

that every one of the three hundred gods of Hinduism have come at one time or another and bathed, and in so doing, have left some divine virtue; hence its exceeding power to cleanse from sin. It is said that whosoever bathes in this filthy well receives instant and unqualified remission of all sin; even the most diabolical murderer may here find instant cleansing. It is no wonder that the pilgrims, who for three thousand years or more have frequented this well, have so done, but it is inconceivable how they can believe such things.

The principal temple of Siva in Benares is the Golden Temple. It is owned by a rich woman and farmed out to the priests. It is a handsome building, having two beautiful spires upon it with a central dome. The dome and one of the spires are overlaid with gold plate, that is, thin sheetings of solid gold. This temple, like all the temples in Benares, is characterized by the filthy phallic worship of this God.

Well, I had the honor of being personally conducted through the Lucknow museum by the learned and distinguished curator, who during the past year has been making extensive excavations in the ancient city of Mutra, which stands next to Benares for holiness. Mutra was one of the chief cities of the Buddhists in the days of its early power and glory, before the time of Christ.

Among these excavations are a number of beautifully carved gods and statues of Buddha, and remains of what were the magnificent temples of Buddha. To say that the carvings were the foulest in design I have ever seen, is to draw the case mild. The indecent paintings and carvings found in Pompeii are chaste beside some of them. Mind, these were the carvings with which their temples were adorned. It is all the more startling because Buddhism has been supposed to be a reform from the low and coarse features of Hinduism, in its ethics. It is also remarkable that these things have just come to light within the past twelve months; that is, this feature of Buddhism. Had Sir Edward Arnold had these things with which to illustrate his *Light of Asia*, perhaps that might have taken the edge off that wonderful romance of his. If that poem, beautiful as it now stands, could be stripped of the Christian ideas the author has saturated it with, and embellished with the real Buddhistic facts which I have reluctantly ventured to set before you, the sentimentalism current in respect of Buddhism would undergo a change.

After visiting the Golden Temple we went to the Cow Temple, where the sacred creatures are kept and attended to with all the scrupulous care that ought to be bestowed upon the gods. The inside of the temple where the worshippers crowd is unspeakably vile and dirty. I watched

some of their rites until I turned sick, and had to leave the building.

From here we took our way to the famous Monkey Temple. The monkey, as you know, is a sacred animal. It is regarded as belonging to a superior race, temporarily doomed to this form of body, but still capable of vast and malignant power. Therefore they are never under any circumstances killed, but always propitiated. About this temple they swarm, climbing over walls, and up the posts and pillars, and in and out of all crannies and niches, over the roofs and minarets and towers and domes. Monkeys to right of you, monkeys to left of you. They are daintily fed and cared for. Visitors are importuned to buy grain and fruit for them and feed them, with the assurance that by so doing, blessing will come to them. If the blessing does not come to them, it is certain that the pice (small coins) go into the pockets of the Brahmins who sell the food to feed, and the garlands to deck, the beasts with.

Here I had quite a discussion with the chief priest of the temple, a handsome young Brahmin who spoke English quite well. It is not necessary to repeat the debate. It was interesting, though, I assure you, and was listened to eagerly by a crowd of priests and laymen, who gathered about us. The Brahmin finally admitted that he was not yet well acquainted with his shasters, and so could not answer all my questions or meet my arguments. At the close I asked him if he would gather a few of his monkeys about him, sit down on the temple steps and allow me to photograph him, as I thought the group would be interesting as a study of Hinduism. He did not seem to perceive the irony involved in the composition of the group, but readily consented to have "his picture taken."

In and about these temples, in the cloisters, sitting, standing dressed, half dressed, and nude, are the fakirs, punnets, etc. One or two were as interesting as disgusting. One quite nude, a great, fat, hulking-looking fellow, covered with ashes from head to foot, and inexpressibly dirty in every way. He has been sitting in that spot day and night for fifteen years. He never speaks, but always holds out his hands for pice (money). Others simply lie about and mumble prayers for pice. They are thought to be very holy and their prayers very righteous.

All this is popular Hinduism, and it is said that we are not to look here for Hinduism. Yet it is true that the highest and most esoteric of the great pundits and philosophers encourage these things, and tell us they are necessary for the common people, though not for the men of knowledge.

It must not be thought for a moment that this is all there is to be seen of religion and Hinduism in Benares. I could write pages telling you of