

may, they think, be condemned after death to live again in the form of one of the lower animals, a pig for instance, for thousands of years, and this strange belief gives the priests great power over the lower classes, who are very superstitious.

One of the strange institutions of India is known by the name of caste ; it consists of a total separation of the people into different classes, the four principal of which are the Brahmins or priests, soldiers, merchants, and laborers. Not only are these forbidden to inter-marry, but they dare not enter each other's houses, eat together, or even touch each other ; and children must belong to the same caste, and follow the same occupation or trade as their parents. To break caste is considered a worse crime than murder, and if a man took even a mouthful of food or a drink of water from one of another caste he would be defiled, and become an outcast, despised and abused by everyone. Caste is closely connected with their system of religion, and has proved one of the greatest obstacles to the spread of the Gospel, for it makes it a terrible trial for a Hindu to become a Christian, for if he does he at once loses his caste, is driven from his home, and his relatives mourn for him, and perform funeral ceremonies as if he were dead.

But the Gospel of Jesus Christ is slowly but surely bringing about great changes in India, and these strange beliefs and customs I have been telling you about will, it is hoped, soon lose their power over the people, and the light of a better day dawn for them. In future papers I hope to tell you something of what missionaries have done and are doing to make India, by God's blessing on their labors, a Christian land.

QUESTIONS.

How is India situated? What is the present form of government? What is its population? Give illustrations which help to give some idea of this vast number. Describe the appearance of the Hindus. Are they all of one nation and language? What can you tell of the social condition of the people? Is education general? What is said of the cities of India? Of the farm villages, and the condition of the people living in them? What is said of the religious beliefs of the Hindus? Of their sacred books? Name the three principal deities. Are there other gods