

In Sind little detail was observed in abstracting information respecting caste. In the Bombay presidency 84% of the people are Hindus. Caste is not discussed elaborately in the Digest of the census, but incidentally the views of Mr. Ibbetson as to the close relation of occupation, tribe, religion, and caste, are sustained by the unnamed official who prepared the Digest. Among the 200 pages of tables, one table shows 'Class and name of caste,' 'Hereditary occupation,' ratios occupied in certain general pursuits, and, under 'Remarks,' more definitely the numbers actually occupied in pursuits not hereditary. The largest caste is the Kunbi, or cultivators, of the Maratha districts, and next the Mahar and Dhed, unclean castes, village servants. Brahmans and Rajputs lead socially. Over 830 castes are recognized, the forty-page index for which, unfortunately, was not bound in the copy of the Digest at hand. Mr. Bourdillon (Bengal) avoids discussion of caste farther than it was necessary for general tabulation of caste enumeration. He quotes the instructions of the census committee of India in this:—

We have no hesitation in saying that there is no part of the work of compilation which presents so many difficulties, involves so much labor, and at the same time is so unsatisfactory when completed, as the working-up of the caste tables."

The committee did not encourage minute research as to caste, and it is only by a sort of cross-examination that we can trace Mr. Bourdillon's views as compared with Mr. Ibbetson's. Under caste, however, he speaks of "the interest of the caste question being much more ethnological than statistical," — the race idea. The Bengal tables deal only with 'Hindu castes;' but Mr. Bourdillon tells us, under 'Religions,' that

The term 'Hindu' now denotes neither a creed nor a race, neither a church nor a people, but is a general expression devoid of precision, and embracing alike the most punctilious disciple of pure Vedantism, the agnostic youth who is the product of western education, and the semi-barbarous hillman who eats without scruple any thing . . . and is as ignorant of the Hindu theology as the stone which he worships in times of danger.

And he quotes approvingly from Mr. Beverley:—

So does the Hindu religion in Bengal assume a Protean form, from the austere rites practised by the shaven pundits of Nuddea to the idol-worship of the semi-barbarous Boona. The Bauris . . . are probably all of aboriginal extraction, but have adopted as their religion a form of Hinduism, and can scarcely be classed as other than Hindus.

In chapter ix., after stating that the Gwalla or the cowherd caste is largest, Brahmin second in numbers, Kaibarthas (husbandmen of lower Bengal) third, Mr. Beverley says, "The Koch, who occupy the fourth place, afford a striking example of the way in which Hinduism is replenished," and goes on to explain how a people, once with a language and a religion, as well as a government, of its own, has been absorbed by Islamism and Hinduism, in which latter the converts are, to all intents and purposes, low-caste Hindus. Many names are given that are to be interpreted as occupation or as castes interchangeably, and heredity of caste and of occupation is distinctly named. Under 'Religion' Mr. Beverley gives a general statement of absorption of aboriginal tribes into Hinduism, their ruling classes being absorbed into the warrior caste, while the common people became low-caste Hindus.

The principal point on which there may be a diversity of view as to caste between the census officers is as to its existence among non-Hindu peoples. There is no evidence of antagonism in their general views, and it is not clear that there would not be essential harmony if each wrote fully on the subject.

Other provincial census reports should shortly be received from India, to aid our investigations. Meantime we may recognize some suggestions of caste in the relations of race, occupation, and social position, among western nations. In more than one locality in the United States a lady finds that her cook will not make a bed, the chambermaid will not dress the infant, the nurse will not broil a steak, and, with a houseful of servants, no one will clean the clothes, which are sent to a washerwoman. Actual scavengers have hardly higher social rank in America than in India, where distinction, varying here with daily changes of wealth and of occupation, become moulded into family and religious permanence.

Mr. Ibbetson reminds us that "William Priest, John King, Edward Farmer, and James Smith are but the survivals in England of the four *Varnas* of Menu."

PALMISTRY.

Handbook of modern palmistry. By Prof. V. DE METZ. 2d ed., with 8 illustrations. New York, Thompson and Moreau, pr. [1883.] 8+130 p. 16°.

ALTHOUGH written apparently with something curiously like an honest intent, this book is a piece of absurd claptrap, — utterly irrelevant

deductions from monstrous assumptions, affectations of impossible learning mingled with a mass of mere jargon, calculated to sound like science to the vulgar. The whole makes such a farrago as might of itself send its writer to the lunatic-asylum, in which he would certainly prove a distinguished ornament—that is, if he is honest in his madness. Still, those who are minded to find ‘sermons in stones, and good in every thing,’ may get useful matter for reflection from it.

First, he may learn that the palmist art of divination is one of the oldest and most widespread, as well as the longest to survive, of superstitions. It is perhaps natural that men should try to make some interpretations of the curiously varied lines of the human hand. It would be easy for a primitive people to frame a fancy that the likeness, and at the same time the variety, of the lines in the hands of men, had something akin to the like and the unlike elements of all men’s lives. It was, perhaps, from the ever-present longing for light on the great mystery, that some one of old hit on the conjecture that these lines that toil gives to the hand were prophecies of the life that the mortal was to lead. There at once sprang up systems of interpretation less apparently scientific than those of the astrologers, yet quite as credible, and winning as much credence in the olden time as did the predictions of the star science. There was a great mass of superstition of this same general nature afloat among all early peoples. Astrology, from the largeness of its claims, and the dignity of its pretended subject-matter, the action of the stars, has always held the first place in the hierarchy of humbugs. Next comes the interpretation of dreams, then divinations by signs, then palmistry, and at last a variety of less determined means of divination, — the flight of birds, the aspect of their entrails, etc. Where these notions have taken any strong hold upon the people, they have certain common features that show them, one and all, to be the bastard brothers of true science. They all rest upon that idea of likeness in nature which precedes the understanding of cause and effect. Man is always ready to find the unexplored clouds of nature ‘very like a whale,’ or ‘backed like a camel,’ at the bidding of any one who will affect superior discernment, and promise him to rend the future’s veil. The more remote the likeness, the more undisciplined men will strain to note it, and, noting, the more implicit their belief in it.

Such books as this mark the remains of the old truth-searching impulse, which, in its first

active shape, gave us superstitions, but which, finally united with a critical spirit, gave us true learning. They indicate a stronger survival of the old spirit of superstition than is commonly supposed to continue in educated communities.

Divination has a higher place in the common mind than most well-trained men are disposed to believe: even in our best educated communities, it is still, as of old, a well-paid profession. In the leading paper of Cambridge, Mass., published within a stone’s throw of the university, a professed divinator has kept for years a large business-like and soberly worded advertisement of his services. The circulation of this paper is not among the lower classes: on the contrary, its principal *clientèle* is among the more intelligent people. The present writer is informed that a good many speculators base their ‘futures’ on the predictions they obtain from these wizards. We have managed to varnish our American people with an appearance of modernism; but our school system, with its imperfect scientific training, makes no efficient battle against these pernicious relics of the past. It leaves the child without that sense of natural law which alone can overthrow such superstitions.

We cannot dismiss these indications of a low state of mind with the grin with which one is disposed to treat them. That a considerable part of our people still believe in witchcraft is indeed a serious matter. The machinery of our modern society rests on the theory that men are guided by a common sense of cause and effect. In any serious turn of affairs, when action must rest on the general rationality of the people, those who support these wizards will prove unfit for trust. Our system of education should be shaped to meet this evil. Children should be forced to see that they live under a reign of law: to leave them longer, with nothing to check this strong inherent tendency to base superstition, is to leave rotten timber in the ship of state.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE ‘cold-wave flag,’ whose use has been inaugurated by the signal-service during the past autumn, is intended to be displayed not only at the regular stations of the signal-service, but also at as many railway-stations and post-offices as possible, in order to spread the widest notice of the coming change of weather. The service cannot at present undertake to provide the flags or to pay for special telegrams to numerous local display-stations; but the cost of the flags (white, six feet square, with a two-foot black square in centre) is moderate, and can easily be borne