

to him, What sort of a god could it be, whose temple was a hole in the ground? It was a large snake called the *cobra di capella*. The bite of these snakes is the deadliest of any in India; and because the people are so afraid of them, they are worshiped as gods. Priests are appointed to take care of them, to feed them with milk, butter, plantains, and other nice things; and streams of worshipers bring offerings to them every day.

After the missionary had passed the ant-hill, he met two men whom he knew, and stopped to talk with them. Soon, one of them noticed his whip and exclaimed,—

"See that whip? It is made like a snake."

"Yes," said the other, "it is exactly like one we have just seen."

"Where did you see him?" asked the missionary, wishing to avoid the dangerous thing if possible.

"We saw him going into a hole near the mission house," was the answer.

"Why didn't you kill him?"

"Kill him!" they said; "kill him! He is our god."

But they were quite willing to show where he was, and stood quietly by while the missionary and his servant filled the hole with water, and then killed the snake as soon as he showed his head above the hole. They were frightened at first; but as soon as the danger was over, they came forward, and examined the dead god, and said no one could live more than three hours after being bitten by him.

A day or two afterward when the missionary's teacher, a Brahman, heard what had been done, he was very much excited and exclaimed,—

"You have committed a great crime; you have killed my god."

"I killed him to save myself and family from his poisonous bite," said the missionary.

"A cobra never hurts anyone" said the Brahman. "If he bites some one, and he dies afterwards, it is only because his time to die had come."

These gods are at the same time the terror and admiration of thousands of people; so there are men who catch them, and exhibit them, making a good deal of money by it. By pressing on the snake's neck, the poison is all thrown out of his mouth; and then the men can do anything they please with him—make him stand up in the air, let him coil around their bodies, and perform tricks with him. To those who are looking on it is frightful and exciting to see men playing with poisonous serpents in the midst of the beating of drums and the playing on rude musical instruments. They worship them at the same time, and often go through tortures to appease the wrath of these cruel gods.

What a glad day that will be when all the nations shall know one God, and give up all these foolish and wicked customs!

TRUTH IS BEST.

Sometime after the beginning of the present century, there was living in a busy country town in the North a pious couple who had an only son. For this son they daily prayed to God. And what they asked in their prayers was that God would enable them to lay in his young heart, among the first lessons he should learn, the love of all things honest and good. "It is our duty," the father said, "to ground our boy well in truth and uprightness." "Yes," the mother answered, "it is like laying down one of the precious stones of the New Jerusalem." The boy took kindly to their lessons. He opened his heart to their pious teaching, and learned to love the things they praised, and to desire to have them in his heart. So the foundations of an upright life were laid in the boy's heart, and among these very especially a regard for uprightness and truth.

In the course of years the boy's school days were ended, and also his apprenticeship to a business life in a country town; and as there was no prospect for him there, he came over to England, to one of