

It is the food of his soul. It is the foundation of his hopes, both for this world and for another. He is subdued, enslaved, and befooled by it. He is, however, a willing slave—a willing devotee; for he loves idolatry, together with its superstitions and ceremonies, with all the ardor of religious frenzy. Moreover, it is of great importance to bear in mind, that, as a man can hardly be better than his religion, the nature of the Hindu partakes of the supposed nature of the gods whom he worships. And what is that nature? According to the traditions handed about amongst the natives, and constantly dwelt upon in their conversation, and referred to in their popular songs, which, perhaps, would be sufficient proof for our purpose, yet, more especially, according to the numberless statements and narratives found in their sacred writings, on which these traditions are based, it is, in many instances, vile and abominable to the last degree; so that the poor idolator, when brought completely under its influence, is most deplorably debased. Virtue, truth, holiness, civilization, enlightenment, human progress, all that contributes to individual happiness and to a nation's prosperity, cannot be properly appreciated by him. His soul's best affections are blighted, and his conscience is deeply perverted. Idolatry is a word denoting all that is wicked in imagination and impure in practice. These remarks are especially true of rigid and thorough Hindus, like the Ganga putras or "sons of the Ganges," who may be regarded as representing, in their own persons, the complete results of their strange religion. To speak plainly, and yet without extravagance, the moral nature of such Hindus has become so distorted, that to a large extent they have forgotten the essential distinctness of things. Their idol worship has plunged them into immoralities of the grossest forms, has robbed them of truth, has filled their minds with deceit, has vitiated their holy aspirations, has greatly enfeebled every sentiment of virtue, has corrupted the common feelings of humanity within