

and clay, and pictured on paper, I would ask you whether the August Supreme Ruler has appointed them, or not? No, these are all derived from men's minds, having been so deluded by the devil as to make, according to their own stupid purpose and device, every kind of strange and monstrous thing. Of old the August Supreme Ruler in six days created heaven and earth, land and sea, men and things. He had already appointed thousands and tens of thousands of angels to act as his messengers. Why then does he need these strange and monstrous things which men have made in direct opposition to his will? According to the Old Testament, the August Supreme Ruler formerly came down at Mount Sinai, and with his own hands wrote the ten commandments upon tables of stone, which he delivered to Moses, saying, "I am Lord above, the August Supreme Ruler. All you men must not by any means set up any image of things in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or bow down and worship them." Now you men who have set up any image, and bow down and worship it, truly rebel against the will of the August Supreme Ruler.

You may say that these images help the August Supreme Ruler to protect men. Why are you so deluded by the devil, and so utterly confused and insensible? Can you not reflect that the August Supreme Ruler in six days created heaven and earth, land and sea, men and things? If in this work he needed none to assist him, who can he now need to help him to take care of men?

INDIA—CUSTOMS IN REFERENCE TO THE DYING AND THE DEAD

The dead of a Zamindar or landholder, of my acquaintance, in a village near to my house, and part of the ceremonies which I witnessed, led me to make inquiries as to the customs connected with the dying and the dead; and the following, I believe, is a faithful account of the ceremonies which prevail in this part of India—

In some parts of the country, especially in Bengal, when a person is near death his friends carry him to the banks of the Ganges, that he may die in sight of the sacred river. This custom does not prevail in Northern India, but here when a person is thought to be dying, his friends sweep a part of the room in which he lies, and having carefully plastered it with cow-dung, lay him upon it; at the same time a small piece of gold and water from the Ganges are put into his mouth; two or three cents worth of gold is all that is used by the poorer classes. This is done under the delusion that the water and the gold secure the full pardon of the sins of the dying man, and felicity in the world to come.

At this time the friends and neighbors come to see him and to mourn over him. When the person is quite dead, his clothes are taken off, and the body is wrapped in a new white cloth.

If the person dead be a female, and not a widow, the body is wrapped in a cloth of various colors; her eyelashes are colored black, and red marks put upon her forehead. This being done, the body is placed upon a bier made of bamboo and bound fast. An offering is then made consisting of rice, sugar, flowers, Ghee, and the seeds of a sacred plant called Tulaco. These things are mixed together and made into small balls. The offering being made, the corpse is borne by four men, who constantly cry "Ram, Ram, each hai," that is, "Ram is true;" some of the friends of the deceased usually follow after. Having arrived at the Ganges, the body is washed and placed upon the funeral pile: sometimes it is built over a hole about two feet and a half in diameter; sometimes the fire is made without any hole being dug. Between 3 and 400 pounds of wood is considered enough to burn one body; when the funeral pile is completed and the body placed upon it, a son or heir at law having walked around the pile, and offered a prayer to the God of fire, that the sins of the one dead may be consumed, sets the pile on fire. The friends now retire a short distance, while the son or heir remains to tend the fire until the body is consumed.

During the burning, sandal wood and ghi, and sometimes pitch, are thrown into the fire by those who can afford to do so—the fire on account of its fragrance, the last to increase the intensity of the fire; sometimes the body is not entirely consumed for the want of wood; in this case the remains of the body are collected and thrown into the river. Many people are so poor that they cannot buy wood to burn their dead; the bodies of all such are thrown into the river. This practice in many places is a dreadful nuisance. I have often seen dead bodies floating down the river, or lying upon the bank, food for jackals and carrion birds.

The friends having witnessed the burning of the body, retire to a convenient place on the river at some distance, and bathe, then return to the house of the man who has died. And having taken a leaf of the Nim tree and a kernel of barley, eat them and go to their homes; the leaf of the Nim is very bitter, and the eating of it shows that he who does so has a part in the sorrow which has come upon his friend.

At the door of the house under a stone is now put a branch of the Nim tree and a few kernels of barley; this is a token that some one has lately died in that house. The one who lighted the funeral pile is considered unclean. For twenty days he is compelled to live alone, no one comes near him, no one touches him, he cooks his own food and sleeps upon the ground with a dagger by his side, in order to defend himself if the spirit of the dead should come and trouble him for burning his body.

On the tenth, the relatives of the deceased go out into the fields, generally near a well; the men shave their heads and beard, and moustaches. The widow takes off all her ornaments; her finger rings and toe rings,

her armlets and anklets. The loss of these is her badge of sorrow, and the evidence that she is a widow. After having bathed they return to their houses and eat, not from their common dishes, but from large leaves. A vessel filled with water is now placed in some field not far away, for the dead. During the ten days a lamp, placed in an earthen vessel pierced with holes, is hung in the Pipal tree, that the spirit of the dead may come and live to the light of it.

On the eleventh day, the person who burnt the dead goes out into a mango grove, accompanied by a Brahman, and marks out eighteen squares on the ground, in two lines, the squares being about two feet on each side; in the centre of each square a fire made of cow-dung is kindled, a lamp is also lighted and placed in each, a small earthen vessel containing rice and milk is then placed upon the fire until the rice is thoroughly boiled. It is then mixed with sugar, ghi, and flowers, and made into balls, which are afterwards thrown into the river; twelve of the offerings are for the twelve months of the year, four for great holidays, one for the dead man, one for his father, and one for his grandfather. This is done in order to secure the repose of the soul of the man and of his ancestors.

On the thirteenth day the relatives of the deceased give a feast according to their ability. They must invite no fewer than thirteen Brahmans, and as many more as they choose. Having fasted these Brahmans, they give to each a small brazen vessel, a piece of cloth, and some money, according to their circumstances in life. After the Brahmans have eaten and received their gifts, the relatives and friends of the dead assemble, and are also feasted.

The Hindus believe that when a person dies his soul is taken to Jam Raj, the judge of departed souls. When the dead appears before him, he immediately calls two recording angels, who keep a strict account of all the actions of all creatures, and commands them to open their books and make known the character of the person before him. If his good works are found to be greater than his wicked ones, he is permitted to be born again in a higher state of being; or if pre-eminently holy, he enters into heaven, and becomes absorbed into the Infinite Brahman.

On the other hand, if his wicked actions predominate over them, Jam Raj at once proceeds to pronounce his sentence of transmigration into a lower birth, into beasts, vile reptiles or worms, or perhaps dooms him to the torments of hell. At this moment the wretched being makes a loud and earnest request that the sentence may be deferred for thirteen days, until he can return to earth to see if his friends will do anything for his salvation or no. The execution of the sentence is finally deferred for thirteen days; he is not permitted, however, during these days to remain upon earth; but in some dreadful place, some purgatory between earth and hell. Here he wanders oppressed by hunger and thirst, in dreadful wildernesses, burning deserts, and through dark and fearful places. The Brahmans, the priests of Hindoism, like the priests of a faith equally fatal to the soul, have prescribed rites and ceremonies, gifts and offerings which the friends of the departed may give as a ransom for the soul of their friend from the sentence of Jam Raj. For this reason, from the hour of the death of a poor man until the thirteenth day his family are compelled to feast Brahmans, give them presents, and offer sacrifices; even if they be compelled to sell the last article from their house in order to do it. In this way poverty and ruin are brought upon many.—Foreign Missionary.

WESTERN CENTRAL AFRICA.

THE OVERTHROW OF FETTERISM AMONG THE FANTERS ON THE GOLD COAST OF AFRICA.

The following is taken from an able work, in two volumes, recently published, by Brodie Cruikshank, Esq., a member of the Legislative Council, Cape Coast Castle, called "Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa." It contains very interesting information respecting the dismal effects which the slave trade produced upon the people of Africa, the wars that prevailed between the Ashantees and the Fanters, and the civil and religious customs of the negroes, as well as the beneficial effects which the wise administration of the British governor at Cape Coast Castle, and the efforts of the Wesleyan missionaries have had in improving the people.

The Fetich Men or Negro Priests—These form a regular and numerous order, and may be said to resemble the Abidjolog of Old Calabar. They are a set of skilful rogues and impostors, whose system is a compound of artful contrivance and deceit, and is upheld by every means which talent, observation, and cunning can supply. They are ready to adopt any measures, however base and wicked, that seem calculated to increase the superstitious reverence of the people, and to augment their power. One imagines, in perusing the extraordinary accounts that are given of these men in the volumes before us, that he is reading what Caesar details respecting the great associations of the ancient druidical priests of Britain, or the descriptions that have been given of the artful schemes of the Jesuits. Certainly the persons who are capable of framing and conducting such a system of imposture discover talents which, if they had a thorough education, would enable them to take a place among the sagacious diplomatists of Europe. The youthful candidates for the office are subjected to a regular system of training and preparatory discipline. One qualification of great importance is the power of endurance in the wild sort of dancing, which is uniformly practiced in their religious rites, and by which the priests excite themselves to frantic madness before giving forth the oracles of the god. Any youth who possesses