



THE TAJ MAHAL, AGRA.

crowd, and with their shouting, add to the din. When the train arrives, there is a frantic rush for the seats, men run helter-skelter, followed by half-dazed women with babies in their arms and crying children at their heels. The railway officials have to do a great deal of pushing and hauling before they can get the people properly seated. Great numbers of natives travel on the railways, they generally patronize the third or fourth class, the rates being exceedingly low. The prejudices of the natives are regarded so far, that compartments are reserved for "Purdah women," but I have frequently noticed that the occupants did not appear particularly anxious to hide their faces from European gentlemen, more especially if they were accompanied by ladies. I remember one afternoon at Cawnpore a woman being brought into the railway station, closely veiled from head to foot. When she walked from her palanquin to the door of the compartment reserved for "Purdah women," sheets were held up by her male escort to screen her from public view; when she was seated and found her attendants securely lodged in the adjoin-

ing carriage, she threw aside her veil and laughed as she showed her beautiful face to our astonished gaze; the other occupants seemed to enjoy the fun, for they copied her example.

The educating influence of the railways upon the various classes of the population who ride together in crowded carriages, may be seen in the gradual weakening of the rigid rules of the caste system.

Regarding caste, it is not within the scope of this paper to say more than that the current opinion about the Hindus being divided into four great divisions, namely: religious, military, commercial and laboring classes, is only true of the Brahman, or religious caste. The Indian census reports of 1881, enumerate 1,929 different castes. As a rule, every profession, trade, guild, tribe and class is not only a distinct caste, but they exclusively eat together, and exclusively intermarry.

Calcutta is the capital of British India and the seat of supreme Government. It is situated on the left bank of the Hugli River, about eighty miles from the sea coast. The Hugli is the most