

Vishnu used to ride. His mother was condemned to slavery till she could procure the water of immortality. Learning this, Gorooro determined to go in search of it for her, but before he started she said, "What ever you do not destroy a Brahmin. Brahmins are as hot as fire, and must not be destroyed by creatures. They are the religious teachers of all. When they are angry they are like fire, like the sun, like a weapon. Neither the sun nor fire can reduce you to ashes like a Brahmin's curse when he is fasting. They are the great ones, the first-born, the fathers of the world. This is why kings worship them, and why you must honour them too. Do them no harm. Their words are more terrible than a thunderbolt, and their anger is unmerciful."

"Mother," replied Gorooro, "tell me all about them, so that if I see them I may recognise them. Is their form terrible? Do they burn like the sun? What is their shape, character, power?"

Beenota answered, "Son! he who hurts like a fishhook in the throat, and burns like a coal, is a Brahmin. Take care that you kill not a Brahmin."

The royal bird ascended into the sky and departed, but when hungry it descended like death to the lower world among the creatures. Animals fled at his approach and birds spread their wings to escape into the air. Among other creatures that the great bird had swallowed, a Brahmin had also entered his throat, and now burnt him like a fiery coal. In agony he entreated the twice-born to come out, saying, "Brahmin, I am opening my beak. Make haste. Though my sins are many, I won't destroy a Brahmin." "Then," the man replied, "let my wife out too." Being set free, the Brahmin blessed the bird and departed to his home.

Stories like the above are numerous in Hindu works, and are evidently written to create in the minds of the natives boundless fear and reverence for the priestly caste. The word Brahmin may mean "the race from the mouth of Brahma," or merely those who speak of Brahma. To kill a cow or a Brahmin is an unpardonable sin. Not only are the common people subject to this caste, but kings and gods themselves are also. By their charms and mantras all are controlled and governed. Numerous are the stories of men being turned into deer, elephants, giants, trees, ashes, and I know not what else, by the curse of the twice-born. But these are all fables, and do not happen now, for if they did preachers of the Gospel would not be spared. As a rule they do not even enter into conversation or arguments with missionaries, but, standing a little apart, notice with chagrin how the "common people hear gladly." Their ignorance of what every native schoolboy now learns covers the older Brahmins with shame; and those who have received any measure of modern education do not attempt to uphold the authority of the Shastres, the worship of idols, or the distinctions of caste. This is an evidence of progress, though their practice is altered by very little, if at all. The pride of caste is still strong within; and people still drink the water in which the priests wash their feet at the temple-doors. I have witnessed the degrading spectacle, denounced it on the spot, and spoke of the true "water of life" that quenches the souls thirst for ever. But the Brahmin has turned from Christ to the idols again, offered the usual incense, left the brass vessel at the door of the temple, and gone home stepping as proudly as ever.

Yet, God be praised! some of these very men are brought to Jesus as humble penitents. One sitting near me while I write this, though he has long cast aside the sign of the caste, is sometimes greeted with abject pros-

trations. The other day a man met him, and presented a small leaf holding a little water, expecting him to dip the great toe of his right foot in it as any Brahmin would do. The man was very disappointed and puzzled when told that he had addressed a Christian. He had asked for holy water and hoped to drink some, and put some on his forehead as an act of worship! but instead of this he was told of that Saviour who cries, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." Yes; the "twice-born" can be born again by faith in Jesus Christ. Poitas can be torn from the shoulder of the priestly caste by that gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." They before whom all other castes bow before "the name that is above every name."

WHAT IS A BRAHMO?

He is unknown to ancient Hindu literature, being purely a production of the nineteenth century; and yet we find his portrait faithfully drawn in the Bible by the pen of the Apostle Paul. He describes him as "holding a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; and as ever-learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth. But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all, as theirs also was." Like the Egyptian magicians, the *Brahmo* opposes the Gospel by imitation. Ready to follow us in all things but faith in Christ, he speaks of their "ministers," "missionaries," "prayer-meetings," "watch-night meetings," "sermons," "baptisms," and I know not what else. He accepts implicitly the suggestions of his own erratic brain, while he rejects the authority of Him who "spake as never man spake." He praises Christ with his lips, but refuses him the reverence of his heart. He has no settled creed concerning God, His government or His character, and yet boasts of his ability to extract all that is true from the Bible, the Koran, and the Bades, as easily as a bee obtains honey from flowers. He prides himself upon being able to appreciate fully, and to estimate justly, the beauty and perfection of Gospel morality; but he fails utterly to perceive how this very morality, as pure and lofty in tone, condemns him as guilty before God. He wishes to be thought capable of fully comprehending Christ's words, but refuses to glance at the mystery of Christ's cross. He closes his ears, therefore, to the message of the Gospel, unless the preacher allows him an opportunity of declaring his high estimate of the Saviour's character and teaching. He prefers a thousand times his own constantly varying fancies about God before the highest wisdom, the purest holiness, the sublimest love, and the happiest future conceivable, such as the Bible reveals. He accepts a portion of all creeds to prevent the suspicion that he has become a Christian. He does not worship idols, or regard distinction of caste, abhors child-marriage, and allows widows to marry; but he will not be immersed as a believer in Jesus, choosing rather to immerse himself in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and so still remain a Brahmo. He loves the name of "reformer," while neglecting to reform himself by complete submission to the Lord. He dances round the silver flag of his own "New Dispensation" in preference to turning towards the cross of the New Testament. In fine, the Brahmo acts the part of Jannes and Jambres, and thus opposes the truth as much as the uneducated Brahmin, who knows nothing of Western science, theology, or infidelity. The name "Brahmo" is intended to convey the idea expressed by one word "Unitarian," and is used also to distinguish its bearers from Hindus, Mussulmans,