

MISCELLANEOUS.

PRAJNÂPÂRAMITÂ.

Our frontispiece, Prajñâpâramitâ, the perfection of wisdom, is a masterpiece of the ancient Buddhist art of Java.

We read that a king of Gujerat, India, being told in an oracle that his country would go to ruin, sent his son with a fleet and five thousand followers to Java. They settled in the center of the Island, and being reinforced by another detachment of two thousand soldiers from India, they succeeded in founding a great and flourishing empire, carrying on an extensive commerce with Gujerat and other countries. They were Buddhists, and introduced the Buddhist faith, erecting extensive monuments, the ruins of which are still standing. The best-known temple of this period is Boro Buddor, which is built on a rising mound with extensive galleries and passages well adapted for processions, which play an important part in the Mahâyâna ritual. The pillars and walls of this sacred mound are covered with inscriptions and reliefs representing scenes from the life of Buddha and Buddhist folklore tales.

There are also relics of the Brahman religion, which was probably introduced before the Buddhist emigrants reached Java; but the Brahman art shows no perfection and consists simply in circles of stones which are either in their natural shape or carved into rude representations of Hindu deities. But they are so rude that even the elephant-headed Ganesa can sometimes hardly be recognised. Further there are figures supposed to represent Siva and Vishnu and other gods of the Brahman pantheon.

The Buddhist civilisation apparently was far superior to that of the Brahmans, but it was superseded through the influx of Mohammedans, who by and by became so powerful that in the year 1479 they conquered Majapahit, the capital, and remained for a long time in possession of the island. The year of the Mohammedan conquest terminated the artistic period of Java. Says Fergusson, in his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. II., page 258: "It is as if the masons had thrown away their tools, and the chisels had dropped from the hands of the carvers. From that time forward no building was erected in Java, and no image carved, that is worth even a passing notice. At a time when the Mohammedans were adorning India with monuments of surpassing magnificence, no one in Java thought of building either a mosque, or a tomb, or a palace that would be deemed respectable in any second-class state in any part of the world."

The statue of Prajñâpâramitâ is one of the finest gems of the Royal Museum of Leyden, which I had occasion to admire on a visit to that famous Dutch university town. My friend, Monsieur G. Birnie, of Deventer, Holland, who had the kindness to show me the artistic and scientific treasures of his country, noticing

the interest which I took in the statue, had it photographed with the permission of the authorities of the Museum, and we owe it to his courtesy that we are able to offer it to the readers of *The Open Court*. We hereby publicly express our thanks both to him and to the authorities of the Royal Museum of Leyden.

We have before us in this statue the ideal of Wisdom sitting in the attitude of a teacher, evidently enforcing the instruction which she gives by the assistance of her fingers, used in enumerating the points which she makes. The halo behind her head indicates that the spirit of Buddha is incarnate in her; her seat, like that of the Tathâgata, is a lotos flower; her features indicate the influence of the Gandhara school, founded by Greek artists in the Græco-Indian kingdom of Gandhara in the valley of the Indus, flourishing in the second and first centuries before Christ.

Javanese art is distinguished by a purity of taste that indicates a purity of religious sentiment and conception in the artists. What a pity that the civilisation of which the work of art before us is a symptom was swept from the face of the earth to be succeeded only by periods of barbarism!

P. C.

BERKELEY'S TREATISE CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

Berkeley's *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, of which a reprint has just been published as the fourth of the series of Philosophical Classics of the Religion of Science Library,¹ first appeared in Dublin in 1710. The second edition, the last of the author's life-time, appeared in London in 1734, in the same volume with the third edition of the *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, a reprint of which will also immediately appear in the Religion of Science Library.

The *Principles*, published when the author was only twenty-six, is the most systematic of all of Berkeley's expositions of his theory of knowledge: it was the direct outgrowth of the *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* (1709), which sought to banish the metaphysical abstractions of Absolute Space and Extension from philosophy, and was itself mainly concerned with the abolition of Abstract Matter and of the ontological and theological corollaries of that concept. The *Dialogues* treat of substantially the same subjects, but are more familiar and elegant in form and are devoted in the main to the refutation of the most plausible popular and philosophical objections to the new doctrine. They have been called the gem of British metaphysical literature, and on them Berkeley's claim to be the great modern master of Socratic dialogue rests. No other writer in English, save perhaps Hume, has approached Berkeley in lucidity of metaphysical style.

The two books, which mark a distinctively new epoch in philosophy and science, together afford a comprehensive survey of Berkeley's doctrines, placing within the reach of every reader in remarkably brief compass opinions which have profoundly influenced the course of intellectual history. Works of this kind have been almost invariably distinguished by their brevity. "I had no inclination," is Berkeley's characteristic remark, "to trouble the world with large volumes. What I have done was rather with the view of giving hints to thinking men, who have leisure and curiosity to go to the bottom of things, and pursue them in their own minds. Two or three times reading these small tracts, and making what is read the occasion of thinking, would, I believe, render the whole familiar and easy to the mind,

¹The Open Court Pub. Co. Chicago and London. 1901. Pp. xv, 128. Price, 25 cents.