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Some Facts on the Religions of India.

BY KATE T. PHILLIPS

The chief religions of India are:—Brahmanism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Demon-worship, and Parsi-ism.

The religion that hinders the spread of Christianity more than any single influence is Brahmanism—the religion of the Hindus.

The Hindus believe in a Supreme Being of whom he knows nothing except that He exists, and is said to have made himself manifest at different times as Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; Siva, the Destroyer and Reproducer.

Brahma is seldom worshipped. Siva has many temples but is not always represented in human form. Vishnu is believed to have appeared on earth in ten different forms of animals and of men. The wives of the gods are also worshipped and many inferior gods and goddesses, besides sacred animals, rivers, mountains, hills, plants and stones.

Brahmanism teaches that four classes of men were created by Brahma, 1, the Brahmins, or priests; 2, Soldiers, 3, Farmers and merchants, 4, Mechanics and Servants. Each of these classes are sub-divided and below all are the outcasts.

Castes foster pride, intolerance and selfishness, since the Brahman even when wicked must be worshipped. The Hindus may not eat or drink with those of a lower caste. Those belonging to a lower class can never rise socially, while the higher castes can never fall except by transgressing caste rules. Marriages must be between those of the same caste. To become converted means much to the Brahman. He must become despised and rejected by the men in his own caste, and willing to be abandoned by his family and friends.

Brahmanism degrades women. As a woman she cannot hope for heaven. If very faithful and obedient her next birth may be as a man and then she may reach heaven. The degradation of women has produced infanticide and child-marriage.

Although Buddhism has for the most part passed away from India, the land of its birth, yet the mark of Gautama's teaching is ineffaceably stamped on modern Brahmanism, and some of the worst characteristics, habits and convictions of the Hindus are due to Buddha's teaching.

Gautama Buddha was an Indian Prince who lived at the time of Daniel. Arnold called him the Light of Asia and a faint glimmer of light seemed to have hovered about him and his strange religion. Buddha spent six years of solitude in a cave and came very near to nature but not to nature's God. Foundations of his creed have been summed up in an ancient formula invented by Buddha and are as follows:—1. That misery always accompanies existence. 2. That all modes of existence of man or animal result from passion. 3. That there is no escape from existence except by destruction of desire. That this may be accomplished by following the three fold way. The first awakening of the hearts is when they first turn to the Enlightened One for comfort and guidance. When they have done this they are awake and have entered upon the first stage of the Buddhist way of salvation.

The second stage is reached when they are rid of all impure desires and revengeful feelings. The third when they are rid of all evil desires, ignorance, doubt, heresy, unkindness and vexation. The believer who has gone thus far has reached the last stage; he has cut the meshes of ignorance, passion and sin, and has escaped from the net of transmigration. Hirvana is within his grasp. When this life is over, he will be free forever from birth.

No Buddhist hopes to reach this stage on earth but having once entered the paths he cannot leave them.

Buddhism does not acknowledge the existence of a soul separate from the powers of man. His idea of heaven is Hirvana meaning extinction. Those who are so unfortunate as not to enter the paths have no hope of Hirvana and are born again in a lower form and so on until they reach an awful hell.

Buddha did not profess to be a god. He claimed by his life of solitude, and having passed the third and last stage, to have become a god. He did not teach his followers to worship him, yet he is worshipped by the Brahmins as well as the Buddhists. It is said that now there is no trace of the morality Buddha taught and it has been called the least hopeful of the mis-faiths of misguided men.

And now to come to Mohammedanism. Mohammed was a prophet who lived about 1,300 years ago. He was a native of Arabia and was brought up in the best Arabian way with the desert for his education and the wildness his religion. From an early age he had been called a thoughtful person and he soon saw idolatries a mockery and abomination. As was the custom of his country he was used to retire during the month Ramadan, into solitude and silence to commune with his own heart. There among the silent mountains, he himself silent, listening to the small still voices, he came very near to Nature and Nature's God. It was during one of these times that he told his wife and house hold, that the idols were nothing but worthless bits of wood and that there was but one God over all. So from that he went forth teaching his doctrines "Allah akbar" "God is great;" and also "Islam," "we must submit to God." That God had honoured him by saving him from death and darkness, and had ordained him to go and tell others, was to acknowledge him a Prophet of God.

Mohammed found many hardships and many persecutions until finally he was driven from his country. In the thirteenth year of his mission, when he was fifty three years of age, he was forced to defend himself and religion by the force of arms. So he commanded his followers to obey him, promising them wealth, power and honor if they conquered and Paradise if they should fall in battle. They went forth to battle and were in general victorious.

Mohammed and his followers wrote with much difficulty, the sacred book of Mohammedanism, the Koran. It contains some crude principles of their religion. This book so badly written was considered a gift direct from God and the reverence in which the Koran was and is held would put many Christians to shame.

The ignorant Mohammedan worships Mohammed and thinks it a merit to steal from or kill an unbeliever. Their hatred of Christianity is intense and they are very difficult to reach with the Gospel. Parsi-ism is the religion of the "Fire Worshipers" of the East. They are the followers of Zarathustra and are descendants of the ancient Persians who emigrated to India, on the conquest of their country by the Arabs. 720 A. D.

The emblem of their divinity is the sacred fire which is continually burning on their altars in the "fire temple." Their reverence for fire prevents them from dealing with it lightly. They welcome the evening blaze with a prayer of thanksgiving.

When a young Parsi is seven years old his first religious ceremony takes place. It consists in investing him with a girdle of his faith. After this performance he is considered morally accountable for his acts.

When a doctor declares a case hopeless a priest is called in who prays for forgiveness of sins. After death prayers are repeated for the repose of his soul and a dog is brought in to drive away the evil spirits. The Parsis are the only people in the world who do not smoke. Their religion teaches them benevolence. In Bombay they have thirty two different charitable institutions. They are forbidden to defile any of the creations as earth, water, trees, and flowers.

When the Hindus conquered India about 5,000 years ago, the people they found there were savage tribes differing in origin and language. The most of them were demon-worshippers. They think that the earth is full of spirits which dwell in trees, plants, streams and rocks, and must be conciliated by sacrifices and offerings. At one time human sacrifices were not uncommon, but these have been abolished.

For this dark land steeped in heathenism and unbelief missionaries are struggling with hearts undaunted to preach the life and faith of the Crucified One.

Note.—Sometimes a question was received for our "Box" asking for a description of the different religions of India. As the subject was too lengthy for a proper answer to be given in the "Question

Box" and, as we believe it to be of interest to all our readers, we asked Miss Phillips to write a short article on the subject for publication in our Column. The request was complied with, and we have pleasure in presenting to day the paper printed above. We earnestly hope that not only "S. E. F." will find a satisfactory reply to his query but that it will be interesting and helpful to many of our workers.

P.—

Brooklyn, Y. Co., N. S. Society.

This Society of Christian Endeavour was organized in April, 1898, by Rev. A. W. Currie, and has enjoyed a fair amount of success and prosperity. Although our number have not increased to any great extent, we feel and know that our faith and lives have been strengthened by our frequent intercourse with each other, and by communion with Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Weak members have been made stronger, and it is our united prayer that we may go on to know more and more of that blessed Jesus who "went about doing good."

We hold our meetings on Sabbath evening. On the evening of April 8th we had with us Miss Lizzie Prosser, who gave us a very interesting talk on our Christian Endeavour Pledge, which was very profitable to many of us.

On April 29th we were pleased to welcome among us Rev. A. W. Currie, now of McAdam Junction, N. B. It did us all good to have him take the chair and lead our meeting. It was really an earnest service, and the power of the Holy Spirit was felt to be among us.

On the evening of May 6th we had our monthly Roll Call, to which there were 23 responses; but we were sorry to find that some 9 or 10 had neglected to send in their testimony, although they were unable to come out to meeting. We devoutly pray that when "the Roll is called up yonder" there shall not be one missing voice.

Mrs. C. N. MORRELL, Cor. Sec.

Woodstock Society.

Fellow Endeavorers:—Not having heard from our Society for some time, you, no doubt, have wondered how we are getting along.

The meetings are good, helpful and cheering. We have had a great deal of sickness in the Endeavor and church this Spring, and the Sick Committee have attended to their duty well. A few weeks ago we took three into membership; all took the Active Members Pledge. Our hearts were made glad the same night by eight or nine of our Associate Members wishing to be taken in as Active members.

Self-Denial Week we took about eleven dollars, (\$11.00).

Yours in the Work, AUBRELL T. JOHNSTON, Cor. Sec.

May 1st., 1900.

Wood in a Storm.

Louisa M. Alcott tells the following story of her kind hearted and benevolent father and mother:

One snowy Saturday night, when our wood was very low, a poor child came, to beg a little, as the baby was sick and the father on a spree with all his wages. My mother hesitated a little at first, as we also had a baby. Very cold weather was upon us, and a Sunday to be got through before wood could be had.

My father said, Give half our stock, and trust in Providence; the weather will moderate, or wood will come.

Mother laughed, and answered in her merry way, Well their need is greater than ours, and if our half gives out we can go to bed and tell stories.

So a generous half went to the poor neighbor, and a little later in the evening, while the storm still raged, and we were about to cover our fire to keep it, a knock came and a farmer who usually supplied us appeared, saying, anxiously,

I started for Boston with a load of wood, but it drifts so, I want to go home. Wouldn't you like to have me drop the wood here? It would accommodate me, and you needn't hurry about paying for it.

Yes, said father; and as the man went off he turned to mother with a look that much impressed us children with his gifts as a seer. Didn't I tell you wood would come if the weather did not moderate?

My mother's motto was Hope and keep busy, and one of her sayings was, Cast your bread upon the waters, and after many days it will come back buttered.—Kingdom Tidings.

A CHEAP MEDICINE CHEST.

Mrs. P. Williams, Gooderham P. O., Ont., writes: "I have used Haygard's Yellow Oil for Burns, Scalds, Sprains, Bruises, Sore Throat and for Pains in the Stomach and Bowels, and it has always given relief. My mother says it is a regular medicine chest in itself."

Died Within Sight of Land.

For many months a miner in the coal regions of Pennsylvania has been saving money to bring his wife to America. Day after day he toiled and saved with this one object in view. At last the latter containing the hoarded sum was dispatched, and a cheery one, telling him when to expect her, was received. Last week the beaming face of the Hungarian husband was seen among the throng that had gathered to welcome the incoming vessel. Eagerly he scanned each face, and when the last passenger had stepped ashore, he timidly approached one of the ship's men. The sailor was gentle—for even rough men are when they bear bad tidings—as he told him that the wife had died almost within sight of land. Even the hardened onlookers were moved by the pious grief of the poor Hungarian when he heard the news. Our human sympathies are strangely stirred when we think of such a pitiful case, yet how much sadder is the fate of those who set out for the New Jerusalem, yet who die by the way; those travellers who have started out bravely on their heavenly journey, yet have perished within sight of home.—Christian Observer.

The Line Fence.

A good lawyer learns many lessons in the school of human nature; and thus it was that Lawyer Hackett did not fear to purchase the tract of land which, says the *Lewis-ton Journal*, had been lawed over for years.

Some of the people wondered why he wanted to get hold of property with such an incubus of uncertainty upon it. Others thought that perhaps he wanted some legal knitting work, and would pitch in red-hot to fight that line fence question on his own hook.

That's what the owner of the adjoining land thought. So he braced himself for trouble when he saw Hackett coming across the fields one day.

Said Hackett, What's your claim here, anyway, as to this fence?

I insist, replied his neighbor, that your fence is over on my land two feet at one end and one foot at least at the other end.

Well, replied Hackett, you go ahead just as quick as you can and set your fence over. At the end where you say that I encroach on you two feet, set the fence on my land four feet. At the other end push it on my land two feet.

But persisted the neighbor, that's twice what I claim.

I don't care about that, said Hackett. There's been fight enough over this land. I want you to take enough so you are perfectly satisfied and then we can get along pleasantly. Go ahead and help yourself.

The man paused abashed. He had been ready to commence the old struggle, tooth and nail, but this move of the new neighbor stunned him. Yet he wasn't to be outdone in generosity. He looked at Hackett, and said, that fence ain't going to be moved an inch. I don't want the land. There wa'n't nothin' in the fight anyway but the principle of the thing.

Payable To Order.

A promise is like a check.

If I have a check, what do I do with it? Suppose I carried it about in my pocket and said, I do not see the use of this bit of paper; I cannot buy anything with it, a person would say: Have you been to the bank with it?

No; I did not think of that.

But it is payable to your order. Have you written your name on the back of it?

No; I have not done that.

And yet you are blaming the person who gave you the check! The whole blame lies with yourself. Put your name on the back of the check, go with it to the bank, and you will get what is promised to you.

A prayer should be the presentation of God's promise, indorsed by your personal faith.—C. H. Spurgeon.

So rapidly does lung irritation spread and deepen, that often in a few weeks a simple cough culminates in tubercular consumption. Give heed to a cough, there is always danger in delay, get a bottle of Bickel's Anti-Consumptive Syrup and cure yourself. It is a medicine unsurpassed for all throat and lung troubles. It is compounded from several herbs, each one of which stands at the head of the list as exerting a wonderful influence in curing consumption and all lung diseases.

Buckingham's Dye for the Whiskers can be applied when at home, and is uniformly successful in coloring a brown or black. Hence its great popularity.

"There is no little enemy." Little impurities in the blood are sources of great danger and should be expelled by Hood's Sarsaparilla.

A gentleman and his wife, traveling in the Holy Land, while resting by the roadside became interested in a shepherd as he sought to lead his flock over a stream. In vain he called to his sheep to follow him through the shallow water, and again and again he coaxed them on. They would come so far, and no further. At last, as a final resort, he caught a little lamb and bore it to the other side. Immediately the dam followed, and then the entire flock crossed safely to better pastures and cooler shade.

There was in that little incident a lesson for the two travelers. It had been necessary in their case, too, that the Good Shepherd should bear their only child across the stream in order to draw them closer to him. But their hearts had rebelled against the will of God, and they had sought to bury their sorrow in distraction. As the meaning of the lesson came more fully upon them, they accepted the great truth taught; and not only did they find healing for their own broken hearts and shattered hopes, but were used of God in bringing hope and comfort into many another burdened and darkened life.

Little misunderstandings often lend to lasting alienations. It will not do to let them stand. A few words will sometime explain and avert what might be serious trouble.

WAY UP

above every other medicine stands the record of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery as a remedy for diseases of the blood, stomach and organs of digestion and nutrition. The claim is made that the "Discovery" will cure ninety-eight persons in every hundred who are suffering from the diseases for which it is prescribed. That claim is based upon the actual record that it has cured ninety-eight per cent. of those who have used it, and the number of these reaches to the hundreds of thousands. Will it cure you? Try it. It is a wonderful medicine and has worked wonderful cures.

Let no dealer sell you a medicine said to be "just as good." Just as good medicines don't cure.

"About ten years ago I began to have trouble with my stomach," writes Mr. Wm. Connolly, of 335 Walnut St., Lorain, Ohio. "It got so bad that I had to lay off quite often two and three days a week, my stomach would bloat, and I would belch up gas, and was in awful distress at such times. I have been treated by the best doctors in this city but got no help whatever. I wrote to you for advice. You told me that by my symptoms you thought I had liver complaint and advised of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery and 'Pleasant Pellets' in connection. These medicines I have taken as directed, and am very happy to state that I commenced to get better from the start and have not lost a day this summer on account of my stomach. I feel top and better than I have for ten years."

Dr. Pierce's Pellets cure biliousness.

STRENGTHENS THE STOMACH

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the use of your "Golden Medical Discovery" and "Pleasant Pellets" in connection. These medicines I have taken as directed, and am very happy to state that I commenced to get better from the start and have not lost a day this summer on account of my stomach. I feel top and better than I have for ten years."

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JOHN J. WEDDALL.

MR. J. D. ROBINSON DUNDAS, ONT.

Gives His Honest Opinion of Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills.

Mr. J. D. Robinson, a resident of Dundas, Ont., has found these pills that is claimed for them and following statement of his case:

"Some time ago I obtained Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills. I can now without hesitation say that they have been beneficial in relieving my heart and nerves."

"I was troubled with sleeplessness, palpitation and neuralgia for a long time. I had really given up of a cure. Now, that others have testified of the virtues of this remedy, I unsolicited testimony."

"My honest opinion is that these are so good for heart and nerves. Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills. A box or 3 for \$1.25, at all druggists."

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