

able that the stupa from which this relief comes may be that visited by the Chinese pilgrim."

The story is typical of Indian ideals. While western mind glories in deeds of heroism the Hindu's highest ideal is self-sacrifice. The sculpture before us is only one conspicuous instance of many others indicating the same tendency and illustrating the same ideal of highest virtue.

## THE RELIGIONS OF INDIA.

BY WILLIAM ALANSON BORDEN.

**A**LTHOUGH Christianity was preached in India as early as the sixth century, no results worthy of record were obtained in that land until a thousand years later, when the first Catholic mission was established in Goa.

Since then missionary endeavor in India has been continuous and equal success has attended the efforts of both Catholic and Protestant, if the term "success" can be applied to four centuries of work that has resulted in only three million converts out of a population of three hundred million.

To be sure, one per cent is better than nothing, but it is far below what we conceive to be the carrying power of our own faith.

In contrast with this meagre result, and the better to illustrate the point to be made: Some ten years ago a party of devout Hindus in Baroda State were moved to undertake a proselyting campaign among the hill tribes of the state, the only real heathen in India, and the census returns of 1911 show that thirty per cent of these tribes had been converted to Hinduism by these men, or four per cent of the whole population of the State of Baroda itself.

In one case four hundred years of conscientious attempt to convert a nation results in one per cent; in the other case ten years of work equally conscientious and carried on by men not more earnest results in four per cent. Why? Because Hinduism and Islam are more in the line of Oriental thought than Christianity is and, what is of equal importance, converts to Hinduism or Islam are not ostracized by their former communities.

The Christian missionary is an earnest, hardworking man, and a fairly capable one, who has achieved a small measure of success against tremendous odds. In the other case the odds are not as large and success has been attained in proportion.

The religions of the East have been born on eastern soil to remedy eastern wants, have developed amid eastern conditions and have been modified from time to time to agree with the advance of eastern civilization and the trend of eastern thought. They fit the eastern mind and satisfy the eastern philosophy.

Although Christianity was born in the East it has matured in the West. It has developed in a western environment and been modified again and again to agree with the progress of western thought and philosophy. It has finally reached a stage that is as entirely foreign to eastern ideas as the religions of the East are to ours.

We are entirely satisfied with our religion; they are equally satisfied with theirs and they are quite likely to remain so. But with one exception, and that one the depressed castes of the Hindu community. They are not satisfied with their social condition, and that condition is caused by their religion as it has been interpreted for them by the Brahmin priest. These people have been the scape-goats of the Indian system of caste; on them has fallen all the degraded and menial labor of the community and the social ostracism that accompanies that work. Their condition is absolutely wretched and any change in it would be a change for the better. Both Christianity and Islam offer that change, and yet so rigid are the laws of caste in India that, depressed as these castes are, they hesitate to take advantage of the offer, though, as has just been said, some three million of them are now in the Christian fold and in a wonderfully improved social and religious status in consequence.

However impossible it may be for our missionaries to convert any of the higher castes of Hinduism—and practically none have been converted thus far—there is still a large field left among these twenty-five million “untouchables” as well as among the eight million “hill people.” The missionary boards of Europe and America may rest assured of several centuries of work still left in India, reckoning by past progress, before they will feel obliged to transfer their charities to fields nearer home.

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Before the conquest by the Aryans, that greatest race of ancient times, the history of India is lost in the vague uncertainties of myth and fable, for India is one of the cradles of the human race. We have dim records in which we may see one people follow another through untold ages, each in its turn appearing from the mists of a remote past, developing its civilization of copper and bronze, of

cotton fabric, of stone temple and shrine, and then vanishing into the mists of a past only a little less remote.

What these races were, whether native or immigrant, we have no means of knowing, but one of these prehistoric races, commonly spoken of as the Aryans, we now know came into India from some place far to the north. They were a race of great fecundity and in consequence were forced to develop a genius for successful migration. One stream of this exodus moved toward the west and north-west. Encountering the bitter powers of nature, and learning to meet them, they became an active, hardy race. As they moved north over Europe they became inured to cold and able to extract a comfortable living from hard and rugged conditions; encountering a lower sun they became lighter in hue, and their physique became stronger as their environment demanded strength. As their advance met the sea they conquered it, and finally they produced the great maritime nations of Europe that, by means of the sea thus conquered, have spread their colonies over all the world, and with those colonies the religion of the Bible that had replaced in their hearts the older faith of the Vedas.

Another stream of Aryans moved toward the south and south-east, peopling Persia and pouring over the northwest passes of India into the Punjab, the "land of five rivers."

These movements were slow, one generation as it became crowded in its older home moving a little ahead and thus gradually coming into new conditions and being acclimated to them. As they moved further south they became of darker hue under a higher sun and of frailer physique as their surroundings grew more tropical.

The religion they carried into Persia and India, known as Vedism, was a pure nature worship with some slight admixture of ancestor worship, as would be natural in a primitive people. The sky that rained was Indra; Vishnu was the sun-god and Brahman the god of hymns. They had no priests, nor temples, nor any public worship. Neither had they any castes. All of these came later. Each man worshiped the gods in his own house, before his own hearth, and was assisted in that worship by his wife.

They were tillers of the soil and herdsmen. They lived on the grains they raised and upon their cattle which they killed for food. Their intense prejudice against animal food was still many hundred years ahead of them.

Their government was patriarchal, each clan being independent, but as they advanced farther into the plains of the Ganges and

thence into the hills of the Deccan they came into active conflict with the inhabitants of those countries and were forced to raise armies. With these armies came more powerful governments and a greater consolidation of civil authority. Thus arose the great kings of the epic period with their organized forces.

With the kings came also the priests who assisted them in the worship of the gods, devised more efficacious sacrifices by means of which the armies were to obtain victory, or designated the more auspicious days for battles or for domestic functions.

It was inevitable that these priests should gradually gather all religious ceremonies into their own hands and all the learning of the age as well. By the time the Aryans had conquered the whole of India the priesthood had become the distinct Brahmin caste, a class of learned men and scholars. By this time, also, the conquered inhabitants of the country, a people of much darker hue than the invaders, had become a race of serfs and were known as the Sudra caste. "Caste" comes from a Sanskrit word meaning color. The distinction between the Brahmin and the Sudra was mainly one of color, but it was also one of occupation, and as the people were divided generally into four occupations—priests, soldiers, cultivators (and tradesmen), and serfs—it was very natural that as the two extremes had become castes the two means should also so divide themselves. So at the end of this period of conquest we see the formation of the four original castes of Indian society. The priests were the Brahmin caste, the kings and soldiers were the fighting caste or Kshatriyas, the cultivators the Vaisya caste and the serfs the Sudra caste.

The Kshatriyas, being more powerful and important, took a slight precedence over the humble Vaisyas, but there was as yet no social distinction between them and the Brahmins.

The establishment of the priesthood was naturally followed by a distinct classification and arrangement of religious beliefs and practices gradually hardening into a definite theology known as Brahmanism, the second stage of the principal religion of India. This stage may be placed at about eight centuries before the Christian era, though some authorities are inclined to throw it a thousand years farther back.

Brahmanism from its theological side recognized one supreme being, Brahm, the creator of the universe, and a host of subordinate gods representing the different attributes of the great God, or a state of mediatorship between him and man, an idea that seems to be essential to the human mind inasmuch as it is found in all religions.

Brahmanism taught the immortality of the human race, but the conscious part of that immortality, or at least that part of it about which there seems to be a definite belief, consisted of an almost endless series of earthly lives for each individual, and the series extended as far into the past as it did into the future. The philosophers of that age saw the logical necessity of assuming that an immortal life must extend both ways, that a never-ending life implied also a never-beginning one, and as they believed that each life would eventually be absorbed into the being of God, they also held that in the beginning it must have emanated from God.

Just what was the object of this arbitrary pollution of some portions of a perfect being, which after freeing themselves from this pollution were to be united again with the original perfection, the theologians of the age failed to make clear. They probably covered their failure by the assertion that the divine purposes were not to be understood by a finite mind, an explanation that has served a like purpose in many ages since then.

These old philosophers also believed that every good or evil action, thought or word of every life in this endless chain created a spiritual atmosphere, or "karma," about the individual that accompanied him in all of his future lives, and that every evil element of that karma had to be thoroughly purged away by righteous living and pure thoughts before the soul could be fitted for its final absorption into the being of God.

There was no general heaven or hell. Each man created his own heaven or hell by his individual actions. A man whose life was good came into a life of increased honor in his next incarnation. One whose life was evil, and whose karma had thereby become polluted, descended in his next life to that stage of human or animal existence which corresponded to the polluted karma. They believed, and all Hindus still believe, that every man is personally responsible for his every action or intention, and that he must himself pay the penalty of whatever sins he has committed.

The idea of vicarious atonement is utterly foreign to Indian religious philosophy. They fail to see the logic of it. To their minds such a theory violates the reformatory purpose of punishment and argues a revengeful God rather than a just one.

On its ethical side this old religion, antedating Christianity by eight hundred years, will bear comparison with the moral teachings of the present day. It forbade suicide, perjury, slander, drunkenness, oppressive usury, and cruelty to animals. It taught mildness, truthfulness, obedience to parents, chastity, almsgiving, charity

toward the old, the sick and the feeble, the forgiveness of injuries and the returning of good for evil.

Just how far the people of that age followed the teachings of the priests or the precepts of the moral law is a matter for inference. We are of the same general stock ourselves; we live under about the same system of ethics and can form our own judgments on the subject, though it were scarcely judicious to cast many stones.

At this stage of its growth Brahmanism had only the four castes just mentioned, and the three upper ones of these were very nearly on an equality as far as social standing was concerned. They dined together and intermarried. In the subsequent development of the creed, after it had come more completely under the domination of the priests, these castes were subdivided into hundreds, and finally into thousands, of smaller castes and all social intercourse between them came to an end. Each small caste had its own laws and its own religious ceremonies, and these rigidly prescribed the daily and even hourly duties of its members.

In the Indian caste system no opportunity is given to any man to improve his condition in life; of whatever caste the father is that must be the caste of all his descendants to the remotest generation. Only death and the subsequent reincarnation can change a man's caste, his condition in life, or his associates.

No better scheme could have been devised for disintegrating a nation and placing it at the mercy of the ruling caste of priests, with no chance of its ever uniting against that rule.

In the patient working out of this elaborate scheme for his own aggrandizement the Brahmin has builded better than he knew, for it has worked out very much for the benefit of the Englishman who has calmly and definitely seated himself at the head of the civil part of it, with the Brahmin under him.

The Brahmin is still at the head of the religious part of the caste system, but he hungers for the governmental part which carries the power. This part there is very small chance of his getting. He may excite others to assassination, but that method is slow and the consequences are apt to be unpleasant. He might finally abolish the caste system altogether and then, by uniting all Indians in a patriotic uprising, drive the English into the sea; but he himself would be dethroned in the process, and the movement would only result in exchanging an English government for a Mohammedan one.

The present unrest in India is caused by the Brahmin's efforts

to get back into the saddle. He knows now that without the Englishman at his back he would not keep his seat for a week, even should he chance to get it, and so he is trying to make himself the co-ruler with the English; or, perhaps, some other nation has whispered to him.

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The Hindu is a pessimist. He has been oppressed for ages. The whole history of India is one of raids and forays by other nations. The fair and just rule of the English is still too recent for him to have forgotten the centuries of rapine that preceded it, nor is he quite sure that even the English rule will not yet turn to exploitation.

His religion teaches him that life in this world is a dreary round of trial and tribulation in preparation for some future life somewhere else. For that matter most other religions of the world, being of eastern origin, teach the same. But in his religion that state of preparation in this world is infinitely prolonged. He can only look forward to millions of future lives that are still to come in their well-nigh endless succession, and he longs for some way of escape from the wheel.

About five centuries before the Christian era two reformers were born whose mission was to show him that way of escape. Devout Buddhists and Jains believe that these men were incarnations of a heavenly power, of the Spirit of Truth, sent into the world for that purpose. They were Vardhamana Mahavira, otherwise known as Jina, and Siddartha Gautama, known as Buddha. They were both princes, sons of small rajahs whose states lay just north of Benares, and their ideas were so similar that they must have been pupils of some older teacher, or else both must have been members of some advanced religious brotherhood.

Both believed in transmigration or reincarnation, and neither of them saw anything in the endless series of earthly lives that was not also endless misery. Both gave up the ease and luxury of their royal estates and became wandering mendicants and preachers, relieving what misery they saw so far as their powers enabled them so to do, and each of them continually looking for a way by which humanity might be emancipated from its present and future sufferings by being taken back into the Spirit of the Universe.

Jina discovered the way in asceticism, in the extreme mortification of the flesh, in the triumph of the mind over the body, which in India has always been a much favored gateway to holiness. If his followers would devote twelve years of their lives to rigid

asceticism and would follow up a like effort through the following eight incarnations, they would be relieved from all further transmigrations and gain a heaven of bliss where each would retain his individual consciousness throughout eternity.

This life of asceticism was open to all. If members of the laity did not choose to subject themselves to it, but would contribute to the support of those who did, would be charitable to all men, would lead pure and simple lives, would venerate the holy ones, would neither purposely nor carelessly kill any living creature, and would in all other ways conform to the ethical and theological precepts of their creed, they would ultimately attain the same heaven of eternal rest.

Jainism was not a complete departure from Brahmanism, for it recognized caste to some extent and adopted several of the Hindu gods. Brahmin priests often officiate in their temples. It is quite a distinct religion, however, and far more than simply a sect of Brahmanism.

The Jains number a million, or perhaps more. They belong largely to the merchant class and as a rule are prosperous and much respected throughout India. They have built many beautiful temples, somewhat gaudy, to be sure, but distinctive enough to have given rise to a definite order of ecclesiastical architecture.

There are still many ascetics among them and these may be seen in all the large towns of western India, with a small square of linen over their mouths that no insect may be inhaled with the breath and destroyed, and carrying a soft broom with which they sweep the path in front of them that no living creature may be trodden on and killed.

The Jains have established many animal hospitals and thus demonstrated their compassion in a very practical way, but it is also a pity that their intense conservatism in regard to the destruction of infected rats has served to perpetuate the bubonic plague in the large cities where as grain merchants they control the situation.

Although Buddha, like Jina, passed the first seven years of his pilgrimage as an ascetic, he was not satisfied with asceticism as a remedy for human ills, and so turned to the discipline of the mind rather than to that of the body.

After a long time spent in meditation it was irresistibly borne in upon him that the source of all unhappiness in this world was desire, and if one could so abate desire that it would finally be neutralized he would approach the nature of the spirit that underlies the universe. He thereupon taught that if one could so regulate

his thoughts and his human passions that all desire would be quenched, even the desire for life itself or for heaven hereafter, he would thereby prepare himself for immediate absorption into what might now be called the Spirit of the Universe—a state of unconscious existence lasting forever, Nirvana, so called; unconscious so far as one's own individuality was concerned, a dreamless sleep lasting through all eternity. Whether or not there was in this state a larger consciousness, more than a mere individuality and partaking of the nature of the Deity, the teachings of Buddha nowhere mention, though many modern followers of the faith believe that such is the fact.

The Buddhists do not recognize caste, but believe in the absolute brotherhood of the human race, in fact, in the brotherhood of all life. In recognition of that brotherhood Buddha advocated the monastic life and also preached celibacy. He seemed to think that the life of the world was an absolute failure and the sooner all living things were removed from the face of the earth the better for all concerned.

A dependent community of begging monks and nuns whose entire support was to come from the charity of others (for none of them were to do any labor, but were to pass their time in meditation) required a working laity to feed them, otherwise the proper preparation for Nirvana might be unduly abridged. So the disciples of Buddha taught that whoever lacked the courage or the opportunity to prepare himself for Nirvana during the span of a single life might so lead that life in purity, helpfulness and charity, and so "acquire merit" that after death he would pass into a heaven where he would be as a god for ten billion years before he must again return to earth for his next incarnation, and that even that incarnation would be as glorious as an unsuccessful world could offer.

There were hells, also, of varying degrees, where the very wicked were adequately punished until they were fitted to return to the surface of the earth and there begin over again the weary round of existence from the lowest form of animal life.

This religion swept over India during the next few centuries and was carried from there to Tibet, China and Japan. It seemed to have an irresistible fascination to the Oriental mind and at one time included within its fold a third of the human race. After a time, however, it began to lose favor in the land of its birth and was gradually superseded by a reformed Brahmanism, known in the present day as Hinduism, so that it now numbers only nine

million followers in India, settled mostly in Ceylon, Burma and Nepal.

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During the Buddhist period Brahmanism itself was undergoing a considerable change, as would be the natural course of any religion, even one so much under the control of its priesthood as this one was. On the one side, under the influence of that priesthood it was riveting the fetters of caste more firmly on its followers, as has been explained before. On the other side it was opening its portals to all the new teachings of the Jains, the Buddhists and numerous other reformers, and was becoming so all-embracing that almost any form of religious belief could find shelter under its roof. This was a most unusual thing for a priest-ridden faith to do, and can only be explained by the fact that the Brahmins, who control the movement, are by far the most intellectual of all the people of India.

From the Buddhists and Jains it had adopted much of the belief in the sacredness of animal life. No Hindu will eat beef and very few of them will eat any kind of meat. From Christianity it had adopted the doctrine of the Trinity: Brahm, the Creator; Vishnu, Preserver; Siva, the Destroyer, and each member of the Godhead had come to be worshiped by his own particular sect. Buddha and Jina had been declared to be incarnations on earth of the god Vishnu. Even the name of the religion had been changed, and it is now known as Hinduism.

The old religion, always tolerant, had become supertolerant, and so broadened had it become that it had well-nigh ceased to be a distinct religion, but a collection of all religious beliefs. From many standpoints it might almost be considered the universal religion of India, with its basis in pantheism.

This widening of the doctrine brought to the newer Hinduism the popular favor that Buddhism had taken away from the older Brahmanism, and Hinduism now has two hundred million followers.

Although the modern Hindu recognizes the Trinity, he usually limits his worship to Vishnu, the mild god of the humanities; to Siva, the god of death and therefore the arbiter of one's next incarnation; or to some of their numerous wives or subordinates, or perhaps to some local or caste divinity. Occasionally, also, he will pay his respects to divinities outside of his own religion. He will pray to Jina or to Buddha, or he will join a procession in honor of the one God of whom Mohammed was the prophet.

On general principles, when so little is to be lost and so much

possibly may be gained, he does not propose to be out of favor with any god, if some small act of devotion will retain that favor.

But during all the time he may be flirting with the gods of other people he fully recognizes the tremendous fact of his own personal and individual responsibility for every thought, word and deed of his present life. He knows, as his fathers knew, that every pain and misfortune of this life is the punishment he must bear for the voluntary faults and crimes of some former existence; that the sum total of his present karma, which every day he is building up about him, will bring to him, and to him only, sometime, somewhere, either in this life or in some life to come, its fitting reward or its adequate punishment. And he knows, too, that an infinite power will measure that reward, be it good or bad, with an exact justice that will have no admixture of either favoritism or revenge.

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These three religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, are the principal *native* faiths of India. There are others of course, for India is as fertile in creeds as she is in material things, but these are the distinctive ones, although Sikhism has also a considerable following.

But among the Indian faiths there are two, besides Christianity, that have been imported from other parts of the Orient. These are Mohammedanism and Parseeism.

The former made its entry into India at the beginning of the eleventh century. It came, bearing a sword, over the northwest passes that had furnished an entrance to so many invaders in times past, and the bearers of that sword ruled India for eight hundred years, or until they were finally dispossessed by the Marathas and the English.

As the sword was used in the conquest so was it also used to convert the conquered to "the true faith," and with equal success. The surprising element of this forcible conversion lies in its permanency after the pressure had been withdrawn. The descendants of these converts still largely retain the faith of Islam and now form a considerable portion of the sixty-three million Mohammedans in the Indian census returns. This would rather indicate that Islam has its strong points as well as its sharp ones.

Mohammedanism originated in Arabia about five hundred years after the Christian era and was compounded partly from eastern Christianity but mainly from reformed Judaism. It was an intensely proselyting religion, making its converts more by force of

arms than by force of logic, and it soon overran the whole of western Asia and of Northern Africa and made considerable inroads into Europe by way of Spain and the Byzantine empire. With the exception of Europe the faith still flourishes where it was originally carried.

Islam teaches the one God, and that he rules the world with love and mercy; that he alone is the object of worship and that, since he is the all-wise ruler of the universe, there must be no murmuring at his decrees, and one's life must be put unreservedly into his hands.

Like other religions Mohammedanism has its heavenly host of angels, archangels and saints. Like Christianity and Jainism it teaches a personal and conscious future life, to which every soul may attain by its own individual efforts. It repudiates the idea of vicarious atonement.

Like Christianity and Parseism it teaches the resurrection of the dead and a day of judgment. Some trace of old ancestor worship is seen in the Islamic belief that the spirits of the dead remain near their tombs until the general resurrection, and many Moslems decorate these tombs on all festal occasions and assemble there on holidays in rites of remembrance. As these tombs are scattered over the country in a most indiscriminate way, in one's dooryard, in the middle of a college campus, even in the center of a busy street, such gatherings are apt to be quite noticeable and rather inconvenient, but they are never interfered with.

Concerning the Moslem system of ethics, what was said concerning the ethical code of other religions may be repeated. They took the ethics of their age, just as all other religions did.

The Mohammedans are much more tolerant than they are given credit for being. In India they fraternize with their Hindu neighbors so far as the caste prejudices of the latter allow, and they even recognize Moses, Jesus and Buddha as prophets from the same Universal Father, but they believe, naturally, that Mohammed brought the latest commands. This spirit is well illustrated in a versified translation from the second book of the Koran:

“It matters not whate'er ye name yourselves,—  
Believing Muslims, Jews or Nazarenes,  
Or Sabians,—whoe'er believe in God,  
The last e'erlasting day, and act aright,  
Their meed is with their Lord; no fear nor care  
Shall come upon them, nor the touch of woe.”

There is no caste system among them nor a regular priesthood.

All converts are received into full religious and social fellowship; thus Islam offers large inducements to the depressed castes of the Hindus or to the socially ostracized of other faiths.

Though the Moslems are not as well educated nor as intelligent as the Hindus, they are stronger physically on account of their more natural diet. They are also fairly well united as a religious body, while the Hindus are not, and although they have now been quiet these many years they have not forgotten how to use the sword they wielded so successfully many years ago. Were England to withdraw from India to-day, to-morrow would see a Mohammedan empire there again.

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There is one other faith that demands a place in any list of Indian religions, although its followers only number a hundred thousand, and that is the faith of the Parsees, or, as it is more commonly known outside, Zoroastrianism. This faith took its rise some eight or ten centuries before the Christian era from the preaching of Zoroaster, the Persian reformer. The southern stream of the Aryan migration had carried into Persia the old religion of the Vedas, but a different environment had of course made many changes in it, and a feud between the two streams had caused still larger modifications.

Zoroaster preached an almost pure monotheism. He taught the one eternal, all-powerful God, Ormazd, the creator of the world, and that this God was surrounded by the usual heavenly host of angels and archangels. A peculiar point of this religion was that its followers believed that the universe was the scene of a continual conflict between light and darkness, between good and evil; and as the good principle was personified in Ormazd and the heavenly hosts, so was evil, in its turn by Satan and his host of evil spirits, among whom were all the old gods of the Vedas. This placing of the old Vedic gods among the inimical powers argues a great change in the popular ideas, or as some might say, a great advance from the old nature worship of the Aryans.

This duality of divine control was not permanent. The Parsees believed that the conflict would finally end in the destruction of evil through the cooperation of humanity working in unison with God and keeping his commandments. At the end of the conflict, when humanity had developed to such an ethical state that it could work intelligently and effectively with the divine goodness, would come the general resurrection of the dead and the final day of judg-

ment, after which the good would inherit the earth in a life of eternal bliss.

The ethics of this religion were quite like those of the others before mentioned, and are summarized in their sacred writings as "good thoughts, good words, good deeds." And it may be said of the Parsees of India that they come closer to a realization of their ethical beliefs in their daily lives than any other class of the Indian community.

They hold scrupulously to the utmost cleanliness both of body and of mind. They consider the three ancient elements of fire, earth and water as sacred and not to be polluted, particularly by dead bodies which they consider specially unclean. They therefore dispose of their dead by exposing them, naked, on iron gratings set in the tops of tall stone towers, called Towers of Silence, where the flesh is consumed by vultures, after which the bones drop through into a pit below, to mingle with those of their ancestors, rich and poor alike.

They are not fire worshipers any more than the Christians are worshipers of the cross, but it is quite likely that the old fire worship of their ancestors has filtered down into modern times in the use of fire, the purest thing they know, as a symbol of their God. The sacred fire is always kept burning in their temples and when the priests approach it in the ceremonies their mouths are closely veiled that they may not pollute it by their breath.

Parseeism is probably the cleanest and purest religion of ancient times and has furnished many tenets to most of the later faiths. It was almost exterminated in the Mohammedan conquest of Persia in the eleventh century, but a few of its followers escaped and found refuge in India. They have settled mainly in and about Bombay and Navsari and easily stand at the head of the native populations of those places.

They are a light colored, handsome race, and their women are the most beautiful in all India. They are well educated, women as well as men (an exception among Indian people), and are the cleanest, healthiest, wealthiest, most charitable and most progressive of all the Indian religious communities.

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This concludes the important and distinctive religions of India. They are distinct from each other and from Christianity only on the theological side, the less important; in all their precepts concerning man's dominion over himself and his relations to and deal-

ings with his fellow men they are at one with each other and with every great religion of the world to-day.

The theological side of any religion may be considered as ephemeral, perhaps altogether so. Theologies have changed largely in the past as men have gained knowledge concerning natural laws, and our present knowledge of nature can hardly be considered complete. Many theologies of the present day are rapidly changing as our discoveries are sweeping us onward toward a fuller understanding of God's plan, more of which may be revealed to our children at some distant day; but the great firm and solid edifice of moral law, of man's relationship to man, that has been growing precept upon precept for untold ages, whose architects have been the great men and the sainted teachers of the past and whose builders have been men even as we, this edifice is not changing but only growing. Its stones are not guesses at infinity, replaced in the next generation by other guesses, but truths wrought from the hearts of noble and just men whose sympathies have turned to the pains and the failings of their fellow men and who have sought to remedy them.

And as this temple rises, tier upon tier, we builders of the present may look forward through the mists of future years and behold its completed dome under which all the nations of the earth will unite in their paeans to the one Universal Father whom all men now worship, though under divers names and through varying ceremonies.

## WHAT ENGLAND HAS DONE FOR INDIA.

BY RAM CHANDRA.

THE English first went to India for the purpose of extending their trade. The East India Company was formed for commercial purposes alone and the operations of that Company were the scandal of the civilized world. The proceedings of the trial of Warren Hastings are a sufficient exemplification of this fact. The House of Lords in the end acquitted Warren Hastings, in spite of his crimes, because of his services in extending the dominion of the Empire. Eventually Great Britain assumed possession of India, ostensibly on account of the iniquities of the East India Company. All this was accomplished by stirring up antagonism between different sections of the country, setting one prince against another, one religious sect against another, and in the name of local interests