

world. Nature has lavished her choicest gifts upon that country. With an area less than half that of the United States it supports a population of two hundred and fifty millions. The Hindoos were a highly civilized people thousands of years before the Anglo-Saxons emerged from the lowest state of barbarism, and they have kept up that civilization to the present time. They are to-day the finest artisans of all people; their learned men are great scholars, subtle philosophers, and men of fine culture. They are the most religious people in the world.

But their very religion has been their greatest curse, for it taught a system of tyranny and class distinction known by the name of caste, the very opposite of universal brotherhood. This caste system brought with it the most terrible oppression, superstition and intolerance, until millions upon millions of human beings have been reduced to utter hopelessness and darkness. A man without a high caste pedigree was considered no more than the worm crawling on the earth, and even his life not of as much value. The high caste Brahman walking in the street would not allow his low caste neighbor to touch his garment, because he would thereby become defiled, and not so very long ago the law read thus: "It is the duty of the low caste to get out of the way so as not to pass between a Brahman and the sun—for should his shadow fall upon the Brahman he (the Brahman) has a right to draw his sword and kill the low caste (sudra) on the spot for having defiled him even by his shadow."

The principal religions of India are those of Brahma, Mohammed, and Buddah. They all hated and persecuted each other, and only agreed mutually in hating the Christians. It was the country, up to a recent time, above all others, of prejudice, hate, tyranny, and intolerance.

Four years ago, I was the honored guest at a Masonic Lodge meeting in

the third degree, in the great Temple at Calcutta.—There were about one hundred and fifty Masons present—men of almost every nationality and creed. The Master's Degree was conferred on three Fellow Crafts, who knelt before the same altar. *One was a Christian, who took his obligation on the Bible; one was a Mohammedan, who took it on the Koran; the other a Hindoo, who took it on the Shastras.*

The oath was administered by an English Lord, a Judge of the Supreme Court, and he was assisted by the Grand Secretary, my friend Rustomjee, a Parse and follower of Zoroaster.

There Masonry is seen and felt. There it is now what it was in Europe during the dark ages. There no one thinks it is trivial or useless. These men in India are the learned, the influential men. They do not renounce their religions; they never meet together in the temples of worship, but they meet before the Masonic altar as Brethren, on bended knee, before the Great Architect of the Universe—and, hand in hand, breast to breast, mouth to ear, they walk about in their quiet daily vocations, among Asia's teeming millions, sowing the seed, and setting the example, from high to low, of Masonic teachings and Masonic lives. Who will dare assume to calculate its influence? God speed your noble work, dear Brethren of Hindoostan.—*Keystone.*

"BAD MASONS."—There are no "bad Masons" just as there are no "bad Christians." Such a designation is an obvious contradiction. There are bad members of Lodges, but that is a very different matter. Some members of Lodges have never in truth become Masons because of their badness, just as some members of churches never become Christians. There are good, bad and indifferent members of Lodges, but there are only good Masons.—*Masonic Record.*