From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan

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FROM THE CAVES AND JUNGLES OF HINDOSTAN

Translated From The Russian Of
HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY

Translator's Preface

"You must remember," said Mme. Blavatsky, "that I never meant this for a scientific work. My letters to the Russian Messenger, under the general title: 'From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan,' were written in leisure moments, more for amusement than with any serious design.

"Broadly speaking, the facts and incidents are true; but I have freely availed myself of an author's privilege to group, colour, and dramatize them, whenever this seemed necessary to the full artistic effect; though, as I say, much of the book is exactly true, I would rather claim kindly judgment for it, as a romance of travel, than incur the critical risks that haunt an avowedly serious work."

To this caution of the author's, the translator must add another; these letters, as Mme Blavatsky says, were written in leisure moments, during 1879 and 1880, for the pages of the Russki Vyestnik, then edited by M. Katkoff. Mme. Blavatsky's manuscript was often incorrect; often obscure. The Russian compositors, though they did their best to render faithfully the Indian names and places, often produced, through their ignorance of Oriental tongues, forms which are strange, and sometimes unrecognizable. The proof-sheets were never corrected by the author, who was then in India; and, in consequence, it has been impossible to restore all the local and personal names to their proper form.

A similar difficulty has arisen with reference to quotations and cited authorities, all of which have gone through a double process of refraction: first into Russian, then into English. The translator, also a Russian, and far from perfectly acquainted with English, cannot claim to possess the erudition necessary to verify and restore the many quotations to verbal accuracy; all that is hoped is that, by a careful rendering, the correct sense has been preserved.

The translator begs the indulgence of English readers for all imperfections of style and language; in the words of the Sanskrit proverb: "Who is to be blamed, if success be not reached after due effort?"

The translator's best thanks are due to Mr. John C. Staples, for valuable help in the early chapters.

--London, July, 1892

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FROM THE CAVES AND JUNGLES OF HINDOSTAN

By Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

In Bombay

Late in the evening of the sixteenth of February, 1879, after a rough voyage which lasted thirty-two days, joyful exclamations were heard everywhere on deck. "Have you seen the lighthouse?" "There it is at last, the Bombay lighthouse."

Cards, books, music, everything was forgotten. Everyone rushed on deck. The moon had not risen as yet, and, in spite of the starry tropical sky, it was quite dark. The stars were so bright that, at first, it seemed hardly possible to distinguish, far away amongst them, a small fiery point lit by earthly hands. The stars winked at us like so many huge eyes in the black sky, on one side of which shone the Southern Cross. At last we distinguished the lighthouse on the distant horizon. It was nothing but a tiny fiery point diving in the phosphorescent waves. The tired travellers greeted it warmly. The rejoicing was general.

What a glorious daybreak followed this dark night! The sea no longer tossed our ship. Under the skilled guidance of the pilot, who had just arrived, and whose bronze form was so sharply defined against the pale sky, our steamer, breathing heavily with its broken machinery, slipped over the quiet, transparent waters of the Indian Ocean straight to the harbour. We were only four miles from Bombay, and, to us, who had trembled with cold only a few weeks ago in the Bay of Biscay, which has been so glorified by many poets and so heartily cursed by all sailors, our surroundings simply seemed a magical dream.

After the tropical nights of the Red Sea and the scorching hot days that had tortured us since Aden, we, people of the distant North, now experienced something strange and unwonted, as if the very fresh soft air had cast its spell over us. There was not a cloud in the sky, thickly strewn with dying stars. Even the moonlight, which till then had covered the sky with its silvery garb, was

gradually vanishing; and the brighter grew the rosiness of dawn over the small island that lay before us in the East, the paler in the West grew the scattered rays of the moon that sprinkled with bright flakes of light the dark wake our ship left behind her, as if the glory of the West was bidding good-bye to us, while the light of the East welcomed the newcomers from far-off lands. Brighter and bluer grew the sky, swiftly absorbing the remaining pale stars one after the other, and we felt something touching in the sweet dignity with which the Queen of Night resigned her rights to the powerful usurper. At last, descending lower and lower, she disappeared completely.

And suddenly, almost without interval between darkness and light, the red-hot globe, emerging on the opposite side from under the cape, leant his golden chin on the lower rocks of the island and seemed to stop for a while, as if examining us. Then, with one powerful effort, the torch of day rose high over the sea and gloriously proceeded on its path, including in one mighty fiery embrace the blue waters of the bay, the shore and the islands with their rocks and cocoanut forests. His golden rays fell upon a crowd of Parsees, his rightful worshippers, who stood on shore raising their arms towards the mighty "Eye of Ormuzd." The sight was so impressive that everyone on deck became silent for a moment, even a red-nosed old sailor, who was busy quite close to us over the cable, stopped working, and, clearing his throat, nodded at the sun.

Moving slowly and cautiously along the charming but treacherous bay, we had plenty of time to admire the picture around us. On the right was a group of islands with Gharipuri or Elephanta, with its ancient temple, at their head. Gharipuri translated means "the town of caves" according to the Orientalists, and "the town of purification" according to the native Sanskrit scholars. This temple, cut out by an unknown hand in the very heart of a rock resembling porphyry, is a true apple of discord amongst the archaeologists, of whom none can as yet fix, even approximately, its antiquity. Elephanta raises high its rocky brow, all overgrown with secular cactus, and right under it, at the foot of the rock, are hollowed out the chief temple and the two lateral ones. Like the serpent of our Russian fairy tales, it seems to be opening its fierce black mouth to swallow the daring mortal who comes to take possession of the secret mystery of Titan. Its two remaining teeth, dark with time, are formed by two huge pillars t the entrance, sustaining the palate of the monster.

How many generations of Hindus, how many races, have knelt in the dust before the Trimurti, your threefold deity, O Elephanta? How many centuries were spent by weak man in digging out in your stone bosom this town of temples and carving your gigantic idols? Who can say? Many years have elapsed since I saw you last, ancient, mysterious temple, and still the same restless thoughts, the same recurrent questions vex me snow as they did then, and still remain unanswered. In a few days we shall see each other again. Once more I shall gaze upon your stern image, upon your three huge granite faces, and shall feel as hopeless as ever of piercing the mystery of your being. This secret fell into safe hands three centuries before ours. It is not in vain that the old Portuguese historian Don Diego de Cuta boasts that "the big square stone fastened over the arch of the pagoda with a distinct inscription, having been torn out and sent as a present to the King Dom Juan III, disappeared mysteriously

in the course of time....," and adds, further, "Close to this big pagoda there stood another, and farther on even a third one, the most wonderful of all in beauty, incredible size, and richness of material. All those pagodas and caves have been built by the Kings of Kanada, (?) the most important of whom was Bonazur, and these buildings of Satan our (Portuguese) soldiers attacked with such vehemence that in a few years one stone was not left upon another...." And, worst of all, they left no inscriptions that might have given a clue to so much. Thanks to the fanaticism of Portuguese soldiers, the chronology of the Indian cave temples must remain for ever an enigma to the archaeological world, beginning with the Brah-mans, who say Elephanta is 374,000 years old, and ending with Fergusson, who tries to prove that it was carved only in the twelfth century of our era. Whenever one turns one's eyes to history, there is nothing to be found but hypotheses and darkness. And yet Gharipuri is mentioned in the epic Mahabharata, which was written, according to Colebrooke and Wilson, a good while before the reign of Cyrus. In another ancient legend it is said that the temple of Trimurti was built on Elephanta by the sons of Pandu, who took part in the war between the dynasties of the Sun and the Moon, and, belonging to the latter, were expelled at the end of the war. The Rajputs, who are the descendants of the first, still sing of this victory; but even in their popular songs there is nothing positive. Centuries have passed and will pass, and the ancient secret will die in the rocky bosom of the cave still unrecorded.

On the left side of the bay, exactly opposite Elephanta, and as if in contrast with all its antiquity and greatness, spreads the Malabar Hill, the residence of the modern Europeans and rich natives. Their brightly painted bungalows are bathed in the greenery of banyan, Indian fig, and various other trees, and the tall and straight trunks of cocoanut palms cover with the fringe of their leaves the whole ridge of the hilly headland. There, on the south-western end of the rock, you see the almost transparent, lace-like Government House surrounded on three sides by the ocean. This is the coolest and the most comfortable part of Bombay, fanned by three different sea breezes.

The island of Bombay, designated by the natives "Mambai," received its name from the goddess Mamba, in Mahrati Mahima, or Amba, Mama, and Amma, according to the dialect, a word meaning, literally, the Great Mother. Hardly one hundred years ago, on the site of the modern esplanade, there stood a temple consecrated to Mamba-Devi. With great difficulty and expense they carried it nearer to the shore, close to the fort, and erected it in front of Baleshwara the "Lord of the Innocent"--one of the names of the god Shiva. Bombay is part of a considerable group of islands, the most remarkable of which are Salsetta, joined to Bombay by a mole, Elephanta, so named by the Portuguese because of a huge rock cut in the shape of an elephant thirty-five feet long, and Trombay, whose lovely rock rises nine hundred feet above the surface of the sea. Bombay looks, on the maps, like an enormous crayfish, and is at the head of the rest of the islands. Spreading far out into the sea its two claws, Bombay island stands like a sleepless guardian watching over his younger brothers. Between it and the Continent there is a narrow arm of a river, which gets gradually broader and then again narrower, deeply indenting the sides of both shores, and so forming a haven that has no equal in the world. It was not without reason that the Portuguese, expelled in the course of time by the English, used

to call it "Buona Bahia."

In a fit of tourist exaltation some travellers have compared it to the Bay of Naples; but, as a matter of fact, the one is as much like the other as a lazzaroni is like a Kuli. The whole resemblance between the former consists in the fact that there is water in both. In Bombay, as well as in its harbour, everything is original and does not in the least remind one of Southern Europe. Look at those coasting vessels and native boats; both are built in the likeness of the sea bird "sat," a kind of kingfisher. When in motion these boats are the personi-fication of grace, with their long prows and rounded poops. They look as if they were gliding backwards, and one might mistake for wings the strangely shaped, long lateen sails, their narrow angles fastened upwards to a yard. Filling these two wings with the wind, and careening, so as almost to touch the surface of the water, these boats will fly along with astonishing swiftness. Unlike our European boats, they do not cut the waves, but glide over them like a sea-gull.

The surroundings of the bay transported us to some fairy land of the Arabian Nights. The ridge of the Western Ghats, cut through here and there by some separate hills almost as high as themselves, stretched all along the Eastern shore. From the base to their fantastic, rocky tops, they are all overgrown with impenetrable forests and jungles inhabited by wild animals. Every rock has been enriched by the popular imagination with an independent legend. All over the slope of the mountain are scattered the pagodas, mosques, and temples of numberless sects. Here and there the hot rays of the sun strike upon an old fortress, once dreadful and inaccessible, now half ruined and covered with prickly cactus. At every step some memorial of sanctity. Here a deep vihara, a cave cell of a Buddhist bhikshu saint, there a rock protected by the symbol of Shiva, further on a Jaina temple, or a holy tank, all covered with sedge and filled with water, once blessed by a Brahman and able to purify every sin, all indispensable attribute of all pagodas. All the surroundings are covered with symbols of gods and goddesses. Each of the three hundred and thirty millions of deities of the Hindu Pantheon has its representative in something consecrated to it, a stone, a flower, a tree, or a bird. On the West side of the Malabar Hill peeps through the trees Valakeshvara, the temple of the "Lord of Sand." A long stream of Hindus moves towards this celebrated temple; men and women, shining with rings on their fingers and toes, with bracelets from their wrists up to their elbows, clad in bright turbans and snow white muslins, with foreheads freshly painted with red, yellow, and white, holy sectarian signs.

The legend says that Rama spent here a night on his way from Ayodhya (Oudh) to Lanka (Ceylon) to fetch his wife Sita who had been stolen by the wicked King Ravana. Rama's brother Lakshman, whose duty it was to send him daily a new lingam from Benares, was late in doing so one evening. Losing patience, Rama erected for himself a lingam of sand. When, at last, the symbol arrived from Benares, it was put in a temple, and the lingam erected by Rama was left on the shore. There it stayed during long centuries, but, at the arrival of the Portuguese, the "Lord of Sand" felt so disgusted with the feringhi (foreigners) that he jumped into the sea never to return. A little farther on there is a charming tank, called Vanattirtha, or the "point of the arrow." Here Rama, the much

worshipped hero of the Hindus, felt thirsty and, not finding any water, shot an arrow and immediately there was created a pond. Its crystal waters were surrounded by a high wall, steps were built leading down to it, and a circle of white marble dwellings was filled with dwija (twice born) Brahmans.

India is the land of legends and of mysterious nooks and corners. There is not a ruin, not a monument, not a thicket, that has no story attached to it. Yet, however they may be entangled in the cobweb of popular imagination, which becomes thicker with every generation, it is difficult to point out a single one that is not founded on fact. With patience and, still more, with the help of the learned Brahmans you can always get at the truth, when once you have secured their trust and friendship.

The same road leads to the temple of the Parsee fire-worshippers. At its altar burns an unquenchable fire, which daily consumes hundredweights of sandal wood and aromatic herbs. Lit three hundred years ago, the sacred fire has never been extinguished, notwithstanding many disorders, sectarian discords, and even wars. The Parsees are very proud of this temple of Zaratushta, as they call Zoroaster. Compared with it the Hindu pagodas look like brightly painted Easter eggs. Generally they are consecrated to Hanuman, the monkey-god and the faithful ally of Rama, or to the

elephant headed Ganesha, the god of the occult wisdom, or to one of the Devis. You meet with these temples in every street. Before each there is a row of pipals (Ficus religiosa) centuries old, which no temple can dispense with, because these trees are the abode of the elementals and the sinful souls.

All this is entangled, mixed, and scattered, appearing to one's eyes like a picture in a dream. Thirty centuries have left their traces here. The innate laziness and the strong conservative tendencies of the Hindus, even before the European invasion, preserved all kinds of monuments from the ruinous vengeance of the fanatics, whether those memorials were Buddhist, or belonged to some other unpopular sect. The Hindus are not naturally given to senseless vandalism, and a phrenologist would vainly look for a bump of destructiveness on their skulls. If you meet with antiquities that, having been spared by time, are, nowadays, either destroyed or disfigured, it is not they who are to blame, but either Mussulmans, or the Portuguese under the guidance of the Jesuits.

At last we were anchored and, in a moment, were besieged, ourselves as well as our luggage, by numbers of naked skeleton-like Hindus, Parsees, Moguls, and various other tribes. All this crowd emerged, as if from the bottom of the sea, and began to shout, to chatter, and to yell, as only the tribes of Asia can. To get rid of this Babel confusion of tongues as soon as possible, we took refuge in the first bunder boat and made for the shore.

Once settled in the bungalow awaiting us, the first thing we were struck with in Bombay was the millions of crows and vultures. The first are, so to speak, the County Council of the town, whose duty it is to clean the streets, and to kill one of them is not only forbidden by the police, but would be very dangerous. By killing one you would rouse the vengeance of every Hindu, who is always ready to offer his own life in exchange for a crow's. The souls

of the sinful forefathers transmigrate into crows and to kill one is to interfere with the law of Karma and to expose the poor ancestor to something still worse. Such is the firm belief, not only of Hindus, but of Parsees, even the most enlightened amongst them. The strange behaviour of the Indian crows explains, to a certain extent, this superstition. The vultures are, in a way, the grave-diggers of the Parsees and are under the personal protection of the Farvardania, the angel of death, who soars over the Tower of Silence, watching the occupations of the feathered workmen.

The deafening caw of the crows strikes every new comer as uncanny, but, after a while, is explained very simply. Every tree of the numerous cocoa-nut forests round Bombay is provided with a hollow pumpkin. The sap of the tree drops into it and, after fermenting, becomes a most intoxicating beverage, known in Bombay under the name of toddy. The naked toddy wallahs, generally half-caste Portuguese, modestly adorned with a single coral necklace, fetch this beverage twice a day, climbing the hundred and fifty feet high trunks like squirrels. The crows mostly build their nests on the tops of the cocoa-nut palms and drink incessantly out of the open pumpkins. The result of this is the chronic intoxication of the birds. As soon as we went out in the garden of our new habitation, flocks of crows came down heavily from every tree. The noise they make whilst jumping about everywhere is indescribable. There seemed to be something positively human in the positions of the slyly bent heads of the drunken birds, and a fiendish light shone in their eyes while they were examining us from foot to head.

We occupied three small bungalows, lost, like nests, in the garden, their roofs literally smothered in roses blossoming on bushes twenty feet high, and their windows covered only with muslin, instead of the usual panes of glass. The bungalows were situated in the native part of the town, so that we were transported, all at once, into the real India. We were living in India, unlike English people, who are only surrounded by India at a certain distance. We were enabled to study her character and customs, her religion, superstitions and rites, to learn her legends, in fact, to live among Hindus.

Everything in India, this land of the elephant and the poisonous cobra, of the tiger and the unsuccessful English missionary, is original and strange. Everything seems unusual, unexpected, and striking, even to one who has travelled in Turkey, Egypt, Damascus, and Palestine. In these tropical regions the conditions of nature are so various that all the forms of the animal and vegetable kingdoms must radically differ from what we are used to in Europe. Look, for instance, at those women on their way to a well through a garden, which is private and at the same time open to anyone, because somebody's cows are grazing in it. To whom does it not happen to meet with women, to see cows, and admire a garden? Doubtless these are among the commonest of all things. But a single attentive glance will suffice to show you the difference that exists between the same objects in Europe and in India. Nowhere more than in India does a human being feel his weakness and insignificance. The majesty of the tropical growth is such that our highest trees would look dwarfed compared with banyans and especially with palms. A European cow, mistaking, at first sight,

her Indian sister for a calf, would deny the existence of any kinship between them, as neither the mouse-coloured wool, nor the straight goat-like horns, nor the humped back of the latter would permit her to make such an error. As to the women, each of them would make any artist feel enthusiastic about the gracefulness of her movements and drapery, but still, no pink and white, stout Anna Ivanovna would condescend to greet her. "Such a shame, God forgive me, the woman is entirely naked!"

This opinion of the modern Russian woman is nothing but the echo of what was said in 1470 by a distinguished Russian traveler, "the sinful slave of God, Athanasius son of Nikita from Tver," as he styles himself. He describes India as follows: "This is the land of India. Its people are naked, never cover their heads, and wear their hair braided. Women have babies every year. Men and women are black. Their prince wears a veil round his head and wraps another veil round his legs. The noblemen wear a veil on one shoulder, and the noblewomen on the shoulders and round the loins, but everyone is barefooted. The women walk about with their hair spread and their breasts naked. The children, boys and girls, never cover their shame until they are seven years old. . . ."
This description is quite correct, but Athanasius Nikita's son is right only concerning the lowest and poorest classes. These really do "walk about" covered only with a veil, which often is so poor that, in fact, it is nothing but a rag. But still, even the poorest woman is clad in a piece of muslin at least ten yards long. One end serves as a sort of short petticoat, and the other covers the head and shoulders when out in the street, though the faces are always uncovered. The hair is erected into a kind of Greek chignon. The legs up to the knees, the arms, and the waist are never covered. There is not a single respectable woman who would consent to put on a pair of shoes. Shoes are the attribute and the prerogative of disreputable women. When, some time ago, the wife of the Madras governor thought of passing a law that should induce native women to cover their breasts, the place was actually threatened with a revolution. A kind of jacket is worn only by dancing girls. The Government recognized that it would be unreasonable to irritate women, who, very often, are more dangerous than their husbands and brothers, and the custom, based on the law of Manu, and sanctified by three thousand years' observance, remained unchanged.

For more than two years before we left America we were in constant correspondence with a certain learned Brahman, whose glory is great at present (1879) all over India. We came to India to study, under his guidance, the ancient country of Aryas, the Vedas, and their difficult language. His name is Dayanand Saraswati Swami. Swami is the name of the learned anchorites who are initiated into many mysteries unattainable by common mortals. They are monks who never marry, but are quite different from other mendicant brotherhoods, the so-called Sannyasi and Hossein. This Pandit is considered the greatest Sanskritist of modern India and is an absolute enigma to everyone. It is only five years since he appeared on the arena of great reforms, but till then, he lived, entirely secluded, in a jungle, like the ancient gymnosophists mentioned by the Greek and Latin authors. At this time he was studying the chief philosophical systems of the "Aryavartta" and the occult meaning of the Vedas with the help of mystics and anchorites. All Hindus

believe that on the Bhadrinath Mountains (22,000 feet above the level of the sea) there exist spacious caves, inhabited, now for many thousand years, by these anchorites. Bhadrinath is situated in the north of Hindustan on the river Bishegunj, and is celebrated for its temple of Vishnu right in the heart of the town. Inside the temple there are hot mineral springs, visited yearly by about fifty thousand pilgrims, who come to be purified by them.

From the first day of his appearance Dayanand Saraswati produced an immense impression and got the surname of the "Luther of India." Wandering from one town to another, today in the South, tomorrow in the North, and transporting himself from one end of the country to another with incredible quickness, he has visited every part of India, from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, and from Calcutta to Bombay. He preaches the One Deity and, "Vedas in hand," proves that in the ancient writings there was not a word that could justify polytheism. Thundering against idol worship, the great orator fights with all his might against caste, infant marriages, and superstitions. Chastising all the evils grafted on India by centuries of casuistry and false interpretation of the Vedas, he blames for them the Brahmans, who, as he openly says before masses of people, are alone guilty of the humiliation of their country, once great and independent, now fallen and enslaved. And yet Great Britain has in him not an enemy, but rather an ally. He says openly--"If you expel the English, then, no later than tomorrow, you and I and everyone who rises against idol worship will have our throats cut like mere sheep. The Mussulmans are stronger than the idol worshippers; but these last are stronger than we." The Pandit held many a warm dispute with the Brah-mans, those treacherous enemies of the people, and has almost always been victorious. In Benares secret assassins were hired to slay him, but the attempt did not succeed. In a small town of Bengal, where he treated fetishism with more than his usual severity, some fanatic threw on his naked feet a huge cobra. There are two snakes deified by the Brahman mythology: the one which surrounds the neck of Shiva on his idols is called Vasuki; the other, Ananta, forms the couch of Vishnu. So the worshipper of Shiva, feeling sure that his cobra, trained purposely for the mysteries of a Shivaite pagoda, would at once make an end of the offender's life, triumphantly exclaimed, "Let the god Vasuki himself show which of us is right!"

Dayanand jerked off the cobra twirling round his leg, and with a single vigorous movement, crushed the reptile's head. "Let him do so," he quietly assented. "Your god has been too slow. It is I who have decided the dispute, Now go," added he, addressing the crowd, "and tell everyone how easily perish the false gods."

Thanks to his excellent knowledge of Sanskrit the Pandit does a great service, not only to the masses, clearing their ignorance about the monotheism of the Vedas, but to science too, showing who, exactly, are the Brahmans, the only caste in India which, during centuries, had the right to study Sanskrit literature and comment on the Vedas, and which used this right solely for its own advantage.

Long before the time of such Orientalists as Burnouf, Colebrooke and Max Muller, there have been in India many reformers who tried to prove the pure monotheism of the Vedic doctrines. There have even been founders of new religions who denied the revelations

of these scriptures; for instance, the Raja Ram Mohun Roy, and, after him, Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, both Calcutta Bengalees. But neither of them had much success. They did nothing but add new denominations to the numberless sects existing in India. Ram Mohun Roy died in England, having done next to nothing, and Keshub Chunder Sen, having founded the community of "Brahmo-Samaj," which professes a religion extracted from the depths of the Babu's own imagination, became a mystic of the most pronounced type, and now is only "a berry from the same field," as we say in Russia, as the Spiritualists, by whom he is considered to be a medium and a Calcutta Swedenborg. He spends his time in a dirty tank, singing praises to Chaitanya, Koran, Buddha, and his own person, proclaiming himself their prophet, and performs a mystical dance, dressed in woman's attire, which, on his part, is an attention to a "woman goddess" whom the Babu calls his "mother, father and eldest brother."

In short, all the attempts to re-establish the pure primitive monotheism of Aryan India have been a failure. They always got wrecked upon the double rock of Brahmanism and of prejudices centuries old. But lo! here appears unexpectedly the pandit Dayanand. None, even of the most beloved of his disciples, knows who he is and whence he comes. He openly confesses before the crowds that the name under which he is known is not his, but was given to him at the Yogi initiation.

The mystical school of Yogis was established by Patanjali, the founder of one of the six philosophical systems of ancient India. It is supposed that the Neo-platonists of the second and third Alexandrian Schools were the followers of Indian Yogis, more especially was their theurgy brought from India by Pythagoras, according to the tradition. There still exist in India hundreds of Yogis who follow the system of Patanjali, and assert that they are in communion with Brahma. Nevertheless, most of them are do-nothings, mendicants by profession, and great frauds, thanks to the insatiable longing of the natives for miracles. The real Yogis avoid appearing in public, and spend their lives in secluded retirement and studies, except when, as in Dayanand's case, they come forth in time of need to aid their country. However, it is perfectly certain that India never saw a more learned Sanskrit scholar, a deeper metaphysician, a more wonderful orator, and a more fearless denunciator of every evil, than Dayanand, since the time of Sankharacharya, the celebrated founder of the Vedanta philosophy, the most metaphysical of Indian systems, in fact, the crown of pantheistic teaching. Then, Dayanand's personal appearance is striking. He is immensely tall, his complexion is pale, rather European than Indian, his eyes are large and bright, and his greyish hair is long. The Yogis and Dikshatas (initiated) never cut either their hair or beard. His voice is clear and loud, well calculated to give expression to every shade of deep feeling, ranging from a sweet childish caressing whisper to thundering wrath against the evil doings and falsehoods of the priests. All this taken together produces an indescribable effect on the impressionable Hindu. Wherever Dayanand appears crowds prostrate themselves in the dust over his footprints; but, unlike Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, he does not teach a new religion, does not invent new dogmas. He only asks them to renew their half-forgotten Sanskrit studies, and, having compared the doctrines of their forefathers with what they have become in the hands of Brahmans, to return to the pure conceptions of Deity taught by the primitive

Rishis--Agni, Vayu, Aditya, and Anghira--the patriarchs who first gave the Vedas to humanity. He does not even claim that the Vedas are a heavenly revelation, but simply teaches that "every word in these scriptures belongs to the highest inspiration possible to the earthly man, an inspiration that is repeated in the history of humanity, and, when necessary, may happen to any nation....."

During his five years of work Swami Dayanand made about two million proselytes, chiefly amongst the higher castes. Judging by appearances, they are all ready to sacrifice to him their lives and souls and even their earthly possessions, which are often more precious to them than their lives. But Dayanand is a real Yogi, he never touches money, and despises pecuniary affairs. He contents himself with a few handfuls of rice per day. One is inclined to think that this wonderful Hindu bears a charmed life, so careless is he of rousing the worst human passions, which are so dangerous in India. A marble statue could not be less moved by the raging wrath of the crowd. We saw him once at work. He sent away all his faithful followers and forbade them either to watch over him or to defend him, and stood alone before the infuriated crowd, facing calmly the monster ready to spring upon him and tear him to pieces.

Here a short explanation is necessary. A few years ago a society of well-informed, energetic people was formed in New York. A certain sharp-witted savant surnamed them "La Societe des Malcontents du Spiritisme." The founders of this club were people who, believing in the phenomena of spiritualism as much as in the possibility of every other phenomenon in Nature, still denied the theory of the "spirits." They considered that the modern psychology was a science still in the first stages of its development, in total ignorance of the nature of the psychic man, and denying, as do many other sciences, all that cannot be explained according to its own particular theories.

From the first days of its existence some of the most learned Americans joined the Society, which became known as the Theosophical Society. Its members differed on many points, much as do the members of any other Society, Geographical or Archeological, which fights for years over the sources of the Nile, or the Hieroglyphs of Egypt. But everyone is unanimously agreed that, as long as there is water in the Nile, its sources must exist somewhere. So much about the phenomena of spiritualism and mesmerism. These phenomena were still waiting their Champollion--but the Rosetta stone was to be searched for neither in Europe nor in America, but in the far-away countries where they still believe in magic, where wonders are performed daily by the native priesthood, and where the cold materialism of science has never yet reached--in one word, in the East.

The Council of the Society knew that the Lama-Buddhists, for instance, though not believing in God, and denying the personal immortality of the soul, are yet celebrated for their "phenomena," and that mesmerism was known and daily practised in China from time immemorial under the name of "gina." In India they fear and hate the very name of the spirits whom the Spiritualists venerate so deeply, yet many an ignorant fakir can perform "miracles" calculated to turn upside-down all the notions of a scientist and to be the despair

of the most celebrated of European prestidigitateurs. Many members of the Society have visited India--many were born there and have themselves witnessed the "sorceries" of the Brahmans. The founders of the Club, well aware of the depth of modern ignorance in regard to the spiritual man, were most anxious that Cuvier's method of comparative anatomy should acquire rights of citizenship among metaphysicians, and, so, progress from regions physical to regions psychological on its own inductive and deductive foundation. "Otherwise," they thought, "psychology will be unable to move forward a single step, and may even obstruct every other branch of Natural History." Instances have not been wanting of physiology poaching on the preserves of purely metaphysical and abstract knowledge, all the time feigning to ignore the latter absolutely, and seeking to class psychology with the positive sciences, having first bound it to a Bed of Procrustes, where it refuses to yield its secret to its clumsy tormentors.

In a short time the Theosophical Society counted its members, not by hundreds, but by thousands. All the "malcontents" of American Spiritualism--and there were at that time twelve million Spiritualists in America--joined the Society. Collateral branches were formed in London, Corfu, Australia, Spain, Cuba, California, etc. Everywhere experiments were being performed, and the conviction that it is not spirits alone who are the causes of the phenomena was becoming general.

In course of time branches of the Society were in India and in Ceylon. The Buddhist and Brahmanical members became more numerous than the Europeans. A league was formed, and to the name of the Society was added the subtitle, "The Brotherhood of Humanity." After an active correspondence between the Arya-Samaj, founded by Swami Dayanand, and the Theosophical Society, an amalgamation was arranged between the two bodies. Then the Chief Council of the New York branch decided upon sending a special delegation to India, for the purpose of studying, on the spot, the ancient language of the Vedas and the manuscripts and the wonders of Yogism. On the 17th of December, 1878, the delegation, composed of two secretaries and two members of the council of the Theosophical Society, started from New York, to pause for a while in London, and then to proceed to Bombay, where it landed in February, 1879.

It may easily be conceived that, under these circumstances, the members of the delegation were better able to study the country and to make fruitful researches than might, otherwise, have been the case. Today they are looked upon as brothers and aided by the most influential natives of India. They count among the members of their society pandits of Benares and Calcutta, and Buddhist priests of the Ceylon Viharas--amongst others the learned Sumangala, mentioned by Minayeff in the description of his visit to Adam's Peak--and Lamas of Thibet, Burmah, Travancore and elsewhere. The members of the delegation are admitted to sanctuaries where, as yet, no European has set his foot. Consequently they may hope to render many services to Humanity and Science, in spite of the illwill which the representatives of positive science bear to them.

As soon as the delegation landed, a telegram was despatched to Dayanand, as everyone was anxious to make his personal acquaintance. In reply, he said that he was obliged to go immediately to Hardwar, where hundreds of thousands of pilgrims were expected to assemble,

but he insisted on our remaining behind, since cholera was certain to break out among the devotees. He appointed a certain spot, at the foot of the Himalayas, in the jab, where we were to meet in a month's time.

Alas! all this was written some time ago. Since then Swami Dayanand's countenance has changed completely toward us. He is, now, an enemy of the Theosophical Society and its two founders--Colonel Olcott and the author of these letters. It appeared that, on entering into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Society, Dayanand nourished the hope that all its members, Christians, Brahmans and Buddhists, would acknowledge His supremacy, and become members of the Arya Samaj.

Needless to say, this was impossible. The Theosophical Society rests on the principle of complete non-interference with the religious beliefs of its members. Toleration is its basis and its aims are purely philosophical. This did not suit Dayanand. He wanted all the members, either to become his disciples, or to be expelled from the Society. It was quite clear that neither the President, nor the Council could assent to such a claim. Englishmen and Americans, whether they were Christians or Freethinkers, Buddhists, and especially Brahmans, revolted against Dayanand, and unanimously demanded that the league should be broken.

However, all this happened later. At the time of which I speak we were friends and allies of the Swami, and we learned with deep interest that the Hardwar "mela," which he was to visit, takes place every twelve years, and is a kind of religious fair, which attracts representatives from all the numerous sects of India.

Learned dissertations are read by the disputants in defence of their peculiar doctrines, and the debates are held in public. This year the Hardwar gathering was exceptionally numerous. The Sannyasis--the mendicant monks of India--alone numbered 35,000 and the cholera, foreseen by the Swami, actually broke out.

As we were not yet to start for the appointed meeting, we had plenty of spare time before us; so we proceeded to examine Bombay.

The Tower of Silence, on the heights of the Malabar Hill, is the last abode of all the sons of Zoroaster. It is, in fact, a Parsee cemetery. Here their dead, rich and poor, men, women and children, are all laid in a row, and in a few minutes nothing remains of them but bare skeletons. A dismal impression is made upon a foreigner by these towers, where absolute silence has reigned for centuries. This kind of building is very common in every place were Parsees live and die. In Bombay, of six towers, the largest was built 250 years ago, and the least but a short time since. With few exceptions, they are round or square in shape, from twenty to forty feet high, without roof, window, or door, but with a single iron gate opening towards the East, and so small that it is quite covered by a few bushes. The first corpse brought to a new tower--"dakhma"--must be the body of the innocent child of a mobed or priest. No one, not even the chief watcher, is allowed to approach within a distance of thirty paces of these towers. Of all living human beings "nassesalars"--corpse-carriers--

alone enter and leave the "Tower of Silence." The life these men lead is simply wretched. No European executioner's position is worse. They live quite apart from the rest of the world, in whose eyes they are the most abject of beings. Being forbidden to enter the markets, they must get their food as they can. They are born, marry, and die, perfect strangers to all except their own class, passing through the streets only to fetch the dead and carry them to the tower. Even to be near one of them is a degradation. Entering the tower with a corpse, covered, whatever may have been its rank or position, with old white rags, they undress it and place it, in silence, on one of the three rows presently to be described. Then, still preserving the same silence, they come out, shut the gate, and burn the rags.

Amongst the fire-worshippers, Death is divested of all his majesty and is a mere object of disgust. As soon as the last hour of a sick person seems to approach, everyone leaves the chamber of death, as much to avoid impeding the departure of the soul from the body, as to shun the risk of polluting the living by contact with the dead. The mobed alone stays with the dying man for a while, and having whispered into his ear the Zend-Avesta precepts, "ashem-vohu" and "Yato-Ahuvarie," leaves the room while the patient is still alive. Then a dog is brought and made to look straight into his face. This ceremony is called "sas-did," the "dog's-stare." A dog is the only living creature that the "Drux-nassu"--the evil one--fears, and that is able to prevent him from taking possession of the body. It must be strictly observed that no one's shadow lies between the dying man and the dog, otherwise the whole strength of the dog's gaze will be lost, and the demon will profit by the occasion. The body remains on the spot where life left it, until the nassesalars appear, their arms hidden to the shoulders under old bags, to take it away. Having deposited it in an iron coffin--the same for everyone--they carry it to the dakhma. If any one, who has once been carried thither, should happen to regain consciousness, the nassesalars are bound to kill him; for such a person, who has been polluted by one touch of the dead bodies in the dakhma, has thereby lost all right to return to the living, by doing so he would contaminate the whole community. As some such cases have occurred, the Parsees are trying to get a new law passed, that would allow the miserable ex-corpses to live again amongst their friends, and that would compel the nassesalars to leave the only gate of the dakhma unlocked, so that they might find a way of retreat open to them. It is very curious, but it is said that the vultures, which devour without hesitation the corpses, will never touch those who are only apparently dead, but fly away uttering loud shrieks. After a last prayer at the gate of the dakhma, pronounced from afar by the mobed, and re-peated in chorus by the nassesalars, the dog ceremony is repeated. In Bombay there is a dog, trained for this purpose, at the entrance to the tower. Finally, the body is taken inside and placed on one or other of the rows, according to its sex and age.

We have twice been present at the ceremonies of dying, and once of burial, if I may be permitted to use such an incongruous term. In this respect the Parsees are much more tolerant than the Hindus, who are offended by the mere presence at their religious rites of an European. N. Bayranji, a chief official of the tower, invited us to his house to be present at the burial of some rich woman. So we witnessed all that was going on at a distance of about forty

paces, sitting quietly on our obliging host's verandah. While the dog was staring into the dead woman's face, we were gazing, as intently, but with much more disgust, at the huge flock of vultures above the dakhma, that kept entering the tower, and flying out again with pieces of human flesh in their beaks. These birds, that build their nests in thousands round the Tower of Silence, have been purposely imported from Persia. Indian vultures proved to be too weak, and not sufficiently bloodthirsty, to perform the process of stripping the bones with the despatch prescribed by Zoroaster. We were told that the entire operation of denuding the bones occupies no more than a few minutes. As soon as the ceremony was over, we were led into another building, where a model of the dakhma was to be seen. We could now very easily imagine what was to take place presently inside the tower. In the centre there is a deep waterless well, covered with a grating like the opening into a drain. Around it are three broad circles, gradually sloping downwards. In each of them are coffin-like receptacles for the bodies. There are three hundred and sixty-five such places. The first and smallest row is destined for children, the second for women, and the third for men. This threefold circle is symbolical of three cardinal Zoroastrian virtues--pure thoughts, kind words, and good actions. Thanks to the vultures, the bones are laid bare in less than an hour, and, in two or three weeks, the tropical sun scorches them into such a state of fragility, that the slightest breath of wind is enough to reduce them to powder and to carry them down into the pit. No smell is left behind, no source of plagues and epidemics. I do not know that this way may not be preferable to cremation, which leaves in the air about the Ghat a faint but disagreeable odour. The Ghat is a place by the sea, or river shore, where Hindus burn their dead. Instead of feeding the old Slavonic deity "Mother Wet Earth" with carrion, Parsees give to Armasti pure dust. Armasti means, literally, "fostering cow," and Zoroaster teaches that the cultivation of land is the noblest of all occupations in the eyes of God. Accordingly, the worship of Earth is so sacred among the Parsees, that they take all possible precautions against polluting the "fostering cow" that gives them "a hundred golden grains for every single grain." In the season of the Monsoon, when, during four months, the rain pours incessantly down and washes into the well everything that is left by the vultures, the water absorbed by the earth is filtered, for the bottom of the well, the walls of which are built of granite, is, to this end, covered with sand and charcoal.

The sight of the Pinjarapala is less lugubrious and much more amusing. The Pinjarapala is the Bombay Hospital for decrepit animals, but a similar institution exists in every town where Jainas dwell. Being one of the most ancient, this is also one of the most interesting, of the sects of India. It is much older than Buddhism, which took its rise about 543 to 477 B.C. Jainas boast that Buddhism is nothing more than a mere heresy of Jainism, Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, having been a disciple and follower of one of the Jaina Gurus. The customs, rites, and philosophical conceptions of Jainas place them midway between the Brahmanists and the Buddhists. In view of their social arrangements, they more closely resemble the former, but in their religion they incline towards the latter. Their caste divisions, their total abstinence from flesh, and their non-worship of the relics of the saints, are as strictly observed as the similar tenets of the Brahmans, but, like Buddhists, they deny the Hindu gods and the authority of the Vedas, and adore their

own twenty-four Tirthankaras, or Jinas, who belong to the Host of the Blissful. Their priests, like the Buddhists', never marry, they live in isolated viharas and choose their successors from amongst the members of any social class. According to them, Prakrit is the only sacred language, and is used in their sacred literature, as well as in Ceylon. Jainas and Buddhists have the same traditional chronology. They do not eat after sunset, and carefully dust any place before sitting down upon it, that they may not crush even the tiniest of insects. Both systems, or rather both schools of philosophy, teach the theory of eternal indestructible atoms, following the ancient atomistic school of Kanada. They assert that the universe never had a beginning and never will have an end. "The world and everything in it is but an illusion, a Maya," say the Vedantists, the Buddhists, and the Jainas; but, whereas the followers of Sankaracharya preach Parabrahm (a deity devoid of will, understanding, and action, because "It is absolute understanding, mind and will"), and Ishwara emanating from It, the Jainas and the Buddhists believe in no Creator of the Universe, but teach only the existence of Swabhawati, a plastic, infinite, self-created principle in Nature. Still they firmly believe, as do all Indian sects, in the transmigration of souls. Their fear, lest, by killing an animal or an insect, they may, perchance, destroy the life of an ancestor, develops their love and care for every living creature to an almost incredible extent. Not only is there a hospital for invalid animals in every town and village, but their priests always wear a muslin muzzle, (I trust they will pardon the disrespectful expression!) in order to avoid destroying even the smallest animalcule, by inadvertence in the act of breathing. The same fear impels them to drink only filtered water. There are a few millions of Jainas in Gujerat, Bombay, Konkan, and some other places.

The Bombay Pinjarapala occupies a whole quarter of the town, and is separated into yards, meadows and gardens, with ponds, cages for beasts of prey, and enclosures for tame animals. This institution would have served very well for a model of Noah's Ark. In the first yard, however, we saw no animals, but, instead, a few hundred human skeletons--old men, women and children. They were the remaining natives of the, so-called, famine districts, who had crowded into Bombay to beg their bread. Thus, while, a few yards off, the official "Vets." were busily bandaging the broken legs of jackals, pouring ointments on the backs of mangy dogs, and fitting crutches to lame storks, human beings were dying, at their very elbows, of starvation. Happily for the famine-stricken, there were at that time fewer hungry animals than usual, and so they were fed on what remained from the meals of the brute pensioners. No doubt many of these wretched sufferers would have consented to transmigrate instantly into the bodies of any of the animals who were ending so snugly their earthly careers.

But even the Pinjarajala roses are not without thorns. The graminivorous "subjects," of course, could mot wish for anything better; but I doubt very much whether the beasts of prey, such as tigers, hyenas, and wolves, are content with the rules and the forcibly prescribed diet. Jainas themselves turn with disgust even from eggs and fish, and, in consequence, all the animals of which they have the care must turn vegetarians. We were present when an old tiger, wounded by an English bullet, was fed. Having sniffed at a kind of rice soup which was offered to him, he lashed his tail, snarled, showing his yellow teeth, and with a weak roar

turned away from the food. What a look he cast askance upon his keeper, who was meekly trying to persuade him to taste his nice dinner! Only the strong bars of the cage saved the Jaina from a vigorous protest on the part of this veteran of the forest. A hyena, with a bleeding head and an ear half torn off, began by sitting in the trough filled with this Spartan sauce, and then, without any further ceremony, upset it, as if to show its utter contempt for the mess. The wolves and the dogs raised such disconsolate howls that they attracted the attention of two inseparable friends, an old elephant with a wooden leg and a sore-eyed ox, the veritable Castor and Pollux of this institu-tion. In accordance with his noble nature, the first thought of the elephant concerned his friend. He wound his trunk round the neck of the ox, in token of protection, and both moaned dismally. Parrots, storks, pigeons, flamingoes--the whole feathered tribe--revelled in their breakfast. Monkeys were the first to answer the keeper's invitation and greatly enjoyed themselves. Further on we were shown a holy man, who was feeding insects with his own blood. He lay with his eyes shut, and the scorching rays of the sun striking full upon his naked body. He was literally covered with flies, mosquitoes, ants and bugs.

"All these are our brothers," mildly observed the keeper, pointing to the hundreds of animals and insects. "How can you Europeans kill and even devour them?"

"What would you do," I asked, "if this snake were about to bite you? Is it possible you would not kill it, if you had time?"

"Not for all the world. I should cautiously catch it, and then I should carry it to some deserted place outside the town, and there set it free."

"Nevertheless; suppose it bit you?"

"Then I should recite a mantram, and, if that produced no good result, I should be fair to consider it as the finger of Fate, and quietly leave this body for another."

These were the words of a man who was educated to a certain extent, and very well read. When we pointed out that no gift of Nature is aimless, and that the human teeth are all devouring, he answered by quoting whole chapters of Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection and Origin of Species. "It is not true," argued he, "that the first men were born with canine teeth. It was only in course of time, with the degradation of humanity,--only when the appetite for flesh food began to develop--that the jaws changed their first shape under the influence of new necessities."

I could not help asking myself, "Ou la science va-t'elle se fourrer?"

The same evening, in Elphinstone's Theatre, there was given a special performance in honour of "the American Mission," as we are styled here. Native actors represented in Gujerati the ancient fairy drama Sita-Rama, that has been adapted from the Ramayana, the celebrated epic by Vilmiki. This drama is composed of fourteen acts and no end of tableaux, in addition to transformation

scenes. All the female parts, as usual, were acted by young boys, and the actors, accord-ing to the historical and national customs, were bare-footed and half-naked. Still, the richness of the costumes, the stage adornments and transformations, were truly wonderful. For instance, even on the stages of large metropolitan theatres, it would have been difficult to give a better representation of the army of Rama's allies, who are nothing more than troops of monkeys under the leadership of Hanuman--the soldier, statesman, dramatist, poet, god, who is so celebrated in history (that of India s.v.p.). The oldest and best of all Sanskrit dramas, Hanuman-Natak, is ascribed to this talented forefather of ours.

Alas! gone is the glorious time when, proud of our white skin (which after all may be nothing more than the result of a fading, under the influences of our northern sky), we looked down upon Hindus and other "niggers" with a feeling of contempt well suited to our own magnificence. No doubt Sir William Jones's soft heart ached, when translating from the Sanskrit such humiliating sentences as the following: "Hanuman is said to be the forefather of the Europeans." Rama, being a hero and a demi-god, was well entitled to unite all the bachelors of his useful monkey army to the daughters of the Lanka (Ceylon) giants, the Rakshasas, and to present these Dravidian beauties with the dowry of all Western lands. After the most pompous marriage ceremonies, the monkey soldiers made a bridge, with the help of their own tails, and safely landed with their spouses in Europe, where they lived very happily and had a numerous progeny. This progeny are we, Europeans. Dravidian words found in some European languages, in Basque for instance, greatly rejoice the hearts of the Brahmans, who would gladly promote the philologists to the rank of demi-gods for this important discovery, which confirms so gloriously their ancient legend. But it was Darwin who crowned the edifice of proof with the authority of Western education and Western scientific literature. The Indians became still more convinced that we are the veritable descendants of Hanuman, and that, if one only took the trouble to examine carefully, our tails might easily be discovered. Our narrow breeches and long skirts only add to the evidence, however uncomplimentary the idea may be to us.

Still, if you consider seriously, what are we to say when Science, in the person of Darwin, concedes this hypothesis to the wisdom of ancient Aryas. We must perforce submit. And, really, it is better to have for a forefather Hanu-man, the poet, the hero, the god, than any other monkey, even though it be a tailless one. Sita-Rama belongs to the category of mythological dramas, something like the tragedies of Aeschylus. Listening to this production of the remotest antiquity, the spectators are carried back to the times when the gods, descending upon earth, took an active part in the everyday life of mortals. Nothing reminds one of a modern drama, though the exterior arrangement is the same. "From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a step," and vice versa. The goat, chosen for a sacrifice to Bacchus, presented the world tragedy (greek script here). The death bleatings and buttings of the quadrupedal offering of antiquity have been polished by the hands of time and of civilization, and, as a result of this process, we get the dying whisper of Rachel in the part of Adrienne Lecouvreur, and the fearfully realistic "kicking" of the modern Croisette in the poisoning scene of The Sphinx. But, whereas the descendants of Themistocles gladly receive, whether captive or free, all the

changes and improvements considered as such by modern taste, thinking them to be a corrected and enlarged edition of the genius of Aeschylus; Hindus, happily for archaeologists and lovers of antiquity, have never moved a step since the times of our much honoured forefather Hanuman.

We awaited the performance of Sita-Rama with the liveliest curiosity. Except ourselves and the building of the theatre, everything was strictly indigenous and nothing reminded us of the West. There was not the trace of an orchestra. Music was only to be heard from the stage, or from behind it. At last the curtain rose. The silence, which had been very remarkable before the performance, considering the huge crowd of spectators of both sexes, now became absolute. Rama is one of the incarnations of Vishnu and, as most of the audience were worshippers of Vishnu, for them the spectacle was not a mere theatrical performance, but a religious mystery, representing the life and achievements of their favourite and most venerated gods.

The prologue was laid in the epoch before creation began (it may safely be said that no dramatist would dare to choose an earlier one) --or, rather, before the last manifestation of the universe. All the philosophical sects of India, except Mussulmans, agree that the universe has always existed. But the Hindus divide the periodical appearances and vanishings into days and nights of Brahma. The nights, or withdrawals of the objective universe, are called Pralayas, and the days, or epochs of new awakening into life and light, are called Manvantaras, Yugas, or "centuries of the gods." These periods are also called, respectively, the inbreathings and outbreathings of Brahma. When Pralaya comes to an end Brahma awakens, and, with this awakening, the universe that rested in deity, in other words, that was reabsorbed in its subjective essence, emanates from the divine principle and becomes visible. The gods, who died at the same time as the universe, begin slowly to return to life. The "Invisible" alone, the "Infinite," the "Lifeless," the One who is the unconditioned original "Life" itself, soars, surrounded by shoreless chaos. Its holy presence is not visible. It shows itself only in the periodical pulsation of chaos, represented by a dark mass of waters filling the stage. These waters are not, as yet, separated from the dry land, because Brahma, the creative spirit of Narayana, has not yet separated from the "Ever Unchanging." Then comes a heavy shock of the whole mass and the waters begin to acquire transparency. Rays, proceeding from a golden egg at the bottom, spread through the chaotic waters. Receiving life from the spirit of Narayana, the egg bursts and the awakened Brahma rises to the surface of the water in the shape of a huge lotus. Light clouds appear, at first transparent and web-like. They gradually become condensed, and transform themselves into Prajapatis, the ten personified creative powers of Brahma, the god of everything living, and sing a hymn of praise to the creator. Something naively poetical, to our unaccustomed ears, breathed in this uniform melody unaccompanied by any orchestra.

The hour of general revival has struck. Pralaya comes to an end. Everything rejoices, returning to life. The sky is separated from the waters and on it appear the Asuras and Gandharvas, the heavenly singers and musicians. Then Indra, Yama, Varuna, and Kuvera, the spirits presiding over the four cardinal points, or the four elements, water, fire, earth, and air, pour forth atoms, whence springs the

serpent "Ananta." The monster swims to the surface of the waves and, bending its swanlike neck, forms a couch on which Vishnu reclines with the Goddess of Beauty, his wife Lakshmi, at his feet. "Swatha! Swatha! Swatha!" cries the choir of heavenly musicians, hailing the deity. In the Russian church service this is pronounced Swiat! Swiat! Swiat! and means holy! holy! holy!

In one of his future avatars Vishnu will incarnate in Rama, the son of a great king, and Lakshmi will become Sita. The motive of the whole poem of Ramayana is sung in a few words by the celestial musicians. Kama, the God of Love, shelters the divine couple and, that very moment, a flame is lit in their hearts and the whole world is created.

Later there are performed the fourteen acts of the drama, which is well known to everybody, and in which several hundred personages take part. At the end of the prologue the whole assembly of gods come forward, one after another, and acquaint the audience with the contents and the epilogue of their performance, asking the public not to be too exacting. It is as though all these familiar deities, made of painted granite and marble, left the temples and came down to remind mortals of events long past and forgotten.

The hall was full of natives. We four alone were representatives of Europe. Like a huge flower bed, the women displayed the bright colors of their garments. Here and there, among handsome, bronze-like heads, were the pretty, dull white faces of Parsee women, whose beauty reminded me of the Georgians. The front rows were occupied by women only. In India it is quite easy to learn a person's religion, sect, and caste, and even whether a woman is married or single, from the marks painted in bright colors on everyone's forehead.

Since the time when Alexander the Great destroyed the sacred books of the Gebars, they have constantly been oppressed by the idol worshippers. King Ardeshir-Babechan restored fire worship in the years 229-243 A.C. Since then they have again been persecuted during the reign of one of the Shakpurs, either II., IX., or XI., of the Sassanids, but which of them is not known. It is, however, reported that one of them was a great protector of the Zartushta doctrines. After the fall of Yesdejird, the fire-worshippers emigrated to the island of Ormasd, and, some time later, having found a book of Zoroastrian prophecies, in obedience to one of them they set out for Hindustan. After many wanderings, they appeared, about 1,000 or 1,200 years ago, in the territory of Maharana-Jayadeva, a vassal of the Rajput King Champanir, who allowed them to colonize his land, but only on condition that they laid down their weapons, that they abandoned the Persian language for Hindi, and that their women put off their national dress and clothed themselves after the manner of Hindu women. He, however, allowed them to wear shoes, since this is strictly prescribed by Zoroaster. Since then very few changes have been made. It follows that the Parsee women could only be distinguished from their Hindu sisters by very slight differences. The almost white faces of the former were separated by a strip of smooth black hair from a sort of white cap, and the whole was covered with a bright veil. The latter wore no covering on their rich, shining hair, twisted into a kind of Greek chignon. Their foreheads were brightly painted, and their nostrils adorned with golden rings. Both are fond of bright, but uniform, colors, both cover their arms up to

the elbow with bangles, and both wear saris.

Behind the women a whole sea of most wonderful turbans was waving in the pit. There were long-haired Rajputs with regular Grecian features and long beards parted in the middle, their heads covered with "pagris" consisting of, at least, twenty yards of finest white muslin, and their persons adorned with earrings and necklaces; there were Mahrata Brahmans, who shave their heads, leaving only one long central lock, and wear turbans of blinding red, decorated in front with a sort of golden horn of plenty; Bangas, wearing three-cornered helmets with a kind of cockscomb on the top; Kachhis, with Roman helmets; Bhillis, from the borders of Rajastan, whose chins are wrapped three times in the ends of their pyramidal turbans, so that the innocent tourist never fails to think that they constantly suffer from toothache; Bengalis and Calcutta Babus, bare-headed all the year round, their hair cut after an Athenian fashion, and their bodies clothed in the proud folds of a white toga-virilis, in no way different from those once worn by Roman senators; Parsees, in their black, oilcloth mitres; Sikhs, the followers of Nanaka, strictly monotheist and mystic, whose turbans are very like the Bhillis', but who wear long hair down to their waists; and hundreds of other tribes.

Proposing to count how many different headgears are to be seen in Bombay alone, we had to abandon the task as impracticable after a fortnight. Every caste, every trade, guild, and sect, every one of the thousand sub-divisions of the social hierarchy, has its own bright turban, often sparkling with gold lace and precious stones, which is laid aside only in case of mourning. But, as if to compensate for this luxury, even the mem-bers of the municipality, rich merchants, and Rai-Bahadurs, who have been created baronets by the Government, never wear any stockings, and leave their legs bare up to the knees. As for their dress, it chiefly consists of a kind of shapeless white shirt.

In Baroda some Gaikwars (a title of all the Baroda princes) still keep in their stables elephants and the less common giraffes, though the former are strictly forbidden in the streets of Bombay. We had an opportunity of seeing ministers, and even Rajas, mounted on these noble animals, their mouths full of pansupari (betel leaves), their heads drooping under the weight of the precious stones on their turbans, and each of their fingers and toes adorned with rich golden rings. While the evening I am describing lasted, however, we saw no elephants, no giraffes, though we enjoyed the company of Rajas and ministers. We had in our box the hand-some ambassador and late tutor of the Mahararana of Oodeypore. Our companion was a Raja and a pandit. His name was a Mohunlal-Vishnulal-Pandia. He wore a small pink turban sparkling with diamonds, a pair of pink barege trousers, and a white gauze coat. His raven black hair half covered his amber-colored neck, which was surrounded by a necklace that might have driven any Parisian belle frantic with envy. The poor Raiput was awfully sleepy, but he stuck heroically to his duties, and, thoughtfully pulling his beard, led us all through the endless labyrinth of metaphysical entanglements of the Ramayana. During the entr'actes we were offered coffee, sherbets, and cigarettes, which we smoked even during the performance, sitting in front of the stage in the first row. We were covered, like idols, with garlands of flowers, and the manager, a stout Hindu clad in transparent muslins, sprinkled us several times

with rose-water.

The performance began at eight p.m. and, at half-past two, had only reached the ninth act. In spite of each of us having a punkah-wallah at our backs, the heat was unbearable. We had reached the limits of our endurance, and tried to excuse ourselves. This led to general disturbance, on the stage as well as in the auditorium. The airy chariot, on which the wicked king Ravana was carrying Sita away, paused in the air. The king of the Nagas (serpents) ceased breathing flames, the monkey soldiers hung motionless on the trees, and Rama himself, clad in light blue and crowned with a diminutive pagoda, came to the front of the stage and pronounced in pure English speech, in which he thanked us for the honour of our presence. Then new bouquets, pansu-paris, and rose-water, and, finally, we reached home about four a.m. Next morning we learned that the performance had ended at half-past six.

On The Way To Karli

It is an early morning near the end of March. A light breeze caresses with its velvety hand the sleepy faces of the pilgrims; and the intoxicating perfume of tuberoses mingles with the pungent odors of the bazaar. Crowds of barefooted Brahman women, stately and well-formed, direct their steps, like the biblical Rachel, to the well, with brass water pots bright as gold upon their heads. On our way lie numerous sacred tanks, filled with stagnant water, in which Hindus of both sexes perform their prescribed morning ablutions. Under the hedge of a garden somebody's tame mongoose is devouring the head of a cobra. The headless body of the snake convulsively, but harmlessly, beats against the thin flanks of the little animal, which regards these vain efforts with an evident delight. Side by side with this group of animals is a human figure; a naked mali (gardener), offering betel and salt to a monstrous stone idol of Shiva, with the view of pacifying the wrath of the "Destroyer," excited by the death of the cobra, which is one of his favourite servants. A few steps before reaching the railway station, we meet a modest Catholic procession, consisting of a few newly converted pariahs and some of the native Portuguese. Under a baldachin is a litter, on which swings to and fro a dusky Madonna dressed after the fashion of the native goddesses, with a ring in her nose. In her arms she carries the holy Babe, clad in yellow pyjamas and a red Brah-manical turban. "Hari, hari, devaki!" ("Glory to the holy Virgin!") exclaim the converts, unconscious of any difference between the Devaki, mother of Krishna, and the Catholic Madonna. All they know is that, excluded from the temples by the Brahmans on account of their not belonging to any of the Hindu castes, they are admitted sometimes into the Christian pagodas, thanks to the "padris," a name adopted from the Portuguese padre, and applied indiscriminately to the missionaries of every European sect.

At last, our gharis--native two-wheeled vehicles drawn by a pair of strong bullocks--arrived at the station. English employes open wide their eyes at the sight of white-faced people travelling about

the town in gilded Hindu chariots. But we are true Americans, and we have come hither to study, not Europe, but India and her products on the spot.

If the tourist casts a glance on the shore opposite to the port of Bombay, he will see a dark blue mass rising like a wall between himself and the horizon. This is Parbul, a flat-topped mountain 2,250 feet high. Its right slope leans on two sharp rocks covered with woods. The highest of them, Mataran, is the object of our trip. From Bombay to Narel, a station situated at the foot of this mountain, we are to travel four hours by railway, though, as the crow flies, the distance is not more than twelve miles. The railroad wanders round the foot of the most charming little hills, skirts hundreds of pretty lakes, and pierces with more than twenty tunnels the very heart of the rocky ghats.

We were accompanied by three Hindu friends. Two of them once belonged to a high caste, but were excommunicated from their pagoda for association and friendship with us, unworthy foreigners. At the station our party was joined by two more natives, with whom we had been in correspondence for many a year. All were members of our Society, reformers of the Young India school, enemies of Brahmans, castes, aid prejudices, and were to be our fellow-travelers and visit with us the annual fair at the temple festivities of Karli, stopping on the way at Mataran and Khanduli. One was a Brahman from Poona, the second a moodeliar (landowner) from Madras, the third a Singalese from Kegalla, the fourth a Bengali Zemindar, and the fifth a gigantic Rajput, whom we had known for a long time by the name of Gulab-Lal-Sing, and had called simply Gulab-Sing. I shall dwell upon his personality more than on any of the others, because the most wonderful and diverse stories were in circulation about this strange man. It was asserted that he belonged to the sect of Raj-Yogis, and was an initiate of the mysteries of magic, alchemy, and various other occult sciences of India. He was rich and independent, and rumour did not dare to suspect him of deception, the more so because, though quite full of these sciences, he never uttered a word about them in public, and carefully concealed his knowledge from all except a few friends.

He was an independent Takur from Rajistan, a province the name of which means the land of kings. Takurs are, almost without exception, descended from the Surya (sun), and are accordingly called Suryavansa. They are prouder than any other nation in the world. They have a proverb, "The dirt of the earth cannot stick to the rays of the sun." They do not despise any sect, except the Brahmans, and honor only the bards who sing their military achievements. Of the latter Colonel Tod writes somewhat as follows,* "The magnificence and luxury of the Rajput courts in the early periods of history were truly wonderful, even when due allowance is made for the poetical license of the bards. From the earliest times Northern India was a wealthy country, and it was precisely here that was situated the richest satrapy of Darius. At all events, this country abounded in those most striking events which furnish history with her richest materials. In Rajistan every small kingdom had its Thermopylae, and every little town has produced its Leonidas. But the veil of the centuries hides from posterity events that the pen of the historian might have bequeathed to the everlasting admiration of the nations. Somnath might have appeared as a rival of Delphi, the treasures of Hind might outweigh the riches

of the King of Lydia, while compared with the army of the brothers Pandu, that of Xerxes would seem an inconsiderable handful of men, worthy only to rank in the second place."

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* In nearly every instance the passages quoted from various authorities have been retranslated from the Russian. As the time and labor needful for verification would he too great, the sense only of these passages is given here. They do not pretend to be textual.--Translator

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England did not disarm the Rajputs, as she did the rest of the Indian nations, so Gulab-Sing came accompanied by vassals and shield-bearers.

Possessing an inexhaustible knowledge of legends, and being evidently well acquainted with the antiquities of his country, Gulab-Sing proved to be the most interesting of our companions.

"There, against the blue sky," said Gulab-Lal-Sing, "you behold the majestic Bhao Mallin. That deserted spot was once the abode of a holy hermit; now it is visited yearly by crowds of pilgrims. According to popular belief the most wonderful things happen there--miracles. At the top of the mountain, two thousand feet above the level of the sea, is the platform of a fortress. Behind it rises another rock two hundred and seventy feet in height, and at the very summit of this peak are to be found the ruins of a still more ancient fortress, which for seventy-five years served as a shelter for this hermit. Whence he obtained his food will for ever remain a mystery. Some think he ate the roots of wild plants, but upon this barren rock there is no vegetation. The only mode of ascent of this perpendicular mountain consists of a rope, and holes, just big enough to receive the toes of a man, cut out of the living rock. One would think such a pathway accessible only to acrobats and monkeys. Surely fanaticism must provide wings for the Hindus, for no accident has ever happened to any of them. Unfortunately, about forty years ago, a party of Englishmen conceived the unhappy thought of exploring the ruins, but a strong gust of wind arose and carried them over the precipice. After this, General Dickinson gave orders for the destruction of all means of communication with the upper fortress, and the lower one, once the cause of so many losses and so much bloodshed, is now entirely deserted, and serves only as a shelter for eagles and tigers."

Listening to these tales of olden times, I could not help comparing the past with the present. What a difference!

"Kali-Yug!" cry old Hindus with grim despair. "Who can strive against the Age of Darkness?"

This fatalism, the certainty that nothing good can be expected now, the conviction that even the powerful god Shiva himself can neither appear nor help them are all deeply rooted in the minds of the old generation. As for the younger men, they receive their education in high schools and universities, learn by heart Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Darwin and the German philosophers, and entirely lose all respect, not only for their own religion, but for every

other in the world.

The young "educated" Hindus are materialists almost without exception, and often achieve the last limits of Atheism. They seldom hope to attain to anything better than a situation as "chief mate of the junior clerk," as we say in Russia, and either become sycophants, disgusting flatterers of their present lords, or, which is still worse, or at any rate sillier, begin to edit a newspaper full of cheap liberalism, which gradually develops into a revolutionary organ.

But all this is only en passant. Compared with the mysterious and grandiose past of India, the ancient Aryavarta, her present is a natural Indian ink background, the black shadow of a bright picture, the inevitable evil in the cycle of every nation. India has become decrepit and has fallen down, like a huge memorial of antiquity, prostrate and broken to pieces. But the most insignificant of these fragments will for ever remain a treasure for the archeologist and the artist, and, in the course of time, may even afford a clue to the philosopher and the psychologist. "Ancient Hindus built like giants and finished their work like goldsmiths," says Archbishop Heber, describing his travel in India. In his description of the Taj-Mahal of Agra, that veritable eighth wonder of the world, he calls it "a poem in marble." He might have added that it is difficult to find in India a ruin, in the least state of preservation, that cannot speak, more eloquently than whole volumes, of the past of India, her religious aspirations, her beliefs and hopes.

There is not a country of antiquity, not even excluding the Egypt of the Pharaohs, where the development of the subjective ideal into its demonstration by an objective symbol has been expressed more graphically, more skillfully, and artistically, than in India. The whole pantheism of the Vedanta is contained in the symbol of the bisexual deity Ardhanari. It is surrounded by the double triangle, known in India under the name of the sign of Vishnu. By his side lie a lion, a bull, and an eagle. In his hands there rests a full moon, which is reflected in the waters at his feet. The Vedanta has taught for thousands of years what some of the German philosophers began to preach at the end of last century and the beginning of this one, namely, that everything objective in the world, as well as the world itself, is no more than an illusion, a Maya, a phantom created by our imagination, and as unreal as the reflection of the moon upon the surface of the waters. The phenomenal world, as well as the subjectivity of our conception concerning our Egos, are nothing but, as it were, a mirage. The true sage will never submit to the temptations of illusion. He is well aware that man will attain to self-knowledge, and become a real Ego, only after the entire union of the personal fragment with the All, thus becoming an immutable, infinite, universal Brahma. Accordingly, he considers the whole cycle of birth, life, old age, and death as the sole product of imagination.

Generally speaking, Indian philosophy, split up as it is into numerous metaphysical teachings, possesses, when united to Indian ontological doctrines, such a well developed logic, such a wonderfully refined psychology, that it might well take the first rank when contrasted with the schools, ancient and modern, idealist or positivist, and eclipse them all in turn. That positivism expounded by Lewis, that makes each particular hair

on the heads of Oxford theologians stand on end, is ridiculous child's play compared with the atomistic school of Vaisheshika, with its world divided, like a chessboard, into six categories of everlasting atoms, nine substances, twenty-four qualities, and five motions. And, however difficult, and even impossible may seem the exact representation of all these abstract ideas, idealistic, pantheistic, and, sometimes, purely material, in the condensed shape of allegorical symbols, India, nevertheless, has known how to express all these teachings more or less successfully. She has immortalized them in her ugly, four-headed idols, in the geometrical, complicated forms of her temples, and even in the entangled lines and spots on the foreheads of her sectaries.

We were discussing this and other topics with our Hindu fellow-travellers when a Catholic padre, a teacher in the Jesuit College of St. Xavier in Bombay, entered our carriage at one of the stations. Soon he could contain himself no longer, and joined in our conversation. Smiling and rubbing his hands, he said that he was curious to know on the strength of what sophistry our companions could find anything resembling a philosophical explanation "in the fundamental idea of the four faces of this ugly Shiva, crowned with snakes," pointing with his finger to the idol at the entrance to a pagoda.

"It is very simple," answered the Bengali Babu. You see that its four faces are turned towards the four cardinal points, South, North, West, and East--but all these faces are on one body and belong to one god."

"Would you mind explaining first the philosophical idea of the four faces and eight hands of your Shiva," interrupted the padre.

"With great pleasure. Thinking that our great Rudra (the Vedic name for this god) is omnipresent, we repre-sent him with his face turned simultaneously in all directions. Eight hands indicate his omnipotence, and his single body serves to remind us that he is One, though he is everywhere, and nobody can avoid his all-seeing eye, or his chastising hand."

The padre was going to say something when the train stopped; we had arrived at Narel.

It is hardly twenty-five years since, for the first time, a white man ascended Mataran, a huge mass of various kinds of trap rock, for the most part crystalline in form. Though quite near to Bombay, and only a few miles from Khandala, the summer residence of the Europeans, the threatening heights of this giant were long considered inaccessible. On the north, its smooth, almost vertical face rises 2,450 feet over the valley of the river Pen, and, further on, numberless separate rocks and hillocks, covered with thick vegetation, and divided by valleys and precipices, rise up to the clouds. In 1854, the railway pierced one of the sides of Mataran, and now has reached the foot of the last mountain, stopping at Narel, where, not long ago, there was nothing but a precipice. From Narel to the upper plateau is but eight miles, which you may travel on a pony, or in an open or closed palanquin, as you choose.

Considering that we arrived at Narel about six in the evening, this course was not very tempting. Civilization has done much

with inanimate nature, but, in spite of all its despotism, it has not yet been able to conquer tigers and snakes. Tigers, no doubt, are banished to the more remote jungles, but all hinds of snakes, especially cobras and coralillos, which last by preference inhabit trees, still abound in the forests of Mataran as in days of old, and wage a regular guerilla warfare against the invaders. Woe betide the belated pedestrian, or even horseman, if he happens to pass under a tree which forms the ambuscade of a coralillo snake! Cobras and other reptiles seldom attack men, and will generally try to avoid them, unless accidentally trodden upon, but these guerilleros of the forest, the tree serpents, lie in wait for their victims. As soon as the head of a man comes under the branch which shelters the coralillo, this enemy of man, coiling its tail round the branch, dives down into space with all the length of is body, and strikes with its fangs at the man's forehead. This curious fact was long considered to be a mere fable, but it has now been verified, and belongs to the natural history of India. In these cases the natives see in the snake the envoy of Death, the fulfiller of the will of the bloodthirsty Kali, the spouse of Shiva.

But evening, after the scorchingly hot day, was so tempting, and held out to us from the distance such promise of delicious coolness, that we decided upon risking our fate. In the heart of this wondrous nature one longs to shake off earthly chains, and unite oneself with the boundless life, so that death itself has its attractions in India.

Besides, the full moon was about to rise at eight p.m. Three hours' ascent of the mountain, on such a moonlit, tropical night as would tax the descriptive powers of the greatest artists, was worth any sacrifice. Apropos, among the few artists who can fix upon canvas the subtle charm of a moonlit night in India public opinion begins to name our own V.V. Vereshtchagin.

Having dined hurriedly in the dak bungalow we asked for our sedan chairs, and, drawing our roof-like topees over our eyes, we started. Eight coolies, clad, as usual, in vine-leaves, took possession of each chair and hurried up the mountain, uttering the shrieks and yells no true Hindu can dispense with. Each chair was accompanied besides by a relay of eight more porters. So we were sixty-four, without counting the Hindus and their servants--an army sufficient to frighten any stray leopard or jungle tiger, in fact any animal, except our fearless cousins on the side of our great-grandfather Hanuman. As soon as we turned into a thicket at the foot of the Mountain, several dozens of these kinsmen joined our procession. Thanks to the achievements of Rama's ally, monkeys are sacred in India. The Government, emulating the earlier wisdom of the East India Company, forbids everyone to molest them, not only when met with in the forests, which in all justice belong to them, but even when they invade the city gardens. Leaping from one branch to another, chattering like magpies, and making the most formidable grimaces, they followed us all the way, like so many midnight spooks. Sometimes they hung on the trees in full moonlight, like forest nymphs of Russian mythology; sometimes they preceded us, awaiting our arrival at the turns of the road as if showing us the way. They never left us. One monkey babe alighted on my knees. In a moment the authoress of his being, jumping without any ceremony over the coolies' shoulders, came to his rescue, picked him up, and, after making the most ungodly grimace at me, ran away with him.

"Bandras (monkeys) bring luck with their presence," remarked one of the Hindus, as if to console me for the loss of my crumpled topee. "Besides," he added, "seeing them here we may be sure that there is not a single tiger for ten miles round."

Higher and higher we ascended by the steep winding path, and the forest grew perceptibly thicker, darker, and more impenetrable. Some of the thickets were as dark as graves. Passing under hundred-year-old banyans it was impossible to distinguish one's own finger at the distance of two inches. It seemed to me that in certain places it would not be possible to advance without feeling our way, but our coolies never made a false step, but hastened onwards. Not one of us uttered a word. It was as if we had agreed to be silent at these moments. We felt as though wrapped in the heavy veil of dark-ness, and no sound was heard but the short, irregular breathing of the porters, and the cadence of their quick, nervous footsteps upon the stony soil of the path. One felt sick at heart and ashamed of belonging to that human race, one part of which makes of the other mere beasts of burden. These poor wretches are paid for their work four annas a day all the year round. Four annas for going eight miles upwards and eight miles downwards not less than twice a day; altogether thirty-two miles up and down a mountain 1,500 feet high, carrying a burden of two hundredweight! However, India is a country where everything is adjusted to never changing customs, and four annas a day is the pay for unskilled labor of any kind.

Gradually open spaces and glades became more frequent and the light grew as intense as by day. Millions of grasshoppers were shrilling in the forest, filling the air with a metallic throbbing, and flocks of frightened parrots rushed from tree to tree. Sometimes the thundering, prolonged roars of tigers rose from the bottom of the precipices thickly covered with all kinds of vegetation. Shikaris assure us that, on a quiet night, the roaring of these beasts can be heard for many miles around. The panorama, lit up, as if by Bengal fires, changed at every turn. Rivers, fields, forests, and rocks, spread out at our feet over an enormous distance, moved and trembled, iridescent, in the silvery moonlight, like the tides of a mirage. The fantastic character of the pictures made us hold our breath. Our heads grew giddy if, by chance, we glanced down into the depths by the flickering moonlight. We felt that the precipice, 2,000 feet deep, was fascinating us. One of our American fellow travelers, who had begun the voyage on horseback, had to dismount, afraid of being unable to resist the temptation to dive head foremost into the abyss.

Several times we met with lonely pedestrians, men and young women, coming down Mataran on their way home after a day's work. It often happens that some of them never reach home. The police unconcernedly report that the missing man has been carried off by a tiger, or killed by a snake. All is said, and he is soon entirely forgotten. One person, more or less, out of the two hundred and forty millions who inhabit India does not matter much! But there exists a very strange superstition in the Deccan about this mysterious, and only partially explored, mountain. The natives assert that, in spite of the considerable number of victims, there has never been found a single skeleton. The corpse, whether intact or mangled by tigers, is immediately carried away by the monkeys, who, in the latter case,

gather the scattered bones, and bury them skillfully in deep holes, that no traces ever remain. Englishmen laugh at this superstition, but the police do not deny the fact of the entire disappearance of the bodies. When the sides of the mountain were excavated, in the course of the construction of the railway, separate bones, with the marks of tigers' teeth upon them, broken bracelets, and other adornments, were found at an incredible depth from the surface. The fact of these things being broken showed clearly that they were not buried by men, because, neither the religion of the Hindus, nor their greed, would allow them to break and bury silver and gold. Is it possible, then, that, as amongst men one hand washes the other, so in the animal kingdom one species conceals the crimes of another?

Having spent the night in a Portuguese inn, woven like an eagle's nest out of bamboos, and clinging to the almost vertical side of a rock, we rose at daybreak, and, having visited all the points de vue famed for their beauty, made our preparations to return to Narel. By daylight the panorama was still more splendid than by night; volumes would not suffice to describe it. Had it not been that on three sides the horizon was shut out by rugged ridges of mountain, the whole of the Deccan plateau would have appeared before our eyes. Bombay was so distinct that it seemed quite near to us, and the channel that separates the town from Salsetta shone like a tiny silvery streak. It winds like a snake on its way to the port, surrounding Kanari and other islets, which look the very image of green peas scattered on the white cloth of its bright waters, and, finally, joins the blinding line of the Indian Ocean in the extreme distance. On the outer side is the northern Konkan, terminated by the Tal-Ghats, the needle-like summits of the Jano-Maoli rocks, and, lastly, the battlemented ridge of Funell, whose bold silhouette stands out in strong relief against the distant blue of the dim sky, like a giant's castle in some fairy tale. Further on looms Parbul, whose flat summit, in the days of old, was the seat of the gods, whence, according to the legends, Vishnu spoke to mortals. And there below, where the defile widens into a valley, all covered with huge separate rocks, each of which is crowded with historical and mythological legends, you may perceive the dim blue ridge of mountains, still loftier and still more strangely shaped. That is Khandala, which is overhung by a huge stone block, known by the name of the Duke's Nose. On the opposite side, under the very summit of the mountain, is situated Karli, which, according to the unanimous opinion or archeologists, is the most ancient and best preserved of Indian cave temples.

One who has traversed the passes of the Caucasus again and again; one who, from the top of the Cross Mountain, has beheld beneath her feet thunderstorms and lightnings; who has visited the Alps and the Rigi; who is well acquainted with the Andes and Cordilleras, and knows every corner of the Catskills in America, may be allowed, I hope, the expression of a humble opinion. The Caucasian Mountains, I do not deny, are more majestic than Ghats of India, and their splendour cannot be dimmed by comparison with these; but their beauty is of a type, if I may use this expression. At their sight one experiences true delight, but at the same time a sensation of awe. One feels like a pigmy before these Titans of nature. But in India, the Himalayas excepted, mountains produce quite a different impression. The highest summits of the Deccan, as well as of the triangular ridge that fringes Northern Hindostan, and of the Eastern Ghats, do not exceed 3,000 feet. Only in the Ghats of the Malabar coast,

from Cape Comorin to the river Surat, are there heights of 7,000 feet above the surface of the sea. So that no comparison can be dawn between these and the hoary headed patriarch Elbruz, or Kasbek, which exceeds 18,000 feet. The chief and original charm of Indian mountains wonderfully consists in their capricious shapes. Sometimes these mountains, or, rather, separate volcanic peaks standing in a row, form chains; but it is more common to find them scattered, to the great perplexity of geologists, without visible cause, in places where the formation seems quite unsuitable. Spacious valleys, surrounded by high walls of rock, over the very ridge of which passes the railway, are common. Look below, and it will seem to you that you are gazing upon the studio of some whimsical Titanic sculptor, filled with half finished groups, statues, and monuments. Here is a dream-land bird, seated upon the head of a monster six hundred feet high, spreading its wings and widely gaping its dragon's mouth; by its side the bust of a man, surmounted by a helmet, battlemented like the walls of a feudal castle; there, again, new monsters devouring each other, statues with broken limbs, disorderly heaps of huge balls, lonely fortresses with loopholes, ruined towers and bridges. All this scattered and intermixed with shapes changing incessantly like the dreams of delirium. And the chief attraction is that nothing here is the result of art, everything is the pure sport of Nature, which, however, has occasionally been turned to account by ancient builders. The art of man in India is to be sought in the interior of the earth, not on its surface. Ancient Hindus seldom built their temples otherwise than in the bosom of the earth, as though they were ashamed of their efforts, or did not dare to rival the sculpture of nature. Having chosen, for instance, a pyramidal rock, or a cupola shaped hillock like Elephanta, Or Karli, they scraped away inside, according to the Puranas, for centuries, planning on so grand a style that no modern architecture has been able to conceive anything to equal it. Fables (?) about the Cyclops seem truer in India than in Egypt.

The marvellous railroad from Narel to Khandala reminds one of a similar line from Genoa up the Apenines. One may be said to travel in the air, not on land. The railway traverses a region 1,400 feet above Konkan, and, in some places, while one rail is laid on the sharp edge of the rock, the other is supported on vaults and arches. The Mali Khindi viaduct is 163 feet high. For two hours we hastened on between sky and earth, with abysses on both sides thickly covered with mango trees and bananas. Truly English engineers are wonderful builders.

The pass of Bhor-Ghat is safely accomplished and we are in Khandala. Our bungalow here is built on the very edge of a ravine, which nature herself has carefully concealed under a cover of the most luxuriant vegetation. Everything is in blossom, and, in this unfathomed recess, a botanist might find sufficient material to occupy him for a lifetime. Palms have disappeared; for the most part they grow only near the sea. Here they are replaced by bananas, mango trees, pipals (ficus religiosa), fig trees, and thousands of other trees and shrubs, unknown to such outsiders as ourselves. The Indian flora is too often slandered and misrepresented as being full of beautiful, but scentless, flowers. At some seasons this may be true enough, but, as long as jasmines, the various balsams, white tuberoses, and golden champa (champaka or frangipani) are in blossom, this statement is far from being true. The aroma

of champa alone is so powerful as to make one almost giddy. For size, it is the king of flowering trees, and hundreds of them were in full bloom, just at this time of year, on Mataran and Khandala.

We sat on the verandah, talking and enjoying the surrounding views, until well-nigh midnight. Everything slept around us.

Khandala is nothing but a big village, situated on the flat top of one of the mountains of the Sahiadra range, about 2,200 feet above the sea level. It is surrounded by isolated peaks, as strange in shape as any we have seen.

One of them, straight before us, on the opposite side of the abyss, looked exactly like a long, one-storied building, with a flat roof and a battlemented parapet. The Hindus assert that, somewhere about this hillock, there exists a secret entrance, leading into vast interior halls, in fact to a whole subterranean palace, and that there still exist people who possess the secret of this abode. A holy hermit, Yogi, and Magus, who had inhabited these caves for "many centuries," imparted this secret to Sivaji, the celebrated leader of the Mahratta armies. Like Tanhauser, in Wagner's opera, the unconquerable Sivaji spent seven years of his youth in this mysterious abode, and therein acquired his extraordinary strength and valour.

Sivaji is a kind of Indian Ilia Moorometz, though his epoch is much nearer to our times. He was the hero and the king of the Mahrattas in the seventeenth century, and the founder of their short-lived empire. It is to him that India owes the weakening, if not the entire destruction, of the Mussulman yoke. No taller than an ordinary woman, and with the hand of a child, he was, nevertheless, possessed of wonderful strength, which, of course, his compatriots ascribed to sorcery. His sword is still preserved in a museum, and one cannot help wondering at its size and weight, and at the hilt, through which only a ten-year-old child could put his hand. The basis of this hero's fame is the fact that he, the son of a poor officer in the service of a Mogul emperor, like another David, slew the Mussulman Goliath, the formidable Afzul Khan. It was not, however, with a sling that he killed him, he used in this combat the formidable Mahratti weapon, vaghnakh, consisting of five long steel nails, as sharp as needles, and very strong. This weapon is worn on the fingers, and wrestlers use it to tear each other's flesh like wild animals. The Deccan is full of legends about Sivaji, and even the English historians mention him with respect. Just as in the fable respecting Charles V, one of tile local Indian traditions asserts that Sivaji is not dead, but lives secreted in one of the Sahiadra caves. When the fateful hour strikes (and according to the calculations of the astrologers the time is not far off) he will reappear, and will bring freedom to his beloved country.

The learned and artful Brahmans, those Jesuits of India, profit by the profound superstition of the masses to extort wealth from them, sometimes to the last cow, the only food giver of a large family.

In the following passage I give a curious example of this. At the end of July, 1879, this mysterious document appeared in Bombay. I translate literally, from the Mahratti, the original having been translated into all the dialects of India, of which there are 273.

"Shri!" (an untranslatable greeting). "Let it be known unto every one that this epistle, traced in the original in golden letters, came down from Indra-loka (the heaven of Indra), in the presence of holy Brahmans, on the altar of the Vishveshvara temple, which is in the sacred town of Benares.

"Listen and remember, O tribes of Hindustan, Rajis-tan, Punjab, etc., etc. On Saturday, the second day of the first half of the month Magha, 1809, of Shalivahan's era" (1887 A.D.), "the eleventh month of the Hindus, during the Ashwini Nakshatra" (the first of the twenty-seven constellations on the moon's path), "when the sun enters the sign Capricorn, and the time of the day will be near the constellation Pisces, that is to say, exactly one hour and thirty-six minutes after sunrise, the hour of the end of the Kali-Yug will strike, and the much desired Satya-Yug will commence" (that is to say, the end of the Maha-Yug, the great cycle that embraces the four minor Yugas). "This time Satya-Yug will last 1,100 years. During all this time a man's lifetime will be 128 years. The days will become longer and will consist of twenty hours and forty-eight minutes, and the nights of thirteen hours and twelve minutes, that is to say, instead of twenty-four hours we shall have exactly thirty-four hours and one minute. The first day of Satya-Yug will be very important for us, because it is then that will appear to us our new King with white face and golden hair, who will come from the far North. He will become the autonomous Lord of India. The Maya of human unbelief, with all the heresies over which it presides, will be thrown down to Patala" (sig-nifying at once hell and the antipodes), "and the Maya of the righteous and pious will abide with them, and will help them to enjoy life in Mretinloka" (our earth).

"Let it also be known to everyone that, for the dissemination of this divine document, every separate copy of it will be rewarded by the forgiveness of as many sins as are generally forgiven when a pious man sacrifices to a Brahman one hundred cows. As for the disbelievers and the indifferent, they will be sent to Naraka" (hell). "Copied out and given, by the slave of Vishnu, Malau Shriram, on Saturday, the 7th day of the first half of Shravan" (the fifth month of the Hindu year), "1801, of Shalivalian's era" (that is, 26th July, 1879).

The further career of this ignorant and cunning epistle is not known to me. Probably the police put a stop to its distribution; this only concerns the wise administrators. But it splendidly illustrates, from one side, the credulity of the populace, drowned in superstition, and from the other the unscrupulousness of the Brahmans.

Concerning the word Patala, which literally means the opposite side, a recent discovery of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, whom I have already mentioned in the preceding letters, is interesting, especially if this discovery can be accepted by philologists, as the facts seem to promise. Dayanand tries to show that the ancient Aryans knew, and even visited, America, which in ancient MSS. is called Patala, and out of which popular fancy constructed, in the course of time, something like the Greek Hades. He supports his theory by many quotations from the oldest MSS., especially from the legends about Krishna and his favourite disciple Arjuna. In the history of the latter it is mentioned that Arjuna, one of the five Pandavas, descendants of the moon dynasty, visited Patala on his travels,

and there married the widowed daughter of King Nagual, called Illupl. Comparing the names of father and daughter we reach the following considerations, which speak strongly in favour of Dayanand's supposition.

(1) Nagual is the name by which the sorcerers of Mexico, Indians and aborigines of America, are still designated. Like the Assyrian and Chaldean Nargals, chiefs of the Magi, the Mexican Nagual unites in his person the functions of priest and of sorcerer, being served in the latter capacity by a demon in the shape of some animal, generally a snake or a crocodile. These Naguals are thought to be the descendants of Nagua, the king of the snakes. Abbe Brasseur de Bourbourg devotes a considerable amount of space to them in his book about Mexico, and says that the Naguals are servants of the evil one, who, in his turn, renders them but a temporary service. In Sanskrit, likewise, snake is Naga, and the "King of the Nagas" plays an important part in the history of Buddha; and in the Puranas there exists a tradition that it was Arjuna who introduced snake worship into Patala. The coincidence, and the identity of the names are so striking that our scientists really ought to pay some attention to them.

(2) The Name of Arjuna's wife Illupl is purely old Mexican, and if we reject the hypothesis of Swami Daya-nand it will be perfectly impossible to explain the actual existence of this name in Sanskrit manuscripts long before the Christian era. Of all ancient dialects and languages it is only in those of the American aborigines that you constantly meet with such combinations of consonants as pl, tl, etc. They are abundant especially in the language of the Toltecs, or Nahuatl, whereas, neither in Sanskrit nor in ancient Greek are they ever found at the end of a word. Even the words Atlas and Atlantis seem to be foreign to the etymology of the European languages. Wherever Plato may have found them, it was not he who invented them. In the Toltec language we find the root atl, which means water and war, and directly after America was discovered Columbus found a town called Atlan, at the entrance of the Bay of Uraga. It is now a poor fishing village called Aclo. Only in America does one find such names as Itzcoatl, Zempoaltecatl, and Popocatepetl. To attempt to explain such coincidences by the theory of blind chance would be too much, consequently, as long as science does not seek to deny Dayanand's hypothesis, which, as yet, it is unable to do, we think it reasonable to adopt it, be it only in order to follow out the axiom "one hypothesis is equal to another." Amongst other things Dayanand points out that the route that led Arjuna to America five thousand years ago was by Siberia and Behring's Straits.

It was long past midnight, but we still sat listening to this legend and others of a similar kind. At length the innkeeper sent a servant to warn us of the dangers that threatened us if we lingered too long on the verandah on a moonlit night. The programme of these dangers was divided into three sections--snakes, beasts of prey, and dacoits. Besides the cobra and the "rock-snake," the surrounding mountains are full of a kind of very small mountain snake, called furzen, the most dangerous of all. Their poison kills with the swiftness of lightning. The moonlight attracts them, and whole parties of these uninvited guests crawl up to the verandahs of houses, in order to warm themselves. Here they are more snug than on the wet ground. The verdant and perfumed abyss below our verandah happened, too, to be the favorite resort of tigers and leopards, who come thither to quench their thirst at the broad

brook which runs along the bottom, and then wander until daybreak under the windows of the bungalow. Lastly, there were the mad dacoits, whose dens are scattered in mountains inaccessible to the police, who often shoot Europeans simply to afford themselves the pleasure of sending ad patres one of the hateful bellatis (foreigners). Three days before our arrival the wife of a Brahman disappeared, carried off by a tiger, and two favorite dogs of the commandant were killed by snakes. We declined to wait for further explanations, but hurried to our rooms. At daybreak we were to start for Karli, six miles from this place.

In The Karli Caves

At five o'clock in the morning we had already arrived at the limit, not only of driveable, but, even, of rideable roads. Our bullock-cart could go no further. The last half mile was nothing but a rough sea of stones. We had either to give up our enterprise, or to climb on all-fours up an almost perpendicular slope two hundred feet high. We were utterly at our wits' end, and meekly gazed at the historical mass before us, not knowing what to do next. Almost at the summit of the mountain, under the overhanging rocks, were a dozen black openings. Hundreds of pilgrims were crawling upwards, looking, in their holiday dresses, like so many green, pink, and blue ants. Here, however, our faithful Hindu friends came to our rescue. One of them, putting the palm of his hand to his mouth, produced a strident sound something between a shriek and a whistle. This signal was answered from above by an echo, and the next moment several half naked Brahmans, hereditary watchmen of the temple, began to descend the rocks as swiftly and skillfully as wild cats. Five minutes later they were with us, fastening round our bodies strong leathern straps, and rather dragging than leading us upwards. Half an hour later, exhausted but perfectly safe, we stood before the porch of the chief temple, which until then had been hidden from us by giant trees and cactuses.

This majestic entrance, resting on four massive pillars which form a quadrangle, is fifty-two feet wide and is covered with ancient moss and carvings. Before it stands the "lion column," so-called from the four lions carved as large as nature, and seated back to back, at its base. Over the principal entrance, its sides covered with colossal male and female figures, is a huge arch, in front of which three gigantic elephants are sculptured in relief, with heads and trunks that project from the wall. The shape of the temple is oval. It is 128 feet long and forty-six feet wide. The central space is separated on each side from the aisles by forty-two pillars, which sustain the cupola-shaped ceiling. Further on is an altar, which divides the first dome from a second one which rises over a small chamber, formerly used by the ancient Aryan priests for an inner, secret altar. Two side passages leading towards it come to a sudden end, which suggests that, once upon a time, either doors or wall were there which exist no longer. Each of the forty-two pillars has a pedestal, an octagonal shaft, and a capital, described by Fergusson as "of the most exquisite workmanship, representing two kneeling elephants surmounted by a god and a goddess." Fergusson

further says that this temple, or chaitya, is older and better preserved than any other in India, and may be assigned to a period about 200 years B.C., because Prinsep, who has read the inscription on the Silastamba pillar, asserts that the lion pillar was the gift of Ajmitra Ukasa, son of Saha Ravisobhoti, and another inscription shows that the temple was visited by Dathama Hara, otherwise Dathahamini, King of Ceylon, in the twentieth year of his reign, that is to say, 163 years before our era. For some reason or other, Dr. Stevenson points to seventy years B.C. as the date, asserting that Karlen, or Karli, was built by the Emperor Devobhuti, under the supervision of Dhanu-Kakata. But how can this be maintained in view of the above-mentioned perfectly authentic inscriptions? Even Fergusson, the celebrated defender of the Egyptian antiquities and hostile critic of those of India, insists that Karli belongs to the erections of the third century B.C., adding that "the disposition of the various parts of its architecture is identical with the architecture of the choirs of the Gothic period, and the polygonal apsides of cathedrals."

Above the chief entrance is found a gallery, which reminds one of the choirs, where, in Catholic churches, the organ is placed. Besides the chief entrance there are two lateral entrances, leading to the aisles of the temple, and over the gallery there is a single spacious window in the shape of a horseshoe, so that the light falls on the daghopa (altar) entirely from above, leaving the aisles, sheltered by the pillars, in obscurity, which increases as you approach the further end of the building. To the eyes of a spectator standing at the entrance, the whole daghopa shines with light, and behind it is nothing but impenetrable darkness, where no profane footsteps were permitted to tread. A figure on the dag-hopa, from the summit of which "Raja priests" used to pronounce verdicts to the people, is called Dharma-Raja, from Dharma, the Hindu Minos. Above the temple are two stories of caves, in each of which are wide open galleries formed by huge carved pillars, and from these galleries an opening leads to roomy cells and corridors, sometimes very long, but quite useless, as they invariably come to an abrupt termination at solid walls, without the trace of an issue of any kind. The guardians of the temple have either lost the secret of further caves, or conceal them jealously from Europeans.

Besides the Viharas already described, there are many others, scattered over the slope of the mountain. These temple-monasteries are all smaller than the first, but, according to the opinion of some archeologists, they are much older. To what century or epoch they belong is not known except to a few Brahmans, who keep silence. Generally speaking, the position of a European archaeologist in India is very sad. The masses, drowned in superstition, are utterly unable to be of any use to him, and the learned Brahmans, initiated into the mysteries of secret libraries in pagodas, do all they can to prevent archeological research. However, after all that has happened, it would be unjust to blame the conduct of the Brahmans in these matters. The bitter experience of many centuries has taught them that their only weapons are distrust and circumspection, without these their national history and the most sacred of their treasures would be irrevocably lost. Political coups d'etat which have shaken their country to its foundation, Mussulman invasions that proved so fatal to its welfare, the all-destructive fanaticism of Mussulman vandals and of Catholic padres, who are ready for anything in order to secure manuscripts and destroy them--all these

form a good excuse for the action of the Brahmans. However in spite of these manifold destructive tendencies, there exist in many places in India vast libraries capable of pouring a bright and new light, not only on the history of India itself, but also on the darkest problems of universal history. Some of these libraries, filled with the most precious manuscripts, are in the possession of native princes and of pagodas attached to their territories, but the greater part is in the hands of the Jainas (the oldest of Hindu sects) and of the Rajputana Takurs, whose ancient hereditary castles are scattered all over Rajistan, like so many eagles' nests on high rocks. The existence of the celebrated collections in Jassulmer and Patana is not unknown to the Government, but they remain wholly beyond its reach. The manuscripts are written in an ancient and now completely forgotten language, intelligible only to the high priests and their initiated librarians. One thick folio is so sacred and inviolable that it rests on a heavy golden chain in the centre of the temple of Chintamani in Jassulmer, and taken down only to be dusted and rebound at the advent of each new pontiff. This is the work of Somaditya Suru Acharya, a great priest of the pre-Mussulman time, well-known in history. His mantle is still preserved in the temple, and forms the robe of initiation of every new high priest. Colonel James Tod, who spent so many years in India and gained the love of the people as well as of the Brahmans--a most uncommon trait in the biography of any Anglo-Indian--has written the only true history of India, but even he was never allowed to touch this folio. Natives commonly believe that he was offered initiation into the mysteries at the price of the adoption of their religion. Being a devoted archaeologist he almost resolved to do so, but, having to return to England on account of his health, he left this world before he could return to his adopted country, and thus the enigma of this new book of the sibyl remains unsolved.

The Takurs of Rajputana, who are said to possess some of the underground libraries, occupy in India position similar to the position of European feudal barons of the Middle Ages. Nominally they are dependent on some of the native princes or on the British Government; but de facto they are perfectly independent. Their castles are built on high rocks, and besides the natural difficulty of entering them, their possessors are made doubly unreachable by the fact that long secret passages exist in every such castle, known only to the present owner and confided to his heir only at his death. We have visited two such underground halls, one of them big enough to contain a whole village. No torture would ever induce the owners to disclose the secret of their entrances, but the Yogis and the initiated Adepts come and go freely, entirely trusted by the Takurs.

A similar story is told concerning the libraries and subterranean passages of Karli. As for the archaeologists, they are unable even to determine whether this temple was built by Buddhists or Brahmans. The huge daghopa that hides the holy of holies from the eyes of the worshippers is sheltered by a mushroom-shaped roof, and resembles a low minaret with a cupola. Roofs of this description are called "umbrellas," and usually shelter the statues of Buddha and of the Chinese sages. But, on the other hand, the worshippers of Shiva, who possess the temple nowadays, assert that this low building is nothing but a lingam of Shiva. Besides, the carvings of gods and goddesses cut out of the rock forbid one to think

that the temple is the production of the Buddhists. Fergusson writes, "What is this monument of antiquity? Does it belong to the Hindus, or to the Buddhists? Has it been built upon plans drawn since the death of Sakya Sing, or does it belong to a more ancient religion?"

That is the question. If Fergusson, being bound by facts existing in inscriptions to acknowledge the anti-quity of Karli, will still persist in asserting that Elephanta is of much later date, he will scarcely be able to solve this dilemma, because the two styles are exactly the same, and the carvings of the latter are still more magnificent. To ascribe the temples of Elephanta and Kanari to the Buddhists, and to say that their respective periods correspond to the fourth and fifth centuries in the first case, and the tenth in the second, is to introduce into history a very strange and unfounded anachronism. After the first century A.D. there was not left a single influential Buddhist in India. Conquered and persecuted by the Brahmans, they emigrated by thousands to Ceylon and the trans-Himalayan districts. After the death of King Asoka, Buddhism speedily broke down, and in a short time was entirely displaced by the theocratic Brahmanism.

Fergusson's hypothesis that the followers of Sakya Sing, driven out by intolerance from the continent, probably sought shelter on the islands that surround Bombay, would hardly sustain critical analysis. Elephanta and Salsetta are quite near to Bombay, two and five miles distant respectively, and they are full of ancient Hindu temples. Is it credible, then, that the Brahmans, at the culminating point of their power, just before the Mussulman invasions, fanatical as they were, and mortal enemies of the Buddhists, would allow these hated heretics to build temples within their possessions in general and on Gharipuri in particular, this latter being an island consecrated to their Hindu pagodas? It is not necessary to be either a specialist, an architect, or an eminent archeologist, in order to be convinced at the first glance that such temples as Elephanta are the work of Cyclopses, requiring centuries and not years for their construction. Whereas in Karli everything is built and carved after a perfect plan, in Elephanta it seems as if thousands of different hands had wrought at different times, each following its own ideas and fashioning after its own device. All three caves are dug out of a hard porphyry rock. The first temple is practically a square, 130 feet 6 inches long and 130 feet wide. It contains twenty-six thick pillars and sixteen pilasters.

Between some of them there is a distance of 12 or 16 feet, between others 15 feet 5 inches, 13 feet 3 1/2 inches, and so on. The same lack of uniformity is found in the pedestals of the columns, the finish and style of which is constantly varying.

Why, then, should we not pay some attention to the explanations of the Brahmans? They say that this temple was begun by the sons of Pandu, after "the great war," Mahabharata, and that after their death every true believer was bidden to continue the work according to his own notions. Thus the temple was gradually built during three centuries. Every one who wished to redeem his sins would bring his chisel and set to work. Many were the members of royal families, and even kings, who personally took part in these labors.

On the right hand side of the temple there is a corner stone, a

lingam of Shiva in his character of Fructifying Force, which is sheltered by a small square chapel with four doors. Round this chapel are many colossal human figures. According to the Brahmans, these are statues representing the royal sculptors themselves, they being doorkeepers of the holy of holies, Hindus of the highest caste. Each of the larger figures leans upon a dwarf representative of the lower castes, which have been promoted by the popular fancy to the rank of demons (Pisachas). Moreover, the temple is full of unskillful work. The Brahmans hold that such a holy place could not be deserted if men of the preceding and present generations had not become unworthy of visiting it. As to Kanari or Kanhari, and some other cave temples, there is not the slightest doubt that they were all erected by Buddhists. In some of them were found inscriptions in a perfect state of preservation, and their style does not remind one in the least of the symbolical buildings of the Brahmans. Archbishop Heber thinks the Kanari caves were built in the first or second centuries B.C. But Elephanta is much older and must be classed among prehistoric monuments, that is to say, its date must be assigned to the epoch that immediately followed the "great war," Mahabharata. Unfortunately the date of this war is a point of disagreement between European scientists; the celebrated and learned Dr. Martin Haug thinks it is almost antediluvian, while the no less celebrated and learned Professor Max Muller places it as near the first century of our era as possible.

The fair was at its culmination when, having finished visiting the cells, climbing over all the stories, and examining the celebrated "hall of wrestlers," we descended, not by way of the stairs, of which there is no trace to be found, but after the fashion of pails bringing water out of a deep well, that is to say, by the aid of ropes. A crowd of about three thousand persons had assembled from the surrounding villages and towns. Women were there adorned from the waist down in brilliant-hued saris, with rings in their noses, their ears, their lips, and on all parts of their limbs that could hold a ring. Their raven-black hair which was smoothly combed back, shone with cocoanut oil, and was adorned with crimson flowers, which are sacred to Shiva and to Bhavani, the feminine aspect of this god.

Before the temple there were rows of small shops and of tents, where could be bought all the requisites for the usual sacrifices--aromatic herbs, incense, sandal wood, rice, gulab, and the red powder with which the pilgrim sprinkles first the idol and then his own face. Fakirs, bairagis, hosseins, the whole body of the mendicant brotherhood, was present among the crowd. Wreathed in chaplets, with long uncombed hair twisted at the top of the head into a regular chignon, and with bearded faces, they presented a very funny likeness to naked apes. Some of them were covered with wounds and bruises due to mortification of the flesh. We also saw some bunis, snake-charmers, with dozens of various snakes round their waists, necks, arms, and legs--models well worthy of the brush of a painter who intended to depict the image of a male Fury. One jadugar was especially remarkable. His head was crowned with a turban of cobras. Expanding their hoods and raising their leaf-like dark green heads, these cobras hissed furiously and so loudly that the sound was audible a hundred paces off. Their "stings" quivered like light-ning, and their small eyes glittered

with anger at the approach of every passer-by. The expression, "the sting of a snake," is universal, but it does not describe accurately the process of inflicting a wound. The "sting" of a snake is perfectly harmless. To introduce the poison into the blood of a man, or of an animal, the snake must pierce the flesh with its fangs, not prick with its sting. The needle-like eye teeth of a cobra communicate with the poison gland, and if this gland is cut out the cobra will not live more than two days. Accordingly, the supposition of some sceptics, that the bunis cut out this gland, is quite unfounded. The term "hissing" is also inaccurate when applied to cobras. They do not hiss. The noise they make is exactly like the death-rattle of a dying man. The whole body of a cobra is shaken by this loud and heavy growl.

Here we happened to be the witnesses of a fact which I relate exactly as it occurred, without indulging in explanations or hypotheses of any kind. I leave to naturalists the solution of the enigma.

Expecting to be well paid, the cobra-turbaned buni sent us word by a messenger boy that he would like very much to exhibit his powers of snake-charming. Of course we were perfectly willing, but on condition that between us and his pupils there should be what Mr. Disraeli would call a "scientific frontier."* We selected a spot about fifteen paces from the magic circle. I will not describe minutely the tricks and wonders that we saw, but will proceed at once to the main fact. With the aid of a vaguda, a kind of musical pipe of bamboo, the buni caused all the snakes to fall into a sort of cataleptic sleep. The melody that he played, monotonous, low, and original to the last degree, nearly sent us to sleep ourselves. At all events we all grew extremely sleepy without any apparent cause. We were aroused from this half lethargy by our friend Gulab-Sing, who gathered a handful of a grass, perfectly unknown to us, and advised us to rub our temples and eyelids with it. Then the buni produced from a dirty bag a kind of round stone, something like a fish's eye, or an onyx with a white spot in the centre, not bigger than a ten-kopek bit. He declared that anyone who bought that stone would be able to charm any cobra (it would produce no effect on snakes of other kinds) paralyzing the creature and then causing it to fall asleep. Moreover, by his account, this stone is the only remedy for the bite of a cobra. You have only to place this talisman on the wound, where it will stick so firmly that it cannot be torn off until all the poison is absorbed into it, when it will fall off of itself, and all danger will be past.

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* Written in 1879.

Being aware that the Government gladly offers any premium for the invention of a remedy for the bite of the cobra, we did not show any unreasonable interest on the appearance of this stone. In the meanwhile, the buni began to irritate his cobras. Choosing a cobra eight feet long, he literally enraged it. Twisting its tail round a tree, the cobra arose and hissed. The buni quietly let it bite his finger, on which we all saw drops of blood. A unanimous cry of horror arose in the crowd. But master buni stuck the stone on his finger and proceeded with his performance.

"The poison gland of the snake has been cut out," remarked our New York colonel. "This is a mere farce."

As if in answer to this remark, the buni seized the neck of the cobra, and, after a short struggle, fixed a match into its mouth, so that it remained open. Then he brought the snake over and showed it to each of us separately, so that we all saw the death-giving gland in its mouth. But our colonel would not give up his first impression so easily. "The gland is in its place right enough," said he, "but how are we to know that it really does contain poison?"

Then a live hen was brought forward and, tying its legs together, the buni placed it beside the snake. But the latter would pay no attention at first to this new victim, but went on hissing at the buni, who teased and irritated it until at last it actually struck at the wretched bird. The hen made a weak attempt to cackle, then shuddered once or twice and became still. The death was instantaneous. Facts will remain facts, the most exacting critic and disbeliever notwithstanding. This thought gives me courage to write what happened further. Little by little the cobra grew so infuriated that it became evident the jadugar himself did not dare to approach it. As if glued to the trunk of the tree by its tail, the snake never ceased diving into space with its upper part and trying to bite everything. A few steps from us was somebody's dog. It seemed to attract the whole of the buni's attention for some time. Sitting on his haunches, as far as possible from his raging pupil, he stared at the dog with motionless glassy eyes, and then began a scarcely audible song. The dog grew restless. Putting his tail between his legs, he tried to escape, but remained, as if fastened to the ground. After a few seconds he crawled nearer and nearer to the buni, whining, but unable to tear his gaze from the charmer. I understood his object, and felt awfully sorry for the dog. But, to my horror, I suddenly felt that my tongue would not move, I was perfectly unable either to get up or even to raise my finger. Happily this fiendish scene was not prolonged. As soon as the dog was near enough, the cobra bit him. The poor animal fell on his back, made a few convulsive movements with his legs, and shortly died. We could no longer doubt that there was poison in the gland. In the meanwhile the stone had dropped from the buni's finger and he approached to show us the healed member. We all saw the trace of the prick, a red spot not bigger than the head of an ordinary pin.

Next he made his snakes rise on their tails, and, holding the stone between his first finger and thumb, he proceeded to demonstrate its influence on the cobras. The nearer his hand approached to the head of the snake, the more the reptile's body recoiled. Looking steadfastly at the stone they shivered, and, one by one, dropped as if paralyzed. The buni then made straight for our sceptical colonel, and made him an offer to try the experiment himself. We all protested vigorously, but he would not listen to us, and chose a cobra of a very considerable size. Armed with the stone, the colonel bravely approached the snake. For a moment I positively felt petrified with fright. Inflating its hood, the cobra made an attempt to fly at him, then suddenly stopped short, and, after a pause, began following with all its body the circular movements of the colonel's hand. When he put the stone quite close to the

reptile's head, the snake staggered as if intoxicated, its hissing grew weak, its hood dropped helplessly on both sides of its neck, and its eyes closed. Drooping lower and lower, the snake fell at last on the ground like a stick, and slept.

Only then did we breathe freely. Taking the sorcerer aside we expressed our desire to buy the stone, to which he easily assented, and, to our great astonishment, asked for it only two rupees. This talisman became my own property and I still keep it. The buni asserts, and our Hindu friends confirm the story, that it is not a stone but an excrescence. It is found in the mouth of one cobra in a hundred, between the bone of the upper jaw and the skin of the palate. This "stone" is not fastened to the skull, but hangs, wrapped in skin, from the palate, and so is very easily cut off; but after this operation the cobra is said to die. If we are to believe Bishu Nath, for that was our sorcerer's name, this excrescence confers upon the cobra who possesses it the rank of king over the rest of his kind.

"Such a cobra," said the buni, "is like a Brahman, a Dwija Brahman amongst Shudras, they all obey him. There exists, moreover, a poisonous toad that also, sometimes, possesses this stone, but its effect is much weaker. To destroy the effect of a cobra's poison you must apply the toad's stone not later than two minutes after the infliction of the wound; but the stone of a cobra is effectual to the last. Its healing power is certain as long as the heart of the wounded man has not ceased to beat."

Bidding us good-bye, the buni advised us to keep the stone in a dry place and never to leave it near a dead body, also, to hide it during the sun and moon eclipses, "otherwise," said he, "it will lose all its power." In case we were bitten by a mad dog, he said, we were to put the stone into a glass of water and leave it there during the night, next morning the sufferer was to drink the water and then forget all danger.

"He is a regular devil and not a man!" exclaimed our colonel, as soon as the buni had disappeared on his way to a Shiva temple, where, by the way, we were not admitted.

"As simple a mortal as you or I," remarked the Rajput with a smile, "and, what is more, he is very ignorant. The truth is, he has been brought up in a Shivaite pagoda, like all the real snake-charmers. Shiva is the patron god of snakes, and the Brahmans teach the bunis to produce all kinds of mesmeric tricks by empiri-cal methods, never explaining to them the theoretical principles, but assuring them that Shiva is behind every phenomenon. So that the bunis sincerely ascribe to their god the honor of their `miracles.'"

"The Government of India offers a reward for an antidote to the poison of the cobra. Why then do the bunis not claim it, rather than let thousands of people die helpless?"

"The Brahmans would never suffer that. If the Government took the trouble to examine carefully the statistics of deaths caused by snakes, it would be found that no Hindu of the Shivaite sect has ever died from the bite of a cobra. They let people of other sects die, but save the members of their own flock."

"But did we not see how easily he parted with his secret, notwithstanding we were foreigners. Why should not the English buy it as readily?"

"Because this secret is quite useless in the hands of Europeans. The Hindus do not try to conceal it, because they are perfectly certain that without their aid nobody can make any use of it. The stone will retain its wonderful power only when it is taken from a live cobra. In order to catch the snake without killing it, it must be cast into a lethargy, or, if you prefer the term, charmed. Who is there among the foreigners who is able to do this? Even amongst the Hindus, you will not find a single individual in all India who possesses this ancient secret, unless he be a disciple of the Shivaite Brahmans. Only Brahmans of this sect possess a monopoly of the secret, and not all even of them, only those, in short, who belong to the pseudo-Patanjali school, who are usually called Bhuta ascetics. Now there exist, scattered over the whole of India, only about half-a-dozen of their pagoda schools, and the inmates would rather part with their very lives than with their secret."

"We have paid only two rupees for a secret which proved as strong in the colonel's hands as in the hands of the buni. Is it then so difficult to procure a store of these stones?" Our friend laughed.

"In a few days," said he, "the talisman will lose all its healing powers in your inexperienced hands. This is the reason why he let it go at such a low price, which he is, probably, at this moment sacrificing before the altar of his deity. I guarantee you a week's activity for your purchase, but after that time it will only be fit to be thrown out of the window."

We soon learned how true were these words. On the following day we came across a little girl, bitten by a green scorpion. She seemed to be in the last convulsions. No sooner had we applied the stone than the child seemed relieved, and, in an hour, she was gaily playing about, whereas, even in the case of the sting of a common black scorpion, the patient suffers for two weeks. But when, about ten days later, we tried the experiment of the stone upon a poor coolie, just bitten by a cobra, it would not even stick to the wound, and the poor wretch shortly expired. I do not take upon myself to offer, either a defence, or an explanation of the virtues of the "stone." I simply state the facts and leave the future career of the story to its own fate. The sceptics may deal with it as they will. Yet I can easily find people in India who will bear witness to my accuracy.

In this connection I was told a funny story. When Dr. (now Sir J.) Fayrer, who lately published his Thanatophidia, a book on the venomous snakes of India, a work well known throughout Europe, he categorically stated in it his disbelief in the wondrous snake-charmers of India. However, about a fortnight or so after the book appeared amongst the Anglo-Indians, a cobra bit his own cook. A buni, who happened to pass by, readily offered to save the man's life. It stands to reason that the celebrated naturalist could not accept such an offer. Nevertheless, Major Kelly and other officers urged him to permit the experiment. Declaring that in spite of all, in less than an hour his cook would be no more, he gave his consent. But it happened that in less than an hour the

cook was quietly preparing dinner in the kitchen, and, it is added, Dr. Fayrer seriously thought of throwing his book into the fire.

The day grew dreadfully hot. We felt the heat of the rocks in spite of our thick-soled shoes. Besides, the general curiosity aroused by our presence, and the unceremonious persecutions of the crowd, were becoming tiring. We resolved to "go home," that is to say, to return to the cool cave, six hundred paces from the temple, where we were to spend the evening and to sleep. We would wait no longer for our Hindu companions, who had gone to see the fair, and so we started by ourselves.

On approaching the entrance of the temple we were struck by the appearance of a young man, who stood apart from the crowd and was of an ideal beauty. He was a member of the Sadhu sect, a "candidate for Saintship," to use the expression of one of our party.

The Sadhus differ greatly from every other sect. They never appear unclothed, do not cover themselves with damp ashes, wear no painted signs on their faces, or foreheads, and do not worship idols. Belonging to the Adwaiti section of the Vedantic school, they believe only in Parabrahm (the great spirit). The young man looked quite decent in his light yellow costume, a kind of nightgown without sleeves. He had long hair, and his head was uncovered. His elbow rested on the back of a cow, which was itself well calculated to attract attention, for, in addition to her four perfectly shaped legs, she had a fifth growing out of her hump. This wonderful freak of nature used its fifth leg as if it were a hand and arm, hunting and killing tiresome flies, and scratching its head with the hoof. At first we thought it was a trick to attract attention, and even felt offended with the animal, as well as with its handsome owner, but, coming nearer, we saw that it was no trick, but an actual sport of mischievous Nature. From the young man we learned that the cow had been presented to him by the Maharaja Holkar, and that her milk had been his only food during the last two years.

Sadhus are aspirants to the Raj Yoga, and, as I have said above, usually belong to the school of the Vedanta. That is to say, they are disciples of initiates who have entirely resigned the life of the world, and lead a life of monastic chastity. Between the Sadhus and the Shivaite bunis there exists a mortal enmity, which manifests itself by a silent contempt on the side of the Sadhus, and on that of the bunis by constant attempts to sweep their rivals off the face of the earth. This antipathy is as marked as that between light and darkness, and reminds one of the dualism of the Ahura-Mazda and Ahriman of the Zoroastrians. Masses of people look up to the first as to Magi, sons of the sun and of the Divine Principle, while the latter are dreaded as dangerous sorcerers. Having heard most wonderful accounts of the former, we were burning with anxiety to see some of the "miracles" ascribed to them by some even among the Englishmen. We eagerly invited the Sadhu to visit our vihara during the evening. But the handsome ascetic sternly refused, for the reason that we were staying within the temple of the idol-worshippers, the very air of which would prove antagonistic to him. We offered him money, but he would not touch it, and so we parted.

A path, or rather a ledge cut along the perpendicular face of a rocky mass 200 feet high, led from the chief temple to our vihara. A man needs good eyes, sure feet, and a very strong head to avoid sliding down the precipice at the first false step. Any help would be quite out of the question, for, the ledge being only two feet wide, no one could walk side by side with another. We had to walk one by one, appealing for aid only to the whole of our personal courage. But the courage of many of us was gone on an unlimited furlough. The position of our American colonel was the worst, for he was very stout and short-sighted, which defects, taken together, caused him frequent vertigos. To keep up our spirits we indulged in a choral performance of the duet from Norma, "Moriam' insieme," holding each other's hands the while, to ensure our being spared by death or dying all four in company. But the colonel did not fail to frighten us nearly out of our lives. We were already half way up to the cave when he made a false step, staggered, lost hold of my hand, and rolled over the edge. We three, having to clutch the bushes and stones, were quite unable to help him. A unanimous cry of horror escaped us, but died away as we perceived that he had succeeded in clinging to the trunk of a small tree, which grew on the slope a few steps below us. Fortunately, we knew that the colonel was good at athletics, and remarkably cool in danger. Still the moment was a critical one. The slender stem of the tree might give way at any moment. Our cries of distress were answered by the sudden appearance of the mysterious Sadhu with his cow.

They were quietly walking along about twenty feet below us, on such invisible projections of the rock that a child's foot could barely have found room to rest there, and they both traveled as calmly, and even carelessly, as if a comfortable causeway were beneath their feet, instead of a vertical rock. The Sadhu called out to the colonel to hold on, and to us to keep quiet. He patted the neck of his monstrous cow, and untied the rope by which he was leading her. Then, with both hands he turned her head in our direction, and clucking with his tongue, he cried "Chal!" (go). With a few wild goat-like bounds the animal reached our path, and stood before us motion-less. A for the Sadhu himself, his movements were as swift and as goat-like. In a moment he had reached the tree, tied the rope round the colonel's body, and put him on his legs again; then, rising higher, with one effort of his strong hand he hoisted him up to the path. Our colonel was with us once more, rather pale, and with the loss of his pince-nez, but not of his presence of mind.

An adventure that had threatened to become a tragedy ended in a farce.

"What is to be done now?" was our unanimous in-quiry. "We cannot let you go alone any further."

"In a few moments it will be dark and we shall be lost," said Mr. Y---, the colonel's secretary.

And, indeed, the sun was dipping below the horizon, and every moment was precious. In the meanwhile, the Sadhu had fastened the rope round the cow's neck again and stood before us on the pathway, evidently not understanding a word of our conversation. His tall, slim figure seemed as if suspended in the air above the precipice. His long, black hair, floating in the breeze, alone

showed that in him we beheld a living being and not a magnificent statue of bronze. Forgetting our recent danger and our present awkward situation, Miss X---, who was a born artist, exclaimed: "Look at the majesty of that pure profile; observe the pose of that man. How beautiful are his outlines seen against the golden and blue sky. One would say, a Greek Adonis, not a Hindu!" But the "Adonis" in question put a sudden stop to her ecstasy. He glanced at Miss X--- with half-pitying, half-kindly, laughing eyes, and said with his ringing voice in Hindi--

"Bara-Sahib cannot go any further without the help of someone else's eyes. Sahib's eyes are his enemies. Let the Sahib ride on my cow. She cannot stumble."

"I! Ride on a cow, and a five-legged one at that? Never!" exclaimed the poor colonel, with such a helpless air, nevertheless, that we burst out laughing.

"It will be better for Sahib to sit on a cow than to lie on a chitta" (the pyre on which dead bodies are burned), remarked the Sadhu with modest seriousness. "Why call forth the hour which has not yet struck?"

The colonel saw that argument was perfectly useless, and we succeeded in persuading him to follow the Sadhu's advice, who carefully hoisted him on the cow's back, then, recommending him to hold on by the fifth leg, he led the way. We all followed to the best of our ability.

In a few minutes more we were on the verandah of our vihara, where we found our Hindu friends, who had arrived by another path. We eagerly related all our adventures, and then looked for the Sadhu, but, in the meanwhile, he had disappeared together with his cow.

"Do not look for him, he is gone by a road known only to himself," remarked Gulab-Sing carelessly. "He knows you are sincere in your gratitude, but he would not take your money. He is a Sadhu, not a buni," added he proudly.

We remembered that it was reported this proud friend of ours also belonged to the Sadhu sect. "Who can tell," whispered the colonel in my ear, "whether these reports are mere gossip, or the truth?"

Sadhu-Nanaka must not be confounded with Guru-Nanaka, a leader of the Sikhs. The former are Adwaitas, the latter monotheists. The Adwaitas believe only in an impersonal deity named Parabrahm.

In the chief hall of the vihara was a life-sized statue of Bhavani, the feminine aspect of Shiva. From the bosom of this devaki streams forth the pure cold water of a mountain spring, which falls into a reservoir at her feet. Around it lay heaps of sacrificial flowers, rice, betel leaves and incense. This hall was, in consequence, so damp that we preferred to spend the night on the verandah in the open air, hanging, as it were, between sky and earth, and lit from below by numerous fires kept burning all the night by Gulab-Sing's servants, to scare away wild beasts, and, from above, by the light of the full moon. A supper was arranged after the Eastern fashion, on carpets spread upon the floor, and with thick banana leaves for plates and dishes. The noiselessly gliding steps of the servants, more silent than ghosts, their white muslins and red turbans, the limitless depths of space, lost in waves of moonlight, before us,

and behind, the dark vaults of ancient caves, dug out by unknown races, in unknown times, in honor of an unknown, prehistoric religion-- all these, our surroundings, transported us into a strange world, and into distant epochs far different from our own.

We had before us representatives of five different peoples, five different types of costume, each quite unlike the others. All five are known to us in ethnography under the generic name of Hindus. Similarly eagles, condors, hawks, vultures, and owls are known to ornithology as "birds of prey," but the analogous differences are as great. Each of these five companions, a Rajput, a Bengali, a Madrasi, a Sinhalese and a Mahratti, is a descendant of a race, the origin of which European scientists have discussed for over half a century without coming to any agreement.

Rajputs are called Hindus and are said to belong to the Aryan race; but they call themselves Suryavansa, that is to say, descendants of Surya or the sun.

The Brahmans derive their origin from Indu, the moon, and are called Induvansa; Indu, Soma, or Chandra, meaning moon in Sanskrit. If the first Aryans, appearing in the prologue of universal history, are Brahmans, that is to say, the people who, according to Max Muller, having crossed the Himalayas conquered the country of the five rivers, then the Rajputs are no Aryans; and if they are Aryans they are not Brahmans, as all their genealogies and sacred books (Puranas) show that they are much older than the Brahmans; and, in this case, moreover, the Aryan tribes had an actual existence in other countries of our globe than the much renowned district of the Oxus, the cradle of the Germanic race, the ancestors of Aryans and Hindus, in the fancy of the scientist we have named and his German school.

The "moon" line begins with Pururavas (see the genealogical tree prepared by Colonel Tod from the MS. Puranas in the Oodeypore archives), that is to say, two thousand two hundred years before Christ, and much later than Ikshvaku, the patriarch of the Suryavansa. The fourth son of Pururavas, Rech, stands at the head of the line of the moon-race, and only in the fifteenth generation after him appears Harita, who founded the Kanshikagotra, the Brahman tribe.

The Rajputs hate the latter. They say the children of the sun and Rama have nothing in common with the children of the moon and Krishna. As for the Bengalis, according to their traditions and history, they are aborigines. The Madrasis and the Sinhalese are Dravidians. They have, in turn, been said to belong to the Semites, the Hamites, the Aryans, and, lastly, they have been given up to the will of God, with the conclusion drawn that the Sinhalese, at all events, must be Mongolians of Turanian origin. The Mahrattis are aborigines of the West of India, as the Bengalis are of, the East; but to what group of tribes belong these two nationalities no ethnographer can define, save perhaps a German. The traditions of the people themselves are generally denied, because they are not in harmony with foregone conclusions. The meaning of ancient manuscripts is disfigured, and, in fact, sacrificed to fiction, if only the latter proceeds from the mouth of some favorite oracle.

The ignorant masses are often blamed and found to be guilty of

superstition for creating idols in the spiritual world. Is not, then, the educated man, the man who craves after knowledge, who is enlightened, still more inconsistent than these masses, when he deals with his favorite authorities? Are not half a dozen laurel-crowned heads allowed by him to do whatever they like with facts, to draw their own conclusions, according to their own liking, and does he not stone every one who would dare to rise against the decisions of these quasi-infallible specialists, and brand him as an ignorant fool?

Let us remember the case in point of Louis Jacolliot, who spent twenty years in India, who actually knew the language and the country to perfection, and who, nevertheless, was rolled in the mud by Max Muller, whose foot never touched Indian soil.

The oldest peoples of Europe are mere babes com-pared with the tribes of Asia, and especially of India. And oh! how poor and insignificant are the genealogies of the oldest European families compared with those of some Rajputs. In the opinion of Colonel Tod, who for over twenty years studied these genealogies on the spot, they are the completest and most trustworthy of the records of the peoples of antiquity. They date from 1,000 to 2,200 years B.C., and their authenticity may often be proved by reference to Greek authors. After long and careful research and comparison with the text of the Puranas, and various monumental inscriptions, Colonel Tod came to the conclusion that in the Oodeypore archives (now hidden from public inspection), not to mention other sources, may be found a clue to the history of India in particular, and to universal ancient history in general. Colonel Tod advises the earnest seeker after this clue not to think, with some flippant archaeologists who are insufficiently acquainted with India, that the stories of Rama, the Mahabharata, Krishna, and the five brothers Pandu, are mere allegories. He affirms that he who seriously considers these legends will very soon become thoroughly convinced that all these so-called "fables" are founded on historical facts, by the actual existence of the descendants of the heroes, by tribes, ancient towns, and coins still extant; that to acquire the right to pronounce a final opinion one must read first the inscriptions on the Inda-Prestha pillars of Purag and Mevar, on the rocks of Junagur, in Bijoli, on Aravuli and on all the ancient Jaina temples scattered throughout India, where are to be found numerous inscriptions in a language utterly unknown, in comparison with which the hieroglyphs will seem a mere toy.

Yet, nevertheless, Professor Max Muller, who, as already mentioned, was never in India, sits as a judge and corrects chronological tables as is his wont, and Europe, taking his words for those of an oracle, endorses his decisions. Et c'est ainsi que s'ecrit l'histoire.

Talking of the venerable German Sanskritist's chronology, I cannot resist the desire to show, be it only to Russia, on what a fragile basis are founded his scientific discussions, and how little he is to be trusted when he pronounces upon the antiquity of this or that manuscript. These pages are of a superficial and descriptive nature, and, as such, make no pretense to profound learning, so that what follows may seem incongruous. But it must be remembered that in Russia, as elsewhere in Europe, people estimate the value of this philological light by the points of exclamation lavished upon him by his admiring followers, and that no one reads the Veda

Bhashaya of Swami Dayanand. It may even be that I shall not be far from the truth in saying that the very existence of this work is ignored, which may perhaps be a fortunate fact for the reputation of Professor Max Muller. I shall be as brief as possible. When Professor Max Muller states, in his Sahitya-Grantha, that the Aryan tribe in India acquired the notion of God step by step and very slowly, he evidently wishes to prove that the Vedas are far from being as old as is supposed by some of his colleagues. Having presented, in due course, some more or less valuable evidence to prove the truth of this new theory, he ends with a fact which, in his opinion, is indisputable. He points to the word hiranya-garbha in the mantrams, which he translates by the word "gold," and adds that, as the part of the Vedas called chanda appeared 3,100 years ago, the part called mantrams could not have been written earlier than 2,900 years ago. Let me remind the reader that the Vedas are divided into two parts: chandas--slokas, verses, etc.; and mantrams--prayers and rhythmical hymns, which are, at the same time, incantations used in white magic. Professor Max Muller divides the mantram ("Agnihi Poorwebhihi," etc.) philologically and chronologically, and, finding in it the word hiranya-garbha, he denounces it as an anachronism. The ancients, he says, had no knowledge of gold, and, therefore, if gold is mentioned in this mantram it means that the mantram was composed at a comparatively modern epoch, and so on.

But here the illustrious Sanskritist is very much mistaken. Swami Dayanand and other pandits, who sometimes are far from being Dayanand's allies, maintain that Professor Max Muller has completely misunderstood the meaning of the term hiranya. Originally it did not mean, and, when united to the word garbha, even now does not mean, gold. So all the Professor's brilliant demonstrations are labor in vain. The word hiranya in this mantram must be translated "divine light"--mystically a symbol of knowledge; analogically the alchemists used the term "sublimated gold" for "light," and hoped to compose the objective metal out of its rays. The two words, hiranya-garbha, taken together, mean, literally, the "radiant bosom," and, when used in the Vedas, designate the first principle, in whose bosom, like gold in the bosom of the earth, rests the light of divine knowledge and truth, the essence of the soul liberated from the sins of the world. In the mantrams, as in the chandas, one must always look for a double meaning: (1) a metaphysical one, purely abstract, and (2) one as purely physical; for everything existing upon the earth is closely bound to the spiritual world, from which it proceeds and by which it is reabsorbed. For instance Indra, the god of thunder, Surya, the sun-god, Vayu, god of the wind, and Agni, god of fire, all four depending on this first divine principle, expand, according to the mantram from hiranya-garbha, the radiant bosom. In this case the gods are the personifications of the forces of Nature. But the initiated Adepts of India understand very clearly that the god Indra, for instance, is nothing more than a mere sound, born of the shock of electrical forces, or simply electricity itself. Surya is not the god of the sun, but simply the centre of fire in our system, the essence whence come fire, warmth, light, and so on; the very thing, namely, which no European scientist, steering an even course between Tyndall and Schropfer, has, as yet, defined. This concealed meaning has totally escaped Professor Max Muller's attention, and this is why, clinging to the dead letter, he never hesitates before cutting a Gordian knot. How then can he be permitted to pronounce upon the antiquity of the Vedas, when he is so far from the right understanding of the language of these

ancient writings.

The above is a resume of Dayanand's argument, and to him the Sanskritists must apply for further particulars, which they will certainly find in his Rigvedadi Bhashya Bhoomika.

In the cave, every one slept soundly round the fire except myself. None of my companions seemed to mind in the least either the hum of the thousand voices of the fair, or the prolonged, far-away roar of the tigers rising from the valley, or even the loud prayers of the pilgrims who passed to and fro all night long, never fearing to cross the steep passage which, even by daylight, caused us such perplexity. They came in parties of twos and threes, and sometimes there appeared a lonely unescorted woman. They could not reach the large vihara, because we occupied the verandah at its entrance, and so, after grumbling a little, they entered a small lateral cave something like a chapel, containing a statue of Devaki-Mata, above a tank full of water. Each pilgrim prostrated himself for a time, then placed his offering at the feet of the goddess and bathed in the "holy waters of purification," or, at the least, sprinkled some water over his forehead, cheeks, and breast. Lastly, retreating backwards, he knelt again at the door and disappeared in the darkness with a final invocation: "Mata, maha mata!"--Mother, O great mother!

Two of Gulab-Sing's servants, with traditional spears and shields of rhinoceros skin, who had been ordered to protect us from wild beasts, sat on the steps of the verandah. I was unable to sleep, and so watched with increasing curiosity everything that was going on. The Takur, too, was sleepless. Every time I raised my eyes, heavy with fatigue, the first object upon which they fell was the gigantic figure of our mysterious friend.

Having seated himself after the Eastern fashion, with his feet drawn up and his arms round his knees, the Rajput sat on a bench cut in the rock at one end of the verandah, gazing out into the silvery atmosphere. He was so near the abyss that the least incautious movement would expose him to great danger. But the granite goddess, Bhavani herself, could not be more immovable. The light of the moon before him was so strong that the black shadow under the rock which sheltered him was doubly impenetrable, shrouding his face in absolute darkness. From time to time the flame of the sinking fires leaping up shed its hot reflection on the dark bronze face, enabling me to distinguish its sphinx-like lineaments and its shining eyes, as unmoving as the rest of the features.

"What am I to think? Is he simply sleeping, or is he in that strange state, that temporary annihilation of bodily life?..... Only this morning he was telling us how the initiate Raj-yogis were able to plunge into this state at will... Oh, if I could only go to sleep....."

Suddenly a loud prolonged hissing, quite close to my ear, made me start, trembling with indistinct reminiscences of cobras. The sound was strident and evidently came from under the hay upon which I rested. Then it struck one! two! It was our American alarum-clock, which always traveled with me. I could not help

laughing at myself, and, at the same time, feeling a little ashamed of my involuntary fright.

But neither the hissing, nor the loud striking of the clock, nor my sudden movement, that made Miss X--- raise her sleepy head, awakened Gulab-Sing, who still hung over the precipice. Another half hour passed. The far-away roar of the festivity was still heard, but everything round me was calm and still. Sleep fled further and further from my eyes. A fresh, strong wind arose, before the dawn, rustling the leaves and then shaking the tops of the trees that rose above the abyss. My attention became absorbed by the group of three Rajputs before me--by the two shield bearers and their master. I cannot tell why I was specially attracted at this moment by the sight of the long hair of the servants, which was waving in the wind, though the place they occupied was comparatively sheltered. I turned my eyes upon their Sahib, and the blood in my veins stood still. The veil of somebody's topi, which hung beside him, tied to a pillar, was simply whirling in the wind, while the hair of the Sahib himself lay as still as if it had been glued to his shoulders, not a hair moved, nor a single fold of his light muslin garment. No statue could be more motionless. What is this then? I said to myself. Is it delirium? Is this a hallucination, or a wonderful inexplicable reality? I shut my eyes, telling myself I must look no longer. But a moment later I again looked up, startled by a crackling sound from above the steps. The long, dark silhouette of some animal appeared at the entrance, clearly outlined against the pale sky. I saw it in profile. Its long tail was lashing to and fro. Both the servants rose swiftly and noiselessly and turned their heads towards Gulab-Sing, as if asking for orders. But where was Gulab-Sing? In the place which, but a moment ago, he occupied, there was no one. There lay only the topi, torn from the pillar by the wind. I sprang up: a tremendous roar deafened me, filling the vihara, wakening the slumbering echoes, and resounding, like the softened rumbling of thunder, over all the borders of the precipice. Good heavens! A tiger!

Before this thought had time to shape itself clearly in my mind, the sleepers sprang up and the men all seized their guns and revolvers, and then we heard the sound of crashing branches, and of something heavy sliding down into the precipice. The alarm was general.

"What is the matter now?" said the calm voice of Gulab-Sing, and I again saw him on the stone bench. "Why should you be so frightened?"

"A tiger! Was it not a tiger?" came in hasty, questioning tones from Europeans and Hindus.

Miss X--- trembled like one stricken with fever. "Whether it was a tiger, or something else, matters very little to us now. Whatever it was, it is, by this time, at the bottom of the abyss," answered the Rajput yawning.

"I wonder the Government does not destroy all these horrid animals," sobbed poor Miss X---, who evidently believed firmly in the omnipotence of her Executive.

"But how did you get rid of the `striped one'?" insisted the colonel. "Has anyone fired a shot?"

"You Europeans think that shooting is, if not the only, at least the best way to get rid of wild animals. We possess other means, which are sometimes more efficacious than guns," explained Babu Narendro-Das Sen. "Wait until you come to Bengal, there you will have many opportunities to make acquaintance with the tigers."

It was now getting light, and Gulab-Sing proposed to us to descend and examine the rest of the caves and the ruins of a fortress before the day became too hot, so, at half-past three, we went by another and easier way to the valley, and, happily, this time we had no adventures. The Mahratti did not accompany us. He disappeared without informing us whither he was going.

We saw Logarh, a fortress which was captured by Sivaji from the Moguls in 1670, and the ruins of the hall, where the widow of Nana Farnavese, under the pretext of an English protectorate, became de facto the captive of General Wellesley in 1804, with a yearly pension of 12,000 rupees. We then started for the village of Vargaon, once fortified and still very rich. We were to spend the hottest hours of the day there, from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon, and proceed afterwards to the historical caves of Birsa and Badjah, about three miles from Karli.

At about two P.M. when, in spite of the huge punkahs waving to and fro, we were grumbling at the heat, appeared our friend the Mahratta Brahman, whom we thought we had lost on the way. Accompanied by half-a-dozen Daknis (inhabitants 0f the Dekhan plateau) he was slowly advancing, seated almost on the ears of his horse, which snorted and seemed very unwilling to move. When he reached the verandah and jumped down, we saw the reason of his disappearance. Across the saddle was tied a huge tiger, whose tail dragged in the dust. There were traces of dark blood in his half opened mouth. He was taken from the horse and laid down by the doorstep.

Was it our visitor of the night before? I looked at Gulab-Sing. He lay on a rug in a corner, resting his head on his hand and reading. He knitted his brows slightly, but did not say a word. The Brahman who had just brought the tiger was very silent too, watching over certain preparations, as if making ready for some solemnity. We soon learned that, in the eyes of a superstitious people, what was about to happen was a solemnity indeed.

A bit of hair cut from the skin of a tiger that has been killed, neither by bullet, nor by knife, but by a "word," is considered the best of all talismans against his tribe.

"This is a very rare opportunity," explained the Mahratti. "It is very seldom that one meets with a man who possesses the word. Yogis and Sadhus do not generally kill wild animals, thinking it sinful to destroy any living creature, be it even a cobra or a tiger, so they simply keep out of the way of noxious animals. There exists only one brotherhood in India whose members possess all secrets, and from whom nothing in nature is concealed. Here is the body of the tiger to testify that the animal was not killed with a weapon of any kind, but simply by the word of Gulab-Lal-Sing. I found it, very easily, in the bushes exactly under our vihara, at the foot of the rock over which the tiger had rolled, already dead. Tigers

never make false steps. Gulab-Lal-Sing, you are a Raj-Yogi, and I salute you!" added the proud Brahman, kneeling before the Takur.

"Do not use vain words, Krishna Rao!" interrupted Gulab-Sing. "Get up; do not play the part of a Shudra."

"I obey you, Sahib, but, forgive me, I trust my own judgment. No Raj-Yogi ever yet acknowledged his connection with the brotherhood, since the time Mount Abu came into existence."

And he began distributing bits of hair taken from the dead animal. No one spoke, I gazed curiously at the group of my fellow-travelers. The colonel, President of our Society, sat with downcast eyes, very pale. His secretary, Mr. Y---, lay on his back, smoking a cigar and looking straight above him, with no expression in his eyes. He silently accepted the hair and put it in his purse. The Hindus stood round the tiger, and the Sinhalese traced mysterious signs on its forehead. Gulab-Sing continued quietly reading his book.

The Birza cave, about six miles from Vargaon, is constructed on the same plan as Karli. The vault-like ceiling of the temple rests upon twenty-six pillars, eighteen feet high, and the portico on four, twenty-eight feet high; over the portico are carved groups of horses, oxen, and elephants, of the most exquisite beauty. The "Hall of Initiation" is a spacious, oval room, with pillars, and eleven very deep cells cut in the rock. The Bajah caves are older and more beautiful. Inscriptions may still be seen showing that all these temples were built by Buddhists, or, rather, by Jainas. Modern Buddhists believe in one Buddha only, Gautama, Prince of Kapilavastu (six centuries before Christ) whereas the Jainas recognize a Buddha in each of their twenty-four divine teachers (Tirthankaras) the last of whom was the Guru (teacher) of Gautama. This disagreement is very embarrassing when people try to conjecture the antiquity of this or that vihara or chaitya. The origin of the Jaina sect is lost in the remotest, unfathomed antiquity, so the name of Buddha, mentioned in the inscriptions, may be attributed to the last of the Buddhas as easily as to the first, who lived (see Tod's genealogy) a long time before 2,200 B.C.

One of the inscriptions in the Baira cave, for instance. in cuneiform characters, says: "From an ascetic in Nassik to the one who is worthy, to the holy Buddha, purified from sins, heavenly and great."

This tends to convince scientists that the cave was cut out by Buddhists.

Another inscription, in the same cave, but over an-other cell, contains the following: "An agreeable offering of a small gift to the moving force [life], to the mind principle [soul], the well-beloved material body, fruit of Manu, priceless treasure, to the highest and here present, Heavenly."

Of course the conclusion is drawn that the building does not belong to the Buddhists, but to the Brahmans, who believe in Manu.

Here are two more inscriptions from Bajah caves.

"An agreeable gift of the symbol and vehicle of the purified Saka-Saka."

"Gift of the vehicle of Radha [wife of Krishna, symbol of perfection]
to Sugata who is gone for ever."

Sugata, again, is one of the names of Buddha. A new contradiction!

It was somewhere here, in the neighborhood of Vargaon, that the Mahrattis seized Captain Vaughan and his brother, who were hanged after the battle of Khirki.

Next morning we drove to Chinchor, or, as it is called here, Chinchood. This place is celebrated in the annals of the Dekkan. Here one meets with a repetition in miniature of what takes place on a larger scale at L'hassa in Tibet. As Buddha incarnates in every new Dalai-Lama, so, here, Gunpati (Ganesha, the god of wisdom with the elephant's head) is allowed by his father Shiva to incarnate in the eldest son of a certain Brahman family. There is a splendid temple erected in his honor, where the avatars (incarnations) of Gunpati have lived and received adoration for over two hundred years.

This is how it happened.

About 250 years ago a poor Brahman couple were promised, in sleep, by the god of wisdom that he would incarnate in their eldest son. The boy was named Maroba (one of the god's titles) in honor of the deity. Maroba grew up, married, and begot several sons, after which he was commanded by the god to relinquish the world and finish his days in the desert. There, during twenty-two years, according to the legend, Maroba wrought miracles and his fame grew day by day. He lived in an impenetrable jungle, in a corner of the thick forest that covered Chinchood in those days. Gunpati appeared to him once more, and promised to incarnate in his descendants for seven generations. After this there was no limit to his miracles, so that the people began to worship him, and ended by building a splendid temple for him.

At last Maroba gave orders to the people to bury him alive, in a sitting posture, with an open book in his hands, and never to open his grave again under penalty of his wrath and maledictions. After the burial of Maroba, Gunpati incarnated in his first-born, who began a conjuring career in his turn. So that Maroba-Deo I, was replaced by Chintaman-Deo I. This latter god had eight wives and eight sons. The tricks of the eldest of these sons, Narayan-Deo I, became so celebrated that his fame reached the ears of the Emperor Alamgir. In order to test the extent of his "deification," Alamgir sent him a piece of a cow's tail wrapped in rich stuffs and coverings. Now, to touch the tail of a dead cow is the worst of all degradations for a Hindu. On receiving it Narayan sprinkled the parcel with water, and, when the stuffs were unfolded, there was found enclosed in them a nosegay of white syringa, instead of the ungodly tail. This transformation rejoiced the Emperor so much that he presented the god with eight villages, to cover his private expenses. Narayan's social position and property were inherited by Chintaman-Deo II., whose heir was Dharmadhar, and, lastly, Narayan II came into power. He drew down the malediction of Gunpati by violating the grave of

Maroba. That is why his son, the last of the gods, is to die without issue.

When we saw him he was an aged man, about ninety years old. He was seated on a kind of platform. His head shook and his eyes idiotically stared without seeing us, the result of his constant use of opium. On his neck, ears, and toes, shone precious stones, and all around were spread offerings. We had to take off our shoes before we were allowed to approach this half-ruined relic.

On the evening of the same day we returned to Bombay. Two days later we were to start on our long journey to the North-West Provinces, and our route promised to be very attractive. We were to see Nassik, one of the few towns mentioned by Greek historians, its caves, and the tower of Rama; to visit Allahabad, the ancient Prayaga, the metropolis of the moon dynasty, built at the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna; Benares, the town of five thousand temples and as many monkeys; Cawnpur, notorious for the bloody revenge of Nana Sahib; the remains of the city of the sun, destroyed, according to the computations of Colebrooke, six thousand years ago; Agra and Delhi; and then, having explored Rajistan with its thousand Takur castles, fortresses, ruins, and legends, we were to go to Lahore, the metropolis of the Punjab, and, lastly, to stay for a while in Amritsar. There, in the Golden Temple, built in the centre of the "Lake of Immortality," was to be held the first meeting of the members of our Society, Brahmans, Buddhists, Sikhs, etc.--in a word, the representatives of the one thousand and one sects of India, who all sympathized, more or less, with the idea of the Brotherhood of Humanity of our Theosophical Society.

Vanished Glories

Benares, Prayaga (now Allahabad), Nassik, Hurdwar, Bhadrinath, Matura--these were the sacred places of prehistoric India which we were to visit one after the other; but to visit them, not after the usual manner of tourists, a vol d'oiseau, with a cheap guide-book in our hands and a cicerone to weary our brains, and wear out our legs. We were well aware that all these ancient places are thronged with traditions and overgrown with the weeds of popular fancy, like ruins of ancient castles covered with ivy; that the original shape of the building is destroyed by the cold embrace of these parasitic plants, and that it is as difficult for the archaeologist to form an idea of the architecture of the once perfect edifice, judging only by the heaps of disfigured rubbish that cover the country, as for us to select from out the thick mass of legends good wheat from weeds. No guides and no cicerone could be of any use whatever to us. The only thing they could do would be to point out to us places where once there stood a fortress, a castle, a temple, a sacred grove, or a celebrated town, and then to repeat legends which came into existence only lately, under the Mussulman rule. As to the undisguised truth, the original history of every interesting spot, we should have had to search for these by ourselves, assisted only by our own conjectures.

Modern India does not present a pale shadow of what it was in the pre-Christian era, nor even of the Hindostan of the days of Akbar, Shah-Jehan and Aurungzeb. The neighborhood of every town that has been shattered by many a war, and of every ruined hamlet, is covered with round reddish pebbles, as if with so many petrified tears of blood. But, in order to approach the iron gate of some ancient fortress, it is not over natural pebbles that it is necessary to walk, but over the broken fragments of some older granite remains, under which, very often, rest the ruins of a third town, still more ancient than the last. Modern names have been given to them by Mussulmans, who generally built their towns upon the remains of those they had just taken by assault. The names of the latter are sometimes mentioned in the legends, but the names of their predecessors had completely disappeared from the popular memory even before the Mussulman invasion. Will a time ever come for these secrets of the centuries to be revealed? Knowing all this beforehand, we resolved not to lose patience, even though we had to devote whole years to explorations of the same places, in order to obtain better historical information, and facts less disfigured than those obtained by our predecessors, who had to be contented with a choice collection of naive lies, poured forth from the mouth of some frightened semi-savage, or some Brahman, unwilling to speak and desirous of disguising the truth. As for ourselves, we were differently situated. We were helped by a whole society of educated Hindus, who were as deeply interested in the same questions as ourselves. Besides, we had a promise of the revelation of some secrets, and the accurate translation of some ancient chronicles, that had been preserved as if by a miracle.

The history of India has long since faded from the memories of her sons, and is still a mystery to her conquerors. Doubtless it still exists, though, perchance, only partly, in manuscripts that are jealously concealed from every European eye. This has been shown by some pregnant words, spoken by Brahmans on their rare occasions of friendly expansiveness. Thus, Colonel Tod, whom I have already quoted several times, is said to have been told by a Mahant, the chief of an ancient pagoda-monastery: "Sahib, you lose your time in vain researches. The Bellati India [India of foreigners] is before you, but you will never see the Gupta India [secret India]. We are the guardians of her mysteries, and would rather cut out each other's tongues than speak."

Yet, nevertheless, Tod succeeded in learning a good deal. It must be borne in mind that no Englishman has ever been loved so well by the natives as this old and courageous friend of the Maharana of Oodeypur, who, in his turn, was so friendly towards the natives that the humblest of them never saw a trace of contempt in his demeanour. He wrote before ethnology had reached its present stage of development, but his book is still an authority on everything concerning Rajistan. Though the author's opinion of his work was not very high, though he stated that "it is nothing but a conscientious collection of materials for a future historian," still in this book is to be found many a thing undreamed of by any British civil servant.

Let our friends smile incredulously. Let our enemies laugh at our pretensions to penetrate the world-mysteries of Aryavarta," as a certain critic recently expressed himself. However pessimistic

may be our critics' views, yet, even in the event of our conclusions not proving more trustworthy than those of Fergusson, Wilson, Wheeler, and the rest of the archeologists and Sanskritists who have written about India, still, I hope, they will not be less susceptible of proof. We are daily reminded that, like unreasonable children, we have undertaken a task before which archaeologists and historians, aided by all the influence and wealth of the Government, have shrunk dismayed; that we have taken upon ourselves a work which has proved to be beyond the capacities of the Royal Asiatic Society.

Let it be so.

Let everyone try to remember, as we ourselves remember, that not very long ago a poor Hungarian, who not only had no means of any kind but was almost a beggar, traveled on foot to Tibet through unknown and dangerous countries, led only by the love of learning and the eager wish to pour light on the historical origin of his nation. The result was that inexhaustible mines of literary treasures were discovered. Philology, which till then had wandered in the Egyptian darkness of etymological labyrinths, and was about to ask the sanction of the scientific world to one of the wildest of theories, suddenly stumbled on the clue of Ariadne. Philology discovered, at last, that the Sanskrit language is, if not the forefather, at least--to use the language of Max Muller--"the elder brother" of all classical languages. Thanks to the extraordinary zeal of Alexander Csoma de Koros, Tibet yielded a language the literature of which was totally unknown. He partly translated it and partly analyzed and explained it. His translations have shown the scientific world that (1) the originals of the Zend-Avesta, the sacred scriptures of the sun-worshippers, of Tripitaka, that of the Buddhists, and of Aytareya-Brahmanam, that of the Brahmans, were written in one and the same Sanskrit language; (2) that all these three languages--Zend, Nepalese, and the modern Brahman Sanskrit--are more or less dialects of the first; (3) that old Sanskrit is the origin of all the less ancient Indo-European languages, as well as of the modern European tongues and dialects; (4) that the three chief religions of heathendom--Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Brahmanism--are mere heresies of the monotheistic teachings of the Vedas, which does not prevent them from being real ancient religions and not modern falsifications.

The moral of all this is evident. A poor traveler, without either money or protection, succeeded in gaining admittance to the Lamaseries of Tibet and to the sacred literature of the isolated tribe which inhabits it, probably because he treated the Mongolians and the Tibetans as his brothers and not as an inferior race--a feat which has never been accomplished by generations of scientists. One cannot help feeling ashamed of humanity and science when one thinks that he whose labors first gave to science such precious results, he who was the first sower of such an abundant harvest, remained, almost until the day of his death, a poor and obscure worker. On his way from Tibet he walked to Calcutta without a penny in his pocket. At last Csoma de Koros became known, and his name began to be pronounced with honor and praise whilst he was dying in one of the poorest parts of Calcutta. Being already very ill, he wanted to get back to Tibet, and started on foot again through Sikkhim. He succumbed to his illness on the road and was buried in Darhjeeling.

It is needless to say we are fully aware that what we have undertaken is simply impossible within the limits of ordinary newspaper articles. All we hope to accomplish is to lay the foundation stone of an edifice, whose further progress must be entrusted to future generations. In order to combat successfully the theories worked out by two generations of Orientalists, half a century of diligent labor would be required. And, in order to replace these theories with new ones, we must get new facts, facts founded not on the chronology and false evidence of scheming Brahmans, whose interest is to feed the ignorance of European Sanskritists (as, unfortunately, was the experience of Lieutenant Wilford and Louis Jacolliot), but on indubitable proofs that are to be found in inscriptions as yet undeciphered. The clue to these inscriptions Europeans do not possess, because, as I have already stated, it is guarded in MSS. which are as old as the inscriptions and which are almost out of reach. Even in case our hopes are realized and we obtain this clue, a new difficulty will arise before us. We shall have to begin a systematic refutation, page by page, of many a volume of hypotheses published by the Royal Asiatic Society. A work like this might be accomplished by dozens of tireless, never-resting Sanskritists--a class which, even in India, is almost as rare as white elephants.

Thanks to private contributions and the zeal of some educated Hindu patriots, two free classes of Sanskrit and Pali had already been opened--one in Bombay by the Theosophical Society, the other in Benares under the presidency of the learned Rama-Misra-Shastri. In the present year, 1882, the Theosophical Society has, altogether, fourteen schools in Ceylon and India.

Our heads full of thoughts and plans of this kind, we, that is to say, one American, three Europeans, and three natives, occupied a whole carriage of the Great Indian Peninsular Railroad on our way to Nassik, one of the oldest towns in India, as I have already mentioned, and the most sacred of all in the eyes of the inhabitants of the Western Presidency. Nassik borrowed its name from the Sanskrit word "Nasika," which means nose. An epic legend assures us that on this very spot Lakshman, the eldest brother of the deified King Rama, cut off the nose of the giantess Sarpnaka, sister of Ravana, who stole Sita, the "Helen of Troy" of the Hindus.

The train stops six miles from the town, so that we had to finish our journey in six two-wheeled, gilded chariots, called ekkas, and drawn by bullocks. It was one o'clock A.M., but, in spite of the darkness of the hour, the horns of the animals were gilded and adorned with flowers, and brass bangles tinkled on their legs. Our waylay through ravines overgrown with jungle, where, as our drivers hastened to inform us, tigers and other four-footed misanthropes of the forest played hide-and-seek. However, we had no opportunity of making the acquaintance of the tigers, but enjoyed instead a concert of a whole community of jackals. They followed us step by step, piercing our ears with shrieks, wild laughter and barking. These animals are annoying, but so cowardly that, though numerous enough to devour, not only all of us, but our gold-horned bullocks too, none of them dared to come nearer than the distance of a few steps. Every time the long whip, our weapon against snakes, alighted on the back of one of them, the whole horde disappeared with unimaginable noise. Nevertheless, the drivers did not dispense with a single one of their superstitious

precautions against tigers. They chanted mantrams in unison, spread betel over the road as a token of their respect to the Rajas of the forest, and, after every couplet, made the bullocks kneel and bow their heads in honor of the great gods. Needless to say, the ekka, as light as a nutshell, threatened each time to fall with its passenger over the horns of the bullocks. We had to endure this agreeable way of traveling for five hours under a very dark sky. We reached the Inn of the Pilgrims in the morning at about six o'clock.

The real cause of Nassik's sacredness, however, is not the mutilated trunk of the giantess, but the situation of the town on the banks of the Godavari, quite close to the sources of this river which, for some reason or other, are called by the natives Ganga (Ganges). It is to this magic name, probably, that the town owes its numerous magnificent temples, and the selectness of the Brahmans who inhabit the banks of the river. Twice a year pilgrims flock here to pray, and on these solemn occasions the number of the visitors exceeds that of the inhabitants, which is only 35,000. Very picturesque, but equally dirty, are the houses of the rich Brahmans built on both sides of the way from the centre of the town to the Godavari. A whole forest of narrow pyramidal temples spreads on both sides of the river. All these new pagodas are built on the ruins of those destroyed by the fanaticism of the Mussulmans. A legend informs us that most of them rose from the ashes of the tail of the monkey god Hanuman. Retreating from Lanka, where the wicked Ravana, having anointed the brave hero's tail with some combustible stuff set it on fire, Hanuman, with a single leap through the air, reached Nassik, his fatherland. And here the noble adornment of the monkey's back, burned almost entirely during the voyage, crumbled into ashes, and from every sacred atom of these ashes, fallen to the ground, there rose a temple.... And, indeed, when seen from the mountain, these numberless pagodas, scattered in a most curious disorderly way, look as if they had really been thrown down by handfuls from the sky. Not only the river banks and the surrounding country, but every little island, every rock peeping from the water is covered with temples. And not one of them is destitute of a legend of its own, different versions of which are told by every individual of the Brahmanical community according to his own taste--of course in the hope of a suitable reward.

Here, as everywhere else in India, Brahmans are divided into two sects--worshippers of Shiva and wor-shippers of Vishnu--and between the two there is rivalry and warfare centuries old. Though the neighborhood of the Godavari shines with a twofold fame derived from its being the birthplace of Hanuman and the theatre of the first great deeds of Rama, the incarnation of Vishnu, it possesses as many temples dedicated to Shiva as to Vishnu. The material of which the pagodas consecrated to Shiva are constructed is black basalt. And it is, exactly, the color of the material which is the apple of discord in this case. The black material is claimed by the Vaishnavas as their own, it being of the same color as the burned tail of Rama's ally. They try to prove that the Shivaites have no right to it. From the first days of their rule the English inherited endless lawsuits between the fighting sectarians, cases decided in one law-court only to be transferred on appeal to another, and always having their origin in this ill-omened tail and its pretensions. This tail is a mysterious deus ex machina that directs all the thoughts of the Nassik Brahmans pro and contra.

On the subject of this tail were written more reams of paper and petitions than in the quarrel about the goose between Ivan Ivanitch and Ivan Nikiphoritch; and more ink and bile were spilt than there was mud in Mirgorod, since the creation of the universe. The pig that so happily decided the famous quarrel in Gogol would be a priceless blessing to Nassik, and the struggle for the tail. But unhappily even the "pig" if it hailed from "Russia" would be of no avail in India; for the English would suspect it at once, and arrest it as a Russian spy!

Rama's bathing place is shown in Nassik. The ashes of pious Brahmans are brought hither from distant parts to be thrown into the Godavari, and so to mingle for ever with the sacred waters of Ganges. In an ancient MS. there is a statement of one of Rama's generals, who, somehow or other, is not mentioned in the Ramayana. This statement points to the river Godavari as the frontier between the kingdoms of Rama, King of Ayodya (Oude), and of Ravana, King of Lanka (Ceylon). Legends and the poem of Ramayana state that this was the spot where Rama, while hunting, saw a beautiful antelope, and, intending to make a present to his beloved Sita of its skin, entered the regions of his unknown neighbor. No doubt Rama, Ravana, and even Hanuman, promoted, for some unexplained reason, to the rank of a monkey, are historical personages who once had a real existence. About fifty years ago it was vaguely suspected that the Brahmans possessed priceless MSS. It was reported that one of these MSS. treats of the prehistoric epoch when the Aryans first invaded the country, and began an endless war with the dark aborigines of southern India. But the religious fanaticism of the Hindus never allowed the English Government to verify these reports.

The most interesting sights of Nassik are its cave-temples, about five miles from the town. The day before we started thither, I certainly did not dream that a "tail" would have to play an important part in our visit to Nassik, that, in this case, it would save me, if not from death, at least from disagreeable and perhaps dangerous bruises. This is how it happened.

As the difficult task of ascending a steep mountain lay before us, we decided to hire elephants. The best couple in the town was brought before us. Their owner assured us "that the Prince of Wales had ridden upon them and was very contented." To go there and back and have them in attendance the whole day--in fact the whole pleasure-trip--was to cost us two rupees for each elephant. Our native friends, accustomed from infancy to this way of riding, were not long in getting on the back of their elephant. They covered him like flies, with no predilection for this or that spot of his vast back. They held on by all kinds of strings and ropes, more with their toes than their fingers, and, on the whole, presented a picture of contentment and comfort. We Europeans had to use the lady elephant, as being the tamer of the two. On her back there were two little benches with sloping seats on both sides, and not the slightest prop for our backs. The wretched, undergrown youngsters seen in European circuses give no idea of the real size of this noble beast. The mahout, or driver, placed himself between the huge animal's ears whilst we gazed at the "perfected" seats ready for us with an uneasy feeling of distrust The mahout ordered his elephant to kneel, and it must be owned that in climbing on her back with the aid of a small ladder, I felt what the French call chair de poule. Our she-elephant answered to the poetical name

of "Chanchuli Peri," the Active Fairy, and really was the most obedient and the merriest of all the representatives of her tribe that I have ever seen. Clinging to each other we at last gave the signal for departure, and the mahout goaded the right ear of the animal with an iron rod. First the elephant raised herself on her fore-legs, which movement tilted us all back, then she heavily rose on her hind ones, too, and we rolled forwards, threatening to upset the mahout. But this was not the end of our misfortunes. At the very first steps of Peri we slipped about in all directions, like quivering fragments of blancmange.

The journey came to a sudden pause. We were picked up in a hasty way, replaced on our respective seats, during which proceeding Peri's trunk proved very active, and the journey continued. The very thought of the five miles before us filled us with horror, but we would not give up the excursion, and indignantly refused to be tied to our seats, as was suggested by our Hindu companions, who could not suppress their merry laughter.... However, I bitterly repented this display of vanity. This unusual mode of locomotion was something incredibly fantastical, and, at the same time, ridiculous. A horse carrying our luggage trotted by Peri's side, and looked, from our vast elevation, no bigger than a donkey. At every mighty step of Peri we had to be prepared for all sorts of unexpected acrobatic feats, while jolted from one side to the other by her swinging gait. This experience, under the scorching sun, unavoidably induced a state of body and mind something between sea-sickness and a delirious nightmare. As a crown to our pleasures, when we began to ascend a tortuous little path over the stony slope of a deep ravine, our Peri stumbled. This sudden shock caused me to lose my balance altogether. I sat on the hinder part of the elephant's back, in the place of honor, as it is esteemed, and, once thoroughly shaken, rolled down like a log. No doubt, next moment I should have found myself at the bottom of the ravine, with some more or less sad loss to my bodily constitution, if it had not been for the wonderful dexterity and instinct of the clever animal. Having felt that something was wrong she twisted her tail round me, stopped instantaneously and began to kneel down carefully. But my natural weight was too much for the thin tail of this kind animal. Peri did not lose hold of me, but, having at last knelt down, she moaned plaintively, though discreetly, thinking probably that she had nearly lost her tail through being so generous. The mahout hurried to my rescue and then examined the damaged tail of his animal.

We now witnessed a scene that clearly showed us the coarse cunning, greediness and cowardice of a low-class Hindu, of an outcast, as they are denominated here.

The mahout very indifferently and composedly examined Peri's tail, and even pulled it several times to make sure, and was already on the point of hoisting himself quietly into his usual place, when I had the unhappy thought of muttering something that expressed my regret and compassion. My words worked a miraculous transformation in the mahout's behavior. He threw himself on the ground, and rolled about like a demoniac, uttering horrible wild groans. Sobbing and crying he kept on repeating that the Mam-Sahib had torn off his darling Peri's tail, that Peri was damaged for ever in everybody's estimation, that Peri's husband, the proud Airavati, lineal descendant of Indra's own favourite elephant, having witnessed her shame, would renounce his spouse, and that she had

better die.... Yells and bitter tears were his only answer to all remonstrances of our companions. In vain we tried to persuade him that the "proud Airavati" did not show the slightest disposition to be so cruel, in vain we pointed out to him that all this time both elephants stood quietly together, Airavati even at this critical moment rubbing his trunk affectionately against Peri's neck, and Peri not looking in the least discomfited by the accident to her tail. All this was of no avail! Our friend Narayan lost his patience at last. He was a man of extraordinary muscular strength and took recourse to a last original means. With one hand he threw down a silver rupee, with the other he seized the mahout's muslin garment and hurled him after the coin. Without giving a thought to his bleeding nose, the mahout jumped at the rupee with the greediness of a wild beast springing upon its prey. He prostrated himself in the dust before us repeatedly, with endless "salaams," instantly changing his deep sorrow into mad joy. He gave another pull at the unfortunate tail and gladly declared that, thanks to the "prayers of the sahib," it really was safe; to demonstrate which he hung on to it, till he was torn away and put back on his seat.

"Is it possible that a single, miserable rupee can have been the cause of all this?" we asked each other in utter bewilderment.

"Your astonishment is natural enough," answered the Hindus. "We need not express how ashamed and how disgusted we all feel at this voluntary display of humiliation and greed. But do not forget that this wretch, who certainly has a wife and children, serves his employer for twelve rupees a year, instead of which he often gets nothing but a beating. Remember also the long centuries of tyrannical treatment from Brahmans, from fanatical Mussulmans, who regard a Hindu as nothing better than an unclean reptile, and, nowadays, from the average Englishman, and maybe you will pity this wretched caricature of humanity."

But the "caricature" in question evidently felt perfectly happy and not in the least conscious of a humiliation of any kind. Sitting on the roomy forehead of his Peri, he was telling her of his unexpected wealth, reminding her of her "divine" origin, and ordering her to salute the "sahibs" with her trunk. Peri, whose spirits had been raised by the gift of a whole stick of sugar-cane from me, lifted her trunk backwards and playfully blew into our faces.

On the threshold of the Nassik caves we bid good-bye to the modern pigmy India, to the petty things of her everyday life, and to her humiliations. We re-entered the unknown world of India, the great and the mysterious.

The main caves of Nassik are excavated in a mountain bearing the name of Pandu-Lena, which points again to the undying, persistent, primaeval tradition that ascribes all such buildings to the five mythical (?) brothers of prehistoric times. The unanimous opinion of archaeologists esteems these caves more interesting and more important than all the caves of Elephanta and Karli put together. And, nevertheless--is it not strange?--with the exception of the learned Dr. Wilson, who, it may be, was a little too fond of forming hasty opinions, no archaeologist has, as yet, made so bold as to decide to what epoch they belong, by whom they were erected, and

which of the three chief religions of antiquity was the one professed by their mysterious builders.

It is evident, however, that those who wrought here did not all belong either to the same generation or to the same sect. The first thing which strikes the attention is the roughness of the primitive work, its huge dimensions, and the decline of the sculpture on the solid walls, whereas the sculpture and carvings of the six colossi which prop the chief cave on the second floor, are magnificently preserved and very elegant. This circumstance would lead one to think that the work was begun many centuries before it was finished. But when? One of the Sanskrit inscriptions of a comparatively recent epoch (on the pedestal of one of the colossi) clearly points to 453 B.C. as the year of the building. At all events, Barth, Stevenson, Gibson, Reeves, and some other scientists, who being Westerns can have none of the prejudices proper to the native Pundits, have formed this conjecture on the basis of some astronomical data. Besides, the conjunction of the planets stated in the inscription leaves no doubt as to the dates, it must be either 453 B.C., or 1734 of our era, or 2640 B.C., which last is impossible, because Buddha and Buddhist monasteries are mentioned in the inscription. I translate some of the most important sentences:

"To the most Perfect and the Highest! May this be agreeable to Him! The son of King Kshaparata, Lord of the Kshatriya tribe and protector of people, the Ruler of Dinik, bright as the dawn, sacrifices a hundred thousand cows that graze on the river Banasa, together with the river, and also the gift of gold by the builder of this holy shelter of gods, the place of the curbing of the Brahmans' passions. There is no more desirable place than this place, neither in Prabhasa, where accumulate hundreds of thousands of Brahmans repeating the sacred verse, nor in the sacred city Gaya, nor on the steep mountain near Dashatura, nor on the Serpents' Field in Govardhana, nor in the city Pratisraya where stands the monastery of Buddhists, nor even in the edifice erected by Depana-kara on the shores of the fresh water [?] sea. This place, giving incomparable favors, is agreeable and useful in all respects to the spotted deerskin of an ascetic. A safe boat given also by him who built the gratuitous ferry daily transports to the well-guarded shore. By him also who built the house for travelers and the public fountain, a gilded lion was erected by the ever-assaulted gate of this Govardhana, also another [lion] by the ferry-boat, and another by Ramatirtha. Various kinds of food will always be found here by the scanty flock; for this flock more than a hundred kinds of herbs and thousands of mountain roots are stored by this generous giver. In the same Govardhana, in the luminous mountain, this second cave was dug by the order of the same beneficent person, during the very year when the Sun, Shukra and Rahu, much respected by men, were in the full glory of their rise; it was in this year that the gifts were offered. Lakshmi, Indra and Yama having blessed them, returned with shouts of triumph to their chariot, kept on the way free from obstacles [the sky], by the force of mantrams. When they [the gods] all left, poured a heavy shower....." and so on.

Rahn and Kehetti are the fixed stars which form the head and the tail of the constellation of the Dragon. Shukra is Venus. Lakshmi, Indra and Yama stand here for the constellations of Virgo, Aquarius and Taurus, which are subject and consecrated to these three among the twelve higher deities.

The first caves are dugout in a conical hillock about two hundred and eighty feet from its base. In the chief of them stand three statues of Buddha; in the lateral ones a lingam and two Jaina idols. In the top cave there is a statue of Dharma Raja, or Yudhshtira, the eldest of the Pandus, who is worshipped in a temple erected in his honor, between Pent and Nassik. Farther on is a whole labyrinth of cells, where Buddhist hermits probably lived, a huge statue of Buddha in a reclining posture. and another as big, but surrounded with pillars adorned with figures of various animals. Styles, epochs and sects are here as much mixed up and entangled as different trees in a thick forest.

It is very remarkable that almost all the cave temples of India are to be found inside conical rocks and mountains. It is as though the ancient builders looked for such natural pyramids purposely. I noticed this peculiarity in Karli, and it is to be met with only in India. Is it a mere coincidence, or is it one of the rules of the religious architecture of the remote past? And which are the imitators--the builders of the Egyptian pyramids, or the unknown architects of the under ground caves of India? In pyramids as well as in caves everything seems to be calculated with geometrical exactitude. In neither case are the entrances ever at the bottom, but always at a certain distance from the ground. It is well known that nature does not imitate art, and, as a rule, art tries to copy certain forms of nature. And if, even in this similarity of the symbols of Egypt and India, nothing is to be found but a coincidence, we shall have to own that coincidences are sometimes very extraordinary. Egypt has borrowed many things from India. We must not forget that nothing is known about the origin of the Pharaohs, and that the few facts science has succeeded in discovering, far from contradicting our theory, suggest India as the cradle of the Egyptian race. In the days of remote antiquity Kalluka-Bhatta wrote: "During the reign of Visvamitra, first king of the Soma-Vansha dynasty, after a five days battle, Manu-Vena, the heir of ancient kings, was abandoned by the Brahmans, and emigrated with his army, and, having traversed Arya and Barria, at last reached the shores of Masra....."

Arya is Iran or Persia; Barria is an ancient name of Arabia; Masr or Masra is a name of Cairo, disfigured by Mussulmans into Misro and Musr.

Kalluka-Bhatta is an ancient writer. Sanskritists still quarrel over his epoch, wavering between 2,000 years B.C., and the reign of the Emperor Akbar (the time of John the Terrible and Elizabeth of England). On the grounds of this uncertainty, the evidence of Kalluka-Bhatta might be objected to. In this case, there are the words of a modern historian, who has studied Egypt all his life, not in Berlin or London, like some other historians, but in Egypt, deciphering the inscriptions of the oldest sarcophagi and papyri, that is to say, the words of Henry Brugsch-Bey:

". . . I repeat, my firm conviction is that the Egyptians came from Asia long before the historical period, having traversed the Suez promontory, that bridge of all the nations, and found a new fatherland on the banks of the Nile."

An inscription on a Hammamat rock says that Sankara, the last

Pharaoh of the eleventh dynasty, sent a nobleman to Punt: "I was sent on a ship to Punt, to bring back some aromatic gum, gathered by the princes of the Red Land."

Commenting on this inscription, Brugsch-Bey explains that "under the name of Punt the ancient inhabitants of Chemi meant a distant land surrounded by a great ocean, full of mountains and valleys, and rich in ebony and other expensive woods, in perfumes, precious stones and metals, in wild beasts, giraffes, leopards and big monkeys." The name of a monkey in Egypt was Kaff, or Kafi, in Hebrew Koff, in Sanskrit Kapi.

In the eyes of the ancient Egyptians, this Punt was a sacred land, because Punt or Pa-nuter was "the original land of the gods, who left it under the leadership of A-Mon [Manu-Vena of Kalluka-Bhatta?] Hor and Hator, and duly arrived in Chemi."

Hanuman has a decided family likeness to the Egyptian Cynocephalus, and the emblem of Osiris and Shiva is the same. Qui vivra verra!

Our return journey was very agreeable. We had adapted ourselves to Peri's movements. and felt ourselves first-rate jockeys. But for a whole week afterwards we could hardly walk.

A City Of The Dead

What would be your choice if you had to choose between being blind and being deaf? Nine people out of ten answer this question by positively preferring deafness to blindness. And one whose good fortune it has been to contemplate, even for a moment, some fantastic fairy-like corner of India, this country of lace-like marble palaces and enchanting gardens, would willingly add to deafness, lameness of both legs, rather than lose such sights.

We are told that Saadi, the great poet, bitterly complained of his friends looking tired and indifferent while he praised the beauty and charm of his lady-love. "If the happiness of contemplating her wonderful beauty," remonstrated he, "was yours, as it is mine, you could not fail to understand my verses, which, alas, describe in such meagre and inadequate terms the rapturous feelings experienced by every one who sees her even from a distance!"

I fully sympathize with the enamoured poet, but cannot condemn his friends who never saw his lady-love, and that is why I tremble lest my constant rhapsodies on India should bore my readers as much as Saadi bored his friends. But what, I pray you, is the poor narrator to do, when new, undreamed-of charms are daily discovered in the lady-love in question? Her darkest aspects, abject and immoral as they are, and sometimes of such a nature as to excite your horror--even these aspects are full of some wild poetry, of originality, which cannot be met with in any other country. It is not unusual for a European novice to shudder with disgust at some features of local everyday life; but at the same time these very sights attract and fascinate the attention like a horrible nightmare.

We had plenty of these experiences whilst our ecole buissoniere lasted. We spent these days far from railways and from any other vestige of civilization. Happily so, because European civilization does not suit India any better than a fashionable bonnet would suit a half naked Peruvian maiden, a true "daughter of Sun," of Cortes' time.

All the day long we wandered across rivers and jungles, passing villages and ruins of ancient fortresses, over local-board roads between Nassik and Jubblepore, traveling with the aid of bullock cars, elephants, horses, and very often being carried in palks. At nightfall we put up our tents and slept anywhere. These days offered us an opportunity of seeing that man decidedly can surmount trying and even dangerous conditions of climate, though, perhaps, in a passive way, by mere force of habit. In the afternoons, when we, white people, were very nearly fainting with the roasting heat, in spite of thick cork topis and such shelter as we could procure, and even our native companions had to use more than the usual supplies of muslin round their heads--the Bengali Babu traveled on horseback endless miles, under the vertical rays of the hot sun, bareheaded, protected only by his thick crop of hair. The sun has no influence whatever on Bengali skulls. They are covered only on solemn occasions, in cases of weddings and great festivities. Their turbans are useless adornments, like flowers in a European lady's hair.

Bengali Babus are born clerks; they invade all railroad stations, post and telegraph offices and Government law courts. Wrapped in their white muslin toga virilis, their legs bare up to the knees, their heads unprotected, they proudly loaf on the platforms of railway stations, or at the entrances of their offices, casting contemptuous glances on the Mahrattis, who dearly love their numerous rings and lovely earrings in the upper part of their right ears. Bengalis, unlike the rest of the Hindus, do not paint sectarian signs on their foreheads. The only trinket they do not completely despise is an expensive necklace; but even this is not common. Contrary to all expectations, the Mahrattis, with all their little effeminate ways, are the bravest tribe of India, gallant and experienced soldiers, a fact which has been demonstrated by centuries of fighting; but Bengal has never as yet produced a single soldier out of its sixty-five million inhabitants. Not a single Bengali is to be found in the native regiments of the British army. This is a strange fact, which I refused to believe at first, but which has been confirmed by many English officers and by Bengalis themselves. But with all this, they are far from being cowardly. Their wealthy classes do lead a somewhat effeminate life, but their zemindars and peasantry are undoubtedly brave. Disarmed by their present Government, the Bengali peasants go out to meet the tiger, which in their country is more ferocious than elsewhere, armed only with a club, as composedly as they used to go with rifles and swords.

Many out-of-the-way paths and groves which most probably had never before been trodden by a European foot, were visited by us during these short days. Gulab-Lal-Sing was absent, but we were accompanied by a trusted servant of his, and the welcome we met with almost everywhere was certainly the result of the magic influence of his name. If the wretched, naked peasants shrank from us and shut their doors at our approach, the Brahmans were as obliging as could be desired.

The sights around Kandesh, on the way to Thalner and Mhau, are very picturesque. But the effect is not entirely due to Nature's beauty. Art has a good deal to do with it, especially in Mussulman cemeteries. Now they are all more or less destroyed and deserted, owing to the increase of the Hindu inhabitants around them, and to the Mussulman princes, once the rightful lords of India, being expelled. Mussulmans of the present day are badly off and have to put up with more humiliations than even the Hindus. But still they have left many memorials behind them, and, amongst others, their cemeteries. The Mussulman fidelity to the dead is a very touching feature of their character. Their devotion to those that are gone is always more demonstrative than their affection for the living members of their families, and almost entirely concentrates itself on their last abodes. In proportion as their notions of paradise are coarse and material, the appearance of their cemeteries is poetical, especially in India. One may pleasantly spend whole hours in these shady, delightful gardens, amongst their white monuments crowned with turbans, covered with roses and jessamine and sheltered with rows of cypresses. We often stopped in such places to sleep and dine. A cemetery near Thalner is especially attractive. Out of several mausoleums in a good state of preservation the most magnificent is the monument of the family of Kiladar, who was hanged on the city tower by the order of General Hislop in 1818. Four other mausoleums attracted our attention and we learned that one of them is celebrated throughout India. It is a white marble octagon, covered from top to bottom with carving, the like of which could not be found even in Pere La Chaise. A Persian inscription on its base records that it cost one hundred thousand rupees.

By day, bathed in the hot rays of the sun, its tall minaret-like outline looks like a block of ice against the blue sky. By night, with the aid of the intense, phosphorescent moonlight proper to India, it is still more dazzling and poetical. The summit looks as if it were covered with freshly fallen snow-crystals. Raising its slender profile above the dark background of bushes, it suggests some pure midnight apparition, soaring over this silent abode of destruction and lamenting what will never return. Side by side with these cemeteries rise the Hindu ghats, generally by the river bank. There really is something grand in the ritual of burning the dead. Witnessing this ceremony the spectator is struck with the deep philosophy underlying the fundamental idea of this custom. In the course of an hour nothing remains of the body but a few handfuls of ashes. A professional Brahman, like a priest of death, scatters these ashes to the winds over a river. The ashes of what once lived and felt, loved and hated, rejoiced and wept, are thus given back again to the four elements: to Earth, which fed it during such a long time and out of which it grew and developed; to Fire, emblem of purity, that has just devoured the body in order that the spirit may be rid of everything impure, and may freely gravitate to the new sphere of posthumous existence, where every sin is a stumbling block on the way to "Moksha," or infinite bliss; to Air, which it inhaled and through which it lived, and to Water, which purified it physically and spiritually, and is now to receive its ashes into her pure bosom.

The adjective "pure" must be understood in the figurative sense of the mantram. Generally speaking, the rivers of India, beginning with the thrice sacred Ganges, are dreadfully dirty, especially

near villages and towns.

In these rivers about two hundred millions of people daily cleanse themselves from the tropical perspiration and dirt. The corpses of those who are not worth burning are thrown in the same rivers, and their number is great, because it includes all Shudras, pariahs, and various other outcasts, as well as Brahman children under three years of age.

Only rich and high-born people are buried pompously. It is for them that the sandal-wood fires are lit after sunset; it is for them that mantrams are chanted, and for them that the gods are invoked. But Shudras must not listen on any account to the divine words dictated at the beginning of the world by the four Rishis to Veda Vyasa, the great theologian of Aryavarta. No fires for them, no prayers. As during his life a Shudra never approaches a temple nearer than seven steps, so even after death he cannot be put on the same level with the "twice-born."

Brightly burn the fires, extending like a fiery serpent along the river. The dark outlines of strange, wildly-fantastical figures silently move amongst the flames. Sometimes they raise their arms towards the sky, as if in a prayer, sometimes they add fuel to the fires and poke them with long iron pitchforks. The dying flames rise high, creeping and dancing, sputtering with melted human fat and shooting towards the sky whole showers of golden sparks, which are instantly lost in the clouds of black smoke.

This on the right side of the river. Let us now see what is going on on the left. In the early hours of the morning, when the red fires, the black clouds of miasmas, and the thin figures of the fakirs grow dim and vanish little by little, when the smell of burned flesh is blown away by the fresh wind which rises at the approach of the dawn, when, in a word, the right side of the river with its ghotas plunges into stillness and silence, to be reawakened when the evening comes, processions of a different kind appear on the left bank. We see groups of Hindu men and women in sad, silent trains. They approach the river quietly. They do not cry, and have no rituals to perform. We see two men carrying something long and thin, wrapped in an old red rug. Holding it by the head and feet they swing it into the dirty, yellowish waves of the river. The shock is so violent that the red rug flies open and we behold the face of a young woman tinged with dark green, who quickly disappears in the river. Further on another group; an old man and two young women. One of them, a little girl of ten, small, thin, hardly fully developed, sobs bitterly. She is the mother of a stillborn child, whose body is to be thrown in the river. Her weak voice monotonously resounds over the shore, and her trembling hands are not strong enough to lift the poor little corpse that is more like a tiny brown kitten than a human being. The old man tries to console her, and, taking the body in his own hands, enters the water and throws it right in the middle. After him both the women get into the river, and, having plunged seven times to purify themselves from the touch of a dead body, they return home, their clothes dripping with wet. In the meanwhile vultures, crows and other birds of prey gather in thick clouds and considerably retard the progress of the bodies down the river. Occasionally some half-stripped skeleton is caught by the reeds, and stranded there helplessly for weeks, until an outcast, whose

sad duty it is to busy himself all his life long with such unclean work, takes notice of it, and catching it by the ribs with his long hook, restores it to its highway towards the ocean.

But let us leave the river bank, which is unbearably hot in spite of the early hour. Let us bid good-bye to the watery cemetery of the poor. Disgusting and heart-rending are such sights in the eyes of a European! And unconsciously we allow the light wings of reverie to transport us to the far North, to the peaceful village cemeteries where there are no marble monuments crowned with turbans, no sandal-wood fires, no dirty rivers to serve the purpose of a last resting place, but where humble wooden crosses stand in rows, sheltered by old birches. How peacefully our dead repose under the rich green grass! None of them ever saw these gigantic palms, sumptuous palaces and pagodas covered with gold. But on their poor graves grow violets and lilies of the valley, and in the spring evenings nightingales sing to them in the old birch-trees.

No nightingales ever sing for me, either in the neighboring groves, or in my own heart. The latter least of all.

Let us stroll along this wall of reddish stone. It will lead us to a fortress once celebrated and drenched with blood, now harmless and half ruined, like many another Indian fortress. Flocks of green parrots, startled by our approach, fly from under every cavity of the old wall, their wings shining in the sun like so many flying emeralds. This territory is accursed by Englishmen. This is Chandvad, where, during the Sepoy mutiny, the Bhils streamed from their ambuscades like a mighty mountain torrent, and cut many an English throat.

Tatva, an ancient Hindu book, treating of the geography of the times of King Asoka (250-300 B.C.), teaches us that the Mahratti territory spreads up to the wall of Chandvad or Chandor, and that the Kandesh country begins on the other side of the river. But English people do not believe in Tatva or in any other authority and want us to learn that Kandesh begins right at the foot of Chandor hillocks.

Twelve miles south-east from Chandvad there is a whole town of subterranean temples, known under the name of Enkay-Tenkay. Here, again, the entrance is a hundred feet from the base, and the hill is pyramidal. I must not attempt to give a full description of these temples, as this subject must be worked out in a way quite impossible in a newspaper article. So I shall only note that here all the statues, idols, and carvings are ascribed to Buddhist ascetics of the first centuries after the death of Buddha. I wish I could content myself with this statement. But, unfortunately, messieurs les archeologues meet here with an unexpected difficulty, and a more serious one than all the difficulties brought on them by the inconsistencies of all other temples put together.

In these temples there are more idols designated Buddhas than anywhere else. They cover the main entrance, sit in thick rows along the balconies, occupy the inner walls of the cells, watch

the entrances of all the doors like monster giants, and two of them sit in the chief tank, where spring water washes them century after century without any harm to their granite bodies. Some of these Buddhas are decently clad, with pyramidal pagodas as their head gear; others are naked; some sit, others stand; some are real colossi, some tiny, some of middle size. However, all this would not matter; we may go so far as to overlook the fact of Gautama's or Siddhartha-Buddha's reform consisting precisely in his earnest desire to tear up by the roots the Brahmanical idol-worship. Though, of course, we cannot help remembering that his religion remained pure from idol-worship of any kind during centuries, until the Lamas of Tibet, the Chinese, the Burmese, and the Siamese taking it into their lands disfigured it, and spoilt it with heresies. We cannot forget that, persecuted by conquer-ing Brahmans, and expelled from India, it found, at last, a shelter in Ceylon where it still flourishes like the legendary aloe, which is said to blossom once in its lifetime and then to die, as the root is killed by the exuberance of blossom, and the seeds cannot produce anything but weeds. All this we may overlook, as I said before. But the difficulty of the archaeologists still exists, if not in the fact of idols being ascribed to early Buddhists, then in the physiognomies, in the type of all these Enkay-Tenkay Buddhas. They all, from the tiniest to the hugest, are Negroes, with flat noses, thick lips, forty five degrees of the facial angle, and curly hair! There is not the slightest likeness between these Negro faces and any of the Siamese or Tibetan Buddhas, which all have purely Mongolian features and perfectly straight hair. This unexpected African type, unheard of in India, upsets the antiquarians entirely. This is why the archaeologists avoid mentioning these caves. Enkay-Tenkay is a worse difficulty for them than even Nassik; they find it as hard to conquer as the Persians found Thermopylae.

We passed by Maleganva and Chikalval, where we examined an exceedingly curious ancient temple of the Jainas. No cement was used in the building of its outer walls, they consist entirely of square stones, which are so well wrought and so closely joined that the blade of the thinnest knife cannot be pushed between two of them; the interior of the temple is richly decorated.

On our way back we did not stop in Thalner, but went straight on to Ghara. There we had to hire elephants again to visit the splendid ruins of Mandu, once a strongly fortified town, about twenty miles due north east of this place. This time we got there speedily and safely. I mention this place because some time later I witnessed in its vicinity a most curious sight, offered by the branch of the numerous Indian rites, which is generally called "devil worship."

Mandu is situated on the ridge of the Vindhya Mountains, about two thousand feet above the surface of the sea. According to Malcolm's statement, this town was built in A.D. 313, and for a long time was the capital of the Hindu Rajas of Dhara. The historian Ferishtah points to Mandu as the residence of Dilivan-Khan-Ghuri, the first King of Malwa, who flourished in 1387-1405. In 1526 the town was taken by Bahadur-Shah, King of Gujerat, but in 1570 Akbar won this town back, and a marble slab over the town gate still bears his name and the date of his visit.

On entering this vast city in its present state of solitude (the natives call it the "dead town") we all experienced a peculiar feeling, not unlike the sensation of a man who enters Pompeii for the first time. Everything shows that Mandu was once one of the wealthiest towns of India. The town wall is thirty-seven miles long. Streets ran whole miles, on their sides stand ruined palaces, and marble pillars lie on the ground. Black excavations of the subterranean halls, in the coolness of which rich ladies spent the hottest hours of the day, peer from under dilapidated granite walls. Further on are broken stairs, dry tanks, waterless fountains, endless empty yards, marble platforms, and disfigured arches of majestic porches. All this is overgrown with creepers and shrubs, hiding the dens of wild beasts. Here and there a well-preserved wall of some palace rises high above the general wreck, its empty windows fringed with parasitic plants blinking and staring at us like sightless eyes, protesting against troublesome intruders. And still further, in the very centre of the ruins, the heart of the dead town sends forth a whole crop of broken cypresses, an untrimmed grove on the place where heaved once so many breasts and clamoured so many passions.

In 1570 this town was called Shadiabad, the abode of happiness. The Franciscan missionaries, Adolf Aquaviva, Antario de Moncerotti, and others, who came here in that very year as an embassy from Goa to seek various privileges from the Mogul Government, described it over and over again. At this epoch it was one of the greatest cities of the world, whose magnificent streets and luxurious ways used to astonish the most pompous courts of India. It seems almost incredible that in such a short period nothing should remain of this town but the heaps of rubbish, amongst which we could hardly find room enough for our tent. At last we decided to pitch it in the only building which remained in a tolerable state of preservation, in Yami-Masjid, the cathedral-mosque, on a granite platform about twenty-five steps higher than the square. The stairs, constructed of pure marble like the greater part of the town buildings, are broad and almost untouched by time, but the roof has entirely disappeared, and so we were obliged to put up with the stars for a canopy. All round this building runs a low gallery supported by several rows of thick pillars. From a distance it reminds one, in spite of its being somewhat clumsy and lacking in proportion, of the Acropolis of Athens. From the stairs, where we rested for a while, there was a view of the mausoleum of Gushanga-Guri, King of Malwa, in whose reign the town was at the culmination of its brilliancy and glory. It is a massive, majestic, white marble edifice, with a sheltered peristyle and finely carved pillars. This peristyle once led straight to the palace, but now it is surrounded with a deep ravine, full of broken stones and overgrown with cacti. The interior of the mausoleum is covered with golden lettering of inscriptions from the Koran, and the sarcophagus of the sultan is placed in the middle. Close by it stands the palace of Baz-Bahadur, all broken to pieces--nothing now but a heap of dust covered with trees.

We spent the whole day visiting these sad remains, and returned to our sheltering place a little before sunset, exhausted with hunger and thirst, but triumphantly carrying on our sticks three huge snakes, killed on our way home. Tea and supper were waiting for us. To our great astonishment we found visitors in the tent.

The Patel of the neighboring village--something between a tax-collector and a judge--and two zemindars (land owners) rode over to present us their respects and to invite us and our Hindu friends, some of whom they had known previously, to accompany them to their houses. On hearing that we intended to spend the night in the "dead town" they grew awfully indignant. They assured us it was highly dangerous and utterly impossible. Two hours later hyenas, tigers, and other beasts of prey were sure to come out from under every bush and every ruined wall, without mentioning thousands of jackals and wild cats. Our elephants would not stay, and if they did stay no doubt they would be devoured. We ought to leave the ruins as quickly as possible and go with them to the nearest village, which would not take us more than half an hour. In the village everything had been prepared for us, and our friend the Babu was already there, and getting impatient at our delay.

Only on hearing this did we become aware that our bareheaded and cautious friend was conspicuous by his absence. Probably he had left some time ago, without consulting us, and made straight to the village where he evidently had friends. Sending for us was a mere trick of his. But the evening was so sweet, and we felt so comfortable, that the idea of upsetting all our plans for the morning was not at all attractive. Besides, it seemed quite ridiculous to think that the ruins, amongst which we had wandered several hours without meeting anything more dangerous than a snake, swarmed with wild animals. So we smiled and returned thanks, but would not accept the invitation.

"But you positively must not dare to stay here," insisted the fat Patel. "In case of accident, I shall be responsible for you to the Government. Is it possible you do not dread a sleepless night spent in fighting jackals, if not something worse? You do not believe that you are surrounded with wild animals..... It is true they are invisible until sunset, but nevertheless they are dangerous. If you do not believe us, believe the instinct of your elephants, who are as brave as you, but a little more reasonable. Just look at them!"

We looked. Truly, our grave, philosophic-looking elephants behaved very strangely at this moment. Their lifted trunks looked like huge points of interrogation. They snorted and stamped restively. In another minute one of them tore the thick rope, with which he was tied to a broken pillar, made a sudden volte-face with all his heavy body, and stood against the wind, sniffing the air. Evidently he perceived some dangerous animal in the neighborhood.

The colonel stared at him through his spectacles and whistled very meaningly.

"Well, well," remarked he, "what shall we do if tigers really assault us?"

"What shall we do indeed?" was my thought. "Takur Gulab-Lal-Sing is not here to protect us."

Our Hindu companions sat on the carpet after their oriental fashion, quietly chewing betel. On being asked their opinion, they said they would not interfere with our decision, and were ready to do exactly as we liked. But as for the European portion of our party,

there was no use concealing the fact that we were frightened, and we speedily prepared to start. Five minutes later we mounted the elephants, and, in a quarter of an hour, just when the sun disappeared behind the mountain and heavy darkness instantaneously fell, we passed the gate of Akbar and descended into the valley.

We were hardly a quarter of a mile from our abandoned camping place when the cypress grove resounded with shrieking howls of jackals, followed by a well-known mighty roar. There was no longer any possibility of doubting. The tigers were disappointed at our escape. Their discontentment shook the very air, and cold perspiration stood on our brows. Our elephant sprang forward, upsetting the order of our procession and threatening to crush the horses and their riders before us. We ourselves, however, were out of danger. We sat in a strong howdah, locked as in a dungeon.

"It is useless to deny that we have had a narrow escape!" remarked the colonel, looking out of the window at some twenty servants of the Patel, who were busily lighting torches.

Brahmanic Hospitalities

In an hour's time we stopped at the gate of a large bungalow, and were welcomed by the beaming face of our bareheaded Bengali. When we were all safely gathered on the verandah, he explained to us that, knowing beforehand that our "American pigheadedness" would not listen to any warning, he had dodged up this little scheme of his own and was very glad he had been successful.

"Now let us go and wash our hands, and then to supper. And," he added, addressing me, "was it not your wish to be present at a real Hindu meal? This is your opportunity. Our host is a Brahman, and you are the first Europeans who ever entered the part of his house inhabited by the family."

Who amongst Europeans ever dreamed of a country where every step, and the least action of everyday life, especially of the family life, is controlled by religious rites and cannot be performed except according to a certain programme? India is this country. In India all the important incidents of a man's life, such as birth, reaching certain periods of a child's life, marriage, fatherhood, old age and death, as well as all the physical and physiological functions of everyday routine, like morning ablutions, dressing, eating, et tout ce qui s'en suit, from a man's first hour to his last sigh, everything must be performed according to a certain Brahmanical ritual, on penalty of expulsion from his caste. The Brahmans may be compared to the musicians of an orchestra in which the different musical instruments are the numerous sects of their country. They are all of a different shape and of a different timbre; but still every one of them obeys the same leader of the band. However widely the sects may differ in the interpretation of their sacred books, however hostile they may be to each other, striving to put forward their particular deity, every one of them, obeying blindly the

ancient custom, must follow like musicians the same directing wand, the laws of Manu. This is the point where they all meet and form a unanimous, single-minded community, a strongly united mass. And woe to the one who breaks the symphony by a single discordant note! The elders and the caste or sub-caste councils (of these there are any number), whose members hold office for life, are stern rulers. There is no appeal against their decisions, and this is why expulsion from the caste is a calamity, entailing truly formidable consequences. The excommunicated member is worse off than a leper, the solidarity of the castes in this respect being something phenomenal. The only thing that can bear any comparison with it is the solidarity of the disciples of Loyola. If members of two different castes, united by the sincerest feelings of respect and friendship, may not intermarry, may not dine together, are forbidden to accept a glass of water from each other, or to offer each other a hookah, it becomes clear how much more severe all these restrictions must be in the case of an excommunicated person. The poor wretch must literally die to everybody, to the members of his own family as to strangers. His own household, his father, wife, children, are all bound to turn their faces from him, under the penalty of being excommunicated in their turn. There is no hope for his sons and daughters of getting married, however innocent they may be of the sin of their father.

From the moment of "excommunication" the Hindu must totally disappear. His mother and wife must not feed him, must not let him drink from the family well. No member of any existing caste dares to sell him his food or cook for him. He must either starve or buy eatables from outcasts and Europeans, and so incur the dangers of further pollution. When the Brahmanical power was at its zenith, such acts as deceiving, robbing and even killing this wretch were encouraged, as he was beyond the pale of the laws. Now, at all events, he is free from the latter danger, but still, even now, if he happens to die before he is forgiven and received back into his caste, his body may not be burned, and no purifying mantrams will be chanted for him; he will be thrown into the water, or left to rot under the bushes like a dead cat.

This is a passive force, and its passiveness only makes it more formidable. Western education and English influence can do nothing to change it. There exists only one course of action for the excommunicated; he must show signs of repentance and submit to all kinds of humiliations, often to the total loss of all his worldly possessions. Personally, I know several young Brahmans, who, having brilliantly passed the university examinations in England, have had to submit to the most repulsive conditions of purification on their return home; these purifications consisting chiefly in shaving off half their moustaches and eyebrows, crawling in the dust round pagodas, clinging during long hours to the tail of a sacred cow, and, finally, swallowing the excrements of this cow. The latter ceremony is called "Pancha-Gavya," literally, the five products of the cow: milk, curds, butter, etc. The voyage over Kalapani, the black water, that is to say the sea, is considered the worst of all the sins. A man who commits it is considered as polluting himself continually, from the first moment of his going on board the bellati (foreign) ship.

Only a few days ago a friend of ours, who is an LL.D., had to undergo this "purgation," and it nearly cost him his reason. When we remonstrated with him, pointing out that in his case it was

simply foolish to submit, he being a materialist by conviction and not caring a straw for Brahmanism, he replied that he was bound to do so for the following reasons:

"I have two daughters," he explained, "one five, the other six years old. If I do not find a husband for the eldest of them in the course of the coming year, she will grow too old to get married, nobody will think of espousing her. Suppose I suffer my caste to excommunicate me, both my girls will be dishonored and miserable for the rest of their lives. Then, again, I must take into consideration the superstitions of my old mother. If such a misfortune befell me, it would simply kill her....."

But why should he not free himself from every bond to Brahmanism and caste? Why not join, once for all, the ever-growing community of men who are guilty of the same offence? Why not ask all his family to form a colony and join the civilization of the Europeans?

All these are very natural questions, but unfortunately there is no difficulty in finding reasons for answering them in the negative.

There were thirty-two reasons given why one of Napoleon's marshals refused to besiege a certain fortress, but the first of these reasons was the absence of gunpowder, and so it excluded the necessity of discussing the remaining thirty-one. Similarly the first reason why a Hindu cannot be Europeanized is quite sufficient, and does not call for any additional ones. This reason is that by doing so a Hindu would not improve his position. Were he such an adept of science as to rival Tyndall, were he such a clever politician as to eclipse the genius of Disraeli and Bismarck, as soon as he actually had given up his caste and kinsmen, he would indubitably find himself in the position of Mahomet's coffin; metaphorically speaking, he would hang half-way between the earth and the sky.

It would be an utter injustice to suppose that this state of things is the result of the policy of the English Government; that the said Government is afraid of giving a chance to natives who may be suspected of being hostile to the British rule. In reality, the Government has little or nothing to do with it. This state of things must be attributed entirely to the social ostracism, to the contempt felt by a "superior" for an "inferior" race, a contempt deeply rooted in some members of the Anglo-Indian society and displayed at the least provocation. This question of racial "superiority" and "inferiority" plays a more important part than is generally believed, even in England. Nevertheless, the natives (Mussulmans included) do not deserve contempt, and so the gulf between the rulers and the ruled widens with every year, and long centuries would not suffice to fill it up.

I have to dwell upon all this to give my readers a clear idea on the subject. And so it is no wonder the ill-fated Hindus prefer temporary humiliations and the physical and moral sufferings of the "purification," to the prospect of general contempt until death. These were the questions we discussed with the Brahmans during the two hours before dinner.

Dining with foreigners and people belonging to different castes is, no doubt, a dangerous breach of Manu's sacred precepts. But this time, for once, it was easily explained. First, the stout Patel,

our host, was the head of his caste, and so was beyond the dread of excommunication; secondly, he had already taken all the prescribed and advisable precautions against being polluted by our presence. He was a free-thinker in his own way, and a friend of Gulab-Lal-Sing, and so he rejoiced at the idea of showing us how much skillful sophistry and strategical circumspection can be used by adroit Brahmans to avoid the law in some circumstances, while adhering at the same time to its dead letter. Besides, our good-natured, well-favored host evidently desired to obtain a diploma from our Society, being well aware that the collector of his district was enrolled amongst our members.

These, at any rate, were the explanations of our Babu when we expressed our astonishment; so it was our concern to make the most of our chance, and to thank Providence for this rare opportunity. And this we accordingly did.

Hindus take their food only twice a day, at ten o'clock in the morning and at nine in the evening. Both meals are accompanied by complicated rites and ceremonies. Even very young children are not allowed to eat at odd times, eating without the prescribed performance of certain exorcisms being considered a sin. Thousands of educated Hindus have long ceased to believe in all these superstitious customs, but, nevertheless, they are daily practised.

Sham Rao Bahunathji, our host, belonged to the ancient caste of Patarah Prabhus, and was very proud of his origin. Prabhu means lord, and this caste descends from the Kshatriyas. The first of them was Ashvapati (700 B.C.), a lineal descendant of Rama and Prithu, who, as is stated in the local chronology, governed India in the Dvapara and Treta Yugas, which is a good while ago! The Patarah Prabhus are the only caste within which Brahmans have to perform certain purely Vedic rites, known under the name of the "Kshatriya rites." But this does not prevent their being Patans, instead of Patars, Patan meaning the fallen one. This is the fault of King Ashvapati. Once, when distributing gifts to holy anchorites, he inadvertently forgot to give his due to the great Bhrigu. The offended prophet and seer declared to him that his reign was drawing near its end, and that all his posterity would perish. The king, throwing himself on the ground, implored the prophet's pardon. But his curse had worked its fulfilment already. All that he could do to stop the mischief consisted in a solemn promise not to let the king's descendants disappear completely from the earth. However, the Patars soon lost their throne and their power. Since then they have had to "live by their pens," in the employment of many successive governments, to exchange their name of Patars for Patans, and to lead a humbler life than many of their late subjects. Happily for our talkative Amphitryon, his forefathers became Brahmans, that is to say "went through the golden cow."

The expression "to live by their pens" alludes, as we learned later on, to the fact of the Patans occupying all the small Government posts in the Bombay Presidency, and so being dangerous rivals of the Bengali Babus since the time of British rule. In Bombay the Patan clerks reach the considerable figure of five thousand. Their complexion is darker than the complexion of Konkan Brahmans, but they are handsomer and brighter. As to the mysterious expression,

"went through the golden cow," it illustrates a very curious custom. The Kshatriyas, and even the much-despised Shudras, may become a sort of left-hand Brahmans. This metamorphosis depends on the will of the real Brahmans, who may, if they like, sell this right for several hundreds or thousands of cows. When the gift is accomplished, a model cow, made of pure gold, is erected and made sacred by the performance of some mystical ceremonies. The candidate must now crawl through her hollow body three times, and thus is transformed into a Brahman. The present Maharaja of Travankor, and even the great Raja of Benares, who died recently, were both Shudras who acquired their rights in this manner. We received all this information and a notion of the legendary Patar chronicle from our obliging host.

Having announced that we must now get ready for dinner, he disappeared in the company of all the gentlemen of our party. Being left to ourselves, Miss X--- and I decided to have a good look at the house whilst it was empty. The Babu, being a downright, modern Bengali, had no respect for the religious preparations for dinner, and chose to accompany us, proposing to explain to us all that we should otherwise fail to understand.

The Prabhu brothers always live together, but every married couple have separate rooms and servants of their own. The habitation of our host was very spacious. There were small several bungalows, occupied by his brothers, and a chief building containing rooms for visitors, the general dining-room, a lying-in ward, a small chapel with any number of idols, and so on. The ground floor, of course, was surrounded by a verandah pierced with arches leading to a huge hall. All round this hall were wooden pillars adorned with exquisite carving. For some reason or other, it struck me that these pillars once belonged to some palace of the "dead town." On close examination I only grew more convinced that I was right. Their style bore no traces of Hindu taste; no gods, no fabulous monster animals, only arabesques and elegant leaves and flowers of nonexistent plants. The pillars stood very close to each other, but the carvings prevented them from forming an uninterrupted wall, so that the ventilation was a little too strong. All the time we spent at the dinner table miniature hurricanes whistled from behind every pillar, waking up all our old rheumatisms and toothaches, which had peacefully slumbered since our arrival in India.

The front of the house was thickly covered with iron horseshoes-- the best precaution against evil spirits and evil eyes.

At the foot of a broad, carved staircase we came across a couch or a cradle, hung from the ceiling by iron chains. I saw somebody lying on it, whom, at first sight, I mistook for a sleeping Hindu, and was going to retreat discreetly, but, recognizing my old friend Hanuman, I grew bold and endeavored to examine him. Alas! the poor idol possessed only a head and neck, the rest of his body was a heap of old rags.

On the left side of the verandah there were many more lateral rooms, each with a special destination, some of which I have mentioned already. The largest of these rooms was called "vattan," and was used exclusively by the fair sex. Brahman women are not bound to spend their lives under veils, like Mussulman women, but still they have very little communication with men, and keep aloof.

Women cook the men's food, but do not dine with them. The elder ladies of the family are often held in great respect, and husbands sometimes show a shy courteousness towards their wives, but still a woman has no right to speak to her husband before strangers, nor even before the nearest relations, such as her sisters and her mother.

As to the Hindu widows, they really are the most wretched creatures in the whole world. As soon as a woman's husband dies she must have her hair and her eyebrows shaven off. She must part with all her trinkets, her earrings, her nose jewels, her bangles and toe-rings. After this is done she is as good as dead. The lowest outcast would not marry her. A man is polluted by her slightest touch, and must immediately proceed to purify himself. The dirtiest work of the household is her duty, and she must not eat with the married women and the children. The "sati," the burning of the widows, is abolished, but Brahmans are clever managers, and the widows often long for the sati.

At last, having examined the family chapel, full of idols, flowers, rich vases with burning incense, lamps hanging from its ceiling, and aromatic herbs covering its floor, we decided to get ready for dinner. We carefully washed ourselves, but this was not enough, we were requested to take off our shoes. This was a somewhat disagreeable surprise, but a real Brahmanical supper was worth the trouble.

However, a truly amazing surprise was still in store for us.

On entering the dining-room we stopped short at the entrance--both our European companions were dressed, or rather undressed, exactly like Hindus! For the sake of decency they kept on a kind of sleeveless knitted vest, but they were barefooted, wore the snow-white Hindu dhutis (a piece of muslin wrapped round to the waist and forming a petticoat), and looked like something between white Hindus and Constantinople garcons de bains. Both were indescribably funny, I never saw anything funnier. To the great discomfiture of the men, and the scandal of the grave ladies of the house, I could not restrain myself, but burst out laughing. Miss X--- blushed violently and followed my example.

A quarter of an hour before the evening meal every Hindu, old or young, has to perform a "puja" before the gods. He does not change his clothes, as we do in Europe, but takes off the few things he wore during the day. He bathes by the family well and loosens his hair, of which, if he is a Mahratti or an inhabitant of the Dekkan, he has only one long lock at the top of his shaven head. To cover the body and the head whilst eating would be sinful. Wrapping his waist and legs in a white silk dhuti, he goes once more to salute the idols and then sits down to his meal.

But here I shall allow myself to digress. "Silk possesses the property of dismissing the evil spirits who inhabit the magnetic fluids of the atmosphere," says the Mantram, book v., verse 23. And I cannot help wondering whether this apparent superstition may not contain a deeper meaning. It is difficult, I own, to part with our favorite theories about all the customs of ancient heathendom being mere ignorant superstitions. But have not some

vague notions of these customs being founded originally on a true knowledge of scientific principles found their way amongst European scientific circles? At first sight the idea seems untenable. But why may we not suppose that the ancients prescribed this observance in the full knowledge that the effect of electricity upon the organs of digestion is truly beneficial? People who have studied the ancient philosophy of India with a firm resolve to penetrate the hidden meaning of its aphorisms have for the most part grown convinced that electricity and its effects were known to a considerable extent to some philosophers, as, for instance, to Patanjali. Charaka and Sushruta had pro-pounded the system of Hippocrates long before the time of him who in Europe is supposed to be the "father of medicine." The Bhadrinath temple of Vishnu possesses a stone bearing evident proof of the fact that Surya-Sidhanta knew and calculated the expansive force of steam many centuries ago. The ancient Hindus were the first to determine the velocity of light and the laws of its reflection; and the table of Pythagoras and his celebrated theorem of the square of hypotenuse are to be found in the ancient books of Jyotisha. All this leads us to suppose that ancient Aryans, when instituting the strange custom of wearing silk during meals, had something serious in view, more serious, at all events, than the "dismissing of demons."

Having entered the "refectory," we immediately noticed what were the Hindu precautions against their being polluted by our presence. The stone floor of the hall was divided into two equal parts. This division consisted of a line traced in chalk, with Kabalistic signs at either end. One part was destined for the host's party and the guests belonging to the same caste, the other for ourselves. On our side of the hall there was yet a third square to contain Hindus of a different caste. The furniture of the two bigger squares was exactly similar. Along the two opposite walls there were narrow carpets spread on the floor, covered with cushions and low stools. Before every occupant there was an oblong on the bare floor, traced also with chalk, and divided, like a chess board, into small quadrangles which were destined for dishes and plates. Both the latter articles were made of the thick strong leaves of the butea frondosa: larger dishes of several leaves pinned together with thorns, plates and saucers of one leaf with its borders turned up. All the courses of the supper were already arranged on each square; we counted forty-eight dishes, containing about a mouthful of forty-eight different dainties. The materials of which they were composed were mostly terra incognita to us, but some of them tasted very nice. All this was vegetarian food. Of meat, fowl, eggs and fish there appeared no traces. There were chutneys, fruit and vegetables preserved in vinegar and honey, panchamrits, a mixture of pampello-berries, tamarinds, cocoa milk, treacle and olive oil, and kushmer, made of radishes, honey and flour; there were also burning hot pickles and spices. All this was crowned with a mountain of exquisitely cooked rice and another mountain of chapatis, which are something like brown pancakes. The dishes stood in four rows, each row containing twelve dishes; and between the rows burned three aromatic sticks of the size of a small church taper. Our part of the hall was brightly lit with green and red candles. The chandeliers which held these candles were of a very queer shape. They each represented the trunk of a tree with a seven-headed cobra wound round it. From each of the seven mouths

rose a red or a green wax candle of spiral form like a corkscrew. Draughts blowing from behind every pillar fluttered the yellow flames, filling the roomy refectory with fantastic moving shadows, and causing both our lightly-clad gentlemen to sneeze very frequently. Leaving the dark silhouettes of the Hindus in comparative obscurity, this unsteady light made the two white figures still more conspicuous, as if making a masquerade of them and laughing at them.

The relatives and friends of our host came in one after the other. They were all naked down to the waist, all barefooted, all wore the triple Brahmanical thread and white silk dhutis, and their hair hung loose. Every sahib was followed by his own servant, who carried his cup, his silver, or even gold, jug filled with water, and his towel. All of them, having saluted the host, greeted us, the palms of their hands pressed to-gether and touching their foreheads, their breasts, and then the floor. They all said to us: "Ram-Ram" and "Namaste" (salutation to thee), and then made straight for their respective seats in perfect silence. Their civilities reminded me that the custom of greeting each other with the twice pronounced name of some ancestor was usual in the remotest antiquity.

We all sat down, the Hindus calm and stately, as if preparing for some mystic celebration, we ourselves feeling awkward and uneasy, fearing to prove guilty of some unpardonable blunder. An invisible choir of women's voices chanted a monotonous hymn, celebrating the glory of the gods. These were half a dozen nautch-girls from a neighboring pagoda. To this accompaniment we began satisfying our appetites. Thanks to the Babu's instructions, we took great care to eat only with our right hands. This was somewhat difficult, because we were hungry and hasty, but quite necessary. Had we only so much as touched the rice with our left hands whole hosts of Rakshasas (demons) would have been attracted to take part in the festivity that very moment; which, of course, would send all the Hindus out of the room. It is hardly necessary to say that there were no traces of forks, knives or spoons. That I might run no risk of breaking the rule I put my left hand in my pocket and held on to my pocket-handkerchief all the time the dinner lasted.

The singing lasted only a few minutes. During the rest of the time a dead silence reigned amongst us. It was Monday, a fast day, and so the usual absence of noise at meal times had to be observed still more strictly than on any other day. Usually a man who is compelled to break the silence by some emergency or other hastens to plunge into water the middle finger of his left hand, which till then had remained hidden behind his back, and to moisten both his eyelids with it. But a really pious man would not be content with this simple formula of purification; having spoken, he must leave the dining-room, wash thoroughly, and then abstain from food for the remainder of the day.

Thanks to this solemn silence, I was at liberty to notice everything that was going on with great attention. Now and again, whenever I caught sight of the colonel or Mr. Y---, I had all the difficulty in the world to preserve my gravity. Fits of foolish laughter would take possession of me when I observed them sitting erect with such comical solemnity and working so awkwardly with their elbows and hands. The long beard of the one was white with grains of rice, as if silvered with hoar-frost, the chin of the other was yellow with liquid saffron. But unsatisfied curiosity happily came

to my rescue, and I went on watching the quaint proceedings of the Hindus.

Each of them, having sat down with his legs twisted under him, poured some water with his left hand out of the jug brought by the servant, first into his cup, then into the palm of his right hand. Then he slowly and carefully sprinkled the water round a dish with all kinds of dainties, which stood by itself, and was destined, as we learned afterwards, for the gods. During this procedure each Hindu repeated a Vedic mantram. Filling his right hand with rice, he pronounced a new series of couplets, then, having stored five pinches of rice on the right side of his own plate, he once more washed his hands to avert the evil eye, sprinkled more water, and pouring a few drops of it into his right palm, slowly drank it. After this he swallowed six pinches of rice, one after the other, murmuring prayers all the while, and wetted both his eyes with the middle finger of his left hand. All this done, he finally hid his left hand behind his back, and began eating with the right hand. All this took only a few minutes, but was performed very solemnly.

The Hindus ate with their bodies bent over the food, throwing it up and catching it in their mouths so dexterously that not a grain of rice was lost, not a drop of the various liquids spilt. Zealous to show his consideration for his host, the colonel tried to imitate all these movements. He contrived to bend over his food almost horizontally, but, alas! he could not remain long in this position. The natural weight of his powerful limbs overcame him, he lost his balance and nearly tumbled head foremost, dropping his spectacles into a dish of sour milk and garlic. After this unsuccessful experience the brave American gave up all further attempts to become "Hinduized," and sat very quietly.

The supper was concluded with rice mixed with sugar, powdered peas, olive oil, garlic and grains of pomegranate, as usual. This last dainty is consumed hurriedly. Everyone nervously glances askance at his neighbor, and is mortally afraid of being the last to finish, because this is considered a very bad sign. To conclude, they all take some water into their mouths, murmuring prayers the while, and this time they must swallow it in one gulp. Woe to the one who chokes! 'Tis a clear sign that a bhuta has taken possession of his throat. The unfortunate man must run for his life and get purified before the altar.

The poor Hindus are very much troubled by these wicked bhutas, the souls of the people who have died with ungratified desires and earthly passions. Hindu spirits, if I am to believe the unanimous assertions of one and all, are always swarming round the living, always ready to satisfy their hunger with other people's mouths and gratify their impure desires with the help of organs temporarily stolen from the living. They are feared and cursed all over India. No means to get rid of them are despised. The notions and conclusions of the Hindus on this point categorically contradict the aspirations and hopes of Western spiritualists.

"A good and pure spirit, they are confident, will not let his soul revisit the earth, if this soul is equally pure. He is glad to die and unite himself to Brahma, to live an eternal life in Svarga (heaven) and enjoy the society of the beautiful Gandharvas or

singing angels. He is glad to slumber whole eternities, listening to their songs, whilst his soul is purified by a new incarnation in a body, which is more perfect than the one the soul abandoned previously."

The Hindus believe that the spirit or Atma, a particle of the GREAT ALL, which is Parabrahm, cannot be punished for sins in which it never participated. It is Manas, the animal intelligence, and the animal soul or Jiva, both half material illusions, that sin and suffer and transmigrate from one body into the other till they purify themselves. The spirit merely overshadows their earthly transmigrations. When the Ego has reached the final state of purity, it will be one with the Atma, and gradually will merge and disappear in Parabrahm.

But this is not what awaits the wicked souls. The soul that does not succeed in getting rid of earthly cares and desires before the death of the body is weighed down by its sins, and, instead of reincarnating in some new form, according to the laws of metempsychosis, it will remain bodiless, doomed to wander on earth. It will become a bhuta, and by its own sufferings will cause unutterable sufferings to its kinsmen. That is why the Hindu fears above all things to remain bodiless after his death.

"It is better for one to enter the body of a tiger, of a dog, even of a yellow-legged falcon, after death, than to become a bhuta!" an old Hindu said to me on one occasion. "Every animal possesses a body of his own and a right to make an honest use of it. Whereas the bhutas are doomed dakoits, brigands and thieves, they are ever watching for an opportunity to use what does not belong to them. This is a horrible state--a horror indescribable. This is the true hell. What is this spiritualism they talk so much of in the West? Is it possible the intelligent English and Americans are so mad as this?"

And all our remonstrances notwithstanding, he refused to believe that there are actually people who are fond of bhutas, who would do much to attract them into their homes.

After supper the men went again to the family well to wash, and then dressed themselves.

Usually at this hour of the night the Hindus put on clean malmalas, a kind of tight shirt, white turbans, and wooden sandals with knobs pressed between the toes. These curious shoes are left at the door whilst their owners return to the hall and sit down along the walls on carpets and cushions to chew betel, smoke hookahs and cheroots, to listen to sacred reading, and to witness the dances of the nautches. But this evening, probably in our honor, all the Hindus dressed magnificently. Some of them wore darias of rich striped satin, no end of gold bangles, necklaces mounted with diamonds and emeralds, gold watches and chains, and transparent Brahmanical scarfs with gold embroidery. The fat fingers and the right ear of our host were simply blazing with diamonds.

The women, who waited on us during the meal, disappeared afterwards for a considerable time. When they came back they also were luxuriously overdressed and were introduced to us formally as the ladies of the house. They were five: the wife of the host, a

woman of twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age, then two others looking somewhat younger, one of whom carried a baby, and, to our great astonishment, was introduced as the married daughter of the hostess; then the old mother of the host and a little girl of seven, the wife of one of his brothers. So that our hostess turned out to be a grandmother, and her sister-in-law, who was to enter finally into matrimony in from two to three years, might have become a mother before she was twelve. They were all barefooted, with rings on each of their toes, and all, with the exception of the old woman, wore garlands of natural flowers round their necks and in their jet black hair. Their tight bodices, covered with embroidery, were so short that between them and the sari there was a good quarter of a yard of bare skin. The dark, bronze-coloured waists of these well-shaped Women were boldly presented to any one's examination and reflected the lights of the room. Their beautiful arms and their ankles were covered with bracelets. At the least of their movements they all set up a tinkling silvery sound, and the little sister-in-law, who might easily be mistaken for an automaton doll, could hardly move under her load of ornaments. The young grandmother, our hostess, had a ring in her left nostril, which reached to the lower part of the chin. Her nose was considerably disfigured by the weight of the gold, and we noticed how unusually handsome she was only when she took it off to enable herself to drink her tea with some comfort.

The dances of the nautch girls began. Two of them were very pretty. Their dancing consisted chiefly in more or less expressive movements of their eyes, their heads, and even their ears, in fact, of the whole upper part of their bodies. As to their legs, they either did not move at all or moved with such a swiftness as to appear in a cloud of mist.

After this eventful day I slept the sleep of the just.

After many nights spent in a tent, it is more than agreeable to sleep in a regular bed, even if it is only a hanging one. The pleasure would, no doubt, have been considerably increased had I but known I was resting on the couch of a god. But this latter circumstance was revealed to me only in the morning, when descending the staircase I suddenly discovered the poor general en chef, Hanuman, deprived of his cradle and unceremoniously stowed away under the stairs. Decidedly, the Hindus of the nineteenth century are a degenerate and blaspheming race!

In the course of the morning we learned that this swinging throne of his, and an ancient sofa, were the only pieces of furniture in the whole house that could be transformed into beds.

Neither of our gentlemen had spent a comfortable night. They slept in an empty tower that was once the altar of a decayed pagoda and was situated behind the main building. In assigning to them this strange resting place, the host was guided by the praiseworthy intention of protecting them from the jackals, which freely penetrate into all the rooms of the ground floor, as they are pierced by numberless arches and have no door and no window frames. The jackals, however, did not trouble the gentlemen much that night, except by giving their nightly concert. But both Mr. Y--- and the colonel

had to fight all the night long with a vampire, which, besides being a flying fox of an unusual size, happened to be a spirit, as we learned too late, to our great misfortune.

This is how it happened. Noiselessly hovering about the tower, the vampire from time to time alighted on the sleepers, making them shudder under the disgusting touch of his cold sticky wings. His intention clearly was to get a nice suck of European blood. They were wakened by his manipulations at least ten times, and each time frightened him away. But, as soon as they were dozing again, the wretched bat was sure to return and perch on their shoulders, heads, or legs. At last Mr. Y---, losing patience, had recourse to strong measures; he caught him and broke his neck.

Feeling perfectly innocent, the gentlemen mentioned the tragic end of the troublesome flying fox to their host, and instantly drew down on their heads all the thunder-clouds of heaven.

The yard was crowded with people. All the inhabitants of the house stood sorrowfully drooping their heads, at the entrance of the tower. Our host's old mother tore her hair in despair, and shrieked lamentations in all the languages of India. What was the matter with them all? We were at our wits' end. But when we learned the cause of all this, there was no limit to our confusion.

By certain mysterious signs, known only to the family Brahman, it had been decided ten years ago that the soul of our host's elder brother had incarnated in this blood-thirsty vampire-bat. This fact was stated as being beyond any doubt. For nine years the late Patarah Prabhu existed under this new shape, carrying out the laws of metempsychosis. He spent the hours between sunrise and the sunset in an old pipal-tree before the tower, hanging with his head downwards. But at night he visited the old tower and gave fierce chase to the insects that sought rest in this out-of-the-way corner. And so nine years were spent in this happy existence, divided between sleep, food, and the gradual redemption of old sins committed in the shape of a Patarah Prabhu. And now? Now his listless body lay in the dust at the entrance of his favorite tower, and his wings were half devoured by the rats. The poor old woman, his mother, was mad with sorrow, and cast, through her tears, reproachful, angry looks at Mr. Y---, who, in his new capacity of a heartless murderer, looked disgustingly composed.

But the affair was growing serious. The comical side of it disappeared before the sincerity and the intensity of her lamentations. Her descendants, grouped around her, were too polite to reproach us openly, but the expression of their faces was far from reassuring. The family priest and astrologer stood by the old lady, Shastras in hand, ready to begin the ceremony of purification. He solemnly covered the corpse with a piece of new linen. and so hid from our eyes the sad remains on which ants were literally swarming.

Mr. Y--- did his best to look unconcerned, but still, when the tactless Miss X--- came to him, expressing her loud indignation at all these superstitions of an inferior race, he at least seemed to remember that our host knew English perfectly, and he did not encourage her farther expressions of sympathy. He made no answer, but smiled contemptuously. Our host approached the colonel with

respectful salaams and invited us to follow him.

"No doubt he is going to ask us to leave his house immediately!" was my uncomfortable impression.

But my apprehension was not justified. At this epoch of my Indian pilgrimage I was far, as yet, from having fathomed the metaphysical depth of a Hindu heart.

Sham Rao began by delivering a very far-fetched, eloquent preface. He reminded us that he, personally, was an enlightened man, a man who possessed all the advantages of a Western education. He said that, owing to this, he was not quite sure that the body of the vampire was actually inhabited by his late brother. Darwin, of course, and some other great naturalists of the West, seemed to believe in the transmigration of souls, but, as far as he understood, they believed in it in an inverse sense; that is to say, if a baby had been born to his mother exactly at the moment of the vampire's death, this baby would indubitably have had a great likeness to a vampire, owing to the decaying atoms of the vampire being so close to her.

"Is not this an exact interpretation of the Darwinian school?" he asked.

We modestly answered that, having traveled almost incessantly during the last year, we could not help being a bit behindhand in the questions of modern science, and that we were not able to follow its latest conclusions.

"But I have followed them!" rejoined the good-natured Sham Rao, with a touch of pomposity. "And so I hope I may be allowed to say that I have understood and duly appreciated their most recent developments. I have just finished studying the magnificent Anthropogenesis of Haeckel, and have carefully discussed in my own mind his logical, scientific explanations of the origin of man from inferior animal forms through transformation. And what is this transformation, pray, if not the transmigration of the ancient and modern Hindus, and the metempsychosis of the Greeks?"

We had nothing to say against the identity, and even ventured to observe that, according to Haeckel, it does look like it.

"Exactly!" exclaimed he joyfully. "This shows that our conceptions are neither silly nor superstitious, as is maintained by some opponents of Manu. The great Manu, anticipated Darwin and Haeckel. Judge for yourself; the latter derives the genesis of man from a group of plastides, from the jelly-like moneron; this moneron, through the ameoba, the ascidian, the brainless and heartless amphioxus, and so on, transmigrates in the eighth remove into the lamprey, is transformed, at last, into a vertebrate amniote, into a premammalian, into a marsupial animal.... The vampire, in its turn, belongs to the species of vertebrates. You, being well read people all of you, cannot contradict this statement." He was right in his supposition; we did not contradict it.

"In this case, do me the honor to follow my argument...."

We did follow his argument with the greatest attention, but were at a loss to foresee whither it tended to lead us.

"Darwin," continued Sham Rao, "in his Origin of Species, re-established almost word for word the palin-genetic teachings of our Manu. Of this I am perfectly convinced, and, if you like, I can prove it to you book in hand. Our ancient law-giver, amongst other sayings, speaks as follows: `The great Parabrahm commanded man to appear in the universe, after traversing all the grades of the animal kingdom, and springing primarily from the worm of the deep sea mud.' The worm be-came a snake, the snake a fish, the fish a mammal, and so on. Is not this very idea at the bottom of Darwin's theory, when he maintains that the organic forms have their origin in more simple species, and says that the structureless protoplasm born in the mud of the Laurentian and Silurian periods-- the Manu's `mud of the seas,' I dare say--gradually transformed itself into the anthro-poid ape, and then finally into the human being?"

We said it looked very like it.

"But, in spite of all my respect for Darwin and his eminent follower Haeckel, I cannot agree with their final conclusions, especially with the conclusions of the latter," continued Sham Rao. "This hasty and bilious German is perfectly accurate in copying the embryology of Manu and all the metamorphoses of our ancestors, but he forgets the evolution of the human soul, which, as it is stated by Manu, goes hand in hand with the evolution of matter. The son of Swayambhuva, the Self Becoming, speaks as follows: `Everything created in a new cycle, in addition to the qualities of its preceding transmigrations, acquires new qualities, and the nearer it approaches to man, the highest type of the earth, the brighter becomes its divine spark; but, once it has become a Brahma, it will enter the cycle of conscious transmigrations.' Do you realize what that means? It means that from this moment, its transformations depend no longer on the blind laws of gradual evolution, but on the least of a man's actions, which brings either a reward or a punishment. Now you see that it depends on the man's will whether, on the one hand, he will start on the way to Moksha, the eternal bliss, passing from one Loka to another till he reaches Brahmaloka, or, on the other, owing to his sins, will be thrown back. You know that the average soul, once freed from earthly reincarnations, has to ascend from one Loka to another, always in the human shape, though this shape will grow and perfect itself with every Loka. Some of our sects understood these Lokas to mean certain stars. These spirits, freed from earthly matter, are what we mean by Pitris and Devas, whom we worship. And did not your Kabalists of the middle ages designate these Pitris under the expression Planetary Spirits? But, in the case of a very sinful man, he will have to begin once more with the animal forms which he had already traversed unconsciously. Both Darwin and Haeckel lose sight of this, so to speak, second volume of their incomplete theory, but still neither of them advances any argument to prove it false. Is it not so?"

"Neither of them does anything of the sort, most assuredly."

"Why, in this case," exclaimed he, suddenly changing his colloquial tone for an aggressive one, "why am I, I who have studied the most modern ideas of Western science, I who believe in its representatives-- why am I suspected, pray, by Miss X--- of belonging to the tribe of the ignorant and superstitious Hindus? Why does she think that our perfected scientific theories are superstitions, and we ourselves a fallen inferior race?"

Sham Rao stood before us with tears in his eyes. We were at a loss what to answer him, being confused to the last degree by this outburst.

"Mind you, I do not proclaim our popular beliefs to be infallible dogmas. I consider them as mere theories, and try to the best of my ability to reconcile the ancient and the modern science. I formulate hypotheses just like Darwin and Haeckel. Besides, if I understood rightly, Miss X--- is a spiritualist, so she believes in bhutas. And, believing that a bhuta is capable of penetrating the body of a medium, how can she deny that a bhuta, and more so a less sinful soul, may enter the body of a vampire-bat?"

I own, this logic was a little too condensed for us, and so, avoiding a direct answer to a metaphysical question of such delicacy, we tried to apologize and excuse Miss X---'s rudeness as well as we could.

"She did not mean to offend you," we said, "she only repeated a calumny, familiar to every European. Besides, if she had taken the trouble to think it over, she probably would not have said it...."

Little by little we succeeded in pacifying our host. He recovered his usual cheerfulness, but could not resist the temptation of adding a few words to his long argumentation. He had just begun to reveal to us certain peculiarities of his late brother's character, which induced him to be prepared, judging by the laws of atavism, to see their repetition in the propensities of a vampire bat, when Mr. Y--- suddenly dashed in on our small group and spoiled all the results of our conciliatory words by screaming at the top of his voice: "The old woman has gone demented! She keeps on cursing us and says that the murder of this wretched bat is only the forerunner of a whole series of misfortunes brought on her house by you, Sham Rao," said he, hastily addressing the bewildered follower of Haackel. "She says you have polluted your Brahmanical holiness by inviting us. Colonel, you had better send for the elephants. In another moment all this crowd will be on us..."

"For goodness' sake!" exclaimed poor Sham Rao, "have some consideration for my feelings. She is an old woman, she has some superstitions, but she is my mother. You are educated people, learned people... Advise me, show me a way out of all these difficulties. What should you do in my place?"

"What should I do, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Y---, completely put out of temper by the utter ludicrousness of our awkward predicament. "What should I do? Were I a man in your position and a believer in all you are brought up to believe, I should take my revolver, and in the first place, shoot all the vampire bats in the neighborhood, if only to rid all your late relations from the abject bodies of these creatures, and, in the second place, I should endeavor to smash the head of the conceited fraud in the shape of a Brahman who invented all this stupid story. That is what I should do, sir!"

But this advice did not content the miserable descendant of Rama. No doubt he would have remained a long time undecided as to what course of action to adopt, torn as he was between the sacred feelings of hospitality, the innate fear of the Brahman-priest, and his own superstitions, if our ingenious Babu had not come to our rescue.

Learning that we all felt more or less indignant at all this row, and that we were preparing to leave the house as quickly as possible, he persuaded us to stay, if only for an hour, saying that our hasty departure would be a terrible outrage upon our host, whom, in any case, we could not find fault with. As to the stupid old woman, the Babu promised us to pacify her speedily enough: he had his own plans and views. In the meantime, he said, we had better go and examine the ruins of an old fortress close by.

We obeyed very reluctantly, feeling an acute interest in his "plans." We proceeded slowly. Our gentlemen were visibly out of temper. Miss X--- tried to calm herself by talking more than usual, and Narayan, as phlegmatic as usual, indolently and good-naturedly chaffed her about her beloved "spirits." Glancing back we saw the Babu accompanied by the family priest. Judging by their gestures they were engaged in some warm discussion. The shaven head of the Brahman nodded right and left, his yellow garment flapped in the wind, and his arms rose towards the sky, as if in an appeal to the gods to come down and testify to the truth of his words.

"I'll bet you a thousand dollars, no plans of our Babu's will be of any avail with this fanatic!" confidently remarked the colonel as he lit his pipe.

But we had hardly walked a hundred steps after this remark when we saw the Babu running after us and signaling us to stop.

"Everything ended first-rate!" screamed he, as soon as we could hear. "You are to be thanked . . . You happen to be the true saviours and benefactors of the deceased bhuta... You..."

Our Babu sank on the ground holding his narrow, panting breast with both his hands, and laughed, laughed till we all burst into laughter too, before learning any-thing at all.

"Think of it," began the Babu, and stopped short, prevented from going on by his exuberant hilarity. "Just think of it! The whole transaction is to cost me only ten rupees.... I offered five at first... but he would not.... He said this was a sacred matter..... But ten he could not resist! Ho, ho, ho.... "

At last we learned the story. All the metempsychoses depend on the imagination of the family Gurus, who receive for their kind offices from one hundred to one hundred and fifty rupees a year. Every rite is accompanied by a more or less considerable addition to the purse of the insatiable family Brahman, but the happy events pay better than the sad ones. Knowing all this, the Babu asked the Brahman point-blank to perform a false samadhi, that is to say, to feign an inspiration and to announce to the sorrowing mother that her late son's will had acted consciously in all the circumstances; that he brought about his end in the body of the flying fox, that he was tired of that grade of transmigration, that he longed for death in order to attain a higher position in the animal kingdom, that he is happy, and that he is deeply indebted to the sahib who broke his neck and so freed him from his abject embodiment.

Besides, the observant eye of our all-knowing Babu had not failed to remark that a she-buffalo of the Guru's was expecting a calf, and that the Guru was yearning to sell it to Sham Rao. This

circumstance was a trump card in the Babu's hand. Let the Guru announce, under the influence of samadhi, that the freed spirit intends to inhabit the body of the future baby-buffalo and the old lady will buy the new incarnation of her first-born as sure as the sun is bright. This announcement will be followed by rejoicings and by new rites. And who will profit by all this if not the family priest?

At first the Guru had some misgivings, and swore by everything sacred that the vampire bat was veritably inhabited by the brother of Sham Rao. But the Babu knew better than to give in. The Guru ended by understanding that his skillful opponent saw through his tricks, and that he was well aware that the Shastras exclude the possibility of such a transmigration. Growing alarmed, the Guru also grew meek, and asked only ten rupees and a promise of silence for the performance of a samadhi.

On our way back we were met at the gate by Sham Rao, who was simply radiant. Whether he was afraid of our laughing at him, or was at loss to find an explanation of this new metamorphosis in the positive sciences in general, and Haeckel in particular, he did not attempt to explain why the affair had taken such an unexpectedly good turn. He merely mentioned awkwardly enough that his mother, owing to some new mysterious conjectures of hers, had dismissed all sad apprehensions as to the destiny of her elder son, and he then dropped the subject completely.

In order to wipe away the traces of the morning's perplexities from our minds, Sham Rao invited us to sit on the verandah, by the wide entrance of his idol room, whilst the family prayers were going on. Nothing could suit us better. It was nine o'clock, the usual time of the morning prayers. Sham Rao went to the well to get ready, and dress himself, as he said, though the process was more like undressing. In a few moments he came back wearing only a dhuti, as during dinner time, and with his head uncovered. He went straight to his idol room. The moment he entered we heard the loud stroke of a bell that hung under the ceiling, and that continued tolling all the time the prayers lasted.

The Babu explained to us that a little boy was pulling the bell rope from the roof.

Sham Rao stepped in with his right foot and very slowly. Then he approached the altar and sat on a little stool with his legs crossed. At the opposite side of the room, on the red velvet shelves of an altar that resembled an etagere in the drawing-room of some fashionable lady, stood many idols. They were made of gold, of silver, of brass and of marble, according to their im-portance and merits. Maha-Deva or Shiva was of gold. Gunpati or Ganesha of silver, Vishnu in the form of a round black stone from the river Gandaki in Nepal. In this form Vishnu is called Lakshmi-Narayan. There were also many other gods unknown to us, who were worshipped in the shapes of big sea-shells, called Chakra. Surya, the god of the sun, and the kula-devas, the domestic gods, were placed in the second rank. The altar was sheltered by a cupola of carved sandal-wood. During the night the gods and the offerings were covered by a huge bell glass. On the walls there were many sacred

images representing the chief episodes in the biographies of the higher gods.

Sham Rao filled his left hand with ashes, murmuring prayers all the while, covered it for a second with the right one, then put some matter to the ashes, and mixing the two by rubbing his hands together, he traced a line on his face with this mixture by moving the thumb of his right hand from his nose upwards, then from the middle of the forehead to the right temple, then back again to the left temple. Having done with his face he proceeded to cover with wet ashes his throat, arms, shoulders, his back, head and ears. In one corner of the room stood a huge bronze font filled with water. Sham Rao made straight to it and plunged into it three times, dhuti, head, and all, after which he came out looking exactly like a well-favored dripping wet Triton. He twisted the only lock of hair on the top of his shaved head and sprinkled it with water. This operation concluded the first act.

The second act began with religious meditations and with mantrams, which, by really pious people, must be repeated three times a day-- at sunrise, at noon and at sunset. Sham Rao loudly pronounced the names of twenty-four gods, and each name was accompanied by a stroke of the bell. Having finished he first shut his eyes and stuffed his ears with cotton, then pressed his left nostril with two fingers of his left hand, and having filled his lungs with air through the right nostril, pressed the latter also. Then he tightly closed his lips, so that breathing became impossible. In this position every pious Hindu must mentally repeat a certain verse, which is called the Gayatri. These are sacred words which no Hindu will dare to pronounce aloud. Even in repeating them mentally he must take every precaution not to inhale anything impure.

I am bound by my word of honor never to repeat the whole of this prayer, but I may quote a few unconnected sentences:

"Om... Earth... Heaven.... Let the adored light of.... [here follows a name which must not be pronounced] shelter me. Let thy Sun, O thou only One, shelter me, the unworthy... I shut my eyes, I shut my ears, I do not breathe ... in order to see, hear and breathe thee alone. Throw light upon our thoughts [again the secret name]... "

It is curious to compare this Hindu prayer with the celebrated prayer of Descartes' "Meditation III" in his L'Existence de Dieu. It runs as follows, if I remember rightly:

"Now I shut my eyes, cover my ears, and dismiss all my five senses, I will dwell on the thought of God alone, I will meditate on His quality and look on the beauty of this wondrous radiancy."

After this prayer Sham Rao read many other prayers, holding with two fingers his sacred Brahmanical thread. After a while began the ceremony of "the washing of the gods." Taking them down from the altar, one after the other, according to their rank, Sham Rao first plunged them in the big font, in which he had just bathed himself, and then bathed them in milk in a smaller bronze font by the altar. The milk was mixed up with curds, butter, honey, and sugar, and so it cannot be said that this cleansing served its purpose. No wonder we were glad to see that the gods underwent a second bathing in the first font and then were dried with a

clean towel.

When the gods were arranged in their respective places, the Hindu traced on them the sectarian signs with a ring from his left hand. He used white sandal paint for the lingam and red for Gunpati and Surya. Then he sprinkled them with aromatic oils and covered them with fresh flowers. The long ceremony was finished by "the awakening of the gods." A small bell was repeatedly rung under the noses of the idols, who, as the Brahman probably supposed, all went to sleep during this tedious ceremony.

Having noticed, or fancied, which often amounts to the same thing, that they were wide awake, he began offering them his daily sacrifices, lighting the incense and the lamps, and, to our great astonishment, snapping his fingers from time to time, as if warning the idols to "look out." Having filled the room with clouds of incense and fumes of burning camphor, he scattered some more flowers over the altar and sat on the small stool for a while, murmuring the last prayers. He repeatedly held the palms of his hands over the flame of the tapers and rubbed his face with them. Then he walked round the altar three times, and, having knelt three times, retreated backwards to the door.

A little while before our host had finished his morning prayers the ladies of the house came into the room. They brought each a small stool and sat in a row murmuring prayers and telling the beads of their rosaries.

The part played by the rosaries in India is as important as in all Buddhist countries. Every god has his favorite flower and his favorite material for a rosary. The fakirs are simply covered with rosaries. The rosary is called mala and consists of one hundred and eight beads. Very pious Hindus are not content to tell the beads when praying; they must hide their hands during this ceremony in a bag called gomukha, which means the cow's mouth.

We left the women to their prayers and followed our host to the cow house. The cow symbolizes the "fostering earth," or Nature, and is worshipped accordingly. Sham Rao sat down by the cow and washed her feet, first with her own milk, then with water. He gave her some sugar and rice, covered her forehead with powdered sandal, and adorned her horns and four legs with chains of flowers. He burned some incense under her nostrils and brandished a burning lamp over her head. Then he walked three times round her and sat down to rest. Some Hindus walk round the cow one hundred and eight times, rosary in hand. But our Sham Rao had a slight tendency to freethinking, as we knew, and besides, he was too much of an admirer of Haeckel. Having rested himself, he filled a cup with water, put in it the cow's tail for a moment, and then drank it!

After this he performed the rite of worshipping the sun and the sacred plant tulsi. Unable to bring the god Surya from his heavenly altar and wash him in the sacred font, Sham Rao contented himself by filling his own mouth with water, standing on one leg, and spirting this water towards the sun. Needless to say it never reached the orb of day, but, very unexpectedly, sprinkled us instead.

It is still a mystery to us why the plant tulsi, Royal Basilicum, is worshipped. However, towards the end of September we yearly witnessed the strange ceremony of the wedding of this plant with the god Vishnu, notwithstanding that tulsi bears the title of Krishna's bride, probably because of the latter being an incarnation of Vishnu. On these occasions pots of this plant are painted and adorned with tinsel. A magical circle is traced in the garden and the plant is put in the middle of it. A Brahman brings an idol of Vishnu and begins the marriage ceremony, standing before the plant. A married couple hold a shawl between the plant and the god, as if screening them from each other, the Brahman utters prayers, and young women, and especially unmarried girls, who are the most ardent worshippers of tulsi, throw rice and saffron over the idol and the plant. When the ceremony is concluded, the Brahman is presented with the shawl, the idol is put in the shade of his wife, the Hindus clap their hands, rend everyone's ears with the noise of tom-toms, let off fireworks, offer each other pieces of sugar-cane, and rejoice in every conceivable way till the dawn of the next day.

A Witch's Den

Our kind host Sham Rao was very gay during the remaining hours of our visit. He did his best to entertain us, and would not hear of our leaving the neighborhood without having seen its greatest celebrity, its most interesting sight. A jadu wala--sorceress--well known in the district, was just at this time under the influence of seven sister-goddesses, who took possession of her by turns, and spoke their oracles through her lips. Sham Rao said we must not fail to see her, be it only in the interests of science.

The evening closes in, and we once more get ready for an excursion. It is only five miles to the cavern of the Pythia of Hindostan; the road runs through a jungle, but it is level and smooth. Besides, the jungle and its ferocious inhabitants have ceased to frighten us. The timid elephants we had in the "dead city" are sent home, and we are to mount new behemoths belonging to a neighboring Raja. The pair, that stand before the verandah like two dark hillocks, are steady and trust worthy. Many a time these two have hunted the royal tiger, and no wild shrieking or thunderous roaring can frighten them. And so, let us start!

The ruddy flames of the torches dazzle our eyes and increase the forest gloom. Our surroundings seem so dark, so mysterious. There is something indescribably fascinating, almost solemn, in these night-journeys in the out-of-the-way corners of India. Everything is silent and deserted around you, everything is dozing on the earth and overhead. Only the heavy, regular tread of the elephants breaks the stillness of the night, like the sound of falling hammers in the underground smithy of Vulcan. From time to time uncanny voices and murmurs are heard in the black forest.

"The wind sings its strange song amongst the ruins," says one of us, "what a wonderful acoustic phenomenon!" "Bhuta, bhuta!" whisper

the awestruck torch-bearers. They brandish their torches and swiftly spin on one leg, and snap their fingers to chase away the aggressive spirits.

The plaintive murmur is lost in the distance. The forest is once more filled with the cadences of its invisible nocturnal life-- the metallic whirr of the crickets, the feeble, monotonous croak of the tree-frog, the rustle of the leaves. From time to time all this suddenly stops short and then begins again, gradually increasing and increasing.

Heavens! What teeming life, what stores of vital energy are hidden under the smallest leaf, the most imperceptible blades of grass, in this tropical forest! Myriads of stars shine in the dark blue of the sky, and myriads of fireflies twinkle at us from every bush, moving sparks, like a pale reflection of the far-away stars.

We left the thick forest behind us, and reached a deep glen, on three sides bordered with the thick forest, where even by day the shadows are as dark as by night. We were about two thousand feet above the foot of the Vindhya ridge, judging by the ruined wall of Mandu, straight above our heads. Suddenly a very chilly wind rose that nearly blew our torches out. Caught in the labyrinth of bushes and rocks, the wind angrily shook the branches of the blossoming syringas, then, shaking itself free, it turned back along the glen and flew down the valley, howling, whistling and shrieking, as if all the fiends of the forest together were joining in a funeral song.

"Here we are," said Sham Rao, dismounting. Here is the village; the elephants cannot go any further."

"The village? Surely you are mistaken. I don't see anything but trees."

"It is too dark to see the village. Besides, the huts are so small, and so hidden by the bushes, that even by daytime you could hardly find them. And there is no light in the houses, for fear of the spirits."

"And where is your witch? Do you mean we are to watch her performance in complete darkness?"

Sham Rao cast a furtive, timid look round him; and his voice, when he answered our questions, was somewhat tremulous.

"I implore you not to call her a witch! She may hear you. ..... It is not far off, it is not more than half a mile. Do not allow this short distance to shake your decision. No elephant, and even no horse, could make its way there. We must walk. ... But we shall find plenty of light there.... "

This was unexpected, and far from agreeable. To walk in this gloomy Indian night; to scramble through thickets of cactuses; to venture in a dark forest, full of wild animals--this was too much for Miss X---. She declared that she would go no further. She would wait for us in the howdah, on the elephant's back, and perhaps would go to sleep.

Narayan was against this parti de plaisir from the very beginning, and now, without explaining his reasons, he said she was the only sensible one among us.

"You won't lose anything," he remarked, "by staying where you are. And I only wish everyone would follow your example."

"What ground have you for saying so, I wonder?" remonstrated Sham Rao, and a slight note of disappointment rang in his voice, when he saw that the excursion, proposed and organized by himself, threatened to come to nothing. "What harm could be done by it? I won't insist any more that the `incarnation of gods' is a rare sight, and that the Europeans hardly ever have an opportunity of witnessing it; but, besides, the Kangalim in question is no ordinary woman. She leads a holy life; she is a prophetess, and her blessing could not prove harmful to any one. I insisted on this excursion out of pure patriotism."

"Sahib, if your patriotism consists in displaying before foreigners the worst of our plagues, then why did you not order all the lepers of your district to assemble and parade before the eyes of our guests? You are a patel, you have the power to do it."

How bitterly Narayan's voice sounded to our unaccustomed ears. Usually he was so even-tempered, so indifferent to everything belonging to the exterior world.

Fearing a quarrel between the Hindus, the colonel remarked, in a conciliatory tone, that it was too late for us to reconsider our expedition. Besides, without being a believer in the "incarnation of gods," he was personally firmly convinced that demoniacs existed even in the West. He was eager to study every psychological phenomenon, wherever he met with it, and whatever shape it might assume.

It would have been a striking sight for our European and American friends if they had beheld our procession on that dark night. Our way lay along a narrow winding path up the mountain. Not more than two people could walk together--and we were thirty, including the torch-bearers. Surely some reminiscence of night sallies against the confederate Southerners had revived in the colonel's breast, judging by the readiness with which he took upon himself the leadership of our small expedition. He ordered all the rifles and revolvers to be loaded, despatched three torch-bearers to march ahead of us, and arranged us in pairs. Under such a skilled chieftain we had nothing to fear from tigers; and so our procession started, and slowly crawled up the winding path.

It cannot be said that the inquisitive travelers, who appeared later on, in the den of the prophetess of Mandu, shone through the freshness and elegance of their costumes. My gown, as well as the traveling suits of the colonel and of Mr. Y--- were nearly torn to pieces. The cactuses gathered from us whatever tribute they could, and the Babu's disheveled hair swarmed with a whole colony of grasshoppers and fireflies, which, probably, were attracted thither by the smell of cocoa-nut oil. The stout Sham Rao panted like a steam engine. Narayan alone was like his usual self; that is to say, like a bronze Hercules, armed with a club. At the last abrupt turn of the path, after having surmounted the difficulty of climbing over huge, scattered stones, we suddenly

found ourselves on a perfectly smooth place; our eyes, in spite of our many torches, were dazzled with light; and our ears were struck by a medley of unusual sounds.

A new glen opened before us, the entrance of which, from the valley, was well masked by thick trees. We understood how easily we might have wandered round it, without ever suspecting its existence. At the bottom of the glen we discovered the abode of the celebrated Kangalim.

The den, as it turned out, was situated in the ruin of an old Hindu temple in tolerably good preservation. In all probability it was built long before the "dead city," because during the epoch of the latter, the heathen were not allowed to have their own places of worship; and the temple stood quite close to the wall of the town, in fact, right under it. The cupolas of the two smaller lateral pagodas had fallen long ago, and huge bushes grew out of their altars. This evening, their branches were hidden under a mass of bright colored rags, bits of ribbon, little pots, and various other talismans; because, even in them, popular superstition sees something sacred.

"And are not these poor people right? Did not these bushes grow on sacred ground? Is not their sap impregnated with the incense of offerings, and the exhalations of holy anchorites, who once lived and breathed here?"

The learned, but superstitious Sham Rao would only answer our questions by new questions.

But the central temple, built of red granite, stood unharmed by time, and, as we learned afterwards, a deep tunnel opened just behind its closely-shut door. What was beyond it no one knew. Sham Rao assured us that no man of the last three generations had ever stepped over the threshold of this thick iron door; no one had seen the subterranean passage for many years. Kangalim lived there in perfect isolation, and, according to the oldest people in the neighborhood, she had always lived there. Some people said she was three hundred years old; others alleged that a certain old man on his death-bed had revealed to his son that this old woman was no one else than his own uncle. This fabulous uncle had settled in the cave in the times when the "dead city" still counted several hundreds of inhabitants. The hermit, busy paving his road to Moksha, had no intercourse with the rest of the world, and nobody knew how he lived and what he ate. But a good while ago, in the days when the Bellati (foreigners) had not yet taken possession of this mountain, the old hermit suddenly was transformed into a hermitess. She continues his pursuits and speaks with his voice, and often in his name; but she receives worshippers, which was not the practice of her predecessor.

We had come too early, and the Pythia did not at first appear. But the square before the temple was full of people, and a wild, though picturesque, scene it was. An enormous bonfire blazed in the centre, and round it crowded the naked savages like so many black gnomes, adding whole branches of trees sacred to the seven sister-goddesses. Slowly and evenly they all jumped from one leg to another to a tune of a single monotonous musical phrase, which they repeated in chorus, accompanied by several local drums and tambourines. The hushed trill of the latter mingled with the forest echoes and the hysterical moans of two little girls, who lay under a heap of leaves by the fire.

The poor children were brought here by their mothers, in the hope that the goddesses would take pity upon them and banish the two evil spirits under whose obsession they were. Both mothers were quite young, and sat on their heels blankly and sadly staring at the flames. No one paid us the slightest attention when we appeared, and afterwards during all our stay these people acted as if we were invisible. Had we worn a cap of darkness they could not have behaved more strangely.

"They feel the approach of the gods! The atmosphere is full of their sacred emanations!" mysteriously explained Sham Rao, contemplating with reverence the natives, whom his beloved Haeckel might have easily mistaken for his "missing link," the brood of his " Bathybius Haeckelii. "

"They are simply under the influence of toddy and opium!" retorted the irreverent Babu.

The lookers-on moved as in a dream, as if they all were only half-awakened somnambulists; but the actors were simply victims of St. Vitus's dance. One of them, a tall old man, a mere skeleton with a long white beard, left the ring and begun whirling vertiginously, with his arms spread like wings, and loudly grinding his long, wolf-like teeth. He was painful and disgusting to look at. He soon fell down, and was carelessly, almost mechanically, pushed aside by the feet of the others still engaged in their demoniac performance.

All this was frightful enough, but many more horrors were in store for us.

Waiting for the appearance of the prima donna of this forest opera company, we sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree, ready to ask innumerable questions of our condescending host. But I was hardly seated, when a feeling of indescribable astonishment and horror made me shrink back.

I beheld the skull of a monstrous animal, the like of which I could not find in my zoological reminiscences. This head was much larger than the head of an elephant skeleton. And still it could not be anything but an elephant, judging by the skillfully restored trunk, which wound down to my feet like a gigantic black leech. But an elephant has no horns, whereas this one had four of them! The front pair stuck from the flat forehead slightly bending forward and then spreading out; and the others had a wide base, like the root of a deer's horn, that gradually decreased almost up to the middle, and bore long branches enough to decorate a dozen ordinary elks. Pieces of the transparent amber-yellow rhinoceros skin were strained over the empty eye-holes of the skull, and small lamps burning behind them only added to the horror, the devilish appearance of this head.

"What can this be?" was our unanimous question. None of us had ever met anything like it, and even the colonel looked aghast.

"It is a Sivatherium," said Narayan. "Is it possible you never came across these fossils in European museums? Their remains are common enough in the Himalayas, though, of course, in fragments. They were called after Shiva."

"If the collector of this district ever hears that this antediluvian relic adorns the den of your--ahem!--witch," remarked the Babu, "it won't adorn it many days longer."

All round the skull, and on the floor of the portico there were heaps of white flowers, which, though not quite antediluvian, were totally unknown to us. They were as large as a big rose; and their white petals were covered with a red powder, the inevitable concomitant of every Indian religious ceremony. Further on, there were groups of cocoa-nuts, and large brass dishes filled with rice; and each adorned with a red or green taper. In the centre of the portico there stood a queer-shaped censer, surrounded with chandeliers. A little boy, dressed from head to foot in white, threw into it handfuls of aromatic powders.

"These people, who assemble here to worship Kangalim," said Sham Rao, "do not actually belong either to her sect or to any other. They are devil-worshippers. They do not believe in Hindu gods, but live in small communities; they belong to one of the many Indian races, which usually are called the hill-tribes. Unlike the Shanars of Southern Travancore, they do not use the blood of sacrificial animals; they do not build separate temples to their bhutas. But they are possessed by the strange fancy that the goddess Kali, the wife of Shiva, from time immemorial has had a grudge against them, and sends her favorite evil spirits to torture them. Save this little difference, they have the same beliefs as the Shanars. God does not exist for them; and even Shiva is considered by them as an ordinary spirit. Their chief worship is offered to the souls of the dead. These souls, however righteous and kind they may be in their lifetime, become after death as wicked as can be; they are happy only when they are torturing living men and cattle. As the opportunities of doing so are the only reward for the virtues they possessed when incarnated, a very wicked man is punished by becoming after his death a very soft-hearted ghost; he loathes his loss of daring, and is altogether miserable. The results of this strange logic are not bad, nevertheless. These savages and devil-worshippers are the kindest and the most truth-loving of all the hill-tribes. They do whatever they can to be worthy of their ultimate reward; because, don't you see, they all long to become the wickedest of devils!.... "

And put in good humor by his own wittiness, Sham Rao laughed till his hilarity became offensive, considering the sacredness of the place.

"A year ago some business matters sent me to Tinevelli," continued he. "Staying with a friend of mine, who is a Shanar, I was allowed to be present at one of the ceremonies in the honor of devils. No European has as yet witnessed this worship--whatever the missionaries may say; but there are many converts amongst the Shanars, who willingly describe them to the padres. My friend is a wealthy man, which is probably the reason why the devils are especially vicious to him. They poison his cattle, spoil his crops and his coffee plants, and persecute his numerous relations, sending them sunstrokes, madness and epilepsy, over which illnesses they especially preside. These wicked demons have settled in every corner of his spacious landed property--in the woods, the ruins, and even in his stables. To avert all this, my friend covered his land with stucco pyramids, and prayed humbly, asking the demons to draw their portraits on each of them, so that he may recognize them and worship each of them separately, as the

rightful owner of this, or that, particular pyramid. And what do you think?.... Next morning all the pyramids were found covered with drawings. Each of them bore an incredibly good likeness of the dead of the neighborhood. My friend had known personally almost all of them. He found also a portrait of his own late father amongst the lot..... "

"Well? And was he satisfied?"

"Oh, he was very glad, very satisfied. It enabled him to choose the right thing to gratify the personal tastes of each demon, don't you see? He was not vexed at finding his father's portrait. His father was somewhat irascible; once he nearly broke both his son's legs, administering to him fatherly punishment with an iron bar, so that he could not possibly be very dangerous after his death. But another portrait, found on the best and the prettiest of the pyramids, amazed my friend a good deal, and put him in a blue funk. The whole district recognized an English officer, a certain Captain Pole, who in his lifetime was as kind a gentleman as ever lived."

"Indeed? But do you mean to say that this strange people worshipped Captain Pole also?"

"Of course they did! Captain Pole was such a worthy man, such an honest officer, that, after his death, he could not help being promoted to the highest rank of Shanar devils. The Pe-Kovil, demon's house, sacred to his memory, stands side by side with the Pe-Kovil Bhadrakali, which was recently conferred on the wife of a certain German missionary, who also was a most charitable lady and so is very dangerous now."

"But what are their ceremonies? Tell us something about their rites."

"Their rites consist chiefly of dancing, singing, and killing sacrificial animals. The Shanars have no castes, and eat all kinds of meat. The crowd assembles about the Pe-Kovil, previously designated by the priest; there is a general beating of drums, and slaughtering of fowls, sheep and goats. When Captain Pole's turn came an ox was killed, as a thoughtful attention to the peculiar tastes of his nation. The priest appeared, covered with bangles, and holding a wand on which tinkled numberless little bells, and wearing garlands of red and white flowers round his neck, and a black mantle, on which were embroidered the ugliest fiends you can imagine. Horns were blown and drums rolled incessantly. And oh, I forgot to tell you there was also a kind of fiddle, the secret of which is known only to the Shanar priesthood. Its bow is ordinary enough, made of bamboo; but it is whispered that the strings are human veins.... When Captain Pole took possession of the priest's body, the priest leapt high in the air, and then rushed on the ox and killed him. He drank off the hot blood, and then began his dance. But what a fright he was when dancing! You know, I am not superstitious.... Am I?... "

Sham Rao looked at us inquiringly, and I, for one, was glad, at this moment, that Miss X--- was half a mile off, asleep in the howdah.

"He turned, and turned, as if possessed by all the demons of Naraka. The enraged crowd hooted and howled when the priest begun to inflict deep wounds all over his body with the bloody sacrificial knife.

To see him, with his hair waving in the wind and his mouth covered with foam; to see him bathing in the blood of the sacrificed animal, mixing it with his own, was more than I could bear. I felt as if hallucinated, I fancied I also was spinning round.... "

Sham Rao stopped abruptly, struck dumb. Kangalim stood before us!

Her appearance was so unexpected that we all felt embarrassed. Carried away by Sham Rao's description, we had noticed neither how nor whence she came. Had she appeared from beneath the earth we could not have been more astonished. Narayan stared at her, opening wide his big jet-black eyes; the Babu clicked his tongue in utter confusion. Imagine a skeleton seven feet high, covered with brown leather, with a dead child's tiny head stuck on its bony shoulders; the eyes set so deep and at the same time flashing such fiendish flames all through your body that you begin to feel your brain stop working, your thoughts become entangled and your blood freeze in your veins.

I describe my personal impressions, and no words of mine can do them justice. My description is too weak.

Mr. Y--- and the colonel both grew pale under her stare, and Mr. Y--- made a movement as if about to rise.

Needless to say that such an impression could not last. As soon as the witch had turned her gleaming eyes to the kneeling crowd, it vanished as swiftly as it had come. But still all our attention was fixed on this remarkable creature.

Three hundred years old! Who can tell? Judging by her appearance, we might as well conjecture her to be a thousand. We beheld a genuine living mummy, or rather a mummy endowed with motion. She seemed to have been withering since the creation. Neither time, nor the ills of life, nor the elements could ever affect this living statue of death. The all-destroying hand of time had touched her and stopped short. Time could do no more, and so had left her. And with all this, not a single grey hair. Her long black locks shone with a greenish sheen, and fell in heavy masses down to her knees.

To my great shame, I must confess that a disgusting reminiscence flashed into my memory. I thought about the hair and the nails of corpses growing in the graves, and tried to examine the nails of the old woman.

Meanwhile, she stood motionless as if suddenly transformed into an ugly idol. In one hand she held a dish with a piece of burning camphor, in the other a handful of rice, and she never removed her burning eyes from the crowd. The pale yellow flame of the camphor flickered in the wind, and lit up her deathlike head, almost touching her chin; but she paid no heed to it. Her neck, as wrinkled as a mushroom, as thin as a stick, was surrounded by three rows of golden medallions. Her head was adorned with a golden snake. Her grotesque, hardly human body was covered by a piece of saffron-yellow muslin.

The demoniac little girls raised their heads from be-neath the leaves, and set up a prolonged animal-like howl. Their example was followed by the old man, who lay exhausted by his frantic dance.

The witch tossed her head convulsively, and began her invocations, rising on tiptoe, as if moved by some external force.

"The goddess, one of the seven sisters, begins to take possession of her," whispered Sham Rao, not even thinking of wiping away the big drops of sweat that streamed from his brow. "Look, look at her!"

This advice was quite superfluous. We were looking at her, and at nothing else.

At first, the movements of the witch were slow, unequal, somewhat convulsive; then, gradually, they became less angular; at last, as if catching the cadence of the drums, leaning all her long body forward, and writhing like an eel, she rushed round and round the blazing bonfire. A dry leaf caught in a hurricane could not fly swifter. Her bare bony feet trod noiselessly on the rocky ground. The long locks of her hair flew round her like snakes, lashing the spectators, who knelt, stretching their trembling arms towards her, and writhing as if they were alive. Whoever was touched by one of this Fury's black curls, fell down on the ground, overcome with happiness, shouting thanks to the goddess, and considering himself blessed for ever. It was not human hair that touched the happy elect, it was the goddess herself, one of the seven. Swifter and swifter fly her decrepit legs; the young, vigorous hands of the drummer can hardly follow her. But she does not think of catching the measure of his music; she rushes, she flies forward. Staring with her expressionless, motionless orbs at something before her, at something that is not visible to our mortal eyes, she hardly glances at her worshippers; then her look becomes full of fire; and whoever she looks at feels burned through to the marrow of his bones. At every glance she throws a few grains of rice. The small handful seems inexhaustible, as if the wrinkled palm contained the bottomless bag of Prince Fortunatus.

Suddenly she stops as if thunderstruck.

The mad race round the bonfire had lasted twelve minutes, but we looked in vain for a trace of fatigue on the deathlike face of the witch. She stopped only for a moment, just the necessary time for the goddess to release her. As soon as she felt free, by a single effort she jumped over the fire and plunged into the deep tank by the portico. This time, she plunged only once; and whilst she stayed under the water, the second sister-goddess entered her body. The little boy in white produced another dish, with a new piece of burning camphor, just in time for the witch to take it up, and to rush again on her headlong way.

The colonel sat with his watch in his hand. During the second obsession the witch ran, leaped, and raced for exactly fourteen minutes. After this, she plunged twice in the tank, in honor of the second sister; and with every new obsession the number of her plunges increased, till it became six.

It was already an hour and a half since the race began. All this time the witch never rested, stopping only for a few seconds, to disappear under the water.

"She is a fiend, she cannot be a woman!" exclaimed the colonel,

seeing the head of the witch immersed for the sixth time in the water.

"Hang me if I know!" grumbled Mr. Y---, nervously pulling his beard. "The only thing I know is that a grain of her cursed rice entered my throat, and I can't get it out!"

"Hush, hush! Pl

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