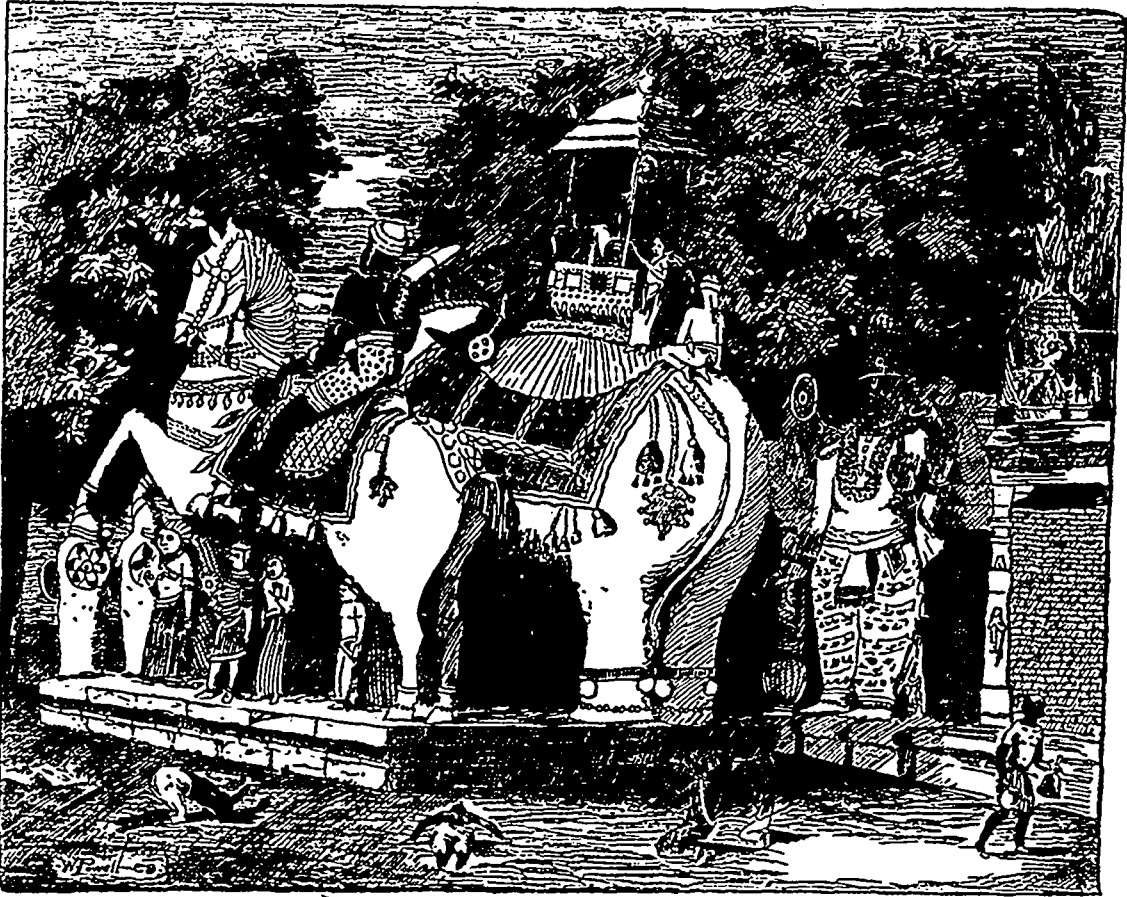




AN INDIAN TEMPLE.—(From a sketch made many years ago in India, by the late Col. Charles Gold, C. B.)

Supreme. The absolutely infinite hosts of Puranic divinities; the powers and energies of nature; almost every animal, in some connections, especially bulls, monkeys, birds and snakes; trees, flowers and stones, are adored. Images of every variety, some with many heads and arms, some of them frightful, some grotesque, half human, half bestial, are set up, and after a ceremony of consecration, called *avahanam*, are supposed to be permanent, abiding homes—nay to have become the very and effective personalities—of supernatural beings that control the destinies of man.

The minds of the worshippers rise no higher, unless other teaching has modified their beliefs and habits. Illustrations of whatever is said in Holy Scripture of the folly and wickedness of idolatry are to be seen in every street, and almost in every house in India. "They that make them are like unto them, so is every one that putteth his trust in them."

Among the beings supposed to be manifestations (or incarnations) of Diety, and everywhere adored, are *Krishna* and *Rama*—the heroes of their two great Epics, the *Mahabharata* and the

*Ramayana*. These are mere poetical creations—very interesting ones, doubtless—with some historical basis. They are, however, rightfully no more influential or important to humanity than are *Aeneas* or *Achilles*.

And what shall we say of active, popular, everyday Hinduism? You go into the streets of the black town in Madras on the night of the greatest of their local festivals, when the glare of many torches turns night into day, and the harsh discordances of native instruments of music vex the ear. The huge car of many stories, bright with flags and flowers, drawn by hundreds of hands, rolls slowly along the streets, while sacred songs and incantations are recited. What is the weird figure enthroned on the car glittering with precious stones? It is *Yegattal*—"the only mother"—an image worshipped here before any stranger from the West had set foot on the surf-beaten shore, where her dark and squalid temple stands—one of the forms of the Indian *Cybele*. As she slowly passes by, with continual halts, every door opens, and the inhabitants of each dwelling come forth to present their offerings, to join in the wor-