

MODERN INDIA.

[CONCLUSION.]

BY A. CHRISTINA ALBERS.

IV.

WHEN we consider the vast difference between the nature of the Oriental and the Western mind; when we stop to realize that the Hindu of to-day is the son of a race that traces its history and literature back to a hoary age, lost in the mist of tradition; when we learn to understand that his customs, his very life are the echo of a civilization that flourished when the ancestors of civilized Europe were as yet roaming over the plains, and America had not begun to play a part in the world's drama; when we begin to open our eyes to facts like these,—then I ask, ought we still to be surprised when we find modes of expression here which are vastly different from those we employ in Western lands? Would it not be vanity to think there is but one way to express thought and that is our way? Long before the printing press was launched into being, long even before the present mode of writing was introduced, people thought. And because they thought they wished to express their thoughts in concrete form, and they found means to do this. And again there are thoughts so lofty that language of grammar and syntax ceases to be sufficient to portray them. It is then that man has found a higher way to convey the truth. It is thus that the “idols” have found their origin. And after all it is but a tedious task to wade through books, and many a volume must be perused before even the simple facts of nature become clear.

The visitor to India beholds a sight that he calls ugly, and when he sees it he pities the “poor heathen” who believes in such a thing—the image of Kali. And certainly she is not fair to behold, this fierce goddess, black as night, with a necklace of skulls around her neck, her tongue protruding, a sickle in one hand, a bleeding human

head in the other, and her foot upon the prostrate form of her husband. And yet all this presents a mighty script, volumes made concrete to him who would read. For Kali the black, Kali the



KALI.

cruel represents nature in her lowest form. Earthquakes and cyclones; thunder and cloudbursts; famine, pestilence and death; the ravages of war; the horrors of brute creation in the field; the cruel-

ties of insect life and the still greater cruelties of the sea—these things and many others, are they pleasant to reflect upon? And yet is there one living who would deny their existence? Alas, no. It is these that have made the heart of many a scientist turn cold and caused him to declare that there is no creator behind so imperfect a universe. But the Hindu knows better. He has focussed in the image of Kali all the horrors of nature in her lower form and presents them to the mind with a force that is too strong for many. He also knows that human nature in its lower stages must be kept in check by fear. “Disregard the laws of nature and suffering will ensue; sin, and Kali—nature—will punish you.” This is the fundamental principle on which Kali-worship is built. But it does not end there. Kali, we read, feels ashamed when she realizes that she has her husband (higher nature) under foot, and she releases him. Thus from nature in her lowest form we turn to nature in her beauties and learn the lesson that suffering, intense though it be, can still last only for a time, and the mind, when ready to receive the higher teachings, will be sure to find them. The votaries of the Kali cult are still numerous, and as long as it still holds in check and inspires to worship millions of human beings, we must accept it as an institution that has not as yet outgrown its usefulness.

A much higher form of religious worship presents itself in the Durga *poojah* or Durga worship. Durga represents a higher aspect of divinity. She is the Loving Grace, and she has the warfaring elements under foot. To her right is Lakshmi, the goddess of beauty and fortune, and to her left Sarasvati, the goddess of music and poetry; to the left of Sarasvati, riding on a peacock, is Kartick, the beautiful son of Shiva; the most beloved son of Durga, Genesh, the elephant-headed, the god of wisdom, is to the right of Lakshmi. Durga is many-armed, this indicates her strength. She controls the lower forces, yet blesses ever, while the sword of justice does not leave her hand. In this group are united the symbols of the Saving Grace and its attributes: prosperity, wisdom, beauty, strength, and justice, and the subjugation of the lower elements.

The annual Durga festival takes place at the time of the autumnal equinox. For this occasion numerous images are prepared of wood and clay and taken to the houses of the worshipers. The figures in these groups are often more than life size. The festival lasts for about a week, and during these days the worshipers come and go from early morning till late at night, bringing their offerings of fruit, flowers, cooked food and clothes. At the end of the festival these gifts are partly distributed to the poor and partly given to the

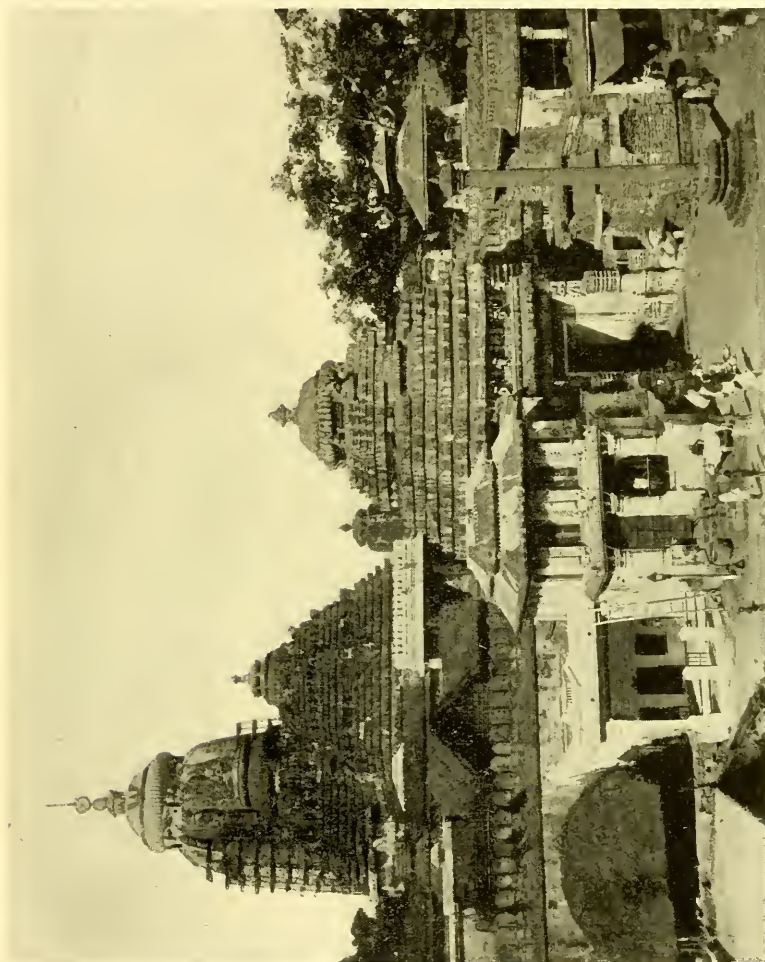
priests. The leaf of the Bael tree, which has the peculiarity that it grows in groups of three on one stem, is also offered, this as a symbol of the triple force or trinity. The ceremony is very impressive and not unlike some I have seen in the Catholic Church. The priest takes the different offerings and passes them before the goddess



DURGA.

from right to left, while cymbals beat profusely and incense fills the air. On the third day the ladies take part in the service, and this forms the closing ceremony. In groups of seven they walk around the image, each bearing one of nature's products over her

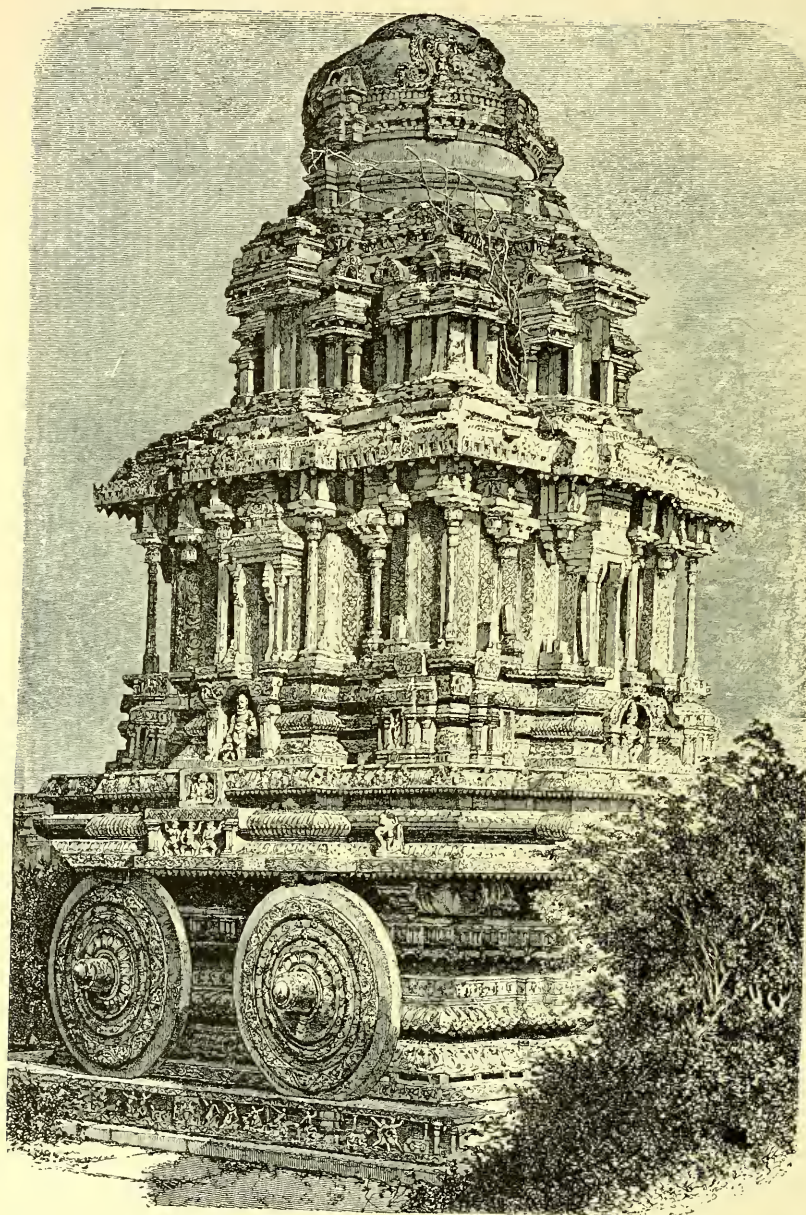
head—fruit, water, flowers, grain etc.—while leading the procession walks a priest sprinkling holy water on the ground. A charming picture it is, this last ceremony. With measured steps they walk, their robes flowing gracefully from their shoulders; jeweled hands drawing the veil over the face while dark eyes cast shy glances;



TEMPLE OF JAGANATH.

faces bending forward to whisper to a neighbor; the stern looking images the while throwing a feeling of awe over the scene.

This last rite ended, the image is carried to the river to be immersed in its waters, as an indication of the fact that when images have done their work then the devotee enters upon the silent stream that leads to the shoreless sea of peace.



CAR OF JAGANAT.

One of the most important religious holidays of the Hindus is the great festival of Jaganat, the Lord of the Universe, which takes place at the time of the summer solstice. Jaganat worship is gentle and pure. It forbids all self-immolation, and the stories of people throwing themselves under the wheel are exaggerated, for such acts would be in direct opposition to the teaching. But at the time when the huge wheel of Jaganat is moved along the street, enormous crowds gather around it and occasionally a death has occurred, which, however, upon investigation has invariably proven to be accidental. It is the occurrence of an occasional accident that has given



A TIBETAN GURU.

Behind the teacher (*guru*, or *pandit*) hangs a picture of the wheel of samsara which, according to Buddhist mythology, explains the concatenation of cause and effect, and portrays the several worlds in which living beings can be reborn. For further details see Carus, *History of the Devil*, p. 118.

rise to the horrible reports of suicide under the wheel of Jaganat. While in reality the spilling of a drop of blood bodes ill for the entire year and is considered a grave misfortune.

The religious festivals of the Hindus are numerous, too numerous indeed for all to be mentioned here. But all are the embodiment of a greater truth. Ritualistic performance is, however, not

the highest mode of worship in India, but only a stepping-stone as it were to the higher religious training, which latter is found at the feet of a learned Brahmin *pundit*, who instructs the *chela* in the philosophies and trains him in the different ways of meditation.

v.

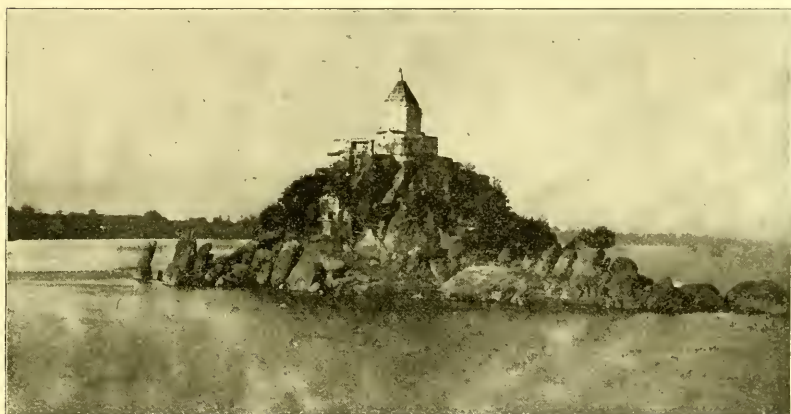
Entering the interior of the country, away from the smoke and the whistle of the engine, the traveler sees along the sandy roads miniature structures, only a few feet high; they are the wayside shrines, built by religious people in honor of some unseen force, either good or evil. Having been trained since all time to respond to the unseen forces of nature, the Hindu expresses his reverence for these in a thousand different ways. To him behind all matter there is life; to him every flower, every stone is the reflection of an invisible force. "Brahm is all, and existence is but a manifestation of Him." And these tiny altars with the marks of vermilion ever fresh upon them and offered flowers drying in the sun, these little shrines, the poetry of the sandy plain, are but the expression of his subtle mind. The pilgrim, as he passes on his way, stops here to lay a flower. A while at the altar of his deity he seeks repose and finds his shelter in the mother-soul of space of which all existence is to him but a faint echo. I have seen them on these sandy roads with their tiny wayside altars and see them now as I am writing, and once again I seem to travel to that monastery in the heart of Behar, a visit that I shall never forget.

I thought I was in one of the tales of the *Arabian Nights* as I entered the court of this spacious mansion. Elephants and camels leisurely feeding, oxen pulling carts of rice, turbaned servants busy with the work of unloading, standing up to their knees in the grain—all this met my view in that picturesque disorder so characteristic of the Orient. A long passage, a stone staircase, a walk over an open terrace, another passage, again a stone staircase—all this seemed strangely romantic, more like the tale of an enchanted castle than reality. The higher I mounted the purer became the atmosphere, till at last my guide halted on a broad and spacious terrace far above the abode of men.

I was presented to His Holiness, the head of the monastery, a stately Brahmin, who greeted me kindly. I looked at his frank face and saw beaming forth from under a yellow turban a pair of jet black eyes, keen yet friendly. A genial smile and a nod of the head inspired confidence, and I was invited to take my seat in an

armchair while he seated himself crosslegged on a couch, his attendants squatting on the carpet around him.

He enquired with great solicitude about my comfort and told me that during my stay at the resthouse I must consider myself his guest. He offered to secure for me any article of food I might desire, even though it be of a nature that a Hindu is not allowed to touch, explaining to me that as my host he was entirely at my service. I spoke with him a long time and he answered my many questions with cheerful readiness. While he spoke he smiled and geniality shone forth from his noble countenance. This is indeed what I have noticed in the men of India, whose lives are given to religion: however different their features might be, they all accom-



TEMPLE ON A ROCK IN THE GANGES.

Near Jangira Bhagalpur.

pany their speech by a smile soft and benign, and in this they all resemble one another.

Nor did he let me go without a blessing. A wreath of flowers, with which he himself adorned me, a spray of roses, these were the tokens of his welcome, accompanied by a benediction. And as I knelt before his august presence, I know I had not come in vain, for great souls always impart of their essence to those who approach them in humility.

The seat of Hindu orthodoxy is Benares, the quaintest, the most picturesque and most interesting city imaginable. About one hundred and twenty miles below the place where the Jumna mingles her waters with those of the sacred Ganges, lies this place, the holy

city of Kashi, the Shining, the most sacred spot in the whole land. "Jai, jai, Kashinat" (Hail, hail, O Lord of Kashi!) calls out the worshipful devotee, as the towers of the sacred city appear before his view, often throwing himself into the dust full length before he ventures to set his foot upon her holy ground. Aged people come here to spend their days in prayer and the performance of religious rites and the Ganges, ever sacred, multiplies here her saving power.

How old this place is no one knows. In authentic history there is no record of its birth, and many are the legends that come floating on the hazy mist of tradition about old, old, happy days in



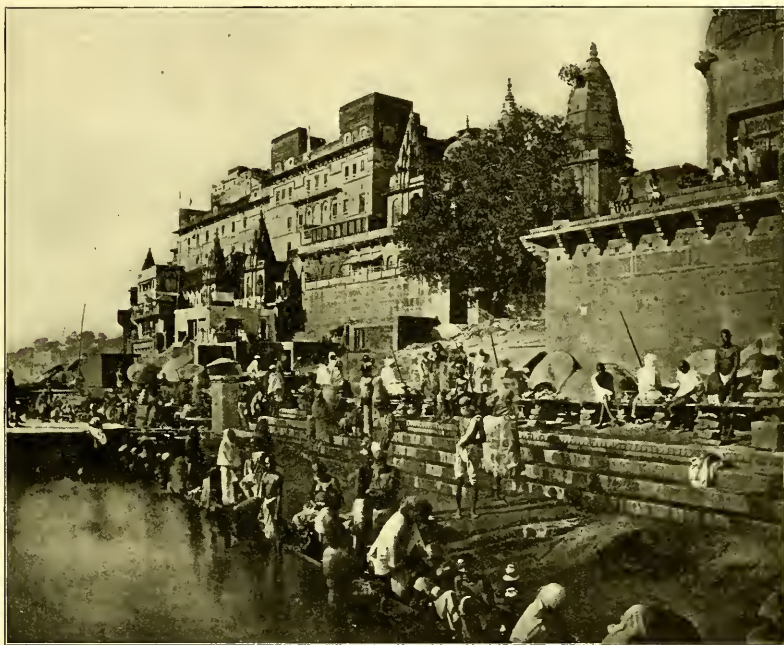
SHIVA SLAYING A DEMON.

kalpas long past, when the city was built of pure gold. It existed long before the "great flood" and to save it from destruction Shiva took it upon his trident and lifted it far above the waters. I asked for an explanation of this strange tale, and the following is what I learned:

While this universe was evolving it underwent many changes and passed through many different stages, and this earth of ours was covered by water prior to its present solid condition. This gradually receded leaving the surface exposed, and it was at this

spot, where now is Benares, that the first dry land appeared. The great threefold force, creation, preservation, and destruction—was made manifest here before any other part of the earth's surface appeared above the water—thus being lifted by the trident—the sacred trinity—above the flood. It is further recorded that primordial man first walked the earth here. The great object of the creative force of the universe being to evolve man, that object was finally accomplished, and it is in honor of this final triumph that the Hindu holds sacred the place of its achievement.

A boatride on the river in the early morning hours affords a

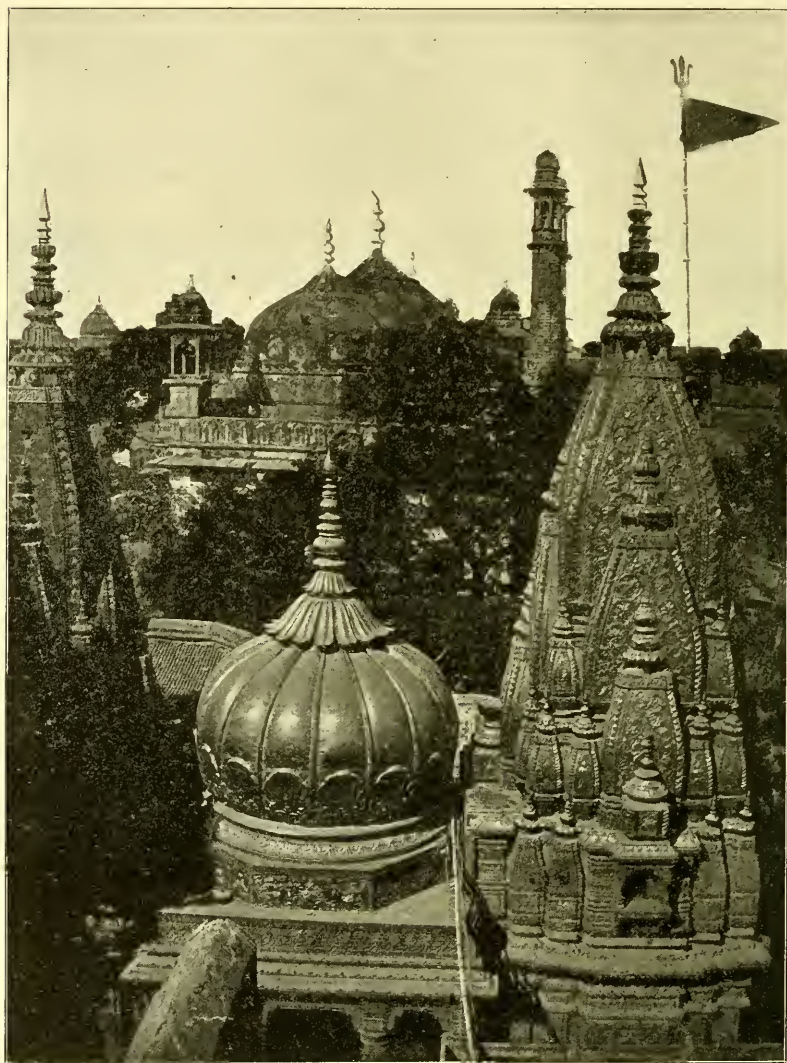


BATHING GHATS OF BENARES.

striking panorama. For miles along the river bank massive stone steps lead down into the water and are interspersed here and there by large platforms on which are picturesque shrines and bathing houses. On them one sees daily throughout the changing seasons crowds of men and women of all castes who meet here on common ground to share alike the rights that their religion affords them. At the time of an eclipse the desire to plunge into the cleansing flood is strongest, and the crowd on the steps by the river most numerous. It is at that time that the magnetic currents of the atmosphere are

disturbed by the influence of astronomical conditions, hence the greater endeavor for worship at this moment.

While in the water the bathers daily perform religious rites.



THE GOLDEN TEMPLE OF BENARES.

Some repeat *mantras*, others lift their triple cord and turn towards the sun in order to worship the creator through the medium of this

glorious work of his hand. Under large straw umbrellas Brahmin priests perform rites after ablution in the river, and around them gather the worshipers to listen to their discourse.

And they who die in holy Kashi, they too are taken to the water's edge, carried thither on a bier and wrapped in a thin white sheet. Once more they are lowered for a last embrace in the "sacred mother's" cooling waves, before they find their last resting-place upon the pyre, and the nearest relative lights the flame that consumes all that is mortal of man. The ashes are entrusted to the stream after the remains are destroyed by fire.

There are many temples in Benares, and they are ever crowded by worshipers, men and women alike. The foreigner is admitted as far as the door that leads into the sanctum sanctorum, but further he may not advance, for the right to enter the innermost shrine is vouchsafed only to those who can claim that privilege by right of birth. Fifteen hundred temples, it is said, does Benares hold, and this number does not include the smaller shrines and those on the terraces of many private houses. They were destroyed at times, these temples at Kashi, when the Mogul held sway over the land, but only to be rebuilt with greater vigor.

The Golden Temple is the most conspicuous owing to the magnificence of its domes which are covered with metal and overlaid with goldleaf, and glisten like burnished gold when the sun shines on their polished surface.

Annapura is a temple dedicated to Durga. Here are kept sacred bulls and cows, fed daily by the worshipers. The cow is sacred to the Hindus because of the blessings she bestows on man; she, they say, is the symbol of motherhood, for on her bounty live old and young alike.

In the temple of Hanuman monkeys are kept sacred, in memory of the great sage by that name who came to earth in the form of a monkey in order to help Ramshandra, as stated in the Ramayana.

Kashi is dedicated to Shiva, the power beyond all form, which however is worshiped in the *lingam* form. The religious force in this place is very strong, and the devotee who places a flower on a shrine or sprinkles holy water over an image, does so only in reverence to the One Life above, to attain which all Hindus aspire. Here, too, live many sages, men whose entire life is devoted to religion. They spend their time in silent contemplation on the Divine, and some there are who never speak. Yet they send out an influence pure and strong, and the world is the better because they live. Others teach the sacred scriptures and in return for this

ask naught but a meal a day and a mat just large enough for their form to rest on at night. Any offer beyond that they refuse with a calm smile. The almighty dollar has no power over them, and the great philosophy of figures to them has a higher value than that of pounds, shillings, and pence. These are men who live the religious life in all its grandeur, in all its purity, and for their sanctity their worshipful followers are ever ready to do them homage.

There are others who try to subdue the senses by self torture; one sees them sitting on a bed of spikes or wearing sandals with soles of spikes. Others again hold an arm in the air until it has become paralyzed in that position, and the nails of the fingers have grown into the flesh of the closed hand. They do not think to gain



SHIVA AND HIS CONSORT PARVATI.

salvation by these means; their object is merely to gain control over the senses.

The streets of Benares are very narrow, so narrow in fact that in many of them no vehicle of any kind can pass; and they form such a complicated network that one imagines oneself to be in a maze; down steps and up again they wind,—between houses often from five to seven stories high, built so that the upper stories project over the lower until the pedestrian looking up sees only a small streak of blue overhead.

I have seen this quaint place when it was illuminated on the

night of a religious festival. Little oil lamps—wicks in tiny earthen bowls—were placed in untold numbers on the housetops, at the windows and above all on the countless steps by the river, until the silent Ganges was aglow with a million lights, which gave the whole the appearance of a fairy palace, and I have never seen a sight more charming.

The Mussulman too has erected here monuments in honor of his faith, the finest of which is the mosque built by Arungzeb, and which is noted for the exquisite beauty of its roof with its many domes and minarets, the two most prominent of which stretch their lofty pinnacles to a height of one hundred and forty-seven feet from the roof. It is from the top of these that one receives the finest view over the city and surrounding country. The followers of the Moslem offer no flowers and have no images. They prostrate themselves in silence before the Deity or stand with hands folded repeating prayers.

Benares is noted for its brass manufactures, the metal used for this purpose not being pure brass, however, but an alloy of six different metals and has a reddish golden tinge. It is worked into exquisite designs of vases and other ornaments, which bear the stamp of fine workmanship.

The famous gold embroidered silks that are exported from this place are woven at hand looms, and it seems almost like the irony of fate to see poor, half fed, half naked men, not able to cover their own bodies, produce garments delicate almost as a spider's web; for, as is well known, from the looms of Benares go forth the finest silks in the world.

Europeans are seldom seen in old Benares and excite much curiosity. I have seen little children run off screaming at beholding me and even the big buffaloes stop their slow walk and turn their big heads as if suspecting a danger signal.

Meanwhile this silent aged city dreams away, heedless alike of foreign dominion and the bustle of factory life; calmly she rules, this queen for whom time exists not, holding unopposed sway over the hearts of the millions of Ind.

VI.

Caste in India is a social organization, but it has its root in religion. In fact, the whole national life of India is religious in its principle and all its institutions are based on religion. The early classification consisted of four great divisions, these were the Brah-

mins ,the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas, and the Sudras. The first three of these are Aryan, the last is non-Aryan. The members of this last caste are denied the sacred thread, and originally had no access to the sacred literature. But the secular education that has of late years been introduced, has placed the Sudras in a position to be no longer exempted from approaching the sacred books; they are not now debarred from reading any part of them. Among the Sudras there are at present men of great learning and wealth, and many of them have Brahmins in their employ.

The original caste divisions are subdivided into many hundred sections, and the members of one of these may not intermarry nor eat food with one another. In the matter of food the people do indeed take extraordinary precautions. A Hindu will not touch food which is cooked by one inferior to himself in caste. He understands the magnetic vibrations that emanate from a person. These, he argues, are being imparted into the food, while being prepared, and transmitted to the partaker while eating. And in order to live a purely spiritual life he must keep the body in harmony with the higher forces of his being.

The numerous subdivisions of caste have done much to break up the national unity of the people, and many thinking men now advocate the intermarriage and joint partaking of food on the part of the members of one caste, independent of its subdivisions, as one means of procuring a stronger national unit. The caste is often subject to internal changes, as is proven by the new subcastes that are ever springing up, but it has withstood all pressure from without through many centuries. At present, however, its rigidity seems to be waning. The rules observed nowadays apply mainly to the questions of food and marriage. Yet, while it may seem strange to the Western mind that one Hindu will not sit down to eat with another, it is equally incomprehensible to him that Western people should often live for years without knowing their next-door neighbors. The Hindus are of a very sociable nature, and members of different castes visit one another freely and often are warm friends.

Nor are the different professions at the present day limited to the members of certain castes as they once were. As is well known, the Brahmins were the philosophers, the Kshatriyas the military men, the Vaisyas the merchants, and the Sudras the serfs. But now there is confusion of occupations. While there are as yet many Brahmins who would rather starve and assign their wives and children to the same fate, than stoop to a profession lower than originally intended for them, there are others who make a livelihood as

traders, porters, clerks, etc. The same rule prevails among other castes.

The minor caste divisions are in many cases trade guilds. These are built largely on the same principle as the Western trade unions, and attend to the regulation of wages and the general interest of their members, but they further exercise a strong influence over their moral conduct, caste members being usually under the strict surveillance of the authorities. A well-behaved caste member always receives his due reward, but ill conduct leads towards excommunication. The punishment then inflicted is very severe; none of his old caste fellows will take food with an outcaste, and the penalty is not infrequently carried to the extent of forbidding him the use of a spiritual adviser, or even the village washerman and barber. He thus finds himself entirely boycotted, and his lot is a miserable one. These are, however, extreme measures and are not resorted to until a man has proven to be a really bad man, and even then he is not without hope, for his conduct can be retrieved by expiations more or less severe in proportion to his offence.

Family life in India is still based on the old patriarchal system; every family is a small government in itself. The eldest male member is the head of the household, seeing to the wants and the moral and educational training of its members, and receiving undisputed obedience and service in return. When a youth marries he takes his bride to his parental home, and she is there installed as one of its members. It is the family of the husband that takes care of the widow when he dies, and the tie that binds kin to kin is stronger than one can realize before having seen its working. One of the results of this is that in India there is no poor-law; the caste and the family see to the helpless and the destitute. This makes the obligations of a householder often enormous, but the rule holds good throughout.

What will be the final outcome of caste is hard to foresee. There are among the Hindus those who venture to predict that in another century there will be practically no caste remaining; there are others who maintain that the salvation of the country lies in bringing back the original arrangement to four divisions. The Hindus are by nature an aristocratic race and there will certainly always be marked divisions between the higher and lower classes of society, but the indications now are that the dividing line will grow less rigid as time goes on.

One thing is certain, that unless young India learns to understand the value and dignity of manual labor, the country cannot

advance. The education they receive at the Government colleges may entitle them to a B. A. and an M. A. degree, but they are turned out from these places of learning entirely unfit to cope with the life they must encounter, and there is many a college graduate who is glad to earn his fifteen to twenty rupees a month. This small sum has in many cases to support large families, which, alas, only too often causes these people to fall prey to the money-lenders. And it is these money-lenders who are a great curse to the people. Charging ten and twelve per cent. a month with a serene conscience, they frequently keep whole families in bondage for generations, and it is as a rule the poor agriculturist who suffers from them most. Nor will they cease their work until the Government sees fit to put down their methods and establish other means for the people to raise their loans. But, alas, the Government does not encourage unity, for in that lies strength, and two hundred million people united might become unruly.

So poor India suffers on; suffers for the sins which her forefathers might or might not have committed long centuries ago, with every prospect that their children will continue to do so for generations yet to come. The poor laborer of the fields receives three or four rupees a month, which does not begin to be sufficient to supply him and his family with food. Many have no houses, not even a mud hut, which is in all cases the highest abode to which they may aspire. Some are the happy possessors of a pair of straw screens, about three or four feet long. These they place together in a triangular form and find their nightly shelter there, for a part of their bodies at least.

The handicrafts are at a low ebb and the industries are depleted. The Hindus, being of a metaphysical nature, have not as yet adjusted themselves to the mercantile spirit of modern times. Taking advantage of this, the Englishman takes the raw materials of the country to Lancashire, where factories thrive and merchants become daily wealthier on the very lifeblood of poor India. Fortunately the present generation are opening their eyes to their shortcoming; they are beginning to send their sons abroad to study the methods of commerce and agriculture to introduce these eventually into their own country, and this is one of the greatest needs of the times.

Thus then do we see the Hindus, the product of a great and ancient civilization: subdued by a material force, inferior to their rulers only in the art of modern warfare and trade; highly metaphysical and of strong spirituality; of high learning in philosophy; superior linguists and literary men; of fine oratorical powers; artists

who are not satisfied with the copying of scenes and forms in nature, but express in their work great spiritual truths; a race the very essence of whose being is spiritual, whose thoughts, literature, art, and institutions all have their root deep down in religion, on the whole advanced to a high state in all but matters material.



THE STUPA AT SARNATH.

A few miles from the city of Benares is Sarnath, the place known as the Deerpark in Buddhist history. It was here that Gautama, the Buddha, the ninth of India's Avatars delivered his first sermon after having attained to enlightenment. To-day a large *stupa* marks

the spot, erected by Asoka during his reign. This, however, is partly in ruins. The building represents a solid dome, ninety-three feet in diameter at the base and hundred and twenty-eight feet high. It still bears the signs of fine workmanship. Like all the monuments of Asoka's time it is a very solid structure.

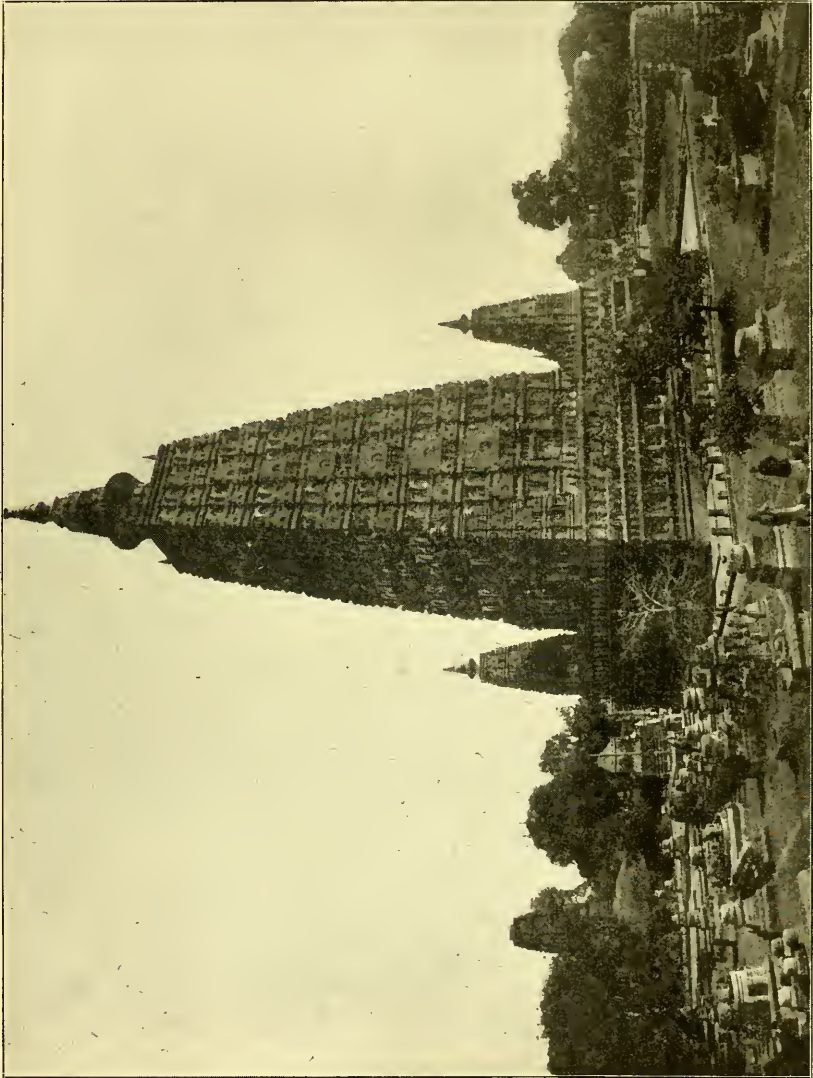
To the west of this *stupa* a few lines of brick, outlining the foundations of buildings, seem like a sad and silent voice from the past. Once stately monasteries graced this place, and yellow-robed monks lived in these halls of learning, while Sarnath was a center of activity. But the conqueror came and with the besom of destruction swept the buildings to the ground, consuming in one conflagration monasteries, hospitals, monks, manuscripts and all. This was what archæologists discovered centuries later when they found among the ashes huge masses of bones, iron, wood, and stone.

Does the voice of the great Teacher speak more plainly anywhere than here? Was it not the keynote of his lore that all which comes into existence must fade? And is it not a strange coincidence that at the very place, where he spoke his first words of enlightenment, the essence of his teachings should be portrayed so forcibly? "These buildings were the work of man," say the crumbling stones, barely visible above the ground, "and their fate is the common fate of all existence," and the demolished stone carvings of the half-ruined *stupa* re-echo this truth.

There is another place dear to all Buddhists, a place less sad, where the heart feels still the hope of life. This is the spot where Gautama meditated in the memorable night when he exhausted all causes and soared to the realm of silence and non-being. A mighty temple marks the spot where sat the silent sage, the work of Asoka again, the Constantine of the Buddhist era. This is the Mekka of all the followers of the Dharma, for to Buddha-Gaya they flock from all parts of Asia. From the banks of the Hoangho, from the Land of the Rising Sun, from hidden Tibet beyond the Himalayas, from the Lion Isle of Lanka, and above all from the land of the Pagôdas—fair Burma—come the followers of the faith, pilgrims of many days, to worship under the branches of this tree, to lay an offering at the feet of the image of the Buddha within the temple. Here I have seen them sitting silently for hours under the Bo-tree—erect and motionless, lost in contemplation on the virtues of the great Teacher and the path he preached for his followers.

Before closing let me say a word about the stately mountain range which is the pride of all true Hindus,—the lofty Himalayas, of which tradition says that its chain is unbroken and which gives

to the world the grandest scenery. Here stretch fields unmeasured, clad in perennial snows, snows which when kissed by the early sun reflect tinges manifold, and are bathed in an ocean of scarlet when



TEMPLE OF BUDDHA-GAYA.

the evening sky reflects its glory upon them. I have seen this snowy grandeur at noontime, when the azure sky stretched a spotless dome above, and the mountains below were clad in a hazy blue. It

was then that the whole seemed suspended in space, floating in the ether as it were; the brooding soul of eternity hovering over the world below. It sends out strong magnetic currents, this snow-clad mountain crest, and the Himalayas abound with a thousand tales,



A BHUTEAN FAMILY.

told from grandsire to sons and sung by the Bhutea mother over her crooning babe.

The native people who live here are mountain tribes, the most

numerous of whom are the Bhuteas who hail from Bhutan. A hardy race they are, men, women, and children alike, and frugal and hard working. A Bhutea woman can carry as high as three



A LITTLE MOUNTAIN MAID.

hundred pounds on her back, and little boys and girls carry rocks for housebuilding enormous in size.

Buddhism of the Northern Canon is the religion of these people. There are several Buddhist temples in these districts where Tibetan

Lamas officiate, as in fact visitors from Tibet are numerous in this part of India.

A visit to a Bhutea village is most interesting, and I went there upon the invitation of one of the prominent members of the Bhutea community. I shall never forget this morning and that strange walk up hill and down, over quaint bridges and still quainter rock-hewn steps, wondering all the while whether I was walking three thousand years back in the wheel of time or into the heart of a land as yet unknown to the world, until we halted before the quaintest little cottage imaginable. And a strange gathering there was at the



A BHUTEA TEA PARTY.

house of this Bhutea host: a Japanese priest just returned from Lhasa; a Doctor of Philosophy from Russia; three high caste Bengalee gentlemen; two Bhuteas, and myself; while the lady of the house, a Himalayan mountain maid pure and simple, graced the meeting with her presence and attended with quiet dignity to her duties as hostess.

Thus have I seen it, this ancient land, and thus do I give it to the world. Whether I have idealized too much I know not. That these people are without their faults, that their institutions are perfect and need no reform; that the national life is what it should be—all this I do not for a minute assert. I only say in all this crying for

reform, in all this modernizing let them beware lest they lose the spiritual force that animates them. They hold within them all that can make a nation great; advance with the times they must, but in so doing let them retain their originality and be Hindus still.

To me India is the land of romance, the land of high ideals. A silence deep and wondrous; ancient temples, deserted buildings; an innate sense of poetry, art, and beauty of her people, to which they give expression in stately forms, grace of movement and picturesque groupings; souls seeking their own beyond the realm of matter;—and over it all the shadows and the whispers of a hoary past—this is the India that I have seen, this is what has appealed to me, and this I have tried to portray. Not the India of the tourist of a few short months; not the India of the merchant who seeks to fill his coffers at the expense of the much abused native; nor yet the India of him who would rob her of her ideals and implant his own instead: but the India that is found by silent hours spent at a ruined building; by the contemplation of a shrine; by listening to the sound of the silver anklet on the floor; by watching the deep, the fathomless silence of her sacred rivers, where the law of her teachings becomes concrete fact; the India that dwells in the heart of every true son of the soil and to uphold which her daughters have labored and suffered;—that is the true India, the “land of lands,” the India that has lived and will live evermore.