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K. K. Venugopal



TRIMURTI,
The Indian Trinity.

THE WORLD
IN MINIATURE;
EDITED BY
FREDERIC SHOBERL.

Hindoostan,

CONTAINING

A DESCRIPTION OF THE RELIGION, MANNERS,
CUSTOMS, TRADES, ARTS, SCIENCES,
LITERATURE, DIVERSIONS, &c.

OF

The Hindoos.

ILLUSTRATED

*With Upwards of One Hundred Coloured
Engravings.*

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

The proper study of mankind is man.—POPE.

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Advertisement.

IN compliance with the suggestion of numerous purchasers of **THE WORLD IN MINIATURE**, the Publisher has made arrangements for its continuation in future in regular monthly volumes.

As the number of plates varies materially in different volumes, it has been deemed advisable, in order to equalize them, to include occasionally in one vo-

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lume some of those which by right belong to another; but when each division is complete, precise directions will be given for placing them in their proper situations.

PREFACE.

THE Europeans have given the name of Hindoostan to that beautiful portion of Asia, which is commonly called the East Indies. According to the native geographers, Hindoostan Proper extends only from Thibet to the river Nerbudda, and consequently, comprehends about half of the Peninsula. All that lies to the south of this line they denominate Deccan. Following the practice of the European geographers, we shall apply, indiscrimi-

nately, the name of India or Hindoostan, to the whole region which is bounded on the east by the Ganges, on the west by the Indus, on the north by the mountains of Thibet and Tartary, and on the south by the ocean.

Nature seems to have taken delight in lavishing upon this beautiful country her most valuable gifts. Beneath a serene sky and an ever-brilliant sun, the soil produces exquisite species of fruit, and abundant harvests. Numberless rivers moderate the heat, and diffuse fertility over every part of the country. The

cotton-plant furnishes in profusion the material for the light garments adapted to the climate. The traveller, whether he journeys along the coast, or penetrates into the interior, is enchanted with a succession of scenery of superlative beauty.

It is not by these objects, however, that the mind of the philosophic observer is most powerfully struck. Immense cities, now too large for the reduced number of their inhabitants, and still adorned with the ruins of magnificent temples and tombs; and wonderful edifices, which have not even transmitted to us the names of

their founders, attest at once the ancient splendour and the present degradation of the people of Hindoostan. But amidst the ruins of these master-pieces of the arts, the manners and customs of the natives seem to have remained unchanged, and exhibit the same features under which they were portrayed by the Greeks, who visited India two thousand years ago.

Nature, in bestowing upon Hindoostan all that was calculated to tempt the rapacity of foreigners, whose country had not been favoured with the like advantages, seems to

have denied to the people of this highly-favoured region, the strength and courage to repel invaders: they have, therefore, been successively subdued by the Persians, the Moguls, and the Europeans. Their institutions have, no doubt, tended to facilitate the conquests of these nations. The voluntary penances to which certain devotees doom themselves for life, prove, at least, that the Hindoo is not deficient either in courage or fortitude: but the odious institution of castes, which has condemned the greatest part of the inhabitants of India to perpetual ab-

jection and misery, could not fail to degrade their souls, and stifle within them every feeling of love for a country which knew them not, or for a government which oppressed, instead of protecting them. When this institution was first established, it was natural to expect that it would be revolting to those classes of the people whom it so deeply humbled. To prevent the effects of their discontent, it was deemed necessary to enchain them by the terrors of religion. Hence all those superstitious practices which accompany the Hindoo from his cradle to his death.

The laws, manners, and customs, nay the useful arts themselves, are all subject to religion, which interferes with even the most indifferent actions of life: and as it was no doubt apprehended that despair would drive the Hindoo to seek a more comfortable life in a less genial clime, a religious injunction forbade him to pass the Indus.

Time, superstition, and the very necessity of dying in the caste and the profession in which he was born, have by degrees accustomed the Hindoo to his fate. Provided you leave him his usages and his supersti-

tions which time and habit have rendered essential to him, he cares not who is his master. Such is probably the cause of the little resistance experienced by the conquerors who have successively reduced this country.

Be that as it may, if we except some military tribes who have had the good sense to shake off the yoke of this law of castes, and have hitherto retained their independence, there is scarcely any part of Hindoostan but is now under foreign dominion: indeed, the whole of the peninsula, if not actually subject to

the British government, may be said to be under its influence.

With each new conquest, the number of foreigners settled in the country, was increased to such a degree as at length, perhaps, to exceed that of the original natives. Hence the difficulty of furnishing an accurate description of the people of India. A writer has, in fact, to treat not of a single nation, but of a great number of nations intermixed together. Under the same sovereign and in the same country, we find a nation of Mahometans, another of Christians, a third of Guebres, and

a fourth of Hindoos, each of which is subdivided into as many more nations as there are different castes, sects, or tribes. Among the Mahometans, for instance, some are sectaries of Ali, others of Omar. These came from Arabia to India, those from Tartary or Persia: and all brought with them opinions, manners and customs, widely differing from one another and from those of the natives.

If we moreover consider the number of British, French, Portuguese, Dutch, Armenians, and foreigners of all nations, either settled in the

various parts of India, or incessantly travelling through the country on commercial business, we shall be still more sensible of the difficulty of doing justice to its population. No wonder then, that in the earlier accounts, there is so much confusion, exaggeration, and inaccuracy. Indeed, we may truly assert, that before the appearance of the Asiatic Researches, and the works of Hodges, Rennell, Daniell, Moor, Solvyns, Buchanan, Forbes, Broughton, &c. &c. India was but very imperfectly known to Europeans.

Not only have these and other re-

cent publications been consulted in the compilation of these volumes, but material assistance has also been derived from private sources, and chiefly from a collection in four folio volumes, containing coloured drawings of the Hindoo deities and of natives of all professions, executed by a Hindoo artist, for, and under the inspection of M. Leger, formerly governor of Pondicherry, and now in the possession of M. Nepveu, bookseller of Paris. Seven eighths of the plates which illustrate this work are engraved from those designs, and great part of the expla-

nations relative to the trades of the Hindoos which accompany them, have been introduced into these volumes.

The first treats of the religion, the religious opinions and sects of the Hindoos.

The second and the greater part of the third are occupied with the first caste, or caste of the Bramins, and whatever is connected with them, such as the religious ceremonies, marriages, funerals, laws and superstitions.

The latter part of the third volume is devoted to the second caste,

or the caste of the rajahs and the military, and consequently embraces all that relates to government, armies, encampments, &c.

The fourth and half of the fifth volume treat of the third and fourth castes, and describe the trades and professions followed by the persons belonging to those castes.

The second part of the fifth volume and the sixth comprize matters that could not be introduced with propriety in this division, such as the languages of Hindoostan, the fine arts, the sciences, the popular di-

versions, and a notice of some of the most remarkable objects in natural history.

Curious and interesting as the investigation of the manners of so extraordinary a people as the Hindoos must be of itself on many accounts, still the interest and curiosity which it is calculated to excite, cannot but be greatly heightened by the present close connection between their country and Great Britain. We say the *present* connection, for we shall not lay particular stress on the notion, suggested however by a gentleman, eminently qualified by his pursuits,

to pronounce an opinion on the subject, that our island was the cradle of the religion and mythology of the Hindoos. Their *Puranas* indeed speak of the *sacred isles in the west*, which are the holy land of the Hindoos, and of which *Sweta-dwipa*, or the *White Island*, is the principal and the most famous. There the fundamental and mysterious transactions of the history of their religion, in its rise and progress, are recorded to have taken place. This White Island, this holy land in the west, is so intimately connected with their religion and mythology, that the one

cannot be separated from the other. Major Wilford, who has ably discussed this curious subject in the *Asiatic Researches*, expresses his conviction, founded on mature consideration, that the White Island is no other than England, and that the Sacred Isles of the Hindoos are the British islands.

There are not wanting numerous coincidences which favour this notion of that profound orientalist. In every northern country, and in almost every system of worship, signs of the Hindoo religion may be discovered; and there is a strong resemblance

between many of the Hindoo festivals and the old feasts in England. The like affinity is perceptible between the Sanscrit and the languages of Europe, both ancient and modern, and among others to that which is the mother of the English.

Leaving this field to the cultivation of the professed antiquary, we are content to direct our view to the interesting spectacle of an Indian empire, containing seventy millions of native subjects to the British sceptre. It has been the fashion, we know, to reprobate the extension of British dominion in the East, and to

stigmatize it as acquired by perfidy and retained by cruelty and oppression. This outcry, so long and so industriously kept up, has at length subsided, and the prejudices which gave rise to it are discarded by all but those who are resolutely bent on reviling every measure that is sanctioned by the government of their country. They deplore with tenderest sympathy the fall of every faithless tyrant and petty usurper, unmindful of the important benefits received by humanity from the change.

The Hindoo character is a most

extraordinary compound of gentleness and ferocity, kindness and utter insensibility to the strongest feelings of nature. The man who would shrink with horror from the destruction of an animal or an insect, has no scruple to take away his own life, or the lives even of those who are most closely connected with him by blood. Hence suicide and murder are crimes of common occurrence in Hindoostan. The immolation of widows, the systematic destruction of female infants, and the sacrifice of numbers of wretched victims at the shrine of superstition, are practices

which prove the power of religion to reconcile the human mind to the greatest enormities. This prodigality of life has received an important check from the British government in India; and if it has not yet abolished all these customs as it has done that of infanticide, we are convinced that this is owing to the difficulty of devising means to accomplish so desirable an end, without revolting the natives by its interference. At any rate we have already the satisfaction of knowing that many thousand lives are annually saved through the efforts of British humanity.

The security of person and property is an advantage enjoyed by the natives of British India, in a degree unknown under any other eastern government. Of this the Hindoos themselves are so sensible, that many of them who had fled from the tyranny of their native rulers, have been known to return to their respective countries as soon as the latter became subject to the British dominion, under which they can peaceably pursue their professions and the practices enjoined by their religion. The natural results of this security and indulgence are an increase of population, and an agricultural and com-

mercial prosperity never attained by those provinces under their former sovereigns.

When we farther consider the establishment of the College of Calcutta, for the study of the native languages and literature of India; the ardour with which these are cultivated by many of our countrymen in the east, as is abundantly attested by the Asiatic Researches, and other publications; when we moreover reflect on the zeal which is manifested in the establishment of missions and the preparation of translations of the sacred Scriptures, in the different dia-

lects of the vast peninsula of Hindoostan, we cannot help viewing in the events which have placed so large a portion of it in British hands, the dawn of an era brought about by Providence, for the purpose of conferring the blessings of civil and religious liberty on the hitherto enslaved Hindoos, of communicating to them the light of genuine science, and thus producing an immense accession to the mass of human happiness.

CONTENTS.

VOL. I.

	<i>Page</i>
Religion of the Hindoos	1
Brama	21
Sheeva	30
Vishnu	52
Inferior Deities of the Hindoos	59
Incarnations of Vishnu	78
Of certain Religious opinions of the Hindoos, and particularly of the Doctrine of the Metempsychosis.	109
Of the Religious Sects of the Hindoos, and principally of the Sect of Buddha	142
Religion of Buddha	161
Talapoins	172
Of the Vedas and other Sacred Books	179

VOL. II.

Manners of the Hindoos	1
Manners of the other Inhabitants of Hindoostan	71
Of the Hindoo Castes	129
Of the Bramins, the First Caste	158

d

	<i>Page</i>
Of various Classes of Bramins, viz. Bramins who teach the Days; Pandidapan Bramins; Tatoidipapan Bramins; and Papanvaichenaven Bramins	180
Of the Yogeas and Fakeers	201
Tadins	213
Pandarons	223
Poojarees	229
Nemessoura-Caori	233
Sacrifices and Religious Ceremonies . . .	237

VOL. III.

Expiations	1
Music and Musical Instruments	10
Dances and Dancers	41
Ceremonies observed at Marriages and at the Birth of Children	61
Funerals	87
Suicide of Widows	99
Murder of Female Infants	132
Morals and Laws, Penal and Civil	161
Ordeals	208
Witchcraft and other Superstitions	226
The Khattries, the Second Caste	239
Rajahs	242
Military Tribes of the Caste of the Khattries—The Seiks	249
The Rajpoots	253
The Mahrattas	264
The Nairs	283
Sepoys, or Native Troops of Hindoostan.	298

VOL. IV.

	<i>Page</i>
Of the Vaisya, the Third Caste ; the Soorders, the Fourth Caste ; the Parias, and the Pooleahs	1
Agriculture	15
Labourers in Husbandry and Herdsmen	63
Basket-makers	77
The Sourers	81
Masons and Carpenters	99
Pagodas, Choultries and Tombs	113
Cotton and Silk Manufactures	161
The Washerman	195
The Tailor	199
The Gooroo, or Schoolmaster	210

VOL. V.

The Potter	1
The Potter's Wife	5
The Farrier	7
The Blacksmith	9
The Goldbeater	15
The Goldsmith	17
The Gilder	22
The Brazier	24
The Brazier's Wife	26
Sellers of Bracelets and Shell-workers	27
Water-Carriers	30
Telinga Barber and Malabar Barber	32
Physicians	38

	<i>Page</i>
The Shoemaker	56
Fishermen	70
The Dealer in Perfumery and Odoriferous Woods	74
Dealers in Betel, Areca, and Tobacco . .	85
The Dealer in Pearls	92
Sciences and Fine Arts—Of the Sanscrit and the other Languages of Hindoostan	119
Astronomy	136
Algebra and Arithmetic	149
Geographical Systems	158
Moralists	167
Poetry and Dramatic Works	194
Painting and Sculpture	231

VOL. VI.

Amusements	1
The Hohlee	6
Chess	24
Flying Kites	37
Tumblers	39
Conjurors and Jugglers	52
The Snake Charmer	65
Gymnastic Exercises	83
Field Sports	91
Antelope-Hunting	96
Tiger-Hunting	105
Elephant-Hunting	138
Lion-Hunting	165
Mode of Travelling—Palanquins	173
The Palanquin of Bengal	175
The Mogul Palanquin	182
The Dolee	185

CONTENTS.

xxxiii

	<i>Page</i>
The Gadee	190
Of the mode in which the Mogul Women and Low Caste Hindoos Travel	192
Peons	197
The Head Peon	199
Couriers	202
Coravers and Otters	205
The Banyan Tree	208
The Mahvah	215
The Gayal	223
The Long-legged Goat	228
The Sahras	230
The Baya	234

LIST OF PLATES.

VOL. I.

	<i>Page</i>
1. Trimurti, the Indian Trinity	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
2. Brama	<i>to face p.</i> 28
3. Dourga killing Maissassour	38
4. Ganesa, God of Wisdom	45
5. Supramanya, second son of Sheeva	49
6. Manmadin, the Indian Cupid.	67
7. Vishnu reclining on the serpent Adissechen	83
8. Vishnu in his third Incarnation as a Wild Boar	84

VOL. II.

9. Malabar Writer	61
10. Wives of Bramins	65
11. A Mahometan Officer	76
12. Sujah Dowlah, Visir of the Mogul Empire, Nabob of Oude, and his Ten Sons	80
13. Hindoo Ladies paying a Visit to a Persee Lady	105

	<i>Page</i>
14. A Bramin who teaches the Days, and his Wife	181
15. A Pandidapapan Bramin and his Wife	186
16. A Papanvaichenaven Bramin, and a Tatoidipapan Bramin	188
17. The Fakeer Praoun Poury	210
18. The Fakeer Perkasanund.	212
19. Ter or Sacred Chariot	216
20. Tadin playing with fire. Ariganda Pandaron. Tadin with a padlock to his mouth	219
21. Pandarons, Penitents of the sect of Sheeva	223
22. A Poojaree singing the History of Mariatta	229
23. Mariatta Codam, or manner of Dancing in honour of the God- dess Mariatta	231
24. Nemessura Cavadi, or Woman car- rying the water of the Ganges	233
25. A Rajah and his Wives celebrating the festival of Krishna	243
26. A Religious Procession	250
27. Ceremony of throwing the Colossal Statue of the goddess Cali into the water	252

VOL. III.

28. A Hindoo cradle	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
29. Hindoos throwing themselves on mattresses covered with sharp In- struments	<i>to face p. 1</i>

LIST OF PLATES. xxxvii

	<i>Page</i>
30. A Species of Penance practised at the festival of the goddess Bhavani	8
31. Musical Instruments, Plate 1	18
32. Musical Instruments, Plate 2	22
33. Musical Instruments, Plate 3	27
34. A Mahometan beating the Nagabotte	32
35. A Hindoo Dancer called Baloks . .	44
36. Devedassis or Bayaderes	50
37. The Father of the Bride going with the nuptial presents to the Bridegroom	67
38. The Bridegroom conducted in state to the house of the Bride	72
39. The Husband swearing to take care of his Wife	77
40. Funeral of a Hindoo	90
41. A Hindoo Widow burning herself with the corpse of her husband .	99
42. A Rajah giving audience	242
43. Dress and ornaments of Hindoo Ladies	248
44. A Rajpoot	262
45. A Mahratta	264
46. Pecali, or water-carrier, attending the army	303
47. Sepoy officers. A private Sepoy .	306
48. A Seik. A sepoy in the French service	308
49. A Sepoy in the native dress. A Hindoo soldier. A Brigbasi	313

VOL. IV.

	<i>Page</i>
50. Basket-maker and his Wife.	<i>Frontispiece</i>
51. Sugar Mill	<i>to face p.</i> 31
52. Hindoo Ploughman and Herdsman .	63
53. A Sourer and his Wife	86
54. Apparatus for Distillation	90
55. Carpenter and Mason.	102
56. A Column from a temple at Benares	125
57. A Choultry	146
58. Taje Mahl	151
59. Beater of Cotton and his Wife	164
60. Cotton Spinning	168
61. Winding cotton	169
62. Preparation of the warp for Weaving	170
63. Weaver joining broken Threads . . .	172
64. Weaving	174
65. Cloth Beater	176
66. Cloth Painter	179
67. Dyer	181
68. Silk Dyer	192
69. Winding Silk	193
70. Ironer	197
71. Malabar Tailor	199
72. School Master	210

VOL. V.

73. Potter's Wife	<i>Frontispiece</i>
74. Potter	<i>to face p.</i> 2
75. Horse Breaker and Blacksmith	9
76. Gold Beater	15

LIST OF PLATES.

xxxix

	<i>Page</i>
77. Goldsmith	17
78. Gilder	22
79. Brazier	24
80. Brazier's Wife	26
81. Shell Cutter	27
82. Water Carrier	30
83. Telinga Barber and Malabar Barber	32
84. Mahratta Shoemaker	60
85. Catamaran and Chelingsh	70
86. Perfumer	74
87. Dealer in Betel, Areca, &c.	85
88. Dealer in Pearls	92

 VOL. VI.

89. Mahometan Woman Travelling	<i>Frontispiece</i>
90. Chess Board and Spring Bow for Shooting Tigers . . . to face p.	34
91. Tumblers	39
92. Interior of Fort St. George with Rope Dancers, Tumblers, &c. . .	42
93. Hindoo Jugglers swallowing a Sword and ballancing a Buffalo	46
94. Conjuror and Juggler with cups and balls	52
95. Snake Charmer	65
96. Wrestlers	90
97. Tiger-Hunt	105
98. Bengal Palanquin	175
99. Mogul Palanquin	182
100. Dolee	184
101. Gadee	190
102. Peon	197
103. Head Peon	199

HINDOOSTAN

In Miniature.

RELIGION OF THE HINDOOS.

THE Hindoos are not idolaters, as it has been so often asserted: they acknowledge in reality but one Supreme Being, though they pay the same kind of worship to the images of their gods as the Roman Catholics do to those of the Virgin Mary and the Saints. The vulgar, indeed, ignorant and stupid as they are all over the world, without investigating either their actions or their creed,

give themselves up to the most extravagant superstitions.

The deities of the Hindoos are but the ministers and favourites of the Supreme Being, emanations of his essence, who appear under various forms to destroy, punish or amend the wicked; and to encourage, protect, and reward, the good. Some will not admit of these emanations from the divinity; maintaining that the gods were but mortals, whom the Supreme Being endued with qualities superior to those of other men. Be this as it may, so much is certain, that we find among the Hindoos the most sublime ideas of a Sovereign Ruler of the universe, coupled with the most absurd and ridiculous notions respect-

ing the inferior deities, to whom, according to their theology, the sole incomprehensible God has committed the government of all created things.

Parabrama is the supreme, eternal, infinite, almighty being, who created all that exists. The Hindoos have had the good sense not to dishonour him by any fable, or to represent him under any form.

Absorbed in the contemplation of himself, he resolved, say their sacred books, to communicate his perfections to beings susceptible of feeling and of happiness. These beings were not then in existence: the eternal willed it, and they were. He first created three celestial beings, or spirits of a superior or-

der—Brama, Vishnu, and Sheeva ; afterwards, Moissassour, and the whole host of angels and celestial spirits, on whom he imposed no other law than that of adoring their creator. After a certain time, part of the heavenly host, misled by the wicked counsels of Moissassour, rebelled against the creator. God punished them by everlasting banishment from his presence, and condemned them to eternal torment : but after another space of time, at the intercession of Brama, Vishnu, and Sheeva, God permitted the rebel angels to be placed in a state of probation, in which they might have an opportunity of deserving his pardon. To this end he created the visible universe, composed

of fifteen globes of purification, of which our earth is the middlemost. The seven inferior globes are destined for the penance and punishment, and the seven superior for the purification of the penitent angels. God then created and placed upon the earth ninety-nine different kinds of mortal bodies, the last and most noble of which are the *Ghoij*, or cow, and *Murd*, man, to be successively animated by these spirits, who were destined to suffer physical and moral evils proportioned to their past disobedience. Such as shall persist in rebellion or misbehave in the last form, shall be again sent back to *onderah*, or the lowest globe, to begin their penance anew, and to pass again through the ninety-nine

transmigrations. Those, on the contrary, who shall go through the fifteen globes, performing penance and obeying the divine precepts, shall be restored to their original state of felicity. The faithful angels have obtained permission to descend into the same regions of penance, to watch over their fallen fellows, and to preserve them from the snares of Moissassour and the other ringleaders of rebellion.

Such is the origin of the multitude of gods and goddesses, demi-gods, and demi-goddesses, differing in rank and power, and subordinate in a thousand ways to one another. Some dwell in the stars, the air, the sea, the woods, the rivers, and all other created things,

like the naiads, fauns, satyrs, dryads, hamadryads, &c. with which the Greeks peopled all nature; while others form companies of celestial musicians, nymphs, dæmons, furies, &c.

All these spirits are comprized in the denominations of *deva* or *deouta*, good genii, and *deitti*, evil genii. The *deouta* are almost always at war with the *deitti*: the former are peculiarly devoted to Vishnu, the latter to Sheeva. In the battles which they fight with one another, both are liable to wounds and even to death; but their respective *gurus*, who are their spiritual directors and physicians, restore them to life.

The number of *deouta* amounts to

thirty *crores*,^r or three hundred millions; that of the *deitti*, to eighty *crores*, or eight hundred millions. The Hindoos have composed the courts of their principal divinities upon the plan of those of their princes. They have their messengers, pages, singers, dancing-girls, doctors, poets, buffoons, &c.

The *racchasa* and the *dinava* are two species of *deitti* more mischievous than the rest. They are giants, dæmons, who devour man and beast: they assume all sorts of hideous shapes, and can make themselves invisible. For the purpose of appeasing their wrath, small chapels are erected, and sacrifices are sometimes offered to them.

The *deouta* and the *deitti* can like-

wise take various shapes at pleasure : they transform themselves into men, beasts, pygmies, and enormous giants, whose heads touch the stars, and whose feet descend to the abyss of hell. The imagination of the Orientals is much warmer and bolder than ours. The poets and sculptors, who borrow so largely from the mythology and the metamorphoses of the gods of Greece and Rome, would be exceedingly puzzled to bring the fictions of the nations of the east within the compass of their art.

Brama, Vishnu, and Sheeva, form the Indian trinity, called *Trimurti*, or, correctly speaking, it is the Supreme Being himself, under the triple character of

transmigrations. Those, on the contrary, who shall go through the fifteen globes, performing penance and obeying the divine precepts, shall be restored to their original state of felicity. The faithful angels have obtained permission to descend into the same regions of penance, to watch over their fallen fellows, and to preserve them from the snares of Moissassour and the other ringleaders of rebellion.

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The number of *deouta* amounts to

creator, preserver, and destroyer. (*See the Frontispiece*). They are sometimes designated by the three letters A. U. M. the first two of which are sounded like a long o, so that altogether they are pronounced like *ome*; a mystic word, on which the pious Hindoo frequently meditates in silence, but which, out of respect, he never suffers to escape his lips.

Almost all nations have exaggerated their own antiquity, with a view to augment their importance: it may reasonably be supposed that the Hindoos, whose imagination has no curb, are not in this point behind any other people. They are profuse of years and ages to form a single day of their Brama.

They believe that the Supreme Being has fixed four ages, or *youg*, for the course of penance and purification of the fallen spirits. These ages they term *satia*, *treta*, *duapara*, and *cali*.

The *satia*, or golden age, lasted three millions two hundred thousand years. The Bramins, the first of the four castes into which Brama has divided mankind, were then in possession of the authority, and there was nothing on earth but innocence and virtue. Human life extended to one hundred thousand years.

The *treta*, or silver age, lasted two millions four hundred thousand years. The Khattries, or second caste, then had the preponderance: vice was intro-

duced into the world, but as yet it formed only one-fourth of its composition, the other three-fourths consisting of virtues. Men began to degenerate, and the duration of their life was reduced to sixty thousand years.

In the *duapara*, the third, or copper age, the Vaisya, or third caste, had the rule. Vices and virtues were then in equal proportion; and human life was abridged to one thousand years. This third age lasted one million six hundred thousand years.

In the fourth, or the present age of the world, called *cali* or *cali-young*, the Sooders, the fourth and last caste, predominate: the proportion of vices is three-fourths, and that of virtues one-

fourth only. The life of man is reduced to one hundred years ; and it is the good alone, whose number is very small, that attain this age. The torrent of vice which inundates the earth, has, from a fatal necessity, produced a multitude of actions unknown to preceding ages ; and when the last fourth of virtues shall be annihilated, Vishnu will put an end to the corruption of mankind, by destroying the human race and the terrestrial globe. The *cali-youg* will last one hundred thousand years, of which five thousand are already past.

Authors differ respecting this chronology, either because they have been instructed by Bramins, who were not well informed, or because the Bramins

themselves calculate differently in the different parts of India; or because there may be a variety of opinions on this point: but yet almost all of them think alike on the subject of the antiquity of the world; for those who diminish the duration of one age, increase that of another in proportion. A learned Bramin laughed, on being told, that we Europeans reckon only about six thousand years since the creation of the world, and, pointing to an old man with a long white beard, asked, if it was possible to believe that he was born but the preceding day.

The Hindoos call the whole of their four ages a *divine age*; a thousand divine ages form a *calpa*, or one of Bra-

ma's days, who, during that period, successively invested fourteen *menus*, or holy spirits, with the sovereignty of the earth. The *menu* transmits his empire to his posterity for seventy-one divine ages, and this period is called *manawantara*, and as fourteen *manawantara* make but nine hundred and ninety-four divine ages, there remain six, which are the twilight of Brama's day. Thirty of these days form his month; twelve of these months one of his years; and one hundred of these years the duration of his existence. The Hindoos assert that fifty of these years have already elapsed, so that we are in the first day of the first month of the fifty-first year of Brama's age, and

in the twenty-eighth divine age of the seventh *manawantara*. The first three human ages of this age, and five thousand years of the fourth are past. The Hindoos therefore calculate that it is 131,400,007,205,000 years since the birth of Brama, or the beginning of the world.

The first *menu* in the present day of Brama, was surnamed Sawayambhava, or son of him who exists of himself. To him is attributed the institution of the religious and civil duties that are still observed among the Hindoos. Hence some idea may be formed of the prodigious antiquity ascribed by the Hindoos to these institutions.

We know little more than the names

of the five *menus* who succeeded the first; but the Hindoo works give many particulars concerning the life and posterity of the seventh *menu*, who is called *Vaivaswata*, or child of the sun. He had ten sons, and was attended by seven *richeys*, or holy persons.

During the reign of this *menu*, the earth was inundated, and the whole human race destroyed by a deluge, with the exception of this religious prince, and the seven *richeys* and their wives, who took refuge in an ark. *Vaivaswata*'s children were not born till after the deluge.

The seventh *menu* is considered as the ancestor of the whole human race, for the seven *richeys* who were preserved

with him in the ark, do not appear to have had human progeny. His posterity are divided into two great branches, called the *children of the sun*, after his reputed father, and the *children of the moon*, from the father of the husband of his daughter Ila ; for the moon is a male deity with the Hindoos.

The male descendants, in a direct line, of these two families, are supposed to have reigned in the cities of Oude and Vitora, till the thousandth year of the present age, when the solar and lunar dynasties became extinct. The *menu* reigned in person during the last golden age : for the Hindoos, deeming it wrong to place a sacred personage in times of impurity, assert that the

menu reigns only in the golden age of each divine age ; and that he disappears in the three other ages, and does not return till the golden age of the succeeding divine age.

According to the *puranas*, or Indian books which treat of the creation and of the history of the gods and heroes of antiquity, fifty-five princes of the solar, and forty-five of the lunar race, governed the world during the second, or silver age. Twenty-nine princes of the first, and twenty-four of the second race, reigned during the third, or copper age : and lastly, they reckon thirty generations of each of the two families during the first thousand years of the *cali-youg*, or the present age.

Since that period, which is the epoch of the accession of Pradyota to the kingdom of Magadha, or Behar, the foundation of which dates from the beginning of the *cali-youg*; a regular chronology records the number of years of each dynasty, to the destruction of the original government of the Hindoos: but this belongs to the history of India, which is foreign to our present subject.

BRAMA.

Brama, Birmah, or Brouma, is one of the three persons of the Indian trinity, or rather the Supreme Being under the attribute of *Creator*. Brama, the progenitor of all rational beings, sprung from a golden egg, sparkling like a thousand suns, which was hatched by the motion imparted to the waters by the Supreme Being. Brama separated the heavens from the earth, and placed amid the subtle ether the eight points of the universe and the receptacle of the waters. He had five heads before Vairevert, one of Sheeva's sons, cut off one

of them. He is delineated floating on a leaf of the lotus, a plant revered in India. The Bramins relate, that the fifteen worlds which compose the universe were each produced by a part of Brama's body. At the moment of our birth, he imprints in our heads, in characters which cannot be effaced, all that we shall do, and all that is to happen to us in life. It is not in our power, nor in that of Brama himself, to prevent what is written from being fulfilled. Brama divided the Hindoos into the four castes or tribes mentioned in the preceding chapter, and which will be further noticed hereafter.

Brama, considered as God the Creator, has, however, neither temple, nor wor-

ship, nor devotees : the Bramins alone, on account of their origin, address their prayers to him every morning.

It was pride that deprived Brama of the *poojah*, as the ceremony which the Hindoos are obliged to perform every morning, in honour of their gods, is called. Brama imagined himself equal to Sheeva, because he possessed the power of creating, and therefore insisted on the pre-eminence over Vishnu. The latter was enraged at his presumption, and a dreadful conflict ensued. The stars fell from the firmament, the *andons* (the visible heavens) burst, and the earth trembled. The *deverkels*, or *dcoutas*, demi-gods, filled with consternation, implored the Lord to support them ; and God appeared

before the combatants, in the form of a pillar of fire which had no end. At this sight their fury subsided, and they agreed, that he who should find the top of the pillar, should enjoy the pre-eminence over the other. Vishnu assumed the form of a wild boar, dug holes in the ground with his tusks, and penetrated to *pandalon*, hell. He proceeded a thousand *cadons* in the twinkling of an eye. Brama, in the shape of a bird, soared towards the summit, flying two thousand *cadons* in a moment. In this way the one continued descending and the other ascending for one hundred thousand years, but yet their search proved fruitless. At length, having exhausted their strength, they

reflected on their imprudence, and recognized the Lord. But as Brama attempted to cheat Vishnu, and to make him believe that he had discovered the top of the pillar, Sheeva decreed that he should never have any temples on earth.

Brama, according to the vulgar mythology, takes but little notice of human affairs. Identified with the sun, he is adored by the Bramins in the *gayatri*, the most sacred passage of the *vedas* (or sacred books), which is itself ranked among the gods, and to which offerings are made. One of the most important attributes of Brama is that of father of legislators; for it was his ten sons who diffused laws and the

sciences over the world. He is considered as the original author of the *vedas*, which are said to have issued from his four mouths ; though it was not till a later period, that is, about fourteen hundred years before Christ, that they were collected and arranged by Vyasa, the philosopher and poet. The laws which bear the name of Menu, the son of Brama, and the works of the other *richeys*, or holy persons, were also re-copied, or perhaps collected from tradition, long after the period when they are said to have been published by the sons of Brama.

Brama, the father of the legislators of India, has a considerable resemblance to the Jupiter of the Greek poets, the father of Minos, whose ce-

celebrated laws were published in the very same century that Vyasa collected the *vedas*. Jupiter was worshipped as the sun, by the name of *Anxur* or *Axur*, and Brama is identified with that luminary. The most common form in which Brama is represented, is that of a man with four heads and four hands; and it is remarkable that the Lacedæmonians gave four heads to their Jupiter. Lastly, the title of Father of Gods and Men is equally applicable to Brama and to Jupiter.

Brama is delineated holding in one hand a ring, the emblem of immortality; in another, fire, to represent force; and with the other two, writing on *olles*, or palm-leaves, the emblem of legis-

lative power. (*See the annexed engraving.*)

Brama's wife, or *sacti*, is Saraswadi, the goddess of literature and the arts. She is considered sometimes as the daughter, at others, as the sister of Brama; and by the name of Bramani, she is one of the eight primary mothers of the earth, wives of the governors of the eight parts of the world.* In one of the sacred books she is introduced speaking of herself, nearly in the terms of the famous inscription on the statue of Isis: *I am all that has been or shall be.*

* These are: 1. *Indra*, governor of the east; 2. *Agnee*, of the south-east; 3. *Yama*, of the south; 4. *Nyruta*, of the south-west; 5. *Varuna*, of the west; 6. *Pavan*, of the north-west; 7. *Cuvera*, of the north; 8. *Iswara*, of the north-east.



BRAMA .

The goose, the emblem of vigilance, is consecrated to her, and she is frequently represented borne by that bird, holding a book in one hand, and playing on the *vina*, or Indian lyre, with the other. She is sometimes seen in the train of Brama, when, seated on a lotus, he holds the *vedas* in one hand, and consecrates the instruments for sacrifice with the three others.

SHEEVA.

Sheeva is the deity who seems to have obtained the most general worship. In his attributes, he has sometimes a resemblance to Brama, at others, to Vishnu, and frequently to the sun. The double character of destroyer and restorer, peculiar to him, has analogy with the operations of nature, which annihilates nothing, but which, under the appearance of destruction, merely changes the forms of bodies. His names are too numerous to be mentioned here: the principal are *Rudra*, *Iwora*, and *Mahadeva*. Under the name

of Rudra, he is cruel and takes delight in sanguinary sacrifices ; under that of Ixora, he is absolute lord of all things ; under that of Mahadeva, or great god, he is adored on all the mountains of India ; and he has also numerous votaries in the plains. His worship very much resembles that of Osiris in Egypt, and of Dionysus, or the Indian Bacchus, at Athens ; and it is remarkable, that one of the thousand and eight incarnations of Sheeva was *Deo Naush*, and one of his names *Baghis*. We leave philologists to decide, whether Ixora and Osiris have the same signification : be this as it may, the resemblance of their attributes and worship afford reason to believe that they

are one and the same. The bull, vulgarly called *nundi*, is consecrated to Mahadeva, who is frequently represented riding on that animal ; and Apis, to which divine honours were paid in Egypt, as they are in India, to all animals of the bull species, was one of the types of Osiris.

Under the name of Rudra, Sheeva corresponds with the Stygian Jupiter, or Pluto ; and there is not a less curious resemblance between Sheeva and Jupiter. The name of *Triopthalmos*, given to the Grecian Jupiter, whose statue was found about the time of the Trojan war, with a third eye in the middle of the forehead, and that of *Trilochan*, by which Sheeva is usually

denominated, when he is represented with three eyes, have precisely the same signification. Under the name of *Cala*, or Time, he has also some resemblance to *Chronos*, or Saturn, who like him was supposed to be delighted with sacrifices of human victims.

Sheeva is one of the greatest deities of the Hindoos: some sects even assert that the other gods are subordinate to him, or merely his attributes. He is a particular favourite with the lowest classes of the people, and with the Saniassis, a religious order, who invoke him as their peculiar patron, by the name of Dourghati. He is sometimes represented with several heads; but in general only one is given to him

The number of his hands differs from four to thirty-two, and each holds a different weapon, as a sword, a club, a hatchet, &c. He is seated on a tiger's or elephant's skin, and wears round his neck a chaplet of human skulls. The river Ganges is seen issuing from the top of his head, where he laid it down to rest in descending from heaven to earth.

He resides on Mount Kailassa, which is composed of rocks, every fragment of which is a precious stone of inestimable value. There he is surrounded by celestial nymphs, while his wife Parvati, a goddess sprung from the mountain, sits by his side and participates in his pleasures and his honours.

Parvati is one of the most celebrated divinities in the legends of the Hindoos: she is the same as Maha-Cali, or the great goddess of time. Victims of all kinds, from man to the tortoise, are sacrificed to her in this character. It is she who punishes the wicked; and in this point, and also as the goddess of enchantments, she agrees with Proserpine, Diana of Tauris, or the triple Hecate.

Diana of Ephesus, who was represented with several breasts, was considered by the ancients as one and the same with Cybele and the earth. Parvati has also the name of Bhavani, or the female nature on earth, when she appears with the distinctive charac-

teristics of the Ephesian Diana: nevertheless, the particular name of the goddess of the earth is *Prithivi*, an inferior deity, who is often confounded with Bhavani. Cybele rides on a lion; so does Bhavani, though, in quality of Sheeva's wife, she is often seen accompanied by the bull. Diana, Ceres, and Cybele, are supposed to be the same as Isis, the wife of Osiris, and the name of Parvati, as the wife of Mahesa, or *Iwora*, is *Isa*.

Besides these characters, which she has in common with the deities of Greece, Parvati is Dourga, or active virtue: under this attribute she vanquished Moissassour, the dæmon of vice, and one of the rebel angels. This

conflict has been celebrated in songs and poems by all the Hindoo sects. It is represented in the annexed engraving, faithfully copied from an Indian painting; and the account given of it is as follows:—

When the angel Moissassour rebelled against the Supreme Being, he metamorphosed himself into a buffalo, and in that form made war for one hundred years on Indra and his celestial hosts, whom he defeated and drove out of heaven. Indra wandered a long time upon earth with his vanquished *deouta*: at length, by the advice of Brama, he solicited the assistance of Vishnu and Sheeva. These deities, commiserating his misfortune and exasperated against

Moissassour, exhaled from their mouths a flame, which was transformed into a goddess of incomparable beauty. This was Parvati, under the name of Dourga. Mounted on a tiger and her four hands armed with a sabre, a lance, a serpent, and a dagger, she proceeded against the usurper, pursued him in all the forms that he assumed to elude her wrath, and, at length, setting her foot upon his head, she cut it off with her sabre. From the trunk of the buffalo instantly sprung a human bust, bearing in one arm a sabre and in the other a buckler. This animal, half-buffalo and half-man, prepared for another attack on its conqueror: but Dourga, throwing the serpent she held



DOURGA KILLING MAISSASSOUR.

in her hand round his neck, thrust her lance into his heart, and thus put an end to the combat. In commemoration of this victory the people of Bengal and the Mahrattas sacrifice a buffalo to Dourga.

Under the name of Maha-Cali, she is represented as hideously ugly, with teeth and nails of immoderate length, arms and whips in her eight hands, and a chaplet of skulls round her neck. By the appellation of Bhavani, she is less terrible, and her festival is held in spring: but Dourga is her favourite character. Her festival is solemnized in autumn, with great parade and rejoicing: her statues are then carried in procession to the nearest river or

lake, and thrown into the water. This practice originated in the belief that Dourga, after giving happiness and prosperity to India, retired into the Ganges, where she receives such as throw themselves in : accordingly, those Hindoos who drown themselves in this sacred river are deemed most happy, and no pains are taken to prevent or to save them.

Padmala, and Camala, born of the Lotus, are likewise names of Parvati ; and here she is decidedly the Venus of the western mythologists ; she issued upon a flower from the foam of the sea, and was hailed as the goddess of beauty by the celestial powers, who gave her in marriage to Sheeva. She is the

mother of *Munmadin*, *Camdeo* or *Depuc*, the Cupid, and *Carticeya*, the Mars of India: and the peacock, which the former rides, is frequently placed beside her. Ganesa, the god of wisdom, is also reckoned one of her sons; and she is considered, equally with *Saraswadi*, as the patroness of the sciences. The miners, employed in extracting metals from the bosom of the earth, are also under her protection, and to her is ascribed the invention of stringed musical instruments. In this point she resembles *Minerva*, and as she is alike skilful in the arts of war and of peace, we have strong reason to believe that she is no other than that goddess. The statues of *Mercury* and *Minerva*,

placed together by the high-roads, had probably the same origin as those of Sheeva and Parvati, which are extremely common in India.

Parvati is particularly the goddess of women of the lower class, who invoke her on all occasions. She has likewise a sect of worshippers, called *Sactis*, who acknowledge no other deity. At the entrance of the temples of Sheeva and Parvati is always placed an ox with a tortoise at his feet. The Greeks, who adopted the forms and the details of the ancient mythologies, with the mystic signification of which they were not always acquainted, invented the fable of Chelone to explain the presence of the tortoise in the temples of Jupiter.

Sheeva had several sons : the first and most powerful is *Ganesu*, the god of wisdom, and who also presides over marriage. His statues, like those of the god *Terminus*, are placed by the side of roads and on the boundaries of townships and villages. He is adored, like *Pan*, under trees and in woods : and on the coast of *Coromandel* he is the object of a particular worship, under the name of *Polear*. At *Chinsura*, divine honours are paid to the incarnation of *Ganesa*, under the figure of the god of that country ; and he is universally venerated throughout *India*.

When a person proposes to build a house or any other edifice, the first thing he does is to sanctify the spot,

by strewing cow-dung and ashes over it ; and in the next place he never fails to erect upon it a statue of Ganesa. In short, the god of wisdom is the most popular of all the deities of India, and has the nearest resemblance to the *Lares*, or household gods, of the ancients. Hanooman shares this attribute with him among the lower classes of the Hindoos. Like the Janus of the Romans, Ganesa has two faces and sometimes four, to indicate that nothing escapes prudence, and that it views at once the past, the present, and the future. The pious Hindoos begin all sacrifices, religious ceremonies, and prayers, not excepting such as are addressed to the superior divinities, and



GANESA,
God of Wisdom.

all business of any importance, with an invocation to Ganesa. There are few books to which are not prefixed the words, *Hail Ganesa!*

One of the attributes of Ganesa, that of patron of literature, he has in common with the Apollo of the Greeks, though Crishna, one of the *awatars*, or incarnations of Vishnu, of which we shall treat presently, bears a closer resemblance to the god of Delphi. Ganesa is depicted with a body of prodigious size, an elephant's head, commonly with four hands, and sometimes, as we have observed, with four faces. The animal which accompanies him is usually the rat, the emblem of

foresight. The following story is related concerning it.

This rat was a giant, called Guedyemonga-Churin, on whom the gods had conferred immortality ; but he abused his power, and did much mischief to mankind, who implored the protection of Ganesa. The latter, pulling out one of his tusks, threw it with such force at Guedyemonga-Churin, that the tooth entered his stomach and overthrew him. The giant instantly transformed himself into a rat as large as a mountain, and ran up to attack Ganesa, who leaped upon his back, saying :
“ Thou shalt henceforth carry me.”

Ganesa is frequently seen with Shee-

va and Parvati in the groves of Kailassa, where it is his employment to fan them with a *chamara*, or fan made of feathers, while Nareda plays on the *vina* (lyre) which is accompanied by the celestial choirs.

The Hindoos, when they adore Ganesa by the name of Polear, cross their arms, and strike themselves several blows with their closed fists on the temples; then, still keeping their arms crossed, they lay hold of their ears and make three inclinations by bending the knee: after which they clasp their hands, strike their foreheads again, and address their prayers to the god. They entertain the highest veneration for him, place his image in all the tem-

ples, in the streets, the roads, the fields, and at the foot of trees, that every one may have opportunities of invoking him in case of need, and that travellers may be able to present their offerings to him before they pursue their route.

Sheeva's second son is *Supramanya* : his father produced him from the eye in the middle of his forehead, to destroy the giant Soura Parpina. The latter, by dint of penance, had obtained the government of the world and immortality ; but he became so wicked, that Sheeva was obliged to punish him. He sent against him *Supramanya*, who fought him in vain for two days ; but at length he was fortunate enough to cut the giant in two. The two parts



SUPRAMANIA .
Second Son of Sheeva .

turned, the one into a peacock and the other into a cock. Supramanya took the peacock to ride upon, and ordered the cock to keep near him on his car. Accordingly, in the temples consecrated to him, and in all those of Sheeva, in which he has always a small chapel, he is seen riding on a peacock, with six heads and twelve arms.

Supramanya is represented with four hands, two of which are armed with daggers, while a third holds a lance, and the fourth is empty. The peacock is at his feet.

Vairevert is the third son of Sheeva, who made him out of his breath, and commissioned him to punish the pride of the *deverkels* and penitents, and to

humble Brama, who esteemed himself the greatest of the gods. Vairevert tore off one of Brama's five heads; he killed the *deverkels* and the penitents, and caught their blood in Brama's skull. He afterwards restored them to life, and gave them humbler and purer hearts.

According to some Hindoos, it is Vairevert, who will come at the expiration of the four ages, at Sheeva's command, to destroy the world; but according to others, that office will be performed by Vishnu. Vairevert is represented with four arms, three eyes, and two projecting teeth in the shape of crescents. He wears, by way of necklace, a string of heads, which hang

down to his belly ; his girdle is composed of serpents ; his hair is of the colour of fire ; bells are attached to his feet, and in his hands he holds a *tidi*, a *choulon*, a cord, and the skull of Brama. Vairevert is represented riding on a dog : he has several temples, but is principally worshipped at Cashee, near the Ganges.

VISHNU.

Of all the gods of the Indian mythology, observes Mrs. Graham, (in her *Letters on India*,) I like *Vishnu* best : for besides being charged with the duty of our preservation, it cannot be denied that he is a very amiable deity. We do not find that he suffers himself to be hurried into those violent passions which dishonour the majesty of Sheeva, nor do we see that he resorts to unworthy artifices, like Indra, to give success to evil designs : but he is always ready to take upon himself the afflictions of humanity, for the purpose of

relieving the wretched. It is he, who, by his kindly influence, prevents the effects of the rage of Mahadeva, and preserves the present order of the creation.

Jupiter, in his attribute of preserver, is the western prototype of Vishnu. Both preside over the rites of hospitality, and protect strangers ; and the celestial eagle constantly accompanies one as well as the other. But Vishnu is also *Varuna*, or the god of the waters. Under this character he is armed with a trident, or sceptre with three prongs. Sir William Jones calls Varuna a form of Sheeva ; but it seems more natural to consider him as Vishnu, who, by one of his names, *Narayan*, is

represented floating on the ocean upon a leaf, and sometimes on the great serpent, Maha Shesha. Sheeva and Vishnu frequently exchange their attributes, and even their arms : hence the former occasionally bears the trident which belongs to the latter.

When Vishnu is not represented sleeping on the ocean, he is depicted with four arms and sometimes more, an agreeable aspect and handsome figure. His colour is dark blue : he holds a lotus, the emblem of water, the *chakra*, or ornamented disk, and the *chank*, or conch ; he is, moreover, armed sometimes with the *agnееastra*, or fiery dart, perhaps the lightning, and at others, with the trident. His

head is sometimes adorned with three tresses, the emblem of the Ganges, which, it is said, flows from Vishnu's feet over the head of Sheeva, and which is called Triveni. The three tresses may perhaps also represent the three great rivers, the Ganges, the Jumna, and the Saraswati; the latter of which, according to the Bramins, communicates with the two others by a subterraneous channel.

Vishnu is frequently borne upon the wings of *Garura*, or *Garuda*, who is commonly represented with a human body and the beak and wings of a hawk. Here we recognize the eagle of Jupiter and his companion, Ganymede. Vishnu's paradise is the *vaicondon*, where he

enjoys the company of his beloved *Lacshmi*, the exquisitely beautiful goddess of fortune and abundance, and one of his wives. She is also called *Sris*, which signifies prosperity, and *Camala*, born of the Lotus, and is considered as the mother of Manmadin. She is consequently the same as Parvati; and, indeed, it seems as if all the goddesses, as well as all the gods, might be reduced to a single deity, whose different attributes they merely represent. The names of the three great divinities, numerous as they may be, are all reducible to those of the sun, fire, and air, and these to that of a great deity, who is visibly represented in the creation by the sun; but in the vulgar mythology,

Sourya, the god of that luminary, is a personage of much less importance than any of those composing the great Trinity. He has nevertheless a numerous sect of worshippers, who have taken from his name the appellation of *Souras*. The sun, in his splendour, is no other, according to the *gayatri*, than truth and the supreme intelligence, which creates, governs, and animates the whole universe. The learned invoke him with particular veneration; but the only notion which the common people have of him, is derived from seeing his image drawn in a car by seven green coursers, and by a horse with seven heads, preceded by *Aroun*, who performs the office of leader, and in

whom we may recognize Aurora, and followed by the twelve *aditis*, or months, and thousands of genii singing his praises. Sourya is believed to have frequently descended from his car in human shape. Two of his sons, called *Aswinau*, are regarded as twins and represented like Castor and Pollux. They preside over medicine ; and they are the offspring of a nymph, who, in the form of a mare, was impregnated by the rays of the sun.

INFERIOR DEITIES OF THE HINDOOS.

Tchandra, the moon, is like the god *Lunus* of the ancient Italians, of the male sex. Fable relates, that the twenty-eight lunar stations into which the heavens are divided by the Hindoos, are each the abode of a wife of *Tchandra*, whom the god visits in turn. He is invoked with *Sourya* and the planets in all sacrifices. His car is drawn by an antelope, as that of *Diana* was by a stag. All the horned animals, the hare, and the rabbit, are under his special protection.

Yama, the god of death, and sovereign of *pandalon*, or hell, is also judge of the souls of the dead, which, at stated periods, repair in crowds to Yamapore, his dread abode, to receive sentence. Hence they either ascend to *suerga*, the first heaven, or are cast into *narac*, the region of serpents, or assume upon earth the form of some animal, unless, from the nature of their offences, they are doomed to reside some time in vegetables or even in mineral substances. The milky-way is the road by which the souls travel to Yamapore. *Yama* resembles Pluto, or rather, perhaps, *Minos*. One of his titles is *Dherma-rajá*, king of justice; another, *Pitripeti*, lord of the patriarchs; and a third,

Sraddha-deva, god of funeral offerings. He is also *Cala*, or Time, though Sheeva is sometimes worshipped by that appellation. Yama is represented with a frightful face, mounted on a buffalo, and holding a stick in his hand.

The Hindoos say, that this god of death expired himself under the blows of Ixora, one of the names of Sheeva, from whom he attempted, in his sixteenth year, to steal away Marcandam, the ward of that deity. Men ceased for some time to be subject to death, and began to imagine themselves immortal: but the earth, overstocked with inhabitants, was no longer capable of supporting them, which occasioned extraordinary commotion and confusion. At

length, Ixora, at the solicitation of the gods, re-animated Yama, who sent one of his ministers to order all the aged to set out immediately for the other world. The messenger, having tumbled by the way, arrived with his head quite muddled with the fumes of wine, and not knowing what he was about, instead of addressing himself exclusively to the old, he intimated Yama's orders to all mankind, without distinction of age. A prodigious number of children, youths, adults, and aged persons, were soon seen perishing promiscuously. Since that time men have died at every age : till then their lives were all of equal length, and the number of years determined the moment of death.

The western mythologists have sometimes confounded Plutus with Pluto: but *Cuvera*, the god of wealth with the Hindoos, has no correspondence with Yama, unless it be supposed that the islands of gold, silver, and iron, which form part of the dominions of the latter, give the other a right to share his empire. *Cuvera*, moreover, is rather the genius who presides over wealth and metals, than a god: he has no altars, and it is to *Lacshmi*, the goddess of fortune, that devotees address their prayers for riches. *Cuvera* resides in the palace of *Alaca*, in the forest of *Chitaroutra*; he is drawn on a splendid car, surrounded by a great number of handsome nymphs, called *Yacshas*.

Yama and Cuvera are two of the protectors of the eight corners of the world: the former presiding over the south, the latter over the north.

Agnee, the god of fire, has usually three legs and four arms; he is represented surrounded with flames, and riding upon a ram: he is one of the protecting deities of the eight corners of the world, and governs the south-east portion. He has many different names, but is best known by that of *Agnee*.

Visvacarman, god of artisans, is annually adored by all those who follow mechanical professions: the implements of the carpenters, masons, &c. are consecrated to him.

Carticeya, son of Parvati, is the

commander of the celestial armies ; he was born with six heads, and was nursed by the six *critikas* (Pleiades) who each suckled one of his six mouths. These nurses were placed among the stars, at a great distance from their husbands, the *richeys* (the seven stars of the Great Bear,) to whom they had proved false. The seventh only, the faithful *Arundati*,* was permitted to remain with her husband, and to accompany him in his nocturnal revolution. Carticeya is also called *Scanda* ; he has six faces, as we have just observed, a mul-

* The Hindoos give this appellation to a small star, which is so near to the stars of the Great Bear, that it seems to touch them.

titude of eyes, and several hands armed with clubs, arrows and sabres ; he is represented riding on a peacock, or accompanied by that bird : he is of an irascible disposition, like his brother Mars, but his power is extremely limited : perhaps he is the same as Supramanya, Sheeva's second son, who, like him, has six heads, and is mounted on a peacock.

Camdeo, or *Manmadin*, differs but little from the Cupid of the ancients. He is also called *Ununga*, or, without body ; and is the son of Vishnu and Lacshmi. Besides his bow and arrows, he carries a banner, on which is delineated a fish : his bow is a sugar-cane ; the cord is formed of bees ; the arrows



MANMADIN,
The Indian Cupid.

are of all sorts of flowers ; one only is headed, but the point is covered with a honey-comb—an allegory equally just and ingenious, and which so correctly expresses the pleasures and the pangs produced at one and the same time by the wounds of love. Manmadin is represented, as in the annexed plate, riding on a parrot.

One day, when Vishnu, to deceive Sheeva, had assumed the figure of a beautiful young female, Manmadin discharged an arrow, which pierced the heart of the formidable deity, and inflamed it with love of the nymph. The latter fled, and at the moment when Sheeva had overtaken her, Vishnu resumed his proper form. Sheeva, en-

raged at the trick played upon him, with one flash of his eyes burned and consumed the imprudent Manmadin, who hence received the name of *Ununga*. He was restored to life by a shower of nectar, which the gods in pity poured upon him: but he remained without body and is the only Indian deity who is accounted incorporeal. *Camdeo* is particularly worshipped by females desirous of obtaining faithful lovers and good husbands. In the worship paid him by the Hindoos, obscene images, loose songs and indecent ideas are excluded: but yet they give him for a wife a goddess, named *Radi*, which signifies lewdness.

Pavan, the god of the winds, is the

father of *Hanooman*, a deity with an ape's head, whose adventures are closely connected with those of the *awatara Rama*, (for which see the sixth incarnation of Vishnu); but in his attributes he nearly resembles Pan. Like the latter, Hanooman was the inventor of a particular kind of music; like him, he dwells in woods and forests, and is at the head of the rural deities. Pavan supports the north-west portion of the universe.

Nareda, one of the sons of Brama, presides over music in general, but his chief character is that of legislator. He is the messenger of the gods: the invention of the *vina*, or Indian guitar, is ascribed to him. His actions have

been celebrated by the poets, and form the subject of a *Purana*.

Indra is the most important deity, after the three great divinities composing the Indian trinity. In several of his attributes he resembles the European Jupiter. He is the sovereign of the firmament, and presides over the different phænomena of the atmosphere, as rain, thunder, &c. He is also the god of illusions and imposture; and as he is neither more chaste nor more constant than Jupiter, his metamorphoses had no other object than to deceive and seduce, like those of the father of gods and men, when he assumed the shape of a swan, a bull, a shower of gold, &c. His body, from the shoulders to the

waist, is studded with eyes, to denote his continual vigilance : hence he has been compared to Argus. He is the chief of the celestial spirits, who are innumerable, and who dwell in *suerga*, the first heaven of the Hindoos, and the abode of virtuous souls : he also rules over the spirits of the earth and sea. His favourite palace is in the forest of Nundana, where his wife, *Indrani*, participates in his pleasures and authority ; she is commonly represented seated by his side, on a beautiful elephant with three trunks, surrounded by a numerous train of *deoutas*. Indra is one of the governors of the eight corners of the world ; but though the part, which is especially under his direction, is the

east, his Olympus is the *Meru*, or north pole, which is allegorically described as a mountain of gold and precious stones.

Casyapa, the priest of the gods, and sometimes called their father, resides, unembarrassed by the arduous duty of governing either gods or men, in a valley, situated on the summit of a lofty mountain. In his mode of life and retirement he resembles Saturn, when he reigned, during the golden age, over Latium. *Casyapa* and his venerable wife are surrounded by sacred nymphs, lovely as the *houris* of Mahomet, and pure as the virgins of Vesta. At their court innocence, oppressed upon earth, finds rest and protection; and

a divine security preserves everlasting peace in their kindly shades, where Ganesa, the god of wisdom, is the most frequent and the most welcome visitor.

Manar Suami, a Hindoo deity, is not well known. Some suppose him to be Sheeva; but his priests recognize in him an incarnation of Supramanya, second son of that god. This doctrine is not generally received; and it is rejected by the Bramins. The temples of *Manar Suami* are very small, and stand in the fields. In general, colossal figures of brick are erected at the entrance; they represent seated *boudons*, who are said to be the guardians of the temple. Within them are seen,

representations of the son of Sheeva and twelve young damsels. These temples are frequented by the Hindoos of the inferior castes, who there perform their devotions; but they are never visited by the Bramins, because they hold this worship in contempt.

Mariatta, who is considered as the goddess of the small-pox, is also worshipped, according to Sonnerat, by people of the lowest class only. *Mariatta* was the wife of the penitent, *Chamada Guini*, and mother of *Parasurama*, who is no other than *Vishnu* in his eighth incarnation. This goddess had authority over the elements; but this power she could retain no longer than while her heart continued

to be pure. One day, going to a pond for water, and making it up according to custom into a ball to carry it home, she saw, on the surface of the water, figures of *granduers*, a species of sylphs of extraordinary beauty. These *granduers* fluttered over her head; she became enamoured of them; her heart was inflamed with desire; the ball which she held suddenly became liquid, and mixed again with the water of the pond. She could never afterwards carry any more home, without the assistance of a vessel. Chamada Guini hence discovered that his wife had ceased to be pure, and, in the excess of his rage, he ordered his son to drag her to the place of execution, and to cut off her

head. This command was obeyed; but Parassurama grieved so much for the loss of his mother, that Chamada Guini told him to go and join her head again to her body, and to recite a prayer, which he taught him, in her ear, assuring him that she would then revive. The son hastened to follow these directions; but, by a singular mistake, he joined the head of his mother to the body of a *parchi*, who had been executed for her crimes—a monstrous union, which combined in Mariatta the virtues of a goddess and the vices of a prostitute. The goddess, rendered impure by this mixture, was expelled from her habitation, and committed all sorts of cruelties. The *deverkels*, ob-

-serving the ravages she was making, appeased her anger, by conferring on her the power of curing the small-pox, and promising that prayers should be offered to her on account of that disease.

INCARNATIONS OF VISHNU.

There is a part of the mythology of India, which seems to be blended with the history of that country, and of which, for this reason, we think it right to treat somewhat more circumstantially. It may be compared with that of the heroic ages of Greece. This part relates to the different *awatars* of Vishnu, or his incarnations and appearances on earth.

The first of these *awatars* has a reference to that general deluge, of which all nations have preserved some tradition. Vishnu, we are told, metamor-

phosed himself into a fish, to save king Sattiaviraden and his wife, during the deluge, which had been sent as a punishment for the crimes and wickedness of mankind. In this form, he acted as a rudder to the vessel which this king had constructed, and watched incessantly over his safety. After the waters had subsided, Sattiaviraden quitted his retreat, and set about repeopling the world. In this incarnation, Vishnu is adored by the name of *Matsya Avatara*.

According to some, the object of this metamorphosis was to fish up the *vedas*, or sacred books, which a certain dæmon had stolen from those to whose

care they were committed, and hidden at the bottom of the sea.

The second incarnation is that of *Kourma*, or the tortoise. The gods and the giants, wishing to obtain immortality by eating *amourdon*, delicious butter, formed in one of the seven seas of the universe, which the Indians call sea of milk, transported, by Vishnu's advice, the mountain of Mandreguivi into that sea: they twisted round it the serpent Adissechen, and alternately pulling, some by his hundred heads, others by the tail, they made the mountain turn round in such a manner, as to agitate the sea and to convert it into butter: but they pulled with such

rapidity, that Adissechen, overcome with weakness, could no longer endure it. His body shuddered ; his hundred trembling mouths made the universe resound with hisses ; a torrent of flames burst from his eyes ; his hundred black pendent tongues palpitated, and vomited forth a deadly poison, which immediately spread all around. The gods and giants betook themselves to flight. Vishnu, bolder than the rest, took the poison, and with it rubbed his body, which became quite blue. It is in memory of this event, that this colour is given to his image in almost all the temples.

The gods and the giants, encouraged by Vishnu's example, fell to work

again. After they had laboured a thousand years, the mountain was on the point of sinking in the sea, when Vishnu, in the form of a tortoise, quickly placed himself beneath, and supported it. At length they saw the cow Camadenu, the horse with seven heads, and the elephant with three trunks, already mentioned, coming out of the sea of milk; also the tree *calpaga vrutcham*; Lacshmi, goddess of riches, wife of Vishnu; Saraswadi, goddess of the sciences and of harmony, married to Brama; Mondevi, goddess of discord and misery, whom nobody would have, and who is represented riding on an ass, and holding in her hand a banner, on which a raven is delineated; and,



Vishnu reclined on the Serpent Adisesechen .

lastly, Danouvandri, the physician, carrying a vessel full of *amourdon*, which the gods instantly seized, and greedily devoured, without leaving a morsel. The giants, disappointed in their expectations, dispersed over the earth, prevented mankind from paying worship to the gods, and strove to obtain adoration for themselves. Their insolence occasioned the subsequent incarnations of Vishnu, who endeavoured to destroy this race, so inimical to the gods. He is adored in this second metamorphosis, by the name of *Kourma Awatara*. The followers of Vishnu believe that this god, though omnipresent, resides more particularly in the *vaicondom*, his paradise, amidst the sea of milk, reclined,

in contemplative slumber, on the serpent Adissechen, which serves him for a throne: in this state he is called *Siranguan*. In all the temples of Vishnu is to be seen the figure of this god; but as the serpent on which he lies cannot be represented with his hundred heads, he is delineated with only five.

A giant, called Paladas, having rolled up the earth like a sheet of paper, carried it on his shoulders to the bottom of the sea. Vishnu, in the form of a man with a boar's head, attacked the giant, and ripped open his belly: he then plunged into the sea, to bring up the earth, which he seized with his tusks, and placed on the surface of the water, as it was before,



VISHNU.
In his third Incarnation, as a Wild Boar.

putting several mountains on it to keep it in equilibrium. In this third incarnation, Vishnu has the name of *Vara-guen*; but in the temple of Tirumaton, which is dedicated to this metamorphosis, he is adored by that of *Ludeva-rague-Cerunal*.

The fourth and fifth incarnations of Vishnu, are probably connected with the ancient history of India, which is lost, and seem to refer to religious wars. It was to destroy the giant Erenien, that the god underwent his fourth incarnation. On this giant, Brama conferred the privilege, that he could not be killed either by gods, men, or beasts. Elated with this advantage, he commanded divine honours to be paid to

him throughout his kingdom. His son, Pragaladen, filled with the grace of Vishnu, was the only person who refused to adore him. Caresses, threats, and torments proved alike unavailing. "The god whom I worship," said he, undauntedly, "is omnipotent, full of goodness to those who adore him, but terrible to the wicked." "And where is this mighty god," replied the giant, "that I may wreak my vengeance on him?" Pragaladen answered, that he was every where, and that he filled all places with his divinity. "Shall I find him here?" cried the enraged Erenien, striking one of the pillars of his palace with his fist. At the same moment the pillar opened, and Vishnu, half man

and half lion, issued from it. Erenien, who had never thought of such a figure, when he solicited the assurance that he should not be killed either by god, man, or beast, maintained an obstinate conflict with Vishnu, who, at length, tore open his body and drank his blood. Vishnu, in this transformation, has the name of *Narassema Awatara*. He is adored by this name in two celebrated temples, the one a league or two from Pondy, and the other on the coast of Orissa.

The fifth transformation of Vishnu, is into a dwarf Bramin, called *Varuna*; he is also named *Trivikera*, or the taker of three steps. The famous Bali, who is now one of the judges and mo-

narchs of *Pandalon*, or hell, obtained, by dint of penances, the sovereignty of the earth, sea, and heaven : but he abused his power to such a degree, that the *deoutas* were apprehensive of losing their celestial abodes. They implored Brama to deliver them from the tyranny of Bali ; but the latter had received a promise that no being should have power to dispossess him. Vishnu undertook to gain, by artifice, what no one could take from him by force. He appeared before him, in the form of a dwarf, and demanded as much ground as he could stride over at three steps, to build himself a hut upon. Bali laughed at the diminutive figure of the dwarf, and told him, that he

ought not to limit his request to such a trifle. The dwarf replied, that he was so small, that what he solicited would be sufficient for him. Bali granted what he desired, and, to ratify the donation, he took a little water in his mouth, and spirted it into the dwarf's hand. The latter immediately attained such prodigious dimensions, that he strode over the earth with the first step, over the ocean with the second, and with the third ascended to heaven, leaving Bali thunderstruck, with no other empire, than his portion of *Pandalon*, to govern. Fable adds, that Bali recognized Vishnu, adored him, and offered him his head ; but the god, satisfied with his submission, par-

doned and permitted him to revisit the earth every year, on the day of the full moon in November.

The sixth incarnation of Vishnu was not voluntary. Nareda-Mooni, a son of Brama, had fallen desperately in love with a young damsel of extraordinary beauty : he offered her his hand, which she rejected with disdain, adding, that she would never wed either man or god who was not equal to herself in beauty. Nareda-Mooni made Vishnu the confidant of his passion : the god, to trick him, promised to make him as beautiful as his mistress ; but on a body of the most exquisite form and proportions he placed the head of an ape. Nareda, conceiving himself cer-

tain of success, flew to the object of his desire. The gods followed, with the intention of diverting themselves at his expense, and were present at the interview, which convulsed them with laughter. Nareda ran to look at himself in a mirror; and, enraged at the trick that had been played him, he pronounced an imprecation, which obliged Vishnu to descend upon earth in human form, and the gods in that of apes. A malediction uttered by a Bramin, never fails to be fulfilled: and Vishnu was accordingly born by the name of *Rama*, son of Desaraden, king of Ayodi, which is supposed to be Siam. At the age of fifteen years, he quitted his paternal abode, and became a peni-

tent, taking with him his wife Siday, and his brother Tatchumanen. He crossed the Ganges, and repaired to the mountain of Fitray Condon, where he had disciples, whom he instructed in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls: he then travelled through the deserts, and remained six years making proselytes. At length, he retired to the desert of Pangavadi, and there erected a hut, for the purpose of completing the term of his penance.

Rama was desirous of introducing his doctrine into Ceylon. Ravanen, king of that island, carried his pride to such a pitch, as to insist on being worshipped as a god. He thought himself too strong to have any thing to appre-

hend from Rama, and actually beat him several times, and took from him his wife Siday. Rama, however, gained over Ravanen's brother, and promised to place him on the throne. Rebuchaden, seduced by this promise, betrayed his brother; the victorious Rama gave him the crown of Ceylon, and having recovered Siday, returned to his father's dominions, and transmitted the royal authority to his two sons, Coussen and Caven.

In the temples dedicated to this incarnation, Vishnu is represented under the figure of a young man of a green colour, and of perfect beauty, holding a bow and arrows in his hand.

The history of Rama-Vishnu forms a

thick volume, which is full of excellent reflections. The Hindoos take such pleasure in reading it, that the followers of Sheeva learn it by heart.

In the seventh incarnation, also, Vishnu appeared as a man, by the name of *Balapatren*. Not knowing that he was a portion of Vishnu, he lived in solitude and penance, merely punishing, without ostentation, the wicked whom he met with. He cleared the earth of a great number of giants; the most remarkable of these, was Vroutarassauran, who, by his cruelties, had compelled mankind to adore him as a god. The author of an unpublished manuscript, mentioned in the preface, adds, that this is all the Hindoos of the coast

of Cormandel know of the history of Balapatren; they merely conjecture, that one of the Puranas, which are not yet translated into the Tamul language, contains farther particulars of his life. He is represented holding a candle in one hand, and a plough-share in the other.

The story of the seventh incarnation of Vishnu is also thus related : A giant, named Cartasuciriargunen, who had a thousand arms, oppressed mankind by his cruelty and rapacity. Vishnu, a second time assumed the human shape and the name of Rama, and armed solely with a plough-share, he engaged the giant, killed him, and cut off his thousand arms : he then threw the bones

into a heap, and formed with them a mountain called Baldus.

In the eighth incarnation, Vishnu appeared under the name of *Parassurama*, to teach mankind to be virtuous, and to disdain the things of this world. Parassurama declared war against the kings of the race of the sun, defeated them, and gave their dominions to the Brahmins. The latter had the ingratitude to refuse him an asylum in the countries of which he had thus made them a present. Parassurama was, therefore, obliged to retire to the Ghauts, the foot of which was then washed by the ocean. He begged Varuna, the god of the sea, to withdraw his waters, and to leave him just room enough to dwell

upon, desiring no more space than a bow-shot. Varuna assented; but Nara-der, who witnessed his promise, represented to him his imprudence, assuring him, that it was Vishnu himself, and that he would send his arrow over all the seas, so that Varuna would not know whither to remove his waters. Varuna, deeply distressed because he could not recal his promise, summoned the god of death to his aid. The latter, in order to assist him, metamorphosed himself into a *kario* (white ant), crept in the night into Parassurama's chamber, and gnawed the cord of his bow half through, so as to leave it only just the strength requisite to keep it on the stretch. Parassurama, not suspecting

the trick, repaired in the morning to the sea-shore, applied an arrow to his bow, and pulled the string with all his might. The string snapped, and the arrow fell at a little distance. The ground which it cleared became instantaneously dry, and formed the tract which we call the coast of Malabar. Parassurama, recollecting the ingratitude of the Bramins, decreed that every Bramin who should die on that coast, should return upon earth in the form of an ass: hence, no Bramin has for a long time fixed his abode in this land of proscription.

According to the Malabar tradition, this god still lives on that coast, where he is depicted of a ferocious and terrific

countenance. On the coast of Coromandel he is represented of a green colour, with a pleasing physiognomy, holding a hatchet in one hand and a fan of palm leaves in the other.

In the ninth incarnation, Vishnu appeared as a shepherd, son of Devegni, sister to Canzen, king of Madurah. It had been predicted to this prince, that one of his sister's sons would deprive him of his throne and life; he therefore ordered all the children she should produce to be put to death. Seven had already perished through the tyrant's cruelty, but the eighth was Vishnu, by the name of *Krishna*. He could speak as soon as he was born, and commanded his mother to send him to Asswadah,

wife of Nandagoben, chief of the shepherds of Gocoulam, and to substitute in his stead a girl to whom that woman had just given birth. Canzen, incensed at the escape of his nephew, ordered all the male children in his kingdom to be put to death ; but Asswadah concealed Krishna with such care that he was not involved in the general massacre. She afterwards brought him up as her own son, and gave him *gopas* and *gopis*, shepherds and shepherdesses, for play-fellows : he chose nine of the latter for his favourites, and the poets and painters seldom represent him without this train. In his youth, he killed the serpent Calangam, who lived in the river Yomoudi. This monster was so poi-

sonous, that the wind which touched him or passed over his abode, spread destruction far and wide. Krishna leaped into the river to attack him. The serpent darted forward, enwreathed him in his long folds, and attempted to stifle him. Krishna had no great difficulty to extricate himself; he then seized the reptile by the tail and crushed his head with his feet. In commemoration of this event, Vishnu is represented in the temples dedicated to the ninth incarnation, with a Cobra di Capello twisted round his body and biting his feet. In another picture he is delineated dancing on the serpent Calangam. His worshippers usually have both pictures in their houses.

Krishna moreover delivered the earth from a great number of giants and monsters; he also rendered an important service to his friends, the shepherds of Madurah, by holding up the mountain of Goverdhana on the point of his little finger, to shelter them from the showers of stones which an incensed dæmon poured down upon them. He exterminated whole armies of giants, sent against him by his uncle Canzen to destroy him; and at length dispatched the tyrant himself, who could not escape his destiny. Krishna, after travelling over the world, performing numberless miracles, rewarding the good and chastising the wicked, was killed at his own desire by a hunter, that he might not

witness the fourth age, which was then beginning, and was to be worse than the preceding. His body was burned on a funeral pile, prepared by his command, on the sea-shore. This is considered as the most memorable and the most glorious of all Vishnu's incarnations. The particular adventures of Krishna have furnished the lyric and pastoral poetry of India with a most fertile theme. The beauty and affection of his wife Radha, the attachment of his companion Nanda, the peregrinations of the demi-god, and his numerous amours, are celebrated with enthusiasm by his worshippers, a considerable sect of whom, the Goclasthas, acknowledge no deity above him.

Great part of the history of Krishna has a striking resemblance to that of Hercules. The persecutions of his youth, his victories over different monsters, and the wars in which he was engaged, may be compared with the adventures of the Grecian hero. On the other hand, the pastoral life of Krishna Govindha resembles that which Apollo Nomion led among the shepherds of Arcadia. His surname *Cesava* (with beautiful hair) is perhaps the same as that of Phœbus, *with the golden locks*. Krishna, like Apollo, was the patron of music and song : he is frequently represented playing on the flute, while the nine *gopis* are dancing round him on Mount Goverdhana, the Parnassus of

the Hindoos. He is sometimes seen surrounded by twelve couple of dancers, emblematic of the twelve months, the youths representing the days when the moon does not shine, and the maidens those when she appears; while he himself denotes the sun or Sourya, as Apollo denoted that luminary by the name of Phœbus.

Like Vishnu in all his incarnations, Krishna is of a dark blue colour: a large bee, of the same hue, flies about his head: he is in brilliant attire, adorned with chaplets of flowers and jewels, and holds a lotus in his hand: sometimes he is seated on a throne, which is in the shape of that flower. When he is not represented with a human face, he

carries in his numerous hands the arms consecrated to Vishnu himself: in short, he has all the attributes of that divinity.

The tenth incarnation is yet to come; it will take place at the expiration of the *Kali Youg*, in about ninety-five thousand years. The earth will then be inundated with wickedness. Vishnu will assume the human form and be born in the house of a Bramin: his name will be Calichi, and that of his horse, Bigeisciua. Calichi, armed with a scymetar, will traverse the whole earth and destroy its guilty inhabitants. "The heavens will tumble down, the celestial orbs will be intermixed, the stars will stand still in their courses, the sun will lose his light, the universe

will revert into its original chaos, from which a new world will issue." Some assert that the tenth incarnation will be a horse, named Calichi, at least there exists an Indian painting in which Vishnu is represented in the form of a man with a horse's head.

Others believe that Sheeva, or one of his sons, is destined to destroy the world. This mission, in fact, does not seem consistent with the character of Vishnu; but, the theologians of India find as little difficulty in reconciling contradictions as those of most other countries. A Bramin, to whom this objection was mentioned, replied, that to annihilate one world for the purpose

of creating another, is not to destroy, but to preserve.

Such are the ten great incarnations of Vishnu. There are fourteen others which are generally admitted, but which are considered as less important, because it was only small portions of the god that became incarnate. The books make mention of more than a thousand metamorphoses of Vishnu; but most of them are rejected as apocryphal. Laeshmi, Vishnu's wife, had also her incarnations, for the purpose of attending her husband on earth during his various transformations.

OF CERTAIN RELIGIOUS OPINIONS
OF THE HINDOOS,
AND
PARTICULARLY THE DOCTRINE
OF THE METEMPSYCHOSIS.

The Hindoos, though strongly attached to their own religion, not only never persecute the professors of any other, but do not even endeavour to make proselytes, believing that every virtuous man, whatever may be his religion, will be happy hereafter.

If the Hindoo princes allow not their subjects to forsake the faith of Brama for that of the Christians or Mahomet, it is rather from political

motives, than from a principle of religion. They regard it as particularly criminal in the great, and in the superior castes, whose example might be followed by others; but if any individual of a low caste embraces either of these religions, it is seldom that any notice is taken of the circumstance. It is also as impossible for a foreigner to procure initiation into the religion of Brama, as for a negro to change the colour of his skin, or a European to transform himself into a Hindoo.

The Hindoos permit neither foreigners nor persons belonging to the impure castes to enter their temples, or to witness their sacrifices, unless at a great distance. Scrupulously attentive

to all the ceremonies prescribed by their religion, they allow every one to hold what opinion of them he pleases ; and objections never excite in them that warmth, which is manifested elsewhere, in discussions of this nature. They seem to think, on this point, like Tiberius, who left to the gods the business of avenging their own wrongs. They pay respect to all other religions, and would deem it a violation of their own, to disturb any person whatever in the exercise of his. As the Supreme Being has divided the human race into different nations, it appears perfectly natural to them, that each should have its own way of adoring him, as well as a language, climate,

and productions, peculiar to the country which it inhabits. "To degrade the religion and customs of another," says Jeswant Sing, rajah of Judpore, in a letter to Aurengzeb, "is to thwart the will and power of the Almighty, before whom Pagans and Mahometans are equal."

The Hindoos, in general, firmly believe in predictions, and the power of talismans, amulets, and charms, which most of them wear fastened round the arms, neck, and waist: and if you laugh at their credulity, they laugh, in their turn, at your ignorance, and are astonished that you should entertain the least doubt of effects which experience has so frequently confirmed.

They believe also in the existence of evil genii, who inhabit certain lakes, certain mountains, certain enchanted and sacred forests; and in the existence of dæmons of different kinds, who frequently take up their abode in human bodies. It is almost always in the bodies of women that these dæmons fix their residence, and the ceremonies employed to expel them out of these poor possessed creatures, are somewhat curious. The voice and the imposing look of the exorciser, the howling, leaps, and violent exertions of the sufferer, together with the shrieks and terror of the persons present, form a scene not unlike that exhibited at our exorcisms of old.

The universal belief of the Hindoos, in lucky, and unlucky days, is to them a source of great anxiety and suspense. Before they undertake a journey, they must consult the Bramins, who alone possess the book, which indicates the day and hour proper for their departure. When that hour arrives, neither rain nor storm could detain them; otherwise, they would perhaps have to wait several days longer, for an equally auspicious moment. But this is not all: if, on leaving his house, a person meets with any of the animals, which are deemed unfavourable omens, or certain birds that fly away in a particular direction, or other similar tokens, he must turn back and wait for a bet-

ter opportunity. The Bramins must, in like manner, be consulted previously to marriage, the building of a house, the sowing of the land, and in all, even the most unimportant circumstances of life. Half the days of the year, perhaps, are unlucky; and is it then astonishing, that, with such a belief, the Hindoos should be indolent and irresolute?

The Hindoos have also enchantments, which they deem irresistible, for exciting reciprocal passion in females of whom they are enamoured; they have others against secret snares, and the assaults of evil spirits; against their enemies, against envy and poison; others to render themselves invul-

nerable, to ensure victory in battle, to prolong their lives to a thousand years and more—in short, to overthrow all the laws of nature.

The Hindoos expiate slight and venial sins by means of pilgrimages, fasts, sacrifices, prayers and ablutions.

Pilgrimages are made to the rivers Ganges, Indus, Cavery, and Jumna; to Benares and Jaggernaut, to the mountains of Tibet, and to other sacred places. The water of the Ganges is transported in sealed vessels to great distances from its banks. The devotees who carry it away, sell it at a price proportionate to the distance, or make presents of it to the rajahs, or other Hindoo princes, who never fail

to pay them handsomely for so valuable a gift.

Sometimes also pilgrimages are performed in consequence of a vow. It is very common to meet, on the high roads, whole families and caravans, repairing to some famous pagoda, to pay their thanksgiving to the deity, or to implore advice and relief for diseases of the soul and body.

People throng from all parts of India to the pagodas of Konjeveram, Trichinopoli, and Tanjore; that consecrated to Govinda, the god of health, at Tripeti, is also much frequented. When a Hindoo falls sick, he makes a vow to go in pilgrimage to the pagoda of Govinda. The pilgrim incessantly pro-

nounces the name of that idol during the whole journey.

Fasts generally precede any solemn festival. The Bramins observe them, and they prescribe a fast for the whole month of December, in commemoration of the victory won by Darma-rajah over Durgiodana.

The eleventh day after the new and full moon is a fast-day, but it is not universally kept: indeed, each individual holds particular fasts. Females fast in honour of Camdeo, the god of love, and on occasion of other festivals peculiar to themselves.

Prayers are recited in the pagodas. This act of devotion consists, according to the *Shaster*, one of the sacred books,

in repeating certain names of God, and explaining them at some length. The Hindoos have likewise processions, attended with singing and the sound of bells; it is at these processions that they offer sacrifices to idols.

They are persuaded that water removes contaminations of the soul as well as those of the body, and therefore use frequent ablutions. Any water is good, but more especially, that of the seven sacred rivers; and above all, the water of the Ganges. Ablutions are usually accompanied with prayers, repeated in a low tone: they consist in bathing in the Ganges, at the same time respectfully holding two or three straws, which are given for the purpose by aged

Bramins, and render the ablution more efficacious. People living at a distance from the Ganges, employ another kind of ablution, which is performed without going into the water. They pour water of the Ganges on the ground, over a space about as long as a man's body, lie down on it, and in this position repeat the customary prayers: they then kiss this ground, consecrated by the water of the sacred river, thirty times. During the whole of this ceremony, the right leg must be kept immovable, which is rather a difficult point: with this exception the ablutions are an excellent institution, keeping up personal cleanliness, and contributing, especially in hot countries,

to the preservation of health. It was, no doubt, to prevent the people from neglecting, through indolence, so wholesome a practice, that the legislator of the Hindoos made it a religious duty.

The Coloran, which waters the Mysore, Madura, Tanjore, and Coromandel, is one of the rivers which the Hindoo devotees prefer for ablutions. The inhabitants of those parts await the swelling of the Coloran with as much impatience as is manifested by the people of Egypt, at the period of the inundation of the Nile. As soon as the water begins to flow into the different canals, formed for irrigating the land, they evince extreme joy. Hurrying to the river, they plunge into it,

in the persuasion, that this first water cleanses them from all sin, as it clears the canals from every kind of filth. In some places there are wretched passage-boats, in which they offer sacrifices, slaughtering a sheep at each extremity of the boat, and pouring the blood along its sides, to propitiate the god of the waters, by which they are, nevertheless, sometimes engulfed.

Every Hindoo who crosses the Indus, or Atock, is deemed perjured, and to have renounced the religion of Brama. It is also forbidden to pass the Caramasa, or accursed river. These prohibitions were undoubtedly designed to prevent emigration. The Bramins assert, that they only interdict the usual

ways of crossing rivers; and that if any person were to pass the Indus, or the Caramnasa, by leaping over, in an air-balloon, by some magical operation, or in any other unknown manner, he would not commit sin. The Bramins have a thousand subterfuges of this kind for all occasions. The Caramnasa may be forded in the dry season: nevertheless, when a Hindoo has to cross it, he pays a Musulman to carry him over, on his back, to the other bank, that his feet may not touch the accursed waters of that river; for the pious Hindoos believe, that the mere contact would deprive them of all the benefit of their long pilgrimages, and their religious austerities: and none but

the inhabitants of the banks of the Caramnasa are exempted from this effect.

The doctrine most generally received in Hindoostan, is that of the metempsychosis, or the perpetual transmigration of souls, from one body into another. According to this system, the souls of men, and those of brutes, are of the same nature, and both eternal; the difference of their functions proceeds solely from the difference of the organization of the bodies which they inhabit: the power is the same, the instrument alone differs.

The soul of the wicked, before it again animates a human body, passes into that of some animal, or even suc-

cessively into several animals, more or less mean, according as it has been more or less guilty. When it is polluted by atrocious crimes, it is doomed to abide for a long series of years, but not for ever, in a region of misery, or hell; for the Bramins shudder at the idea of our hell, that is, an everlasting punishment for transient faults, and deem it wholly incompatible with the justice and goodness of God. When these guilty souls have partly expiated their misdeeds in this place of torment, they begin a fresh series of transmigrations, first passing into plants, or even into stones, then into the eggs of disgusting insects, next into the bodies of less

mean animals, and so on till they again reanimate the human form.

The good are but few in number, and scarcely any individual is perfect. The souls of the good, after death, animate the bodies of men destined to enjoy honours, dignities, and wealth in this world; or, if they have nearly approached perfection, they are removed to the celestial abodes, where happiness is their portion; but this felicity is not eternal; for when they have enjoyed it for a time proportioned to their good actions, they return to earth in human form, there to earn a new period of celestial happiness, or if they misconduct themselves, to recommence a new

series of transmigrations. All the Bra-
mins agree respecting the principle of
this system, though they differ in opi-
nion on certain points.

According to some, the meteors,
vulgarly called falling stars, are the
souls of the *Deoutas* descending to this
lower world, or those which, after
deserving heaven and enjoying celestial
felicity for a certain time, are sent back
to the earth, as we have just observed,
to reanimate human bodies; but, before
they can be born again in human shape,
they mingle with the elements, then
become herbs, plants, and fruit; and
still bound, as it were, in a state of
torpor and insensibility, they afterwards
circulate in the material substance of

the body till the moment of conception, when they burst their bonds and enter once more into the human form.

The metempsychosis furnishes the Hindoos with the means of explaining the reason, why some are fortunate and others unfortunate. Every good action, according to them, must be essentially rewarded, and every bad one necessarily punished. God would be unjust were he to dispense good and evil at random. If, therefore, one is born in a magnificent palace, to be honoured and respected, and to enjoy all the pleasures of life, while another is obliged to toil hard for a scanty subsistence, the reason is, because the latter is punished in this life for the sins committed by him in a

former life; and the other, on the contrary, is rewarded for his good conduct in that preceding life. A sounder philosophy teaches us, that man may be happy in every condition in which Providence may place him: and yet, without adopting the absurd doctrine of fatalism, we cannot deny, that there are persons who seem doomed to misfortune, and whom an inevitable hand appears to persecute without intermission: while others, on the contrary, attain without exertion a pitch of prosperity surpassing their most sanguine expectations. The sight of prosperous wickedness is particularly distressing to the virtuous; and with all our knowledge, we should be as much puzzled as the Hindoos to reconcile this

state of things with the goodness and justice of God, were it not for the cheering conviction of a future life.

The Hindoos believe moreover in predestination ; this idea causes them to endure, with stoic firmness, whatever may befall them ; and they console themselves under adversity in the persuasion, that every thing comes from God, and that the afflictions which they suffer in this world, in expiation of the sins they have committed in a former life, render them worthy of enjoying happiness in that which is to succeed.

The belief in the transmigration of souls excites in the Hindoos an abhorrence of animal food. The lower classes alone subsist upon the flesh of

animals ; but the pious Hindoo would be afraid, lest in killing an animal, or even crushing an insect, he might be taking the life of his father or one of his relations. We cannot help being struck with a strange inconsistency in this system ; for, since the souls of the dead pass into plants as well as animals, they ought to abstain alike from eating the one and the other.

The worshippers of Vishnu assert, that this deity illumines with a celestial light the souls of certain favourite devotees, and that he acquaints them with the various changes which have happened to them in the bodies they have animated. Some privileged spirits have even the power to quit their bodies

for a time, and to return to them at pleasure ; for which purpose it is sufficient to repeat a prayer called *mandiram*. The *Puranas*, or sacred books, record several instances of this kind, from among which father Bouchet, a Jesuit missionary, quotes the following :—

A prince prevailed upon a goddess to teach him the *mandiram* : unfortunately, the servant who was in attendance on him overheard the prayer, and learnt it by heart. One day, when the prince had disengaged his soul, after charging his faithless servant to take care of his body till his return, the latter thought fit to repeat the *mandiram*. His soul, instantaneously released from his body, hastened to ani-

mate that of the prince. The first thing the impostor did, was to cut off the head of his former body, that his master might not take a fancy to animate it. Thus the prince's soul was obliged to enter the body of a parrot, with which it returned to the palace. This story is current all over the east; and is to be found among the tales of the *Thousand and One days*. Pliny relates, in his *Natural History*, that a certain Hermotymus also possessed this admirable secret.

Did the doctrine of the metempsychosis originate in Egypt, and thence pass into India, and spread over the rest of Asia? or was it first taught by the Bramins, and received from them

by the Egyptian priests? Was Pythagoras the inventor of it, and did he communicate it to the Bramins when he visited India? or did both derive it from some anterior nation, now unknown, the existence of which M. Bailly has attempted to demonstrate? These questions have been frequently discussed, but will, perhaps, never be satisfactorily resolved. Be this as it may, if the metempsychosis is not of Indian origin, it must have been naturalized with great facility in Hindoostan. In that genial climate, where the soil produces, almost without culture, all that is necessary for the support of the inhabitants; where there is nothing to annoy them, excepting, perhaps, the

great heat, the intensity of which is, moreover, tempered by the winds, by the shade of large evergreen trees, and by the coolness diffused by numberless rivers and streams ; man has never had occasion to make war upon animals for a subsistence, and to spill blood.

Accordingly, it is a crime in India to kill and even to maltreat any animal: but independently of that universal benevolence which extends to all that breathes, there are animals which are more particularly the objects of the veneration of the Hindoos.

The cow is the most highly honoured: it is consecrated to all the gods generally, and whoever should presume to kill a cow, in a country subject to a

Hindoo prince, would be infallibly condemned to die. The Parias, who are the scum of all the castes, may alone eat the flesh of cows which have died naturally; but they are forbidden to kill them for the purposes of food.

An English soldier, who kept an inn, one day bought a very fat cow near Madras, and drove her home with the intention of killing her. Some Hindoos hastened to the colonel, and informed him that the butcher had, by mistake, sold a cow, which had for many years been kept and fed in their pagoda; and requested him to give orders for the restoration of the sacred animal, engaging to return the purchase-money. Fortunately, the cow was not yet

slaughtered : the colonel complied with their desire, and they led back the cow with loud demonstrations of joy to their temple.

The vulture is consecrated to Vishnu: it is called *garuda*, and the Hindoos, as soon as they perceive one, extend their hands towards it and pat their cheeks.

There are Bramins whose office it is to feed the vultures. One of these persons repairs to a spot, which is frequented by those birds, and calls them with a loud voice. Some of them are soon seen hovering over his head : he then throws into the air pieces of raw flesh, which the vultures catch before it falls. Though there may be eagles

and other birds flying about near the spot, none but the sacred vultures share in this distribution.

An English officer shot a vulture, not knowing the veneration paid to this bird by the Hindoos. A deputation immediately came to apply for the body of the bird, which was delivered to them and burned with great solemnity.

Brama is represented riding on the swan or the goose; and Sheeva is seated on the *nandi* or ox, which is consecrated to him. No sooner does a Hindoo perceive one of those animals, than he rises and begins to pray. The ape, with a whitish skin and a red face and beard, represents Hanooman. The elephant and a great number of other

animals also come in for a share of the veneration of the pious, either because some deity has appeared in their form, or received some service from them.

The Cobra di Capello, or hooded serpent, called on the coast of Malabar, *nalla-pamba*, is the object of a particular worship. Vishnu is frequently represented lying on this animal. The sudden appearance of one of these serpents is deemed sometimes a favourable, and at others, a sinister omen. It is the deity himself in this form, or at least a messenger from him, bringing rewards or punishments. Though this serpent is highly venomous, yet it is never killed, disturbed, or driven out

of the houses which it happens to enter. The most superstitious respect, caress, and adore it: they offer it milk and conduct it to the place to which it is accustomed to retire; they build a hut, or prepare a retreat for it, at the foot of some tree. The family with which one of these serpents takes up its abode, consider themselves lucky, and secure from poverty and misfortune: and if, as is but too frequently the case, any of its members is bitten, and falls a victim to his credulity, they merely say, that it is a punishment from God for some unknown sin. Father Tachard, the missionary, relates, that at Ganjam the women carry offerings of boiled rice, oil, milk, butter,

and flowers, to this serpent, under the idea of preserving their husbands and children from being bitten by it.

Though the cow and the ox are more highly revered by the Hindoos than any other animals, they are nevertheless employed by them, as among us, in the most arduous labour; and they are equally beaten with whips or sticks, when idle or restive.

OF THE RELIGIOUS SECTS OF THE
HINDOOS,
AND
PRINCIPALLY OF THE SECT
OF BUDDHA.

The religion of the Hindoos has its sects like every other. They amount to more than eighty, all of which agree in the principal points: they never involve themselves in discussions, and live at peace with one another, and with the professors of other religions. The most remarkable of these sects are, those of the *right hand* and of the *left hand*, the Seiks, the Banians, and Buddhists.

The two sects, known by the denomi-

nation of the *right and left hand*, divide nearly the whole peninsula of India. These sectaries consider one of their hands as impure, and use it only for private ablutions. They have, for a very long period, contended for the pre-eminence of their respective sects, and their quarrels anciently occasioned sanguinary wars. Neither the marriage nor funeral processions of the Hindoos of one hand, are allowed to pass through the quarters inhabited by those of the other.

Nanac, founder of the sect of the Seiks, was born about the middle of the fifteenth century. Actuated by a desire to put an end to the bloody wars which the Mahometans

were continually making on his countrymen, he endeavoured to reconcile the *Vedas* with the *Koran*, by demonstrating that his nation acknowledged but one Supreme Being, and by exhorting the Hindoos to renounce the idolatry which had crept in among them, and to return to the pure worship of their ancestors. The consequence of this attempt was, that, instead of effecting a reconciliation between the two parties, he formed a third, which was destined to kindle the most destructive wars, in the very country which the humanity of its founder was solicitous to preserve from all dissension. After the death of Nanac, his adherents, consisting of persons of all ranks, and of all reli-

gions, attributed to their prophet, in their zeal for his memory, the power of performing miracles; so widely had they already deviated from his principles!

The Seiks continued to increase in number, and as it appears, in power, till their fourth *guru*, or spiritual chief, built Ramdaspoore, now called Armit-sar, which is their sacred city. They were not allowed to enjoy unmolested tranquillity; and in less than one hundred and fifty years from the death of Nanac, the persecutions which this peaceful sect experienced from the Musulmans, converted it into an association of intrepid warriors. Half a century later, the repeated cruelties of

these same Mahometans, and the murder of Teg Bahader, the chief of the Seiks, raised up, in the person of his son, the *guru* Govinda, a new champion and legislator, who extended the innovations in the religion both of the Mahometans and the Hindoos far beyond the limits to which Nanac had confined himself. He abolished all the distinctions of castes, and gave to his subjects the equality of civil rights. To infuse into them military valour and enthusiasm, he caused them to assume the name of *Sindh*, or lion, and ordered them to go constantly armed. He also enjoined them to suffer their beards to grow, and proscribed the use of tobacco. He forbade women to burn them-

selves on the funeral piles of their husbands. These arrangements were designed to separate them from the neighbouring nations.

The sacred books of the Seiks comprize both their history and their laws. One of them, called the *Adi-grant*, was composed by Nanac, and his four immediate successors ; the other, the *Dasama-padeha-ka-grant*, or the book of the tenth *guru*, is by Govinda. These books the Seiks read in public, in their religious assemblies. The form of government of these people, under their ten *gurus*, was a republic under a spiritual chief, who was afterwards invested with the military authority, when the Seiks changed their character of

peaceful sectaries for that of warlike enthusiasts.

Since the death of Govinda, their last *guru*, they scarcely acknowledge any chief, even in the field of battle; and but for a kind of authority assumed over them by the *acalis*, a tribe of mendicants dwelling round Armitsar, who claim the right of guarding that city, and convoking the national councils, there would not be a more free people on the face of the earth.

The Banians, whom some authors have erroneously confounded with the Bramins, belong to the caste of the Vaissya. They carry on all sorts of commercial professions, and especially those of bankers, brokers, and agents.

They are spread all over India, and are particularly numerous at Bombay, Surat, and in all the neighbouring provinces. They believe, like all the Hindoos, in the transmigration of souls; and carry superstition, in regard to the abstaining from killing animals, using them for food, and hurting them, to a greater length than the Bramins themselves. When a Bramin happens to crush an insect, he expiates his sin by ablutions and prayer; but the devout Banians are much more scrupulous and rigid. Some of them fasten a piece of thin stuff over the mouth, lest a fly should chance to enter and be swallowed by them: others carry along with them a little brush, with which they lightly

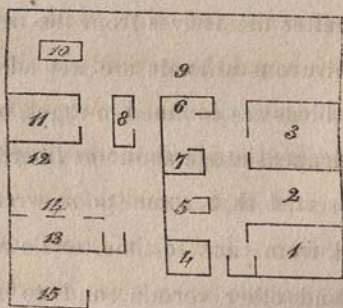
sweep the ground before they sit down, for fear of killing some insect. Many, for the same reason, keep their eyes fixed on the earth when they are walking. Some carry a small bag of sugar or flour, or a little pot of honey, and look for the nests of ants or other insects, to give them something to eat ; others purchase the animals which their owners are about to slaughter, in order to save their lives. The European soldiers and sailors take advantage of this superstition, and pretend that they are going to kill some bird or other animal which they hold in their hands ; when a Banian, who is passing, buys it of them and sets it at liberty.

These Banians have even founded at

Surat a hospital for sick, lame, and aged animals. This establishment covers a plain of about twenty-five acres, inclosed with walls, and containing houses to which the inmates retire to sleep and to shelter themselves from the weather. Carnivorous animals are not admitted. The birds are confined in cages, but the quadrupeds range about at liberty. It is asserted that some poor wretch is hired, from time to time, to lie among lice and other vermin, and to regale them with his blood: care is taken to bind him in such a manner that he cannot run away from the tormenting insects, or kill them in striving to rid himself of them.

This extraordinary hospital occupies

a space of about four hundred square rods, and forms a quadrangle. The following is a sketch of the ground-plan according to Anquetil du Perron:—



No. 1, is the lodging of the porter ; 2, is for sick camels and oxen ; 3, for sick apes ; in 4 there was a very aged land-tortoise, two feet and a half long, and one and a half high, a detestably

ugly creature, that could scarcely crawl. In 1775, Stavorinus found it still alive, though sixteen years before, at the period of Anquetil du Perron's visit, it was reported to be one hundred years old. It was fed with milk. When Stavorinus paid his second visit in 1777, it was dead. In No. 5, lived pigeons, and before the pigeon-house, cocks and hens; and in 6, rabbits. No. 7, was lattice-work, and 8, a house of two floors. In the open place marked 9, horned cattle and horses were grazing. No. 10, is a large tank or reservoir for water, which du Perron even terms a lake. In 11 and 12, live sick and infirm horned cattle and horses; and No. 13, is a distinct receptacle for such of those

animals as are afflicted with incurable diseases or complaints. No. 14, is lattice-work, and 15, is the remarkable apartment for those delectable insects, fleas, bugs, and lice. The French traveller asserts, that these vermin were fed with flour, sugar, and rice; but Ovington's statement of the hiring of poor wretches to supply them with a meal, seems more probable.

This hospital is supported by the charitable contributions of the Banians and some other Hindoos, who, for this purpose, impose a small annual tax on the profits which they derive from their professions. When a Banian has committed any trivial fault, the Bramins exact from him a fine for the benefit of

this hospital. The produce of these fines and contributions, amount, it is said, to the sum of six thousand rupees per annum, which is expended in hay, milk, grass, corn, and other necessaries for the institution.

The religion of Buddha now prevails chiefly in the island of Ceylon, and on the opposite coast of Siam and Pegu. It was long predominant in the Dekkan; but the Bramins have found means to banish it from Hindoostan. It is not exactly known to what country this reformer belonged. To judge from his statues and portraits, which are to be met with in different parts of India, and represent him with curly hair, and different features from those of the

Hindoos, we should take him for a foreigner. In the famous pagoda of Jaggernaut, he is represented, we are told, without head, hands, and feet, and with two eyes in the middle of his belly. Buddha appeared at the beginning of the *kali-youg*: he forbade the sacrifices of human victims, called *naramedha*, and of oxen and horses, called *gomedha* and *aswamedha*, which were held on certain occasions, and were enjoined by the *Vedas*. He taught, that it is a horrid and impious action to inflict death, in any way and on any occasion whatever.

Some of the Bramins are of opinion, that Buddha is the same as Vishnu, who actually appeared by this name in one

of his numerous incarnations. A circumstance which seems to give some weight to this opinion is, that in this incarnation, Vishnu, like Buddha, prohibited the effusion of blood in sacrifices.

An ancient inscription, found in a cavern near Islamabad, and a translation of which is given in the *Asiatic Researches*, relates, that when Buddha descended from the region of souls, and assumed the human form in the womb of Mahamajah, wife of Sutadanna, rajah of Cailas, the body of that princess became a clear and transparent crystal, through which the divine infant, beauteous as a flower, might be seen kneeling and resting on his

two hands. After a pregnancy of ten months and ten days, the queen was desirous of visiting her father, and, having obtained permission from the rajah, her husband, she set out with a retinue suitable to her rank. One day, while walking and gathering flowers in a garden, near the road, she was suddenly seized with the pains of childbirth. The trees bowed down their branches to cover her with their foliage, and to afford her a support while she brought forth the divine infant. Brahma hastened in person to the spot with a vessel of gold, into which he put the child. He delivered him to Indra, who consigned him to the care of a young female, but the child, slipping from the

arms of this nurse, ran seven steps. Mahamaja then took him up and carried him to her palace. The Bramins, who flocked from all parts to see him, cast his nativity. The boy grew up, was named Sachia, and married Vasatara, daughter of Chinhidan. One day, after certain mysteries had been revealed to him, he resolved to quit his dominions. He set out, taking with him only one slave and a horse. Having crossed the Ganges, he arrived at Boucali, and there ordered his slave to return with the horse. The inscription adds, that he adopted the mode of life of the mendicants, and that Brahma himself, Indra, Naga, the king

of serpents, and the tutelary deities of the eight corners of the world, came to pay him homage and to serve him.

RELIGION OF BUDDHA.

The priests of Buddha style themselves *Rahan*; others call them *Talapoins*. They acknowledge no other gods; according to them, all other religions are false, and theirs is the only one by means of which men can be saved: but yet they never persecute any individual for his religious opinions. One of the maxims of the worshippers of Buddha, or as he is also named, Gaudama, is this:—It is easy to extract with the nails, or with the *megnap* (nippers) a thorn that has run into the foot; but it is a very difficult task to

eradicate the doctrines of false gods from the heart of man."

Gaudama was at first human, like three other gods who preceded him in this world, Chauchasam, Gonagom and Gaspa. At the age of thirty-five years, he became a god, preached his law forty-five years, for the purpose of carrying salvation to all men; and at the age of eighty, ascended to *niebau*, or heaven. The five commandments of the law of Gaudama are the following:—

1. Thou shalt not kill any living animal, from the insect to the human being;
2. Thou shalt not steal;
3. Thou shalt not commit adultery;

4. Thou shalt not lie ;

5. Thou shalt not drink wine, or any other intoxicating liquor.

There are ten sins divided into three classes : the first comprehends murder, theft, adultery ; the second, lying, discord, hatred, useless words ; and the third, covetousness, envy, idolatry. There are also good works, the principal of which consists in giving alms to the talapoins.

The Buddhists believe, that the present world was preceded, and will be followed by another, and so on to all eternity. They attribute an incalculable number of years to the duration of a world and the interval which separates it from the next.

Human life has not always had and will not always have its present duration. The first inhabitants of the earth lived a number of years surpassing human imagination; but life became shorter in proportion as the vices of men increased. There was a time when it did not exceed ten years. Those who then lived were sensible that it was necessary to be better than their forefathers; and in proportion as their vices diminished, life was prolonged successively to twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, one hundred, a thousand, ten thousand years. This diminution and augmentation of human life are to occur four times in each world before it is destroyed.

The different worlds are destroyed in three different ways, by fire, water, or wind. A thousand years before the destruction is to commence, a *nat*, or genius, descends from the celestial abodes: dressed in mourning, with solemn look and dishevelled hair, he wanders through towns and country, proclaiming to mankind their approaching dissolution. When the world is to perish by fire, not a drop of rain falls for one hundred thousand years. Men and beasts perish; the sun and moon are darkened and disappear. Their places are occupied by two suns, one of which is always above the horizon, so that there is no night, and the heat becomes so intense, that the lakes and

rivulets are dried up. A third sun soon makes its appearance, then a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, a seventh, which dry up the rivers and seas. Our earth, and all the other inhabited spheres, the abodes of the *nats*, take fire and are dissolved and consumed.

When a world is to be destroyed by water, gentle rains begin to fall; these increase by degrees, and at length become so prodigious, that the whole universe is dissolved by them.

Lastly, when wind is to be the agent of its destruction, one hundred thousand years after the *nat* has announced the fatal event, the wind begins to blow and gradually increases in violence. It first raises the dust and sand, and as

it becomes stronger, it hurls enormous rocks and tops of mountains into the air. Lastly, the whole earth, and all the other worlds, as well as the habitations of the *nats*, are carried away, reduced to powder, and dispersed in the immensity of space.

Out of sixty-four worlds which are destroyed, fifty-six perish by fire, seven by water, and one by wind.

A new universe is formed by means of a heavy rain, resembling that which caused the destruction of the former. This immense mass of water fills the space which was occupied by the destroyed world, and it is gradually condensed and rendered solid by the wind. On the surface appears a first crust, on

which the genii fix their abode. The condensation continues, and from another crust are formed our earth, and one million ten thousand other similar worlds; lastly, the sun, moon, and stars. The genii assume the human form and inhabit the new world.

The Buddhists hold the doctrine of the metempsychosis, but their creed is somewhat different on this point from that of the Hindoos. The soul dies with the body, and from their dissolution is formed a new being, which, according as it has lived well or ill in its former state, becomes a man, a brute, or a *nat*. It again dies to be reanimated in another form, and so on, till, by a life of perfect purity, it attains the state

of *nieba*, or the blessed, in which it has no farther change to apprehend.

The *nats*, or genii, are divided into six classes. Their number is infinite. Some reside in the planets and the fixed stars : others in the earth, the waters, the mountains, and the woods. Some, under the superintendence of their chiefs, preside over the elements, govern the winds, the clouds, and rain ; others record, in a golden book, the good and bad actions of men, and render an account of them to their supreme chief. All of them have the power of changing their forms at pleasure, like the *deouta* of the Hindoos, to whom they bear a close resemblance.

In the centre of a large rock, Sila-

Putavi, in the bowels of a spacious island, situated opposite to the southern slope of Mount Mienmo, (the *Meru* of the Hindoos) is the *niria*, or hell. It consists of eight large hells, which lead to forty thousand smaller. At the gates of the former are seated the judges and their assistants, all appointed from among the *nats*. Each hell has its particular name and punishments. The nature and duration of the punishment are proportioned to the heinousness of the crime. Conquerors, ministers who oppress the people, debauchees, drunkards, rogues, those who use false weights, plunderers of temples, poisoners, incendiaries, such as kill animals and sell their flesh, and magistrates who ac-

cept bribes, need but open the catechism of Buddha: they will find in it to what hell they will be consigned, and the nature and duration of the punishment that will there be inflicted on them for their guilt.

TALAPOINS.

The *talapoins*, or *rahans*, are, as we have observed, the priests of Buddha. They resemble the regular monks of catholic countries, and live, like them, in convents. The great and the opulent deem it a duty to found convents of this kind, which they place under the direction of a *zara*, or superior. These *zaras* enjoy a degree of consideration, proportioned to the wealth of their convents, and the number of the *rahans* under their authority. The greatest

and most important of the *zaras*, has the title of *zarado*: he is sumptuously lodged, attended by a numerous retinue, and no other person but the king is treated with such profound respect as he.

The talapoins are allowed to adorn their convents with pictures and gilding, and enjoy many other privileges. They display great simplicity in their dress and manners. Dr. Buchanan, who had the honour to visit a *zarado*, informs us, that in his dress there was nothing to distinguish him from the multitude, which lay prostrate at his feet. He adds, that, some years before, this *zarado*, being at Rangoun, went, like the other *rahans*, bare-

foot from door to door, collecting the rice that was given him by way of alms. This was, perhaps, no great effort of humility, for, wherever he went, the streets were covered with carpets, the people threw themselves at his feet, imploring his benediction, and the women hurried out of his way, such imperfect creatures being unworthy to appear in the presence of so holy a personage.

In the countries where the religion of Buddha prevails, it is rare to meet with a pauper. Near the convents there are, in general, tolerably good, nay sometimes, very handsome houses, built by pious persons for the accommodation of strangers and travellers. Any indi-

vidual whatever may pass the night there: he is sure to experience a kind reception from the *rahans*, and to want for nothing.

A criminal, who has the good fortune to be touched by a *rahan*, on the way to execution, obtains his pardon. The *rahans* frequently avail themselves of this privilege. They devote part of their time to the instruction of youth; teaching boys to read and write, and initiating them in the knowledge possessed by the nation, particularly what relates to religion, history, and the laws, as well as the means of providing for their own subsistence, and relieving the unfortunate.

It is said, that in ancient times there

were convents of women; that such of them as dedicated themselves to a monastic life, entered in their youth into the priesthood, and continued till death to observe celibacy and the other rules of the *rahans*. These convents have been suppressed; some aged females, however, still perform a kind of sacerdotal office: they shave the head, dress in white, attend in the temples and at funeral ceremonies, and are, in some respect, servants to the *rahans*; but they never reside in the convent. In the libraries of the *rahans* are likewise to be found books, which treat of the manner of admitting females into holy orders, and of the rules of conduct which they ought to follow.

When a young man devotes himself to the service of Buddha, his admission is celebrated with great parade, and numerous ceremonies. Valuable offerings are presented to the *rahans*. The young candidate, dressed in velvet, richly laced with gold, is led about in procession for several days. Drums, hautboys, troops of musicians and dancers, young damsels, attired in muslin, embroidered with gold and silver, his relatives and their servants, the public functionaries, &c. compose the procession. When all the ceremonies are finished, he is conducted into the assembly of the *rahans*; his hair is cut off; he is stripped of his rich

garments, and clothed in the yellow dress of the convent; and he renounces his family, his relations, and the world.

OF THE VEDAS, AND OTHER
SACRED BOOKS.

The principal sacred books of the Hindoos, are the Vedas. They are four in number; the *Rij-Veda*, the *Yayour-Veda*, the *Sama-Veda*, and the *Atarvana-Veda*. The Vedas, according to the Bramins, are the source of all knowledge. They issued from the mouth of Brama, at the time of the creation of the world; and his sons, who are *richeys*, that is, demi-gods or prophets, spread them over the earth for the instruction of mankind. The reading of them is forbidden to

every caste excepting that of the Bramins. The latter may read them, with certain precautions, to the Khattries; but any Bramin who should dare profane them, by reading them to any other castes, would be ignominiously expelled for ever from his own, and degraded to one of the lowest classes of the people. It would also be a sin never to be forgiven, in an individual of any other caste to read them for the purpose of gratifying a guilty curiosity.

The Bramins have always concealed their sacred books with such care, from the knowledge of the vulgar and the profane, that the existence of the *Vedas* was long denied in Europe: all doubt on this point has, however, since

been removed by their translation into the English language.

Dow relates an anecdote illustrative of the extreme reluctance of the Bramins to reveal the mysteries of their religion.

Acbar, the most powerful Mogul emperor, had been brought up in the Mahometan religion. On arriving at years of maturity, he was desirous of choosing his own creed, and to this end resolved to make himself acquainted with the different religions of his empire. As the priests are fond of making proselytes, especially among the great, the heads of all the sects were eager to initiate him into the mysteries of their faith: the Bramins alone obstinately

refused to comply with his desire : entreaties, promises and threats, were unavailing, and it was necessary to have recourse to artifice. Acbar secretly sent to Benares a Hindoo boy, named Fietzi, who was passed off for the son of a Bramin. As such he was adopted by a Bramin, who brought him up as his own child, taught him the Sanscrit, and instructed him in the mysteries of the religion of Brama. Acbar was about to be made acquainted with them, when love rescued for a time the secrets to which the Bramins attached so much importance. Fietzi, having conceived a passion for the daughter of his preceptor, fell at his feet, and with a flood of tears confessed the part

he had been induced to act. The exasperated Bramin snatched the dagger from his girdle, and raised it to dispatch the wretched Fietzi; but, at length, moved by his contrition and his tears, he pardoned him and gave him the hand of his daughter, on condition that he would not translate the *Vedas*.

The *Rij-Veda* contains, it is said, astrology, astronomy, natural philosophy, and the history of the creation of matter and the formation of the world. The *Yayar-Veda* treats of the religious and moral duties; and contains hymns in praise of the Supreme Being, and of the inferior intelligences. The *Sama-Veda* teaches all that relates to reli-

gious rites and ceremonies, fasts, purifications, penances, pilgrimages, sacrifices, prayers, offerings, &c.

We have already seen in the account of the first incarnation of Vishnu, that, at the moment when the *Vedas* issued from the four mouths of Brama, a dæmon, called Scancashur, stole them away, and hid them at the bottom of the sea, but that Vishnu, transforming himself into a fish, went in search of them.

Another dæmon, named Aigrida, stole them a second time from Brama, and carried them with him all over the world. Vishnu overtook him, and recovered the *Vedas* after severely punishing the thief.

We have likewise seen that a philosopher, named Vyasa, who lived at the beginning of the *Kali-youg* (the present age) collected the *Vedas*, which were till then detached, and formed with them a body of doctrine, which he divided into four books. This was all the share he had in them according to the Hindoos, who positively insist that he was not their author.

The Hindoos have a great number of other books, such as the *Upa-Vedas*, a kind of commentary on the *Vedas*; the *Tantra*; the *Mantra*; the *Agama* and the *Nigama*, which teach the art of enchantments; the six *Vedanga*, the first three of which treat of grammar, and the other three of mathe-

matics, religious ceremonies, &c. lastly, the *Derma*, the *Dersana*, the *Upadersana*, the *Mimansa*, and many others, which, according to the Bramins, embrace the whole circle of divine and human knowledge, by the general name of *Sastra*, a term which signifies *science*, and more particularly the *science of religion*.

The *Puranas*, or sacred poems, which some attribute to the above-mentioned Vyasa, and others with greater probability to different authors, are eighteen in number.

Valmichi, the first Indian poet, is the author of an epic poem, intituled *Ramajama*, several cantos of which have been translated into Italian.

The *Maharabata* of Vyasa is another not less celebrated poem among the Hindoos. The subject of it is the war waged by Durgiodana, king of Astanapura, assisted by his ninety-nine brothers, against Judistira or Damara-gda, the reputed son of Pandu.

The Hindoos have also a great number of dramatic works. *Sacontala*, or the *Fatal Ring*, composed by the poet Calidas, a century before the birth of Christ, has been translated from the Sanscrit into English, by Sir William Jones. We shall take occasion to notice the literature and poetry of the Hindoos more at length in another place.

END OF VOL. I.