

T H E
LAND OF THE VEDA:

BEING
PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

OF
INDIA;

ITS PEOPLE, CASTES, THUGS, AND FAKIRS;

ITS RELIGIONS, MYTHOLOGY, PRINCIPAL MONUMENTS, PALACES, AND
MAUSOLEUMS:

TOGETHER WITH THE

Incidents of the Great Sepoy Rebellion,

AND ITS RESULTS TO CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION

With a Map of India, and 42 Illustrations.

ALSO, STATISTICAL TABLES OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS, AND A GLOSSARY OF INDIAN
TERMS USED IN THIS WORK AND IN MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE.

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SEVENTH THOUSAND.

NEW YORK:
PHILLIPS & HUNT.
CINCINNATI:
CRANSTON & STOWE.

partment" was Colonel Williams—he whom Government employed to take the evidence of the Cawnpore Massacre. A number of ladies, among whom was Mrs. Havelock, the General's sister-in-law, expressed a desire to visit the Taj that afternoon. The courteous Colonel offered to escort us, and on our return casually remarked, as we crossed the road from the Taj, "Come, and I will show you something else." So he turned down an ominous-looking portal, and we followed him through the guarded gate into a square with high walls, and thence by a gloomy passage into another inclosed court, where were a group of some of the most awful-looking men that I had ever seen. The Colonel coolly remarked, "These are some of my pets." In a moment we realized where we were standing, three gentlemen and a party of ladies unguarded, in the very presence of nearly two hundred Thugs! It made one's flesh creep. The feeling was dreadful, and the situation was not at all relieved, when, in retiring again through the long, dark passage, a number of these wretches came clanking close after us, to plead in the outer court for some concession from the Colonel. The ladies of the party could hardly forgive our gallant escort for the trick he played upon them in leading them into such a presence, and that, too, after coming out of the Taj. It seemed like leaving paradise and descending into hell among those who, in chains and darkness, await the judgment of the great day!

The Colonel permitted a photograph to be taken of some of the most notorious of his collection. They were unshackled, and brought into the parlor of the prison for the purpose. He pointed out one man (the one in front, on the left hand in the picture) who had confessed to having committed *thirty* murders, and who had given him the details of each! And yet every one of these heartless villains were let loose upon society when the Sepoys rose, and since the suppression of the Rebellion the Thuggee Department has had a busy time in ferreting them out and recapturing them.

Sixty years ago these men plied their dreadful trade almost unmolested. The native Governments could not cope with them.

They infested the public roads disguised as merchants, travelers, and Fakirs, but always in gangs, each man knowing his part of the service when the moment came for action.

If any thing further were possible to add a more damning character to these deeds of blood it is found in the fact that Hindoo Thuggeeism has dared to add a *divine* acquiescence to these practices; for their abominable creed has furnished a suitable patron to accept and delight in the groans and dying agonies of their wretched victims.

The consort of Shiva—the third member of the Hindoo Trimurti—the female Moloch, to whose horrid appetite for blood, and hunger for the human lives on which she is represented as feeding, with a desire that is insatiate, is the being to appease and gratify whom the benighted mothers of India have for ages sacrificed their daughters' lives, and her adorers, these Thugs, have strangled the thousands whom they have immolated. Her name is *Kalee*. She is the most popular deity of Bengal—the etymology of the name of the metropolis of India being derived from her designation and shrine—Kalee, and Ghat, a place of ablution—Kalee's-ghat—hence Calcutta.

Of this abominable idol the *Kalika Purana* declares, in describing her appetite for blood and carnage: "If a devotee should scorch some member of his body by applying a burning lamp, the act would be very acceptable to the goddess; if he should draw some of his blood and present it, it would be still more delectable; if he should cut off some portion of his own flesh and present it as a burnt-offering, that would be most grateful of all. But if the worshiper should present her a whole burnt-offering, it would prove acceptable to her in proportion to the supposed importance of the animated beings thus immolated—that, for instance, by the blood of fishes or tortoises, the goddess is gratified for a whole month after; a crocodile's blood will please her three months; that of certain wild animals nine months; a guana's, a year; an antelope's, twelve years; a rhinoceros's, or tiger's blood, for a hundred years; but the blood of a lion, or a *man*, will delight her appetite for a

thousand years ! while by the blood of three men, slain in sacrifice, she is pleased a hundred thousand years !”

This is the patroness of these Thugs, these professional murderers, who, when their victim is in the agonies of strangulation beneath their knees, on the ground, are engaging in acts of prayer—offering to Kalee the life that is passing away—and to this abomination, thus said to feed on the human soul, have the mothers of India for ages immolated their daughters !

So popular is she and her worship, that even the English Government cannot keep the public offices open during the term of the “Durga-Poojah” holy days, from the first to the thirteenth of October, for all Calcutta then runs mad upon this idolatry. I have seen her image, larger than the human form, painted blue, with her tongue represented as dripping with gore upon her chin, her bosom covered with a necklace of human skulls, and her many arms each bearing a murderous weapon, carried in proud procession through the streets of Calcutta during those holidays, accompanied by bands of music and tens of thousands of frantic followers.

Of this teaching and worship Thuggeeism was the natural result, combining rapine with religion, the service of their goddess with love of plunder—the life for her, the booty for themselves. It raised ruffianism to the dignity of a fulfillment of duty, and swelled the numbers of these religious murderers to a fearful height, till the public thoroughfares were haunted by these wretches, as well as by the brigands and plunderers who imitated them in their lesser guilt. It was on the discovery of thirty dead bodies in different wells of the Doab, (when these assassins had grown to be so reckless in their work that they were ceasing to act with their usual caution in burying and concealing the bodies of their victims,) that Thuggeeism was first brought to the knowledge of the English Government in 1810 ; and so determined were the measures taken by them for its suppression, and so faithfully have they since been followed up, that the Thug had to disappear from the roads of British India, and confine his limited depredations within the