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**CHRISTIANITY AND HINDUISM**  
**CONTRASTED**

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# CHRISTIANITY AND HINDUISM

## CONTRASTED

BY

SIR CHARLES TREVELYAN, BART., K.C.B.

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*Being a Lecture delivered before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-on-Tyne A.D. 1881, and an Article in the Edinburgh Review written A.D. 1836*

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## PREFACE.

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ALTHOUGH my book is already sufficiently long, it occurs to me that my readers may wish to have two questions answered ; first, ‘ How I came to know so much about Thuggee ? ’ and secondly, ‘ What has become of it ? ’

One day when I was Deputy Secretary to what is now called the ‘ Foreign Department ’ at Calcutta, a messenger came into my room with a pile of large official reports filling his arms up to his chin. These he deposited on the ground, and then he went out and twice repeated the same operation. All these I had to digest into what was called a ‘ special letter ’ to the Court of Directors. When I had accomplished my task, I showed the digest to my brother-in-law Macaulay, who was much struck with the

originality and curiosity of the subject, saying that it would be certain to attract attention in Europe, and suggesting that the special letter should, with suitable modifications, be made to do duty a second time as an article in the 'Edinburgh Review.' This was done, and, greatly to my satisfaction, I received forty pounds from Mr. Longman, which was the first of my small gains from literature. This was in the year 1836. My article was the first revelation of the system of Thuggee to Christendom. It seemed so strange that at first it was supposed to be a romance, but the subject was soon dished up in a variety of forms until the public curiosity was satisfied. Now another generation has arisen who may like to see what strongly excited the curiosity of their fathers, and the article is accordingly republished as the basis of my lecture.

As to what has become of Thuggee, it was suppressed by a process which I should like to see applied to Trampdom and some other worse forms of evil. An active magistrate was sitting in his office in Central India when one of his familiars came and whispered in his ear that a large party of Thugs had just strangled a number of sepoy's going home on

furlough,<sup>1</sup> and that if he would at once send his troop of horse they would be taken in the act of burying their victims. This was done with the result predicted. Out of upwards of forty Thugs captured a few were offered their lives provided they gave a detailed account of all the expeditions on which they had been engaged, showing who had taken part in them, and where the victims were buried. These narratives were verified, and on the strength of this other Thugs were apprehended, who were similarly dealt with, until, by this cumulative process, we came to know more about Thugs and Thuggee than the Thugs themselves. In a few years the gangs all over India were broken up, and Thuggee has, for the time, been suppressed, but the seeds of it are deeply implanted in the Hindu religion, and any relaxation of the preventive measures would be immediately followed by a revival of the system. Thuggee, and every other horror, follows, of course, from the worship of a goddess who delights in blood, and can only be propitiated by it.

The rest of the gang originally captured preserved their faith unimpaired to the last. At their

<sup>1</sup> These were an attractive prey, to the Thugs because they always carried money home for their families.

own request they exercised their art for the last time on themselves. They ranged themselves along a platform under the gallows, skilfully adjusted the noose to their necks, and threw themselves off, calling '*Kālījī Suhāī,*' 'Honour and praise to Kālī.' The magistrate reported to the Government, that if there had been any doubt before as to their having been professional Thugs, this closing scene furnished positive confirmation of the fact.

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## CHRISTIANITY AND HINDUISM CONTRASTED.<sup>1</sup>

THE vital question of the divine origin of Christianity is approached from different sides, according to each person's experience and turn of mind. Being myself of a practical disposition, and having had unusual opportunities of seeing the principal religions of the world in their ordinary daily operation, I have naturally looked to the test of results. My family motto is, 'Time trieth Truth.' The Founder of our religion himself has told us to judge of a tree by its fruits, 'for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.'

We have had nearly nineteen hundred years experience of Christianity, and what has been the result? We all know what the *ideal* of Christianity is—how it would be if the Christian religion were worked out to its ulterior consequences. Earth

<sup>1</sup> Lecture delivered by Sir Charles Trevelyan, Bart., K.C.B., before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-on-Tyne, on Monday, October 31, 1881.

would become paradise. Wars would cease. The expense of the army, navy, and police would be saved. Even the poor-rate would disappear before the progress of sobriety, industry, and wise enlightened charity. A real millennium, anticipating the perfection of the life to come, would be realised in the present state of existence. Towards this state of things Christendom has been continually advancing. It is characteristic of the Christian nations, and of the Christian nations only, that, notwithstanding partial relapses, there has been an uninterrupted progress towards perfection. The advance has been proportioned to the degree in which different nations have adhered to the Christian standard, and, thank God, it has been greatest in our own country and our own time, with every prospect of further indefinite improvement.

Let us now turn to other religions. Mahomedanism is entitled to the next place by its grand vindication of the unity of the Godhead; but what would the world become if Mahomedanism were carried out to its ulterior results? The entire female sex would have no higher destiny than to be objects of pleasure to the males. A large proportion even of the males (many of them mutilated and degraded to meet the special exigencies of Mahomedan domestic arrangements) would be slaves to the remainder; for, as all who have watched the attempt to abolish slavery in Turkey and Egypt must have

observed, the Mahomedan social system is based upon slavery ; and all non-Mahomedan people would be born ready saddled and bridled to be mounted by True Believers coming into the world ready booted and spurred. All this is seen daily enacted in the countries which are so unfortunate as to be still under Mahomedan rule. Instead of the crowning Christian graces of humility and charity, pride, lust, and oppression would universally prevail.

The experience we have had of Mahomedanism during nearly thirteen hundred years amounts quite to a Baconian induction. We know exactly what it can, and cannot, do for the world. It rapidly raises Fetish worshippers, and other degraded races, to a low standard of civilisation, beyond which they make no advance ; but, on the contrary, immediately begin to deteriorate. This religion has had too much credit given to it for the Bagdad Caliphate, the Moorish *régime* in Spain, and the Indian Moghul dynasty. If the well-being of the body of the people be accepted as a test, these epochs will not bear the most superficial examination. Bernier, for instance, tells us that, at the most palmy period of the Moghul dynasty, the Delhi nobles kept heavy whips hung over their gates ready to be used when any of the commonalty happened to offend them. At best these periods of Mahomedan glory were partial episodes, faint flickers of a flame which has long since sub-

sided upon its embers. The moral power required to secure steady advancement was entirely wanting. The active principle of this religion is the 'great sword' given to the Red Horseman in the Revelation. It is not a religion of 'divine philosophy,' depending upon reasonable argument and persuasion, but is based upon human power and human passion.

Next in order comes Buddhism. Many of its precepts are excellent, and in its benevolent aspirations it comes nearer than any other false religion to the spirit of Christianity. What it wants is the motive furnished to Christians by the sacrifice of Christ, and the 'hope full of immortality,' which Christianity alone has revealed. The views of Buddhism about the world to come are of the obscurest and most degrading kind—endless transmigrations, in a descending or ascending scale, ending at best in a possible *Nihrvāna*, or unconscious absorption into the Deity. If we could conceive a set of Quietists, acting merely in obedience to a set of moral rules, looking back to no salvation wrought for them, and looking forward only to the dismalest prospect in the life to come, we might form some idea of what mankind would be if they were conformed to a universal Buddhism.

Hinduism is the only remaining great system of idolatry; and, of all the religions which mankind have invented for themselves, it has gone furthest in

deifying human vice and holding out its impersonations as objects of imitation and worship. From murder to petty larceny, every crime has its patron in the Hindu Pantheon. The pickpocket quotes Krishna pilfering the milkmaids; the swindler adores Gunesh; the prostitute glories in her profession, and officiates at the service of all the gods, although she is a special devotee of Kāmī, the Hindu Venus. All these, however, are trifles compared with the abominations behind. Many years ago some experienced Government officers and devoted missionaries at Calcutta formed an association for the purpose of exposing and discouraging cruel and demoralising practices; but it was found that these customs were so firmly rooted in the religious faith of the natives, that a united attack in front was admitted to be inexpedient.

It would serve no good purpose to enter upon all these lamentable results of Hinduism; but as, by the admission of every nation in every age, nothing is more precious than human life, let us test this religion by the regard in which human life is held by it. The practice of human sacrifices in India is more ancient than Hinduism. The Meriah sacrifices, carried on by the aboriginal population in the hill districts of Cuttack, are a case in point. Young children were purchased or stolen, and fattened in pens until their turn came to be cut into small pieces, which were scattered over the fields in order to

secure good crops. But human sacrifice was adopted at a very early period into the Hindu religion under the patronage of a goddess whose worship occupies a large space in it. She is known as *Devī*, *Bawānī*, *Dūrgā*, *Kālī*—‘the goddess,’ ‘the inspirer of fear,’ ‘the dreadful one,’ ‘the black goddess,’—and her image is represented in the act of devouring a human being, and holding the quivering bodies of others in her numerous hands. An example of human sacrifice regularly performed will be found at page 58, but instances are continually cropping up of sons decapitated by their fathers before the image of the goddess, children thrown to the alligators in her name, and so forth, besides the wholesale infanticide and exposure of parents on the banks of the Ganges, and other cruel practices, which are indirectly sanctioned by her. But all this is respectable, because it may be mainly prompted by disinterested religious motives, compared with Thuggee, which was a highly organised confederacy, extending over the whole of India, for the purpose of carrying on, under the sanction of religion, a wholesale system of murder for purposes of gain. The novices were initiated by religious rites. They were guided in the exercise of their profession by supposed revelations of the will of their divine patroness communicated from hour to hour by means of omens, so that they held it to be a sin not to strangle travellers who came in their way when the omens were favourable. They

sacrificed to Bawānī after every murder, and they regularly offered a tithe of their plunder at her shrine.

It is a common remark that dogma and doctrine are nothing, and practice everything; but here we have decisive evidence to the contrary. More than once, Thugs who had been admitted as approvers remonstrated with the English superintendent in language of this sort: 'You ought not to have hung such or such a notorious Thug. He was such a good religious man; such an affectionate father or brother; so exemplary in all the relations of life,' and so forth. According to the faith held by them, these Thugs were as religious as John Wesley or Mr. Wilberforce. The only difference was that Wesley and Wilberforce held the true, while the Thugs held a false, doctrine. After this, let no man say that sound doctrine is of no importance.

You now see what the world would become if Hinduism generally prevailed. The wonder is how human society can subsist at all under such a religion. The truth is, that human nature is better than Hinduism, and the kind and affectionate dispositions implanted in us by God cannot be entirely effaced even by the worst of false religions. Children have to be trained to the practice of Thuggee by a gradual process, and great care is taken not to shock their feelings by too sudden an introduction to scenes of murder, lamentable incidents having resulted from

the breach of this rule. Society is also held together by human laws and obvious considerations of personal interest. The Thugs never molested Europeans, for they knew that if they touched a hair of their head they would never hear the last of it. Outside their own profession the Thugs cultivated the goodwill of everybody connected with them, and were generally regarded as more than usually amiable, respectable, and intelligent members of the community. When I was attached to the Delhi Residency, we were informed by the Thuggee Department that one of our messengers, named Feringea, had been a noted Thug leader, having employed his annual leave of absence in making an expedition as a member of the fraternity. Upon this, I asked the jemmadar, or office-keeper, what sort of a man Feringea was, to which he replied that he had been a first-rate messenger, and had never given any cause of complaint. 'But were you aware that he was a Thug leader?' Upon this the office-keeper gave a significant shrug, and said, 'Well, sir, we had heard of the use he made of his holiday.' Such is Hindu morality!

The practical conclusion to be deduced from these premises is, that, as the Christian religion is the only one capable of correcting the disorders caused by the passions of mankind, and of gradually leading on the world to a state of perfection, it must be of divine origin, and we are bound to promote its universal diffusion in obedience to its founder, Jesus

Christ. If this is true as a general proposition, we are under a special obligation to our magnificent Indian Empire, and the facilities for the task are in proportion to the obligation. The founders of the Hindu system flattered themselves that they had constructed an inexpugnable system, but the arrangements on which they chiefly relied have proved their greatest cause of weakness. They took away the key of knowledge by confining literature and science to the sacred Sanskrit language, and permitting none but Brahmans to learn it. But their flank has been completely turned by the avidity with which natives of every caste now cultivate the language of their rulers, and their own vernacular languages in connection with it. The Brahmans bound up their legal and scientific system with their religion, and now it is all breaking up together, for the full light of European science has been turned upon it, and the notion cannot for a moment be entertained that the world is supported on the back of a tortoise, or that an eclipse is caused by a monstrous dragon devouring the sun or moon.

The grammar and spelling-book suffice to destroy the Hindu religion. A generation is growing up which repudiates idols. A young Hindu, who had received a liberal English education, was forced by his family to attend the shrine of Kālī, upon which he took off his cap to 'Madam Kālī,' made her a low bow, and 'hoped her ladyship was well.' Never-

theless, the missionaries have a most important part to perform. The schoolmaster may break down the barrier, but the missionary must march in and occupy the citadel. The natives are craving for knowledge; and, after the example of Dr. Duff, the missionaries should seize the opportunity and give them *Christian* knowledge. Although it has heretofore been miserably misdirected, the Hindus are strongly imbued with the religious sentiment (the extravagant lengths they have gone in false religion would alone prove this), and they cannot long do without the consolations and hopes of religion. As they cannot go back to Mahomedanism, they must go forward to that religion which is daily becoming more associated in their minds with peace, civil order, justice, national prosperity. In this way the Government helps. The railways help. Every Englishman who in any way benefits India helps.

The evangelisation of India must not be measured by the annual number of declared conversions. India is absorbing Christian knowledge and Christian feeling at every pore. The mere fact that evenhanded justice is administered without any imputation of interested motives, and that, whatever mistakes we make, we try to do our duty to India, so contrary to all experience of former rulers, has a great educational effect, the influence of which is seen in the growth of a body of native public officers who can be trusted in a way they never were before.

An unusually difficult and responsible administrative operation, of the nature of our tithe commutation, had to be executed in the Tanjore district, and all my advisers, European and native, agreed in recommending a native officer, Rāmaya Ayankār, as the fittest person to be entrusted with it. He was so entrusted, and he executed it to admiration without the slightest imputation on his personal integrity. It is a guarantee of further progress in this direction that the observance of the seventh day's rest has commenced. At Madras, in particular, it is delightful to see family parties of natives walking about dressed in their Sunday-best. The full religious significance of the day has not yet occurred to them, but they **have** accepted it as a day of rest and social recreation.

Although India has not yet become Christian, a higher standard of morality has been established, and the spirit of Christianity is becoming diffused throughout native society. Christian knowledge is spreading in every direction in advance of openly professed conversions, and it has become a common thing to meet with natives who know more of the Bible than most Christians. Multitudes, quite outside the missionary communities, have accepted Christianity in principle. This is to a great extent avowed. No doubt you have heard of Ram Mohan Rai, Dwarkanath Thakur, and Keshab Chandar Sen, the leaders of a vast secession from Hinduism, which

has already advanced more than halfway to Christianity; and there are greater multitudes behind who have made no profession, but are feeling their way towards a religion which they see is full of power and blessing. The reproach of Christianity is fast disappearing. When I first went to India no respectable Hindu or Mahomedan would be seen in company with a Christian convert. They would not enter the same ferry-boat with them, and would break or scour a vessel they had touched. Now, however, Christian converts hold their own in native society. They are kept in countenance by the much larger numbers who, without professing Christianity, have thrown off Hinduism. They take an active part in municipal and general administration, getting their full share of public appointments. The missionary schools, also, are crowded, and the missionaries themselves are in great request as tutors to the children of native chiefs.

My own opinion is, that the conversion of India to Christianity will take place in a different way from that generally anticipated. When the fulness of time has come, and the absorption of Christian truth has gone far enough, native public opinion will declare itself, and 'a nation will be born in a day.' It will be something like the construction of a railway. The first sod is cut. The ballast is heaped to make the embankment. The rails are laid upon the embankment. Still, although greatly

advanced, it cannot be said to be a railway until the locomotive has been placed on the rail, and the fire has been lighted to get up the steam. Many of those who fill this room will, I hope, see the Christian locomotive placed on the Indian rail.



## THE THUGS; OR, SECRET MURDERERS OF INDIA.<sup>1</sup>

It has often been said, and we fear with too much truth, that Indian subjects do not excite, in this country, an interest at all proportioned to their importance. We shall, however, be much surprised if what we now have to relate should fail to rouse the attention of the most sluggish reader.

We have to introduce to the knowledge of our countrymen a moral and political phenomenon, which is, perhaps, the most extraordinary that has ever existed in the world,—a phenomenon more striking than anything that romancers have feigned touching the Old Man of the Mountain, or the Secret Tribunals of Germany—a phenomenon of which strange and appalling glimpses have been occasionally obtained, but of which the nature and extent have never, till the present time, been fully understood.

<sup>1</sup> *Ramaseeana; or, a Vocabulary of the peculiar Language used by the Thugs. With an Introduction and Appendix, descriptive of the System pursued by that Fraternity; and of the Measures which have been adopted by the Supreme Government of India for its Suppression.* 8vo. Calcutta: 1836.

It appears, then, from the most overwhelming evidence, that there exists in India a vast fraternity of murderers, consisting of many thousands of persons;—that this fraternity has existed for many ages, and through many political revolutions;—that it has spread its ramifications over the whole of that vast country, from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas;—that it has flourished alike under Hindu, Mahomedan, and British rulers;—that it has every year destroyed multitudes of victims;—and yet that its constitution—we may say its very being—have been quite unknown to the most active and vigilant English functionaries, and very imperfectly understood even by the native governments. It was indeed notorious that gangs of thieves sometimes strangled travellers. It was notorious that the members of these gangs were unusually expert at the operation of strangling; but that these gangs were merely small detached portions of a vast organised community, the members of which recognised each other as brethren in the remotest parts of India;—that these murders were all committed according to certain ancient and solemn forms, and were regarded by those who committed them, not as crimes, but as solemn rites, which it would have been sinful to omit—all this it was reserved for the present generation to discover. One of the many obligations which India owes to Lord William Bentinck is the complete unveiling of this horrible and portentous system.

The book now before us is a collection of official papers, printed by the Indian Government for the information of its officers. No attempt has been made to digest into one connected statement the many interesting facts which these papers disclose. The book has not been published, and is, therefore, inaccessible to common readers; and even were it accessible to them, they would probably be repelled by the obscurity which is the effect of an utter want of arrangement. We think, therefore, that we shall certainly amuse them, and that we may perhaps instruct them, if we undertake to sum up the evidence on this extraordinary subject. We shall confine ourselves at present almost entirely to facts, and put off to another opportunity most of those curious speculations on human nature and on the frame of Indian society to which the recent discoveries naturally lead.

The most interesting of the papers consists of a series of conversations with the captains of gangs, who have been admitted as king's evidence, from which we shall make liberal extracts.

These extraordinary people are known by the name of Thugs, and their profession is called Thuggee. They are divided into Burkas, or persons fully instructed in the art, and Kuboolas, or novices. 'They consider a Burka as capable of forming a gang of Thugs out of the rude materials around him in any part of India; and a Thug who has arrived at

this degree of proficiency in the art ought not therefore to be left at large. A Kuboola, or novice, they think, could do nothing if left to himself, and he might, therefore, be left at large without much danger to society if he had no leader to join.'

These are by no means nominal distinctions. No Thug is allowed to take his degree as a Burka, or to assume the office of strangler, until he has been on many expeditions, and acquired the requisite courage and insensibility by slow degrees.

They are first employed as scouts; then as sextons; then as shumseeas, or holders of hands; and lastly as Bhurtotes or stranglers. When a man feels that he has sufficient courage and insensibility for the purpose, he solicits the oldest and most renowned Thug of the gang to make him his cheyla, or disciple. The Thug agrees to become his gooroo, or spiritual preceptor; and when the gang falls in with a man of respectability but not much strength, fitted for the purpose, he tells the gooroo that he is prepared, with his permission, to try his hands upon him. While the traveller is asleep with the gang at their quarters, the gooroo takes his disciple into a neighbouring field, followed by three or four old members of the gang. On reaching the spot chosen, they all face to the direction the gang intends to move, and the gooroo says, 'O Kalee, Kunkalee, Bhudkalee. O Kalee, Mahakalee, Calcutta Walee. If it seemeth to thee fit that the traveller now at our lodging should die by the hands of this thy slave, vouchsafe us the Thibao.' If they get the auspice on the right, within a certain time (half an hour), it signifies her sanction; but if they have no sign, or the pilhao (or sign on the left), some other Thug must put the traveller to death, and the candidate for honour wait for another time.

Davey's sanction having been conveyed in the Thibao, they return to their quarters, and the gooroo takes a handkerchief, and facing to the west, ties the knot at one end of it with a rupee or other piece of silver inserted. This knot they call the Goor-knat, or classic knot, and no man who has not been thus ordained by the high priest is permitted to tie it. The disciple receives it respectfully from the high priest in his right hand, and stands over the victim with a shumseea, or holder of hands, by his side. The traveller is roused on some pretence or other, and the disciple passes the handkerchief over his neck, at the signal given by the leader of the gang, and strangles him with the aid of his shumseea. Having finished his work, he bows down before his gooroo, and touches his feet with both hands, and does the same to all his relations and friends present, in gratitude for the honour he has attained. He opens the knot after he has heard or seen the Thibao or auspice, on the right, takes out the rupee and gives it, with all the other silver he has, to his gooroo as a nuzur; and the gooroo adding what money he has at the time, purchases a rupee and a quarter's worth of sugar for the Tuponee, and lays out the rest in sweetmeats. The Tuponee sacrifice is then performed under the neem, the mango, or the byr, if they are available, and if not, under any other tree, except the babul, the sirsa (*Mimosa seris*), and the reonja. The new disciple now takes his seat among the Bhurtotes around the carpet, and receives his share of the consecrated sugar; and the sweetmeats are distributed to all the members of the gang, of whatever grade. On his return home after the expedition he gives a feast to his gooroo and his family, and, if he has the means, to all his relations; and he presents his gooroo with an entire new suit of clothes for himself, and one for his wife, and others for his relations, if he can afford it. The gooroo, after a certain interval, returns the compliment to him and his family, and the relation between them is ever after

respected as the most sacred that can be formed. A Thug will often rather betray his father than the gooroo by whom he has been knighted.

The Thugs travel along the roads under various assumed characters, in parties varying from ten or twelve to several hundreds. They appear as traders, as pilgrims, as sepoys seeking or returning from service; and sometimes one of their number figures as a Raja, with all the necessary equipments of tents, carriage, &c., and the rest act the part of his obsequious followers. If the gang is numerous, they are divided into separate parties, who follow each other at some distance, or taking different routes, rendezvous at an appointed place in advance. Their victims are almost always travellers. The most expert members of the gang are employed to collect information, and insinuate themselves into the confidence of the travellers, whom they find at the resting places or overtake on the road. They usually propose to them to join company for mutual safety; and if the traveller suspects one party, he soon falls in with another, who pretend to enter into his feelings of distrust. A person is sent before to select a proper place for the murder, and scouts are employed to prevent intrusion. The travellers are generally induced to sit down under pretence of resting themselves, and they are strangled at once on a given signal. The bodies are then buried, after having been mangled to expedite dissolution, and to prevent

their swelling and causing cracks in the ground. Two Thugs are employed in the murder of each individual, one of whom holds his legs or hands, while the other applies the noose. If a traveller have a dog it is also killed, lest the faithful animal should cause the discovery of the body of its murdered master.

The best way, however, of conveying an adequate idea of the mode in which the murders are committed will be to select some of the most striking instances before us. The first we shall extract will show the confidence the Thugs repose in the power of concealment which belongs to their system. 'There is darkness under the lamp,' says the Hindustani proverb; and such would indeed appear to be the case, when a whole family with their servants could be murdered under the circumstances about to be detailed, without any discovery taking place:—

We fell in, said Chutter, a leading Thug, with the Moonshree and his family at Chupara, between Nagpore and Jubulpore; and they came on with us to Lucknadown, where we found that some companies of a native regiment under European officers were expected the next morning. It was determined to put them all to death that evening, as the Moonshree seemed likely to keep with the companies. Our encampment was near the village, and the Moonshree's tent was pitched close to us. In the afternoon some of the officers' tents came on in advance, and were pitched on the other side, leaving us between them and the village. The servants were all busy occupied in pitching them. Noor Khan and his son Sadee Khan and a few others went, as soon as it

became dark, to the Moonshee's tent, and began to sing and play upon a guitar as they had been accustomed to do. During this time some of them took up the Moonshee's sword on pretence of wishing to look at it. His wife and children were inside listening to the music. The Jhirnee or signal was given, but at this moment the Moonshee saw his danger, called out murder, and attempted to rush through, but was seized and strangled. His wife hearing him, ran out with the infant in her arms, but was seized by Ghubboo Khan, who strangled her and took the infant. The other daughter was strangled in the tent. The grooms were at the time cleaning their horses, and one of them seeing his danger, ran under the belly of his horse, and called out murder ; but he was soon seized and strangled, as well as all the rest.

*Q.*—How ? Did not the servants and others, who were pitching the tents close by, hear these calls for help ?

*Chutter.*—As soon as the signal was given, those of the gang who were idle began to play and sing as loud as they could ; and two vicious horses were let loose, and many ran after them calling out as loudly as they could ; so that the calls of the Moonshee and his party were drowned.

The next is the murder of an open-hearted old soldier, and the contrast is so striking between his easy simplicity and the wily villany of his Thug companions, as to excite our sympathy strongly on his behalf.

It was on my return, said Sheik Inayat, another noted Thug, from the first expedition which I made with my father to the Duckun, when I was fifteen years of age, and about thirty-five years ago. We were a gang of about eighty or ninety Thugs, under my father, Hinga, and some of the Deccan chiefs, lodged in the Mausoleum outside of the town of Elichpore. Two of our leaders, Gumboo and Laljoo, on

going into the bazaar, fell in with the grooms of the Nawab Subjee Khan, the uncle of the Nawab of Bhopaul, Wuzeer Muhommud Khan, who told them that their master had been with his son and his two hundred horse in the service of the Nizam at Hyderabad; and having had a quarrel with his son, he was now on his way home to Bhopaul. They came back and reported; and Dulele Khan and Khuleel Khan, and other leaders of fame went and introduced themselves to the Nawab, pretending that they had been to the Deccan with horses for sale, and were now on their way back to Hindustan. He was pleased with their address and appearance, and invited them to return the next day, which they did; and the following day he set out with as many of our gang as it was thought safe to exhibit. He had two grooms, two troopers, and a slave girl, two horses, and a mare with a wound in the neck, and a pony. The slave girl's duty was to prepare for him his daily portion of subzee, and he told us that he had got the name of Subzee Khan, from the quantity of that intoxicating drug which he was accustomed to drink.

We came on together three stages, and during the fourth stage we came to an extensive jungle this side of Dhoba, and in the Baitool district; and on reaching a watercourse about nine o'clock, Khuleel said, 'Khan Sahib, we have had a fatiguing journey, and we had better rest here and take some refreshment.' 'By all means,' said the Nawab, 'I feel a little fatigued, and will take my subzee here.' He dismounted, laid his sword and shield upon the ground, spread his carpet, and sat down. Dulele and Khuleel sat down by his side, while the girl was preparing his potion, of which he invited these two men, as our supposed chiefs, to partake; and the grooms were engaged with the horses, and the troopers were smoking their pipes at a distance. It had been determined that the Nawab should be first secured, as he was a powerful man, and if he had a moment's warning

he would certainly have cut down some of the gang before they could secure him. Laljoo also went and sat near him, while Gomanee stood behind, and seemed to be much interested in the conversation. All being now ready, the signal was given, and the Nawab was strangled by Gomanee while Laljoo and Dulele held his legs. As soon as the others saw the Nawab secured, they fell upon his attendants, and all were strangled, and their bodies were buried in the bed of the watercourse. On going back to Elichpore, Gomanee sold the Nawab's shield for eight rupees, but it was worth so much more that the people suspected him, and came to our camp to search for him. Our spies brought us timely notice, and we concealed him under the housings of our horses.

The last instance we shall give is, the Sutrooh, or sixty-soul<sup>1</sup> affair, which, besides the surprising number of people who were instantaneously put to death, furnishes a good illustration of the patience with which the Thugs follow up their victims, until they find a fit opportunity to execute their abominable purpose:—

*Dorgha.*—After the capture of Gawilgur by General Wellesley (Duke of Wellington), it was restored to the Nagpore Rajah, who appointed Ghureeb Sing to the command of the fortress. Anxious to get some good soldiers from Hindostan to garrison it, he sent his younger brother, Ghyan Sing, with a number of followers and a large sum of money to raise them in the Oude country and districts between the Ganges and Jumna rivers.

Ghyan Sing and his party passed through Nagpore, and came to Jubulpore in the month of June, while we were

<sup>1</sup> The Thugs designate remarkable affairs by the number of persons killed. The Chaleesrooh, or forty-soul affair, is also famous.

there concentrated from the different parts into which we had extended our expeditions that season. His party consisted of fifty-two men, seven women, and a Brahman boy, then about four years of age. Some of our gangs lodged in the town, some in the cantonments among the troops, and some were encamped at the tank of Adhar, two or three miles from the town on the road to Mirzapore. As soon as we had heard of the arrival of this party from the Deccan, every party of Thugs deputed some of its most respectable members to mix with them in the town and win their confidence. At first they tried to separate them into different parties to proceed by different roads, but though they had collected together at different times and places on the road, it was found impossible to separate any part of them from Ghyan Sing; and we agreed to unite all our gangs, and to lead the party by the most unfrequented roads till we might find a place convenient for the murder of the whole at once.

On reaching Sehora, we persuaded them to quit the high road through Belehree and Myhere, and take that through Chundeea and the old fort Bundoogur, which leads through very extensive tracts of jungle and uninhabited country. We went with them through all this country, however, without finding what we considered a fitting time and place, and reached Rewah, winning more and more upon their confidence every day. From Rewah we went to Simareea, and from that place to a small village half way to Chitterkote, called by us the Burwala Gow, from a large Indian fig-tree (Bur) that stood near it. Thence we sent on people as usual to select a place for the murder, and they found one about two coss and a half distant, in a very extensive jungle, without a human habitation for many miles on either side. We persuaded the party to set out soon after midnight, and as they went along we managed to take our appointed places, two Thugs by every traveller, and the rest in parties of reserve at different intervals along the line, every two managing to keep the person they were appointed to kill in

conversation. On reaching the place chosen, the signal was given at several different places, beginning with the rear party, and passing on to that in front; and all were seized and strangled except the boy. It was now near morning, and too late to admit of the bodies being securely buried. We made a temporary grave for them in the bed of the river, covered them over with sand, and went on with the boy and the booty to Chitterkote, intending to send back a large party the next night and have the bodies securely buried. The rains had begun to set in, and after the murders it rained very heavily all the day. The party, however, went back, but found that the river had risen and washed away all the bodies except two or three, which they found exposed, and pushed into the stream to follow the rest.

*Q.*—What became of the boy?

*Dorgha.*—He was brought up by Mungul Brahmun, brother of Laljoo, and having taken to the trade of Thuggee, he was last year sent to the black water from Saugor.

There is another tragedy connected with Gawilgur, which is of old date, and has not been equally well investigated. Still, the features of it are so extraordinary, that we cannot forbear mentioning it.

In making the above inquiry, Captain Robertson observes, I was informed of a still more frightful murder, which took place under Gawilgur a very few years before, of five hundred recruits that had come from some place for Gawilgur, and were pitched in tents for some reason or other below the fort. Somehow or other a quantity of treasure for the fort for the night halted in this camp, and shortly after about one thousand of apparently discharged sipahees came up, said they were from Hindostan, and wanted service, and encamped at night in the same place, but in the morning there were none to be found of the latter. The

rest were all lying strangled, and the treasure gone. People were sent all over the country, but none of the Thugs were caught.

Sometimes, but very rarely, the Thugs are obliged to depart from their rule of putting their victims to death by strangling. This was the case in an affair in which they obtained a booty of 20,000*l.* sterling. The circumstances are thus narrated by them:—

*Moklal.*—It gave us a great deal of trouble, as the dollars were laden on camels. They went fast, and afraid to appear near to them in a body, we several times lost all trace of them. We first fell in with them at Burhanpore. Ours was only one of three great parties that went from Bundelcund, Gwalior, and Saugor that year to Kandeish; and it consisted of about one hundred and sixty Thugs, concentrating upon the treasure party. At Burwaha ghat on the Nerbudda river we found them disputing with the custom-house officers about the payment of duties, and stating the hardship of being obliged to expose the value of their charge in an unsettled country. We paid duties for ourselves and our six ponies, and leaving a few scouts, passed over the river, and went on to the small deserted village of Naen, in the midst of a jungly waste. Here we waited till the treasure party came up, consisting of eight men, mounted on camels, and armed with matchlocks, and a merchant, by name Futteh Alee, who had joined them on the road in the hope of being more secure in their company than alone. It was about nine o'clock in the morning when they reached the place. The signal was given—we rushed in upon the camels, seized them by their bridles, and made them sit down by beating them with sticks. The men were seized and killed; some strangled, some stabbed with spears, and some cut down with swords. Futteh Alee was pulled off his pony and

strangled. We transferred the treasure to our ponies, threw the bodies into a ravine, and went on for three days without halting anywhere, as we knew we should be immediately pursued. After we had got beyond danger we rested and divided the booty, setting aside the proper share for the Temple of Davey at Bindachul, near Mirzapore.

In Bengal, which is much intersected by rivers, the plan is modified to suit the circumstances of the country. The practice there is to inveigle travellers on board pretended passage-boats, which are manned entirely by Thugs, and then to strangle them and throw the bodies into the river. Several of these boats follow each other at short intervals, so that if the traveller escapes one snare, he may fall into another. But as every body knows his own trade best, we shall leave the Thugs to tell their own story.

The principal men of the gang, or the shrewdest of them, go along the roads, each having a servant carrying his bundle, and proceeding towards the ghat where his boat is to be found, whether going up or down the river. When a traveller overtakes him, he learns whither he is going, pretends to be ignorant of the road, to be going to the same place with the traveller, but to be entirely unacquainted with it, and anxious to have somebody to instruct him. If the traveller had not intended to go by water, the Thug soon pretends to be much tired, and wishes that he were near a boat. The traveller expresses the same wish, and they agree to diverge from the road to the river. Coming to the ghat the Thug pretends that he is a good hand at a bargain, and is allowed to agree for a passage for both. He beats down the master of his own boat, after a good deal of disputing, to half-price, and the traveller is much pleased, and expresses his gratitude. They

embark, and the traveller is killed as soon as they get away from other boats. If the traveller suspects or dislikes the first man, he soon falls in with the inveigler of another boat, who learns it by a sign, and pretends to enter into the traveller's feelings and anxiety to throw off the first, who on some pretence remains behind, while his friend takes on the traveller to another boat, further on than his own, where he is disposed of. They are much more numerous than we are. I have not heard of more than about thirty families of Mooteeas, and the Lodahas are not much above two hundred men, but the Bongoos are very numerous, I have heard.

The following may be taken as a fair specimen of this kind of Thuggee :—

We joined Jypaul at the Mormakeya ghat, where we had two boats at the different ghats, three or four miles from each other. Jhoulée Khan brought two travellers to the boat which Jypaul commanded in person, and Bhowur Khan and I embarked with them. As soon as we had all got on board, Jypaul said in Ramasee, 'Let the Boras (Thugs) separate themselves from the Beetoos (travellers);' and we did so, leaving the two travellers together. Four men were on the bank pulling along the boat, one was at the helm, acting at the same time as the Bykureea or spy, and seven of the gang were below with us and the travellers. We had got on about a coss, when the Bykureea at the helm, seeing all clear, called out, 'Bhugna ko pawn do'—'give my sister's son pawn.' This was their mode of giving the signal, and the two travellers were strangled. After strangling them they broke their spinal bones, thus, by putting their knees upon their backs and pulling up their heads and shoulders. After doing this they pushed them out of a kind of window in the side. Every boat has two of these windows, one on each side, and they put the bodies out of that towards the

river. They break the spinal bones to prevent all chance of the people recovering and giving evidence against them. We generally stab the dead bodies through on both sides under the armpits ; but they are afraid to cut or stab the body, lest there should be signs of blood upon the water, as the corpses pass other boats that are following them on the river.

The Thugs are forbidden by their rules to kill women of any description, and either men or women of the following classes—fukeers, bards, musicians by profession, dancing men or women, washerwomen, sweepers, oil-venders, blacksmiths, and carpenters, when found together, maimed or leprous persons, men with cows, and Ganges water-carriers, while they have the Ganges water actually with them ; but if their pots are empty they are not exempted. These exceptions, however, are not made, as has been supposed, out of compassion, but from a feeling which we shall explain hereafter, and which is the strangest part of this strange system. The Thugs date all their misfortunes from their murder of a native lady, whom they call the Kalee Beebee, or black lady, who was proceeding to Hyderabad with a sheet of cloth of gold, for the tomb of a brother of Sulabut Khan. Since that, the northern Thugs have murdered women as well as men ; but those south of the Nerbudda adhere to their primitive usage in this respect.

The extent to which the natural feelings of humanity have been extinguished in these miscreants is

perfectly astonishing. A party of them accompanied Newal Singh, a Jemadar in the Nizam's service, and his family, more than two hundred miles,—were on the most intimate terms with them for about twenty days,—and received essential favours from them. Once Newal Singh, not knowing them to be Thugs, procured their release, when they were imprisoned on a charge of setting a house on fire, in which they had lodged; and on another occasion his two daughters, of eleven and thirteen years of age, saved them from detection by sitting upon some plundered silk, whilst they were searched by the police. The whole gang hesitated; and one party separated from the main body rather than be present at the murder. But will it be believed what was the cause of their demur? Not any dislike to sacrifice people to whom they owed so much, and with whom they had consorted on such friendly terms—that never entered into their minds—but the circumstance of Newal Singh having but one arm. He and all his family were put to death.

The Thugs also occasionally preserve young children of both sexes, and adopt them as their own; and sometimes young women of a riper age are saved to become the wives of the murderers of their parents. This practice often gives occasion to lamentable scenes, of which the following may be mentioned as examples:—

The signal was given, and all except the two boys were seized and strangled by the people who had been appointed for the purpose, and were now at their posts ready for action. The boys were taken by Jowahir and Kehree, who intended to adopt them as their sons ; and the bodies of the twenty-five persons were all thrown into a ditch, and covered over with earth and bushes. On seeing the bodies thrown into the ditch, Jowahir's boy began to cry bitterly ; and finding it impossible to pacify or keep him quiet, Jowahir took him by the legs, dashed his brains against a stone, and left him on the ground, while the rest were busily occupied in collecting the booty.

. . . . .

By the time we reached the appointed place the Bhurtotes and Shumseeas had all on some pretext or other got close by the side of the persons whom they were appointed to strangle ; and on reaching the spot the signal was given in several places at the same time, and thirty-eight out of forty were seized and strangled. The daughter of Gunga Tewarree was a very handsome young woman, and Punchum, one of our Jemadars, wished to preserve her as a wife for his son Buckholee. But when she saw her mother and father strangled she screamed and beat her head against the stony ground, and tried to kill herself. Punchum tried in vain to quiet her, and promised to take great care of her and marry her to his own son who would be a great chief ; but all was in vain. She continued to scream, and at last Punchum put the handkerchief round her neck and strangled her. The widow of Alfie's brother was strangled, but her daughter, a girl about three years of age, was preserved by Kosul Jemadar, who married her to his own son Hunnee Rae Brahmun, by whom she had two sons, one of whom is still living, and about ten or eleven years of age. Since the death of Kosul and Hunnee Rae she has lived with her husband's mother.

. . . . .

*Chutter.*—Ghubboo Khan strangled the mother while her infant was in her arms, and he determined to keep and adopt the child; but after the bodies had all been put into the grave, Dhunnee Khan urged him to kill the child also, or we should be seized on crossing the Nerbudda valley. He threw the child living in upon the dead bodies, and the grave was filled up over it.

*Q.*—And the child was buried alive?

*Chutter.*—Yes.

As the existence of Thuggee has been discovered at different times and in different parts of India, efforts have been made for its suppression. Mr. Wright, magistrate of Chittoor, formerly made great exertions for this purpose in the south, and Messrs. Halhed and Stockwell in the north of India. A very interesting paper was even published by Dr. Sherwood, of the Madras establishment, in the thirteenth volume of the 'Asiatic Researches' on the subject, of which we have made occasional use. The full extent of the evil, however, was not then known; and whilst our active magistrates flattered themselves that they had put a stop to the practice, it was really only temporarily suspended in their own neighbourhood. A system which embraced the whole of India could not be suppressed by a few partial inroads upon it. The dispersion of the gangs had the usual effect of a persecution which does not go the length of entire eradication. The scattered Thugs formed numerous separate gangs; and, although the number of raw recruits whom they enlisted

contributed in the end to their downfall, yet its immediate effect was greatly to increase the number of victims.

At last, the disclosures which were made on the occasion of the apprehension of a large gang of Thugs by Major Borthwick, in Malwa, in 1831, attracted Lord William Bentinck's attention ; and a system was organised by him for the general suppression of this monstrous evil. Jubulpore was fixed as the centre of operations. Captain Sleeman was appointed superintendent, with a number of European assistants, and the co-operation of the native states was engaged. The plan of proceeding is founded on an accumulation of evidence given by Thug approvers. Two or three of the members of every gang which is seized are admitted as King's evidence, and they are immediately called on to dictate a narrative of all the expeditions in which they have ever served—mentioning the individuals with whom they were associated ; and their authentic testimony is then considered as closed. The trials depend upon the concurrence of a number of depositions, the originals of which were taken in different parts of India, from different persons, without a possibility of previous intercommunication ;—upon the recognition of the prisoner by the witnesses, to each of whom he is shown in a crowd of other people ;—and upon the confirmation of the evidence by the discovery of the bodies in the places indicated. Each of the assist-

ants has a section of India allotted to him, within which he is responsible for the apprehension of these miscreants with the help of the approvers and of the accumulated evidence; and as the mass of information is rapidly becoming more and more complete, we may hope that every professional Thug in India will soon be known and secured. Up to October 1835, 1562 persons had been committed on the charge of Thuggee; of whom 382 had been hanged, and 986 transported or imprisoned for life.

In 1834 these operations were threatened with a severe check, which was happily averted by Lord William Bentinck's firmness. Maun Singh, the Rajah of Joudpore, pleaded the right of granting asylum, and refused to give up the Thugs who had taken refuge in his territory; but he was informed that he could not be permitted to make his country the headquarters whence these bands of assassins might carry on their attacks against all the neighbouring states. On his persisting, an army was assembled against him, and he quietly submitted. The power which put down the Pindaree system was alone equal to the suppression of Thuggee. Occasions like these afford the best illustrations of the advantages of our supremacy in India. Even if the requisite public spirit and intelligence were not wanting, the native states are incapable, from mutual jealousy and distrust, of combining together for the accomplishment of any object of general interest. At

this point the Supreme Power steps in ;—explains to subordinate allies the extent of the evil, and the nature of the remedies which ought to be applied ;—collects for one common effort the resources of the whole of India, and directs that effort by European intelligence, energy, and perseverance.

This is, indeed, a noble instrument of beneficence, but much credit is also due to the hand which has so effectually applied it. The grand characteristic of Lord William Bentinck's measures was, that they were directed to the permanent benefit of the *mass of the people*. Hence the dislike with which he is regarded by the privileged few, and the veneration in which his name is held by the people of India. No renown was likely to attend the suppression of Thuggee. There were no mounted hordes to be subdued by brilliant military achievements. The work could be performed only by the silent operation of uninteresting judicial proceedings. The ruling class in India, who are the dispensers of European fame, were not concerned in the matter. The Thugs had never molested them.

They once held a consultation on the subject, and resolved against ever attacking Europeans, for three reasons ; one of which was, that Europeans generally carry pistols when on a journey ; the second, that they seldom carry money ; and the third, that if they were molested, such a storm would be raised as must end in the destruction of the association. In

this they judged quite correctly. If a single civilian or military man had been thugged, Thuggee would have been abolished long ago; and the Governor-General who had accomplished it would have had his praises sung from John O’Groat’s House to Land’s End. This is one of the evils of our anomalous position in India. The character of a ruler is principally determined by the way in which the interests of the European residents are affected by his measures. Hence a Governor-General may be held up to reprobation in Europe for the very reason for which he is entitled to praise,—because he consults the interest of the many in preference to that of the few. The remedy for this state of things, as far as it admits of a remedy, is to unite all interests by subjecting the natives and the European settlers to common laws. Indian governors will then no longer be distracted between the interests of the powerless many, and the powerful few; and European energy will unite with native acuteness and local knowledge in improving institutions in which the welfare of all will be equally concerned.

We think it likely that our readers are by this time sufficiently interested in the Thugs to wish to know something about their origin. Seneca, who had himself been in Egypt, mentions ‘those robbers whom the Egyptians call Philetas (fondlers), who embrace merely with a view to strangle.’

. . . . Under fair pretence of friendly ends,  
 Baited with reasons not unplausible,  
 Wind them into the easy-hearted man,  
 And *hug* them into snares.

It is not, however, our intention to commence a disquisition upon the striking points of resemblance between ancient Egypt and India; or to trace a supposed emigration of the Philetæ from the banks of the Nile to the shores of Western India. All we mean to suggest is, that as a system nearly allied to Thuggee prevailed at an early period in a country closely connected with India, it is not improbable that Thuggee itself has an equally remote origin.

Thevenot is the first European author who notices the Thugs. He says—

Though the road I have been speaking of from Delhi to Agra be tolerable, yet hath it many inconveniences. One may meet with tigers, panthers, and lions upon it, and one had best also have a care of robbers, and above all things not to suffer any body to come near one upon the road. The cunningest robbers in the world are in that country. They use a certain slip with a running noose, which they can cast with so much sleight about a man's neck, when they are within reach of him, that they never fail, so that they strangle him in a trice. They have another cunning trick also to catch travellers with. They send out a handsome woman upon the road, who with her hair dishevelled seems to be all in tears, sighing and complaining of some misfortune which she pretends has befallen her. Now, as she takes the same way that the traveller goes, he easily falls into conversation with her, and finding her beautiful, offers her his assistance, which she accepts; but he hath no

sooner taken her up behind him on horseback, but she throws the snare about his neck and strangles him, or at least stuns him, until the robbers (who lie hid) come running in to her assistance, and complete what she hath begun. But besides that, there are men in those quarters so skilful in casting the snare, that they succeed as well at a distance as near at hand ; and if an ox or any other beast belonging to a caravan run away, as sometimes it happens, they fail not to catch it by the neck.

This may have been all true in the sixteenth century ; but if so, a considerable change has since taken place in the habits of the order. The sash has been substituted for the noose, as being less open to detection ; and the Thugs who have settled habitations, seldom permit their wives to accompany them on their expeditions. The substitution of a more secret method of strangling for the lasso, is what might have been expected in the progress of improvement.

The Thugs themselves arrogate very high antiquity for their profession ; and one proof which they allege in confirmation of their claim is too remarkable to be passed over. We shall give it in their own words :—

*Q.*—You told Mr. Johnstone, the traveller, while he was at Saugor, that the operations of your trade were to be seen in the caves of Ellora ?

*Feringeea.*—All ! every one of the operations is to be seen there : in one place you see men strangling ; in another burying the bodies ; in another carrying them off to the

graves. There is not an operation in Thuggee that is not exhibited in the caves of Ellora.

*Dorgha.*—In those caves are to be seen the operations of every trade in the world.

*Chotee.*—Whenever we passed near, we used to go and see these caves. Every man will there find his trade described, however secret he may think it; and they were all made in one night.

*Q.*—Does any person besides yourselves consider that any of these figures represent Thugs?

*Feringeea.*—Nobody else; but all Thugs know that they do. We never told anybody else what we thought about them. Everybody there can see the secret operations of his trade, but he does not tell others of them; and no other person can understand what they mean. They are the works of God. No human hands were employed upon them. That everybody admits.

*Q.*—What particular operations are there described in figures?

*Sahib Khan.*—I have seen the Sotha (inveigler) sitting upon the same carpet with the traveller, and in close conversation with him, just as we are when we are worming out their secrets. In another place the strangler has got his handkerchief over his neck, and is strangling him; while another, the Chumochee, is holding him by the legs. These are the only two operations that I have seen described.

*Nasir.*—These I have also seen, and there is no mistaking them. The Chumochee has close hold of the legs, and is pulling at them thus, while the Bhurtote is tightening the handkerchief round his neck, thus!

*Q.*—Have you seen no others?

*Feringeea.*—I have seen these two, and also the Lughas carrying away the bodies to the grave, in this manner, and the sextons digging the grave with the sacred pick-axe; all is done just as if we had ourselves done it: nothing could be more exact.

*Q.*—And who do you think could have executed this work?

*Feringeea.*—It could not have been done by Thugs, because they would never have exposed the secrets of their trade; and no other human being could have done it. It must be the work of the gods: human hands could never have performed it.

*Q.*—And supposing so, you go and worship it?

*Sahib Khan.*—No. We go to gratify curiosity, and not to worship; we look upon it as a mausoleum; a collection of curious figures cut by some demons, who knew the secrets of all mankind, and amused themselves here in describing them.

*Hurnagur.*—We Hindoos go for the same purpose. We never go to worship. We consider it as a Pantheon of unknown gods.

Notwithstanding the alleged antiquity of the profession, the Thugs to the north of the Nerbudda cannot trace their own pedigree higher than the era of the first race of Mahomedan kings of Delhi. Their tradition is, that their ancestors, who were then divided into seven clans, as their descendants still are, used to infest the roads in the neighbourhood of the capital, until they drew upon themselves the anger of an emperor of the house of Ghoree by murdering one of his domestics, who was in league with them, and who threatened to betray them with a view to extort more money than they thought reasonable. On this they were expelled from Delhi. The majority of them retired to Agra, and ultimately to the strong country at the junction of the

Jumna, the Chumbul, and the Kalee Sinde, which continued to be their headquarters until they were driven away by Mr. Halhed in the year 1812. These seven clans are the original trunk upon which all the Thug associations to the north of the Nerbudda have been grafted. They were originally all Mahomedans ; but for a long time past Mahomedans and Hindus have been indiscriminately associated in the gangs; the former class, however, still predominating. Their numbers are kept up by descent (the profession being, as usual in India, hereditary), by adoption, and occasionally, but not often, by the admission of qualified adults.

The Thugs to the south of the Nerbudda boast a purer descent. They can trace back the trade of Thuggee in their families for more generations, and have adhered with greater strictness to the rules of their profession than those who are of Delhi origin. They also refuse to intermarry with the families of the latter, saying they are of lower caste, and formerly 'drove bullocks, and were itinerant tradesmen.' This point was warmly disputed by the northern and southern Thugs before Captain Slesman. It was admitted by some of the northern men that, at their funerals, the women who bring the water chant the occupations of the ancestors of the deceased, in a manner which shows that they were originally descended from gangs of wandering Musulmans, who followed armies, and lived in the

suburbs of cities and in the wild wastes, and that their pretensions to higher descent were unfounded. Others acknowledged that at marriages an old matron will sometimes repeat as she throws down the toolsee,<sup>1</sup> 'Here's to the spirits of those who once led bears and monkeys; to those who drove bullocks, and marked with the godnee;<sup>2</sup> and those who made baskets for the head;' but others, who were more zealous for the honour of their tribe, insisted that these were only disguises assumed by their ancestors to enable them to practise their trade in greater safety.

It is admitted on all hands that two of the original seven clans of northern Thugs which did not, like the others, settle at Agra after their expulsion from Delhi, retain their wandering habits to this day; and there seems reason to suspect that most of the gipsy tribes who are to be found in all parts of India, but are most numerous to the north and west, practise Thuggee as occasion offers. On this part of the subject we may refer to the following remarkable passages in the conversations.

Q.—Do not the Brinjaras often perpetrate murder in their encampments?

*Feringeea.*—Just before the twenty-six of my gang were taken by you at Bhilsa, and before Zolfukar joined us, we were cooking our dinner in the afternoon at a village three

<sup>1</sup> *Ocymum sanctum*. Tulsee was a nymph beloved by Krishna, and by him turned into this plant.

<sup>2</sup> Needle used in tattooing.

cross this side of Sehere, when five travellers came up on their way to Bhilsa. We tried to prevail upon them to wait for us, but they went on, saying they should spend the night at Hirora, a village four coss further on. We made sure of securing them at Hirora, and remained where we were to dine. We reached Hirora about nine at night, and searched all the village in vain for the travellers. We knew that they must either have suspected our designs, or been disposed of by other Thugs on the road ; and I recollected that about three miles from Hirora we had passed a Brinjara encampment. In the morning I went back with a few followers, and there found a horse and pony that we had seen with the five travellers. 'What have you done with the five travellers, my good friends? You have taken from us our merchandise, Bunij,' said I, in Rumasee. They apologised for what they had done ; said they did not know we were after them, and offered to share the booty with us ; but I said we had no fair claim to a share, since none of our party were present at the loading (killing). We left them and came on to Bhilsa, where we met your party of Nujeebs.

Q.—And these Brinjaree Thugs are rarely seized or punished ?

*Sahib Khan, of Telingana.*—How can their deeds be known? They do all their work themselves. They live in the desert, and work in the desert. We live in villages, and cannot do our work without the connivance and support of the farmers who hold, and the influential men who occupy them. Local authorities of all kinds and degrees must be conciliated by us ; but these men are relieved from all this cost and trouble by foregoing the pleasure of other men's society, and the comforts of a fixed habitation. They are wiser men than we are !

*Morlee.*—I was one day walking with some of our party near Jeypore by an encampment of wealthy merchants from

the westward, who wore very high turbans. I observed to my friends as we passed, 'What enormous turbans these men wear!' using our mystic term *Aghasee*. The most respectable among them came up immediately and invited us to sit down with them, saying, 'My good friends, we are of your fraternity, though our *Aghasee* are not the same.' They told us that they were now opulent merchants, and independent of *Thuggee*, the trade by which they had chiefly acquired their wealth; but that they still did a little occasionally when they found in a suitable place a *Bunij* worth taking; but that they were now beyond speculating in trifles! We were kindly entertained, and much pleased with our new friends, but left them the same day, and I have never met any men of the kind since. The common *Moltanee* Thugs, who strangle men with the thongs which they use in driving their bullocks, we have often met. They are to be found all over India, but abound most to the north-west.

No system of secret murder has ever existed so extensive, so completely organised, or so successfully pursued as that of *Thuggee*. The self-devoted Assassins were mere bunglers compared with the Thugs. Our *Burkers*, with their sneaking, solitary, midnight murders, do not deserve to be named in the same day with the members of a confederacy who traversed every part of India in gangs of hundreds, and throttled sometimes as many as threescore victims at once. Besides, the Assassins and the *Burkers* flourished for a time, and passed away: both their beginning and their end are known; but the commencement of *Thuggee* is lost in the remotest antiquity, and it has been practised generation after

generation down to our own times. Even now, it is by no means suppressed: and if the efforts now making for that purpose were only for a short time to be relaxed, it would overspread the whole of India as heretofore. It is, therefore, worth inquiring, what are the causes which have secured such unexampled success to this terrible confederacy; and, above all, what is it which has silenced the voice of conscience in the minds of the Thugs, and infused into them a spirit and a love for their profession which would do credit to any cause.

The principle of Assassination was religion. The principle of Burking was gain. In Thuggee they are both united. Gain sanctioned by religion; human rapacity exercised under the supposed approbation of the Deity, is its principle.

There are Thugs, Captain Sleeman observes, at Jubulpore from all quarters of India; from Lodheena to the Carnatic, and from the Indus to the Ganges. Some of them have been in the habit of holding, what I may fairly call unreserved communication with European gentlemen for more than twelve years; and yet there is not among them one who doubts *the Divine origin of the system of Thuggee*—not one who doubts, that he and all who have followed the trade of murder with the prescribed rites and observances, were acting under the immediate orders and auspices of the goddess Devee, Durga, Kalee, or Bhuwanee, as she is indifferently called, and consequently, there is not one who feels the slightest remorse for the murders which he may, in the course of his vocation, have perpetrated or assisted in perpetrating. A Thug considers the persons murdered

precisely in the light of victims offered up to the goddess; and he remembers them, as a priest of Jupiter remembered the oxen, and a priest of Saturn the children sacrificed upon their altars. He meditates his murders without any misgivings; he perpetrates them without any emotion of pity; and he remembers them without any feelings of remorse. They trouble not his dreams, nor does their recollection ever cause him inquietude in darkness, in solitude, or in the hour of death.

The account which the Thugs give of the first establishment of their profession will explain the nature of its pretensions to a Divine origin.

The Thugs have a tradition that a demon, by name Rukut Beej Dana, infested the world, and devoured mankind as often as they were born or created; and to enable the world to be peopled, Kalee Davey determined to put him to death. This demon, they say, was so tall that the deepest ocean never reached above his waist: and he could, consequently, walk over the world at his ease. Kalee Davey attacked him, and cut him down; but from every drop of his blood another demon arose, and as she cut them down, from every drop of their blood another demon sprung up, and the numbers increased at this geometrical rate, until she became fatigued with the labour. On this she formed two men from the sweat brushed off from one of her arms; and giving them each a handkerchief, told them to put all these demons to death, without allowing one drop of their blood to fall on the ground.

After their labour was over, they offered to return to the goddess the handkerchiefs with which they had done their work; but she desired them to keep them as the instruments of a trade by which their posterity were to earn their subsistence, and to strangle men with these handkerchiefs, as

they had strangled the demons, and live by the plunder they acquired ; and having been the means of enabling the world to get provided with men by the destruction of the demons, their posterity would be entitled to take a few for their own use.

The goddess also told them that they might leave the bodies of their victims on the ground, and she would take care that they should be removed, provided they never looked back to see how she disposed of them. On one occasion, however, a slave had the audacity to look back, and saw the goddess without any clothes on, devouring the bodies and throwing them about in the air. Her modesty and dignity were naturally offended, and she told them that in future they must bury the bodies themselves ; but, from some remains of compassion for her ancient followers, she bestowed on them a pick-axe endowed with various supernatural qualities.

A pick-axe is consecrated by each gang before setting out on an expedition, and is regarded by a Thug much in the same light as his sword is by a soldier. It is the mark of his profession ;—he swears by it, and under such an awful sanction, that the person who forswears himself will, within two or three days, ‘ die a horrid death ; his head will turn round, his face towards his back, and he will writhe in tortures till he dies.’ The sound of the consecrated pick-axe is never heard in digging a grave by any except a Thug. It is carried by the shrewdest,

cleanest, and most sober and careful man of the party in his waist-belt. While in camp, he buries it in a secure place with its point in the direction they intend to go; and if another direction is better, its point will be found changed. Formerly it used to be thrown into a well, whence it would come up of itself, when summoned with the appropriate ceremonies; but since the northern Thugs have begun to do what is forbidden, and neglected what is enjoined, it has lost that virtue, as far as they are concerned. In the Deccan, where the primitive spirit of Thuggee has not been departed from, this is still the case. 'During a whole expedition that I made with them,' says a northern Thug, who served a campaign with the people of his own profession in the south, 'Imam Khan and his brother carried the pick-axe, and I heard them repeatedly in the morning call them from the well into which they had thrown them overnight, and saw the pick-axes come up of themselves from the well, and fall into their aprons, which they held open *thus*—' Here he described the mode.

The most ordinary and effectual mode, however, in which the goddess interferes in behalf of her votaries, is by means of omens. These are considered by the Thugs as signs expressly appointed to guide them to their prey, or to warn them of approaching danger; and no member of the fraternity doubts, that if these omens had been attended to, and the other prescribed rules observed, the system of

Thuggee must have flourished under the auspices of its divine patroness, in spite of all our efforts for its suppression.

All the different kinds of omens are too numerous to be specified, but the following may be taken as specimens. The striking coincidence between the rules of augury observed by the Thugs, and those of ancient Greece and Rome, will not fail to be perceived.

*Pilhaoo.*—The appearance or voice of the animals from which omens are taken, on the left. The reverse of the Thibao. If the Pilhaoo promises good according to their rules of augury, it is always the better from being followed by the Thibao soon after. If it threatens evil, that evil is mitigated by the Thibao.

The Pilhaoo, or omen on the left, must be observed first on opening an expedition, and it must be followed by the Thibao immediately after, or the expedition cannot be entered upon. It signifies that the Deity has taken the gang by the left arm, to lead them on; but she must give them the Thibao, to signify that she has taken them by the right arm also, or the party appointed to take the auspices returns home, and the gang waits till the omens are unexceptionable.

The Pilhaoo perceived on leaving any stage during the expedition, or preparing to leave it, promises good. The Thibao threatens evil, and the gang halts. On reaching any stage, the Pilhaoo threatens evil, and they must move on without resting. The Thibao promises good, and they rest securely.

*Burauk.*—The omen of the wolf or wolves crossing their road. If from left to right, it threatens great evil. If from right to left, it is a good omen. If its call be heard during the day, the gang must immediately quit the country

in which they hear it. If between midnight and daylight, it is bad ; if between evening and midnight, indifferent ; between mid-day and sunset, it is not so bad as between sunrise and mid-day. They call it the weeping (*Chimmama*) of the wolf, and consider the sound mournful. The single wolf portends more than a pair ; and the *Burauk* is, whether for good or for bad, one of the most important omens.

*Chirriya*.—A chirping of the small owlet, which Thugs consider a bad omen, whether made while the bird is sitting or flying ; it is said to be a melancholy and low sound, seldom repeated. *Judæ*, *Jemadar*, who was considered to be one of the best augurers of his day, lived at *Murnae*, a celebrated Thug village, and it is said that, returning one morning from a walk in the fields, he told his friend that he had heard the *Chirriya* in a manner that indicated some great calamity at hand. That night, or the night after, *Mr. Halhed* is said to have attacked the village, and *Lieutenant Monsel* was killed. It was, I believe, in November 1812.

*Duheea*.—The call or cry of the hare. They will perish in the jungles, they say, after hearing it, if they do not make sacrifices ; and the hare, or some other animal of the forest, will drink water out of their skulls : if they kill any one whom they have with them at the time, they will find no booty on him, or what they find will tend to their ruin.

The efficacy of this omen is illustrated in the conversations :—

*Q.*—Do you ever recollect any misfortune arising from going on when a hare crossed the road before you ?

*Nasir of Singhapore.*—Yes ; when *General Doveton* commanded the troops at *Jhalna*, we were advancing towards his camp : a hare crossed the road ; we disregarded the omen, though the hare actually screamed in crossing, and went on. The very next day I, with seventeen of our gang, were

seized ; and it was with great difficulty and delay that we got our release. We had killed some people belonging to the troops, but fortunately none of their property was found upon us.

*Dunteroo.*—The ass. The Thugs think the omen of the ass the most important of all, whether it threatens evil or promises good. ‘Sou pukheroo ek Dunteroo.’—‘The ass is equal to a hundred birds’—is a maxim in augury. The omen of the ass is also superior to that of all quadrupeds ! If they hear it bray on the left on opening an expedition (Pilhaoo), and it is soon after repeated on the right (Thibao), they believe that nothing on earth can prevent their success during that expedition, though it should last for years.

Even the most sensible approvers, Captain Sleeman observes, who have been with me for years, as well Musulmans as Hindus, believe that their good or ill success always depended upon the skill with which the omens were discovered and interpreted, and the strictness with which they were observed and obeyed. One of the old Sindouse stock told me yesterday (May 30, 1835), in presence of twelve others from Hyderabad, Behar, the Dooab, Oude, Rajpootana, and Bundelcund, assembled for the purpose of revising this vocabulary, that had they not attended to these omens, they could never have thrived as they did, and that in ordinary cases of murder a man seldom escaped after one of them, while they and their families had for ten generations thrived, though they had murdered hundreds of people. ‘This,’ said he, ‘could never have been the case, had we not attended to omens, and had not omens been intended for us. There were always signs around us to guide us to rich booty and warn us of danger, had we been always wise enough to discern them, and religious enough to attend to them.’ Every Thug present concurred with him from his soul.

Besides her ordinary interference in their behalf

by means of omens, and the supernatural virtues of the sacred pick-axe, the goddess interposes in a special manner to protect or revenge her followers when the occasion requires. Of this several striking instances are given.

*Q.*—Above the Nerbudda, chiefs have never had the same dread of punishing Thugs as below it, have they ?

*Feringeea.*—They had formerly, and have still in many parts.

*Q.*—Why should they fear; have there been any instances of suffering from it ?

*Feringeea.*—A great many. Was not Nanha, the Raja of Jhalone, made leprous by Davey for putting to death Bodhoo and his brother Khumolee, two of the most noted Thugs of their day. He had them trampled under the feet of elephants, but the leprosy broke out upon his body the very next day.

*Q.*—Did he believe that this punishment was inflicted by Davey for putting them to death ?

*Dorgha Musulman.*—He was quite sensible of it.

*Q.*—Did he do anything to appease her ?

*Dorgha.*—Everything. Bodhoo had begun a well in Jhalone; the Raja built it up in a magnificent style; he had a tomb raised to their name, fed Brahmuns, and consecrated it, had worship instituted upon it, but all in vain; the disease was incurable, and the Raja died in a few months a miserable death. The tomb and well are both kept up and visited by hundreds to this day, and no one doubts that the Raja was punished for putting these two Thugs to death.

*Q.*—But Bodhoo had his nose and hands cut off before, and could have been no favourite of Davey's ?

*Feringeea.*—But he was a Thug of great repute; for sagacity we have never seen his equal; people who had been robbed used to go to him as an oracle.

*Q.*—But he had turned informer, and was sent to Jhalone by Mr. Stockwell to arrest his associates ?

*Dorgha.*—He went to Mr. Stockwell in a passion ; his heart was not fully turned away from us then.

*Q.*—Have you any other instances ?

*Inaent.*—Hundreds ! When Madhajee Scindheea caused seventy Thugs to be executed at Muthura, was he not warned in a dream by Davey that he should release them ? and did he not the very day after their execution begin to spit blood ? and did he not die within three months ?

*Feringeea.*—When Dureear, the Rahtore, and Komere and Patore, the Kuchwaha Rajpoots, Zumeendars, arrested eighty of the Thugs who had settled at Nodha after the murder of Lieutenant Monsel, they had many warnings to let them go ; but they persisted, and kept them till some thirty died. They collected fourteen thousand rupees at the rate of one hundred and twenty-five rupees from every Thug. What became of their families ? Have they not all perished ? They have not a child left. Rae Sing Havildar, the Gwalior Subha of Nodha, took the money, but that very day his only son and the best horse in his stable died, and he was himself taken ill, and died soon after a miserable death.

*Nasir.*—Ah, Davey took care of you then, and why ? Was it not because you were more attentive to her orders ?

*Zulfukar.*—Yes ; we had then some regard for religion. We have lost it since. All kinds of men have been made Thugs, and all classes of people murdered, without distinction, and little attention has been paid to omens. How, after this, could we expect to escape ?

*Nasir.*—Be assured that Davey never forsook us till we neglected her.

*Q.*—Do you know of any instance of her punishing a man for annoying Thugs in the Deccan ?

*Sahib Khan.*—A great many. The Raja of Kundul, some ninety coss east from Hyderabad, arrested all the Thugs

in his raj for some murders they had committed. For three successive nights the voice of Davey was heard from the top of every temple in the capital, warning the Raja to release them. The whole town heard her, and urged the Raja to comply. He was obstinate, and the third night the bed on which he and his Raneé were sleeping was taken up by Davey, and dashed violently against the ground.

*Q.*—Were they killed ?

*Nasir.*—They were not killed, but they were dreadfully bruised ; and had they not released the Thugs, they would certainly have been killed the next night.

*Q.*—Were any of you present ?

*Sahib Khan.*—Our fathers were, and we heard it from them. It occurred sixty years ago.

*Q.*—And do you think that the chiefs have still the same dread of punishing Thugs in all parts of India ?

*Sahib.*—Certainly not in all parts ; because in many they have been suffered to punish them with impunity, on account of their neglect of rules and omens.

*Morlee.*—There is no fear now. They are everywhere seized and punished with impunity ; there is no resisting your good fortune.

*Durgha.*—The Company's good fortune is such, that before the sound of your drums, sorcerers, witches and demons take flight, and how can Thuggee stand ?

Notwithstanding their recent backsliding, the Thugs are not wanting in gratitude to their divine patroness for all these favours. A choice portion of each spoil is set aside for her, previous to the division, and numerous rites are observed in her honour, of which the following will serve for an example :—

*Tupounnee.*—A sacrifice of sugar to Bhowanee. This

sacrifice is offered at the first convenient place after every murder. One rupee and four annas worth of coarse sugar is purchased and put upon a blanket or sheet spread upon the cleanest place they can select. Near the pile of sugar, and on the blanket, they place the consecrated pick-axe, and a piece of silver, as a 'roop dursun,' or silver offering. The most esteemed leader of the gang, who is supposed to be most in favour with the goddess, and best acquainted with the modes of propitiating her, is placed on the blanket, with his face to the west. As many noted stranglers as it can conveniently contain sit on each side of this leader, with their faces in the same direction. They must be, including the leader, an even number. The rest of the gang sit outside the blanket. The leader now makes a hole in the ground, and having put into it a little of the sugar, he lifts his clasped hands and eyes towards heaven, and with his mind fixed upon the goddess, he says, 'Great goddess! as you vouchsafed one lack and sixty-two thousand rupees to Joorā Naik and Koduk Bunwaree,<sup>1</sup> in their need, so, we pray thee, fulfil our desires.' In this prayer all the Thugs fervently join, repeating the words after the leader. He then sprinkles some water over the pit and pick-axe, and places a little sugar upon the extended hands of every Thug seated upon the blanket with him. One of the gang now gives the signal for strangling in the same manner as if they were going to commit murder, and the Thugs upon the carpet eat their sugar in solemn silence. Not a word is spoken till they have eaten the whole, and drunk some water. The pile of sugar is now distributed, as consecrated food, to the whole of the gang

<sup>1</sup> Joorā Naik was a celebrated leader of Multan Thugs. He and his slave Khoduk Bunwaree are said to have killed a man who had, in jewels and other articles, property to the value of 16,000*l.*, laden upon a mule. They brought home the booty, assembled all the members of their fraternity within reach, and honestly divided the whole, as if all had been present. Joorā Naik, his wife and slave, were all canonised in consequence.

entitled from their rank to partake of it. They eat it all with silent reverence, so that no part may fall to the ground; and if any fall, it is put into the pit, that it may not be soiled by the foot of any one. The silver is then given back to the person who lent it for the purpose.

No one but a man who has strangled with his own hands, and is at the same time a free man, is suffered to partake of the sugar thus consecrated. For those who have not yet strangled a victim, or are not free men, sugar is set apart from the pile before consecration, and they eat it at the same time as the others on the signal given. If any thing improper, or indecorous in language, manner, or conduct, takes place during this ceremony, they consider it an evident sign of the displeasure of the deity, and despair of further success during the expedition.

If any particle of the consecrated sugar should be left on the ground, and eaten by a dog or any other animal, they would, they believe, suffer under the displeasure of the deity for years. If any other human being should taste the sugar, they are persuaded that he would immediately take to the trade of Thuggee, and never be able to leave it off, whatever may have been his rank or condition in life. If they have any young disciple about whose advancement they are very solicitous, they try to get for him a little of the consecrated sugar, assured that he will advance rapidly in his profession after eating it.

It will now, we think, be apparent, in what the principle of Thuggee consists; what it was which gave rise to the phenomenon of several thousand persons pursuing murder as a trade, generation after generation, not one of whom entertained the least suspicion that he was doing wrong. The Thugs are the followers of a deity who delights in blood.

Thuggee is by no means the only horror which is patronised by her. Every murderer looks to her as his protectress. She is the goddess of destruction, and of all the Hindu Pantheon she alone is appeased by human sacrifices.

Till lately there was a petty state, called Jaintia, on the eastern frontier of Bengal, the chiefs of which had long been notorious for kidnapping our subjects and offering them up on her shrine. In 1821, a shepherd boy was rescued from their servants while they were dragging him away from the Sylhet district for this purpose ; and the Raja was then solemnly warned of the consequences which would follow a repetition of the act. After this, in 1831, as three of our subjects were passing along the high-road in our own district of Assam, the Jaintia people rushed out upon them, and carried them up into the hills. They were adorned for sacrifice, and separately conveyed to three temples on the peaks of the hill, where they were left, bound and guarded, to await the appointed hour. Fortunately a storm arose, in the darkness and confusion caused by which one of the victims succeeded in untying the cords with which he was bound. He rushed down the hill, and next morning at break of day he reached the nearest British police station more dead than alive,—the sacrificial garments and jewels still upon him. The murder was completed, as regarded the other two victims. After many vain attempts to

obtain redress, the Raja and his chiefs were punished, and the only effectual security was obtained against a recurrence of the practice by the incorporation of the petty state with the British dominions. This is only one of many similar horrors which we might relate. It is no uncommon thing to hear of persons cutting their own throats, or decapitating their children, at the shrine of this bloodthirsty deity. To the Thugs, therefore, murder is an act of religion, just as much as the practice of charity is to a Christian. When, by according favourable omens, their patroness is supposed to have revealed her will for the sacrifice of travellers, those of the stricter sort dare not disobey.

*Q.*—How (asks Captain Sleeman) can you murder old men and young children without some emotions of pity—calmly and deliberately as they sit with you and converse with you,—and tell you of their private affairs,—of their hopes and fears,—and of their wives and children whom they are going to meet after years of absence, toil, and suffering?

*A.*—From the time that the omens have been favourable, we consider them as victims thrown into our hands by the Deity to be killed; and that we are a mere instrument in her hands to destroy them: that if we do not kill them, she will never be again propitious to us, and we and our families shall be involved in misery and want.

*Q.*—And you can sleep as soundly by the bodies or over the graves of those you have murdered, and eat your meals with as much appetite as ever?

*Sahib.*—Just the same; we sleep and eat just the same, unless we are afraid of being discovered.

*Q.*—And when you see or hear a bad omen, you think it is the order of the Deity not to kill the travellers you have with you, or are in pursuit of?

*Sahib.*—Yes; it is the order not to kill them, and we dare not disobey.

It is, however, still a controverted point of Thug theology, whether, when a traveller falls into their hands under favourable omens, they are bound by their religion to kill him, or are only permitted to do so, if it happens to suit their convenience. The orthodox divines of the south are, as usual, for the unsparing use of the sash. The heretics of the north recommend that mercy should be shown in such cases; and are, in consequence, looked upon by their brethren of the Deccan in much the same light in which a Baptist is regarded at Oxford.

*Q.*—When you have a poor traveller with you, or a party of travellers, who appear to have little property about them, and you hear or see a very good omen, do you not let them go, in the hope that the virtue of the omen will guide you to better prey?

*Durgha Musulman.*—Let them go!—never, never—kubhee nuheen, kubhee nuheen.

*Nasir Musulman, of Telingana.*—How could we let them go? Is not the good omen the order from Heaven to kill them, and would it not be disobedience to let them go? If we did not kill them, should we ever get any more travellers?

*Feringeea Brahmun.*—I have known the experiment tried with good effect. I have known travellers who promised little let go, and the virtue of the omen brought better.

*Inayant Musulman.*—Yes, the virtue of the omen remains, and the traveller who has little should be let go, for you are sure to get a better.

*Sahib Khan, of Telingana.*—Never! never! This is one of your northern heresies. You could never let him go without losing all the fruits of your expedition. You might get property, but it could never do you any good. No success could result from your disobedience.

*Morlee Rajpoot.*—Certainly not! The travellers who are in our hands when we have a good omen must never be let go, whether they promise little or much; the omen is unquestionably the order, as Nasir says.

*Nasir.*—The idea of securing the goodwill of Davey by disobeying her orders is quite monstrous. We Deccan Thugs do not understand how you got hold of it. Our ancestors were never guilty of such folly.

*Feringeea.*—You do not mean to say that we of Murnae and Sindouse were not as well instructed as you of Telingana?

*Nasir and Sahib Khan.*—We only mean to say that you have clearly mistaken the nature of a good omen in this case. It is the order of Davey to take what she has put in our way: at least so we, in the Deccan, understand it.

As the Thugs have a religion of their own, they are regarded among themselves as religious or otherwise according to the degree of strictness with which they observe the rules of their peculiar faith. In England it may appear odd to classify professional murderers as religious or otherwise; but this distinction is not unknown to the more refined morality of India. 'His father (a noted Thug) used to drink very hard, and in his fits of intoxication he used to

neglect his *prayers* and his *days of fast*. All days were the same with him. This lad, Shumsheera (also a Thug) was always sober, and *religiously disposed*, and separated from his father, living always with his uncle Dondée (another Thug) who was a *very worthy and good man.*'

Another consequence of the peculiar religious belief of the Thugs is, that they draw a distinction between Thuggee and murder. In our eyes, all killing is wrong which is not sanctioned by the laws of the country : in the opinion of the Thugs, it is wrong when it is not sanctioned by the municipal law of the country, or the divine law of their patroness Kalee. They add to the cases in which the destruction of human life is permitted, that of travellers who fall into their hands when the omens are favourable.

Q.—And you believe that if you were to murder without the observance of the omens and regulations, you would be punished both in this world and the next like other men?

*Sahib.*—Certainly ; no man's family ever survives a murder : it becomes extinct. A Thug who murders in this way loses the children he has, and is never blessed with more.

Q.—In the same manner as if a Thug had murdered a Thug ?

*Sahib.*—Precisely ; he cannot escape punishment.

Q.—And when you observe the omens and rules, you neither feel a dread of punishment here nor hereafter ?

*Sahib.*—Never.

The superiority which the Thugs assume over

ordinary murderers is in the highest degree amusing. They even lay claim to the title of public benefactors, on the ground of their having opened the shortest, and, if they are to be trusted, by far the most certain road to heaven.

*Q.*—Are you never afraid of the spirits of the persons you murder ?

*Nasir.*—Never ; they cannot trouble us.

*Q.*—Why ? Do they not trouble other men when they commit murder ?

*Nasir.*—Of course they do. The man who commits a murder is always haunted by spirits. He has sometimes fifty at a time upon him, and they drive him mad.

*Q.*—And how do they not trouble you ?

*Nasir.*—Are not the people we kill, killed by the orders of Davey ?

*Kuleean.*—Yes, it is by the blessing of Davey that we escape that evil.

*Durgha.*—Do not all whom we kill go to Paradise, and why should their spirits stay to trouble us ?

There is no end to the new and singular results of this distorted state of morals. In every respect in which their peculiar tenets do not clash with the ordinary rules of morality, these professional murderers are not only blameless, but even exemplary in the performance of the various duties of life.

No men, remarks Captain Sleeman, observe more strictly in domestic life all that is enjoined by their priests or demanded by their respective castes ; nor do any men cultivate with more care the esteem of their neighbours, or court with more assiduity the goodwill of all constituted local authori-

ties. In short, to men who do not know them, the principal members of these associations will always appear to be among the most amiable, most respectable, and most intelligent members of the lower, and sometimes the middle and higher classes of native society; and it is by no means to be inferred that every man who attempts to screen them from justice knows them to be murderers.

The most hardened Thugs not unfrequently gain the esteem of the European officers employed in seizing them, by the propriety of their conduct and the mild decorum of their manner.

Bhimmee, observes Mr. Macleod, is a mild respectable kind of man, who would certainly not appear born for a gallows, and I hope you will let him remain with me. I feel interested, too, for the whole of Laek's family, among whom I do not think there is naturally any vice; and shocking as their proceedings would appear at home, very many palliating circumstances evidently exist here, and we must be guided by what is expedient. To Laek the sentence of any of his brothers would be most disheartening. When he heard of their arrest, he repeated with great feeling a Hindostanee verse to this effect: 'I was a pearl once residing in comfort in the ocean. I surrendered myself, believing I should repose in peace in the bosom of some fair damsel—but, alas! they have pierced me, and passed a string through my body, and have left me to dangle in constant pain as an ornament to her nose.' Another officer, speaking of another Thug, says, 'He has one of the most benevolent countenances that I have ever seen. He looks as though he would rather commit suicide than common and cold-blooded murder.' And a third officer, speaking of another, says, 'He is one of the best men I have ever known! and I believe that Makeem may be trusted in any relation of life

save that between a Thug who has taken the auspices, and a traveller with something worth taking upon him. They all look upon travellers as sportsmen look upon hares and pheasants; and they recollect their favourite Beles, or places for murder, as sportsmen recollect their best sporting grounds, and talk of them, when they can, with the same kind of glee.'

It is certainly part of the business of a Thug to cultivate a mild and conciliatory deportment, both with a view to inveigle travellers and secure to himself protectors; but we conceive that this is not of itself sufficient to account for the facts before us. In Europe, hardened criminals are seldom distinguished even for having 'benevolent countenances;' and if we examine into the details of their domestic life, the traces of their ferocious occupation become still more apparent. Such persons are by no means remarkable for being good husbands, good fathers, or good neighbours. Neither do they almost invariably abstain from wanton cruelty, or from offering any outrage either to mind or body beyond what is necessary for depriving their victims of life, which is the case with the Thugs. 'No Thug,' Captain Sleeman observes, 'was ever known to offer insult, either in act or in speech, to the women they were to murder. No gang would ever dare to murder a woman with whom one of its members should be suspected of having had connection.' Whence, then, is this difference? How does it happen that

crime has lost its brutalising influence in the case of the Thugs? The real explanation seems to be this. No man's moral feeling is offended by doing what he does not consider to be wrong. The Thugs are not hardened by the practice of murder, because they do not believe it to be murder in the way in which they commit it. Soldiers fighting in their country's cause could not be less conscious of doing wrong than the Thugs are. Both entertain an implicit belief that an exception has been made in their favour in the general law for the preservation of human life; and, therefore, both are satisfied that they are doing nothing more than their duty in putting their fellow-creatures to death.

But although conscience may be silenced by false religion, human nature cannot be brought at once to view human suffering with indifference. Children are trained to the practice of Thuggee by a gradual process; and great care is taken not to shock them by too sudden an introduction to scenes of actual murder.

*Sahib.*—The first expedition they neither see nor hear anything of murder. They know not our trade; they get presents purchased out of their share, and become fond of the wandering life, as they are always mounted upon ponies. Before the end of the journey they know that we rob. The next expedition they suspect that we commit murder, and some of them even know it; and in the third expedition they see all.

A striking instance is afterwards given of the danger of too abruptly exposing to children the mysteries of this horrid craft.

*Feringeea.*—About twelve years ago my cousin Aman Subahdar took out with us my cousin Kurhora, brother of Omrow approver, a lad of fourteen, for the first time. He was mounted upon a pretty pony, and Hursooka, an adopted son of Aman's, was appointed to take charge of the boy.

We fell in with five Sikhs, and when we set out before daylight in the morning, Hursooka, who had been already on three expeditions, was ordered to take the bridle and keep the boy in the rear out of sight and hearing. The boy became alarmed and impatient, got away from Hursooka, and galloped up at the instant the signal for murder was given. He heard the screams of the men, and saw them all strangled. He was seized with a trembling, and fell from his pony; he became immediately delirious, was dreadfully alarmed at the sight of the turbans of the murdered men, and when any touched or spoke to him, talked about the murders, and screamed exactly like a boy who talks in his sleep, and trembled violently if any one spoke to him or touched him. We could not get him on; and, after burying the bodies, Aman and I and a few others sat by him while the gang went on. We were very fond of him and tried all we could to tranquillise him, but he never recovered his senses, and before evening he died. I have seen many instances of feelings greatly shocked at the sight of the first murder, but never one so strong as this. Kurhora was a very fine boy, and Hursooka took his death much to heart, and turned Fukeer. He is now at some temple on the bank of the Nerbudda river.

Instances also are not wanting of the amiable dispositions of human nature breaking through the

restraints which have been placed upon them by a mistaken system, even in the case of the most practised Thugs.

*Q.*—And you are worse than the Duckun Thugs, for you murder handsome young women, as well as the old and ugly ?

*Feringeea.*—Not always. I and my cousin Aman Subahdar were with a gang of one hundred and fifty Thugs on an expedition through Rajpootana about thirteen years ago, when we met a handmaid of the Peshwa, Bajee Row, on her way from Poona to Cawnpore. We intended to kill her and her followers, but we found her very beautiful, and after having her and her party three days within our grasp, and knowing that they had a lakh and a half of rupees worth of property in jewels and other things with them, we let her and all her party go. We had talked to her and felt love towards her, for she was very beautiful.

*Q.*—And how came you to kill the Moghulanee. She also is said to have been very handsome ?

*Feringeea.*—We none of us ventured near her palankeen. The Musulmans were the only men that approached her before the murder. Madar Buksh approver strangled her.

*Q.*—What did you get from them ?

*Durgha.*—Six hundred rupees worth of property.

*Q.*—And was this enough to tempt so large a gang to murder a beautiful young woman ?

*Durgha.*—We were very averse to it, and often said that we should not get two rupees apiece, and that she ought to be let go ; but Feringeea insisted upon our taking her.

*Q.*—How did you advise the murder of a young woman like this ?

*Feringeea.*—It was her fate to die by our hands. I had

several times tried to shake them off before we met the Musulmans, and when we came to Lalsont I told her that she must go on, as I had joined some old friends and should be delayed. She then told me that I must go to her home with her near Agra, or she would get me into trouble ; and being a Brahman while she was a Musulman, I was afraid that I should be accused of improper intercourse and turned out of caste.

A singular reason is assigned by the Thugs for their general indifference to the pangs of their victims.

*Feringeea.*—‘We all feel pity sometimes,’ observed a Thug leader, ‘but the sugar of the Tuponee sacrifice changes our nature. It would change the nature of a horse. Let any man once taste of that sugar, and he will be a Thug though he know all the trades and have all the wealth in the world. I never wanted food ; my mother’s family was opulent, her relations high in office. I have been high in office myself, and became so great a favourite wherever I went that I was sure of promotion ; yet I was always miserable while absent from my gang, and obliged to return to Thuggee. My father made me taste of that fatal sugar when I was yet a mere boy ; and if I were to live a thousand years I should never be able to follow any other trade.’

There can be no doubt that Thugs ‘become strongly attached to their detestable occupation. They rarely, if ever, abandon it. Those who, narrowly escaping the merited vengeance of the law, are released from prison on security, are seldom able to refrain from resuming their old employment ; and those who, bending under the weight of years and

infirmities, are no longer able to bear an active or principal part, continue to aid the cause by keeping watch, procuring intelligence, or dressing the food of their younger confederates.' This attachment to their profession may, however, be accounted for without attributing any miraculous influence to the 'sacred sugar.' Their calling is, in their esteem, both honourable and holy;—by a long course of education it has become habitual; and it is recommended to them both by its lucrativeness and by the intervals of leisure which it affords. Persons who have been accustomed to a life of mixed idleness and adventure are not easily reconciled to quiet and regular habits. It is well known that scarcely any thing is so difficult to reclaim as a Gipsy, or an American Indian.

Some of the most curious passages in the dialogues are those in which an attempt is made by the Thug approvers to reconcile the supposed divine origin of Thuggee with our success against it. The system is under the special protection of deity, and yet unbelieving men have made serious inroads upon it. Nay, the more intelligent of the Thugs do not pretend to deny the probability even of its entire subversion. Here then is a problem of which we have the solution afforded us in the following conversations:—

Q.—But if there was such a deity as Bhowanee, and she

were your patroness, how could she allow me and others to seize and punish so many Thugs ?

*Nasir.*—I have a hundred times heard my father and other old and wise men say, when we had killed a sweeper, and otherwise infringed their rules, that we should be some day punished for it ; that the European rulers would be made the instruments to chastise us for our disregard of omens and neglect of the rules laid down for our guidance.

*Q.*—You think an institution formed by Davey, the goddess, cannot be suppressed by the hand of man ?

*Nasir.*—Certainly, I think so.

*Q.*—But you think that no man is killed by man's killing, ' adme ke marne se koe murta nuheen ; ' that all who are strangled, are strangled in effect by God ?

*Nasir.*—Certainly.

*Q.*—Then by whose killing have all the Thugs who have been hung at Saugor and Jubulpore been killed ?

*Nasir.*—God's, of course.

*Q.*—You think that we could never have caught and executed them but by the aid of God ?

*Nasir.*—Certainly not.

*Q.*—Then you think that so far we have been assisted by God in what we have done ?

*Nasir.*—Yes.

*Q.*—And you are satisfied that we should not have ventured to do what we have done unless we were assured that our God was working with us, or rather that we were mere instruments in his hands ?

*Nasir.*—Yes, I am.

*Q.*—Then do you not think we may go on with the same assurance till the work we have in hand is done ; till, in short, the system of Thuggee is suppressed ?

*Nasir.*—God is almighty.

*Q.*—And there is but one God ?

*Nasir.*—One God above all gods.

*Q.*—And if that God above all gods supports us, we shall succeed ?

*Nasir.*—Certainly.

*Q.*—Then we are all satisfied that he is assisting us, and therefore hope to succeed even in the Deccan ?

*Nasir.*—God only knows.

It is clear that, whatever the event may be, both parties will retain their own opinion to the last.

*Moradun.*—We see God is assisting you, and that Davey has withdrawn her protection on account of our transgressions. We have sadly neglected her worship. God knows in what it will all end.

*Q.*—True, God only knows ; but we hope it will end in the entire suppression of this wicked and foolish system : and in the conviction on your part that Davey has really had nothing to do with it.

*Nasir.*—That Davey instituted Thuggee, and supported it as long as we attended to her omens, and observed the rules framed by the wisdom of our ancestors, nothing in the world can ever make us doubt.

The association of Mahommedans with Hindus in the worship of Kalee must have attracted attention. This is the more remarkable, as the rules of the Mahommedan religion are especially directed to maintain, in the minds of its followers, the belief in the unity of the Godhead. No carved image, no painted representation of man or beast, is allowed either in their mosques or houses. The perpetual exclusion of idolatry from their religious system has always

been their peculiar boast. Since the fourth century, Christianity has been more or less debased by idol worship; but, as far as we know, this is the first instance of its introduction into Mahommedanism. The Hindus have, in some respects, particularly in the South of India, adopted the religious practices of the Mahommedans; but we never before heard that the Mahommedans had fallen into the idolatry of the Hindus. We shall leave the Mahommedan Thugs to furnish their own explanation of this departure from the first doctrine of their faith.

*Q.*—You are a Musulman?

*Sahib.*—Yes, and the greater part of the Thugs of the south are Musulmans.

*Q.*—And you still marry, inherit, pray, eat and drink, according to the Koran; and your paradise is to be the paradise promised by Mahommud?

*Sahib.*—Yes, all, all.

*Q.*—Has Bhowanee been anywhere named in the Koran?

*Sahib.*—Nowhere.

Here a Musulman Thug from Hindostan interposed, and said, he thought Bhowanee and Fatima, the daughter of Mahommud, and wife of Alee, were one and the same person; and that it was Fatima who invented the use of the handkerchief to strangle the great demon Rukut-beej-dana; which led to a discussion between him and some of my Musulman native officers, who did not like to find the amiable Fatima converted into a goddess of Thuggee—an 'Iphigenia in Tauris.' The Thug was a sturdy wrangler, and, in the estimation of his associate Thugs, had, I think, the best of the argument.

Q.—Then has Bhowanee anything to do with your paradise ?

*Sahib.*—Nothing.

Q.—She has no influence upon your future state ?

*Sahib.*—None.

Q.—Does Mahommud, your prophet, anywhere sanction crimes like yours, the murder in cold blood of your fellow-creatures, for the sake of their money ?

*Sahib.*—No.

Q.—Does he not say that such crimes will be punished by God in the next world ?

*Sahib.*—Yes.

Q.—Then do you never feel any dread of punishment hereafter ?

*Sahib.*—Never ; we never murder unless the omens are favourable ; and we consider favourable omens as the mandates of the deity.

Q.—What deity ?

*Sahib.*—Bhowanee.

Q.—But Bhowanee, you say, has no influence upon the welfare, or otherwise, of your soul hereafter ?

*Sahib.*—None, we believe ; but she influences our fates in this world, and what she orders in this world we believe that God will not punish in the next.

Deprecatory offerings to Kalee as the Goddess of Destruction, appear to be very general among the Mahommedans.

*Feringeea.*—‘Of course,’ observed a Thug leader to Captain Sleeman, ‘all men worship at her temples.’

Q.—We Sahib log (Europeans) never do.

*Feringeea.*—I mean all Hindus and Musulmans.

Here my Mahommedan officers again interposed, and declared that they never did ; and that it was only the very

lowest order of Musulmans that did. But, unfortunately, these keen observers of passing events had seen the wives of some very respectable Musulmans at Jubulpore, during the time that the small-pox was raging, take their children to her temples, and prostrate them before the images of the Goddess of Destruction. The officers admitted this to be sometimes the case, but pretended that it was unknown to their husbands.

*Sahib Khan and Nasir.*—In the Deccan the greatest Nawabs and officers of State worship at the temples, and prostrate themselves and their children before the image of the goddess when the small-pox or the cholera morbus rages. We have ourselves seen them do it often.

*Q.*—And do they believe you Thugs to be under her special protection ?

*Sahib and Nasir.*—Some of them do, and though they often try to dissuade us from our trade, they are afraid to punish us. Bura Sahib Jemadar, of Madura, had several hundred followers, and used to make valuable presents to Nawab Dollee Khan, who knew how he got them, and offered him a high post with rent-free lands if he would leave off the trade. He would not.

*Q.*—What became of him at last ?

*Sahib and Nasir.*—There was a great Decoit leader of the same name, who had been committing great ravages, and orders were sent by the Nawab to the local officers to blow him away from a gun as soon as they could seize him. They seized Sahib Khan Thug, and blew him away by mistake, before the Nawab got information of the arrest. In a few hours after his death a message came from the Nawab to say that he feared there might be a mistake, and when he heard that Sahib Khan Thug had been blown away, he was much grieved, but said that God must have ordained it, and the fault was not his.

It is even asserted that we have ourselves con-

tributed to the general delusion of this impious worship.

The Thugs, observes Captain Sleeman, and I understand all other Hindus, believe Kalee to have first appeared upon the earth in Calcutta. They believe also that after she had, through the means of the Thugs created by her for the special purpose, destroyed the great demon Rukut-beej-dana at Bindachul, on the eastern extremity of the Vindeya range, she carried the body to Calcutta, and there buried it where her temple now stands. That place they consider to be her favourite seat, where she works more miracles than in all the rest of India. They have got a notion that, in Calcutta, even the Christians attend her worship, and make offerings to her temple ; and I believe the priests have always actually made offerings to her image on great occasions in the name of the Honourable Company, out of the rents of the land with which Government has endowed the temple. European gentlemen and ladies frequently attend the nautches and feasts of her great days in the Durga Pooja ; and as these feasts are part of the religious ceremonies, this innocent curiosity is very liable to be misconstrued by people at a distance from the scene, and should not therefore be indulged. The Hindus have a verse which they often repeat in their invocations. ‘Kalee ! Calcutta walee ! tera buchun na jawe khalee.’ ‘O Kalee, great goddess of Calcutta, may thy promise never be made in vain.’ She is said to delight in the name of Kunkalee, or man-eater, and to be always drinking the blood of men and of demons. They all believe Kalee to have been extremely black, and to have had features so terrifically hideous that no mortal man could dare to look upon them.

The system of Thuggee is made for secrecy. Acting upon the maxim, ‘dead men tell no tales,’

they never rob without first murdering. They never shed blood. In speaking of matters relating to their profession, they use a slang which is understood only by themselves. They never put their victims to death till they have a safe opportunity, even if it should be necessary to follow them hundreds of miles before they obtain one. There are also circumstances peculiar to India, which enable them to carry on the practice with much greater facility there than would be the case in most other countries. These circumstances are thus summed up by Captain Sleeman :—

The practice all over India of sending remittances in the precious metals and jewels, whenever the rate of exchange makes it in the smallest degree profitable to do so, by men on foot and in disguise, without any guard or arms to defend themselves ; the necessity of drawing recruits for our armies from distant provinces, and of granting a certain portion of leave to revisit their homes every year during the hot season, when they set out every morning before daylight in order to avoid the heat of the sun during the day ; the custom of travelling on foot or on small ponies, almost universal among those who have occasion to make long journeys, of whatever rank or condition—their mode of providing and dressing their own food under the shade of trees by the wayside, without that communication with the people of the towns through which they pass, which would enable their friends to trace them when they disappear ; the long tracts of grass and wood jungle through which all the roads pass ; the little appearance of road that is anywhere to be found, and the consequent facility with which they are led aside by by-paths into places suited for murder ; the number of such

places in wood and grass jungles, rivers, ravines, and water-courses by which every road is intersected or bordered ; the unreserved manner in which travellers of the same caste mix and communicate, and the facility with which men can feign different castes ; the right of search everywhere assumed by custom-house officers, which obliges travellers to display the nature and value of the property they carry ; the paucity of commercial intercourse between towns along any of the great lines of road leading from and to the great seats of our civil and military establishments, in a country where every village produces what its population demands, and consumes almost all that it produces save its raw agricultural produce ; the slow rate of transit where all produce is carried upon bullocks, and, consequently, the little chance the assassin has of being overtaken and interrupted in his operations ;—all these, and many other circumstances peculiar to the country, favoured the growth of this system, and caused it to spread from one end of India to the other.

These causes, however, do not lie beneath the surface. If any practice at all approaching in atrocity to that of Thuggee were to be discovered in England, it would be immediately put down by an united effort of the whole people. Those who heard the shout of exultation which ran from street to street in the neighbourhood of the Old Bailey on the evening of the conviction of Bishop and his associates, will be able to form some idea of the way in which a Thug association would be dealt with in England. In India, however, the state of moral feeling is quite different. The Thugs have nothing to fear from public opinion. Instead of being denounced by their neighbours, they are generally

the most popular members of society, owing to their conciliatory manners and the freedom with which they spend their money. The native governments, instead of rooting them out, recognised them as a regular profession, protected them, and levied a fixed tax from them. 'Into whosoever hands the principal Thug settlement at the junction of the Chumbul and Jumna fell, viz. the Nawab Wazeer, the Rana of Gohud, the Rohilla chieftains, the Bhudorea Raja, the Raja of Bhurtpoor, and the Gwalior State, from time immemorial, has a tax of Rs. 24-8 on every house inhabited by the Thugs been levied, and paid to the respective Amils.' What would be thought if the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on opening his next budget, was to announce a poll-tax upon *Burkers* as part of his ways and means! The truth is, that the same religious feeling which leads the Thugs to believe that they are performing a laudable action in murdering travellers who are thrown in their way, while the auspices are favourable, causes them to be regarded without horror by other Hindus. They are supposed only to be doing their duty in that state of life to which God has called them. All Hindus, as well as the Thugs, believe in Kalee; and regarding them as her followers, they respect them, and dread the consequences of being instrumental in their punishment.

Captain Sleeman observes, that 'the want of sympathy between men of different castes, or dif-

ferent places of abode, is, unhappily, the grand characteristic of Indian society; and as long as these assassins forbear to murder in and about the places where they reside, and conciliate or keep in ignorance the local police authorities, they are sure of being cherished as among the dearest members of society.<sup>1</sup> This is perfectly true. In India a universal selfishness prevails. There is no mutual dependence,—no disposition to unite for the accomplishment of objects of common advantage. The ‘royal law of love’ has no prevalence there: nobody thinks of ‘doing unto others as he would be done by.’ The difference between ourselves and the natives in these respects is a constant theme of admiration to them. Great as our intellectual superiority is, it does not make nearly the same impression upon them as our moral superiority does. In regard to natural powers of mind, the natives and ourselves may be much on a level. Even in point of intellectual acquirements, the majority of the English in India have not much to boast of; but the superiority of our moral qualities,—our veracity, our trustworthiness, our mutual dependence, our dis-

<sup>1</sup> The indifference with which the destruction of human life is regarded in India, when it does not affect a member of the same family or village community, is truly astonishing. ‘In Oude,’ Captain Sleeman observes, ‘where the fields are almost all irrigated from wells, the bodies were generally thrown into them; and when the cultivators discovered them, they hardly ever thought it worth while to ask how they got there, so accustomed were they to find them.’

position to unite for the attainment of objects of public interest, even though we may not be ourselves immediately concerned,—is fully admitted by them. Europeans, on their first arrival in India, are often surprised, and somewhat disappointed, at hearing such frequent praise of what appear to them the commonplace qualities of veracity and public spirit. He rather expects to hear our eminence in science and the arts, or our proficiency in war or government, made the subject of eulogy. Experience only can teach that nothing is so truly astonishing to a morally depraved people as the phenomenon of a race of men in whose word perfect confidence may be placed, and who are often ardent in the pursuit of objects in which their own interest is not directly concerned. The natives are conscious of their inferiority in nothing so much as in this. They require to be taught rectitude of conduct much more than literature and science.

In conclusion, we venture to affirm, that nothing which the missionaries have ever alleged against Hinduism is half so damning as the evidence which this book contains. We have here the extraordinary spectacle of a religion which is professedly directed to promote, not the peace and happiness, but the destruction of the human race. Other religions have had their abuses; but the essence of the religion of Kalee is pure, unmixed evil. She presides over a system of murder; and is represented as having made

a grant of half the human race to her votaries the Thugs, to be slaughtered by them according to certain prescribed forms.

We should merely weaken the effect of such a disclosure as that which we have made, were we to go through the long catalogue of Hindu gods or goddesses and to mention the vices which are under the special patronage of each. To what an extent such a mythology must operate to taint the morals of the people, it is hardly necessary to say. Almost every false religion has paid court to some of the bad passions of mankind. But neither in Greece, in Carthage, nor in Scandinavia, was superstition ever so diametrically opposed to morality as in India at the present day. If we were to form a graduated scale of religions, that of Christ and that of Kalee would be the opposite extremes.

It must be perfectly obvious, that the application of force can only be a temporary and partial remedy for Thuggee, and the other evils which spring from a false belief. Some are not cognisable by the laws, and those which are can be kept down only whilst the law is vigorously executed; which cannot be always depended on. If the noxious seed is left in the ground, it will spring up again whenever circumstances are favourable. Happily a more efficacious remedy is not wanting. Some time ago a young Hindu who had received a liberal English education was persecuted by his friends for neglecting

idol worship. Having been forced to the shrine of Kalee, he took off his cap, made a low bow to 'Madam Kalee,' and said he 'hoped her ladyship was well.' An Indian boy educated as we are can no more believe in Kalee than we can ourselves. Minds which have been imbued from childhood with the literature and science of Europe cannot return to the absurdities which Bishop Heber found the Professors of the Government Sanscrit College at Benares engaged in teaching, in 1824. Since that time, we are happy to say, a salutary change has taken place. The upper and middle classes are now generally anxious for European instruction. Many new seminaries have been opened by the Government at the principal stations; and several thousand youths are actively engaged in the study of English. As an instance of the prevailing taste, we may mention, that when a new College was lately opened at Hoogly, in which means of instruction in Oriental and Western learning were provided in equal proportions, 1,100 students flocked to the English, while only 300 applied for admission to the Oriental department. Under such circumstances may we not look forward with confidence to that national regeneration which the gradual infusion of English literature, English science, and English morals into the mass of Indian society must produce at no distant period?













