

years ago. They now number in all about 70,000, the great majority of whom reside in Bombay. They speak English fluently, and it is carefully taught in their schools. The founder of their religion was Zoroaster, whom tradition says was a disciple of the Hebrew prophet Daniel. He teaches a pure and lofty morality, summed up in three precepts of two words each, viz., good thoughts, good words, good deeds, of which the Parsi continually reminds himself by the triple coil of his white cotton girdle, which never leaves him.

The Parsis are often spoken of as "Fire Worshipers," a term which they rightly repudiate with indignation. They are Theists. God, according to the Parsi faith, is the emblem of glory, refulgence, and spiritual life; and therefore the Parsi, when praying, either faces the sun, or stands before fire, as the most fitting symbol of the Deity. The interior of their temples is entirely empty, except for the sacred fire in a small recess, which is never allowed to expire. The walls are bare, without the slightest decoration. There is no pleasanter sight in Bombay than the groups of pious Zoroastrians praying at sunset along the shores of Back Bay.

The "good deeds" of the Parsis are in evidence all over Bombay, and are by no means confined to their own people. The charities of Sir Jamsetji Jijibhai, his sons and grandsons, would need a volume to describe. Hospitals, schools, dispensaries, colleges, and other valuable institutions are scattered over town and province with a lavish hand. One of his sons is known to have thus given away a quarter of a million sterling. No community in the history of the world has, in proportion to its numbers and wealth, such a charitable record to produce; it puts modern Christianity to the blush.

Hindu charities are also large and generous, but usually confined to their own people. Their benevolent endowments generally feed the hungry, clothe the naked, or erect and maintain temples. The most curious and interesting of the Hindu charities is the Hospital for Aged and Infirm Animals, at Pinjrapole, which is a unique institution. Here, in cages and inclosures, are hundreds of decrepit cows, mangy dogs and cats, parrots, pigeons, and other domestic pets, fed and cared for tenderly in their old age.

At Surat there are also three or four hospitals for sick animals, and about one thousand head of cattle can be accommodated by them. The sick are physicked, the feeble taken tenderly into the suburbs to graze on green pastures, and the chance calves nursed into maturity and used as servants to the hospital patients.