

A BRAHMAN WORSHIPING THE SUN.

The highest caste among the Hindus is the Brahman. The Queen's son could not be more proud of his birth than is the poorest Brahman. 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 lordly Brahman would give him the sign of religious reverence, but this custom is passing away. This is owing to the fact that the Brahmans 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 Brahmans 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 this Brahman 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 always in the right ear of a Brahman. He then closes his eyes and repeats many prayers in adoration of the sun. He then offers water to the sun. Again throwing water over himself eight times, he stands facing the east, repeating prayers. Brahmans 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 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 Brahmans 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 Brahman 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 charged for pure and true worship from the heart to a holy God? You do not need that I tell you. — *The Mission Dayspring*.

NO DIFFERENCE.

A little black girl, eight years old, was setting the table, when a boy in the room said to her, "Mollie, do you pray?"

The suddenness of the question confused her a little, but she answered, "Yes, every night."

"Do you think God hears you?" the boy asked.

She answered promptly, "I know He does."

"But do you think," said he, trying to puzzle her, "that He hears your prayers as readily as those of white children?"

For full three minutes the child kept on with her work; then she slowly said, "Master George, I pray into God's ears, and not His eyes. My voice is just like any other little girl's and, if I say what I ought to say, God does not stop to look at my skin."