

subject of future remark,—indeed it is the point upon which the present subject turns. Loss of caste is most ordinarily and speedily brought about by *eating* or *tasting* any thing that has been prepared by unclean hands,—that is, by the hands of persons not of their own class. Then, it is lost by eating forbidden things; and by omitting certain rites; and by embracing any new religion. There is a point of importance to be mentioned here. The three higher classes are forbidden to eat or taste anything, except fish, that has had life;—and why? They most rigidly believe in the doctrine of transmigration of souls. The souls of their ancestors, it is presumed, may enter the bodies of any creature on the earth having life; to partake of food prepared from such, under these circumstances of belief, is strictly forbidden. Many of the animals, on this account, are worshipped by them as divinities; and amongst those held in the highest estimation is the cow or ox. This animal, as it walks along the street, is venerated and admired; hospitals are built for these when they are diseased, while the horse is treated with cruelty and contempt. These circumstances must be borne in mind, as bearing upon recent occurrences.

A few words must suffice on the Religion of the natives. This is generally Hindoo and Mahomedan. The Sikhs are a distinct race: they accept and reject peculiarities belonging to both the other sects, but themselves are tolerant of neither. The book of all books to the Mussulman is the Koran. The sacred writings of the Hindoos are the Vedas and Shastres. The former is to them what the Bible is to us, and the Koran to the Mussulman,—the Shastres are a commentary on the Vedas. No two forces could be more antagonistic than the two races we have named, which comprise nearly all the two hundred millions of India. At the same time, it is true that the Mahomedans have a caste of their own—a rival caste; and