his father, his grandfather, and great-grandfather. Pronouncing their names aloud, he prays that these and the twenty-one other ancestors who have preceded them, may attain moksha (or paradise). Then, holding betel in one hand and taking his daughter’s hand in the other, he says a prayer to Vishnu, begging him to look with a gracious eye on this gift that he is making of his virgin daughter. He then places her hand in that of her future husband, pours a little water over it, and gives him some betel, the usual token of a gift.

The gift of the virgin is followed by three other gifts, namely, the go-dana, bhu-dana, and salagrama-dana, which mean the gift of cows, the gift of land, and the gift of salagramas, or small stones, to which they attach a superstitious value, and which will be spoken of later on.

Then follows the ceremony called mangalashta. The bride and bridegroom are seated facing each other, and a sheet of silk is suspended in front of them. This is held by twelve Brahmans, and hides them from the other guests, who successively invoke in a loud voice Vishnu and his

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1 This means 'the eight marriage blessings.' The ceremony concludes with the throwing of coloured rice over the couple by way of blessing them.—Ed.
wife Lakshmi, Brahma and Sarasvati, Siva and Parvati, the Sun and his wife Chhaya, the Moon and his wife Rohini, Indra and Sathi, Vasishta and Arundhati, Rama and Sita, Krishna and Rukmani, and several other pairs of gods and goddesses.

As soon as the *mangalashta* is finished they fasten on the *tali*, that is, the little gold ornament which all married women wear round their necks; the *tali* is strung on a little cord which is dyed yellow with saffron water, and composed of 108 very fine threads closely twisted together. Other little ornaments of gold are also added, round which are fastened flowers and fine black seeds. Two handfuls of rice are placed in a metal pot, on the rice is laid a coconut dyed yellow, and on the top of the coconut the *tali*, to which they offer a sacrifice of sweet perfumes. The *tali* is then taken round to all the guests, both men and women, who touch it and bless it.

Four large metal lamps, each with four wicks, are brought in and placed on a stand, which must also be of the same metal. Above are set other lamps fashioned out of a paste composed of ground rice, and these are filled with oil. They are lighted, and four women take them in their hands. At the same time all round the *pandal* a great number of other lamps are lighted. Then ensues a tremendous din. The women sing, the musicians play, bells are rung, cymbals are clashed, and anything and everything within reach from which sound can be extracted is seized on, each one striving to outdo the other in creating noise.

In the midst of this hubbub the husband advances towards his young wife, who is seated facing the east, and while reciting *mantras* he fastens the *tali* round her neck, securing it with three knots.

The husband and wife, sitting side by side, then offer each other betel. Two married women approach them, give them their blessing, and place *akshatas*, which have been consecrated by *mantras*, on their heads, and finally perform the ceremony of *aratti*.

1 Old ladies whose husbands are alive are specially requested to touch and bless the *tali*, to ensure the couple a long married life.—Ed.

2 This noise is intended to drown any sounds of weeping, sneezing, quarrelling, &c., which are considered bad omens.—Ed.
Fire is then brought on a new earthen brazier, and the purohita consecrates it with mantras, surrounds it with darbha grass, and does homam to it. The fire is surrounded by lighted lamps, and near it is placed a small stone called the sandalwood stone, no doubt because it has been smeared with sandalwood oil. Then the husband, holding his wife's hand, walks three times round the sacred fire, and each time he makes the circuit he takes his wife's right foot in his right hand, and makes her touch the sandalwood stone with it, touching the stone with his own foot at the same time. Whilst performing this action the thoughts of both husband and wife should be directed to the great mountain of the North called Sapta-kula parvata or the mountain of the seven castes, the original home of their ancestors, the mountain being represented by this sandalwood stone.

These are the various ceremonies which compose the muhurta. As soon as they are finished, two bamboos are planted in the centre of the pandal side by side, and at the foot of each of them is placed a bamboo basket. The bride and bridegroom then stand up, each in a basket, and two other baskets full of rice are brought. They take handfuls of this rice and shower it over each other in turn. This they continue to do many times, until they are tired, or are told to stop. ¹

In some castes the guests perform this ceremony, which is called sesha, for the newly married pair. Princes and very rich people have been known to use for the sesha, instead of rice, pearls and precious stones mixed together. After the sesha the couple return to their usual seat. Akshatas consecrated by mantras are then distributed to the guests. The husband throws over his right shoulder a piece of new and clean cloth, one end of which he unfolds before the assembled Brahmans, from whom he receives a blessing, while they also recite a mantra and place a portion of the akshatas they have just received on the cloth. He takes these in his hand and puts one portion on his

¹ In some countries the Jews of the present day observe a custom of throwing handfuls of wheat over a newly married couple, but especially over the wife, saying: 'Increase and multiply.' Sometimes pieces of money which are intended for the poor are mingled with the wheat.—DuBois.
own head, and the rest on his wife’s head, after which the women again perform aratti to the newly married couple.

It is easy to see the allegorical meaning of most of the ceremonies which have just been described, and which are the most solemn and important of the whole proceedings. The kania-dana, for instance, typifies the handing over of the girl by the father to the son-in-law and the renunciation of parental authority over her. The son-in-law for his part fastens the tali round his wife’s neck to show that he accepts the gift, and that from henceforth she is his property. The sacrifice of the homam and the thrice-repeated circuit of the newly married couple round the fire are a mutual ratification of the contract they have just made with one another, for there is no more solemn engagement than that entered into in the presence of fire, which Hindus look upon as the purest of their gods, and which for this reason they always prefer to any other when they wish to make an oath specially binding. The ceremony of the mangalashtha is to call down divine blessings on the newly married couple. That of the seshā is the outward expression of the wish that they may enjoy an abundance of this world’s goods, or that their union may be fruitful, or perhaps both.

When all these ceremonies are ended sandalwood powder, akshatas, and betel are given to all the Brahmains present, both men and women. All must then go and perform their ablutions and return for the feast, which on this day must be specially magnificent.

Before sitting down to eat, they never fail to carry with due solemnity to the household gods their share of the food which has been prepared.

All the guests being seated in a row upon the ground, the men quite apart from the women, so that the latter are out of sight, a large banana leaf is placed before each person, and a helping of boiled rice is placed on it, and on one side two other leaves, folded in the form of cups, one containing melted butter and the other a strongly spiced sauce. The second course consists of dried peas, green vegetables, and roots of various kinds. The third course consists of fritters, puddings boiled in water, others fried in butter, others sweetened and spiced, curdled milk, and salt pickles.
Bananas, jack, and other fruits make up the fourth course. Then follows the kalavanta, which consists of four different dishes all highly flavoured, and composed of various ingredients mixed with rice. To finish the repast a beverage is handed round composed of lime-juice, sugar, cardamom, and aniseed mixed with water. The whole meal takes place in absolute silence.

When all the guests have feasted they turn their attention to the meal for the newly married couple, not forgetting the necessary ceremonies connected with it. First of all the sacred fire is brought and placed before the dais on which they are sitting. The husband rises and does homam to the fire, whilst the purohita repeats mantrams. Then the women form a procession, and singing take the fire back to its original place. The young married couple, holding each other by the hand, go to the place where the tutelary deity is reposing, and make a deep obeisance to it. The husband then does puja to it, and offers as neivedyam some cakes and boiled rice. They make a similar obeisance to the five little earthen vases placed near the deity, in which are sown ten kinds of seeds, and sprinkle them with water.

It is only after having gone through all these preliminaries that the young married couple are allowed to partake of the meal which has been specially prepared for them. They sit down facing one another in the centre of the pandal on two little stools, the bridegroom facing east. Before them is spread a large banana leaf, and at each of its four corners are placed four lamps made of ground rice filled with oil, which are lighted, as well as many others all round the pandal. Then the married women bring in on two metal dishes the different viands which have been prepared for the young couple, much singing and music going on the while. After they have been helped, melted butter is poured three times on to their fingers, and after swallowing this they begin to eat their food together from the same leaf. To eat in this manner is a sign of the

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1 This custom is not observed nowadays in Hindu marriages, but the bridegroom and bride exchange comestibles from each other's leaves. When they live together afterwards the wife may, and does, eat off her husband's leaf, after he has finished eating.—Ed.
most complete union, and is the most unmistakable proof of friendship that two persons closely united could possibly give each other. Later on the wife will be allowed to eat what her husband leaves, but never again will she be permitted to eat in company with him. This is a favour which is only granted her on her wedding-day.

Their meal finished, the newly married couple go outside, preceded by music, and accompanied by the women singing, by all the guests, and by the purohita. The purohita points out to them a small star called Arundhati, the wife of the Penitent Vasishta, which is to be found near the pole-star. The couple make a deep reverence to the star and return to the house in the same procession\(^1\). There the women perform the ceremony of arati. This terminates the ceremonies of the first day, called **muhurta**, or the great day.

I will spare my readers the details of the ceremonies which occupy the four following days, and which, as a rule, are merely a repetition of those just described. What little variety there is, is much in the same style. These ceremonies are interspersed with the most innocent games and amusements, which would appear to us utterly ridiculous, and only suitable for little children, but which afford them the greatest pleasure and infinite amusement.

Amongst the second day's ceremonies one of the most extraordinary is when they place a sort of ornament, called **bassinam**, on the forehead of both the husband and wife. This **bassinam** is covered with gold-leaf or gold paper, and flowers are entwined round it. The object of the **bassinam** is to avert the effects of the **drishti-dosha** or evil eye, the spell which is cast by the looks of jealous or ill-disposed people. Placed thus on the most conspicuous part of the body it is supposed to attract the eyes of the malevolent, and thus prevent them exercising their malign influence on the persons of the newly married couple.

Amongst the ceremonies which take place on the third day there is a peculiar one. The husband, as usual, performs the sacrifice of the **homam** and another to fire, and

\(^1\) Arundhati was the chaste and devoted wife of Vasishta Rishi; and when the couple look at this star they make a vow that they too will live like Vasishta and Arundhati.—Ed.
after him his wife comes up and performs the same sacrifice, only with this difference, that instead of using boiled rice, she uses parched rice. This is, I believe, the only occasion on which a woman can take an active part in any of these sacrifices, which the Brahmins hold to be most sacred and most solemn.

The only remarkable ceremony which takes place on the fourth day is the *nalangu*, in which the newly married couple rub each other’s legs three times with powdered saffron. I do not in the least understand the meaning of this ceremony. I fancy its only object is to kill time. Europeans under similar circumstances would spend it in drinking, often to excess; or in gambling, dancing, singing songs in honour of love and wine, sometimes even in carrying on intrigues with the object of loosening the sacred marriage tie, which it is the object of marriage ceremonies to make secure. The Hindus spend their wedding-days more wisely in religious observances, of which the greater number are well calculated to leave a lasting impression on the minds of those attending them. The innocent and artless games with which they amuse themselves afford them none the less pleasure because they are so. In the domestic festivities of the Brahmins, decency, modesty, purity, and reserve are always conspicuous. This is the more remarkable as they obey a religion whose dogmas are for the most part saturated with immorality.

The fifth day is chiefly occupied in dismissing, with all the customary formalities, the gods, the planets, the great penitents, the ancestors, and all the other divinities who have been invited to the feast. They dismiss even the *kankanam*, that is to say, the two pieces of saffron attached to the wrists of the newly made husband and wife. Finally, the god of the *mantapam*, that is to say of the *pandal*, is himself dismissed. Then follows the distribution of presents, which vary in value according to the means of the host. The *purobita* who has taken the most prominent part, and after him the women who have been singing the whole time from beginning to end, carry off the lion’s share of these bounties. I must just mention that the songs which are sung at these ceremonies contain nothing obscene or even erotic; they are either a sort of explanation of the
A WEDDING PROCESSION

aim and object of each ceremony or else a long rigmarole in praise of the bride and bridegroom, in which they also give expression to the most heartfelt wishes for their future happiness.

The festivity ends with a solemn procession through the streets, which generally takes place at night by torchlight in the midst of squibs and fireworks of all kinds. The newly married pair are seated face to face in an open palanquin highly decorated. Both of them are loaded, rather than adorned, with flowers, jewels, and other ornaments, for the most part borrowed for the occasion. The procession advances slowly. Relatives and friends before whose houses it passes, come out to meet it. The women perform the ceremony of *arati* to the couple, and the men give presents of silver, fruits, sugar, betel, &c. These gifts are really only a loan, for those who receive them are expected to return them on similar occasions to the givers. I have sometimes seen wedding processions that were really beautiful, though perhaps not quite according to our taste.

Such are a Brahmin’s wedding ceremonies, all of which, and many more minute observances which I have not thought it worth while to mention, are scrupulously performed with more or less magnificence by rich as well as by poor.

Sudras’ marriage ceremonies are equally solemn, though much less elaborate. In every caste marriage is looked upon as the most important affair in a man’s life. It is also the most expensive one, and brings many a Hindu to ruin. Some spend on it all that they possess, and a great deal more besides; while others, in order to fulfil what is expected of them, contract debts which they are never able to repay.¹

I shall say nothing of the feasts which are given by their relatives and friends to the newly married couple, of the presents they receive, or of the ceremonies in their honour. I will only add that for a whole month the feasting and rejoicings go on.

When all the festivities have at length come to an end.

¹ One of the planks of the Social Reform platform is the reduction of marriage expenses.—Ed.
the bride returns home with her parents, who keep her shut up till such time as she shall be able to fulfil all the duties of a wife. This also is another occasion for festivities. There is the same gathering of friends and relatives, and almost the same ceremonies, with a few exceptions, that took place at the first wedding. The father and mother of the bridegroom, on being informed that their daughter-in-law has arrived at an age when the marriage can be consummated, go and fetch her, and conduct her home in triumph. And in order that she may become accustomed by degrees to married life, her own parents come at the end of a month and take her back to her own home, and for the first few years, or until she has children, she lives alternately in her parents' and in her husband's house. These mutual arrangements are at first a proof of the happy understanding existing between the two families. But unfortunately this harmony rarely lasts long, for very soon, finding herself ill-treated and even beaten by her husband, and tormented in a thousand ways by an exacting mother-in-law who treats her like a slave and vents upon her all her whims and ill-temper, the poor young wife is forced to a surreptitious flight, seeking shelter and protection under her father's roof. Then, relying on promises of better treatment in future, she consents to resume her fetters; but fresh outrages soon force her to escape again. In the end, resigning herself to the inevitable, or for the sake of her children, she gives up the struggle, and meekly bows to marital authority. A real union with sincere and mutual affection, or even peace, is very rare in Hindu households. The moral gulf which exists in this country between the sexes is so great that in the eyes of a native the woman is simply a passive object who must be abjectly submissive to her husband's will and fancy. She is never looked upon as a companion who can share her husband's thoughts and be the first object of his care and affection. The Hindu wife finds in her husband only a proud and overbearing master who regards her as a fortunate woman to be allowed the honour of sharing his bed and board. If there are some few women who are happy and beloved by those to whom they have been blindly chained by their family, this good fortune must be attributed to the naturally
kind disposition of their husbands, and not in any way to
the training the latter have received.

A Brahmin purohita does not usually preside at a Sudra
marriage unless the contracting parties are very rich and
of high position, and thus able to recompense him hands-
omenly. Generally the ceremony is performed by one of
the mendicant Brahmans who go about selling Hindu
almanacs from door to door.

In each caste custom differs as to the manner in which
a bride is demanded, the sum of money paid for her, the
quantity and the value of her jewels, the colour and price
of the wedding garments, the arrangements as to who shall
defray the expenses of the ceremony, the number of feasts
provided for the guests, and the presents made to relatives
and friends.

Amongst the Sudras the erection of the pandal is one of
the most important and solemn of the ceremonies. It is
set up in the street, opposite the entrance-door of the house,
seven, five, or three days before the wedding festivities
begin. As soon as it is put up a procession is formed,
accompanied by music, to fetch the ara-sani, that is to say,
a green branch of the sacred fig-tree with leaves on it.
This is planted in the centre of the pandal; puja is offered
to it and also votive offerings. All present walk round it
in single file, making deep obeisance to it. It represents
Vishnu, to whom the sacred fig-tree is specially dedicated,
and it remains in the middle of the pandal during the whole
of the ceremonies as the tutelary god of the festivity.
Processions round it take place at intervals, always accom-
panied by the same marks of respect. Another peculiarity
at a Sudra wedding is that a lamp is kept alight in a pro-
minent part of the pandal during the three days' festivities,
the wick of which is composed of 108 threads. Among
the Sudras also the number of earthen cooking-pots is
restricted to ten.

The Brahmin who presides at the marriage begins by
breaking one or more cocoanuts before the ara-sani, and
according as the nut breaks in this or that direction, favour-
able or unfavourable auguries of the future of the newly

1 The spread of education, though it has not extended far amongst
Hindu women, is gradually changing many of these domestic evils.—Ed.
married pair are determined. Almost all the other ceremonies are identical with those of the Brahmins.

At the marriage of Kshatriyas or Rajahs, the ceremonial differs very little from that of the Brahmins. A purohita invariably presides and takes the leading part. All the Brahmins who live in the place and in the neighbourhood are invited, but as they cannot eat with people of this caste, they receive each day portions of rice, melted butter, curdled milk, peas, vegetables, and fruits, which they cook for themselves and feast upon apart.

At the termination of the ceremonies they receive more or less valuable presents of cloths and other things according to their rank and in proportion to the means of the family who give the feast.

At the marriages of Kshatriyas, too, all the different kinds of weapons used in warfare are brought in with much solemnity, accompanied by the songs of the women and by instruments of music. These weapons remain hung up in the most conspicuous part of the pandal until the festivities are ended. The guests offer them sacrifices, and worship them from time to time, and similar processions are made round them to those of the Sudras round the sacred fig-branch.

The work from which I have extracted these details gives particulars of a remarkable expedient for procuring a wife sometimes adopted by the noble caste of Kshatriyas. When a young man of this caste wishes to marry, instead of going through the usual prescribed forms and humiliating proceedings with the parents of the girl that he has in view, he exercises the right of carrying off the noble lady on whom he has set his affections. To ensure success in his enterprise he collects a numerous following, unexpectedly declares hostilities against the king whose son-in-law he hopes to be, and tries to wrest his daughter from him either by force or strategy. As soon as she is in his power he conducts her to his home in triumph, and celebrates the marriage with all due solemnity. This method of procuring a wife, says the author, is the most approved of all in the case of a Kshatriya; and, in fact, Hindu books often mention similar instances of rape, but always amongst the Rajah caste.
The ritual of the Brahmin *purohitas*, after describing in detail the ceremonies to be observed at a Kshatriya marriage, always terminates with a short sermon on the principal duties imposed on this noble caste.

'The real caste of Kshatriyas has ceased to exist,' says this same author, 'and the so-called Kshatriyas of the present time are a bastard race.\(^1\) Whoever pretends to be a true Kshatriya ought to know that he can only be a soldier, and nothing else, and that his one object in life is to make war. During a war he should be careful not to injure a labourer, an artisan, any one who flees before him, who asks his assistance or who places himself under his protection, any one who during the battle or after it lays down his arms and with supplicating hands asks for quarter. In a word, he should conduct himself in these circumstances according to the rules laid down in the *Dharma-sastra*. The true Kshatriya when engaged in fighting an enemy should give up all desire to live. Far be it from him to think of retreating or taking to flight! On the contrary, let him advance bravely, resolved to conquer or to die! The happiest death for a Kshatriya, the one he should wish for most, is to die sword in hand, fighting. It procures for him the inestimable happiness of being admitted to *Swarga*.\(^2\) Boundless ambition is the highest virtue a Kshatriya can possess. However vast his possessions may be already, he should never say that he has enough. All his thoughts should tend to enlarging and extending his territories and to making war on neighbouring princes with a view to appropriating their possessions by main force. He should show faith and piety towards the gods; he should respect Brahmins, placing the utmost

\(^1\) This caste was almost entirely annihilated by Vishnu, who visited the earth in the person of Parasurama. The Kshatriyas, it is related, had increased to such an extent that they filled the whole earth, which they ruled with such unbearable tyranny, that Vishnu, with a view to deliver the world from their unjust oppression, began, as Parasurama, a long and bloody war against them, in which all the men of the caste were exterminated. Only the women were spared, and they became the concubines of Brahmins. The Kshatriyas of the present day are descendants of the bastards who resulted from these illegitimate unions. —Dubois.

\(^2\) Paradise of Indra.
confidence in them, and loading them with gifts. Truth and justice are the foundations on which all his actions should be based. His leisure moments should be given up to reading the Dhanur-veda, and other sacred works which he has the right to study, and he should regulate his conduct by the customs of his caste. Humane and generous, he must never refuse to do good to any one, whoever he may be, and it should be said of no one that he left a Kshatriya's presence unsatisfied. The best and most honourable way in which he can spend his wealth is to give abundant alms to Brahmans, to build temples with gopurams, to erect rest-houses and other buildings for public use on the high-roads, to repair those that are falling into decay, to sink wells and make reservoirs and tanks, and to establish chutrams (almshouses for Brahmans) in many places. He should do his best to rule his country with equity, and should keep a careful watch lest he act unjustly. He must give to all his subjects their due, and never exact from them more than what rightfully belongs to him. In short, his duty is to model his conduct in everything on the rules laid down in the Dharma-sastra.

CHAPTER VII

The second, or Grahastha, Status of Brahmān.—Rules of Life which the Brahmān Grahastha should daily follow.—Introduction.—Forms to be observed when relieving Nature and when Washing.—Manner of cleansing the Teeth.—Sandhya, Part I.—Rules relating to Ablutions.—The Correct Order of Daily Avocations.—Rules to be followed when Eating and when going to Bed.—Sandhya, Part II.—Mantras of which the Sandhya is composed.—Sandhya for Morning, Noon, and Evening.—Conclusion.—General Remarks.

The greater part of the matter contained in this chapter will not perhaps appear very interesting to some readers. However, the subject, considered from a philosophical point of view, seemed to me to be curious, and I think that many will forgive the prolix details that I am about to give for the sake of learning more exactly what the customs of the Brahmans really are. I have gleaned these details from the great book of Brahmān ritual called Nitiya-karma. I shall classify them in parts and sections, as is

1 This Veda treats of the science of archery.—Ed.
usually done in works of this kind, and shall follow the
divisions as they exist in the original. The name of
Grahastha Brahmin is, strictly speaking, only given to those
who are married, and who already have children. A young
Brahmin after his marriage ceases virtually to be a Brah-
machari, but as long as his wife by reason of her youth
remains with her parents, he is not considered a real
Grahastha. He only earns the right to this title after he
has paid the debt to his ancestors, that is, by being the father
of a son. Brahmins who have fulfilled this latter condition
form the real bulk of the caste; it is they who uphold its
rights and settle any differences that may arise. It is they
who are expected to see that the customs are observed and
to further them by precept and example.

INTRODUCTION.

The Grahastha should rise every day about an hour and
a half before the sun appears above the horizon. On
rising his first thoughts should be for Vishnu. He then
calls upon the following gods to cause the sun to rise,
saying: 'O Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Sun, Moon, Mars,
Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu, Ketu, cause the
dawn to appear!'

He pronounces the name of his guru, or spiritual teacher,
and addresses the following prayer to him: 'I offer worship
to you; to you who resemble the god whom I love most;
it is by your wise advice that I am able to escape the dangers
and perils of this world.'

He must then imagine himself to be the Supreme Being,
and say: 'I am God! there is none other but me. I am
Brahma; I enjoy perfect happiness, and am unchange-
able.' He thinks deeply on this point with great com-
placency for some time, fully persuading himself that he
is really Brahma. After this he addresses Vishnu thus:
'O god, who art a pure spirit, the giver of life to all things,
the ruler of the universe, and the husband of Lakshmi, by
your command I rise, and am about to occupy myself
with the affairs of this world.'

He must then think of what work he has before him
during the day, of the good deeds that he proposes to do,
and of the best means of carrying out his intentions. He
reminds himself that his daily tasks to be meritorious must be done zealously and piously, and not indifferently and perfunctorily. Whilst thus thinking he takes courage, and makes a resolution to do his best. After that he performs the hari-smarana, which consists in reciting aloud the litanies to Vishnu, and in repeating his thousand names.

These preliminaries ended, he must attend to the calls of nature, and the following are the rules which he must follow in this important matter:—

SECTION I.—Rules to be observed by Brahmins when answering the calls of nature.

I. Taking in his hand a big chembu (brass vessel) he will proceed to the place set apart for this purpose, which should be at least a bowshot from his domicile.

II. Arrived at the place he will begin by taking off his slippers, which he deposits some distance away, and will then choose a clean spot on level ground.

III. The places to be avoided for such a purpose are: the enclosure of a temple; the edge of a river, pond, or well; a public thoroughfare or a place frequented by the public; a light-coloured soil; a ploughed field; and any spot close to a banian or any other sacred tree.

IV. A Brahmin must not at the time wear a new or newly washed cloth.

1 The hari-smarana consists in saying: 'Hail Govinda! Hail Kesava! Hail Narayana! Hail Hari!' &c., &c. It must not be supposed, however, that all the names and epithets by which this god is designated have any very flattering meanings attached to them. For instance, Govinda means cowherd; Kesava, 'he who has hair on his head'; Narayana, 'he who lives on the waters,' &c. Several other names of Vishnu are even more ridiculous than these.—Dubois.

8 I have decided only after much hesitation to give these somewhat disgusting details. To a judicious and enlightened student, however, a knowledge of the common, everyday habits of a nation is not without its use; and overcoming my natural repugnance on this account, I have ventured to believe that my readers will pardon me for not excising so important a section of the Brahmin's ede mæcum. I may remark at the same time that all these minute details pertaining to cleanliness and health belong to an elaborate system of hygiene which extends to other practices of the people of India, and which is certainly very beneficial in a hot country like theirs. The Hebrew lawgiver also did not forbear to insert rules similar to these in the Hebrew books of law (Deut. xxiii. 12, 13).—Dubois.
V. He will take care to hang his triple cord over his left ear and to cover his head with his loin-cloth.

VI. He will stoop down as low as possible. It would be a great offence to relieve oneself standing upright or only half stooping: it would be a still greater offence to do so sitting on the branch of a tree or upon a wall.

VII. While in this posture he should take particular care to avoid the great offence of looking at the sun or the moon, the stars, fire, a Brahmin, a temple, an image, or one of the sacred trees.

VIII. He will keep perfect silence.

IX. He must chew nothing, have nothing in his mouth, and hold nothing on his head.

X. He must do what he has to do as quickly as possible, and rise immediately.

XI. After rising he will commit a great offence if he looks behind his heels.

XII. If he neglects none of these precautions his act will be a virtuous one, and not without merit; but if he neglects any of them the offence will not go without punishment.

XIII. He will wash his feet and hands on the very spot with the water contained in the chenbu which he brought. Then, taking the vessel in his right hand, and holding his private parts in his left hand, he will go to the stream to purify himself from the great defilement which he has contracted.

XIV. Arrived at the edge of the river or pond where he purposes to wash himself, he will first choose a suitable spot, and will then provide himself with some earth to be used along with the water in cleansing himself.

XV. He must be careful to provide himself with the proper kind of earth, and must remember that there are several kinds which cannot be used without committing an offence under these circumstances. Such are the earth of white-ant nests; salt-earth; potters' earth; road-dust; bleaching earth; earth taken from under trees, from temple enclosures, from cemeteries, from cattle pastures; earth that is almost white like ashes; earth thrown up from rat-holes and such like.

XVI. Provided with the proper kind of earth, he will
approach the water but will not go into it. He will take some in his *chembu*. He will then go a little distance away and wash his feet and hands again. If he has not a brass vessel he will dig a little hole in the ground with his hands near the river-side and will fill it with water, which he will use in the same way, taking great care that this water shall not leak back into the river.

XVII. Taking a handful of earth in his left hand, he will pour water on it and rub it well on the dirty part of his body. He will repeat the operation, using only half the amount of earth, and so on three times more, the amount of earth being lessened each time.

XVIII. After cleansing himself thus he will wash each of his hands five times with earth and water, beginning with the left hand.

XIX. He will wash his private parts once with water and potters' earth mixed.

XX. The same performance for his two feet, repeated five times for each foot, beginning, under the penalty of eternal damnation, with the right foot.

XXI. Having thus scouried the different parts of his body with earth and water he will wash them a second time with water only.

XXII. After that he will wash his face and rinse his

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*It is only the left hand that may be used on these occasions. It would be thought unpardonably filthy to use the right hand. It is always the left hand that is used when anything dirty has to be done, such as blowing the nose, cleaning the ears, the eyes, &c. The right hand is generally used when any part of the body above the navel is touched, and the left hand below that. All Hindus are so habituated to this that one rarely sees them using the wrong hand. The custom of carefully washing the dirty part after answering a call of nature is strictly observed in every caste. The European habit of using paper is looked upon by all Hindus, without exception, as an utter abomination, and they never speak of it except with horror. There are some who even refuse to believe such a habit exists, and think it must be a libel invented out of hatred for Europeans. I am quite sure that when the natives talk amongst themselves of what they call our dirty, beastly habits, they never fail to put this at the head of them all, and to make it a subject of bitter sarcasm and mockery. The sight of a foreigner spitting or blowing his nose into a handkerchief and then putting it into his pocket is enough to make them feel sick. According to their notions it is the polite thing in the world to go outside and blow one's nose with one's fingers and then to wipe them on a wall.—Dubois*
mouth out eight times. When he is doing this last act he must take very great care to spit out the water on his left side, for if by carelessness or otherwise he unfortunately spits it out on the other side, he will assuredly go to hell.

XXIII. He will think three times on Vishnu and will swallow a little water three times in doing so.

SECTION II.—Rules to be observed when cleaning the teeth.

I. To clean his teeth a Hindu must use a small twig cut from either an uduga, a renugu, or a neradu tree, or from one of a dozen others of which the names are given by the author.

II. If such a twig is unobtainable, he may use a bit of wood cut from any thorny or milky shrub.

III. Before cutting the twig he must repeat the following prayer to the gods of the woods: ‘O gods of the woods! I cut one of your small twigs to cleanse my teeth. Grant me, for this action, long life, strength, honours, wit, many cattle and much wealth, prudence, judgement, memory, and power.’

IV. This prayer ended, he cuts a twig a few inches in length, and softens one end into the form of a painter’s brush.

V. Squatting on his heels and facing either east or north,

It is necessary to rinse the mouth out after every action which is calculated to cause any defilement. The rule is to rinse the mouth out four times after making water, eight times after answering an ordinary call of nature, twelve times after taking food, and sixteen times after sexual intercourse. It is easy to recognize in this rule one of those wise ordinances of hygiene so appropriate to the climate and rendered obligatory by usage.—Dubois.

This is called achamania.—Ed.

The practice of rinsing out the mouth and scrubbing the teeth well with a small piece of green wood freshly cut from the branch of a tree is very general, not only amongst Brahmuns, but also amongst all other castes. Europeans, as a rule, are considered to neglect this practice so indispensable to cleanliness and comfort, and in consequence are still further despised on that account; while those Europeans who do clean their teeth are held to do so in such an objectionable manner as rather to add to the disgust which Hindus feel for those who are neglectful of this custom, because they use for this purpose a brush made with the bristles of a dead animal, and therefore impure, and also because they use the same brush many times, though it has after the first time been defiled by saliva.—Dubois.
he scrubs all his teeth well with this brush, after which he rinses his mouth with fresh water.

VI. He must not indulge in this cleanly habit every day. He must abstain on the sixth, the eighth, the ninth, the eleventh, the fourteenth, and the last day of the moon, on the days of new and full moon, on the Tuesday in every week, on the day of the constellation under which he was born, on the day of the week and on the day of the month which correspond with those of his birth, at an eclipse, at the conjunction of the planets, at the equinoxes, the solstices, and other unlucky epochs, and also on the anniversary of the death of his father or mother.

VII. Any one who cleans his teeth with his bit of stick on any of the above-mentioned days will have hell as his portion!

VIII. He may, however, except on the day of the new moon and on the ekadasi (eleventh day of the moon), substitute grass or the leaves of a tree for this piece of wood.

IX. On the day of the new moon and on the ekadasi he may only clean his teeth with the leaves of the mango, the jujvă, or the nere.

After having cleaned his teeth the Brahmin must direct his steps to some water to go through the important act of the sandhya\(^1\).

SECTION III.—The First Part of the Sandhya. Rules to be observed by a Brahmin while washing.

I. He performs the sam-kalpa, then calling to mind the gods of the waters, he worships them. He then thinks of the Ganges, and addresses the following prayer to the sacred river: 'O Ganges! who were born in Brahma's pitcher, whence you descended in streams on to Siva's hair, from Siva's hair to Vishnu's feet, and thence flowed on to the earth to wash out the sins of all men, to purify them and

\(^1\) The word sandhya answers to our word 'twilight'; it indicates the moment in the day when the sun reaches its apogee. Thus the sandhya must be performed three times a day, morning, noon, and evening.—DUBOIS.

Sandhya literally means 'meeting,' between day and night, that is. — Ed.
promote their happiness! You are the stay and support of all living creatures here below! I think of you, and it is in my mind to bathe in your sacred waters. Deign to blot out my sins and deliver me from all evil.'

II. This prayer ended, he must think of the seven sacred rivers (the Ganges, the Jumna, the Indus, the Gódávari, the Sarasvati, the Nerbudda, and the Cauvery). Then plunging into the water, he fixes his thoughts intently on the Ganges, and imagines that he is really bathing in that river.

III. His ablutions finished, he turns towards the sun, takes water in his hands three times, and makes a libation to the sun by letting the water run off the tips of his fingers.

IV. He then leaves the water, girds up his loins with a pure cloth, and puts another on his shoulders. He sits down with his face to the east, fills his brass vessel with water, which he places in front of him, rubs his forehead with the ashes of cow-dung or sandalwood, and traces on it the red mark called tiloki according to the custom of his caste. He ends by hanging either a wreath of flowers round his neck, or else a string of seeds called rudrakshas.

V. He thinks of Vishnu, and in honour of him drinks three times a little of the water contained in the vessel. He also makes three libations to the sun by pouring water on the ground.

VI. Similar libations are made in honour of the gods Vishnu, Siva, Brahma, Indra, Agni, Yama, Neiruta, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera, Isana, the air, the earth, and all the gods in general, mentioning those by name which occur to his memory.

VII. Then he rises, pronouncing aloud the name of the sun, and worshipping him. He then meditates some time on Vishnu, and repeats the prescribed form of prayer in his honour.

VIII. He again repeats the names of the gods, turning round the while, and ends by making them a profound bow.

IX. Thinking once again of the sun, he addresses the following prayer to him:

‘O sun-god! You are Brahma at your rising, Rudra at

1 Details of this will be found in the second part of the samdhya.
noon, and Vishnu when setting. You are the jewel of the air, the king of the day, the witness of everything that takes place on earth; you are the eye of the world, the measurer of time; you order the day and night, the weeks, the months, the years, the cycles, the kalpas, the yugas, the seasons, the ayanas, the times of ablation and of prayer. You are lord of the nine planets; you absolve the sins of those who pray to you and offer you sacrifices. Darkness flies at your approach. In the space of sixty ghatikas (twenty-four minutes) you ride mounted in your chariot over the great mountain of the North, which is ninety million five hundred and ten thousand yojanas in extent. I worship you with all my strength; deign in your mercy to put away all my sins.'

X. Hereupon he turns round and round, twelve, twenty-four, or forty-eight times according as he is able, in honour of the sun.

XI. He then goes to a sacred fig-tree, and with his face towards the east makes it a profound inclination, repeating the following prayer the while: 'O asvatta tree! You are a god! You are the king of trees! Your roots represent Brahma, your trunk Siva, your branches Vishnu. Thus are you the emblem of the Trimurti. All those who honour you in this world by performing to you the ceremony of the upanayana or of marriage\(^1\), by walking round about you, by adoring you and singing your praises, or by other similar acts, will obtain remission of their sins in this world and a home of bliss in the next. Penetrated with the consciousness of these truths I praise and adore you with all my strength. Deign to give me a proof of your goodness by vouchsafing the pardon of my sins in this world, and a place with the blessed after death.'

XII. He then walks round the tree seven, fourteen, twenty-one, twenty-eight, thirty-five, or more times, according as he has strength, always increasing the number by seven.

XIII. He then reads some devotional book for a certain time, and having finished he rises, clothes himself with pure cloths, plucks a few flowers to offer to his household

\(^1\) It will be seen in the following pages that this tree is given in marriage with all due solemnity.—Dubois.
Section IV.—A Brahmin's daily avocations.

I. On returning to his house the Brahmin Grahastha makes the sacrifice of homam, and may then attend to his ordinary affairs.

II. Towards noon, after having ordered his meal, he returns to the river to perform the sandhya for the second time, just as he did in the morning, the prayers only being different.

III. He returns home, taking the greatest care to remain undefiled, and avoiding with scrupulous anxiety the touch of anything on the road that might defile him. For instance, he would have to return promptly to the river if by any accident he set foot on a piece of broken glass or pottery, a bit of rag, hair, or a piece of skin, &c., or if he was touched by a person of inferior caste. It is necessary for him to preserve the most absolute purity to be able to perform the sacrifice which he is about to make.

IV. On his return to his house he proceeds with the daily sacrifice due to his household gods. Everything being ready for this important ceremony, he turns towards the east or towards the north, and remains some time in deep meditation. Taking a position below the divinity, he places the flowers he brought as an offering to the right of the god to whom he is going to do puja. Before him is placed a vessel full of water, also incense, a lamp, sandalwood, cooked rice, and other things of which the sacrifice is to be composed.

V. He first drives away the giants and evil spirits by snapping his fingers ten times, and turning round and round. By these means he prevents their approach.

VI. He then sets to work to provide himself with a new body, beginning with these words: 'I myself am the divinity to whom I am about to offer sacrifice.' By virtue of these words he unites the individual soul which reposes in his navel with the supreme soul which reposes in his breast. In the same way he unites successively the different elements of which he is made, the earth to the water, the water to the fire, the fire to the wind, the wind to the air.
VII. He presses the right nostril with his thumb and repeats the monosyllable _jom_ sixteen times, and breathing heavily through the left nostril he thereby dries up the body which forms his mortal tenement.

VIII. With his thumb and first finger he closes both nostrils, repeats the word _ron_ six times, holds his breath, thinks of fire; and by this means burns his body.

IX. He repeats the word _lom_ thirty-two times, blowing hard all the time through his right nostril. He thus blows away the body which has just been burned. He must think of a new set of senses, and the thought will of itself suffice to procure them for him.

X. Then thinking of water, he causes the _amrita_ to fall from the moon by pronouncing the sacred word _aum_. He diffuses this _amrita_ over the whole of his body, which then becomes resuscitated.

XI. Finally, while saying the word _jom_ he thinks of the elements of which he is composed, and arranges them in order, in the place of those he has just got rid of.

XII. He again repeats: 'I am myself the divinity to whom I am about to do sacrifice.' He then brings back to his navel the individual soul which had been incorporated in the supreme soul, after which, putting his right hand on his head, he says: 'Glory to the Penitent Narada!' and he imagines that this Penitent is then resting on his head. Placing his hands on the vessel of water beside him he evokes upon it the _mantra gayatri_. Finally, he lays his hand on his chest, and Vishnu is at once there. He finishes by saying the letters of the alphabet over the new and perfectly pure body which he has just made for himself.

After this preparatory ceremony, called _santi-yoga_, he does _puja_ to his household gods. He may also do it, over the little stone _salagrama_, to all kinds of gods. This is indeed the most perfect form of worship. But he may also do it over a vessel full of water.

XIII. He then sits down to his meal. If his means allow of it he should not fail to invite daily as many poor Brahmins as possible to this repast.

XIV. He eats in silence, but he does not begin until he has carefully put on one side for his departed ancestors
a small portion of the rice and other dishes prepared for him.

The following are the principal rules which he is enjoined to observe while taking his meal; but for the most part they are neglected:—

After his food has been served the Brahmin pours a little water round the food, then traces a square patch with a thin stream of water, puts a little rice in the middle, and says: 'Glory to Narayana!' sprinkling over it a few drops of water. He also places a little rice on each of the corners of the square, saying successively: 'Glory to Vishnu! Glory to the god of evil spirits (Siva)! Glory to the god of the earth (Brahma)! Glory to the earth!' repeating each time, 'I offer him this rice.' On the rice that he is going to eat he places either some leaves of the *tulasi*¹, or a few of the flowers that he offered in the preceding sacrifice. He then traces a circular patch with a thin stream of water, and puts some rice in the centre. This is an offering to the evil spirits.

Pouring a little water into the hollow of his hand, he drinks it as a foundation for the meal he is about to make. He takes a little rice soaked in melted butter and puts it into his mouth, saying: 'Glory to the wind which dwells in the chest!' At the second mouthful, 'Glory to the wind which dwells in the face!' At the third, 'Glory to the wind which dwells in the throat!' At the fourth, 'Glory to the wind which dwells in the whole body!' At the fifth, 'Glory to those noisy ebullitions which escape above and below!'

*Sannyasis*, penitents, and widows may not eat anything in the evening. Should they do so they would be guilty of a crime equal to that of killing a Brahmin. The most minute attention must be paid to food; but the chief point, and the most laudable without doubt, is to see that the cooking is done with perfect cleanliness. This duty generally devolves on the women, though most Brahmins pride themselves on being good cooks. The room set apart for cooking operations is, as far as possible, the most retired room in the house, so that strangers, and particularly Sudras, may not be able to look in, as that would defile

¹ The basil plant, *Ocimum sanctum*.—Ed.
the earthen vessels. The spot must be well purified to
begin with by rubbing the floor over with cow-dung mixed
with water. The clothing of the persons who do the work
must have been freshly washed.

The Brahmin being seated on the ground, his wife places
a banana leaf in front of him, or the leaves of other trees
sewn together to serve as plates. She pours a few drops
of water on them, and then helps the rice, putting the other
dishes on each side. To flavour the rice they pour upon
it melted butter, for which Brahmins have a particular
fondness, or they flavour it with a kind of sauce so highly
spiced that no European palate could stand its pungency.
Everything is helped as well as eaten with the fingers
only. Should however the dishes be very hot the wife
may use a wooden spoon so as not to burn herself.

When a Brahmin or any other Hindu eats, those whom
he has invited are allowed to be present. As a rule it is
considered the height of rudeness to look at any one who
is eating, and Hindus who are obliged when travelling to
take their meals in rest-houses, or under trees, are very
careful to hang up screens round the place where they eat
so as not to be seen.

As soon as the husband has finished his meal the wife
takes hers on the same plate, upon which, as a proof of his
affection for her, the husband will leave a few scraps, She, for her part, will show no repugnance at eating the
fragments that he has left. The following story, which
I read in some Indian book, illustrates this:—

‘An old Brahmin was so badly attacked by leprosy that
one day a joint of one of his fingers dropped off while
he was eating, and fell on his leaf-plate. When his wife’s
turn came to take her food, she contented herself with
simply putting this piece of finger on one side, and ate up
the remains that her husband had left without showing the
smallest repugnance. The Brahmin, who was watching
her, was so delighted with such a proof of her devotion
that, after overwhelming her with praise, he asked her
what she would like as a reward. ‘Alas!’ she said in
a melancholy tone, ‘what reward can I hope for? I am
young and childless, and perhaps soon I may find myself
one of the hated and despised class of widows!’ ‘No,’
answered the Brahmin, ‘you shall not go unrewarded. I will arrange for your happiness.’ Accordingly the Brahmin, being a holy man and much beloved by the gods, in spite of his leprosy, was granted the favour of re-incarnation and was allowed to live with his wife as long as she and he desired. In the enjoyment of abundant riches, and of all the gifts that nature can bestow, they saw three generations pass away, being reborn each time they reached the ordinary term of human life. Moreover as a climax to their happiness they had numerous children with each new life. At last, tired of this life, they both died, and were transported to the Sattya-loka or paradise of Brahma.’ But to return to our subject.

XV. His meal over, the Brahmin washes his hands and rinses his mouth. He must also gurgle his throat twelve times.

XVI. He takes some leaves of the tulasi which he had offered before his meal to his household gods, and bringing to his mind the thought of either the penitent Agastya or the giant Kumbhakarna he swallows these leaves, by doing which he ensures a good digestion for the meal just eaten and wards off any illness ¹.

XVII. He gives betel and areca-nut to the poor Brahmins invited to dinner and dismisses them. He then spends some time reading devotional books.

XVIII. His reading finished, he puts some betel into his mouth, and is then free to look after his ordinary business or to go and see his friends, taking care all the time not to covet either the goods or the wives of others.

XIX. Towards sunset he returns for the third time to the river and performs the evening sandhya, repeating the ceremonies of the morning and midday.

XX. On his return home he performs the homam for the second time, and reads some Puranas. He again goes through the hari-smarana, which, as we have already described, consists in reciting the litanies to Vishnu and pronouncing his thousand names aloud.

XXI. He then visits the temple nearest to his house,

¹ Agastya is the dwarf Rishi, who is said to have swallowed the ocean in three gulps. Kumbhakarna is a giant famous for his voracious appetite.—Ed.
but he must never present himself there empty-handed. He must take as an offering either oil for the lamp, coconuts, bananas, camphor, or incense, &c., of which the sacrifices are composed. If he is very poor he must at least bring some betel leaves.

XXII. If the temple is dedicated to Vigneshwara (Pillayar) he walks round it once, after which, turning towards the god, he takes the lobe of his left ear in his right hand and the lobe of his right ear in his left hand, and in this position squats down on his heels three times; he then strikes himself gently on both his temples. If the shrine is dedicated to Siva he walks round it twice, and three times if it is consecrated to Vishnu.

XXIII. Having performed his religious duties he returns home, takes his evening meal, observing the usual ceremonies, and goes to bed soon afterwards. A Brahmin must purify the place where he is going to sleep by rubbing it over with cow-dung, and he must manage so that the place cannot be overlooked by any one.

A Brahmin must never sleep on a mountain, in a graveyard, in a temple, in any place where they do puja, in any place dedicated to evil spirits, under the shadow of a tree, on ground that has been tilled, in a cowshed, in the house of his guru, in any spot that is higher than that where the image of some god happens to be, any place where there happens to be ashes, holes made by rats, or where snakes generally live. He must also take care not to spend the night in houses where the servants are insolent, for fear of some accident.

A Brahmin puts a vessel full of water and a weapon near where he lays his head. He rubs his feet, washes his mouth twice, and then lies down.

A Brahmin must never go to bed with his feet wet, nor sleep under the beam which supports the roof of the house. He must avoid sleeping with his face turned to the west or north. If it is impossible to arrange it otherwise it would be better to be turned towards the north than towards the west. When lying down he offers worship to the earth, to Vishnu, to Nandikeswara, one of the chief

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1 This is said to be a necessary precaution, as on these beams snakes are often to be found.—Ed.
spirits who guard Siva, and to the bird garuda (Brahminy kite), to whom he makes the following prayers:—

‘Illustrious son of Kasyapa and Vinata! king of birds, with beauteous wings and sharp-pointed beak; you who are the enemy of snakes, preserve me from their poison’

He who repeats this prayer when he goes to bed, when he rises, and after his ablutions, will never be bitten by a snake. Here is another and most efficacious prayer which they are supposed to make a rule of saying before going to bed. It bears the name of kalasa, and is addressed to those evil spirits, Siva’s guardians. While repeating it the right hand must be placed over the various parts of the body as they are mentioned:—

‘May my head be preserved from all accidents by Bhairava, my forehead by Bishana, my ears by Bhuta Karma, my face by Preta-Vahana, my thighs by Bhuta Karta, my shoulders by the Ditis, who are endowed with supernatural strength, my hands by Kapalini who wears round his neck a chaplet of human skulls, my chest by Santa, my belly, lips, and two sides by Ketrika, the back of my body by Kadrupala, my navel by Kshetraja, my sexual organs by Vatu, my ankles by Siddha Vatu, and the rest of my body from my head to my feet by Surakara, my body to my waist by Vidatta, and from below my waist by Yama! May the fire which receives the worship of all the gods preserve me from all evil in whatever place I may happen to be! May the wives of the demons watch over my children, my cattle, my horses, my elephants! May Vishnu watch over my country, and may the God who takes care of all things also take care of me, particularly when I find myself in some place which is not under the protection of my divinity!’

Whoever recites this prayer every evening when going to bed will come to no harm. It suffices to wear it on the arm, to write it, and to read it, to become rich and live happily.

XXIV. Finally, the Brahmin must again think of Vishnu, and this should be his last thought before sleeping.

SECTION V.—Second Part of the Sandhya. Mantrams or Prayers, according to the Yagur Veda ritual.

If for any reason the Brahmin Grahastha is unable to
perform the ablutions that form part of the first part of the sandhya, he must at any rate try to accomplish the second part by attentively and devoutly repeating the prayers that belong to it. He first stands with his face to the east or towards the sun. He begins by knotting the little lock of hair which grows on the top of his head, then he takes a little darbha grass in his left hand, and in his right hand a larger quantity which he cuts to the length of his palm.

**The Morning Sandhya.**

He begins his religious exercises with the following prayer:

\[
\text{Apavitraha pavitrova sarva vastam,} \\
\text{Galopiva yassmaret pundareekaksham,} \\
\text{Sabahiadhanantara suchihy.}
\]

This means: 'Whether a man be pure or impure, or in whatsoever station in life he may find himself, if he thinks of him who has eyes like the lotus \(^1\) he shall be pure within and without.'

He then prays to the water in the following words:

'Water of the sea, of the rivers, of tanks, of wells, and of any other place whatsoever, hear favourably my prayers and vows! As the traveller, fatigued with the heat, finds rest and comfort under a tree's shade, so may I find in you solace and assistance in all my ills, and pardon for all my sins!

'0 Water! you are the eye of sacrifice and battle! You have an agreeable flavour; you have the bowels of a mother for us, and all her feelings towards us! I call upon you with the same confidence with which a child at the approach of danger flies to the arms of a loving mother. Cleanse me from my sins, and all other men of their sins. 0 Water! at the time of the Flood Brahma the omniscient, whose name is spelt with one letter, existed alone, and existed under your form. This Brahma brooding over you and mingling with you \(^2\) did penance, and by the merits of his penance created night. The waters which covered

\(^1\) That is, Vishnu.

\(^2\) These words recall the words of the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis.—DuBois.
the earth were drawn into one place and formed the sea. Out of the sea were created the day, the years, the sun, the moon, and Brahma with his four countenances. Brahma created anew the firmament, the earth, the air, the smaller worlds, and everything that was in existence before the Flood.

This prayer ended, the Brahmin sprinkles a few drops of water on his head from three stalks of the sacred darbha grass.

Whoever in the morning shall address these prayers to water, and shall be duly impressed with their import, will surely receive remission of his sins.

Then clasping his hands, the Brahmin says:—

‘Vishnu! your eyes are like a flower! I offer you my worship. Pardon my sins; I perform the sandhya to keep my good name and dignity as a Brahmin.’ He then recalls to mind the names of the greater and lesser worlds and the divinities who inhabit them, particularly the fire, the wind, and the sun, also Brihaspati, Indra, and the gods of the earth.

After that he puts his right hand on his head, and recalls to his memory the names of Brahma, of the wind, and of the sun. He then shuts his eyes, and at the same time closing his right nostril with his thumb, he invokes the god Brahma in these words:—

‘Come, Brahma, come to my navel, and stay, stay there a long time.’

He then fancies to himself that this powerful god is seated on his navel; that the deity is red in colour, having four faces and two arms, a cord round his waist, holding a pitcher in his hand, riding on a goose, and accompanied by a multitude of divinities. He then thinks of him as having had no beginning, as possessing the key to all knowledge and being able to grant all the desires of mankind, and especially as the head guru of Brahmans, endowed with the fullest power to purify and sanctify them; finally as the Creator of all things, and as an eternal being. After which he says:—

‘Glory to the earth! Glory to the greater worlds!’

1 There are seven greater worlds, the names of which are Bhu, Bhuvar, Svar, Mahar, Janar, Tapah, Sattya. The first is the earth, the last the
(These he mentions by name, and thinks of them as alighted by the sun.) 'May my heart and my will be drawn to the path of virtue; may my desires be fulfilled in this life and in the next. To you, Brahma, who have created water, light, amritam, &c., to you I offer adoration.'

This prayer finished, he breathes heavily through his left nostril, and thereby puts to flight all the sins contained in his body. Then, closing the left nostril with either the thumb or the middle finger of the right hand, he thinks of Vishnu, whom he addresses in these terms:—

'Come, Vishnu, come to my chest, and stay there, stay there, stay there a long time.'

He then fancies Vishnu seated on his chest. This god is brown in colour, he has four arms, he carries a shell in one hand, the weapon called sankha in another, in the third a chakra, and in the fourth a lotus. He rides on the bird of prey garuda. The Brahmmin thinks of him as omnipresent in the fourteen worlds and upholding everything by his power. Then he says:—

'Glory to the lesser worlds!' (These he mentions by their names.) 'I think of them, of water, and of amritam.'

By virtue of this prayer all his sins are blotted out.

He then thinks of Siva, whom he invokes as follows:—

'Come, Siva, come to my forehead! Stay, stay, stay there a long time.'

He imagines Siva seated on his forehead. This god is white; he carries the trisula or trident in one hand, and a small drum in the other; on his forehead is a new moon. He has five faces, and each face has three eyes; he rides on an ox. He is represented further as the god self-creating and self-sufficient, as the universal destroyer. Then the Brahmmin says:—

'Glory to all the lesser worlds! ' (These he mentions by name.)

Then he adds, speaking to Siva: 'Destroyer of everything in the fourteen worlds, destroy my sins also.'

paradise of Brahma. They always add the word loka, which means a place (locus).—Ed.

1 There are seven lesser worlds, the names of which are Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Rasatala, Talatala, Mahatala, Patala. The last is the infernal regions, the lowest of all.—Ed.
WHOEVER REPEALS THIS PRAYER, AND MAKES THE FOREGOING
MEDITATION, WILL ASSUREDLY OBTAIN PARDON OF ALL HIS SINS
AND BE SAVED. HOWEVER, AS MEN ARE LIABLE TO FALL INTO
INNUMERABLE SINS, THEY CAN HARDLY DO TOO MUCH TO ENSURE
THEIR BEING FORGIVEN, AND THE STAIN OF THEIR WICKEDNESS
REMOVED. THE BRAHMIN THEREFORE ADDRESSES THE FOLLOWING
PRAYER TO THE SUN:

'O SUN! WHO ART PRAYER ITSELF AND THE GOD OF PRAYER:
FORGIVE ME ALL THE SINS THAT I HAVE COMMITTED WHILE PRAYING,
ALL THOSE THAT I HAVE COMMITTED DURING THE NIGHT BY THOUGHT,
WORD, AND DEED; FORGIVE ME ALL THOSE THAT I HAVE COMMITTED
AGAINST MY NEIGHBOUR BY SLANDER OR FALSE WITNESS, BY VIOLAT-
ing OR SEDUCING ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE, BY EATING FORBIDDEN
FOOD, BY RECEIVING PRESENTS FROM A MAN OF LOW CASTE, IN
A WORD, ALL SINS OF ANY KIND INTO WHICH I MAY HAVE FALLEN
BY NIGHT OR BY DAY.'

WHOEVER ADDRESSES THIS PRAYER TO THE SUN, AND IS FILLED
WITH THE CONVINCION OF WHAT HE IS SAYING AND PERFORMS THE
ACHAMANIA AT THE SAME TIME, WILL BE ABSOLVED FROM ALL
HIS SINS AND WILL GO AFTER HIS DEATH TO THE ABODE OF THE
SUN.

TO PERFORM THE ACHAMANIA HE MUST HOLD SOME WATER IN
THE HOLLOW OF HIS RIGHT HAND, AND PUT IT THREE TIMES TO HIS
MOUTH. HE MUST TOUCH THE UNDER PART OF HIS NOSE WITH
THE BACK OF HIS THUMB; THEN JOINING HIS THUMB AND FIRST
FINGER TOGETHER HE MUST TOUCH BOTH HIS EYES, THEN JOINING
ALL THE OTHER FINGERS TOGETHER TO HIS THUMB HE MUST TOUCH
HIS EARS, HIS NAVEL, HIS CHEST, HIS HEAD, AND BOTH SHOULDERS.
AND BEFORE PUTTING THE WATER TO HIS MOUTH HE MUST ALWAYS
BE CAREFUL TO PURIFY IT BY REPEATING OVER IT THE FOLLOWING
PRAYER: 'WATER! YOU ARE OF A GOOD TASTE,' &c., AS MENTIONED
BEFORE. PASSING HIS HAND THREE TIMES ABOVE HIS
HEAD HE LETS FALL A FEW DROPS OF WATER ON IT, AND THEN THRICE
POURS A LITTLE ON THE GROUND. HE.draws A LONG BREATH,
AND THUS EJECTS ALL THE SINS IN HIS BODY. HE MUST THEN
RECITE THE PRAYER WHICH BEGINS WITH THE WORDS: 'O WATER!
at THE TIME OF THE FLOOD,' &c., AS CITED ABOVE.

WATER SHOULD BE LOOKED UPON AS THE SUPREME BEING,
AND AS SUCH ADORATION IS OFFERED TO IT. NOTHING IS MORE
EFFECTUOUS THAN WATER TO CLEANSE MEN FROM THEIR SINS.
THEREFORE ONE CANNOT PERFORM ONE'S DAILY ABLUTIONS TOO
often; or at least touch water and think of it, and so obtain a remission of sin. After having thus worshipped, the Brahmin draws a little water into his nostrils, and then shoots it out again. With this water the sinful man also falls to the ground and is crushed under the left heel. Then turning to the east, the Brahmin stands on tiptoe. Raising slightly his hands, the palms turned towards heaven, he makes the following prayer to the sun:—

'O Sun! fire is born of you, and from you the gods derive their splendour; you are the eye of the world and the light of it!'

Nothing is more efficacious than this prayer, accompanied by adorations, for turning aside anything that may bring sorrow, or sin, or pain, and for protection against untoward accident. He must add, still addressing the sun:—

'Glory to Brahma, Supreme Being! Glory to the Brahmins! Glory to the Penitents! Glory to the gods! Glory to the Vedas! Glory to Vishnu! Glory to the winds!'

While reciting this prayer he offers the tarpana, that is, a libation of water, to such of these gods as he names and to all the gods in general. He puts under his feet a stalk of darbha grass, and standing upright, on one foot if possible, he recites the famous gayatri mantra, which is as follows1:—

'Come, goddess, come and make me happy. You who are the voice of Brahma, whose name is formed of three letters; who are the mother of the Vedas, who are also the mother of Brahma; I offer you my adoration.' He who thus invokes the goddess gayatri three times a day will thereby be purified from all his sins.

He then pronounce the monosyllable aum, and cracks his fingers ten times while turning round. This is to scare away giants and evil spirits. He must then think again of the goddess gayatri. In the morning he must picture her to himself as a young girl of extraordinary beauty, resembling Brahma in appearance, riding on a goose, holding

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1 The gayatri mantra, as we have already observed, is the most sacred, the most sublime, the most meritorious, and the most efficacious of all the mantras of the Brahmins. They have deified this prayer, until they have come to look upon it not only as a mantra, but as an actual goddess itself.—Dubois.
in her hand a stalk of darbha grass, dwelling in the sun's face and in the ritual of the Yajur Veda. Having thus pictured her in his mind, he prostrates himself before her.

He then addresses Vishnu in these words: 'Vishnu! your eyes are like a flower,' &c., as before.

To recite the gayatri without having previously offered homage to Vishnu would be labour lost. Such a lapse would indeed be a source of sin. They count on their fingers the number of times that they recite the gayatri. The hands should be held aloft and covered over with a cloth, so that no one can see how many repetitions have been made. They say it in a low voice so that no one can hear them. The following is the text of this sublime prayer:—

'Aum! Glory to Patala! Glory to the Earth! Glory to Swarga! I think of the splendid light of the Sun. May he deign to turn my heart and my soul towards the path of virtue, and to the blessings of this world and of the next!'

Every Brahmin ought to recite this mantram from a thousand to ten thousand times daily. He may, if self-indulgent, repeat it only a hundred or even only twenty times, but in no case less than eight times.

It is by virtue of this prayer that Brahmans become like Brahma, and after their death share his happiness. It is so extremely efficacious that its fervent repetition will blot out the most heinous sins, such for instance as having

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1 This form does not seem to agree altogether with the original text given in the chapter on mantrams. I think the explanation is that there are several forms of gayatri, which vary according to the Vedas from which they are taken.—DUBois.

One would think from the Abbé's description of the gayatri that it was a meaningless mantram, but the Hindus assert that in it is summed up their highest philosophy. The following is the text of the gayatri, with its translation:—

Aum, bhur, bhuvah, swah!
Aum, tat savitur varenyam
Bhargo devasya dhimahi
Dhiyo yo nah prachodayat.

Aum, earth, sky, heaven!
Aum, that excellent vivifier
The light divine, let us meditate upon,
Which (light) enlightens our understanding.—En.
SUNDRY PRAYERS

killed a Brahmin or a pregnant woman, drunk intoxicating liquors, or betrayed one's most intimate friend, &c. The Brahmin then dismisses the goddess in these terms:

'I have prayed to you, O illustrious goddess, to obtain remission of my sins. Forgive me them, and grant that after my death I may enjoy the delights of Vaikuntha. You have Brahma's face; you are Brahma himself. It is you who have created, who preserve, and who destroy everything. Grant that I may be happy in this world, that joy, wealth, and prosperity may always be my portion, and that after my death my lot may be still happier and more lasting! Return, O goddess, after having granted me this favour, return to your usual dwelling-place!'

He offers her *tarpana*, or the libation of water, as also to the sun and to the planet Venus, saying:

'Glory to the sun and to the planet Venus! May the water that I now offer you find favour in your sight!'

He finally addresses this prayer to fire:

'O fire! listen to what I am about to say! Burn my enemies, and those who speak evil of the Vedas! The number of my sins is like a sea of fire, without bottom and without shore, ready to consume me. I implore your mercy, and may it be to me a means of salvation!'

He then evokes Rudra (Siva), whose countenance is like that of time and of fire, and says to him:

'You are the Veda, you are the truth! You are the Supreme Being! Your face is marvellous! You are the face of the world! I offer you adoration.' Then he says:

'Glory to Brahma! Glory to water! Glory to the god Varuna! Glory to Vishnu!'

He offers the *tarpana* to each of these gods, and then to the sun, to whom he says:

'Illustrious son of Kasyapa, you resemble a lovely flower! You are the enemy of darkness; through you all our sins are forgiven. I offer you my worship as to the greatest of gods; deign to receive it graciously.' Finally, he turns round three times in honour of the sun, and makes him a profound bow.
THE NOONDAY SANDHYA

THE NOONDAY SANDHYA. ¹

The Brahmin, having performed his ablutions and tied up the little lock of hair on the top of his head, traces one of the usual marks on his forehead, and turning towards the east, says:

'Vishnu! the gods delight to look on the beauties of your dwelling-place; the sight charms them, they are never tired of beholding it, they open wide their eyes, the better to be able to contemplate it!'

Then, addressing the sun, he says: 'God of light! God of the day! You are the god of the planets and of all that has life; you are the god who purifies men and blots out all their transgressions, accept the worship that I offer to you!'

He then says:

'Glory to the lesser worlds! Glory to Swarga! Glory to the earth! Glory to Maha-loka! Glory to Tapo-loka! Glory to Yama-loka! Glory to Sattya-loka! It is by the almighty power of the sun, the Supreme Being, that water, light, 

amrita, Brahma with the four faces, and everything that exists, have been created.'

Putting his left thumb on his right hand, he says:

'May everything in me, be it good or bad, commendable or blameworthy, be purified by the sun, the Supreme Being!'

By virtue of this prayer his sins are dried up. Then, closing up both his nostrils, he carries his thoughts back to Krishna, the son of Nanda. This thought causes sin to tremble. He must picture sin to himself under the form of a black man with a horrible face. Then, putting his thumb to his left nostril, he recalls Siva, and says:

'Siva, who are the chief of evil spirits, save me from punishment and put my sins to flight with your trident!'

Breathing strongly through his left nostril, he performs the achamania, and says:

'The water purifies the earth; may the earth which has been purified by the water take away all the sins which I may have committed—by eating after another person, by partaking of forbidden food, by receiving gifts

¹ This is really called Madhya-Vandana.—Ed.
from a man of low caste or from a sinful person. I pray that the water may purify me from all sin, whatsoever it may be.' He performs the achamania twice more, for nothing washes away sin more surely than water. Every Brahmin should therefore perform achamania; for by this act alone not only will all his sins be remitted, even to the murder of a Brahmin or of a pregnant woman, but further it also makes him sinless for all time to come. He then takes three stalks of *darbha* grass, and sprinkles some drops of water on his head with it; but he must first purify the water by reciting over it the *gayatri* and the following _mantrams_:

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'O water! who are spread on the bosom of the earth, grant that I may perform the _sandhya_, so that, being purified by it, I may perform _puja_! ' 'O water! you have a good taste,' &c., and so on as before. He sprinkles some water with the three stalks of *darbha* grass, first on the earth and then on his head. He who in addition to the above recites the following prayer, may be assured that all his desires will be gratified, that he will live in the midst of plenty and be happy:---

'O water! you are in everything that has life, in all quarters of the world, even on the tops of the highest mountains. You are of superlative excellence, you are the light, you are the _amrita_!' He then rises, and filling both his hands with water, pours it on the ground, saying:

'Glory to Patala! Glory to the Earth! Glory to Swarga!' Then, turning to the sun, and raising his hands on high, he says:

'O Sun! you are the will of the gods, you are the opposite of water! You are the eye of the gods Mitra, Varuna, and of Fire; you shine in Swarga, on the earth, and everywhere!' He then repeats the prayer which begins with these words:

'Glory to Brahma, the Supreme Being!' &c., and so on as before.

He places one or two stalks of *darbha* grass under his feet, and evokes the *gayatri* in these words:

'Come, goddess, come and shower your favours upon me! You are the word of Brahma, the mother of the Vedas: it is from you that Brahma was born. I offer you _puja_! You are the mother of Brahmins. It is you
who bear the engine of the world, and carry the weight thereof. It is through your protection that men live peacefully in the world, for by your care all evil, fear, and danger are kept far from them. It is through you that men become virtuous, and it is from you that puja derives its efficacy. You are eternal! Hasten, great goddess, and answer my prayer!

It is by virtue of this prayer that the gods have attained to Swarga; that snakes penetrate into the bowels of the earth, and float in the midst of the waters; that fire possesses the power of burning; that Brahmans, grown like to the gods, merit daily to receive worship and sacrifice from other men in acknowledgement of their surpassing knowledge and virtue. He repeats the invocation to the sun, and purifies himself in pronouncing the sacred word aum. Then he performs the vyahriti in the following manner:

‘Glory to Patala!’ (he puts his hands to his head).
‘Glory to the Earth!’ (he puts his hands on the tuft of hair on the top of his head).
‘Glory to Swarga!’ (he touches himself all over his body).

Then he exclaims, ‘Aum-bhatu!’ at the same time cracking his fingers ten times whilst turning round, and he stamps the ground with his left heel to scare away giants and evil spirits.

He evokes the gayatri afresh, whom now at noon he represents to himself under the image of Vishnu, in the prime of life, clothed in a golden robe, and dwelling in the sun’s face. He then recites the gayatri mantram the proper number of times, exactly as before described, and then he dismisses the deity, saying:

‘You are born of Siva’s face; you dwell in the bosom of Vishnu; you are known of Brahma; go, goddess, whither you will! You are Brahma, the Supreme Being; you receive the worship of Vishnu; you are the life of Brahmans; their fate is in your hands; it is in your power to give them happiness in this world and in the next; give me many children, and may I always have abundance of wealth. Illustrious mother! I have offered you puja; now depart whither it seemeth good!’
Nevertheless he says yet another prayer to her:—

‘Divine wife of Narayana! preserve me from any pain in my head, face, tongue, nose, nostrils, ears, shoulders, thighs, feet, and in any part of my body; preserve me from pain day and night!’

He thus sings the **gayatri**’s praises:—

‘You are quick-witted; you are enlightenment itself; you are not subject to human passions; you are eternal; you are almighty; you are purity itself; you are the refuge and salvation of mankind; you are omniscient; you are the mother of all the Vedas, of which you are the emblem; you are also the emblem of prayer. It is to you that all sacrifices must be offered; all earthly blessings are at your disposal; in an instant you can destroy everything. Happiness and misery, joy and sorrow, hope and fear are in your hands; everything is dependent on you. All men pray to you, and at the same time your fascinations cast a spell over them. You fulfil all their desires, and overwhelm them with benefits; to you they owe success in all their undertakings; you put away their sins; you make them happy; you are present in all three worlds; you have three bodies and three faces, and the numeral three is of your very essence!’

He who thus sings the **gayatri**’s praises will receive his reward; all his sins will be forgiven.

Casting his eyes on liquefied butter, he says: ‘O butter! you are the light; by your power everything shines; you are the friend of the gods; you form part of the sacrifices that are offered to them, you are the essence of these sacrifices!’

Then, addressing the **gayatri** anew, he says: ‘You can be divided into two, three, and four parts; nothing can equal your brilliancy; I offer you **puja**!’ He adds:—

‘O goddess, who dwell on the mountains of the North, you are known to Brahma! Go now whither you will, you are the sacrificer of the sacrifice. It is you who offer it, it is you who receive it. It is you who regulate the offerings, it is you who make them, it is you who receive them; you have yielded the north-east to Siva, and you have taken up your abode in the north-west. If we enjoy light, it is you to whom we owe it, to you who have
granted it to us that we may by its aid fulfil our religious duties!"

He addresses the fire in these words:—

‘O fire! come here; I have need of you for puja; offer it yourself, since you are the emblem of it!’

He says to the water:—

‘O water! remain on the earth, for the use of us who require you: remain that we may drink you, and come down abundantly to fertilize our land!’

Whoever repeats all these prayers at the midday sandhya will have all his wishes gratified and obtain pardon for all his sins.

He again addresses the gayatri as follows:—‘I worship you, O goddess, under the image of Brahma. You are the mother of the world; Brahmins offer you puja, and in return enjoy your favours. You have the outward appearance of a stone; but you are indeed the creator, preserver, and destroyer of everything!’

He offers arghya to the sun. To this end he puts water and red flowers, some darbha grass, some sandalwood powder, and some mustard seed into a plated copper vessel. While mixing all these together, he says:—

‘O sun! you are the most brilliant of all the stars! Vishnu borrows his splendour from you! You are pure and you purify men; I offer you worship! Glory to the sun! I offer him this arghya!’

Such, then, is the noonday sandhya. It is a religious exercise which must never be omitted, but if for any reason one fails to perform it, one must do penance before performing the evening sandhya. This penance consists in repeating the gayatri ten times, and offering arghya to the sun.

A Brahmin who does not perform the sandhya regularly is not permitted to fulfil any other act of religious worship. It would be quite fruitless for him to offer puja, or sraddha (the sacrifice for the dead), or to fast or to pray.

The inestimable advantages which the gayatri mantram procures are proportionate to the number of times it is repeated. Thus for a thousand repetitions you would obtain success in all your undertakings; for ten thousand,
the forgiveness of sins and abundance of this world's goods; for twenty thousand, the spirit of wisdom and the gift of knowledge; for a hundred thousand, the supreme grace of becoming a Vishnu after death.

It is considered most meritorious to solemnly undertake to recite the *gayatri* for a certain fixed time daily, the credit gained thereby being graduated according to the length of time devoted to the exercise. It depends, that is to say, on the choice that one makes of the three following periods: (1) from sunrise to sunset; (2) from sunrise to noon; and (3) at intervals of about three hours.

Any Brahmin who makes such a vow calls together a certain number of his fellow-Brahmins, and says in their presence:—

'To-day being such and such a day of such and such a month, I, so-and-so Brahmin, of such and such country and family, being desirous of averting all danger from myself, of growing in virtue, and of obtaining the delights of Swarga after my death, hereby call all present to witness that I vow to recite the *gayatri* every day from such an hour till such an hour.'

**The Evening Sandhya.**

Brahmins begin this *sandhya* about sunset, but it must not be performed on the day of the *sankranti*, that is to say, on the day that the sun moves from one sign of the Zodiac to another, nor on the days of the new and full moon, nor on the twelfth day of the moon, nor yet on the day on which one has offered the sacrifice for the dead called *sraddha*. To perform the evening *sandhya* under these circumstances would be committing a crime equal to the murder of a Brahmin. If a Brahmin has just lost his father, his mother, or one of his children; if his gums bleed, or if through a wound or accident any part of his body above the navel has been bleeding, or in a word if he finds that he is impure, he would commit an unpardonable sin by performing the evening *sandhya*. Indeed, in the last case he would lose all his possessions and his children. Except under these special circumstances, he must never neglect this religious duty, and he must carefully observe the following rules:—
He makes the usual ablutions. Then, turning to the north, he recalls the memory of Vishnu. He then thinks of Brahma and addresses the following prayer to him:

'Brahma, you have four faces, you are my creator! Forgive me all the sins that I have committed. I am now beginning the evening sandhya. Deign to be present, and repose on my chest, and deliver me from my sins.'

He then recites the mantram which begins with these words:—'Glory to the lesser worlds!' and so on as before. Closing up both nostrils, he thinks of Vishnu, and imagines that he is resting on his navel, and says: 'O Vishnu! you are of great stature and black in colour. You have four arms, you are the preserver of all that exists; destroy my sins.' He offers worship to the seven greater worlds, as in the morning sandhya, and again addressing Vishnu, he says: 'You have created light, amrita, and all that is used for the food of mankind. Preserve me, and preserve all that lives in the world!' Closing the right nostril with his finger, he breathes strongly through the left, and by this means burns all the sins that are in his body. Then he ejects them by breathing forcibly through the right nostril. He then directs his thoughts to Siva, the destroyer of sin and of all things, and imagines that he is resting on his forehead. He says to him: 'O Siva! you are white and tall. You have the mark of a half-moon on your forehead; you have three eyes; you destroy all things; you are the god of gods; I implore your protection, and offer you worship!' He once more offers puja to the different worlds, and destroys his sins by virtue of the following prayer:—'Oh, may my sins be destroyed by the almighty power of the sun and the fire!' He adds: 'O fire! you are prayer and the god of prayer. Forgive me all the mistakes I have made in the different mantrams that I have recited; and forgive me, besides, all the sins that I have this day committed in thought, word, and deed. May this water, which I drink from my uplifted hand, destroy everything bad and sinful that may be in me.' He performs the achamania as at the morning sandhya. He also inhales some purified water into his nostrils, as he did before, and recites the mantram which begins with
the words: 'O water! at the time of the Flood,' &c., and so on, as before mentioned.

Then he ejects by a forcible expiration the water in his nostrils, which carries away the sinful man, whom he crushes at once upon a stone. He represents this man of sin to himself as a powerful being, of extraordinary strength with a red belly, white hair and beard, and a hideous and distorted face.¹

He evokes the Gayatri, and turning to the west, he says:

'O god of the day, on whom depends the happiness of mankind, I offer the evening sandhya: deign to honour me with your presence! O goddess Gayatri, who are the emblem of the Vedas and the word of Brahma, whose name is composed of three letters! I offer you Puja; hasten hither that I may be happy!'

Whilst making this prayer his hands are spread open and raised towards heaven. He then rubs his hands together and puts them to his breast, believing in imagination that the Gayatri is reposing there. He cracks his finger-joints ten times, and turns round at the same moment; and by that he closes all places of egress, so that the goddess cannot depart. He pictures her to himself as an old woman, having Siva's face, riding on an ox, dwelling in the disk of the sun, and united to all the Vedas. Then he says:

'Divine wife of Siva! you are the mother of all that is. I offer you Puja at the approach of night, take me under your protection and save me! Come, Gayatri, come and favourably hear my prayers!'

Whoever recites these words will obtain all that he asks

¹ Here is another portrait of a man of sin, culled from the Sama- Veda: 'The murder of a Brahmin forms the head of the man of sin; drinking intoxicating liquors, the eyes; theft, particularly of gold, the face; the murder of a guru, the ears; the murder of a woman, the nose; the murder of a cow, the shoulders; the rape of another man's wife, the chest; the wilful production of abortion, the neck; oppression of the innocent and just, the belly; ill treatment of any one who has sought protection, the stomach; to slander your guru, violate a virgin, betray a secret confided to you, or to be false to any one who has relied on you, these are the private parts and the thighs; and the hairs of these are the smaller sins. This man of sin is of gigantic stature, and has a horrible face; he is black, and has wild bright eyes; he delights in torturing mankind.'—Dubois.
for. Then, facing the north, with his arms hanging down, he recites the *gayatri mantram*, in the same manner and the same number of times as before. It is impossible to repeat this prayer too often in the evening, evening prayers being so much more efficacious than others. A Brahmin who daily recites this prayer uninterruptedly from sunset to midnight will by this pious exercise most assuredly place himself beyond the possibility of want or misery, and will ensure for himself a quiet and peaceful death, without sickness or pain, when his long and prosperous career shall draw to a close.

To dismiss the goddess *gayatri* he uses the same formulas as those of the noonday *sandhya*, and, after the *tarpana*, or libation of water, to the sun and the planet Venus, he addresses Siva in these words:—'O Rudra! protect me from all accident and danger as well by night as by day. You are the lord of the world; take me under your protection that nothing may hurt me or do me harm.' The prayer to fire follows; then he offers *tarpana* to the following gods, saying: 'Glory to Brahma! Glory to water! Glory to Varuna! Glory to Vishnu! Glory to Rudra!' While offering *arghya* to the sun, he says: 'God of light, god of the day! I offer you worship! Receive the *arghya* that I now present to you, and deliver me from the cares and dangers of the world!'

**Conclusion.**

'I will conclude,' the author goes on to say, 'by explaining what the *sandhya* is, and on what occasions it should be offered.

'Brahma, the author and father of the Vedas, wishing to extract the essence of them, composed the *sandhya*, which is in respect to the other Vedas what butter is to milk, or what gold is compared with the other metals. In short, as honey is the quintessence of flowers, so the *sandhya* is the quintessence of the Vedas.

'And as the *sandhya* is all that is most sublime in the Vedas, so is the *gayatri* all that is most sublime in the *sandhya*. This celebrated prayer obtains for mankind the remission of their sins, plenty, joy, wealth, health, and also ensures their happiness hereafter.'
IMPOSING ON THE IGNORANT

"They must beware of teaching this prayer to the degraded Sudras. Whoever dared to do so would assuredly go to the infernal regions—he, his father, and his children; and if a Sudra happened to overhear a Brahmin repeating it he would inevitably go to the same place and remain there for all eternity.

"I have said it, and I repeat it," says the author, "let them beware of making it known to the Sudras, under pain of eternal damnation.

"No meditation, penance, sacrifice, knowledge, prayer, can compare in efficacy to the gayatri mantram. Its merits are superexcellent, but it must also be kept a profound secret. It was Brahma himself who composed it expressly for Brahmins.

"This is the idea which must be formed of the goddess gayatri. Though she appears under the form of a prayer, it must be recognized that she is the Supreme Being, and she must be worshipped as such. Brahma, who composed this mantram, taught it to Indra, who taught it to Yama; he in turn instructed Siva, who taught it to the Brahmins."

Such are the prayers and ceremonials used by Brahmins when performing the three sandhyas, and such are the extravagant absurdities to which they are bound to conform.

The intense and mysterious solemnity with which they perform all this ceremonial is intended to persuade others that its end and object must be of the highest and most vital importance; the inner meaning being quite beyond the reach of the vulgar and ignorant. Every care is taken to strengthen this opinion; and they use the greatest precautions to exclude the searching eyes of educated persons.

Though assured of the blind credulity of the ignorant masses over whom they hold sway, they are well aware that, if ever the spell should be broken, their charlatanism and cupidity would stand revealed, and they would then become the laughing-stock of the public.

If the sandhya really represents the cream of the Vedas, I do not think that any European will regret the want of a wider acquaintance with these famous books. As an excuse for the fantastic folly of many of their religious
performances Brahmins assert that some, if not all, are only allegories, of which the inner meaning is more rational. This may very likely be true; but I am fully persuaded that the tradition of this inner meaning has been lost. There are beyond question very few Brahmins who would be able to give even the most imperfect idea of what their rites were originally intended to convey. It is an undisputed fact that the greater number of them have nothing in their minds beyond the material and literal fulfillment of the ridiculous ceremonies which they are in the habit of performing. Take, for instance, their celebrated mysterious gayatri, of which each word, they aver, contains a hidden meaning—a meaning, however, which is interpreted in as many different ways as there are castes and sects.

The first four sections of this chapter are taken from the Nitya Karma, or Brahminical ritual. I was acquainted with the second part of the sandhya when I first compiled this work; I had read a full description of its details in a little manuscript of M. Pons, formerly a Jesuit missionary in the Carnatic, who died about eighty years ago. He had travelled all over Southern India, and was a good Sanskrit scholar, having written a grammar of that language. But the particulars which this learned man gave appeared to me so extraordinary and so incredible, that I doubted their authenticity and did not venture to use them. I afterwards procured a book in Canara entitled Purohit-Arama-Karma, or 'The Religious Observances of a Brahmin Purohita,' in which I found the same details in almost exactly the same words. I consulted some Brahmins on the subject, and they assured me that they were substantially correct, but that there were some mantrams and ceremonies mentioned which were not in use in the Southern Provinces, though they were used in the north. Indeed I was assured the ceremonial and mantrams vary slightly in different parts, according to the Veda and the sect of those that follow them. But, according to my informants,

1 A Hindu would contend that the fact of the hidden meaning of the mantrams having been lost does not make the mantrams absurd, but only those who perform the ceremonies without understanding their meaning.—Ed.
most Brahmins neglect and are even altogether ignorant of the greater part of them.

The Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas must also perform the sandhya; but it is not as obligatory for them, especially for Vaisyas, as it is for Brahmins. Furthermore, the mantrams and ceremonials of the latter are quite different, and not nearly so numerous.

The Jains also perform the sandhya. As for the Sudras, they can only make simple ablutions, without any prayers or ceremonies; but any one who wishes to be distinguished from the vulgar herd, and to be considered a more exalted person, rarely fails to perform the ablutions at least once a day. To see them one would never think that those who perform the sandhya are actuated in any way by a spirit of devotion. The Brahmin gets through all these ceremonies and repeats all these prayers as quickly as possible; he is like a schoolboy gabbling over a lesson he has learnt by heart; and this, like everything else, is all performed perfunctorily and as a duty to be discharged with all possible celerity.

CHAPTER VIII

Brahminical Fasts.—The Custom of Rubbing the Head and Body with Oil.—The Over-indulgence of Brahmins.—Their Scrupulous Observance of Custom.—Reflections on this Subject.—Their Samara-dhanas, or Public Feasts.—Sudra Feasts.

BRAHMINs are obliged to keep frequent and often prolonged fasts. They are expected to accustom themselves to them as indispensable adjuncts of their religion from the day they assume the triple cord. Even old age, infirmity, or sickness, unless it be very serious, is not held to exempt them from these fasts.

One is perpetually struck by the numerous points of resemblance between the manners and customs of modern Brahmins and those of the Pharisees, with which we have become acquainted through the Holy Scriptures. Their lives are full of the same affectations, they share the same dread of defilement, there are the same continual ablutions and batheings, the same scrupulous attention to the outward observance of the law, the same frequent fasts, &c.; but all this is tainted by overweening pride, ostentation, and hypocrisy. What St. Matthew says of this sect (xxiii. 27) might certainly be applied without injustice to the Brahmins of India.—DUBOIS.
On ordinary days the Brahmin Grahastha may take two meals; one after midday, and one before going to bed. But this rule has many exceptions. There are many days on which he is allowed to take only one meal, about three o'clock in the afternoon; and there are others when he may neither eat nor drink.

The days of the new and full moon are fast-days, as also the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth days of each lunar month, which are called the ekadasi vrata; on the tenth and twelfth days one meal may be taken, on the eleventh day, called ekadasi, no meal at all is allowed. To fast on these three days has a special merit. As the fast which is kept on the eleventh day of each lunar month is observed with particular solemnity, I will give a few details of it in an appendix.

The thirteenth day of the moon is an unlucky day. Brahmins must eat nothing on that day till sunset. In the evening, before taking their food, they offer puja to Siva, to propitiate him, and then begin to eat.

The feast called Sivaratri (or 'Siva's Night') falls on the fourteenth day of the moon in the month of Maga (February), the origin and particulars of which will be seen in an appendix. On that day no one must eat or drink, or even sleep, for the whole twenty-four hours. Every three hours during the day and night puja is offered to Siva, and not until the following day, after having performed the sandhya, are they at liberty to eat.

On the ninth day of the lunar month Chaitra (April) being the anniversary of the incarnation of the great god Vishnu in the person of Rama, Brahmins may take only one meal in the day, and that without rice; they may only eat peas, cakes, bananas, and coconuts.

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1 The eleventh day is the only strict fast-day, and it is observed only by old and religiously disposed Brahmins and widows. The Madhvi Brahmins observe the fast more scrupulously than others nowadays.

2 Appendix II.

3 This fast is not generally observed nowadays.—Ed.

4 Appendix III.

5 This festival is only observed by followers of Siva, and never by Vishnavites.—Ed.

6 This festival, though strictly speaking a Vishnavite festival, is also observed by ordinary Sivaites.—Ed.
ANointING WITH OIL

On the eighth day of the month of Sravana (August), the day of Vishnu's incarnation in the person of Krishna, they are forbidden to take any food at all, and must give themselves up to works of piety. They make clay images of Krishna and his wife Rukmani, Satya Bhama, Balabada, Rohini, Vasu-Deva, Nanda, Devaki. At midnight they offer puja to all these deities together, and for nei-vedhya they offer cocoanuts, bananas, coarse sugar, common peas, peaflour, milk, and cakes. The next day, after the sandhya, they can take their usual meals.

They must also fast on the anniversaries of the ten Avatars (incarnations) of Vishnu; on the days called manuvadi, yugadi, sankranti; on the days of eclipses; at the equinoxes, solstices, and the conjunction of planets, and other unlucky days; on the anniversary of the death of father or mother; on Sundays and several other days during the year.

On fast-days a man is not allowed to have intercourse with his wife; the women are forbidden to rub their bodies with powdered saffron and the men to anoint their heads with oil. Wednesday and Saturday are the only days in the week on which this cosmetic process may be indulged in with advantage. To anoint yourself on other days might produce serious consequences. For instance, if you anoint yourself on Sunday, you run the risk of catching all sorts of complaints; if on Monday, that of losing your personal attractions; if on Tuesday, you will shorten your life; and if on Friday, you will probably become overwhelmed with debts. Nevertheless, when the case is one of urgent necessity, they may anoint themselves on one of these days after taking certain precautions.1

Whenever any one wishes to perform this operation, it is necessary first to think of Asvatthama, of Bhali Chakra-varti, of Veda-Vyasa, of Hanumanta, of Vibhishana, of Krupacharia, and of Parasu-Rama. Dipping the tips of his fingers in the oil, the anointer must let seven drops fall on the ground, as a libation in honour of these seven personages. After that he may anoint his head in the usual manner.2

1 These customs are not very strictly observed nowadays.—Ed.
2 The custom of oiling the body was very common among the Jews.
This libation is considered rather important. The seven personages whose names have been mentioned are supposed to require oil to anoint their heads; it is only fair, therefore, to give them a few drops. They, on their side, from feelings of gratitude, grant long life and riches to whoever shows them this mark of respect.

But to return to the fasts. The Brahmins do not appear to feel the least inconvenience from enforced abstinence from food. Neither is it a great hardship to them, for from their early youth they are accustomed to eat nothing till after midday. Besides, on these days of mortification they take care to make up for the lateness of their meal by the large quantity they eat when once they begin. Habit has enabled Brahmins to overload their stomachs with most indigestible food, without feeling any discomfort or inconvenience. One often sees a Brahmin, after making a hearty meal of rice and liquefied butter, eat the whole of a huge jack-fruit, which would be enough to give ten Europeans violent indigestion.

These frequent fasts appear to form part of a dietary system which has been misinterpreted in a religious sense; or more probably they are due to a desire on the part of the Brahmins to attract public attention and respect by an ostentatious display of moderation. Be that as it may, gluttony may certainly be included among the numerous vices of the Brahmins. There is no limit to their appetite when they get the opportunity of indulging it, and such opportunities frequently occur, seeing that their numberless ceremonies always end with a feast; and on these occasions they make a point of gorging themselves to the utmost extent. There is no doubt that, in spite of their

They considered it a healthy and cleanly habit. They anointed the hair and beard (Psalm cxxxiii. 2). At festivals or on days of public rejoicing they anointed either their whole bodies or else only the head or feet with unguents (St. Matthew vi. 17; St. Luke vii. 38; St. John xii. 3). They also anointed the dead (St. Mark xiv. 8, xvi. 1; St. Luke xxiii. 56). Their kings and high priests were anointed at their consecration. The vessels of the Tabernacle were also consecrated with holy oil (Exodus xxx. 26–28).—Dusois.

These semi-divine personages are called Chiranjivis in Sanskrit, literally 'the long-lived.'—Ep.

1 The tree which produces this is the tijaca-marum of Malabar. It is the largest fruit known, and is extremely indigestible.—Dusois.
being accustomed to it, this habit of eating to excess would in the end be productive of disastrous consequences in a climate where moderation in all things must be the rule of life, if fasts enforced by custom did not give their stomachs a little rest from time to time.

If Brahmins can with a certain amount of justice reprehend Europeans for intemperance in drinking, with no less justice can Europeans retort that Brahmins show great want of moderation in eating. Besides, drunkenness is not an habitual vice among respectable Europeans, and those who frequently give way to it are looked upon with contempt by their own countrymen; whereas Brahmins, who are the cream of Hindu society, and 'the gods of the earth,' are perfect slaves to their stomachs. Indeed the most revolting gluttony does not horrify them, and they even justify it under the cloak of religion. It is by no means uncommon for them to gorge themselves to such repletion that they are unable to rise from the place where they have been eating.

Far from being ashamed of this, they pretend that it is infinitely pleasing to the god Jivattma, that is to say, to the principle of life, which they have deified. The more liquefied butter and other food they can cram into their stomachs, the better the god Jivattma will be pleased. When they sit down to a feast it is curious to watch the preparations that are made so that nothing may hinder the full play of the appetite, and Jivattma be thoroughly satisfied. To prevent themselves from being inconvenienced in any way during this important operation of eating, they begin by taking off their turbans and clothes, sitting down to the feast almost naked. While eating they occasionally stroke their heads, their throats, their chests, and their stomachs, and rub these portions of their bodies in order as it were, to help the food to descend more quickly into the abdominal regions. They never get up from a meal until it is absolutely impossible to swallow another morsel; and then, to alleviate the enormous amount of work their stomachs are put to, they swallow a piece of asafoetida, the aperient and sudorific qualities of which no doubt prevent the ill effects which would otherwise infallibly result from such excesses.
To fill one's stomach well is a very favourite expression amongst Hindus, and one you very often hear. Whenever they feast in another's house the host never fails to ask his guests if their stomachs are well filled. The first question that a Brahmin's wife and children ask on his return from a feast is, 'Have you filled your stomach well?' and it affords him the greatest pleasure to be able to answer, while he gently rubs that part of his person, 'My stomach is well filled.'

Hindus belonging to other castes which have the right to wear the triple cord also keep most of the Brahminical fasts, and so do even some Sudras who have not that privilege, but who wish to gain the respect and consideration of the public. When these days of mortification come round all manual labour is stopped, all outdoor work is suspended, the shops are closed, and workmen, artisans, and labourers give themselves and their cattle a rest. Fasts which recur so often naturally cause a considerable waste of time, but in a country where industry meets with so little encouragement this drawback is not much felt; and the indolent Hindu has generally more time on his hands than he requires to look after his business, which is never of a very pressing nature. It is indeed quite probable that their natural indolence and dislike for work of all kinds partly contributed to the institution of so many days of rest!

All these practices which the Hindu thinks himself called upon to observe are so overlaid with fanciful and even ridiculous details that it is difficult to understand how any civilized people could have preserved them intact up to the present day. The Hindus, however, are so obstinately devoted to custom and precedent that no sensible person amongst them would think for a moment of trying to bring about a change. It is true that several of their modern philosophers, such as Vemana, Tiruvalluvar, Pattanattu-pillai, Agastya and others, have ridiculed such customs; yet they nevertheless recommend people to follow them, and themselves conform minutely to every observance 1.

1 Amongst the few Hindu works which are written in a free philosophical vein, and in which the Hindu religion and its customs are openly
HINDUS AND EUROPEAN USAGES

Our Western religion, education, and manners are so diametrically opposed at all points to the religious and civil usages of the Hindus that they are naturally looked upon with a most unfavourable eye by the latter. In their opinion Europeans may almost be placed below the level of beasts, and even the more sensible among them cannot understand how people, possessed in other ways of so many superior qualities, can conform in their everyday life to manners and customs which differ so radically from their own, and which, as a natural consequence, they consider most coarse and degraded.

The Brahmin rule of life is in appearance intolerably severe, but it has become for them a mere matter of habit encouraged by vanity and self-interest. Their punctiliousness in the fulfilment of their religious duties day by day, their self-denials and their fasts, form part of the business of their lives and are looked upon in the light of pastimes. They know, too, full well, that the eyes of the multitude are always on them, and the smallest relaxation of their discipline or the least negligence in any particular would put an end to the almost boundless veneration and respect criticized, not one that I know of has been written by a Brahmin. All the works of this kind that I have seen have emanated from authors who were not of this caste. Tiruvalluvar was a Pariah, Pattanattupillai and Agastya were both of the Vellala caste, and their poems are written in Tamil; Sarovignaimurti was a Lingayat, and his works are in Canarese. One of the most famous is Varman, whose poems, originally written in Telugu, have since been translated into several other languages. We are told that this philosopher, who was of the Reddy caste, and was born in the district of Cuddapah, died towards the end of the seventeenth century. His writings, from which I have seen several extracts, appear to me to be most interesting, and are distinguished by much discernment and independence. It is to be noticed that the authors of all these satirical and revolutionary works belong to recent times. If in earlier days any enlightened writers published similar works, the Brahmans have taken care that not a trace of them shall remain. Nowadays they rage against the authors we have mentioned, and speak of their works with contempt. They cannot, of course, succeed in destroying them, but they do everything in their power to prevent the reading of them.—Dubois.

The last sentences of the Abbé's note are misleading, for these authors are held in great respect, and are much read by educated Brahmans. These latter must be distinguished from the purely priestly class of Brahmans, whose interest it may be to dissuade people from studying these works.—Ed.
with which the common people regard them. I have however met with Brahmins who were sufficiently reason-
able to admit that many of their customs were opposed to all common sense, and that they only practised them out of consideration for their co-religionists. I know also that most of them evade the rules and absolve themselves without hesitation from the performance of very many of their trifling ceremonies when they are quite certain that these lapses will remain a profound secret. Thus, for example, there are very few who perform their ablutions more than once a day, or who strictly observe the pre-
scribed fasts. To keep up appearances, to dazzle the eyes of the public, to avoid scandal, such are the limits of their pious zeal. Although in public they affect the utmost strictness, they are very much less particular in private life; and a well-known saying confirms this assertion: 'A real Brahmin in the agrahara\(^1\), half a Brahmin when seen afar off, and a Sudra when entirely out of sight\(^2\).'

It must be acknowledged, however, that they are very tenacious of these long-established customs. Any one who is believed to openly neglect them incurs severe censure and contempt, and also lays himself open to serious insults and annoyances. The gurus of the Brahmins keep a very watchful eye over the others. Those found guilty of a breach of discipline are not always let off with severe reprimands publicly delivered. The saintly gurus rarely omit the imposition of a heavy fine, the amount of which is fixed by themselves.

The purohitas also are obliged, for the sake of example and to keep up appearances, to follow the Brahminical usages with the utmost strictness, even to the minutest details; but it is greatly to their interest to keep up all these practices, seeing that they form a never-failing source of profit.

The scrupulous exactitude of the Brahmins is particularly noticeable at the samaradhanas, or public feasts, to which they are often invited by persons of high degree, such as

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\(^1\) The name of villages entirely peopled by Brahmins.

\(^2\) This is even more true nowadays than it was in the time of the Abbé, at any rate among the Brahmins educated on Western lines. —Kd.
BRAHMIN FEASTS

Rajahs, governors of provinces, and other high officials, or wealthy individuals who pride themselves on the enormous expense which their prodigality entails on these occasions. The dedication of a new temple, the inauguration of an idol, the celebration of a feast-day or of a marriage, the birth of an heir, &c., expiatory ceremonies for the sins of the departed to procure their admittance into the abode of bliss, votive ceremonies to ensure victory in time of war, to avert the evil effects of an unlucky constellation, or to obtain rain in time of drought, &c., &c.; one and all of these are opportunities for *samaradhanas*\(^1\). It is needless to add that the Brahmins who make their living out of these and similar practices insist very warmly on their being kept up, and place them in the foremost rank of meritorious actions. When a *samaradhana* is announced as about to take place, all, men and women, from seven or eight miles round, flock to it, sometimes to the number of over two thousand\(^2\). Each and all bring with them an appetite well calculated to do full justice to the hospitality of their entertainer. These gatherings are composed entirely of Brahmins, and as every one keeps his eye on his neighbour there is much rivalry as to who will show the greatest familiarity with the customs of their caste and the greatest zeal in carrying them out. An ancient Roman philosopher once said that he could not imagine how two augurs could meet without laughing in each other's faces. What would he have thought of the grave and serious mien which Hindu soothsayers and impostors preserve under similar circumstances?\(^3\)

Seated on the ground in long rows, the women entirely separated from the men, they sing in turn while waiting for their food, either Sanskrit hymns in honour of their deities or love-songs. All those who are listening cry out as a mark of approval, *'Hara! Hara! Govinda!'* though the greater number have probably understood nothing of what has been sung.

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\(^1\) The Jews had also their solemn feasts. Frequent mention is made of them in the Bible.—Dubois.

\(^2\) There is a sarcastic Tamil proverb to the effect that 'a Brahmin will walk even a hundred miles for rice and dhow.'—Ed.

\(^3\) A style of acclamation. They are the names of Siva and Vishnu.—Dubois.
The giver of the entertainment is not permitted to eat with his guests unless he is himself a Brahmin. If he is of another caste he appears after the feast is finished, and prostrates himself humbly before these *gods of the earth* who have done him the honour to devour the food he has provided, and who in return give him their *asirvada* or blessing. If their host crowns the feast by a distribution of presents of cloth or money, their fulsome compliments will know no bounds, and they will exalt him even above their own deities. At this the host feels excessively flattered, thoroughly convinced that such an honour cannot be too dearly bought. I have already remarked that all Hindus are particularly susceptible to flattery. There is an entire caste called *Battus*, who are in a way flatterers by profession. Their only occupation in life is to grovel before people of position or importance, and to recite or sing before them verses composed in their honour, which are full to overflowing of the most extravagant eulogies. The most astonishing thing is that, instead of wounding the modesty and susceptibilities of those to whom they are addressed, these songs are received with complacency and looked upon as sincere tributes to undoubted merit, the author being handsomely rewarded for them.

Those who belong to the sects of Siva and Vishnu also have their *samaradhanas*, or public feasts, which are given by the wealthy among them. As all the guests who crowd to these entertainments are Sudras, and for the most part low, uneducated people, the festivities are generally very noisy and disorderly, and frequently end in a quarrel. The various classes of common Sudras also get up feasts amongst themselves, but these have no resemblance to the *samaradhanas* of the Brahmins, the only motive of the feasters being to enjoy a festivity which usually ends in a debauch. At a Brahmin feast the greatest order and propriety prevail, but Sudra feasts differ in no wise from the orgies which take place in Europe in the low pot-houses frequented by the scum of the population. The Sudras generally postpone the discussion of their many and frequent differences until some occasion of this sort.

1 This is untrue of Vishnavite Brahmins, for no two Vishnavite Brahmins will eat together unless they be very closely related.—ED.
comes round. Every one, indeed, arrives with a firm determination to have a good fight and to make plenty of noise over it. The moment when the meal is ready and the giver of the feast has invited his guests to come in and partake of it, is generally the time that they consider most suitable for the discussion of their pretended grievances. They stop the whole assemblage by uttering the customary oath in the name of the prince or governor of the province, and declare that no one shall begin to eat until their grievances have been listened to, their wrongs redressed, and the culprits punished. And then the dispute begins. Some take one side and some another, but all participate in it, and the quarrel becomes general. They all scream at the top of their voices, without listening to a word any one else is saying; they hurl the most disgusting accusations at one another, mixed with horrible imprecations and insults, without pausing to give either party a chance of replying. Then their blood rises, and the quarrel waxes warmer and warmer. They proceed to threatening gestures and rush towards each other, their faces contorted with rage and fury. Any one who did not know the Hindu character would swear they were all going to fly at each other's throats. Their host, however, who generally maintains a strict neutrality on these occasions, continues to superintend his domestic arrangements with the utmost composure, or else retires to some peaceful corner and quietly smokes his pipe, a tranquil spectator of the scene around him, knowing full well that the belligerents must ultimately tire themselves out by the vehemence of their cries and gesticulations, and that they will calm down from sheer exhaustion. He then selects three or four to act as arbitrators, and, placing himself with them between the two parties, succeeds, after no little difficulty, in restoring peace. They then investigate the cause of the quarrel, and try to arrange the affair so as to satisfy both sides. If this is impossible, the final decision is put off till some future time, when the whole scene is re-enacted from the beginning. Promptly forgetting the epithets which they have been mutually heaping on each other, the guests at length seat themselves and begin the feast, which has had plenty of time to get cold. As a rule
it would be waste of labour to try to arrange a difference of opinion between Sudras without first allowing them to quarrel and abuse each other, and even come to blows.\(^1\) After these preliminaries, which they generally repeat several times, you may attempt the task of reconciliation with some hope of success.

The Pariahs also sometimes have feasts amongst themselves, but these are invariably disgusting orgies. Following the customs of their caste, they make a point of intoxicating themselves with the juice of the palm-tree, of which there is always a vast quantity drunk. The guests, who know that these orgies always end in a free fight, go ready armed with stout sticks, and the feast rarely concludes without bloodshed. Similar quarrels almost always form part of the wedding ceremonies of a Sudra. During the time that I lived in India, I celebrated over 2,000 marriages amongst Christian Sudras of all castes; and I only remember one such occasion on which there was not a violent altercation, which ended more often than not in a furious, if not sanguinary, battle. The principal cause of dissension is the marriage settlement. It is seldom that the bride’s parents do not try to cheat those of the bridegroom over the quantity or value of the jewels, or over the colour and price of the wedding garments. At other times, perhaps, it is the friends and relations who feel themselves aggrieved. They complain bitterly that the respect and consideration which were their due have not been shown them, either in not consulting them before the marriage was arranged, or by a lack of due form and ceremony in their invitation.

There are many small details which must be attended to when a feast is given amongst the various Sudra classes. The quality of the food, the method of preparing and serving it, and a thousand other minutiae, are all points which have long since been settled by immemorial custom, the non-observance of which would entail very serious con-

\(^1\) The truth is, a marriage or funeral ceremony is the only occasion when all the members of one family or members of one caste meet, and it therefore offers the best, if not the only, opportunity for an aggrieved member to lay his complaint before his caste-headman. It is too much to say that they come ‘determined to have a good fight,’ with or without reason.—Ed.
sequences. Even involuntary mistakes of the most trivial kind are not overlooked or forgiven. The following story is an instance. I was once in a village where a man of the Oopara or gardener caste was giving a feast to his friends and to the headman of his caste. All the guests had seated themselves and begun their meal, when one of them, whilst eating, found a small stone in his rice, which hurt his teeth. He promptly spat out everything he had in his mouth on to his plate, found the tiny stone, and placing it in the hollow of his hand rose from his place, and thus addressed all the other guests. ‘Sirs!’ he said, pointing to the giver of the feast, ‘here is a man who invites us to his house, and then gives us stones instead of rice!’ And he then showed this little pebble to every person present. ‘Shame! shame!’ cried all the guests; ‘our host must be punished.’ Thereupon they all got up, leaving their meal unfinished, to deliberate as to the punishment that should be inflicted for so grave an offence. The poor fellow was mulcted in a heavy fine, and was also condemned to provide another feast on twice as sumptuous a scale for the heads of the caste.

It is considered good style amongst the Sudras never to appear pleased or satisfied with any entertainment that may be offered them. The host may spend large sums for the gratification of his guests, and may take every possible care that the food is nicely prepared and well served; but the greatest compliment that he can expect or hope for is that his feast is just fit for dogs. Hence the common saying, that if a Sudra invited to a feast can find fault with nothing else, he will be sure to complain that there was not enough salt.

The master of the house must not be annoyed at these incivilities; he must listen to the fault-finding patiently, and make what excuses he can for the inferiority of his repast. His only consolation is the thought of the revenge he will take when he, in his turn, is invited to a feast by his fastidious and too candid friends.

Intoxicating drinks are forbidden at these feasts, and it would be considered an insult of the deepest dye to even suggest them. When the meal is over, betel is handed round, and the guests retire at once.