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GROUP OF SADHUS AND WANDERING BEGCARS.

A Group of Hindu Devotees.

(By the Rev. C. Hope Gill.)

This group represents twenty-nine religious devotees of India, with some of their chelas, or pupils. Five of the latter are sitting on the ground to the reader's right. These devotees are sometimes called fakirs; but that is a Mohammedan term, as these are all Hindus, we should more correctly call them Sadhus (holy men), Bairagis, Yogis, Gosains, and wandering beggars.

We do not often see such a variety grouped together. The photographer must have used his cleverest arts to beguile them into such submission and mutual amity, and at his bidding they evidently donned their best clothes, or at least most of them; they are not always so respectable.

The man in the middle, clothed in a leopard skin is a chief personage among them. His tall hat, of hide, into which his long, unkempt hair is coiled, denotes his importance. An attendant behind carries some antlers, his master's badge of office. He has wooden clogs on his feet, with little button pegs passed between his toes to act as laces. In his hands he holds the bowl of his hookah, or tobacco-pipe, which he is smoking or sucking through his fingers. The man next but one to his right is holding in his hands and smoking a long and gorgeous hookah, resembling a mace; it has the tobacco at the top, and is sucked through rosewater at the bottom.

The group contains three travelling musicians. Highlanders will recognize their national pipes (what a libel!) in the middle, but might listen in vain for their swirl. On the right is the native edition of the violin, and on the left the most primitive instrument with only two strings.

There are three figures to be noted at the bottom of the picture. The man on the reader's left shows three horizontal marks showing his devotion to Siva, and has his head completely shaved with a razor. Next to him is a Brahman, wearing the sacred thread of the twice-born, and also a large rosary. With his right hand he grasps a stout stick, and under his left hand is lying his short iron staff, with a ring attached; an instrument of awe to the people. The next man has a plentiful supply of salmon-colored clothing, the robes of the holy, and is holding a water gourd with a handle, in which he receives alms and doles of rice.

Many of these so-called ascetics are disreputable in their character and decidedly dirty in their habits. In our picture we see two or three with filthy, matted locks, which have never been cut, combed or washed; and many more whom we should like to introduce to a barber. Cleanliness is said to be next to godliness; and the Hindus generally are a cleanly people, who seldom miss their daily bath; but in the case of their religious devotees, dirt appears to be considered a necessary accompaniment to sanctity.

These men live upon the charity of the people. They obtain a reputation for sanctity by making long pilgrimages, smearing their bodies with ashes, and sometimes imposing penances upon themselves. They have a great influence over the common people, who fear their displeasure. 'If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness'—'Church Missionary Gleaner.'

A Remarkable Story.

In Backargunj, work was carried on by the Baptist Mission from 1829, but up to 1840 no result followed whatever. Numerous were the Bengali tracts constantly distributed. The crowd, which took the tracts to their homes, did not know, and we did not then know, that one amongst those who carried home a tract was a great teacher of the people, who, in most cases, were so illiterate that they were unable to read. This man carried the tract twenty-five miles into the interior, through rice-fields and swamps and marshes. He took it into his native village, where he collected some sixteen of his disciples, and asked them to sit round the mat on the floor of his hut, and then one read the tract. We cannot trace the subject dealt with in the tract, but we believe it was the story of the raising of Jairus's daughter and the necessity for prayer. Now, in a cottage there was a woman ill with fever, and they gathered round