

"Life is as a drop that trembles on the lotus-leaf, fleeting and quickly gone." Death is an end of consciousness. Faith is evidenced by bathing in the Ganges, eating clarified butter, holding the breath while reading a set portion of the Vedas, swallowing the dust raised by the hoofs of sacred cows, &c. The natural outcome of such religion is Pantheism, Polytheism, and idolatry in its grossest forms.

BUDDHISM originated about 550 years before Christ. Its founder Gautama or Buddha having been born between 482 B. C. and 472 B. C. He was himself a man of singularly attractive character. His work was that of a reformer of the abuses of Brahmanism, and his whole life a perfect example of the morality which he taught. He has been called the Luther of his times. He denounced caste, ignored the complex ritual of Brahmanism, and went about doing good and preaching a gospel of love and kindness to all sorts and conditions of men; but the system which he sought to establish, lacked the elements of cohesion. It was undisguised Atheism. It admitted the existence of a supreme power, without a Supreme Being, having no better foundations to rest upon than the personal magnetism of the man himself, it was certain, sooner or later, to collapse. The "Light of Asia," as it was called, gradually faded away, many of its distinctive ideas became incorporated into Brahmanism, and it finally disappeared from India about the end of the twelfth century, A. D. The result of that marvellous conglomerate of superstition is called *Hinduism*.

Brieflet No. 4.

IN ROME.

THE PANTHEON—"Pride of Rome!"—is probably the most perfect pagan building in the world: built, B. C., 27. It is the only building of ancient Rome that has outlived the wreck of centuries. For four hundred years it was the receptacle of the statues of heathen deities that stood in niches around its walls. At the end of that time it was closed as a temple, and for two hundred years its great bronze doors were never opened, save by barbarians, in search of plunder, who, when they gained admittance found its pavement strewn with broken statues of gods and heroes. In A. D. 608, it was consecrated as a Christian Church. Later, it became a fortress. Now, it is a church again, dedicated to Mary, a mart

for the sale of "Indulgences," and the sepulchre of illustrious statesmen, poets, and painters. Raphael's tomb is here, and that of Victor Emanuel. It is circular in shape, 143 feet in diameter, and covered with a lofty dome, in the top of which is an opening 28 feet in diameter, by which only the building is lighted. The walls are twenty-three feet thick. The portico in front, supported by Corinthian columns, is thought to be the finest specimen of architecture that Rome possesses.

TRAJAN'S COLUMN, near the end of the Corso, is another very interesting relic of antiquity. Erected A. D., 114, it is still in perfect preservation. The shaft, 115 feet high and thirteen feet in diameter, is composed of thirty-three blocks of marble, on which are carved some 2,500 figures, representing a spectacle which can be compared with nothing in modern times—A Roman "Triumph." By walking round the pillar you can trace distinctly the spiral procession, which winds about it from base to summit. There are the conquerors and the captives, the spoils of war, the horses and the chariots, and conspicuously, Trajan himself, and the stated attendant whose duty it was to whisper into the monarch's ear,—"Remember thou art but a man!" It was originally surmounted with his statue, but that has been replaced with an effigy of St. Peter, giving rise to the saying that here "Christianity is grafted on paganism." The magnificent forum which it once adorned, is now in utter ruins, presenting the appearance of a deserted quarry, and is a favourite resorts of *cats*. Fragments of columns of polished marble and granite lie scattered around. The spacious corridors, the grand arches, and the temples are all *gone*. Trajan may have been one of the greatest of the Roman Emperors, but, like the rest of them, he found his highest gratification in the shedding of blood. The triumph recorded on this pillar lasted 123 days, during which time, among other *amusements*, 10,000 gladiators entertained the populace by killing one another in the amphitheatre. Many Christians were put to death during his reign, for no other reason than that they avowed themselves to be such; notably Simeon of Jerusalem, and Ignatius, the venerable bishop of Antioch, who was "sent to the lions" in A. D. 107.