

Northern Messenger

VOLUME XXXVII. No. 20.

MONTREAL, MAY 16, 1902.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.

A Brahman Worshipping the Sun.

(By Mrs. W. B. Capron, in 'Dayspring'.)

The highest caste among the Hindus is the Brahmin. The Queen's son could not be more proud of his birth than is the poorest Brahmin. The most important ceremony of his life is the putting on the sacred thread. He is then said to be twice born. It is like putting on a crown, in that it brings him all the honors of his caste. Formerly, all lower castes when meeting the

must go to the nearest stream or tank. He must throw water eight times over his head. He then dips three times in the water, repeating three prayers, and worships the rising sun. During this worship he touches various parts of his body with his wet hand. If he should sneeze, as is not uncommon on a chilly morning, he touches his right ear as a token of being restored. Fire, water, sun, moon, and air are all in the right ear of a Brahmin. He then closes his eyes and repeats many prayers in adoration of the sun. He then

was idol worship. It seemed like children playing at cooking, only the performer was a gray-haired man or one in the prime of life, and it seemed as if he ought to know better.

Were you in India you would see in the early morning these Brahmins going and coming to and from the tank or river. They always wash their own clothes, or, rather, they used to do so. A muslin cloth of three yards fastened about the waist, and another, worn as a mantle or as a turban, were the usual dress. So you would see the Brahmin coming from the water with the cloth about the waist quite wet, and the other just wrung out on his shoulder or in his hand. He would also be carrying a little, bright, shining, brass vessel full of water, which would be carefully kept for drinking water for the day. Now, however, through the influence of more refined ideas of dress, many wear jackets and such attire as requires starch and ironing, and the old-time customs pass away. But how can all this meaningless flourishing of water called morning devotions be changed for pure and true worship from the heart to a holy God? You do not need that I tell you.

The Successor.

(Cora S. Day, in 'American Messenger'.)

'I'm so sorry,' said Margaret Whitney, and in that one little sentence she voiced the sentiment of all who belonged to or attended Oakville church.

It was a small country place and the church and its congregation corresponded in size—both were small. But if the most valuable things come in small quantities, as is often asserted, this little church was a good illustration of the truth. It was thoroughly alive and wide awake, and was blessed with a pastor whose energy and zeal seemed ever seeking for more work and wider fields in which to exercise themselves.

It was this desire and need of wider fields that brought the 'sorry' condition to the little flock. A call came to the active young pastor, inviting him to take charge of a large church in a near-by manufacturing town. He saw at once the larger field of work that awaited and needed him, and accepted, in spite of the protests of the people.

'You will find another who will fill the place as well, perhaps better, than I have done,' he said when they spoke of their regret that he was to leave them. And then he added, with a look of solemn conviction in his face:

'I am called. I must go,' and they could not answer that.

The first Sunday that saw a stranger in the pulpit was a shock to them all. Not only did they realize more keenly than before what they had lost, but when the candidate rose and stood before them to announce the opening hymn, their first feeling was one of disappointment in him. All that the recent pastor was, this man was not. He was old, but it was not so much age as overwork and ill-health that showed in his thin, furrowed face and stooping fig-



lordly Brahmin would give him the sign of religious reverence, but this custom is passing away. This is owing to the fact that the Brahmins were once more confined to religious duties and temple worship. Now they are quite ready for clerkships and government employment, and business generally. Also, government schools and the railway tend to jostle together high and low.

Strict Brahmins say that two hours in the morning and two hours at evening are needed to perform worship as it should be.

On rising in the morning the Brahmin

offers water to the sun. Again throwing water over himself eight times, he stands facing the east, repeating prayers. Brahmins who shorten the evening worship are generally careful to secure the morning duties. In some cases a household has its priest, and the members are called together to hear him repeat sentences or names of gods, and to see him go through various ceremonies. He has many little brass cups and spoons, and when I have seen these attempts at worship I have often been troubled because I could not realize that this