

that races and nations have existed or are now living who are wholly without ideas of a supernatural being. It has, however, always been found that such statements were founded on an imperfect knowledge of the races described, and that behind the crude exterior some apprehension of a supreme power is entertained, altho at times extremely vague. It would hardly surprise us if it was found that the savage and barbarous Nat worship of the Kachins had blotted out all higher ideas of the supernatural. For centuries the vilest practices have been perpetuated in connection with this worship. An educational system, even in its most rudimentary form, is unknown; any especial worship of a supreme being does not exist. Still, even here it is clearly discernible that God has not suffered Himself to be unknown. The Kachins have ideas of a being higher and more powerful than any Nat. He is called by different names, such as "The one higher than the clouds" (this name has to some Kachins an almost magical power); the "Omniscient" one, whose wisdom was especially manifested at the creation of man; the "Creator," who also was active in giving life to man; the "Spirit," or the Spirit above all spirits. Other names, as the "Lord of heaven and earth," may also be given, but the same being is indicated in every case. It is true that a further attempt to explain his ideas of the supreme would bring a Kachin to what a Western mind would regard as an almost hopeless confusion. He would assert that the same being is indicated in each of the above names, and also that the "Omniscient" one and the "Creator" had something like a human birth, while this would not be admitted in the case of "The one higher than the clouds." To us some form of incarnation, or something resembling an Avatar of Vishnu, would offer the most natural explanation, but a Kachin feels no necessity of solving this mystery. It is enough for him to know that there is some one greater than the Nats. These Nats, the greatest number of which have once been human beings, are in their present state immortal, but not omniscient, omnipotent, or ubiquitous. All of these attributes are without hesitation applied to the one above all. Beings half Nat and half man were endowed with supernatural power, but were subject to change and death, and exist at present in the same way as any other who has passed into the realm of the dead.

The knowledge of a supreme power exerts, however, hardly any moral influence over the Kachins. It is commonly believed that he ordinarily does not concern himself about human affairs. Only in extreme cases is it suspected that he punishes an extraordinarily wicked person, but when and how this happens no one claims to know. When any great calamity befalls a tribe or family; when war, famine, or pestilence is raging, and the Nats do not seem propitious, then supplications are made to the Lord of all, but no sacrifices are offered. That we here meet with a few remaining ideas from the original monotheism of India seems almost certain. God has been forgotten by more favored nations than the Kachins, but those in closest contact with these wild children of nature have had occa-