ROBERT VANE RUSSELL

THE TRIBES AND CASTES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES OF INDIA, VOLUME 1

Robert Vane Russell

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Russell R.

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Содержание

R. V. Russell
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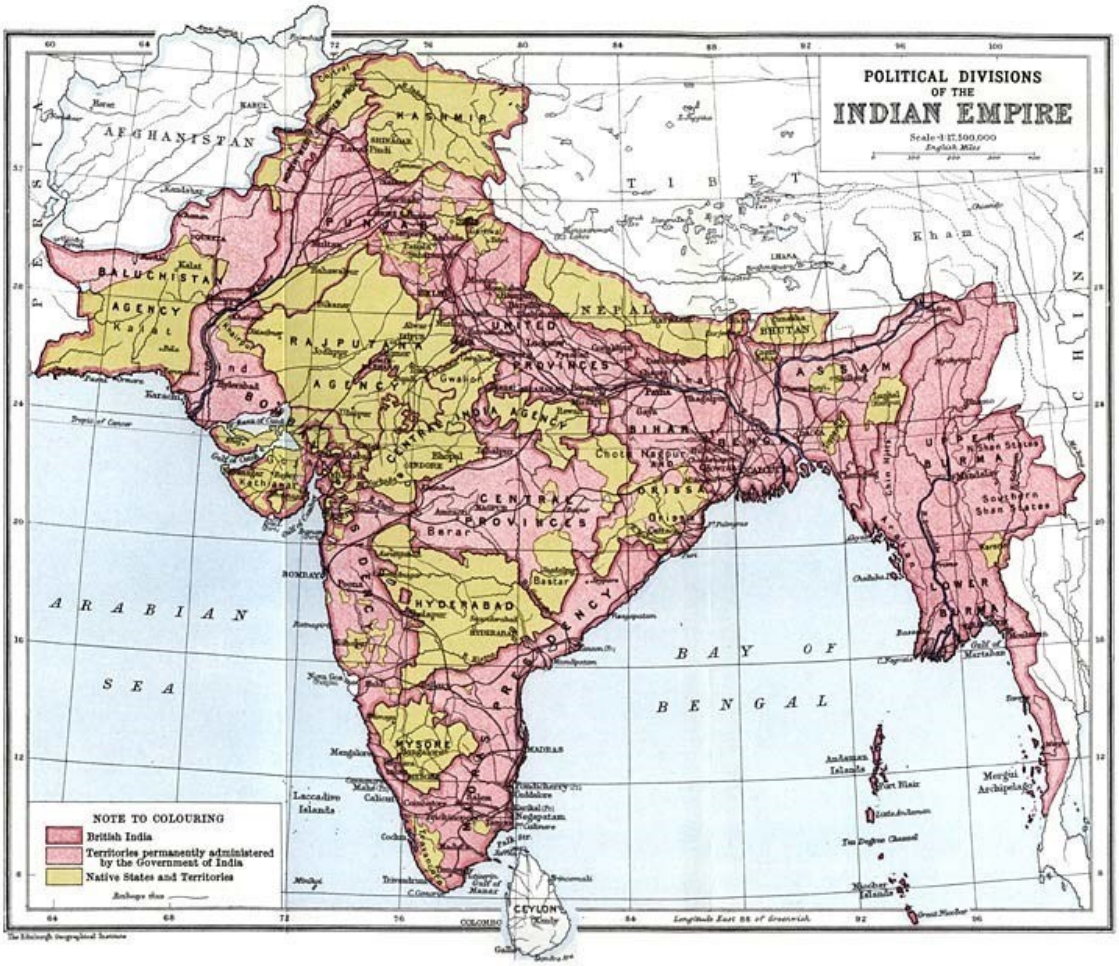
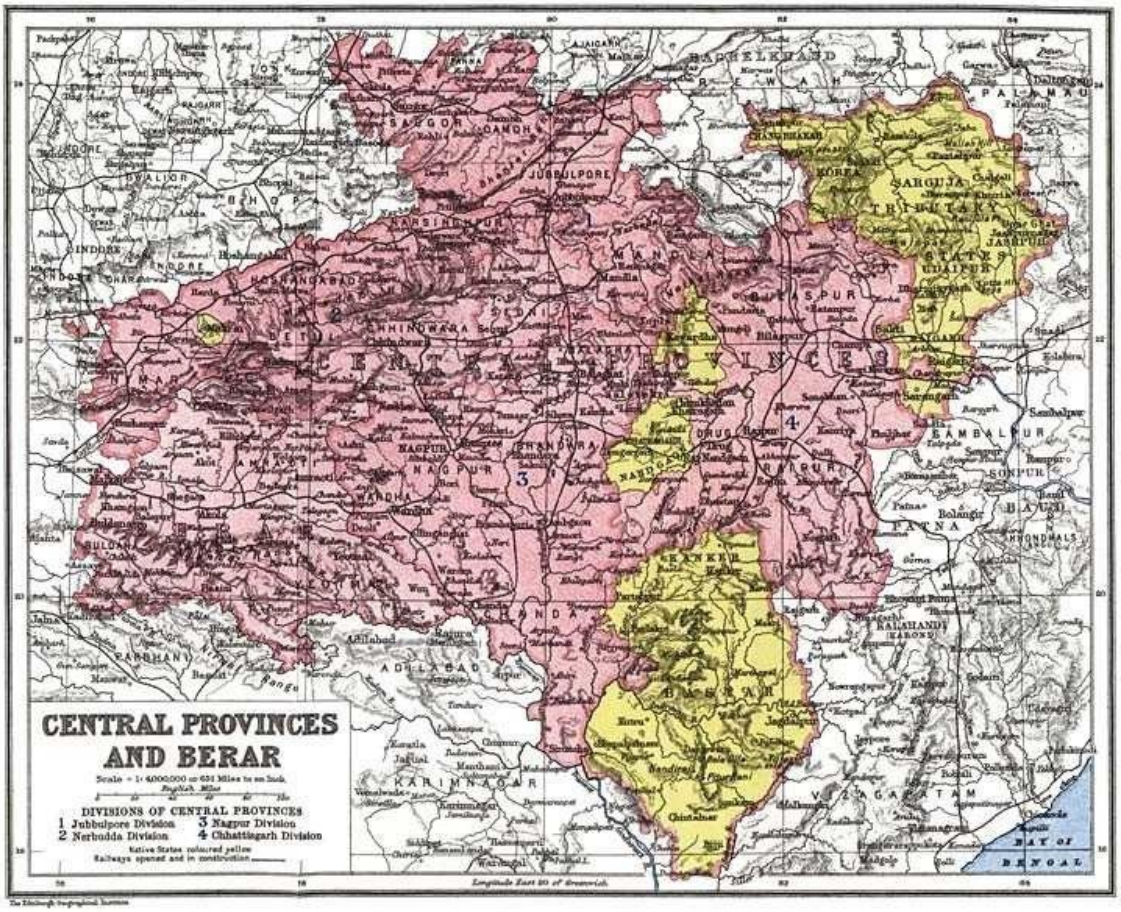
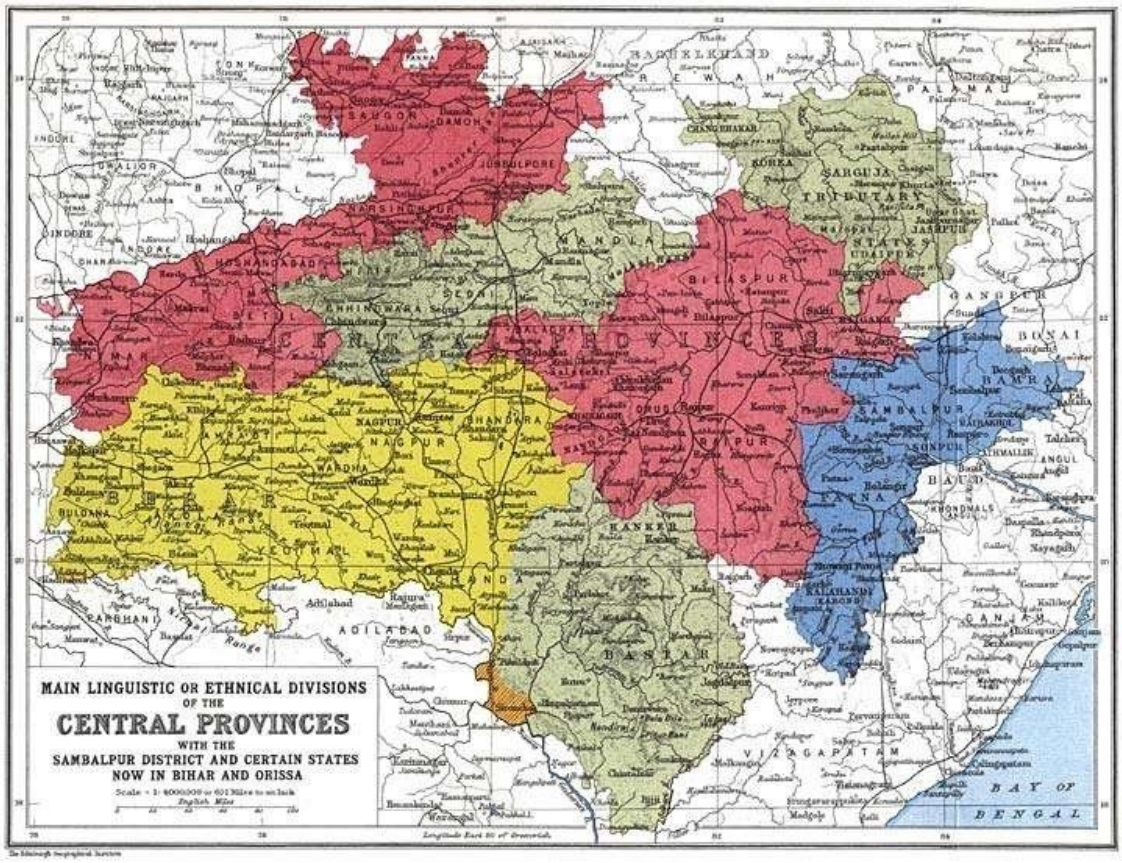


Political Divisions of the Indian Empire
Scale = 1 : 17,500,000



Central Provinces and Berar
Scale = 1 : 4,000,000 or 63.1 Miles to an Inch



Main Linguistic or Ethnical Divisions of the Central Provinces with the Sambalpur District and Certain States now in Bihar and Orissa

Scale = 1 : 4,000,000 or 63.1 Miles to an Inch

HINDI-speaking Districts.—The western tract includes the Saugor, Damoh, Jubbulpore, Narsinghpur, Hoshangabad, Nimar and Betul Districts which lie principally in the Nerbudda Valley or on the Vindhyan Hills north-west of the Valley. In most of this area the language is the Bundeli dialect of Western Hindi, and in Nimar and Betul a form of the Rajputana dialects. The eastern tract includes the Raipur, Bilaspur and Drug Districts and adjacent Feudatory States. This country is known as Chhattisgarh, and the language is the Chhattisgarhi dialect of Eastern Hindi.

MARATHI.—Amraoti, Akola, Buldana and Yeotmal Districts of Berar, and Nagpur, Bhandara, Wardha and Chanda Districts of the Nagpur Plain.

TELUGU.—Sironcha tahsil of Chanda District. Telugu is also spoken to some extent in the adjacent tracts of Chanda and Bastar States.

TRIBAL or Non-Aryan dialects.—Mandla, Seoni, Chhindwara, and part of Balaghat Districts on the Satpura Range in the centre. Sarguja, Jashpur, Udaipur, Korea, and Chang Bhakar States on the Chota Nagpur plateau to the north-east. Bastar and Kanker States and parts of Chanda and Drug Districts on the hill-ranges south of the Mahanadi Valley to the south-east. In these areas the non-Aryan or Kolarian and Dravidian tribes form the strongest element in the population but many of them have abandoned their own languages and speak Aryan vernaculars.

URIYA.—Sambalpur District and Sarangarh, Bamra, Rairakhol, Sonpur, Patna and Kalahandi Feudatory States. This area, with the exception of Sarangarh, no longer forms part of the Central Provinces, having been transferred to Bengal in 1905, and subsequently to the new Province of Bihar and Orissa. It was, however, included in the ethnographic survey for some years, and is often referred to in the text.

Preface

This book is the result of the arrangement made by the Government of India, on the suggestion of the late Sir Herbert Risley, for the preparation of an ethnological account dealing with the inhabitants of each of the principal Provinces of India. The work for the Central Provinces was entrusted to the author, and its preparation, undertaken in addition to ordinary official duties, has been spread over a number of years. The prescribed plan was that a separate account should be written of each of the principal tribes and castes, according to the method adopted in Sir Herbert Risley's *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*. This was considered to be desirable as the book is intended primarily as a work of reference for the officers of Government, who may desire to know something of the customs of the people among whom their work lies. It has the disadvantage of involving a large amount of repetition of the same or very similar statements about different castes, and the result is likely therefore to be somewhat distasteful to the ordinary reader. On the other hand, there is no doubt that this method of treatment, if conscientiously followed out, will produce more exhaustive results than a general account. Similar works for some other Provinces have already appeared, as Mr. W. Crooke's *Castes and Tribes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Mr. Edgar Thurston's *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, and Mr. Ananta Krishna Iyer's volumes on Cochin, while a Glossary for the Punjab by Mr. H.A. Rose has been partly published. The articles on Religions and Sects were not in the original scheme of the work, but have been subsequently added as being necessary to render it a complete ethnological account of the population. In several instances the adherents of the religion or sect are found only in very small numbers in the Province, and the articles have been compiled from standard works.

In the preparation of the book much use has necessarily been made of the standard ethnological accounts of other parts of India, especially Colonel Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rājasthān*, Mr. J.D. Forbes' *Rasmāla or Annals of Gujarāt*, Colonel Dalton's *Ethnology of Bengal*, Dr. Buchanan's *Eastern India*, Sir Denzil Ibbetson's *Punjab Census Report* for 1881, Sir John Malcolm's *Memoir of Central India*, Sir Edward Gait's *Bengal and India Census Reports* and article on Caste in Dr. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Colonel (Sir William) Sleeman's *Report on the Badhaks* and *Rāmāseeāna or Vocabulary of the Thugs,* Mr. Kennedy's *Criminal Classes of the Bombay Presidency*, Major Gunthorpe's *Criminal Tribes of Bombay, Berār and the Central Provinces*, the books of Mr. Crooke and Sir H. Risley already mentioned, and the mass of valuable ethnological material contained in the *Bombay Gazetteer* (Sir J. Campbell), especially the admirable volumes on *Hindus of Gujarāt* by Mr. Bhimbhai Kirpārām, and *Pārsis and Muhammadans of Gujarāt* by Khān Bahādur Fazlullah Lutfullah Faridi, and Mr. Kharsedji Nasarvānji Seervai, J.P., and Khān Bahādur Bāmanji Behrāmji Patel. Other Indian ethnological works from which I have made quotations are Dr. Wilson's *Indian Caste* (*Times* Press and Messrs. Blackwood). Bishop Westcott's *Kabīr and the Kabīrpanth* (Baptist Mission Press, Cawnpore), Mr. Rajendra Lāl Mitra's *Indo-Aryans* (Newman & Co., Calcutta), *The Jainas* by Dr. J.G. Bühler and Mr. J. Burgess, Dr. J.N. Bhattachārya's *Hindu Castes and Sects* (Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta), Professor Oman's *Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India, Cults, Customs and Superstitions of India*, and *Brāhmans, Theists and Muslims of India* (T. Fisher Unwin), Mr. V.A. Smith's *Early History of India* (Clarendon Press), the Rev. T.P. Hughes' *Dictionary of Islām* (W.H. Allen & Co., and Heffer & Sons, Cambridge), Mr. L.D. Barnett's *Antiquities of India*, M. André Chevrillon's *Romantic India*, Mr. V. Ball's *Jungle Life in India*, Mr. W. Crooke's *Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, and *Things Indian*, Captain Forsyth's *Highlands of Central India* (Messrs. Chapman & Hall), Messrs. Yule and Burnell's *Hobson-Jobson* (Mr. Crooke's edition), Professor Hopkins' *Religions of India*, the Rev. E.M. Gordon's *Indian Folk-Tales* (Elliot & Stock), Messrs. Sewell and Dikshit's *Indian Calendar*, Mr. Brennand's *Hindu Astronomy*, and the late Rev. Father P. Dehon's monograph on the Oraons in the *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.

Ethnological works on the people of the Central Provinces are not numerous; among those from which assistance has been obtained are Sir C. Grant's *Central Provinces Gazetteer* of 1871, Rev. Stephen Hislop's *Notes on the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*, Colonel Bloomfield's *Notes on the Baigas*, Sir Charles Elliott's *Hoshangābād Settlement Report*, Sir Reginald Craddock's *Nāgpur Settlement Report*, Colonel Ward's *Mandla Settlement Report*, Colonel Lucie Smith's *Chānda Settlement Report*, Mr. G.W. Gayer's *Lectures on Criminal Tribes*, Mr. C.W. Montgomerie's *Chhindwāra Settlement Report*, Mr. C.E. Low's *Bālāghāt District Gazetteer*, Mr. E.J. Kitts' *Berār Census Report* of 1881, and the *Central Provinces Census Reports* of Mr. T. Drysdale, Sir Benjamin Robertson and Mr. J.T. Marten.

The author is indebted to Sir J.G. Frazer for his kind permission to make quotations from *The Golden Bough* and *Totemism and Exogamy* (Macmillan), in which the best examples of almost all branches of primitive custom are to be found; to Dr. Edward Westermarck for similar permission in respect of *The History of Human Marriage*, and *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (Macmillan); to Messrs. A. & C. Black in respect of the late Professor Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites*; to Messrs. Heinemann for those from M. Salomon Reinach's *Orpheus*; and to Messrs. Hachette et Cie and Messrs. Parker of Oxford for those from *La Cité Antique* of M. Fustel de Coulanges. Much assistance has also been obtained from Sir E. B. Tylor's *Early History of Mankind* and *Primitive Culture*, Lord Avebury's *The Origin of Civilisation*, Mr. E. Sidney Hartland's *Primitive Paternity*, and M. Salomon Reinach's *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*. The labours of these eminent authors have made it possible for the student to obtain a practical knowledge of the ethnology of the world by the perusal of a small number of books; and if any of the ideas put forward in these volumes should ultimately be so fortunate as to obtain acceptance, it is to the above books that I am principally indebted for having been able to formulate them. Other works from which help has been obtained are M. Emile Senart's *Les Castes dans l'Inde*, Professor W. E. Hearn's *The Aryan Household*, and Dr. A.H. Keane's *The World's Peoples*. Sir George Grierson's great work, *The Linguistic Survey of India*, has now given an accurate classification of the non-Aryan tribes according to their languages and has further thrown a considerable degree of light on the vexed question of their origin. I have received from Mr. W. Crooke of the Indian Civil Service (retired) much kind help and advice during the final stages of the preparation of this work. As will be seen from the articles, resort has constantly been made to his *Tribes and Castes* for filling up gaps in the local information.

Rai Bahādur Hīra Lāl was my assistant for several years in the taking of the census of 1901 and the preparation of the Central Provinces District Gazetteers; he has always given the most loyal and unselfish aid, has personally collected a large part of the original information contained in the book, and spent much time in collating the results. The association of his name in the authorship is no more than his due, though except where this has been specifically mentioned, he is not responsible for the theories and deductions from the facts obtained. Mr. Pyāre Lāl Misra, barrister, Chhindwāra, was my ethnographic clerk for some years, and he and Munshi Kanhya Lāl, late of the Educational Department, and Mr. Adurām Chandhri, Tahsīldār, gave much assistance in the inquiries on different castes. Among others who have helped in the work, Rai Bahādur Panda Baijnāth, Diwān of the Patna and Bastar States, should be mentioned first, and Bābu Kali Prasanna Mukerji, pleader, Saugor, Mr. Gopāl Datta Joshi, District Judge, Saugor, Mr. Jeorākhan Lāl, Deputy-Inspector of Schools, and Mr. Gokul Prasād, Tahsīldār, may be selected from the large number whose names are given in the footnotes to the articles. Among European officers whose assistance should be acknowledged are Messrs. C.E. Low, C.W. Montgomerie, A.B. Napier, A.E. Nelson, A.K. Smith, R.H. Crosthwaite and H.F. Hallifax, of the Civil Service; Lt.-Col. W.D. Sutherland, I.M.S., Surgeon-Major Mitchell of Bastar, and Mr. D. Chisholm.

Some photographs have been kindly contributed by Mrs. Ashbrooke Crump, Mrs. Mangabai Kelkar, Mr. G.L. Corbett, C.S., Mr. R.L. Johnston, A.D.S.P., Mr. J.H. Searle, C.S., Mr. Strachey, Mr.

H.E. Bartlett, Professor L. Scherman of Munich, and the Diwān of Raigarh State. Bishop Westcott kindly gave the photograph of Kabīr, which appears in his own book.

Finally I have to express my gratitude to the Chief Commissioner, Sir Benjamin Robertson, for the liberal allotment made by the Administration for the publication of the work; and to the publishers, Messrs. Macmillan & Co., and the printers, Messrs. R. & R. Clark, for their courtesy and assistance during its progress through the press.

September 1915.

Pronunciation

a	has the sound of	**u** in *but* or *murmur*.
ā	has the sound of	**a** in *bath* or *tar*.
e	has the sound of	**é** in *écarté* or **ai** in *maid*.
i	has the sound of	**i** in *bit*, or (as a final letter) of **y** in *sulky*
ī	has the sound of	**ee** in *beet*.
o	has the sound of	**o** in *bore* or *bowl*.
u	has the sound of	**u** in *put* or *bull*.
ū	has the sound of	**oo** in *poor* or *boot*.

The plural of caste names and a few common Hindustāni words is formed by adding *s* in the English manner according to ordinary usage, though this is not, of course, the Hindustāni plural.

Note.—The rupee contains 16 annas, and an anna is of the same value as a penny. A pice is a quarter of an anna, or a farthing. Rs. 1–8 signifies one rupee and eight annas. A lakh is a hundred thousand, and a krore ten million.

Part I.
Introductory Essay on Caste

Introductory Essay on Caste

1. The Central Provinces

The territory controlled by the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces and Berār has an area of 131,000 square miles and a population of 16,000,000 persons. Situated in the centre of the Indian Peninsula, between latitudes 17°47′ and 24°27′ north, and longitudes 76° and 84° east, it occupies about 7.3 per cent of the total area of British India. It adjoins the Central India States and the United Provinces to the north, Bombay to the west, Hyderābād State and the Madras Presidency to the south, and the Province of Bihār and Orissa to the east. The Province was constituted as a separate administrative unit in 1861 from territories taken from the Peshwa in 1818 and the Marātha State of Nāgpur, which had lapsed from failure of heirs in 1853. Berār, which for a considerable previous period had been held on a lease or assignment from the Nizām of Hyderābād, was incorporated for administrative purposes with the Central Provinces in 1903. In 1905 the bulk of the District of Sambalpur, with five Feudatory States inhabited by an Uriya-speaking population, were transferred to Bengal and afterwards to the new Province of Bihār and Orissa, while five Feudatory States of Chota Nāgpur were received from Bengal. The former territory had been for some years included in the scope of the Ethnographic Survey, and is shown coloured in the annexed map of linguistic and racial divisions.

The main portion of the Province may be divided, from north-west to south-east, into three tracts of upland, alternating with two of plain country. In the north-west the Districts of Sangor and Damoh lie on the Vindhyan or Mālwa plateau, the southern face of which rises almost sheer from the valley of the Nerbudda. The general elevation of this plateau varies from 1500 to 2000 feet. The highest part is that immediately overhanging the Nerbudda, and the general slope is to the north, the rivers of this area being tributaries of the Jumna and Ganges. The surface of the country is undulating and broken by frequent low hills covered with a growth of poor and stunted forest. The second division consists of the long and narrow valley of the Nerbudda, walled in by the Vindhyan and Satpūra hills to the north and south, and extending for a length of about 200 miles from Jubbulpore to Handia, with an average width of twenty miles. The valley is situated to the south of the river, and is formed of deep alluvial deposits of extreme richness, excellently suited to the growth of wheat. South of the valley the Satpūra range or third division stretches across the Province, from Amarkantak in the east (the sacred source of the Nerbudda) to Asīrgarh in the Nimār District in the west, where its two parallel ridges bound the narrow valley of the Tapti river. The greater part consists of an elevated plateau, in some parts merely a rugged mass of hills hurled together by volcanic action, in others a succession of bare stony ridges and narrow fertile valleys, in which the soil has been deposited by drainage. The general elevation of the plateau is 2000 feet, but several of the peaks rise to 3500, and a few to more than 4000 feet. The Satpūras form the most important watershed of the Province, and in addition to the Nerbudda and Tapti, the Wardha and Wainganga rivers rise in these hills. To the east a belt of hill country continues from the Satpūras to the wild and rugged highlands of the Chota Nāgpur plateau, on which are situated the five States recently annexed to the Province. Extending along the southern and eastern faces of the Satpūra range lies the fourth geographical division, to the west the plain of Berār and Nāgpur, watered by the Purna, Wardha and Wainganga rivers, and

further east the Chhattīsgarh plain, which forms the upper basin of the Mahānadi. The Berār and Nāgpur plain contains towards the west the shallow black soil in which autumn crops, like cotton and the large millet juāri, which do not require excessive moisture, can be successfully cultivated. This area is the great cotton-growing tract of the Province, and at present the most wealthy. The valleys of the Wainganga and Mahānadi further east receive a heavier rainfall and are mainly cropped with rice. Many small irrigation tanks for rice have been built by the people themselves, and large tank and canal works are now being undertaken by Government to protect the tract from the uncertainty of the rainfall. South of the plain lies another expanse of hill and plateau comprised in the zarmīndāri estates of Chānda and the Chhattīsgarh Division and the Bastar and Kanker Feudatory States. This vast area, covering about 24,000 square miles, the greater part of which consists of dense forests traversed by precipitous mountains and ravines, which formerly rendered it impervious to Hindu invasion or immigration, producing only on isolated stretches of culturable land the poorer raincrops, and sparsely peopled by primitive Gonds and other forest tribes, was probably, until a comparatively short time ago, the wildest and least-known part of the whole Indian peninsula. It is now being rapidly opened up by railways and good roads.

2. Constitution of the population

Up to a few centuries ago the Central Provinces remained outside the sphere of Hindu and Muhammadan conquest. To the people of northern India it was known as Gondwāna, an unexplored country of inaccessible mountains and impenetrable forests, inhabited by the savage tribes of Gonds from whom it took its name. Hindu kingdoms were, it is true, established over a large part of its territory in the first centuries of our era, but these were not accompanied by the settlement and opening out of the country, and were subsequently subverted by the Dravidian Gonds, who perhaps invaded the country in large numbers from the south between the ninth and twelfth centuries. Hindu immigration and colonisation from the surrounding provinces occurred at a later period, largely under the encouragement and auspices of Gond kings. The consequence is that the existing population is very diverse, and is made up of elements belonging to many parts of India. The people of the northern Districts came from Bundelkhand and the Gangetic plain, and here are found the principal castes of the United Provinces and the Punjab. The western end of the Nerbudda valley and Betūl were colonised from Mālwa and Central India. Berār and the Nāgpur plain fell to the Marāthas, and one of the most important Marātha States, the Bhonsla kingdom, had its capital at Nāgpur. Cultivators from western India came and settled on the land, and the existing population are of the same castes as the Marātha country or Bombay. But prior to the Marātha conquest Berār and the Nimar District of the Central Provinces had been included in the Mughal empire, and traces of Mughal rule remain in a substantial Muhammadan element in the population. To the south the Chānda District runs down to the Godāvari river, and the southern tracts of Chānda and Bastar State are largely occupied by Telugu immigrants from Madras. To the east of the Nāgpur plain the large landlocked area of Chhattīsgarh in the upper basin of the Mahānadi was colonised at an early period by Hindus from the east of the United Provinces and Oudh, probably coming through Jubbulpore. A dynasty of the Haihaivansi Rājpūt clan established itself at Ratanpur, and owing to the inaccessible nature of the country, protected as it is on all sides by a natural rampart of hill and forest, was able to pursue a tranquil existence untroubled by the wars and political vicissitudes of northern India. The population of Chhattīsgarh thus constitutes to some extent a distinct social organism, which retained until quite recently many remnants of primitive custom. The middle basin of the Mahānadi to the east of Chhattīsgarh, comprising the Sambalpur District and adjoining States, was peopled by Uriyas from Orissa, and though this area has now been restored to its parent province, notices of its principal castes have been included in these volumes. Finally, the population contains a large element of the primitive or non-Aryan tribes, rich in variety, who have retired before the pressure of Hindu cultivators to

its extensive hills and forests. The people of the Central Provinces may therefore not unjustly be considered as a microcosm of a great part of India, and conclusions drawn from a consideration of their caste rules and status may claim with considerable probability of success to be applicable to those of the Hindus generally. For the same reason the standard ethnological works of other Provinces necessarily rank as the best authorities on the castes of the Central Provinces, and this fact may explain and excuse the copious resort which has been made to them in these volumes.

3. The word 'Caste.'

The word 'Caste,' Dr. Wilson states,[1] is not of Indian origin, but is derived from the Portuguese *casta*, signifying race, mould or quality. The Indian word for caste is *jāt* or *jāti*, which has the original meaning of birth or production of a child, and hence denotes good birth or lineage, respectability and rank. *Jātha* means well-born. Thus *jāt* now signifies a caste, as every Hindu is born into a caste, and his caste determines his social position through life.

4. The meaning of the term 'Caste.'

The two main ideas denoted by a caste are a community or persons following a common occupation, and a community whose members marry only among themselves. A third distinctive feature is that the members of a caste do not as a rule eat with outsiders with the exception of other Hindu castes of a much higher social position than their own. None of these will, however, serve as a definition of a caste. In a number of castes the majority of members have abandoned their traditional occupation and taken to others. Less than a fifth of the Brāhmans of the Central Provinces are performing any priestly or religious functions, and the remaining four-fifths are landholders or engaged in Government service as magistrates, clerks of public offices, constables and orderlies, or in railway service in different grades, or in the professions as barristers and pleaders, doctors, engineers and so on. The Rājpūts and Marāthas were originally soldiers, but only an infinitely small proportion belong to the Indian Army, and the remainder are ruling chiefs, landholders, cultivators, labourers or in the various grades of Government service and the police. Of the Telis or oil-pressers only 9 per cent are engaged in their traditional occupation, and the remainder are landholders, cultivators and shopkeepers. Of the Ahīrs or graziers only 20 per cent tend and breed cattle. Only 12 per cent of the Chamārs are supported by the tanning industry, and so on. The Bahnas or cotton-cleaners have entirely lost their occupation, as cotton is now cleaned in factories; they are cartmen or cultivators, but retain their caste name and organisation. Since the introduction of machine-made cloth has reduced the profits of hand-loom weaving, large numbers of the weaving castes have been reduced to manual labour as a means of subsistence. The abandonment of the traditional occupation has become a most marked feature of Hindu society as a result of the equal opportunity and freedom in the choice of occupations afforded by the British Government, coupled with the rapid progress of industry and the spread of education. So far it has had no very markedly disintegrating effect on the caste system, and the status of a caste is still mainly fixed by its traditional occupation; but signs are not wanting of a coming change. Again, several castes have the same traditional occupation; about forty of the castes of the Central Provinces are classified as agriculturists, eleven as weavers, seven as fishermen, and so on. Distinctions of occupation therefore are not a sufficient basis for a classification of castes. Nor can a caste be simply defined as a body of persons who marry only among themselves, or, as it is termed, an endogamous group; for almost every important caste is divided into a number of subcastes which do not marry and frequently do not eat with each other. But it is a distinctive and peculiar feature of caste as a social institution that it splits up the people into a multitude of these divisions and

[1] *Indian Caste*, p. 12.

bars their intermarriage; and the real unit of the system and the basis of the fabric of Indian society is this endogamous group or subcaste.

5. The subcaste

The subcastes, however, connote no real difference of status or occupation. They are little known except within the caste itself, and they consist of groups within the caste which marry among themselves, and attend the communal feasts held on the occasions of marriages, funerals and meetings of the caste *panchāyat* or committee for the judgment of offences against the caste rules and their expiation by a penalty feast; to these feasts all male adults of the community, within a certain area, are invited. In the Central Provinces the 250 groups which have been classified as castes contain perhaps 2000 subcastes. Except in some cases other Hindus do not know a man's subcaste, though they always know his caste; among the ignorant lower castes men may often be found who do not know whether their caste contains any subcastes or whether they themselves belong to one. That is, they will eat and marry with all the members of their caste within a circle of villages, but know nothing about the caste outside those villages, or even whether it exists elsewhere. One subdivision of a caste may look down upon another on the ground of some difference of occupation, of origin, or of abstaining from or partaking of some article of food, but these distinctions are usually confined to their internal relations and seldom recognised by outsiders. For social purposes the caste consisting of a number of these endogamous groups generally occupies the same position, determined roughly according to the respectability of its traditional occupation or extraction.

6. Confusion of nomenclature

No adequate definition of caste can thus be obtained from community of occupation or intermarriage; nor would it be accurate to say that every one must know his own caste and that all the different names returned at the census may be taken as distinct. In the Central Provinces about 900 caste-names were returned at the census of 1901, and these were reduced in classification to about 250 proper castes.

In some cases synonyms are commonly used. The caste of *pān* or betel-vine growers and sellers is known indifferently as Barai, Pansāri or Tamboli. The great caste of Ahīrs or herdsmen has several synonyms—as Gaoli in the Northern Districts, Rawat or Gahra in Chhattīsgarh, Gaur among the Uriyas, and Golkar among Telugus. Lohārs are also called Khāti and Kammāri; Masons are called Larhia, Rāj and Beldār. The more distinctly occupational castes usually have different names in different parts of the country, as Dhobi, Wārthi, Baretha, Chakla and Parit for washermen; Basor, Burud, Kandra and Dhulia for bamboo-workers, and so on. Such names may show that the subdivisions to which they are applied have immigrated from different parts of India, but the distinction is generally not now maintained, and many persons will return one or other of them indifferently. No object is gained, therefore, by distinguishing them in classification, as they correspond to no differences of status or occupation, and at most denote groups which do not intermarry, and which may therefore more properly be considered as subcastes.

Titles or names of offices are also not infrequently given as caste names. Members of the lowest or impure castes employed in the office of Kotwār or village watchmen prefer to call themselves by this name, as they thus obtain a certain rise in status, or at least they think so. In some localities the Kotwārs or village watchmen have begun to marry among themselves and try to form a separate caste. Chamārs (tanners) or Mahars (weavers) employed as grooms will call themselves Sais and consider themselves superior to the rest of their caste. The Thethwār Rāwats or Ahīrs will not clean household cooking-vessels, and therefore look down on the rest of the caste and prefer to call themselves by this designation, as 'Theth' means 'exact' or 'pure,' and Thethwār is one who has not degenerated from

the ancestral calling. Sālewārs are a subcaste of Koshtis (weavers), who work only in silk and hence consider themselves as superior to the other Koshtis and a separate caste. The Rāthor subcaste of Telis in Mandla have abandoned the hereditary occupation of oil-pressing and become landed proprietors. They now wish to drop their own caste and to be known only as Rāthor, the name of one of the leading Rājpūt clans, in the hope that in time it will be forgotten that they ever were Telis, and they will be admitted into the community of Rājpūts. It occurred to them that the census would be a good opportunity of advancing a step towards the desired end, and accordingly they telegraphed to the Commissioner of Jubbulpore before the enumeration, and petitioned the Chief Commissioner after it had been taken, to the effect that they might be recorded and classified only as Rāthor and not as Teli; this method of obtaining recognition of their claims being, as remarked by Sir Bampfylde Fuller, a great deal cheaper than being weighed against gold. On the other hand, a common occupation may sometimes amalgamate castes originally distinct into one. The sweeper's calling is well-defined and under the generific term of Mehtar are included members of two or three distinct castes, as Dom, Bhangi and Chuhra; the word Mehtar means a prince or headman, and it is believed that its application to the sweeper by the other servants is ironical. It has now, however, been generally adopted as a caste name. Similarly, Darzi, a tailor, was held by Sir D. Ibbetson to be simply the name of a profession and not that of a caste; but it is certainly a true caste in the Central Provinces, though probably of comparatively late origin. A change of occupation may transfer a whole body of persons from one caste to another. A large section of the Banjāra caste of carriers, who have taken to cultivation, have become included in the Kunbi caste in Berār and are known as Wanjāri Kunbi. Another subcaste of the Kunbis called Mānwa is derived from the Māna tribe. Telis or oilmen, who have taken to vending liquor, now form a subcaste of the Kalār caste called Teli-Kalār; those who have become shopkeepers are called Teli-Bania and may in time become an inferior section of the Bania caste. Other similar subcastes are the Ahīr-Sunars or herdsmen-goldsmiths, the Kāyasth-Darzis or tailors, the Kori-Chamārs or weaver-tanners, the Gondi Lohārs and Barhais, being Gonds who have become carpenters and blacksmiths and been admitted to these castes; the Mahār Mhālis or barbers, and so on.

7. Tests of what a caste is

It would appear, then, that no precise definition of a caste can well be formulated to meet all difficulties. In classification, each doubtful case must be taken by itself, and it must be determined, on the information available, whether any body of persons, consisting of one or more endogamous groups, and distinguished by one or more separate names, can be recognised as holding, either on account of its traditional occupation or descent, such a distinctive position in the social system, that it should be classified as a caste. But not even the condition of endogamy can be accepted as of universal application; for Vidūrs, who are considered to be descended from Brāhman fathers and women of other castes, will, though marrying among themselves, still receive the offspring of such mixed alliances into the community; in the case of Gosains and Bairāgis, who, from being religious orders, have become castes, admission is obtained by initiation as well as by birth, and the same is the case with several other orders; some of the lower castes will freely admit outsiders; and in parts of Chhattīsgarh social ties are of the laxest description, and the intermarriage of Gonds, Chamārs and other low castes are by no means infrequent. But notwithstanding these instances, the principle of the restriction of marriage to members of the caste is so nearly universal as to be capable of being adopted as a definition.

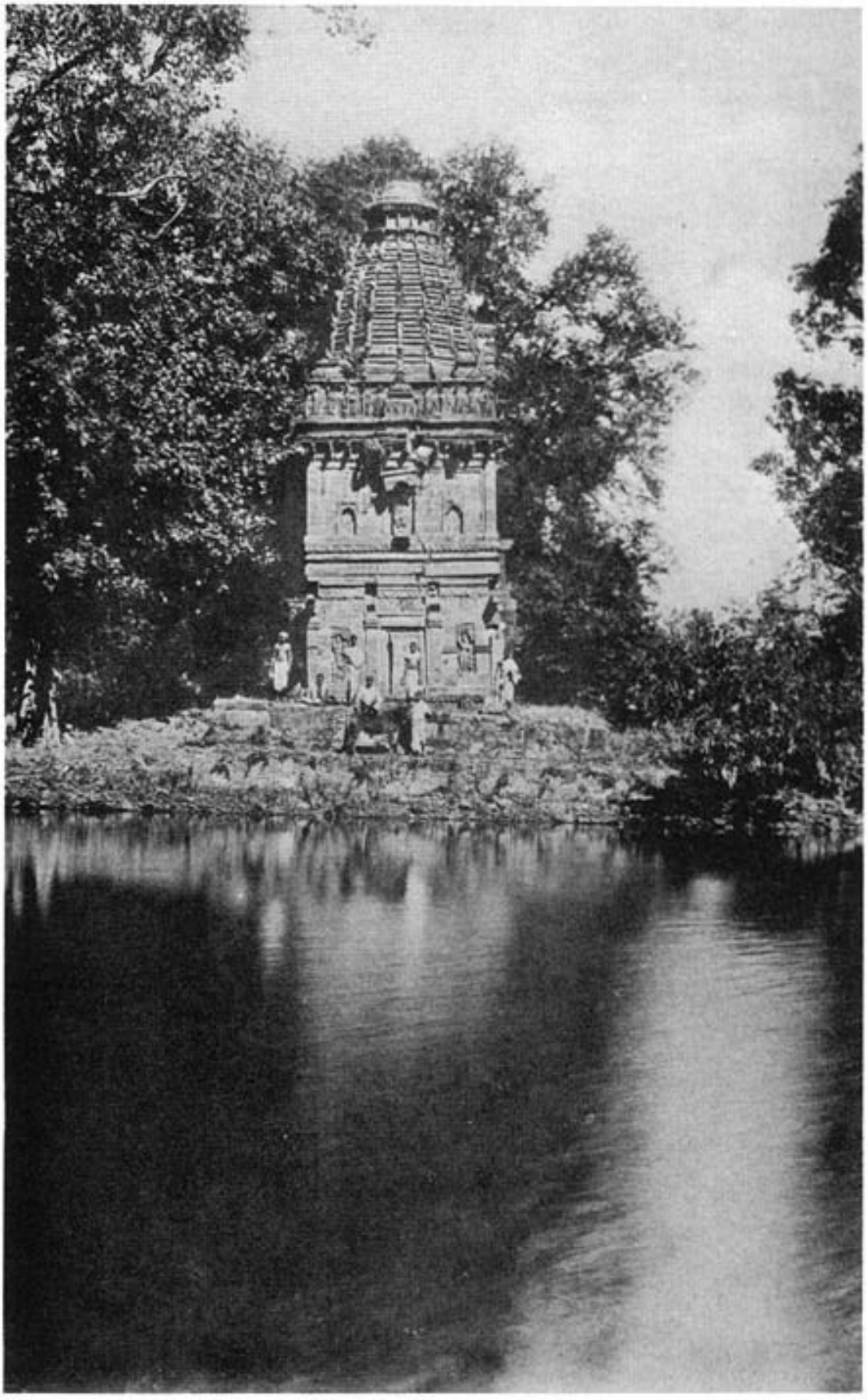
8. The four traditional castes

The well-known traditional theory of caste is that the Aryans were divided from the beginning of time into four castes: Brāhmans or priests, Kshatriyas or warriors, Vaishyas or merchants and

cultivators, and Sūdras or menials and labourers, all of whom had a divine origin, being born from the body of Brahma—the Brāhmans from his mouth, the Kshatriyas from his arms, the Vaishyas from his thighs, and the Sudras from his feet. Intermarriage between the four castes was not at first entirely prohibited, and a man of any of the three higher ones, provided that for his first wife he took a woman of his own caste, could subsequently marry others of the divisions beneath his own. In this manner the other castes originated. Thus the Kaivarttas or Kewats were the offspring of a Kshatriya father and Vaishya mother, and so on. Mixed marriages in the opposite direction, of a woman of a higher caste with a man of a lower one, were reprobated as strongly as possible, and the offspring of these were relegated to the lowest position in society; thus the Chandāls, or descendants of a Sūdra father and Brāhman mother, were of all men the most base. It has been recognised that this genealogy, though in substance the formation of a number of new castes through mixed descent may have been correct, is, as regards the details, an attempt made by a priestly law-giver to account, on the lines of orthodox tradition, for a state of society which had ceased to correspond to them.

9. Occupational theory of caste

In the ethnographic description of the people of the Punjab, which forms the Caste chapter of Sir Denzil Ibbetson's *Census Report* of 1881, it was pointed out that occupation was the chief basis of the division of castes, and there is no doubt that this is true. Every separate occupation has produced a distinct caste, and the status of the caste depends now mainly or almost entirely on its occupation. The fact that there may be several castes practising such important callings as agriculture or weaving does not invalidate this in any way, and instances of the manner in which such castes have been developed will be given subsequently. If a caste changes its occupation it may, in the course of time, alter its status in a corresponding degree. The important Kāyasth and Gurao castes furnish instances of this. Castes, in fact, tend to rise or fall in social position with the acquisition of land or other forms of wealth or dignity much in the same manner as individuals do nowadays in European countries. Hitherto in India it has not been the individual who has undergone the process; he inherits the social position of the caste in which he is born, and, as a rule, retains it through life without the power of altering it. It is the caste, as a whole, or at least one of its important sections or subcastes, which gradually rises or falls in social position, and the process may extend over generations or even centuries.



Hindu temple of the god Siva.

In the *Brief Sketch of the Caste System of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Mr. J.C. Nesfield puts forward the view that the whole basis of the caste system is the division of occupations, and that the social gradation of castes corresponds precisely to the different periods of civilisation during which their traditional occupations originated. Thus the lowest castes are those allied to the primitive occupation of hunting, Pāsi, Bhar, Bahelia, because the pursuit of wild animals was the earliest stage in the development of human industry. Next above these come the fishing castes, fishing being considered somewhat superior to hunting, because water is a more sacred element among Hindus than land, and there is less apparent cruelty in the capturing of fish than the slaughtering of animals; these are the Kahārs, Kewats, Dhīmars and others. Above these come the pastoral castes—Ghosi, Gadaria, Gūjar and Ahīr; and above them the agricultural castes, following the order in which these occupations were adopted during the progress of civilisation. At the top of the system stands the Rājpūt or Chhatri, the warrior, whose duty is to protect all the lower castes, and the Brāhman, who is their priest and spiritual guide. Similarly, the artisan castes are divided into two main groups; the lower one consists of those whose occupations preceded the age of metallurgy, as the Chamārs and Mochis or tanners, Koris or weavers, the Telis or oil-pressers, Kalārs or liquor-distillers, Kumhārs or potters, and Lunias or salt-makers. The higher group includes those castes whose occupations were coeval with the age of metallurgy, that is, those who work in stone, wood and metals, and who make clothing and ornaments, as the Barhai or worker in wood, the Lohār or worker in iron, the Kasera and Thathera, brass-workers, and the Sunār or worker in the precious metals, ranking precisely in this order of precedence, the Sunār being the highest. The theory is still further developed among the trading castes, who are arranged in a similar manner, beginning from the Banjāra or forest trader, the Kunjra or greengrocer, and the Bharbhūnja or grain-parcher, up to the classes of Banias and Khatris or shopkeepers and bankers.

It can hardly be supposed that the Hindus either consciously or unconsciously arranged their gradation of society in a scientific order of precedence in the manner described. The main divisions of social precedence are correctly stated by Mr. Nesfield, but it will be suggested in this essay that they arose naturally from the divisions of the principal social organism of India, the village community. Nevertheless Mr. Nesfield's book will always rank as a most interesting and original contribution to the literature of the subject, and his work did much to stimulate inquiry into the origin of the caste system.

10. Racial Theory

In his Introduction to the *Tribes and Castes of Bengal* Sir Herbert Risley laid stress on the racial basis of caste, showing that difference of race and difference of colour were the foundation of the Indian caste system or division of the people into endogamous units. There seems reason to suppose that the contact of the Aryans with the indigenous people of India was, to a large extent, responsible for the growth of the caste system, and the main racial divisions may perhaps even now be recognised, though their racial basis has, to a great extent, vanished. But when we come to individual castes and subcastes, the scrutiny of their origin, which has been made in the individual articles, appears to indicate that caste distinctions cannot, as a rule, be based on supposed difference of race. Nevertheless Sir H. Risley's *Castes and Tribes of Bengal* and *Peoples of India* will, no doubt, always be considered as standard authorities, while as Census Commissioner for India and Director of Ethnography he probably did more to foster this branch of research in India generally than any other man has ever done.

11. Entry of the Aryans into India. The Aryas and Dasyus

M. Emile Senart, in his work *Les Castes dans l'Inde*, gives an admirable sketch of the features marking the entry of the Aryans into India and their acquisition of the country, from which the following account is largely taken. The institution of caste as it is understood at present did not exist among the Aryans of the Vedic period, on their first entry into India. The word *varna*, literally 'colour,' which is afterwards used in speaking of the four castes, distinguishes in the Vedas two classes only: there are the Arya Varna and the Dasa Varna—the Aryan race and the race of enemies. In other passages the Dasyus are spoken of as black, and Indra is praised for protecting the Aryan colour. In later literature the black race, Krishna Varna, are opposed to the Brāhmans, and the same word is used of the distinction between Aryas and Sūdras. The word *varna* was thus used, in the first place, not of four castes, but of two hostile races, one white and the other black. It is said that Indra divided the fields among his white-coloured people after destroying the Dasyus, by whom may be understood the indigenous barbarian races.[2] The word Dasyu, which frequently recurs in the Vedas, probably refers to the people of foreign countries or provinces like the Goim or Gentiles of the Hebrews. The Dasyus were not altogether barbarians, for they had cities and other institutions showing a partial civilisation, though the Aryas, lately from more bracing climes than those which they inhabited, proved too strong for them.[3] To the Aryans the word Dasyu had the meaning of one who not only did not perform religious rites, but attempted to harass their performers. Another verse says, "Distinguish, O Indra, between the Aryas and those who are Dasyus: punishing those who perform no religious rites; compel them to submit to the sacrifices; be thou the powerful, the encourager of the sacrificer."[4]

Rakshasa was another designation given to the tribes with whom the Aryans were in hostility. Its meaning is strong, gigantic or powerful, and among the modern Hindus it is a word for a devil or demon. In the Satapatha Brāhmana of the white Yajur-Veda the Rakshasas are represented as 'prohibiters,' that is 'prohibiters of the sacrifice.'[5] Similarly, at a later period, Manu describes Aryavarrta, or the abode of the Aryas, as the country between the eastern and western oceans, and between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas, that is Hindustān, the Deccan being not then recognised as an abode of the Aryans. And he thus speaks of the country: "From a Brāhman born in Aryavarrta let all men on earth learn their several usages." "That land on which the black antelope naturally grazes, is held fit for the performance of sacrifices; but the land of Mlechchhas (foreigners) is beyond it." "Let the three first classes (Brāhmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) invariably dwell in the above-mentioned countries; but a Sūdra distressed for subsistence may sojourn wherever he chooses."[6]

Another passage states: "If some pious king belonging to the Kshatriya or some other caste should defeat the Mlechchhas[7] and establish a settlement of the four castes in their territories, and accept the Mlechchhas thus defeated as Chandālas (the most impure caste in ancient Hindu society) as is the case in Aryavarrta, then that country also becomes fit for sacrifice. For no land is impure of itself. A land becomes so only by contact." This passage is quoted by a Hindu writer with the same reference to the Code of Manu as the preceding one, but it is not found there and appears to be a gloss by a later writer, explaining how the country south of the Vindhyas, which is excluded by Manu, should be rendered fit for Aryan settlement.[8] Similarly in a reference in the Brāhmanas to the migration of the Aryans eastward from the Punjab it is stated that Agni the fire-god flashed forth

[2] Dr. Wilson's *Indian Caste* (Times Press and Messrs. Blackwood), 1875, p. 88, quoting from Rig-Veda.

[3] Dr. Wilson's *Indian Caste* (Times Press and Messrs. Blackwood), 1875, p. 88, quoting from Rig-Veda.

[4] Rig-Veda, i. 11. Wilson, *ibidem*, p. 94.

[5] Wilson, *ibidem*, p. 99.

[6] Manu, ii. 17, 24.

[7] Barbarians or foreigners.

[8] See Burnett and Hopkins, *Ordinances of Manu, s.v.*

from the mouth of a priest invoking him at a sacrifice and burnt across all the five rivers, and as far as he burnt Brāhmans could live. Agni, as the god of fire by which the offerings were consumed, was addressed as follows: "We kindle thee at the sacrifice, O wise Agni, the sacrificer, the luminous, the mighty."[9] The sacrifices referred to were, in the early period, of domestic animals, the horse, ox or goat, the flesh of which was partaken of by the worshippers, and the sacred Soma-liquor, which was drunk by them; the prohibition or discouragement of animal sacrifices for the higher castes gradually came about at a later time, and was probably to a large extent due to the influence of Buddhism.

The early sacrifice was in the nature of a communal sacred meal at which the worshippers partook of the animal or liquor offered to the god. The Dasyus or indigenous Indian races could not worship the Aryan gods nor join in the sacrifices offered to them, which constituted the act of worship. They were a hostile race, but the hostility was felt and expressed on religious rather than racial grounds, as the latter term is understood at present.

12. The Sūdra

M. Senart points out that the division of the four castes appearing in post-Vedic literature, does not proceed on equal lines. There were two groups, one composed of the three higher castes, and the other of the Sūdras or lowest. The higher castes constituted a fraternity into which admission was obtained only by a religious ceremony of initiation and investment with the sacred thread. The Sūdras were excluded and could take no part in sacrifices. The punishment for the commission of the gravest offences by a Brāhman was that he became a Sūdra, that is to say an outcast. The killing of a Sūdra was an offence no more severe than that of killing certain animals. A Sūdra was prohibited by the severest penalties from approaching within a certain distance of a member of any of the higher castes. In the Sutras[10] it is declared[11] that the Sūdra has not the right (Adhikāra) of sacrifice enjoyed by the Brāhman, Kshatriya and Vaishya. He was not to be invested with the sacred thread, nor permitted, like them, to hear, commit to memory, or recite Vedic texts. For listening to these texts he ought to have his ears shut up with melted lead or lac by way of punishment; for pronouncing them, his tongue cut out; and for committing them to memory, his body cut in two.[12] The Veda was never to be read in the presence of a Sūdra; and no sacrifice was to be performed for him.[13] The Sūdras, it is stated in the Harivansha, are sprung from vacuity, and are destitute of ceremonies, and so are not entitled to the rites of initiation. Just as upon the friction of wood, the cloud of smoke which issues from the fire and spreads around is of no service in the sacrificial rite, so too the Sūdras spread over the earth are unserviceable, owing to their birth, to their want of initiatory rites, and the ceremonies ordained by the Vedas.[14] Again it is ordained that silence is to be observed by parties of the three sacrificial classes when a Sūdra enters to remove their natural defilements, and thus the servile position of the Sūdra is recognised.[15] Here it appears that the Sūdra is identified with the sweeper or scavenger, the most debased and impure of modern Hindu castes.[16] In the Dharmashāstras or law-books it is laid down that a person taking a Sūdra's food for a month becomes a Sudra and after death becomes a dog. Issue begotten after eating a Sūdra's food is of the Sūdra caste. A person who dies with Sūdra's

[9] Wilson, *Indian Caste*, p. 170, quoting Weber, *Indische Studien*, i. 170.

[10] A collection of rules for sacrifices and other rites, coming between the Vedas and the law-books, and dated by Max Müller between 600–200 B.C.

[11] Wilson, *Indian Caste*, p. 182.

[12] Wilson, p. 184, quoting from Shrauta-sūtra of Kātyayana, 1. 1. 6.

[13] Manu, iv. 99; iii. 178.

[14] Wilson, pp. 421, 422.

[15] Wilson, p. 187, quoting from Hiranyakeshi Sūtra.

[16] See article Mehtar in text.

food in his stomach becomes a village pig, or is reborn in a Sūdra's family.[17] An Arya who had sexual intimacy with a Sūdra woman was to be banished; but a Sūdra having intimacy with an Arya was to be killed. If a Sūdra reproached a dutiful Arya, or put himself on equality with him on a road, on a couch or on a seat, he was to be beaten with a stick.[18] A Brāhman might without hesitation take the property of a Sūdra; he, the Sūdra, had indeed nothing of his own; his master might, doubtless, take his property.[19] According to the Mahābhārata the Sūdras are appointed servants to the Brāhmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.[20] A Brāhman woman having connection with a Sūdra was to be devoured by dogs, but one having connection with a Kshatriya or Vaishya was merely to have her head shaved and be carried round on an ass.[21] When a Brāhman received a gift from another Brāhman he had to acknowledge it in a loud voice; from a Rājanya or Kshatriya, in a gentle voice; from a Vaishya, in a whisper; and from a Sūdra, in his own mind. To a Brāhman he commenced his thanks with the sacred syllable Om; to a king he gave thanks without the sacred Om; to a Vaishya he whispered his thanks; to a Sūdra he said nothing, but thought in his own mind, *svasti*, or 'This is good.'[22] It would thus seem clear that the Sūdras were distinct from the Aryas and were a separate and inferior race, consisting of the indigenous people of India. In the Atharva-Veda the Sudra is recognised as distinct from the Arya, and also the Dasa from the Arya, as in the Rig-Veda.[23] Dr. Wilson remarks, "The aboriginal inhabitants, again, who conformed to the Brāhmanic law, received certain privileges, and were constituted as a fourth caste under the name of Sūdras, whereas all the rest who kept aloof were called Dasyus, whatever their language might be."[24] The Sūdras, though treated by Manu and Hindu legislation in general as a component, if enslaved, part of the Indian community, not entitled to the second or sacramental birth, are not even once mentioned in the older parts of the Vedas. They are first locally brought to notice in the Mahābhārata, along with the Abhīras, dwelling on the banks of the Indus. There are distinct classical notices of the Sūdras in this very locality and its neighbourhood. "In historical times," says Lassen, "their name reappears in that of the town Sudros on the lower Indus, and, what is especially worthy of notice, in that of the people Sudroi, among the Northern Arachosians."[25]

"Thus their existence as a distinct nation is established in the neighbourhood of the Indus, that is to say in the region in which, in the oldest time, the Aryan Indians dwelt. The Aryans probably conquered these indigenous inhabitants first; and when the others in the interior of the country were subsequently subdued and enslaved, the name Sūdra was extended to the whole servile caste. There seems to have been some hesitation in the Aryan community about the actual religious position to be given to the Sūdras. In the time of the liturgical Brāhmanas of the Vedas, they were sometimes admitted to take part in the Aryan sacrifices. Not long afterwards, when the conquests of the Aryans were greatly extended, and they formed a settled state of society among the affluents of the Jumna and Ganges, the Sūdras were degraded to the humiliating and painful position which they occupy in Manu. There is no mention of any of the Sankara or mixed castes in the Vedas."[26]

From the above evidence it seems clear that the Sūdras were really the indigenous inhabitants of India, who were subdued by the Aryans as they gradually penetrated into India. When the conquering race began to settle in the land, the indigenous tribes, or such of them as did not retire before

[17] Wilson, p. 363, quoting from Smriti of Angira.

[18] Wilson, *Indian Caste*, p. 195, from Hiranyakeshi Sūtra.

[19] Manu, viii. 417.

[20] Wilson, p. 260, quoting Mahābhārata, viii. 1367 *et seq.*

[21] Wilson, p. 403, quoting from *Vyavahāra Mayūkha*.

[22] Wilson, p. 400, from Parāshara Smriti.

[23] Wilson, p. 140, quoting from *Atharva Veda*, iv. 32. 1.

[24] Wilson, p. 211.

[25] Wilson, *Indian Caste*, referring to Ptolemy, vii. 1. 61 and vi. 120. 3.

[26] Wilson, pp. 113, 114.

the invaders into the still unconquered interior, became a class of menials and labourers, as the Amalekites were to the children of Israel. The Sūdras were the same people as the Dasyus of the hymns, after they had begun to live in villages with the Aryans, and had to be admitted, though in the most humiliating fashion, into the Aryan polity. But the hostility between the Aryas and the Dasyus or Sūdras, though in reality racial, was felt and expressed on religious grounds, and probably the Aryans had no real idea of what is now understood by difference of race or deterioration of type from mixture of races. The Sūdras were despised and hated as worshippers of a hostile god. They could not join in the sacrifices by which the Aryans renewed and cemented their kinship with their god and with each other; hence they were outlaws towards whom no social obligations existed. It would have been quite right and proper that they should be utterly destroyed, precisely as the Israelites thought that Jehovah had commanded them to destroy the Canaanites. But they were too numerous, and hence they were regarded as impure and made to live apart, so that they should not pollute the places of sacrifice, which among the Aryans included their dwelling-houses. It does not seem to have been the case that the Aryans had any regard for the preservation of the purity of their blood or colour. From an early period men of the three higher castes might take a Sūdra woman in marriage, and the ultimate result has been an almost complete fusion between the two races in the bulk of the population over the greater part of the country. Nevertheless the status of the Sūdra still remains attached to the large community of the impure castes formed from the indigenous tribes, who have settled in Hindu villages and entered the caste system. These are relegated to the most degrading and menial occupations, and their touch is regarded as conveying defilement like that of the Sūdras.[27] The status of the Sūdras was not always considered so low, and they were sometimes held to rank above the mixed castes. And in modern times in Bengal Sūdra is quite a respectable term applied to certain artisan castes which there have a fairly good position. But neither were the indigenous tribes always reduced to the impure status. Their fortunes varied, and those who resisted subjection were probably sometimes accepted as allies. For instance, some of the most prominent of the Rājpūt clans are held to have been derived from the aboriginal[28] tribes. On the Aryan expedition to southern India, which is preserved in the legend of Rāma, as related in the Rāmāyana, it is stated that Rāma was assisted by Hanumān with his army of apes. The reference is generally held to be to the fact that the Aryans had as auxiliaries some of the forest tribes, and these were consequently allies, and highly thought of, as shown by the legend and by their identification with the mighty god Hanumān. And at the present time the forest tribes who live separately from the Hindus in the jungle tracts are, as a rule, not regarded as impure. But this does not impair the identification of the Sūdras with those tribes who were reduced to subjection and serfdom in the Hindu villages, as shown by the evidence here given. The view has also been held that the Sūdras might have been a servile class already subject to the Aryans, who entered India with them. And in the old Pārsi or Persian community four classes existed, the Athornan or priest, the Rathestan or warrior, the Vasteriox or husbandman, and the Hutox or craftsman.[29] The second and third of these names closely resemble those of the corresponding Hindu classical castes, the Rājanya or Kshatriya and the Vaishya, while Athornan, the name for a priest, is the same as Atharvan, the Hindu name for a Brāhman versed in the Atharva-Veda. Possibly then Hutox may be connected with Sūdra, as *h* frequently changes into *s*. But on the other hand the facts that the Sūdras are not mentioned in the Vedas, and that they succeeded to the position of the Dasyus, the black hostile Indians, as well as the important place they fill in the later literature, seem to indicate clearly that they mainly consisted of the indigenous subject tribes. Whether the Aryans

[27] See for the impure castes *para.* 40 *post*.

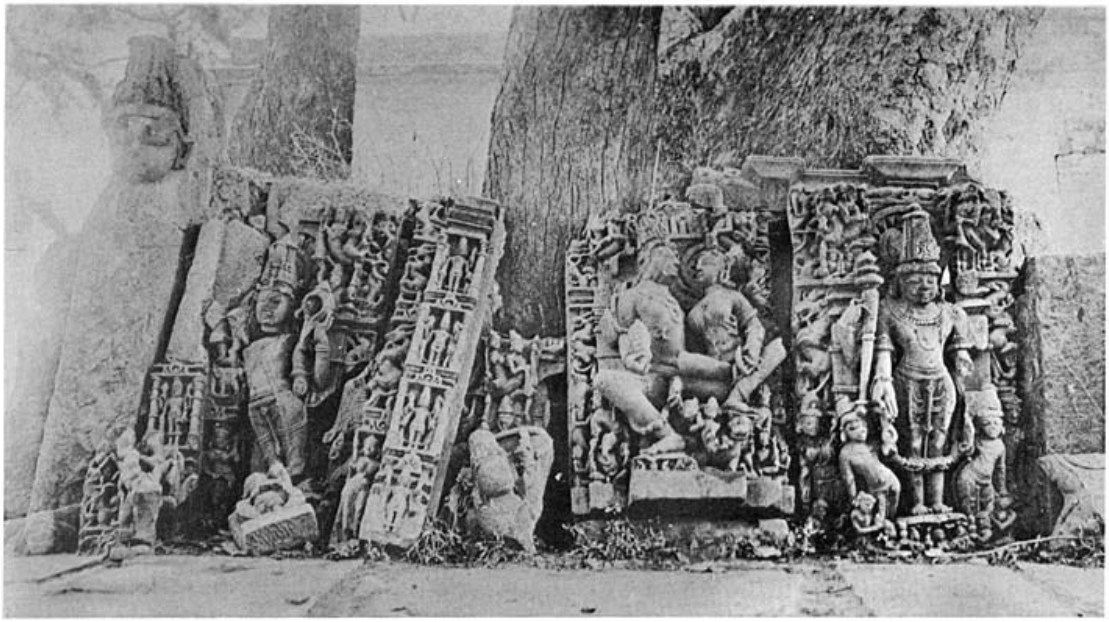
[28] The word "aboriginal" is used here for convenience and not as conveying any assertion as to the origin of the pre-Aryan population.

[29] *Bombay Gazetteer*, *Pārsis of Gujarāt*, p. 213.

applied a name already existing in a servile class among themselves to the indigenous population whom they subdued, may be an uncertain point.

13. The Vaishya

In the Vedas, moreover, M. Senart shows that the three higher castes are not definitely distinguished; but there are three classes—the priests, the chiefs and the people, among whom the Aryans were comprised. The people are spoken of in the plural as the clans who followed the chiefs to battle. The word used is Visha. One verse speaks of the Vishas (clans) bowing before the chief (Rājan), who was preceded by a priest (Brāhman). Another verse says: "Favour the prayer (Brahma), favour the service; kill the Rakshasas, drive away the evil; favour the power (*khatra*) and favour the manly strength; favour the cow (*dherm*, the representative of property) and favour the people (or house, *visha*)."[30]



Hindu sculptures

Similarly Wilson states that in the time of the Vedas, *visha* (related to *vesha*, a house or district) signified the people in general; and Vaishya, its adjective, was afterwards applied to a householder, or that appertaining to an individual of the common people. The Latin *vicus* and the Greek οἶκος are the correspondents of *vesha*.[31] The conclusion to be drawn is that the Aryans in the Vedas, like other early communities, were divided by rank or occupation into three classes—priests, nobles and the body of the people. The Vishas or clans afterwards became the Vaishyas or third classical caste. Before they entered India the Aryans were a migratory pastoral people, their domestic animals being the horse, cow, and perhaps the sheep and goat. The horse and cow were especially venerated, and hence were probably their chief means of support. The Vaishyas must therefore have been herdsmen and shepherds, and when they entered India and took to agriculture, the Vaishyas must have become cultivators. The word Vaishya signifies a man who occupies the soil, an agriculturist, or merchant.[32] The word Vasteriox used by the ancestors of the Pārsis, which appears to correspond to Vaishya, also

[30] Rig-Veda, 6. 3. 16, quoted by Wilson, *Indian Caste*, p. 110.

[31] Wilson, p. 109.

[32] Monier-Williams, Sanskrit Dictionary, pointed out by Mr. Crooke.

signifies a husbandman, as already seen. Dr. Max Müller states: "The three occupations of the Aryas in India were fighting, cultivating the soil and worshipping the gods. Those who fought the battles of the people would naturally acquire influence and rank, and their leaders appear in the Veda as Rājas or kings. Those who did not share in the fighting would occupy a more humble position; they were called Vish, Vaishyas or householders, and would no doubt have to contribute towards the maintenance of the armies.[33] According to Manu, God ordained the tending of cattle, giving alms, sacrifice, study, trade, usury, and also agriculture for a Vaishya."[34] The Sūtras state that agriculture, the keeping of cattle, and engaging in merchandise, as well as learning the Vedas, sacrificing for himself and giving alms, are the duties of a Vaishya.[35] In the Mahābhārata it is laid down that the Vaishyas should devote themselves to agriculture, the keeping of cattle and liberality.[36] In the same work the god Vayu says to Bhishma: "And it was Brahma's ordinance that the Vaishya should sustain the three castes (Brāhman, Kshatriya and Vaishya) with money and corn; and that the Sūdra should serve them."[37]

In a list of classes or occupations given in the White Yajur-Veda, and apparently referring to a comparatively advanced state of Hindu society, tillage is laid down as the calling of the Vaishya, and he is distinguished from the Vāni or merchant, whose occupation is trade or weighing.[38] Manu states that a Brāhman should swear by truth; a Kshatriya by his steed and his weapons; a Vaishya by his cows, his seed and his gold; and a Sūdra by all wicked deeds.[39] Yellow is the colour of the Vaishya, and it must apparently be taken from the yellow corn, and the yellow colour of *ghī* or butter, the principal product of the sacred cow; yellow is also the colour of the sacred metal gold, but there can scarcely have been sufficient gold in the hands of the body of the people in those early times to enable it to be especially associated with them. The Vaishyas were thus, as is shown by the above evidence, the main body of the people referred to in the Vedic hymns. When these settled down into villages the Vaishyas became the householders and cultivators, among whom the village lands were divided; the Sūdras or indigenous tribes, who also lived in the villages or in hamlets adjoining them, were labourers and given all the most disagreeable tasks in the village community, as is the case with the impure castes at present.

14. Mistaken modern idea of the Vaishyas

The demonstration of the real position of the Vaishyas is important, because the Hindus themselves no longer recognise this. The name Vaishya is now frequently restricted to the Bania caste of bankers, shopkeepers and moneylenders, and hence the Banias are often supposed to be the descendants and only modern representatives of the original Vaishyas. Evidence has been given in the article on Bania to show that the existing Bania caste is mainly derived from the Rājpūts. The name Bāni, a merchant or trader, is found at an early period, but whether it denoted a regular Bania caste may be considered as uncertain. In any case it seems clear that this comparatively small caste, chiefly coming from Rājputāna, cannot represent the Vaishyas, who were the main body or people of the invading Aryans. At that time the Vaishyas cannot possibly have been traders, because they alone provided the means of subsistence of the community, and if they produced nothing, there could be no material for trade. The Vaishyas must, therefore, as already seen, have been shepherds and cultivators, since in early times wealth consisted almost solely of corn and cattle. At a later period,

[33] Quoted by Wilson, p. 209. It would seem probable, however, that the Vaishyas must themselves have formed the rank and file of the fighting force, at least in the early period.

[34] Manu, i. 90.

[35] Wilson, *Indian Caste*, p. 193, quoting from Hiranyakeshi Sūtra.

[36] Wilson, p. 260, quoting Mahābhārata, viii. 1367 *et seq*.

[37] Mahābhārata, xii. 2749 *et seq*.

[38] List of classes of Indian society given in the Purusha-Medha of the White Yajur-Veda, Wilson, pp. 126–135.

[39] Manu, viii. 113.

with the increased religious veneration for all kinds of life, agriculture apparently fell into some kind of disrepute as involving the sacrifice of insect life, and there was a tendency to emphasise trade as the Vaishya's occupation in view of its greater respectability. It is considered very derogatory for a Brāhman or Rājpūt to touch the plough with his own hands, and the act has hitherto involved a loss of status: these castes, however, did not object to hold land, but, on the contrary, ardently desired to do so like all other Hindus. Ploughing was probably despised as a form of manual labour, and hence an undignified action for a member of the aristocracy, just as a squire or gentleman farmer in England might consider it beneath his dignity to drive the plough himself. No doubt also, as the fusion of races proceeded, and bodies of the indigenous tribes who were cultivators adopted Hinduism, the status of a cultivator sank to some extent, and his Vaishyan ancestry was forgotten. But though the Vaishya himself has practically disappeared, his status as a cultivator and member of the village community appears to remain in that of the modern cultivating castes, as will be shown subsequently.

15. Mixed unions of the four classes

The settlement of the Aryans in India was in villages and not in towns, and the Hindus have ever since remained a rural people. In 1911 less than a tenth of the population of India was urban, and nearly three-quarters of the total were directly supported by agriculture. Apparently, therefore, the basis or embryo of the gradation of Hindu society or the caste system should be sought in the village. Two main divisions of the village community may be recognised in the Vaishyas or cultivators and the Sūdras or impure serfs and labourers. The exact position held by the Kshatriyas and the constitution of their class are not quite clear, but there is no doubt that the Brāhmans and Kshatriyas formed the early aristocracy, ranking above the cultivators, and a few other castes have since attained to this position. From early times, as is shown by an ordinance of Manu, men of the higher castes or classes were permitted, after taking a woman of their own class for the first wife, to have second and subsequent wives from any of the classes beneath them. This custom appears to have been largely prevalent. No definite rule prescribed that the children of such unions should necessarily be illegitimate, and in many cases no doubt seems to exist that, if not they themselves, their descendants at any rate ultimately became full members of the caste of the first ancestor. According to Manu, if the child of a Brāhman by a Sūdra woman intermarried with Brāhmans and his descendants after him, their progeny in the seventh generation would become full Brāhmans; and the same was the case with the child of a Kshatriya or a Vaishya with a Sūdra woman. A commentator remarks that the descendants of a Brāhman by a Kshatriya woman could attain Brāhmanhood in the third generation, and those by a Vaishya woman in the fifth.[40] Such children also could inherit. According to the Mahābhārata, if a Brāhman had four wives of different castes, the son by a Brāhman wife took four shares, that by a Kshatriya wife three, by a Vaishya wife two, and by a Sūdra wife one share.[41] Manu gives a slightly different distribution, but also permits to the son by a Sūdra wife a share of the inheritance.[42] Thus the fact is clear that the son of a Brāhman even by a Sūdra woman had a certain status of legitimacy in his father's caste, as he could marry in it, and must therefore have been permitted to partake of the sacrificial food at marriage;[43] and he could also inherit a small share of the property.

[40] Hopkin's and Burnett's *Code of Manu,* x. 64, 65, and footnotes.

[41] Mahābhārata, xiii. 2510 *et. seq*., quoted by Wilson, p. 272.

[42] Manu, ix. 149, 157.

[43] Manu indeed declares that such children could not be initiated (x. 68), but it is clear that they must, as a matter of fact, have been capable of initiation or they could not possibly have been married in the father's caste.

16. Hypergamy

The detailed rules prescribed for the status of legitimacy and inheritance show that recognised unions of this kind between men of a higher class and women of a lower one were at one time fairly frequent, though they were afterwards prohibited. And they must necessarily have led to much mixture of blood in the different castes. A trace of them seems to survive in the practice of hypergamy, still widely prevalent in northern India, by which men of the higher subcastes of a caste will take daughters in marriage from lower ones but will not give their daughters in return. This custom prevails largely among the higher castes of the Punjab, as the Rājpūts and Khatris, and among the Brāhmans of Bengal.[44] Only a few cases are found in the Central Provinces, among Brāhmans, Sunārs and other castes. Occasionally intermarriage between two castes takes place on a hypergamous basis; thus Rājpūts are said to take daughters from the highest clans of the cultivating caste of Dāngis. More commonly families of the lower subcastes or clans in the same caste consider the marriage of their daughters into a higher group a great honour and will give large sums of money for a bridegroom. Until quite recently a Rājpūt was bound to marry his daughters into a clan of equal or higher rank than his own, in order to maintain the position of his family. It is not easy to see why so much importance should be attached to the marriage of a daughter, since she passed into another clan and family, to whom her offspring would belong. On the other hand, a son might take a wife from a lower group without loss of status, though his children would be the future representatives of the family. Another point, possibly connected with hypergamy, is that a peculiar relation exists between a man and the family into which his daughter has married. Sometimes he will accept no food or even water in his son-in-law's village. The word *sāla*, signifying wife's brother, when addressed to a man, is also a common and extremely offensive term of abuse. The meaning is now perhaps supposed to be that one has violated the sister of the person spoken to, but this can hardly have been the original significance as *sasur* or father-in-law is also considered in a minor degree an opprobrious term of address.

17. The mixed castes. The village menials

But though among the four classical castes it was possible for the descendants of mixed unions between fathers of higher and mothers of lower caste to be admitted into their father's caste, this would not have been the general rule. Such connections were very frequent and the Hindu classics account through them for the multiplication of castes. Long lists are given of new castes formed by the children of mixed marriages. The details of these genealogies seem to be destitute of any probability, and perhaps, therefore, instances of them are unnecessary. Matches between a man of higher and a woman of lower caste were called *anuloma*, or 'with the hair' or 'grain,' and were regarded as suitable and becoming. Those between a man of lower and a woman of higher caste were, on the other hand, known as *pratiloma* or 'against the hair,' and were considered as disgraceful and almost incestuous. The offspring of such unions are held to have constituted the lowest and most impure castes of scavengers, dog-eaters and so on. This doctrine is to be accounted for by the necessity of safeguarding the morality of women in a state of society where kinship is reckoned solely by male descent. The blood of the tribe and clan, and hence the right to membership and participation in the communal sacrifices, is then communicated to the child through the father; hence if the women are unchaste, children may be born into the family who have no such rights, and the whole basis of society is destroyed. For the same reason, since the tribal blood and life is communicated through males, the birth and standing of the mother are of little importance, and children are, as has been seen, easily admitted to their father's rank. But already in Manu's time the later and present view that both the

[44] See article on Brāhman for some further details.

father and mother must be of full status in the clan, tribe or caste in order to produce a legitimate child, has begun to prevail, and the children of all mixed marriages are relegated to a lower group. The offspring of these mixed unions did probably give rise to a class of different status in the village community. The lower-caste mother would usually have been taken into the father's house and her children would be brought up in it. Thus they would eat the food of the household, even if they did not participate in the sacrificial feasts; and a class of this kind would be very useful for the performance of menial duties in and about the household, such as personal service, bringing water, and so on, for which the Sūdras, owing to their impurity, would be unsuitable. In the above manner a new grade of village menial might have arisen and have gradually been extended to the other village industries, so that a third group would be formed in the village community ranking between the cultivators and labourers. This gradation of the village community may perhaps still be discerned in the main social distinctions of the different Hindu castes at present. And an attempt will now be made to demonstrate this hypothesis in connection with a brief survey of the castes of the Province.

18. Social gradation of castes

An examination of the social status of the castes of the Central Provinces, which, as already seen, are representative of a great part of India, shows that they fall into five principal groups. The highest consists of those castes who now claim to be directly descended from the Brāhmans, Kshatriyas or Vaishyas, the three higher of the four classical castes. The second comprises what are generally known as pure or good castes. The principal mark of their caste status is that a Brāhman will take water to drink from them, and perform ceremonies in their houses. They may be classified in three divisions: the higher agricultural castes, higher artisan castes, and serving castes from whom a Brāhman will take water. The third group contains those castes from whose hands a Brāhman will not take water; but their touch does not convey impurity and they are permitted to enter Hindu temples. They consist mainly of certain cultivating castes of low status, some of them recently derived from the indigenous tribes, other functional castes formed from the forest tribes, and a number of professional and menial castes, whose occupations are mainly pursued in villages, so that they formerly obtained their subsistence from grain-payments or annual allowances of grain from the cultivators at seedtime and harvest. The group includes also some castes of village priests and mendicant religious orders, who beg from the cultivators. In the fourth group are placed the non-Aryan or indigenous tribes. Most of these cannot properly be said to form part of the Hindu social system at all, but for practical purposes they are admitted and are considered to rank below all castes except those who cannot be touched. The lowest group consists of the impure castes whose touch is considered to defile the higher castes. Within each group there are minor differences of status some of which will be noticed, but the broad divisions may be considered as representing approximately the facts. The rule about Brāhmans taking water from the good agricultural and artisan castes obtains, for instance, only in northern India. Marātha Brāhmans will not take water from any but other Brāhmans, and in Chhattīsgarh Brāhmans and other high castes will take water only from the hands of a Rāwat (grazier), and from no other caste. But nevertheless the Kunbis, the great cultivating caste of the Marātha country, though Brāhmans do not take water from them, are on the same level as the Kurmis, the cultivating caste of Hindustān, and in tracts where they meet Kunbis and Kurmis are often considered to be the same caste. The evidence of the statements made as to the origin of different castes in the following account will be found in the articles on them in the body of the work.

19. Castes ranking above the cultivators

The castes of the first group are noted below:

• Bania. • Bhāt. • Brāhman. • Gurao.	• Karan. • Kāyasth and Prabhu. • Khātri. • Rajpūt.

The Brāhmans are, as they have always been, the highest caste. The Rājpūts are the representatives of the ancient Kshatriyas or second caste, though the existing Rājpūt clans are probably derived from the Hun, Gūjar and other invaders of the period before and shortly after the commencement of the Christian era, and in some cases from the indigenous or non-Aryan tribes. It does not seem possible to assert in the case of a single one of the present Rājpūt clans that any substantial evidence is forthcoming in favour of their descent from the Aryan Kshatriyas, and as regards most of the clans there are strong arguments against such a hypothesis. Nevertheless the Rājpūts have succeeded to the status of the Kshatriyas, and an alternative name for them, Chhatri, is a corruption of the latter word. They are commonly identified with the second of the four classical castes, but a Hindu law-book gives Rājapūtra as the offspring of a Kshatriya father and a mother of the Karan or writer caste.[45] This genealogy is absurd, but may imply the opinion that the Rājpūts were not the same as the Aryan Kshatriyas. The Khatris are an important mercantile caste of the Punjab, who in the opinion of most authorities are derived from the Rājpūts. The name is probably a corruption of Kshatri or Kshatriya. The Banias are the great mercantile, banking and shopkeeping caste among the Hindus and a large proportion of the trade in grain and *ghī* (preserved butter) is in their hands, while they are also the chief moneylenders. Most of the important Bania subcastes belonged originally to Rājputāna and Central India, which are also the homes of the Rājpūts, and reasons have been given in the article on Bania for holding that they are derived from the Rājpūts. They, however, are now commonly called Vaishyas by the Hindus, as, I think, under the mistaken impression that they are descended from the original Vaishyas. The Bhāts are the bards, heralds and genealogists of India and include groups of very varying status. The Bhāts who act as genealogists of the cultivating and other castes and accept cooked food from their clients may perhaps be held to rank with or even below them. But the high-class Bhāts are undoubtedly derived from Brāhmans and Rājpūts, and rank just below those castes. The bard or herald had a sacred character, and his person was inviolable like that of the herald elsewhere, and this has given a special status to the whole caste.[46] The Kāyasths are the writer caste of Hindustān, and the Karans and Prabhus are the corresponding castes of Orissa and Bombay. The position of the Kāyasths has greatly risen during the last century on account of their own ability and industry and the advantages they have obtained through their high level of education. The original Kāyasths may have been village accountants and hence have occupied a lower position, perhaps below the cultivators. They are an instance of a caste whose social position has greatly improved on account of the wealth and importance of its members. At present the Kāyasths may be said to rank next to Brāhmans and Rājpūts. The origin of the Prabhus and Karans is uncertain, but their recent social history appears to resemble that of the Kāyasths. The Guraos are another caste whose position has greatly improved. They were priests of the village temples of Siva, and accepted the offerings of food which Brāhmans could not take. But they also supplied leaf-plates for festivals, and were village musicians and trumpeters in the Marātha armies, and hence

[45] Wilson, *Indian Caste*, i. 440, quoting *Brahma Vaivarrta Purāna*.

[46] See article Bhāt for further discussion of this point.

probably ranked below the cultivators and were supported by contributions of grain from them. Their social position has been raised by their sacred character as priests of the god Siva and they are now sometimes called Shaiva Brāhmans. But a distinct recollection of their former status exists.

Thus all the castes of the first group are derived from the representatives of the Brāhmans and Kshatriyas, the two highest of the four classical castes, except the Guraos, who have risen in status owing to special circumstances. The origin of the Kāyasths is discussed in the article on that caste. Members of the above castes usually wear the sacred thread which is the mark of the Dwija or twice-born, the old Brāhmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. The thread is not worn generally by the castes of the second group, but the more wealthy and prominent sections of them frequently assume it.

20. Castes from whom a Brāhman can take water. Higher agriculturists

The second group of good castes from whom a Brāhman can take water falls into three sections as already explained: the higher agricultural castes, the higher artisans, and the serving or menial castes from whom a Brāhman takes water from motives of convenience. These last do not properly belong to the second group but to the next lower one of village menials. The higher agricultural castes or those of the first section are noted below:

- Agharia.
- Ahīr.
- Bhīlāla.
- Bishnoi.
- Chasa.
- Daharia.
- Dāngi.
- Dumāl.
- Gūjar.
- Jādum.
- Jāt.
- Khandait.
- Kirār.
- Kolta.
- Kunbi.
- Kurmi.
- Lodhi.
- Māli.
- Marātha.
- Mīna or Deswāli.
- Panwār Rājpūt.
- Rāghuvansi.
- Velama.

In this division the Kurmis and Kunbis are the typical agricultural castes of Hindustān or the plains of northern India, and the Bombay or Marātha Deccan. Both are very numerous and appear to be purely occupational bodies. The name Kurmi perhaps signifies a cultivator or worker. Kunbi may mean a householder. In both castes, groups of diverse origin seem to have been amalgamated owing to their common calling. Thus the Kunbis include a subcaste derived from the Banjāra (carriers), another from the Dhangars or shepherds, and a third from the Mānas, a primitive tribe. In Bombay it is considered that the majority of the Kunbi caste are sprung from the non-Aryan or indigenous tribes, and this may be the reason why Marātha Brāhmans do not take water from them. But they have now become one caste with a status equal to that of the other good cultivating castes. In many tracts of Berār and elsewhere practically all the cultivators of the village belong to the Kunbi caste, and there

is every reason to suppose that this was once the general rule and that the Kunbis or 'householders' are simply the cultivators of the Marātha country who lived in village communities. Similarly Sir H. Risley considered that some Kurmis of Bihār were of the Aryan type, while others of Chota Nāgpur are derived from the indigenous tribes. The Chasas are the cultivating caste of Orissa and are a similar occupational group. The word Chasa has the generic meaning of a cultivator, and the caste are said by Sir H. Risley to be for the most part of non-Aryan origin, the loose organisation of the caste system among the Uriyas making it possible on the one hand for outsiders to be admitted into the caste, and on the other for wealthy Chasas, who gave up ploughing with their own hands and assumed the respectable title of Mahanti, to raise themselves to membership among the lower classes of Kāyasths. The Koltas are another Uriya caste, probably an offshoot of the Chasas, whose name may be derived from the *kulthi*[47] pulse, a favourite crop in that locality.

Similarly the Vellālas are the great cultivating caste of the Tamil country, to whom by general consent the first place in social esteem among the Tamil Sūdra castes is awarded. In the *Madras Census Report* of 1901 Mr. Francis gives an interesting description of the structure of the caste and its numerous territorial, occupational and other subdivisions. He shows also how groups from lower castes continually succeed in obtaining admission into the Vellāla community in the following passage: "Instances of members of other castes who have assumed the name and position of Vellālas are the Vettuva Vellālas, who are only Puluvāns; the Illam Vellālas, who are Panikkāns; the Karaiturai (lord of the shore) Vellālas, who are Karaiyāns; the Karukamattai (palmyra leaf-stem) Vellālas, who are Balijas; the Guha (Rama's boatmen) Vellālas, who are Sembadavāns; and the Irkuli Vellālas, who are Vannāns. The children of dancing-girls also often call themselves Mudali, and claim in time to be Vellālas, and even Paraiyāns assume the title of Pillai and trust to its eventually enabling them to pass themselves off as members of the caste."

This is an excellent instance of the good status attaching to the chief cultivating caste of the locality and of the manner in which other groups, when they obtain possession of the land, strive to get themselves enrolled in it.

The Jāts are the representative cultivating caste of the Punjab. They are probably the descendants of one of the Scythian invading hordes who entered India shortly before and after the commencement of the Christian era. The Scythians, as they were called by Herodotus, appear to have belonged to the Mongolian racial family, as also did the white Huns who came subsequently. The Gūjar and Ahīr castes, as well as the Jāts, and also the bulk of the existing Rājpūt clans, are believed to be descended from these invaders; and since their residence in India has been comparatively short in comparison with their Aryan predecessors, they have undergone much less fusion with the general population, and retain a lighter complexion and better features, as is quite perceptible to the ordinary observer in the case of the Jāts and Rājpūts. The Jāts have a somewhat higher status than other agricultural castes, because in the Punjab they were once dominant, and one or two ruling chiefs belonged to the caste.[48] The bulk of the Sikhs were also Jāts. But in the Central Provinces, where they are not large landholders, and have no traditions of former dominance, there is little distinction between them and the Kurmis. The Gūjars for long remained a pastoral freebooting tribe, and their community was naturally recruited from all classes of vagabonds and outlaws, and hence the caste is now of a mixed character, and their physical type is not noticeably distinct from that of other Hindus. Sir G. Campbell derived the Gūjars from the Khazars, a tribe of the same race as the white Huns and Bulgars who from an early period had been settled in the neighbourhood of the Caspian. They are believed to have entered India during the fifth or sixth century. Several clans of Rājpūts, as well as considerable sections of the Ahīr and Kunbi castes were, in his opinion, derived from the Gūjars. In the Central Provinces the Gūjars have now settled down into respectable cultivators. The Ahīrs or

[47] *Dolichos uniflorus*.

[48] See article Jāt for a more detailed discussion of their status.

cowherds and graziers probably take their name from the Abhīras, another of the Scythian tribes. But they have now become a purely occupational caste, largely recruited from the indigenous Gonds and Kawars, to whom the business of tending cattle in the jungles is habitually entrusted. In the Central Provinces Ahīrs live in small forest villages with Gonds, and are sometimes scarcely considered as Hindus. On this account they have a character for bucolic stupidity, as the proverb has it: 'When he is asleep he is an Ahīr and when he is awake he is a fool.' But the Ahīr caste generally has a good status on account of its connection with the sacred cow and also with the god Krishna, the divine cowherd.

The Marāthas are the military caste of the Marātha country, formed into a caste from the cultivators, shepherds and herdsmen, who took service under Sivaji and subsequent Marātha leaders. The higher clans may have been constituted from the aristocracy of the Deccan states, which was probably of Rājpūt descent. They have now become a single caste, ranking somewhat higher than the Kunbis, from whom the bulk of them originated, on account of their former military and dominant position. Their status was much the same as that of the Jāts in the Punjab. But the ordinary Marāthas are mainly engaged in the subordinate Government and private service, and there is very little distinction between them and the Kunbis. The Khandaits or swordsmen (from *khanda*, a sword) are an Uriya caste, which originated in military service, and the members of which belonged for the most part to the non-Aryan Bhuiya tribe. They were a sort of rabble, half military and half police, Sir H. Risley states, who formed the levies of the Uriya zamīndārs. They have obtained grants of land, and their status has improved. "In the social system of Orissa the Sreshta (good) Khandaits rank next to the Rājputs, who are comparatively few in number, and have not that intimate connection with the land which has helped to raise the Khandaits to their present position."[49] The small Rautia landholding caste of Chota Nāgpur, mainly derived from the Kol tribe, was formed from military service, and obtained a higher status with the possession of the land exactly like the Khandaits.

Peasant's hut

Several Rājput clans, as the Panwārs of the Wainganga Valley, the Rāghuvansis, the Jādums derived from the Yādava clan, and the Daharias of Chhattīsgarh, have formed distinct castes, marrying among themselves. A proper Rājpūt should not marry in his own clan. These groups have probably in the past taken wives from the surrounding population, and they can no longer be held to belong

[49] *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, art. Khandait.

to the Rājpūt caste proper, but rank as ordinary agricultural castes. Other agricultural castes have probably been formed through mixed descent from Rājpūts and the indigenous races. The Agharias of Sambalpur say they are sprung from a clan of Rājpūts near Agra, who refused to bend their heads before the king of Delhi. He summoned all the Agharias to appear before him, and fixed a sword across the door at the height of a man's neck. As the Agharias would not bend their heads they were as a natural consequence all decapitated as they passed through the door. Only one escaped, who had bribed a Chamār to go instead of him. He and his village fled from Agra and came to Chhattīsgarh, where they founded the Agharia caste. And, in memory of this, when an Agharia makes a libation to his ancestors, he first pours a little water on the ground in honour of the dead Chamār. Such stories may be purely imaginary, or may contain some substratum of truth, as that the ancestors of the caste were Rājpūts, who took wives from Chamārs and other low castes. The Kīrārs are another caste with more or less mixed descent from Rājpūts. They are also called Dhākar, and this means one of illegitimate birth. The Bhilālas are a caste formed of the offspring of mixed alliances between Rājpūts and Bhīls. In many cases in Nimār Rājpūt immigrants appear to have married the daughters of Bhīl chieftains and landholders, and succeeded to their estates. Thus the Bhilālas include a number of landed proprietors, and the caste ranks as a good agricultural caste, from whom Brāhmans will take water. Among the other indigenous tribes, several of which have in the Central Provinces retained the possession of large areas of land and great estates in the wilder forest tracts, a subcaste has been formed of the landholding members of the tribe. Such are the Rāj-Gonds among the Gonds, the Binjhāls among Baigas, and the Tawar subtribe of the Kawar tribe of Bilāspur, to which all the zamīndārs[50] belong. These last now claim to be Tomara Rājpūts, on the basis of the similarity of the name. These groups rank with the good agricultural castes, and Brāhmans sometimes consent to take water from them. The Dāngis of Saugor appear to be the descendants of a set of freebooters in the Vindhyan hills, much like the Gūjars in northern India. The legend of their origin is given in Sir B. Robertson's *Census Report* of 1891: "The chief of Garhpahra or old Saugor detained the palanquins of twenty-two married women and kept them as his wives. The issue of the illicit intercourse were named Dāngis, and there are thus twenty-two subdivisions of these people. There are also three other subdivisions who claim descent from pure Rājpūts, and who will take daughters in marriage from the remaining twenty-two, but will not give their daughters to them." Thus the Dāngis appear to have been a mixed group, recruiting their band from all classes of the population, with some Rajpūts as leaders. The name probably means hillman, from *dāng*, a hill. *Khet men bāmi, gaon men Dāngi* or 'A Dāngi in the village is like the hole of a snake in one's field,' is a proverb showing the estimation in which they were formerly held. They obtained estates in Saugor and a Dāngi dynasty formerly governed part of the District, and they are now highly respectable cultivators. The Mīnas or Deswālis belonged to the predatory Mīna tribe of Rājputāna, but a section of them have obtained possession of the land in Hoshangābād and rank as a good agricultural caste. The Lodhas of the United Provinces are placed lowest among the agricultural castes by Mr. Nesfield, who describes them as little better than a forest tribe. The name is perhaps derived from the bark of the *lodh* tree, which was collected by the Lodhas of northern India and sold for use as a dyeing agent. In the Central Provinces the name has been changed to Lodhi, and they are said to have been brought into the District by a Rāja of the Gond-Rājpūt dynasty of Mandla in the seventeenth century, and given large grants of waste land in the interior in order that they might clear it of forest. They have thus become landholders, and rank with the higher agricultural castes. They are addressed as Thākur, a title applied to Rājpūts, and Lodhi landowners usually wear the sacred thread.

[50] Proprietors of large landed estates.

21. Status of the cultivator

The above details have been given to show how the different agricultural castes originated. Though their origin is so diverse they have, to a great extent, the same status, and it seems clear that this status is dependent on their possession of the land. In the tracts where they reside they are commonly village proprietors and superior tenants. Those who rank a little higher than the others, as the Jāts, Marāthas, Dāngis and Lodhis, include in their body some ruling chiefs or large landed proprietors, and as a rule were formerly dominant in the territory in which they are found. In primitive agricultural communities the land is the principal, if not almost the sole, source of wealth. Trade in the modern sense scarcely exists, and what interchange of commodities there is affects, as a rule, only a trifling fraction of the population. India's foreign trade is mainly the growth of the last century, and the great bulk of the exports are of agricultural produce, yet in proportion to the population the trading community is still extremely small. It thus seems quite impossible that the Aryans could have been a community of priests, rulers and traders, because such a community would not have had means of subsistence. And if the whole production and control of the wealth and food of the community had been in the hands of the Sūdras, they could not have been kept permanently in their subject, degraded position. The flocks and herds and the land, which constituted the wealth of early India, must thus have been in the possession of the Vaishyas; and grounds of general probability, as well as the direct evidence already produced, make it clear that they were the herdsmen and cultivators, and the Sūdras the labourers. The status of the modern cultivators seems to correspond to that of the Vaishyas, that is, of the main body of the Aryan people, who were pure and permitted to join in sacrifices. The status, however, no longer attaches to origin, but to the possession of the land; it is that of a constituent member of the village community, corresponding to a citizen of the city states of Greece and Italy. The original Vaishyas have long disappeared; the Brāhmans themselves say that there are no Kshatriyas and no Vaishyas left, and this seems to be quite correct. But the modern good cultivating castes retain the status of the Vaishyas as the Rājpūts retain that of the Kshatriyas. The case of the Jāts and Gūjars supports this view. These two castes are almost certainly derived from Scythian nomad tribes, who entered India long after the Vedic Aryans. And there is good reason to suppose that a substantial proportion, if not the majority, of the existing Rājpūt clans were the leaders or aristocracy of the Jāts and Gūjars. Thus it is found that in the case of these later tribes the main body were shepherds and cultivators, and their descendants have the status of good cultivating castes at present, while the leaders became the Rājpūts, who have the status of the Kshatriyas; and it therefore seems a reasonable inference that the same had previously been the case with the Aryans themselves. It has been seen that the word Visha or Vaishya signified one of the people or a householder. The name Kunbi appears to have the same sense, its older form being *kutumbika*, which is a householder or one who has a family,[51] a *pater familias*.

22. The clan and the village

It has been seen also that Visha in the plural signified clans. The clan was the small body which lived together, and in the patriarchal stage was connected by a tie of kinship held to be derived from a common ancestor. Thus it is likely that the clans settled down in villages, the cultivators of one village being of the same exogamous clan. The existing system of exogamy affords evidence in favour of this view, as will be seen. All the families of the clan had cultivating rights in the land, and were members of the village community; and there were no other members, unless possibly a Kshatriya

[51] See article on Kunbi, para. 1.

headman or leader. The Sūdras were their labourers and serfs, with no right to hold land, and a third intermediate class of village menials gradually grew up.

The law of Mirāsi tenures in Madras is perhaps a survival of the social system of the early village community. Under it only a few of the higher castes were allowed to hold land, and the monopoly was preserved by the rule that the right of taking up waste lands belonged primarily to the cultivators of the adjacent holdings; no one else could acquire land unless he first bought them out. The pariahs or impure castes were not allowed to hold land at all. This rule was pointed out by Mr. Slocock, and it is also noticed by Sir Henry Maine: "There are in Central and Southern India certain villages to which a class of persons is hereditarily attached, in such a manner that they form no part of the natural and organic aggregate to which the bulk of the villagers belong. These persons are looked upon as essentially impure; they never enter the village, or only enter reserved portions of it; and their touch is avoided as contaminating. Yet they bear extremely plain marks of their origin. Though they are not included in the village, they are an appendage solidly connected with it; they have definite village duties, one of which is the settlement of boundaries, on which their authority is allowed to be conclusive. They evidently represent a population of alien blood whose lands have been occupied by the colonists or invaders forming the community."[52] Elsewhere, Sir Henry Maine points out that in many cases the outsiders were probably admitted to the possession of land, but on an inferior tenure to the primary holders or freemen who formed the cultivating body of the village; and suggests that this may have been the ground for the original distinction between occupancy and non-occupancy tenants. The following extract from a description of the Marātha villages by Grant Duff[53] may be subjoined to this passage: "The inhabitants are principally cultivators, and are now either Mirāsidars or Ooprees. These names serve to distinguish the tenure by which they hold their lands. The Oopree is a mere tenant-at-will, but the Mirāsidar is a hereditary occupant whom the Government cannot displace so long as he pays the assessment on his field. With various privileges and distinctions in his village of minor consequence, the Mirāsidar has the important power of selling or transferring his right of occupancy at pleasure. It is a current opinion in the Marātha country that all the lands were originally of this description."

As regards the internal relations of clans and village groups, Sir H. Maine states: "The men who composed the primitive communities believed themselves to be kinsmen in the most literal sense of the word; and, surprising as it may seem, there are a multitude of indications that in one stage of thought they must have regarded themselves as equals. When these primitive bodies first make their appearance as landowners, as claiming an exclusive enjoyment in a definite area of land, not only do their shares of the soil appear to have been originally equal, but a number of contrivances survive for preserving the equality, of which the most frequent is the periodical redistribution of the tribal domain."[54] Similarly Professor Hearn states: "The settlement of Europe was made by clans. Each clan occupied a certain territory—much, I suppose, as an Australian squatter takes up new country. The land thus occupied was distributed by metes and bounds to each branch of the clan; the remainder, if any, continuing the property of the clan."[55] And again: "In those cases where the land had been acquired by conquest there were generally some remains of the conquered population who retained more or less interest in the lands that had once been their own. But as between the conquerors themselves it was the clansmen, and the clansmen only, who were entitled to derive any advantage from the land that the clan had acquired. The outsiders, the men who lived with the clan but were not of the clan, were no part of the folk, and had no share in the folkland. No services rendered, no participation in the common danger, no endurance of the burden and heat of the day, could create in

[52] *Village Communities*, p. 127.

[53] *History of the Marāthas*, vol. i. p. 25.

[54] *Village Communities*, pp. 226, 227.

[55] *The Aryan Household*, ed. 1891, p. 190.

an outsider any colour of right. Nothing short of admission to the clan, and of initiation in its worship, could enable him to demand as of right the grass of a single cow or the wood for a single fire."[56]

23. The ownership of land

Thus it appears that the cultivating community of each village constituted an exogamous clan, the members of which believed themselves to be kinsmen. When some caste or tribe occupied a fresh area of land they were distributed by clans in villages, over the area, all the cultivators of a village being of one caste or tribe, as is still the case with the Kunbis in Berār. Sometimes several alien castes or groups became amalgamated into a single caste, such as the Kurmis and Kunbis; in others they either remained as a separate caste or became one. When the non-Aryan tribes retained possession of the land, there is every reason to suppose that they also were admitted into Hinduism, and either constituted a fresh caste with the cultivating status, or were absorbed into an existing one with a change of name. Individual ownership of land was probably unknown. The *patel* or village headman, on whom proprietary right was conferred by the British Government, certainly did not possess it previously. He was simply the spokesman and representative of the village community in its dealings with the central or ruling authority. But it seems scarcely likely either that the village community considered itself to own the land. Cases in which the community as a corporate body has exercised any function of ownership other than that of occupying and cultivating the soil, if recorded at all, must be extremely rare, and I do not know that any instance is given by Sir Henry Maine. A tutelary village god is to be found as a rule in every Hindu village. In the Central Provinces the most common is Khermāta, that is the goddess of the village itself or the village lands. She is a form of Devi, the general earth-goddess. When a village is founded the first thing to be done is to install the village god. Thus the soil of the village is venerated as a goddess, and it seems doubtful whether the village community considered itself the owner. In the Marātha Districts, Hanumān or Mahābīr, the monkey god, is the tutelary deity of the village. His position seems to rest on the belief of the villagers that the monkeys were the lords and owners of the soil before their own arrival. For the worship of these and the other village gods there is usually a village priest, known as Bhumka, Bhumia, Baiga or Jhānkar, who is taken from the non-Aryan tribes. The reason for his appointment seems to be that the Hindus still look on themselves to some extent as strangers and interlopers in relation to the gods of the earth and the village, and consider it necessary to approach these through the medium of one of their predecessors. The words Bhumka and Bhumia both mean lord of the soil, or belonging to the soil. As already seen, the authority of some menial official belonging to the indigenous tribes is accepted as final in cases of disputed boundaries, the idea being apparently that as his ancestors first occupied the village, he has inherited from them the knowledge of its true extent and limits. All these points appear to tell strongly against the view that the Hindu village community considered itself to own the village land as we understand the phrase. They seem to have looked on the land as a god, and often their own tutelary deity and protector. What they held themselves to possess was a right of occupancy, in virtue of prescriptive settlement, not subject to removal or disturbance, and transmitted by inheritance to persons born into the membership of the village community. Under the Muhammadans the idea that the state ultimately owned the land may have been held, but prior to them the existence of such a belief is doubtful. The Hindu king did not take rent for land, but a share of the produce for the support of his establishments. The Rājpūt princes did not call themselves after the name of their country, but of its capital town, as if their own property consisted only in the town, as Jodhpur, Jaipur and Udaipur, instead of Mārwār, Dhūndhār and Mewār. Just as the village has a priest of the non-Aryan tribes for propitiating the local gods, so the Rājpūt chief at his accession

[56] *Ibidem*, p. 228. Professor Hearn followed Sir Henry Maine in thinking that the clan was an expansion of the patriarchal joint family; but the reasons against this view are given subsequently.

was often inducted to the royal cushion by a Bhīl or Mīna, and received the badge of investiture as if he had to obtain his title from these tribes. Indeed the right of the village community to the land was held sometimes superior to that of the state. Sir J. Malcolm relates that he was very anxious to get the village of Bassi in Indore State repopulated when it had lain waste for thirty-six years. He had arranged with the Bhīl headman of a neighbouring village to bring it under cultivation on a favourable lease. The plan had other advantages, and Holkar's minister was most anxious to put it into execution, but said that this could not be done until every possible effort had been made to discover whether any descendant of the former *patel* or of any *watandār* or hereditary cultivator of Bassi was still in existence; for if such were found, he said, "even we Marāthas, bad as we are, cannot do anything which interferes with their rights." None such being found at the time, the village was settled as proposed by Malcolm; but some time afterwards, a boy was discovered who was descended from the old *patel's* family, and he was invited to resume the office of headman of the village of his forefathers, which even the Bhīl, who had been nominated to it, was forward to resign to the rightful inheritor.[57] Similarly the Marātha princes, Sindhia, Holkar and others, are recorded to have set more store by the headship of the insignificant Deccan villages, which were the hereditary offices of their families, than by the great principalities which they had carved out for themselves with the sword. The former defined and justified their position in the world as the living link and representative of the continuous family comprising all their ancestors and all their descendants; the latter was at first regarded merely as a transient, secular possession, and a source of wealth and profit. This powerful hereditary right probably rested on a religious basis. The village community was considered to be bound up with its village god in one joint life, and hence no one but they could in theory have the right to cultivate the lands of that village. The very origin and nature of this right precluded any question of transfer or alienation. The only lands in which any ownership, corresponding to our conception of the term, was held to exist, were perhaps those granted free of revenue for the maintenance of temples, which were held to be the property of the god. In Rome and other Greek and Latin cities the idea of private or family ownership of land also developed from a religious sentiment. It was customary to bury the dead in the fields which they had held, and here the belief was that their spirits remained and protected the interests of the family. Periodical sacrifices were made to them and they participated in all the family ceremonies. Hence the land in which the tombs of ancestors were situated was held to belong to the family, and could not be separated from it.[58] Gradually, as the veneration for the spirits of ancestors decayed, the land came to be regarded as the private property of the family, and when this idea had been realised it was made alienable, though not with the same freedom as personal property. But the word *pecunia* for money, from *pecus* a flock, like the Hindi *dhan*, which means wealth and also flocks of goats and sheep, and feudal from the Gaelic *fiu*, cattle, point to conditions of society in which land was not considered a form of private property or wealth. M. Fustel de Coulanges notices other primitive races who did not recognise property in land: "The Tartars understand the term property as applying to cattle, but not as applying to land. According to some authors, among the ancient Germans there was no ownership of land; every year each member of the tribe received a holding to cultivate, and the holding was changed in the following year. The German owned the crop; he did not own the soil. The same was the case among a part of the Semitic race and certain of the Slav peoples."[59] In large areas of the Nigeria Protectorate at present, land has no exchangeable value at all; but by the native system of taxation a portion of the produce is taken in consideration of the right of use.[60] In ancient Arabia 'Baal' meant the lord of some place or district, that is, a local deity, and hence came to mean a god. Land naturally moist was considered as irrigated by a god and

[57] *Memoir of Central India*, vol. ii. p. 22.

[58] *La Cité antique*, 21st ed. pp. 66, 68.

[59] *La Cité antique*, 21 st ed. pp. 66, 68.

[60] *Nigeria*, quoted in *Saturday Review*, 6th April 1912.

the special place or habitation of the god. To the numerous Canaanite Baalims, or local deities, the Israelites ascribed all the natural gifts of the land, the corn, the wine, and the oil, the wool and the flax, the vines and fig trees. Pasture land was common property, but a man acquired rights in the soil by building a house, or, by 'quickening' a waste place, that is, bringing it under cultivation.[61] The Israelites thought that they derived their title to the land of Canaan from Jehovah, having received it as a gift from Him. The association of rights over the land with cultivation and building, pointed out by Professor Robertson Smith, may perhaps explain the right over the village lands which was held to appertain to the village community. They had quickened the land and built houses on it, establishing the local village deity on their village sites, and it was probably thought that their life was bound up with that of the village god, and only they had a right to cultivate his land. This would explain the great respect shown by the Marāthas for hereditary title to land, as seen above; a feeling which must certainly have been based on some religious belief, and not on any moral idea of equity or justice; no such deep moral principle was possible in the Hindu community at the period in question. The Hindu religious conception of rights to land was thus poles apart from the secular English law of proprietary and transferable right, and if the native feeling could have been, understood by the early British administrators the latter would perhaps have been introduced only in a much modified form.

24. The cultivating status that of the Vaishya

The suggested conclusion from the above argument is that the main body of the Aryan immigrants, that is the Vaishyas, settled down in villages by exogamous clans or septs. The cultivators of each village believed themselves to be kinsmen descended from a common ancestor, and also to be akin to the god of the village lands from which they drew their sustenance. Hence their order had an equal right to cultivate the village land and their children to inherit it, though they did not conceive of the idea of ownership of land in the sense in which we understand this phrase.

The original status of the Vaishya, or a full member of the Aryan community who could join in sacrifices and employ Brāhmans to perform them, was gradually transferred to the cultivating member of the village communities. In process of time, as land was the chief source of wealth, and was also regarded as sacred, the old status became attached to castes or groups of persons who obtained or held land irrespective of their origin, and these are what are now called the good cultivating castes. They have now practically the same status, though, as has been seen, they were originally of most diverse origin, including bands of robbers and freebooters, cattle-lifters, non-Aryan tribes, and sections of any castes which managed to get possession of an appreciable quantity of land.

25. Higher professional and artisan castes

The second division of the group of pure or good castes, or those from whom a Brāhman can take water, comprises the higher artisan castes:

[61] *Religion of the Semites*, p. 96.

• Barhai. • Bharbhūnja. • Halwai. • Kasār. • Komti.	• Sānsia. • Sunār. • Tamera. • Vidūr.

The most important of these are the Sunār or goldsmith; the Kasār or worker in brass and bell-metal; the Tamera or coppersmith; the Barhai or carpenter; and the Halwai and Bharbhūnja or confectioner and grain-parcher. The Sānsia or stone-mason of the Uriya country may perhaps also be included. These industries represent a higher degree of civilisation than the village trades, and the workers may probably have been formed into castes at a later period, when the practice of the handicrafts was no longer despised. The metal-working castes are now usually urban, and on the average their members are as well-to-do as the cultivators. The Sunārs especially include a number of wealthy men, and their importance is increased by their association with the sacred metal, gold; in some localities they now claim to be Brāhmans and refuse to take food from Brāhmans.[62] The more ambitious members abjure all flesh-food and liquor and wear the sacred thread. But in Bombay the Sunār was in former times one of the village menial castes, and here, before and during the time of the Peshwas, Sunārs were not allowed to wear the sacred thread, and they were forbidden to hold their marriages in public, as it was considered unlucky to see a Sunār bridegroom. Sunār bridegrooms were not allowed to see the state umbrella or to ride in a palanquin, and had to be married at night and in secluded places, being subject to restrictions and annoyances from which even Mahārs were free. Thus the goldsmith's status appears to vary greatly according as his trade is a village or urban industry. Copper is also a sacred metal, and the Tameras rank next to the Sunārs among the artisan castes, with the Kasārs or brass-workers a little below them; both these castes sometimes wearing the sacred thread. These classes of artisans generally live in towns. The Barhai or carpenter is sometimes a village menial, but most carpenters live in towns, the wooden implements of agriculture being made either by the blacksmith or by the cultivators themselves. Where the Barhai is a village menial he is practically on an equality with the Lohār or blacksmith; but the better-class carpenters, who generally live in towns, rank higher. The Sānsia or stone-mason of the Uriya country works, as a rule, only in stone, and in past times therefore his principal employment must have been to build temples. He could not thus be a village menial, and his status would be somewhat improved by the sanctity of his calling. The Halwai and Bharbhūnja or confectioner and grain-parcher are castes of comparatively low origin, especially the latter; but they have to be given the status of ceremonial purity in order that all Hindus may be able to take sweets and parched grain from their hands. Their position resembles that of the barber and waterman, the pure village menials, which will be discussed later. In Bengal certain castes, such as the Tānti or weaver of fine muslin, the Teli or oil-presser, and the Kumhār or potter, rank with the ceremonially pure castes. Their callings have there become important urban industries. Thus the Tāntis made the world-renowned fine muslins of Dacca; and the Jagannāthia Kumhārs of Orissa provide the earthen vessels used for the distribution of rice to all pilgrims at the temple of Jagannāth. These castes and certain others have a much higher rank than that of the corresponding castes in northern and Central India, and the special reasons indicated seem to account for this. Generally the artisan castes ranking on the same or a higher level than the cultivators are urban and not rural. They

[62] See article Sunār for a discussion of the sanctity of gold and silver, and the ornaments made from them.

were not placed in a position of inferiority to the cultivators by accepting contributions of grain and gifts from them, and this perhaps accounts for their higher position. One special caste may be noticed here, the Vidūrs, who are the descendants of Brāhman fathers by women of other castes. These, being of mixed origin, formerly had a very low rank, and worked as village accountants and patwāris. Owing to their connection with Brāhmans, however, they are a well-educated caste, and since education has become the door to all grades of advancement in the public service, the Vidūrs have taken advantage of it, and many of them are clerks of offices or hold higher posts under Government. Their social status has correspondingly improved; they dress and behave like Brāhmans, and in some localities it is said that even Marātha Brāhmans will take water to drink from Vidūrs, though they will not take it from the cultivating castes. There are also several menial or serving castes from whom a Brāhman can take water, forming the third class of this group, but their real rank is much below that of the cultivators, and they will be treated in the next group.

26. Castes from whom a Brāhman cannot take water; the village menials

The third main division consists of those castes from whom a Brāhman cannot take water, though they are not regarded as impure and are permitted to enter Hindu temples. The typical castes of this group appear to be the village artisans and menials and the village priests. The annexed list shows the principal of these.

Village menials.

- Lohār—Blacksmith.
- Barhai—Carpenter.
- Kumhār—Potter.
- Nai—Barber.
- Dhimar—Waterman.
- Kahār—Palanquin-bearer.
- Bāri—Leaf-plate maker.
- Bargāh—Household servant.
- Dhobi—Washerman.
- Darzi—Tailor.
- Basor or Dhulia—Village musician.
- Bhāt and Mirāsi—Bard and genealogist.
- Halba—House-servant and farm-servant.

Castes of village watchmen.

- Khangār.
- Chadār.
- Chauhān.
- Dahāit.
- Panka.

Village priests and mendicants.

- Joshi—Astrologer.
- Gārpagāri—Hail-averter.
- Gondhali—Musician.

- Mānbhao — Wandering priests and mendicants.
- Jangam
- Basdewa
- Sātani
- Waghya

Others.
• Māli—Gardener and maker of garlands.
• Barai—Betel-vine grower and seller.
Other village traders and artisans.
• Kalār—Liquor-vendor.
• Teli—Oil-presser.

- Hatwa — Pedlar.
- Manihār

Banjāra—Carrier.

- Bahelia — Fowlers and hunters.
- Pārdhi

• Bahna—Cotton-cleaner.
• Chhīpa—Calico-printer and dyer.
• Chitrakathi—Painter and picture-maker.
• Kachera—Glass bangle-maker.
• Kadera—Fireworks-maker.
• Nat—Acrobat.

- Gadaria — Shepherds.
- Dhangar
- Kuramwār

- Beldār — Diggers, navvies, and salt-refiners.
- Murha
- Nunia

The essential fact which formerly governed the status of this group of castes appears to be that they performed various services for the cultivators according to their different vocations, and were supported by contributions of grain made to them by the cultivators, and by presents given to them at seed-time and harvest. They were the clients of the cultivators and the latter were their patrons and supporters, and hence ranked above them. This condition of things survives only in the case of a few castes, but prior to the introduction of a metal currency must apparently have been the method

of remuneration of all the village industries. The Lohār or blacksmith makes and mends the iron implements of agriculture, such as the ploughshare, axe, sickle and goad. For this he is paid in Saugor a yearly contribution of 20 lbs. of grain per plough of land held by each cultivator, together with a handful of grain at sowing-time and a sheaf at harvest from both the autumn and spring crops. In Wardha he gets 50 lbs. of grain per plough of four bullocks or 40 acres. For new implements he must either be paid separately or at least supplied with the iron and charcoal. In Districts where the Barhai or carpenter is a village servant he is paid the same as the Lohār and has practically an equal status. The village barber receives in Saugor 20 lbs. of grain annually from each adult male in the family, or 22½ lbs. per plough of land besides the seasonal presents. In return for this he shaves each cultivator over the head and face about once a fortnight. The Dhobi or washerman gets half the annual contribution of the blacksmith and carpenter, with the same presents, and in return for this he washes the clothes of the family two or three times a month. When he brings the clothes home he also receives a meal or a wheaten cake, and well-to-do families give him their old clothes as a present. The Dhīmar or waterman brings water to the house morning and evening, and fills the earthen water-pots placed on a wooden stand or earthen platform outside it. When the cultivators have marriages he performs the same duties for the whole wedding party, and receives a present of money and clothes according to the means of the family, and his food every day while the wedding is in progress. He supplies water for drinking to the reapers, receiving three sheaves a day as payment, and takes sweet potatoes and boiled plums to the field and sells them. The Kumhār or potter is not now paid regularly by dues from the cultivators like other village menials, as the ordinary system of sale has been found to be more convenient in his case. But he sometimes takes for use the soiled grass from the stalls of the cattle and gives pots free to the cultivator in exchange. On Akti day, at the beginning of the agricultural year, the village Kumhār in Saugor presents five pots with covers on them to each cultivator and is given 2½ lbs. of grain. He presents the bride with seven new pots at a wedding, and these are filled with water and used in the ceremony, being considered to represent the seven seas. At a funeral he must supply thirteen vessels which are known as *ghāts*, and must replace the household earthen vessels, which are rendered impure on the occurrence of a death in the house, and are all broken and thrown away. In the Punjab and Marātha country the Kumhār was formerly an ordinary village menial.

27. The village watchmen

The office of village watchman is an important one, and is usually held by a member of the indigenous tribes. These formerly were the chief criminals, and the village watchman, in return for his pay, was expected to detect the crimes of his tribesmen and to make good any losses of property caused by them. The sections of the tribes who held this office have developed into special castes, as the Khangārs, Chadārs and Chauhāns of Chhattīsgarh. These last are probably of mixed descent from Rājpūts and the higher castes of cultivators with the indigenous tribes. The Dahāits were a caste of gatekeepers and orderlies of native rulers who have now become village watchmen. The Pankas are a section of the impure Gānda caste who have embraced the doctrines of the Kabīrpanthi sect and formed a separate caste. They are now usually employed as village watchmen and are not regarded as impure. Similarly those members of the Mahār servile caste who are village watchmen tend to marry among themselves and form a superior group to the others. The village watchman now receives a remuneration fixed by Government and is practically a rural policeman, but in former times he was a village menial and was maintained by the cultivators in the same manner as the others.

28. The village priests. The gardening castes

The village priests are another class of this group. The regular village priest and astrologer, the Joshi or Parsai, is a Brāhman, but the occupation has developed a separate caste. The Joshi officiates

at weddings in the village, selects auspicious names for children according to the constellations under which they were born, and points out the auspicious moment or *mahūrat* for weddings, name-giving and other ceremonies, and for the commencement of such agricultural operations as sowing, reaping, and threshing. He is also sometimes in charge of the village temple. He is supported by contributions of grain from the villagers and often has a plot of land rent-free from the proprietor. The social position of the Joshis is not very good, and, though Brāhmans, they are considered to rank somewhat below the cultivating castes. The Gurao is another village priest, whose fortune has been quite different. The caste acted as priests of the temples of Siva and were also musicians and supplied leaf-plates. They were village menials of the Marātha villages. But owing to the sanctity of their calling, and the fact that they have become literate and taken service under Government, the Guraos now rank above the cultivators and are called Shaiva Brāhmans. The Gondhalis are the village priests of Devi, the earth-goddess, who is also frequently the tutelary goddess of the village. They play the kettle-drum and perform dances in her honour, and were formerly classed as one of the village menials of Marātha villages, though they now work for hire. The Gārpagāri, or hail-averter, is a regular village menial, his duty being to avert hail-storms from the crops, like the χαλαζοφύλαξ in ancient Greece. The Gārpagāris will accept cooked food from Kunbis and celebrate their weddings with those of the Kunbis. The Jogis, Mānbhaos, Sātanis, and others, are wandering religious mendicants, who act as priests and spiritual preceptors to the lower classes of Hindus.

Group of religious mendicants

With the village priests may be mentioned the Māli or gardener. The Mālis now grow vegetables with irrigation or ordinary crops, but this was not apparently their original vocation. The name is derived from *māla*, a garland, and it would appear that the Māli was first employed to grow flowers for the garlands with which the gods and also their worshippers were adorned at religious ceremonies. Flowers were held sacred and were an essential adjunct to worship in India as in Greece and Rome.

The sacred flowers of India are the lotus, the marigold and the *champak*[63] and from their use in religious worship is derived the custom of adorning the guests with garlands at all social functions, just as in Rome and Greece they wore crowns on their heads. It seems not unlikely that this was the purpose for which cultivated flowers were first grown, at any rate in India. The Māli was thus a kind of assistant in the religious life of the village, and he is still sometimes placed in charge of the village shrines and is employed as temple-servant in Jain temples. He would therefore have been supported by contributions from the cultivators like the other village menials and have ranked below them, though on account of the purity and sanctity of his occupation Brāhmans would take water from him. The Māli has now become an ordinary cultivator, but his status is still noticeably below that of the good cultivating castes and this seems to be the explanation. With the Māli may be classed the Barai, the grower and seller of the *pān* or betel-vine leaf. This leaf, growing on a kind of creeper, like the vine, in irrigated gardens roofed with thatch for protection from the sun, is very highly prized by the Hindus. It is offered with areca-nut, cloves, cardamom and lime rolled up in a quid to the guests at all social functions. It is endowed by them with great virtues, being supposed to prevent heartburn, indigestion, and other stomachic and intestinal disorders, and to preserve the teeth, while taken with musk, saffron and almonds, the betel-leaf is held to be a strong aphrodisiac. The juice of the leaf stains the teeth and mouth red, and the effect, though repulsive to Europeans, is an indispensable adjunct to a woman's beauty in Hindu eyes. This staining of the mouth red with betel-leaf is also said to distinguish a man from a dog. The idea that betel preserves the teeth seems to be unfounded. The teeth of Hindus appear to be far less liable to decay than those of Europeans, but this is thought to be because they generally restrict themselves to a vegetable diet and always rinse out their mouths with water after taking food. The betel-leaf is considered sacred; a silver ornament is made in its shape and it is often invoked in spells and magic. The original vine is held to have grown from a finger-joint of Bāsuki, the Queen of the Serpents, and the cobra is worshipped as the tutelary deity of the *pān*-garden, which this snake is accustomed to frequent, attracted by the moist coolness and darkness. The position of the Barai is the same as that of the Māli; his is really a low caste, sometimes coupled with the contemned Telis or oil-pressers, but he is considered ceremonially pure because the betel-leaf, offered to gods and eaten by Brāhmans and all Hindus, is taken from him. The Barai or Tamboli was formerly a village menial in the Marātha villages.

29. Other village traders and menials

The castes following other village trades mainly fall into this group, though they may not now be village menials. Such are the Kalār or liquor-vendor and Teli or oil-presser, who sell their goods for cash, and having learnt to reckon and keep accounts, have prospered in their dealings with the cultivators ignorant of this accomplishment. Formerly it is probable that the village Teli had the right of pressing all the oil grown in the village, and retaining a certain share for his remuneration. The liquor-vendor can scarcely have been a village menial, but since Manu's time his trade has been regarded as a very impure one, and has ranked with that of the Teli. Both these castes have now become prosperous, and include a number of landowners, and their status is gradually improving. The Darzi or tailor is not usually attached to the village community; sewn clothes have hitherto scarcely been worn among the rural population, and the weaver provides the cloths which they drape on the body and round the head.[64] The contempt with which the tailor is visited in English proverbial lore for working at a woman's occupation attaches in a precisely similar manner in India to the weaver.[65] But in Gujarāt the Darzi is found living in villages and here he is also a village menial. The Kachera or

[63] *Michelia champaka*, a variety of the jack or bread-fruit tree.

[64] See article Darzi for further discussion of the use of sewn clothes in India.

[65] See articles on Bhulia, Panka, Kori and Julāha.

maker of the glass bangles which every Hindu married woman wears as a sign of her estate, ranks with the village artisans; his is probably an urban trade, but he has never become prosperous or important. The Banjāras or grain-carriers were originally Rājpūts, but owing to the mixed character of the caste and the fact that they obtained their support from the cultivators, they have come to rank below these latter. The Wanjāri cultivators of Berār have now discarded their Banjāra ancestry and claim to be Kunbis. The Nat or rope-dancer and acrobat may formerly have had functions in the village in connection with the crops. In Kumaon[66] a Nat still slides down a long rope from the summit of a cliff to the base as a rite for ensuring the success of the crops on the occasion of a festival of Siva. Formerly if the Nat or Bādi fell to the ground in his course, he was immediately despatched with a sword by the surrounding spectators, but this is now prohibited. The rope on which he slid down the cliff is cut up and distributed among the inhabitants of the village, who hang the pieces as charms on the eaves of their houses. The hair of the Nat is also taken and preserved as possessing similar virtues. Each District in Kumaon has its hereditary Nat or Bādi, who is supported by annual contributions of grain from the inhabitants. Similarly in the Central Provinces it is not uncommon to find a deified Nat, called Nat Bāba or Father Nat, as a village god. A Natni, or Nat woman, is sometimes worshipped; and when two sharp peaks of hills are situated close to each other, it is related that there was once a Natni, very skilful on the tight-rope, who performed before the king; and he promised her that if she would stretch a rope from the peak of one hill to that of the other, and walk across it, he would marry her and make her wealthy. Accordingly the rope was stretched, but the queen from jealousy went and cut it nearly through in the night, and when the Natni started to walk, the rope broke, and she fell down and was killed. Having regard to the Kumaon rite, it may be surmised that these legends commemorate the death of a Natni or acrobat during the performance of some feat of dancing or sliding on a rope for the magical benefit of the crops. And it seems possible that acrobatic performances may have had their origin in this manner. The point bearing on the present argument is, however, that the Nat performed special functions for the success of the village crops, and on this account was supported by contributions from the villagers, and ranked with the village menials.

30. Household servants

Some of the castes already mentioned, and one or two others having the same status, work as household servants as well as village menials. The Dhīmar is most commonly employed as an indoor servant in Hindu households, and is permitted to knead flour in water and make it into a cake, which the Brāhman then takes and puts on the girdle with his own hands. He can boil water and pour pulse into the cooking-pot from above, so long as he does not touch the vessel after the food has been placed in it. He will take any remains of food left in the cooking-pot, as this is not considered to be polluted, food only becoming polluted when the hand touches it on the dish after having touched the mouth. When this happens, all the food on the dish becomes *jūtha* or leavings of food, and as a general rule no caste except the sweepers will eat these leavings of food of another caste or of another person of their own. Only a wife, whose meal follows her husband's, will eat his leavings. As a servant, the Dhīmar is very familiar with his master; he may enter any part of the house, including the cooking-place and the women's rooms, and he addresses his mistress as 'Mother.' When he lights his master's pipe he takes the first pull himself, to show that it has not been tampered with, and then presents it to him with his left hand placed under his right elbow in token of respect. Maid-servants frequently belong also to the Dhīmar caste, and it often happens that the master of the household has illicit intercourse with them. Hence there is a proverb: 'The king's son draws water and the water-bearer's son sits on the throne,'—similar intrigues on the part of high-born women with their servants being not unknown. The Kahār or palanquin-bearer was probably the same caste as the Dhīmar.

[66] Traill's *Account of Kumaon, Asiatic Researches*, vol. xvi. (1828) p. 213.

Landowners would maintain a gang of Kahārs to carry them on journeys, allotting to such men plots of land rent-free. Our use of the word 'bearer' in the sense of a body-servant has developed from the palanquin-bearer who became a personal attendant on his master. Well-to-do families often have a Nai or barber as a hereditary family servant, the office descending in the barber's family. Such a man arranges the marriages of the children and takes a considerable part in conducting them, and acts as escort to the women of the family when they go on a journey. Among his daily duties are to rub his master's body with oil, massage his limbs, prepare his bed, tell him stories to send him to sleep, and so on. The barber's wife attends on women in childbirth after the days of pollution are over, and rubs oil on the bodies of her clients, pares their nails and paints their feet with red dye at marriages and on other festival occasions. The Bāri or maker of leaf-plates is another household servant. Plates made of large leaves fastened together with little wooden pins and strips of fibre are commonly used by the Hindus for eating food, as are little leaf-cups for drinking; glazed earthenware has hitherto not been commonly manufactured, and that with a rougher surface becomes ceremonially impure by contact with any strange person or thing. Metal vessels and plates are the only alternative to those made of leaves, and there are frequently not enough of them to go round for a party. The Bāris also work as personal servants, hand round water, and light and carry torches at entertainments and on journeys. Their women are maids to high-caste Hindu ladies, and as they are always about the zenana are liable to lose their virtue.

31. Status of the village menials

The castes of village and household menials form a large group between the cultivators on the one hand and the impure and servile labourers on the other. Their status is not exactly the same. On the one hand, the Nai or barber, the Kahār and Dhīmar or watermen, the household servants, the Bāri, Ahīr, and others, some of the village priests and the gardening castes, are considered ceremonially pure and Brāhmans will take water from them. But this is a matter of convenience, as, if they were not so held pure, they would be quite useless in the household. Several of these castes, as the Dhīmars, Bāris and others, are derived from the primitive tribes. Sir H. Risley considered the Bāris of Bengal as probably an offshoot from the Bhuiya or Mūsahar tribe: "He still associates with the Bhuiyas at times, and if the demand for leaf-plates and cups is greater than he can cope with himself, he gets them secretly made up by his ruder kinsfolk and passes them off as his own production. Instances of this sort, in which a non-Aryan or mixed group is promoted on grounds of necessity or convenience to a higher status than their antecedents would entitle them to claim, are not unknown in other castes, and must have occurred frequently in outlying parts of the country, where the Aryan settlements were scanty and imperfectly supplied with the social apparatus demanded by the theory of ceremonial purity. Thus the undoubtedly non-Aryan Bhuiyas have in parts of Chota Nāgpur been recognised as Jal-Acharani (able to give water to the higher castes) and it may be conjectured that the Kahārs themselves only attained this privilege in virtue of their employment as palanquin-bearers."[67] The fact that Brāhmans will take water from these castes does not in any way place them on a level with the cultivators; they remain menial servants, ranking, if anything, below such castes as Lohār, Teli and Kalār, from whom Brāhmans will not take water; but these latter are, as corporate bodies, more important and prosperous than the household menial castes, because their occupation confers a greater dignity and independence.

On the other hand, one or two of the village menials, such as the Dhobi or washerman, are considered to some extent impure. This is due to specially degrading incidents attaching to their occupation, as in the case of the Dhobi, the washing of the clothes of women in childbirth.[68] And the

[67] *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, art. Bāri.

[68] Pointed out by Mr. Crooke.

Sungaria subcaste of Kumhārs, who keep pigs, are not touched, because the impurity of the animal is necessarily communicated to its owner's house and person. Still, in the village society there is little real difference between the position of these castes and those of the other village menials.

32. Origin of their status

The status of the village menial castes appears to be fixed by their dependent position on the cultivators. The latter are their patrons and superiors, to whom they look for a livelihood. Before the introduction of a currency in the rural tracts (an event of the last fifty to a hundred years) the village artisans and menials were supported by contributions of grain from the cultivators. They still all receive presents, consisting of a sowing-basketful of grain at seed-time and one or two sheaves at harvest. The former is known as *Bīj phūtni*, or 'The breaking of the seed,' and the latter as *Khanvār,* or 'That which is left' Sometimes, after threshing, the menials are each given as much grain as will fill a winnowing-fan. When the peasant has harvested his grain, all come and beg from him. The Dhīmar brings some water-nut, the Kāchhi or market-gardener some chillies, the Barai betel-leaf, the Teli oil and tobacco, the Kalār liquor (if he drinks it), the Bania some sugar, and all receive grain in excess of the value of their gifts. The Joshi or village priest, the Nat or acrobat, the Gosain or religious mendicant and the Fakīr or Muhammadan beggar solicit alms. On that day the cultivator is said to be like a little king in his fields, and the village menials constitute his court. In purely agricultural communities grain is the principal source of wealth, and though the average Hindu villager may appear to us to be typical of poverty rather than wealth, such standards are purely relative. The cultivator was thus the patron and supporter of the village artisans and menials, and his social position was naturally superior to theirs. Among the Hindus it is considered derogatory to accept a gift from another person, the recipient being thereby placed in a position of inferiority to the donor. Some exception to this rule is made in the case of Brāhmans, though even with them it partly applies. Generally the acceptance of a gift of any value among Hindus is looked upon in the same manner as the taking of money in England, being held to indicate that the recipient is in an inferior social position to the giver. And the existence of this feeling seems to afford strong support to the reason suggested here for the relative status of the cultivating and village menial castes.

The group of village menial and artisan castes comes between the good cultivating castes who hold the status of the Vaishyas or body of the Aryans, and the impure castes, the subjected aborigines. The most reasonable theory of their status seems to be that it originated in mixed descent. As has already been seen, it was the common practice of members of the higher classes to take lower-caste women either as wives or concubines, and a large mixed class would naturally result. Such children, born and brought up in the households of their fathers, would not be full members of the family, but would not be regarded as impure. They would naturally be put to the performance of the menial household duties, for which the servile castes were rendered unsuitable through their impure status. This would correspond with the tradition of the large number of castes originating in mixed descent, which is given in the Hindu sacred books. It has been seen that where menial castes are employed in the household, classes of mixed descent do as a matter of fact arise. And there are traces of a relationship between the cultivators and the menial castes, which would be best explained by such an origin. At a betrothal in the great Kunbi cultivating caste of the Marāthas, the services of the barber and washerman must be requisitioned. The barber washes the feet of the boy and girl and places vermilion on the foreheads of the guests; the washerman spreads a sheet on the ground on which the boy and girl sit. At the end of the ceremony the barber and washerman take the bride and bridegroom on their shoulders and dance to music in the marriage-shed, for which they receive small presents. After a death has occurred at a Kunbi's house, the impurity is not removed until the barber and washerman have eaten in it. At a Kunbi's wedding the Gurao or village priest brings the

leafy branches of five trees and deposits them at Māroti's[69] temple, whence they are removed by the parents of the bride. Before a wedding, again, a Kunbi bride must go to the potter's house and be seated on his wheel, while it is turned round seven times for good luck. Similarly at a wedding among the Hindustāni cultivating castes the bride visits the potter's house and is seated on his wheel; and the washerman's wife applies vermilion to her forehead. The barber's wife puts red paint on her feet, the gardener's wife presents her with a garland of flowers and the carpenter's wife gives her a new wooden doll. At the wedding feast the barber, the washerman and the Bāri or personal servant also eat with the guests, though sitting apart from them. Sometimes members of the menial and serving castes are invited to the funeral feast as if they belonged to the dead man's caste. In Madras the barber and his wife, and the washerman and his wife, are known as the son and daughter of the village. And among the families of ruling Rājpūt chiefs, when a daughter of the house is married, it was customary to send with her a number of handmaidens taken from the menial and serving castes. These became the concubines of the bridegroom and it seems clear that their progeny would be employed in similar capacities about the household and would follow the castes of their mothers. The Tamera caste of coppersmiths trace their origin from the girls so sent with the bride of Dharam-Pāl, the Haihaya Rājpūt Rāja of Ratanpur, through the progeny of these girls by the Raja.

33. Other castes who rank with the village menials

Many other castes belong to the group of those from whom a Brāhman cannot take water, but who are not impure. Among these are several of the lower cultivating castes, some of them growers of special products, as the Kāchhis and Mowārs or market-gardeners, the Dāngris or melon-growers, and the Kohlis and Bhoyars who plant sugarcane. These subsidiary kinds of agriculture were looked down upon by the cultivators proper; they were probably carried out on the beds and banks of streams and other areas not included in the regular holdings of the village, and were taken up by labourers and other landless persons. The callings of these are allied to, or developed from, that of the Māli or gardener, and they rank on a level with him, or perhaps a little below, as no element of sanctity attaches to their products. Certain castes which were formerly labourers, but have now sometimes obtained possession of the land, are also in this group, such as the Rajbhars, Kīrs, Mānas, and various Madras castes of cultivators. Probably these were once not allowed to hold land, but were afterwards admitted to do so. The distinction between their position and that of the hereditary cultivators of the village community was perhaps the original basis of the different kinds of tenant-right recognised by our revenue law, though these now, of course, depend solely on length of tenure and other incidents, and make no distinction of castes. The shepherd castes who tend sheep and goats (the Gadarias, Dhangars and Kuramwārs) also fall into this group. Little sanctity attached to these animals as compared with the cow, and the business of rearing them would be left to the labouring castes and non-Aryan tribes. The names of all three castes denote their functional origin, Gadaria being from *gādar*, a sheep, Dhangar from *dhan* or small-stock, the word signifying a flock of sheep or goats and also wealth; and Kuramwār from *kurri*, the Telugu word for sheep. Others belonging to this group are the digging and earth-working castes, the Beldārs, Murhas, Nunias and so on, practically all derived from the indigenous tribes, who wander about seeking employment from the cultivators in the construction and repair of field embankments and excavation of wells and tanks; and various fishing and boating castes, as the Injhwārs, Naodas, Murhas and Kewats, who rank as equal to the Dhīmars, though they may not be employed in household or village service. Such castes, almost entirely derived from the non-Aryan tribes, may have come gradually into existence as the wants of society developed and new functions were specialised; they would naturally be given the social status already attaching to the village menial castes.

[69] The Marāthi name for the god Hanumān.

34. The non-Aryan tribes

The fourth group in the scheme of precedence comprises the non-Aryan or indigenous tribes, who are really outside the caste system when this is considered as the social organisation of the Hindus, so long at least as they continue to worship their own tribal deities, and show no respect for Brāhmans nor for the cow. These tribes have, however, entered the Hindu polity in various positions. The leaders of some of them who were dominant in the early period were admitted to the Kshatriya or Rājpūt caste, and the origin of a few of the Rājput clans can be traced to the old Bhar and other tribes. Again, the aristocratic or landholding sections of several existing tribes are at present, as has been seen, permitted to rank with the good Hindu cultivating castes. In a few cases, as the Andhs, Halbas and Mānas, the tribe as a whole has become a Hindu caste, when it retained possession of the land in the centre of a Hindu population. These have now the same or a slightly higher position than the village menial castes. On the other hand, those tribes which were subjugated and permitted to live with a servile status in the Hindu villages have developed into the existing impure castes of labourers, weavers, tanners and others, who form the lowest social group. The tribes which still retain their distinctive existence were not enslaved in this manner, but lived apart in their own villages in the forest tracts and kept possession of the land. This seems to be the reason why they rank somewhat higher than the impure castes, even though they may utterly defile themselves according to Hindu ideas by eating cow's flesh. Some tribes, such as the Gonds, Binjhwārs and Kawars, counted amongst them the owners of large estates or even kingdoms, and consequently had many Hindu cultivators for their subjects. And, as the Hindus themselves say, they could not regard the Gonds as impure when they had a Gond king. Nevertheless, the Gond labourers in Hindu villages in the plains are more despised than the Gonds who live in their own villages in the hill country. And the conversion of the tribes as a whole to Hinduism goes steadily forward. At each census the question arises which of them should be classed as Hindus, and which as Animists or worshippers of their own tribal gods, and though the classification is necessarily very arbitrary, the process can be clearly observed. Thus the Andhs, Kolis, Rautias and Halbas are now all Hindus, and the same remark applies to the Kols, Bhīls and Korkus in several Districts. By strict abstention from beef, the adoption of Hindu rites, and to some extent of child-marriage, they get admission to the third group of castes from whom a Brāhman cannot take water. It will be desirable here to digress from the main argument by noticing briefly the origin and affinities of the principal forest tribes of the Central Provinces.

35. The Kolarians and Dravidians

These tribes are divided into two families, the Munda or Kolarian, named after the Kol tribe, and the Dravidian, of which the former are generally held to be the older and more primitive. The word Kol is probably the Santāli *hār*, a man. "This word is used under various forms, such as *hār, hāra, ho* and *koro* by most Munda tribes in order to denote themselves. The change of *r* to *l* is familiar and presents no difficulty."[70] The word is also found in the alternative name Ho for the Kol tribe, and in the names of the cognate Korwa and Korku tribes. The word Munda is a Sanskrit derivative meaning a head, and, as stated by Sir H. Risley, is the common term employed by the Kols for the headman of a village, whence it has been adopted as an honorific title for the tribe. In Chota Nāgpur those Kols who have partly adopted Hinduism and become to some degree civilised are called Munda, while the name Ho or Larka (fighting) Kol is reserved for the wilder section of the tribe.

[70] *Linguistic Survey*, vol. iv., *Munda and Dravidian Languages*, p. 7.

36. Kolarian tribes

The principal tribes of the Munda or Kolarian family in the Central Provinces are shown below:

• Kol, Munda, Ho. • Bhumij. • Santāl. • Kharia. • Korwa. • Korku. • Nāhal • Savar or Saonr. • Māl, Māle.	• Gadba. • Khairwār. • Baiga. • Bhuiya. • Bhaina. • Bhunjia. • Binjhwār. • *Probable*: Bhar, Koli, Bhīl, Chero.

One large group includes the Kol, Munda or Ho tribe itself and the Bhumij and Santāls, who appear to be local branches of the Kols called by separate names by the Hindus. The Kharias seem to be the earliest Kol settlers in Chota Nāgpur, who were subjugated by the later comers. The name Kol, as already seen, is probably a form of the Santali *hār*, a man. Similarly the name of the Korku tribe is simply a corruption of *Koraku*, young men, and that of the Korwa tribe is from the same root. The dialects of the Korku and Korwa tribes closely approximate to Mundāri. Hence it would seem that they were originally one tribe with the Kols, but have been separated for so long a period that their direct connection can no longer be proved. The disintegrating causes which have split up what was originally one into a number of distinct tribes, are probably no more than distance and settlement in different parts of the country, leading to cessation of intermarriage and social intercourse. The tribes have then obtained some variation in the original names or been given separate territorial or occupational designations by the Hindus, and their former identity has gradually been forgotten. Both the Korwas of the Chota Nāgpur plateau and the Korkus of the Satpūra hills were known as Muāsi, a term having the meaning of robber or raider. The Korwas have also a subtribe called Korāku, and Mr. Crooke thinks that they were originally the same tribe. Sir G. Grierson states that the Korwa dialect is closely allied to Kharia. Similarly the resemblance of the name raises a presumption that the great Koli tribe of Gujarāt and western India may be a branch of the Kols who penetrated to the western coast along the Satpūlra and Central India hill ranges. The Kolis and Bhīls are tribes of the same country and are commonly spoken of together. Both have entirely lost their own language and cannot therefore be classified definitely either as Kolarian or Dravidian, but there is a probability that they are of the Kolarian family. The Nāhals, another tribe of the western Satpūra range, are an offshoot of the Korkus. They are coupled with the Bhīls and Kolis in old Hindu accounts.

The Savars, Sawaras or Saonrs are also a widely distributed tribe, being found as far west as Bundelkhand and east in Orissa and Ganjām. In the Central Provinces they have lost their own language and speak Hindi or Uriya, but in Madras they still retain their original speech, which is classified by Sir G. Grierson with Gadba as a Munda or Kolarian dialect. The name occurs in Vedic literature, and the tribe is probably of great antiquity. In the classical stories of their origin the first ancestor of the Savars is sometimes described as a Bhīl. The wide extension of the Savar tribe east

and west is favourable to the hypothesis of the identity of the Kols and Kolis, who have a somewhat similar distribution. The Gadbas of Ganjām, and the Māl or Māle Pahāria tribe of Chota Nāgpur seem to be offshoots of the Savars. The Khairwārs or Kharwārs are an important tribe of Mīrzāpur and Chota Nāgpur. There is some reason for supposing that they are an occupational offshoot of the Kols and Cheros, who have become a distinct group through taking to the manufacture of edible catechu from the wood of the *khair* tree.[71]

Another great branch of the Kolarian family is that represented by the Bhuiya and Baiga tribes and their offshoots, the Bhunjias, Bhainas and Binjhwārs. The Kolarian origin of the Bhuiyas has been discussed in the article on that tribe, and it has also been suggested that the Baiga tribe of the Central Provinces are an offshoot of the Bhuiyas. These tribes have all abandoned their own languages and adopted the local Aryan vernaculars. The name Bhuiya is a Sanskrit derivative from *bhu*, earth, and signifies 'belonging to the soil.' Bhumij, applied to a branch of the Kol tribe, has the same origin. Baiga is used in the sense of a village priest or a sorcerer in Chota Nāgpur, and the office is commonly held by members of the Bhuiya tribe in that locality, as being the oldest residents. Thus the section of the tribe in the Central Provinces appears to have adopted, or been given, the name of the office. The Bharias or Bharia-Bhumias of Jubbulpore seem to belong to the great Bhar tribe, once dominant over large areas of the United Provinces. They also hold the office of village priest, which is there known as Bhumia, and in some tracts are scarcely distinguished from the Baigas. Again, in Sambalpur the Bhuiyas are known as Bhumia Kol, and are commonly regarded as a branch of the Kol tribe. Thus it would seem that two separate settlements of the Kolarian races may have occurred; the earlier one would be represented by the Bhars, Bhuiyas, Baigas and kindred tribes who have entirely lost their own languages and identity, and have names given to them by the Hindus; and a later one of the Kols or Mundas and their related tribes, whose languages and tribal religion and organisation, though in a decaying state, can be fully recognised and recorded. And the Dravidian immigration would be subsequent to both of them. To judge from the cases in which the fissure or subdivision of single tribes into two or more distinct ones can still be observed, it seems quite a plausible hypothesis that the original immigrants may have consisted only of a single tribe on each occasion, and that the formation of new ones may have occurred after settlement. But the evidence does not warrant any definite assertion.

37. Dravidian tribes

The principal Dravidian tribes are the Gonds, Khonds and Oraons. The Gonds were once dominant over the greater part of the Central Provinces, which was called Gondwana after them. The above three names have in each case been given to the tribes by the Hindus. The following tribes are found in the Province:

Gond, Oraon or Kurukh, Khond, Kolām, Parja, Kamār. *Tribal Castes*: Bhatra, Halba, Dhoba. *Doubtful*: Kawar, Dhanwār.

The Gonds and Khonds call themselves Koi or Koitur, a word which seems to mean man or hillman. The Oraon tribe call themselves Kurukh, which has also been supposed to be connected with the Kolarian *horo*, man. The name Oraon, given to them by the Hindus, may mean farmservant, while Dhangar, an alternative name for the tribe, has certainly this signification.

There seems good reason to suppose that the Gonds and Khonds were originally one tribe divided through migration.[72] The Kolāms are a small tribe of the Wardha Valley, whose dialect resembles those of the Gonds and Khonds. They may have split off from the parent tribe in southern India and come northwards separately. The Parjas appear to represent the earliest Gond settlers in

[71] *Acacia catechu*.

[72] See article on Gond.

Bastar, who were subjugated by later Gond and Rāj-Gond immigrants. The Halbas and Bhatras are mixed tribes or tribal castes, descended from the unions of Gonds and Hindus.

38. Origin of the Kolarian tribes

The Munda languages have been shown by Sir G. Grierson to have originated from the same source as those spoken in the Indo-Pacific islands and the Malay Peninsula. “The Mundas, the Mon-Khmer, the wild tribes of the Malay Peninsula and the Nicobarese all use forms of speech which can be traced back to a common source though they mutually differ widely from each other.”[73] It would appear, therefore, that the Mundas, the oldest known inhabitants of India, perhaps came originally from the south-east, the islands of the Indian Archipelago and the Malay Peninsula, unless India was their original home and these countries were colonised from it.

Sir Edward Gait states: “Geologists tell us that the Indian Peninsula was formerly cut off from the north of Asia by sea, while a land connection existed on the one side with Madagascar and on the other with the Malay Archipelago; and though there is nothing to show that India was then inhabited, we know that it was so in palaeolithic times, when communication was probably still easier with the countries to the north-east and south-west than with those beyond the Himalayas.”[74] In the south of India, however, no traces of Munda languages remain at present, and it seems therefore necessary to conclude that the Mundas of the Central Provinces and Chota Nāgpur have been separated from the tribes of Malaysia who speak cognate languages for an indefinitely long period; or else that they did not come through southern India to these countries but by way of Assam and Bengal or by sea through Orissa. There is good reason to believe from the names of places and from local tradition that the Munda tribes were once spread over Bihār and parts of the Ganges Valley; and if the Kolis are an offshoot of the Kols, as is supposed, they also penetrated across Central India to the sea in Gujarāt and the hills of the western Ghāts. The presumption is that the advance of the Aryans or Hindus drove the Mundas from the open country to the seclusion of the hills and forests. The Munda and Dravidian languages are shown by Sir G. Grierson to be distinct groups without any real connection.

Drawing water from the village well

[73] *Linguistic Survey*, p. 15.

[74] Introduction to *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 9.

Though the physical characteristics of the two sets of tribes display no marked points of difference, the opinion has been generally held by ethnologists who know them that they represent two distinct waves of immigration, and the absence of connection between their languages bears out this view. It has always been supposed that the Mundas were in the country of Chota Nāgpur and the Central Provinces first, and that the Dravidians, the Gonds, Khonds and Oraons came afterwards. The grounds for this view are the more advanced culture of the Dravidians; the fact that where the two sets of tribes are in contact those of the Munda group have been ousted from the more open and fertile country, of which, according to tradition, they were formerly in possession; and the practice of the Gonds and other Dravidian tribes of employing the Baigas, Bhuiyas and other Munda tribes for their village priests, which is an acknowledgment that the latter as the earlier residents have a more familiar acquaintance with the local deities, and can solicit their favour and protection with more prospect of success. Such a belief is the more easily understood when it is remembered that these deities are not infrequently either the human ancestors of the earliest residents or the local animals and plants from which they supposed themselves to be descended.

39. Of the Dravidian tribes

The Dravidian languages, Gondi, Kurukh and Khond, are of one family with Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Canarese, and their home is the south of India. The word Dravida comes from an older form Damila or Dramila, and was used in ancient Pali and Jain literature as a name for the people of the Tamil country.[75] Afterwards it came to signify generally the people of southern India as opposed to Gaur or northern India.

As stated by Sir Edward Gait there is at present no evidence to show that the Dravidians came to southern India from any other part of the world, and for anything that is known to the contrary the languages may have originated there. The existence of the small Brahui tribe in Baluchistān who speak a Dravidian language but have no physical resemblance to other Dravidian races cannot be satisfactorily explained, but, as he points out, this is no reason for holding that the whole body of speakers of Dravidian languages entered India from the north-west, and, with the exception of this small group of Brahuis, penetrated to the south and settled there without leaving any traces of their passage.

The Dravidian languages occupy a large area in Madras, Mysore and Hyderābād, and they extend north into the Central Provinces and Chota Nāgpur where they die out, practically not being found west and north of this tract. As the languages are more highly developed and the culture of their speakers is far more advanced in the south, it is justifiable to suppose, pending evidence to the contrary, that the south is their home and that they have spread thence as far north as the Central Provinces. The Gonds and Oraons, too, have stories to the effect that they came from the south. The belief has hitherto been, at least in the Central Provinces, that both the Gonds and Baigas have been settled in this territory for an indefinite period, that is, from prior to any Aryan or Hindu immigration. Mr. H.A. Crump, C.S., has however pointed out that if this was the case the Munda or Kolarian tribes, which have lost their own languages, should have adopted Dravidian and not Hindu forms of speech. As already seen, numerous Kolarian tribes, as the Binjhwār, Bhaina, Bhuiya, Baiga, Bhumij, Chero, Khairwār and the Kols themselves in the Central Provinces have entirely lost their own languages, as well as the Bhīls and Kolis, if these are held to be Kolarian tribes. None of them have adopted a Dravidian language, but all speak corrupt forms of the ancient Aryan vernaculars derived from Sanskrit. The fact seems to indicate that at the time when they abandoned their own languages these tribes were in contact with Hindus, and were not surrounded by Gonds, as several of them are at

[75] *Linguistic Survey*, p. 277.

present. The history of the Central Provinces affords considerable support to the view that the Gond immigration occurred at a comparatively late period, perhaps in the ninth or tenth century, or even later, after a considerable part of the Province had been governed for some centuries by Rājpūt dynasties.[76] The Gonds and Oraons still have well-defined legends about their immigration, which would scarcely be the case if it had occurred twenty centuries or more ago.

Any further evidence or argument as to the date of the Dravidian immigration would be of considerable interest.

40. Origin of the impure castes

The fifth or lowest group in the scheme of precedence is that of the impure castes who cannot be touched. If a high-caste Hindu touches one of them he should bathe and have his clothes washed. These castes are not usually allowed to live inside a Hindu village, but have a hamlet to themselves adjoining it. The village barber will not shave them, nor the washerman wash their clothes. They usually have a separate well assigned to them from which to draw water, and if the village has only one well, one side of it is allotted to them and the Hindus take water from the other side. Formerly they were subjected to more humiliating restrictions. In Bombay a Mahār might not spit on the ground lest a Hindu should be polluted by touching it with his foot, but had to hang an earthen pot round his neck to hold his spittle. He was made to drag a thorny branch with him to brush out his footsteps, and when a Brāhman came by had to lie at a distance on his face lest his shadow might fall on the Brāhman.[77] Even if the shadow of a Mahār or Māng fell on a Brāhman he was polluted and dare not taste food and water until he had bathed and washed the impurity away. In Madras a Paraiyān or Pariah pollutes a high-caste Hindu by approaching within a distance of 64 feet of him.[78] The debased and servile position of the impure castes corresponds to that which, as already seen, attached to the Sūdras of the classical period. The castes usually regarded as impure are the tanners, bamboo-workers, sweepers, hunters and fowlers, gipsies and vagrants, village musicians and village weavers. These castes, the Chamārs, Basors, Mahārs, Koris, Gāndas and others are usually also employed as agricultural and casual labourers. Formerly, as already seen, they were not allowed to hold land. There is no reason to doubt that the status of impurity, like that of the Sūdra, was originally the mark of a subjugated and inferior race, and was practically equivalent to slavery. This was the position of the indigenous Indians who were subjugated by the Aryan invaders and remained in the country occupied by them. Though they were of different races, and the distinction was marked and brought home to themselves by the contrast in the colour of their skins, it seems probable that the real basis for their antagonism was not social so much as religious. The Indians were hated and despised by the immigrants as the worshippers of a hostile god. They could not join in the sacrifices by which the Aryans held communion with their gods, and the sacrifice itself could not even be held, in theory at least, except in those parts of India which were thoroughly subdued and held to have become the dwelling-place of the Aryan gods. The proper course prescribed by religion towards the indigenous residents was to exterminate them, as the Israelites should have exterminated the inhabitants of Canaan. But as this could not be done, because their numbers were too great or the conquerors not sufficiently ruthless, they were reduced to the servile condition of impurity and made the serfs of their masters like the Amalekites and the plebeians and helots.

If the whole of India had been thoroughly subjugated and settled like the Punjab and Hindustān, it may be supposed that the same status of impurity would have been imposed upon all the indigenous races; but this was very far from being the case. In central and southern India the Aryans or subsequent

[76] See for this the article on Kol, from which the above passage is abridged.

[77] Bombay Gazetteer, vol. xii. p. 175.

[78] *Cochin Census Report*, 1901, quoted in Sir H. Risley's *Peoples of India*, 2nd ed. p. 115.

immigrants from Central Asia came at first at any rate only in small parties, and though they may have established territorial states, did not regularly occupy the land nor reduce the indigenous population to a condition of servitude. Thus large bodies of these must have retained a free position, and on their acceptance of the new religion and the development of the caste system, became enrolled in it with a caste status on the basis of their occupation. Their leaders were sometimes admitted to rank as Kshatriyas or Rājpūts, as has been stated.

Subsequently, as the racial distinction disappeared, the impure status came to attach to certain despised occupations and to customs abhorrent to Hinduism, such as that of eating beef. But, as already seen, the tribes which have continued to live apart from the Hindus are not usually regarded as impure, though they may eat beef and even skin animals. The Dhīmars, who keep pigs, still have a higher status than the impure castes because they are employed as water-bearers and household servants. It is at least doubtful whether at the time when the stigma of impurity was first attached to the Sūdras the Hindus themselves did not sacrifice cows and eat beef.[79] The castes noted below are usually regarded as impure in the Central Provinces.

The Dhobi (washerman) and Kumhār (potter) are sometimes included among the impure castes, but, as already noted, their status is higher than that of the castes in this list.

Audhelia: Labouring caste of mixed descent who keep pigs.
Balāhi: Weavers and village messengers and watchmen.
Basor: Bamboo basket-makers and village musicians.
Chamār: Tanners and labourers.
Gānda: Weavers and village musicians.
Ghasia: Grass-cutters, labourers and sweepers.
Kaikāri: Vagrant basket-makers.
Kanjar, Beria, Sānsia: Gipsies and thieves.
Katia: Cotton-spinners.
Kori: Weavers and labourers.
Mādgi: Telugu tanners and hide-curriers.
Mahār: Weavers and labourers.
Māla: Telugu weavers and labourers.
Māng: Broom- and mat-makers and village musicians. They also castrate cattle.
Mehtar: Sweepers and scavengers.

Certain occupations, those of skinning cattle and curing hides, weaving the coarse country cloth worn by the villagers, making baskets from the rind of the bamboo, playing on drums and tom-toms, and scavenging generally are relegated to the lowest and impure castes. The hides of domestic animals are exceedingly impure; a Hindu is defiled even by touching their dead bodies and far more so by removing the skins. Drums and tom-toms made from the hides of animals are also impure. But in the case of weaving and basket-making the calling itself entails no defilement, and it would appear simply that they were despised by the cultivators, and as a considerable number of workers were required to satisfy the demand for baskets and cloth, were adopted by the servile and labouring castes. Basket- and mat-making are callings naturally suited to the primitive tribes who would obtain the bamboos from the forests, but weaving would not be associated with them unless cloth was first woven of tree-cotton. The weavers of the finer cotton and silk cloths, who live in towns, rank much higher than the village weavers, as in the case of the Koshtis and Tāntis, the latter of whom made the famous fine cotton cloth, known as *abrawān*, or 'running water,' which was supplied to the imperial Zenāna at Delhi. On one occasion a daughter of Aurāngzeb was reproached on entering the room

[79] This was permissible in the time of Asoka, *circa* 250 B.C. Mr. V.A. Smith's *Asoka*, pp. 56, 58.

for her immodest attire and excused herself by the plea that she had on seven folds of cloth over her body.[80] In Bengal Brāhmans will take water from Tāntis, and it seems clear that their higher status is a consequence of the lucrative and important nature of their occupation.

The Katias are a caste of cotton-spinners, the name being derived from *kātna*, to cut or spin. But hand-spinning is now practically an extinct industry and the Katias have taken to weaving or ordinary manual labour for a subsistence. The Kanjars and Berias are the gipsy castes of India. They are accustomed to wander about carrying their grass-matting huts with them. Many of them live by petty thieving and cheating. Their women practise palmistry and retail charms for the cure of sickness and for exorcising evil spirits, and love-philtres. They do cupping and tattooing and also make reed mats, cane baskets, palm-leaf mats and fans, ropes from grass- and tree-fibre, brushes for the cotton-loom, string-net purses and balls, and so on; and the women commonly dance and act as prostitutes. There is good reason for thinking that the Kanjars are the parents of the European gipsies, while the Thugs who formerly infested the high-roads of India, murdering solitary travellers and small parties by strangulation, may also have been largely derived from this caste.[81]

41. Derivation of the impure castes from the indigenous tribes

It can only be definitely shown in a few instances that the existing impure occupational castes were directly derived from the indigenous tribes. The Chamār and Kori, and the Chuhra and Bhangi, or sweepers and scavengers of the Punjab and United Provinces, are now purely occupational castes and their original tribal affinities have entirely disappeared. The Chamārs and Mehtars or sweepers are in some places of a superior physical type, of comparatively good stature and light complexion;[82] this may perhaps be due to a large admixture of Hindu blood through their women, during a social contact with the Hindus extending over many centuries, and also to the fact that they eat flesh when they can obtain it, including carrion. Such types are, however, exceptional among the impure castes, and there is no reason to doubt their general origin from the non-Aryan tribes, which in a few instances can be directly traced. Thus it seems likely that the Kanjars, Berias, Sānsias and other gipsy groups, as well as the Mirāsis, the vagrant bards and genealogists of the lower classes of Hindus, are derived from the Dom caste or tribe of Bengal, who are largely employed as sweepers and scavengers as well as on ordinary labour. The evidence for the origin of the above groups from the Doms is given in the article on Kanjar. Sir H.M. Elliot considered the Doms to be one of the original tribes of India. Again, there is no doubt that the impure Gānda caste, who are weavers, labourers and village musicians in the Uriya country and Chhattīsgarh Districts of the Central Provinces, are derived from the Pān tribe of Chota Nāgpur. The Pāns or Pābs are a regular forest tribe, and are sometimes called Gānda, while the Gāndas may be alternatively known as Pān. But the section of the tribe who live among the Hindus and are regarded as impure have now become a distinct caste with a separate name. The Bhuiya tribe were once the rulers of Chota Nāgpur; they still install the Rāja of Keonjhar, and have a traditional relation to other ruling families. But in parts of Chota Nāgpur and southern Bihār the Bhuiyas living in Hindu villages have become a separate impure caste with the opprobrious designation of Mūsahar or rat-eater. The great Mahār caste of the Marātha country or Bombay are weavers and labourers, and formerly cured hides, like the Chamārs and Koris of northern India. They are regarded as impure and were the serfs or villeins of the Kunbis, attached to the land. An alternative name for them is Dher, and this is supposed to be a corruption of Dharada a hillman, a name applied in Manu to all the indigenous races of India. Though the connection cannot be traced in all cases, there is thus no

[80] Sir H. Risley's *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, art. Tānti.

[81] See article Kanjar for a discussion of the connection of the gipsies and Thugs with the Kanjars.

[82] See article Chamār, para. 1.

reason to doubt that the existing impure castes represent the subjected or enslaved section of the primitive non-Aryan tribes.

42. Occupation the basis of the caste system

It has been seen that the old Aryan polity comprised four classes: the Brāhmans and Kshatriyas or priestly and military aristocracy; the Vaishyas or body of the Aryans, who were ceremonially pure and could join in sacrifices; and the Sūdras or servile and impure class of labourers. The Vaishyas became cultivators and herdsmen, and their status of ceremonial purity was gradually transferred to the cultivating members of the village community, because land was the main source of wealth. Between the last two there arose another class of village menials and craftsmen, originating principally from the offspring of fathers of the Aryan classes and Sūdra women, to whom was left the practice of the village industries, despised by the cultivators. In spite of the almost complete fusion of races which the intercourse of centuries has effected, and the multiplication and rearrangement of castes produced by the diversity of occupation and other social factors, the divisions of the village community can still be recognised in the existing social gradation.

It has been seen also that occupation is the real basis of the division and social precedence of castes in India, as in all communities which have made any substantial progress in civilisation and social development. Distinctions of race, religion and family gradually disappear, and are merged in the gradation according to wealth or profession. The enormous majority of castes are occupational and their social position depends on their caste calling. Thus in the case of an important industry like weaving, there are separate castes who weave the finer kinds of cloth, as the Tāntis and Koshtis, while one subcaste of Koshtis, the Sālewārs, are distinguished as silk-weavers, and a separate caste of Patwas embroider silk and braid on cloth; other castes, as the Mahārs, Gāndas and Koris, weave coarse cloth, and a distinct caste of Katias existed for the spinning of thread, and the Muhammadan caste of Bahnas for cleaning cotton. The workers in each kind of metal have formed a separate caste, as the Lohārs or blacksmiths, the Kasārs or brass-workers, the Tameras or coppersmiths, and the Sunārs or gold- and silversmiths, while the Audhia subcaste of Sunārs[83] and the Bharewas, an inferior branch of the Kasārs, work in bell-metal. Each of these castes makes ornaments of its own metal, while the Kachera caste[84] make glass bangles, and the Lakheras make bangles from lac and clay. In the case of agriculture, as has been seen, there is usually a functional cultivating caste for each main tract of country, as the Jāts in the Punjab, the Kurmis in Hindustān, the Kunbis in the Deccan, the Chasas in Orissa, the Kāpus in the Telugu country and the Vellālas in the Tamil country. Except the Jāts, who were perhaps originally a racial caste, the above castes appear to include a number of heterogeneous groups which have been welded into a single body through the acquisition of land and the status which it confers. Various other cultivating castes also exist, whose origin can be traced to different sources; on obtaining possession of the land they have acquired the cultivating status, but retained their separate caste organisation and name. Other agricultural castes have been formed for the growing of special products. Thus the Mālis are gardeners, and within the caste there exist such separate groups as the Phūlmālis who grow flowers, the Jire Mālis cumin and the Halde Mālis turmeric.[85] Hindus generally object to cultivate *sān*-hemp,[86] and some special castes have been formed from those who grew it and thus underwent some loss of status; such are the Lorhas and Kumrawats and Pathinas, and the Santora subcaste of Kurmis. The *āl*[87] or Indian madder-dye is another plant to

[83] *Loha*, iron; *tamba*, copper; *kānsa*, brass or bell-metal; *sona*, gold.

[84] *Kānch*, glass.

[85] *Phul*, flower; *haldi*,turmeric; *jira*, cumin.

[86] *Crotalaria juncea*. See article Lorha for a discussion of the objections to this plant.

[87] *Morinda citrifolia*. The taboo against the plant is either because the red dye resembles blood, or because a number of insects are destroyed in boiling the roots to extract the dye.

which objection is felt, and the Alia subcastes of Kāchhis and Banias consist of those who grow and sell it. The Dāngris and Kāchhis are growers of melons and other vegetables on the sandy stretches in the beds of rivers and the alluvial land on their borders which is submerged in the monsoon floods. The Barais are the growers and sellers of the betel-vine.

Several castes have been formed from military service, as the Marāthas, Khandaits, Rautias, Taonlas and Pāiks. All of these, except the Marāthas, are mainly derived from the non-Aryan tribes; since they have abandoned military service and taken as a rule to agriculture, their rank depends roughly on their position as regards the land. Thus the Marāthas and Khandaits became landowners, receiving grants of property as a reward for, or on condition of, military service like the old feudal tenures; they rank with, but somewhat above, the cultivating castes. The same is the case, though to a less degree, with the Rautias of Chota Nāgpur, a military caste mainly formed from the Kol tribe. On the other hand, the Pāiks or foot-soldiers and Taonlas have not become landholders and rank below the cultivating castes. The Hatkars are a caste formed from Dhangars or shepherds who entered the Marātha armies. They are now called Bangi Dhangars or shepherds with the spears, and rank a little above other Dhangars.

43. Other agents in the formation of castes

The great majority of castes have been formed from occupation, but other sources of origin can be traced. Several castes are of mixed descent, as the Vidūrs, the descendants of Brāhman fathers and mothers of other castes; the Bhilālas, by Rajpūt fathers and Bhīl mothers; the Chauhāns, Audhelias, Khangārs and Dhākars of Bastar, probably by Hindu fathers and women of various indigenous tribes; the Kirārs of mixed Rajpūt descent, and others. These also now generally take rank according to their occupation and position in the world. The Vidūrs served as village accountants and ranked below the cultivators, but since they are well educated and have done well in Government service their status is rapidly improving. The Bhilālas are landholders and rank as a good cultivating caste. The Chauhāns and Khangārs are village watchmen and rank as menials below the cultivators, the Dhākars are farmservants and labourers with a similar position, while the Audhelias are labourers who keep pigs and are hence regarded as impure. The Halbas or 'ploughmen' are another mixed caste, probably the descendants of house-servants of the Uriya Rājas, who, like the Khandaits, formed a sort of militia for the maintenance of the chiefs authority. They are now mainly farmservants, as the name denotes, but where they hold land, as in Bastar, they rank higher, almost as a good cultivating caste.

Again, very occasionally a caste may be formed from a religious sect or order. The Bishnois were originally a Vaishnava sect, worshipping Vishnu as an unseen god, and refusing to employ Brāhmans. They have now become cultivators, and though they retain their sectarian beliefs, and have no Brāhman priests, are generally regarded as a Hindu cultivating caste. The Pankas are members of the impure Gānda caste who adhered to the Kabīrpanthi sect. They are now a separate caste and are usually employed as village watchmen, ranking with menials above the Gāndas and other similar castes. The Lingāyats are a large sect of southern India, devoted to the worship of Siva and called after the *lingam* or phallic emblem which they wear. They have their own priests, denying the authority of Brāhmans, but the tendency now is for members of those castes which have become Lingāyats to marry among themselves and retain their relative social status, thus forming a sort of inner microcosm of Hinduism.

44. Caste occupations divinely ordained

Occupation is the real determining factor of social status in India as in all other societies of at all advanced organisation. But though in reality the status of occupations and of castes depends roughly on the degree to which they are lucrative and respectable, this is not ostensibly the case, but their

precedence, as already seen, is held to be regulated by the degree of ceremonial purity or impurity attaching to them. The Hindus have retained, in form at any rate, the religious constitution which is common or universal in primitive societies. The majority of castes are provided with a legend devised by the Brāhmans to show that their first ancestor was especially created by a god to follow their caste calling, or at least that this was assigned to him by a god. The ancestors of the bearer-caste of Kahārs were created by Siva or Mahādeo from the dust to carry his consort Parvati in a litter when she was tired; the first Māng was made by Mahādeo from his own sweat to castrate the divine bull Nandi when he was fractious, and his descendants have ever since followed the same calling, the impiety of mutilating the sacred bull in such a manner being thus excused by the divine sanction accorded to it. The first Māli or gardener gave a garland to Krishna. The first Chamār or tanner made sandals for Siva from a piece of his own skin; the ancestor of the Kāyasth or writer caste, Chitragupta, keeps the record of men's actions by which they are judged in the infernal regions after death; and so on.

45. Subcastes. local type

All important castes are divided into a number of subordinate groups or subcastes, which as a rule marry and take food within their own circle only. Certain differences of status frequently exist among the subcastes of the occupational or social type, but these are usually too minute to be recognised by outsiders. The most common type of subcaste is the local, named after the tract of country in which the members reside or whence they are supposed to have come. Thus the name Kanaujia from the town of Kanauj on the Ganges, famous in ancient Indian history, is borne by subcastes of many castes which have immigrated from northern India. Jaiswār, from the old town of Jais in the Rai Bareli District, is almost equally common. Pardeshi or foreign, and Pūrabia or eastern, are also subcaste names for groups coming from northern India or Oudh. Mahobia is a common name derived from the town of Mahoba in Central India, as are Bundeli from Bundelkhand, Narwaria from Narwar and Mārwāri from Mārwār in Rājputāna. Groups belonging to Berār are called Berāri, Warade or Baone; those from Gujarāt are called Lād, the classical term for Gujarāt, or Gujarāti, and other names are Deccani from the Deccan, Nimāri of Nimar, Havelia, the name of the wheat-growing tracts of Jubbulpore and Damoh; Chhattīsgarhia, Kosaria, Ratanpuria (from the old town of Ratanpur in Bilāspur), and Raipuria (from Raipur town), all names for residents in Chhattīsgarh; and so on. Brāhmans are divided into ten main divisions, named after different tracts in the north and south of India where they reside;[88] and these are further subdivided, as the Mahārāshtra Brāhmans of the Marātha country of Bombay into the subcastes of Deshasth (belonging to the country) applied to those of the Poona country above the western Ghāts; Karhāra or those of the Satara District, from Karhar town; and Konkonasth or those of the Concan, the Bombay coast; similarly the Kanaujia division of the Pānch-Gaur or northern Brāhmans has as subdivisions the Kanaujia proper, the Jijhotia from Jajhoti, the old name of the Lalitpur and Saugor tract, which is part of Bundelkhand; the Sarwaria or those dwelling round the river Sarju in the United Provinces; the Mathuria from Muttra; and the Prayāgwāls or those of Allahabad (Prayāg), who act as guides and priests to pilgrims who come to bathe in the Ganges at the sacred city. The creation of new local subcastes seems to arise in two ways: when different groups of a caste settle in different tracts of country and are prevented from attending the caste feasts and assemblies, the practice of intermarriage and taking food together gradually ceases, they form separate endogamous groups and for purposes of distinction are named after the territory in which they reside; this is what has happened in the case of Brāhmans and many other castes; and, secondly, when a fresh body of a caste arrives and settles in a tract where some of its members already reside, they do not amalgamate with the latter group, but form a fresh one and are named after the territory from which they have come, as in the case of such names as Pardeshi,

[88] See article on Brāhman.

Pūrabia, Gangapāri ('from the other side of the Ganges'), and similar ones already cited. In former times, when the difficulties of communication were great, these local subcastes readily multiplied; thus the Kanaujia Brāhmans of Chhattīsgarh are looked down upon by those of Saugor and Damoh, as Chhattīsgarh has been for centuries a backward tract cut off from the rest of India, and they may be suspected of having intermarried with the local people or otherwise derogated from the standard of strict Hinduism. Similarly the Kanaujia Brāhmans of Bengal are split into several local subcastes named after tracts in Bengal, who marry among themselves and neither with other Kanaujias of Bengal nor with those of northern India. Since the opening of railways people can travel long distances to marriage and other ceremonies, and the tendency to form new subcastes is somewhat checked; a native gentleman said to me, when speaking of his people, that when a few families of Khedāwāl Brāhmans from Gujarāt first settled in Damoh they had the greatest difficulty in arranging their marriages; they could not marry with their caste-fellows in Gujarāt because their sons and daughters could not establish themselves, that is, could not prove their identity as Khedāwāl Brāhmans; but since the railway has been opened intermarriage takes place freely with other Khedāwāls in Gujarāt and Benāres. Proposals are on foot to authorise the intermarriage of the three great subcastes of Marātha Brāhmans: Deshasth, Konkonasth and Karhāra. As a rule, there is no difference of status between the different local subcastes, and a man's subcaste is often not known except to his own caste-fellows. But occasionally a certain derogatory sense may be conveyed; in several castes of the Central Provinces there is a subcaste called Jharia or jungly, a term applied to the oldest residents, who are considered to have lapsed in a comparatively new and barbarous country from the orthodox practices of Hinduism. The subcaste called Deshi, or 'belonging to the country,' sometimes has the same signification. The large majority of subcastes are of the local or territorial type.

46. Occupational subcastes

Many subcastes are also formed from slight differences of occupation, which are not of sufficient importance to create new castes. Some instances of subcastes formed from growing special plants or crops have been given. Audhia Sunārs (goldsmiths) work in brass and bell-metal, which is less respectable than the sacred metal, gold. The Ekbeile Telis harness one bullock only to the oil-press and the Dobeile two bullocks. As it is thought sinful to use the sacred ox in this manner and to cover his eyes as the Telis do, it may be slightly more sinful to use two bullocks than one. The Udia Ghasias (grass-cutters) cure raw hides and do scavengers' work, and are hence looked down upon by the others; the Dingkuchia Ghasias castrate cattle and horses, and the Dolboha carry dhoolies and palanquins. The Māngya Chamārs are beggars and rank below all other subcastes, from whom they will accept cooked food. Frequently, however, subcastes are formed from a slight distinction of occupation, which connotes no real difference in social status. The Hathgarhia Kumhārs (potters) are those who used to fashion the clay with their own hands, and the Chakarias those who turned it on a wheel. And though the practice of hand pottery is now abandoned, the divisions remain. The Shikāri or sportsmen Pardhis (hunters) are those who use firearms, though far from being sportsmen in our sense of the term; the Phanse Pardhis hunt with traps and snares; the Chitewale use a tame leopard to run down deer, and the Gayake stalk their prey behind a bullock. Among the subcastes of Dhīmars (fishermen and watermen) are the Singaria, who cultivate the *singāra* or water-nut in tanks, the Tānkiwālas or sharpeners of grindstones, the Jhīngars or prawn-catchers, the Bansias and Saraias or anglers (from *bansi* or *sarai*, a bamboo fishing-rod), the Kasdhonias who wash the sands of the sacred rivers to find the coins thrown or dropped into them by pious pilgrims, and the Sonjharas who wash the sands of auriferous streams for their particles of gold.[89] The Gāriwān Dangris have adopted the comparatively novel occupation of driving carts (*gāri*) for a livelihood, and the Pānibhar

[89] Sonjhara is a separate caste as well as a subcaste of Dhīmar.

are water-carriers, while the ordinary occupation of the Dāngris is to grow melons in river-beds. It is unnecessary to multiply instances; here, as in the case of territorial subcastes, the practice of subdivision appears to have been extended from motives of convenience, and the slight difference of occupation is adopted as a distinguishing badge.

47. Subcastes formed from social or religious differences, or from mixed descent

Subcastes are also occasionally formed from differences of social practice which produce some slight gain or loss of status. Thus the Biyāhut or 'Married' Kalārs prohibit the remarriage of widows, saying that a woman is married once for all, and hence rank a little higher than the others. The Dosar Banias, on the other hand, are said to take their name from *dūsra*, second, because they allow a widow to marry a second time and are hence looked upon by the others as a second-class lot. The Khedāwāl Brāhmans are divided into the 'outer' and 'inner': the inner subdivision being said to exist of those who accepted presents from the Rāja of Kaira and remained in his town, while the outer refused the presents, quitted the town and dwelt outside. The latter rank a little higher than the former. The Suvarha Dhīmars keep pigs and the Gadhewāle donkeys, and are considered to partake of the impure nature of these animals. The Gobardhua Chamārs wash out and eat the undigested grain from the droppings of cattle on the threshing-floors. The Chungia group of the Satnāmi Chamārs are those who smoke the *chongi* or leaf-pipe, though smoking is prohibited to the Satnāmis. The Nāgle or 'naked' Khonds have only a negligible amount of clothing and are looked down upon by the others. The Makaria Kamārs eat monkeys and are similarly despised.

Subcastes are also formed from mixed descent. The Dauwa Ahīrs are held to be the offspring of Ahīr women who were employed as wet-nurses in the houses of Bundela Rājpūts and bore children to their masters. The Halbas and Rautias are divided into subcastes known as Puraīt or 'pure,' and Surāit or of 'mixed' descent. Many castes have a subcaste to which the progeny of illicit unions is relegated, such as the Dogle Kāyasths, and the Lahuri Sen subcaste of Barais, Banias and other castes. Illegitimate children in the Kasār (brass-worker) caste form a subcaste known as Tākle or 'thrown out,' Vidur or 'illegitimate,' or Laondi Bachcha, the issue of a kept wife. In Berār the Mahādeo Kolis, called after the Mahādeo or Pachmarhi hills, are divided into the Khas, or 'pure,' and the Akarāmāse or 'mixed'; this latter word means gold or silver composed of eleven parts pure metal and one part alloy. Many subcastes of Bania have subcastes known as Bīsa or Dasa, that is 'Twenty' or 'Ten' groups, the former being of pure descent or twenty-carat, as it were, and the latter the offspring of remarried widows or other illicit unions. In the course of some generations such mixed groups frequently regain full status in the caste.

Subcastes are also formed from members of other castes who have taken to the occupation of the caste in question and become amalgamated with it; thus the Korchamārs are Koris (weavers) adopted into the Chamār (tanner) caste; Khatri Chhīpas are Khatris who have become dyers and printers; the small Dāngri caste has subcastes called Teli, Kalār and Kunbi, apparently consisting of members of those castes who have become Dāngris; the Bāman Darzis or tailors will not take food from any one except Brāhmans and may perhaps be derived from them, and the Kaith Darzis may be Kāyasths; and so on.

Occasionally subcastes may be formed from differences of religious belief or sectarian practice. In northern India even such leading Hindu castes as Rājpūts and Jāts have large Muhammadan branches, who as a rule do not intermarry with Hindus. The ordinary Hindu sects seldom, however, operate as a bar to marriage, Hinduism being tolerant of all forms of religious belief. Those Chamārs of Chhattīsgarh who have embraced the doctrines of the Satnāmi reforming sect form a separate endogamous subcaste, and sometimes the members of the Kabīrpanthi sect within a caste marry among themselves.

Statistics of the subcastes are not available, but their numbers are very extensive in proportion to the population, and even in the same subcaste the members living within a comparatively small local area often marry among themselves and attend exclusively at their own caste feasts, though in the case of educated and well-to-do Hindus the construction of railways has modified this rule and connections are kept up between distant groups of relatives. Clearly therefore differences of occupation or social status are not primarily responsible for the subcastes, because in the majority of cases no such differences really exist. I think the real reason for their multiplication was the necessity that the members of a subcaste should attend at the caste feasts on the occasion of marriages, deaths and readmission of offenders, these feasts being of the nature of a sacrificial or religious meal. The grounds for this view will be given subsequently.

48. Exogamous groups

The caste or subcaste forms the outer circle within which a man must marry. Inside it are a set of further subdivisions which prohibit the marriage of persons related through males. These are called exogamous groups or clans, and their name among the higher castes is *gotra*. The theory is that all persons belonging to the same *gotra* are descended from the same male ancestor, and so related. The relationship in the *gotra* now only goes by the father's side; when a woman marries she is taken into the clan of her husband and her children belong to it. Marriage is not allowed within the clan and in the course of a few generations the marriage of persons related through males or agnates is prohibited within a very wide circle. But on the mother's side the *gotra* does not serve as a bar to marriage and the union of first cousins would be possible, other than the children of two brothers. According to Hindu law, intermarriage is prohibited within four degrees between persons related through females. But generally the children of first cousins are allowed to marry, when related partly through females. And several castes allow the intermarriage of first cousins, that of a brother's daughter to a sister's son and in a less degree of a brother's son to a sister's daughter being specially favoured. One or two Madras castes allow a man to marry his niece, and the small Dhoba caste of Mandla permit the union of children of the same mother but different fathers.

Sir Herbert Risley classed the names of exogamous divisions as eponymous, territorial or local, titular and totemistic. In the body of this work the word clan is usually applied only to the large exogamous groups of the Rājpūts and one or two other military castes. The small local or titular groups of ordinary Hindu castes are called 'section,' and the totemic groups of the primitive tribes 'sept.' But perhaps it is simpler to use the word 'clan' throughout according to the practice of Sir J.G. Frazer. The vernacular designations of the clans or sections are *gotra*, which originally meant a stall or cow-pen; *khero*, a village; *dih*, a village site; *baink*, a title; *mul* or *mur*, literally a root, hence an origin; and *kul* or *kuri*, a family. The sections called eponymous are named after Rishis or saints mentioned in the Vedas and other scriptures and are found among the Brāhmans and a few of the higher castes, such as Vasishta, Garga, Bhāradwāj, Vishvamitra, Kashyap and so on. A few Rājpūt clans are named after kings or heroes, as the Rāghuvansis from king Rāghu of Ajodhia and the Tilokchandi Bais from a famous king of that name. The titular class of names comprise names of offices supposed to have been held by the founder of the clan, or titles and names referring to a personal defect or quality, and nicknames. Instances of the former are Kotwār (village watchman), Chaudhri, Meher or Māhto (caste headman), Bhagat (saint), Thākuria and Rawat (lord or prince), Vaidya (physician); and of titular names and nicknames: Kuldip (lamp of the family), Mohjaria (one with a burnt mouth), Jāchak (beggar), Garkata (cut-throat), Bhātpagar (one serving on a pittance of boiled rice), Kangāli (poor), Chīkat (dirty), Petdukh (stomach-ache), Ghunnere (worm-eater) and so on. A special class of names are those of offices held at the caste feasts; thus the clans of the Chitrakathi caste are the Atak or Mānkari, who furnish the headman of the caste *panchāyat* or committee; the Bhojin who serve the food at marriages and other ceremonies; the Kākra who arrange for the lighting; the Gothārya

who keep the provisions, and the Ghorerao (*ghora*, a horse) who have the duty of looking after the horses and bullock-carts of the caste-men who assemble. Similarly the five principal clans of the small Turi caste are named after the five sons of Singhbonga or the sun: the eldest son was called Mailuar and his descendants are the leaders or headmen of the caste; the descendants of the second son, Chardhagia, purify and readmit offenders to caste intercourse; those of the third son, Suremār, conduct the ceremonial shaving of such offenders, and those of the fourth son bring water for the ceremony and are called Tirkuār. The youngest brother, Hasdagia, is said to have committed some caste offence, and the four other brothers took the parts which are still played by their descendants in his ceremony of purification. In many cases exogamous clans are named after other castes or subcastes. Many low castes have adopted the names of the Rājpūt clans, either from simple vanity as people may take an aristocratic surname, or because they were in the service of Rājpūts, and have adopted the names of their masters or are partly descended from them. Other names of castes found among exogamous groups probably indicate that an ancestor belonging to that caste was taken into the one in which the group is found. The Bhaina tribe have clans named after the Dhobi, Ahīr, Gond, Māli and Panka castes. The members of such clans pay respect to any man belonging to the caste after which they are named and avoid picking a quarrel with him; they also worship the family gods of the caste.

Territorial names are very common, and are taken from that of some town or village in which the ancestor of the clan or the members of the clan themselves resided.[90] The names are frequently distorted, and it seems probable that the majority of the large number of clan names for which no meaning can be discovered were those of villages. These unknown names are probably more numerous than the total of all those classes of names to which a meaning can be assigned.

49. Totemistic clans

The last class of exogamous divisions are those called totemistic, when the clan is named after a plant or animal or other natural object. These are almost universal among the non-Aryan or primitive tribes, but occur also in most Hindu castes, including some of the highest. The commonest totem names are those of the prominent animals, including several which are held sacred by the Hindus, as *bāgh* or *nāhar*, the tiger; *bachās*, the calf; *morkuria*, the peacock; *kachhwāha* or *limuān*, the tortoise; *nāgas*, the cobra; *hasti*, the elephant; *bandar*, the monkey; *bhainsa*, the buffalo; *richharia*, the bear; *kuliha*, the jackal; *kukura*, the dog; *karsayāl*, the deer; *heran*, the black-buck, and so on. The utmost variety of names is found, and numerous trees, as well as rice, kodon and other crops, salt, sandalwood, cucumber, pepper, and some household implements, such as the pestle and rolling-slab, serve as names of clans. Names which may be held to have a totemistic origin occur even in the highest castes. Thus among the names of eponymous Rishis or saints, Bhāradwāj means a lark, Kaushik may be from the *kūsha* grass, Agastya from the *agasti* flower, Kashyap from *kachhap*, a tortoise; Taittiri from *tītar*, a partridge, and so on. Similarly the origin of other Rishis is attributed to animals, as Rishishringa to an antelope, Mandavya to a frog, and Kanāda to an owl.[91] An inferior Rājpūt clan, Meshbansi, signifies descendants of the sheep, while the name of the Baghel clan is derived from the tiger (bāgh), that of the Kachhwāha clan perhaps from *kachhap*, a tortoise, of the Haihaivansi from the horse, of the Nāgvansi from the cobra, and of the Tomara clan from *tomar*, a club. The Karan or writer caste of Orissa, similarly, have clans derived from the cobra, tortoise and calf, and most of the cultivating and other middle castes have clans with totemistic names. The usual characteristics of totemism, in its later and more common form at any rate, are that members of a clan regard themselves as related to, or descended from, the animal or tree from which the clan takes its name, and abstain from killing

[90] See article Kurmi, appendix, for some instances of territorial names.

[91] Wilson's *Indian Caste*, p. 439.

or eating it. This was perhaps not the original relation of the clan to its clan totem in the hunting stage, but it is the one commonly found in India, where the settled agricultural stage has long been reached. The Bhaina tribe have among their totems the cobra, tiger, leopard, vulture, hawk, monkey, wild dog, quail, black ant, and so on. Members of a clan will not injure the animal after which it is named, and if they see the corpse of the animal or hear of its death they throw away an earthen cooking-pot, and bathe and shave themselves as for one of the family. At a wedding the bride's father makes an image in clay of the bird or animal of the groom's sept and places it beside the marriage-post. The bridegroom worships the image, lighting a sacrificial fire before it, and offers to it the vermilion which he afterwards smears on the forehead of the bride. Women are often tattooed with representations of their totem animal, and men swear by it as their most sacred oath. A similar respect is paid to the inanimate objects after which certain septs are named. Thus members of the Gawad or cowdung clan will not burn cowdung cakes for fuel; and those of the Mircha clan do not use chillies. One clan is named after the sun, and when an eclipse occurs they perform the same formal rites of mourning as others do on the death of their totem animal. The Bāghani clan of Majhwārs, named after the tiger, think that a tiger will not attack any member of their clan unless he has committed an offence entailing temporary excommunication from caste. Until this offence has been expiated his relationship with the tiger as head of the clan is in abeyance, and the tiger will eat him as he would any other stranger. If a tiger meets a member of the clan who is free from sin, he will run away. Members of the Khoba or peg clan will not make a peg nor drive one into the ground. Those of the Dūmar or fig-tree clan say that their first ancestor was born under this tree. They consider the tree to be sacred and never eat its fruit, and worship it once a year. Sometimes the members of the clan do not revere the object after which it is named but some other important animal or plant. Thus the Markām clan of Gonds, named after the mango-tree, venerate the tortoise and do not kill it. The Kathotia clan of Kols is named after *kathota*, a bowl, but they revere the tiger. Bāgheshwar Deo, the tiger-god, resides on a little platform in their verandas. They may not join in a tiger-beat nor sit up for a tiger over a kill. In the latter case they think that the tiger would not come and would be deprived of his food, and all the members of their family would get ill. The Katharia clan take their name from *kathri*, a mattress. A member of this sept must never have a mattress in his house, nor wear clothes sewn in crosspieces as mattresses are sewn. The name of the Mudia or Mudmudia clan is said to mean shaven head, but they apparently revere the white *kumhra* or gourd, perhaps because it has some resemblance to a shaven head. They give a white gourd to a woman on the day after she has borne a child, and her family then do not eat this vegetable for three years. The Kumraya sept revere the brown *kumhra* or gourd. They grow this vegetable on the thatch of their house-roof and from the time of planting it till the fruits have been plucked they do not touch it, though of course they afterwards eat the fruits. The Bhuwar sept are named after *bhu* or *bhumi*, the earth. They must always sleep on the earth and not on cots. The Nūn (salt) and Dhān (rice) clans of Oraons cannot dispense with eating their totems or titular ancestors. But the Dhān Oraons content themselves with refusing to consume the scum which thickens on the surface of the boiled rice, and the Nūn sept will not lick a plate in which salt and water have been mixed. At the weddings of the Vulture clan of the small Bhona caste one member of the clan kills a small chicken by biting off the head and then eats it in imitation of a vulture. Definite instances of the sacrificial eating of the totem animal have not been found, but it is said that the tiger and snake clans of the Bhatra tribe formerly ate their totems at a sacrificial meal. The Gonds also worship the cobra as a household god, and once a year they eat the flesh of the snake and think that by doing so they will be immune from snake-bite throughout the year. On the festival of Nāg-Panchmi the Mahārs make an image of a snake with flour and sugar and eat it. It is reported that the Singrore Dhīmars who work on rivers and tanks must eat the flesh of a crocodile at their weddings, while the Sonjharas who wash the sands of rivers for gold should catch a live crocodile for the occasion of the wedding and afterwards put it back into the river. These latter

customs may probably have fallen into abeyance owing to the difficulty of catching a crocodile, and in any case the animals are tribal gods rather than totems.

50. Terms of relationship

Exogamy and totemism are found not only in India, but are the characteristics of primitive social groups over the greater part of the world. Totemism establishes a relation of kinship between persons belonging to one clan who are not related by blood, and exogamy prescribes that the persons held to be so related shall not intermarry. Further, when terms of relationship come into existence it is found that they are applied not to members of one family, but to all the persons of the clan who might have stood in each particular relationship to the person addressing them. Thus a man will address as mother not only his own mother, but all the women of his clan who might have stood to him in the relation of mother. Similarly he will address all the old men and women as grandfather or grandmother or aunt, and the boys and girls of his own generation as brother and sister, and so on. With the development of the recognition of the consanguineous family, the use of terms of relationship tends to be restricted to persons who have actual kinship; thus a boy will address only his father's brothers as father, and his cousins as brothers and sisters; but sufficient traces of the older system of clan kinship remain to attest its former existence. But it seems also clear that some, at least, of the terms of relationship were first used between persons really related; thus the word for mother must have been taught by mothers to their own babies beginning to speak, as it is a paramount necessity for a small child to have a name by which to call its mother when it is wholly dependent on her; if the period of infancy is got over without the use of this term of address there is no reason why it should be introduced in later life, when in the primitive clan the child quickly ceased to be dependent on its mother or to retain any strong affection for her. Similarly, as shown by Sir J.G. Frazer in *Totemism and Exogamy*, there is often a special name for the mother's brother when other uncles or aunts are addressed simply as father or mother. This name must therefore have been brought into existence to distinguish the mother's brother at the time when, under the system of female descent, he stood in the relation of a protector and parent to the child. Where the names for grandfather and grandmother are a form of duplication of those for father and mother as in English, they would appear to imply a definite recognition of the idea of family descent. The majority of the special names for other relatives, such as fraternal and maternal uncles and aunts, must also have been devised to designate those relatives in particular, and hence there is a probability that the terms for father and brother and sister, which on *a priori* grounds may be considered doubtful, were also first applied to real or putative fathers and brothers and sisters. But, as already seen, under the classificatory system of relationship these same terms are addressed to members of the same clan who might by age and sex have stood in such a relationship to the person addressing them, but are not actually akin to him at all. And hence it seems a valid and necessary conclusion that at the time when the family terms of relationship came into existence, the clan sentiment of kinship was stronger than the family sentiment; that is, a boy was taught or made to feel that all the women of the clan of about the same age as his mother were as nearly akin to him as his own mother, and that he should regard them all in the same relation. And similarly he looked on all the men of the clan of an age enabling them to be his fathers in the same light as his own father, and all the children of or about his own age as his brothers and sisters. The above seems a necessary conclusion from the existence of the classificatory system of relationship, which is very widely spread among savages, and if admitted, it follows that the sentiment of kinship within the clan was already established when the family terms of relationship were devised, and therefore that the clan was prior to the family as a social unit. This conclusion is fortified by the rule of exogamy which prohibits marriage between persons of the same clan between whom no blood-relationship can be traced, and therefore shows that some kind of kinship was believed to exist between them, independent of and stronger than the link of consanguinity. Further, Mr. Hartland shows in *Primitive*

Paternity[92] that during the period of female descent when physical paternity has been recognised, but the father and mother belong to different clans, the children, being of the mother's clan, will avenge a blood-feud of their clan upon their own father; and this custom seems to show clearly that the sentiment of clan-kinship was prior to and stronger than that of family kinship.

51. Clan kinship and totemism

The same argument seems to demonstrate that the idea of kinship within the clan was prior to the idea of descent from a common ancestor, whether an animal or plant, a god, hero or nicknamed ancestor. Because it is obvious that a set of persons otherwise unconnected could not suddenly and without reason have believed themselves to be descended from a common ancestor and hence related. If a number of persons not demonstrably connected by blood believe themselves to be akin simply on account of their descent from a common ancestor, it can only be because they are an expanded family, either actually or by fiction, which really had or might have had a common ancestor. That is, the clan tracing its descent from a common ancestor, if this was the primary type of clan, must have been subsequent to the family as a social institution. But as already seen the sentiment of kinship within the clan was prior to that within the family, and therefore the genesis of the clan from an expanded family is an impossible hypothesis; and it follows that the members of the clan must first have believed themselves to be bound together by some tie equivalent to or stronger than that of consanguineous kinship, and afterwards, when the primary belief was falling into abeyance, that of descent from a common ancestor came into existence to account for the clan sentiment of kinship already existing. If then the first form of association of human beings was in small groups, which led a migratory life and subsisted mainly by hunting and the consumption of fruits and roots, as the Australian natives still do, the sentiment of kinship must first have arisen, as stated by Mr. M'Lennan, in that small body which lived and hunted together, and was due simply to the fact that they were so associated, that they obtained food for each other, and on occasion protected and preserved each other's lives.[93] These small bodies of persons were the first social units, and according to our knowledge of the savage peoples who are nearest to the original migratory and hunting condition of life, without settled habitations, domestic animals or cultivated plants, they first called themselves after some animal or plant, usually, as Sir J.G. Frazer has shown in *Totemism and Exogamy*,[94] after some edible animal or plant. The most probable theory of totemism on *a priori* grounds seems therefore to be that the original small bodies who lived and hunted together, or totem-clans, called themselves after the edible animal or plant from which they principally derived their sustenance, or that which gave them life. While the real tie which connected them was that of living together, they did not realise this, and supposed themselves to be akin because they commonly ate this animal or plant together. This theory of totemism was first promulgated by Professor Robertson Smith and, though much disputed, appears to me to be the most probable. It has also been advocated by Dr. A.C. Haddon, F.R.S.[95] The Gaelic names for family, *teadhloch* and *cuedichc* or *coedichc*, mean, the first, 'having a common residence,' the second, 'those who eat together.'[96] The detailed accounts of the totems of the Australian, Red Indian and African tribes, now brought together by Sir J.G. Frazer in *Totemism and Exogamy*, show a considerable amount of evidence that the early totems were not only as a rule edible animals, but the animals eaten by the totem-clans which bore their names.[97] But after the domestication of animals

[92] Vol. i. pp. 272, 276.

[93] *Studies in Ancient History*, p. 123.

[94] See lists of totems of Australian and Red Indian tribes. Sir J.G. Frazer notes that the majority are edible animals or plants.

[95] Address to the British Association, 1902. I had not had the advantage of reading the address prior to the completion of this work.

[96] M'Lennan, *Studies in Ancient History*, p. 123, quoting from Grant's *Origin and Descent of the Gael*.

[97] *Totemism and Exogamy*, i. pp. 112, 120, ii. p. 536, iii. pp. 100, 162; *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 209–10; *Native Tribes of South-East Australia* p. 145; *Native Tribes of Northern Australia* (Professor Baldwin Spencer), pp. 21, 197; J.H. Weeks,

and the culture of plants had been attained to, the totems ceased to be the chief means of subsistence. Hence the original tie of kinship was supplanted by another and wider one in the tribe, and though the totem-clans remained and continued to fulfil an important purpose, they were no longer the chief social group. And in many cases, as man had also by now begun to speculate on his origin, the totems came to be regarded as ancestors, and the totem-clans, retaining their sentiment of kinship, accounted for it by supposing themselves to be descended from a common ancestor. They thus also came to base the belief in clan-kinship on the tie of consanguinity recognised in the family, which had by now come into existence. This late and secondary form of totemism is that which obtains in India, where the migratory and hunting stage has long been passed. The Indian evidence is, however, of great value because we find here in the same community, occasionally in the same caste, exogamous clans which trace their descent sometimes from animals and plants, or totems, and sometimes from gods, heroes, or titular ancestors, while many of the clans are named after villages or have names to which no meaning can be attached. As has been seen, there is good reason to suppose that all these forms of the exogamous clan are developed from the earliest form of the totem-clan; and since this later type of clan has developed from the totem-clan in India, it is a legitimate deduction that wherever elsewhere exogamous clans are found tracing their descent from a common ancestor or with unintelligible names, probably derived from places, they were probably also evolved from the totem-clan. This type of clan is shown in Professor Hearn's *Aryan Household* to have been the common unit of society over much of Europe, where no traces of the existence of totemism are established.[98] And from the Indian analogy it is therefore legitimate to presume that the totem-clan may have been the original unit of society among several European races as well as in America, Africa, Australia and India. Similar exogamous clans exist in China, and many of them have the names of plants and animals.[99]

52. Animate Creation

In order to render clear the manner in which the clan named after a totem animal (or, less frequently, a plant) came to hold its members akin both to each other and their totem animals, an attempt may be made to indicate, however briefly and imperfectly, some features of primitive man's conception of nature and life. Apparently when they began dimly to observe and form conscious mental impressions of the world around them, our first ancestors made some cardinal, though natural and inevitable, mistakes. In the first place they thought that the whole of nature was animate, and that every animal, plant, or natural object which they saw around them, was alive and self-conscious like themselves. They had, of course, no words or ideas connoting life or consciousness, or distinguishing animals, vegetables or lifeless objects, and they were naturally quite incapable of distinguishing them. They merely thought that everything they saw was like themselves, would feel hurt and resentment if injured, and would know what was done to it, and by whom; whenever they saw the movement of an animal, plant, or other object, they thought it was volitional and self-conscious like their own movements. If they saw a tree waving in the wind, having no idea or conception of the wind, they thought the tree was moving its branches about of its own accord; if a stone fell, they, knowing nothing of the force of gravity, thought the stone projected itself from one place to another because it wished to do so. This is exactly the point of view taken by children when they first begin to observe. They also think that everything they see is alive like themselves, and that animals exercise volition and have a self-conscious intelligence like their own. But they quickly learn their mistakes and adopt the point of view of their elders because they are taught. Primitive man had no one to teach him, and as he

Among the Primitive Bakongo, p. 99.

[98] See pp. II, 138, 190 (Edition 1891).

[99] *Totemism and Exogamy*, ii. pp. 338, 339.

did not co-ordinate or test his observations, the traces of this first conception of the natural world remain clearly indicated by a vast assortment of primitive customs and beliefs to the present day. All the most prominent natural objects, the sun and moon, the sky, the sea, high mountains, rivers and springs, the earth, the fire, became objects of veneration and were worshipped as gods, and this could not possibly have happened unless they had been believed to have life. Stone images and idols are considered as living gods. In India girls are married to flowers, trees, arrows, swords, and so on. A bachelor is married to a ring or a plant before wedding a widow, and the first ceremony is considered as his true marriage. The Saligrām, or ammonite stone, is held to represent the god Vishnu, perhaps because it was thought to be a thunderbolt and to have fallen from heaven. Its marriage is celebrated with the *tulsi* or basil-plant, which is considered the consort of Vishnu. Trees are held to be animate and possessed by spirits, and before a man climbs a tree he begs its pardon for the injury he is about to inflict on it. When a tank is dug, its marriage is celebrated. To the ancient Roman his hearth was a god; the walls and doors and threshold of his house were gods; the boundaries of his field were also gods.[100] It is precisely the same with the modern Hindu; he also venerates the threshold of his house, the cooking-hearth, the grinding-mill, and the boundaries of his field. The Jains still think that all animals, plants and inanimate objects have souls or spirits like human beings. The belief in a soul or spirit is naturally not primitive, as man could not at first conceive of anything he did not see or hear, but plants and inanimate objects could not subsequently have been credited with the possession of souls or spirits unless they had previously been thought to be alive. "The Fijians consider that if an animal or a plant dies its soul immediately goes to Bolotoo; if a stone or any other substance is broken, immortality is equally its reward; nay, artificial bodies have equal good luck with men and hogs and yams. If an axe or a chisel is worn out or broken up, away flies its soul for the service of the gods. If a house is taken down or any way destroyed, its immortal part will find a situation on the plains of Bolotoo. The Finns believed that all inanimate objects had their *haltia* or soul."[101] The Malays think that animals, vegetables and minerals, as well as human beings, have souls.[102] The Kawar tribe are reported to believe that all articles of furniture and property have souls or spirits, and if any such is stolen the spirit will punish the thief. Theft is consequently almost unknown among them. All the fables about animals and plants speaking and exercising volition; the practice of ordeals, resting on the belief that the sacred living elements, fire and water, will of themselves discriminate between the innocent and guilty; the propitiatory offerings to the sea and to rivers, such incidents as Xerxes binding the sea with fetters, Ajax defying the lightning, Aaron's rod that budded, the superstitions of sailors about ships: all result from the same primitive belief. Many other instances of self-conscious life and volition being attributed to animals, plants and natural objects are given by Lord Avebury in *Origin of Civilisation*, by Dr. Westermarck in *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*,[103] and by Sir J.G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*[104]

Thus primitive man had no conception of inanimate matter, and it seems probable that he did not either realise the idea of death. Though it may be doubtful whether any race exists at present which does not understand that death is the cessation of life in the body, indications remain that this view was not primary and may not have been acquired for some time. The Gonds apparently once thought that people would not die unless they were killed by magic, and similar beliefs are held by the Australian and African savages. Several customs also point to the belief in the survival of some degree of life in the body after death, apart from the idea of the soul.

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[100] *La Cité Antique*, p. 254.

[101] *The Origin of Civilisation*, 7th ed. p. 246.

[102] W.W. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, pp. 52, 53.

[103] I. p. 253.

[104] 2nd ed. vol. i. pp. 169, 174. See also Sir E.B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. pp. 282, 286, 295; ii. pp. 170, 181, etc.

53. The distribution of life over the body

Primitive man further thought that life, instead of being concentrated in certain organs, was distributed equally over the whole of the body. This mistake appears also to have been natural and inevitable when it is remembered that he had no name for the body, the different limbs and the internal organs, and no conception of their existence and distribution, nor of the functions which they severally performed. He perceived that sensation extended over all parts of the body, and that when any part was hurt or wounded the blood flowed and life gradually declined in vigour and ebbed away. For this reason the blood was subsequently often identified with the life. During the progress of culture many divergent views have been held about the source and location of life and mental and physical qualities, and the correct one that life is centred in the heart and brain, and that the brain is the seat of intelligence and mental qualities has only recently been arrived at. We still talk about people being hard-hearted, kind-hearted and heartless, and about a man's heart being in the right place, as if we supposed that the qualities of kindness and courage were located in the heart, and determined by the physical constitution and location of the heart. The reason for this is perhaps that the soul was held to be the source of mental qualities, and to be somewhere in the centre of the body, and hence the heart came to be identified with it. As shown by Sir J.G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough* many peoples or races have thought that the life and qualities were centred in the whole head, not merely in the brain. And this is the reason why Hindus will not appear abroad with the head bare, why it is a deadly insult to knock off a man's turban, and why turbans or other head-gear were often exchanged as a solemn pledge of friendship. The superstition against walking under a ladder may have originally been based on some idea of its being derogatory or dangerous to the head, though not, of course, from the fear of being struck by a falling brick. Similarly, as shown in the article on Nai, the belief that the bodily strength and vigour were located in the hair, and to a less extent in the nails and teeth, has had a world-wide prevalence. But this cannot have been primary, because the hair had first to be conceived of apart from the rest of the body, and a separate name devised for it, before the belief that the hair was the source of strength could gradually come into existence. The evolution of these ideas may have extended over thousands of years. The expression 'white-livered,' again, seems to indicate that the quality of courage was once held to be located in the liver, and the belief that the liver was the seat of life was perhaps held by the Gonds. But the primary idea seems necessarily to have been that the life was equally distributed all over the body. And since, as will be seen subsequently, the savage was incapable of conceiving the abstract idea of life, he thought of it in a concrete form as part of the substance of the flesh and blood.

And since primitive man had no conception of inanimate matter it followed that when any part of the body was severed from the whole, he did not think of the separate fraction as merely lifeless matter, but as still a part of the body to which it had originally belonged and retaining a share of its life. For according to his view of the world and of animate nature, which has been explained above, he could not think of it as anything else. Thus the clippings of hair, nails, teeth, the spittle and any other similar products all in his view remained part of the body from which they had been severed and retained part of its life. In the case of the elements, earth, fire and water, which he considered as living beings and subsequently worshipped as gods, this view was correct. Fractional portions of earth, fire and water, when severed from the remainder, retained their original nature and constitution, and afforded some support to his generally erroneous belief. And since he had observed that an injury done to any part of the body was an injury to the whole, it followed that if one got possession of any part of the body, such as the severed hair, teeth or nails, one could through them injure that body of which they still formed a part. It is for this reason that savages think that if an enemy can obtain possession of any waste product of the body, such as the severed hair or nails, that he can injure the owner through them. Similarly the Hindus thought that the clippings of the hair or nails, if buried in

fertile ground, would grow into a plant, through the life which they retained, and as this plant waxed in size it would absorb more and more of the original owner's life, which would consequently wane and decline. The worship of relics, such as the bones or hair of saints, is based on the same belief that they retain a part of the divine life and virtue of him to whom they once belonged.

54. Qualities associated with animals

It is probable that qualities were first conceived of by being observed in animals or natural objects. Prior to the introduction of personal names, the individuality of human beings could neither be clearly realised nor remembered after they were dead. But man must have perceived at an early period that certain animals were stronger or swifter than he was, or more cunning, and since the same quality was reproduced in every animal of the species, it could easily become permanently associated with the animal. But there were no names for qualities, nor any independent conception of them apart from the animal or animals in which they were observed. Supposing that strength and swiftness were mainly associated with the horse, as was often the case, then they would be necessarily conceived of as a part or essence of the horse and his life, not in the way we think of them, as qualities appertaining to the horse on account of the strength of his muscles and the conformation of his limbs. When names were devised for these qualities, they would be something equivalent to horsey or horse-like. The association of qualities with animals is still shown in such words as asinine, owlish, foxy, leonine, mulish, dogged, tigerish, and so on; but since the inferiority of animals to man has long been recognised, most of the animal adjectives have a derogatory sense.[105] It was far otherwise with primitive man, who first recognised the existence of the qualities most necessary to him, as strength, courage, swiftness, sagacity, cunning and endurance, as being displayed by certain animals in a greater degree than he possessed them himself. Birds he admired and venerated as being able to rise and fly in the air, which he could not do; fish for swimming and remaining under water when he could not; while at the same time he had not as yet perceived that the intelligence of animals was in any way inferior to his own, and he credited many of them with the power of speech. Thus certain animals were venerated on account of the qualities associated with them, and out of them in the course of time anthropomorphic gods personifying the qualities were evolved. The Australian aborigines of the kangaroo totem, when they wish to multiply the number of kangaroos, go to a certain place where two special blocks of stone project immediately one above the other from the hillside. One is supposed to represent an 'old man' kangaroo and the other a female. The stones are rubbed and then painted with alternate red and white stripes, the red stripes representing the red fur of the kangaroos, and the white ones its bones. After doing this some of them open veins in their arms and allow the blood to spurt over the stones. The other men sing chants referring to the increase in the numbers of the kangaroos, and they suppose that this ceremony will actually result in producing an increased number of kangaroos and hence an additional supply of food.[106] Here the inference seems to be that the stones represent the centre or focus of the life of kangaroos, and when they are quickened by the painting, and the supply of blood, they will manifest their creative activity and increase the kangaroos. If we suppose that some similar stone existed on the Acropolis and was considered by the owl clan as the centre of the life of the owls which frequented the hill, then when the art of sculpture had made some progress, and the superiority of the human form and intellect began to be apprehended, if a sculptor carved the stone into the semblance of a human being, the goddess Athena would be born.

[105] See also *Primitive Culture*, i. pp. 119, 121, 412, 413, 514.

[106] Messrs. Spencer and Gillan, *Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London, Macmillan), p. 201.

55. Primitive language

It has been seen that primitive man considered the life and qualities to be distributed equally over the body in a physical sense, so that they formed part of the substance and flesh. The same view extended even to instrumental qualities or functions, since his mental powers and vision were necessarily limited by his language. Language must apparently have begun by pointing at animals or plants and making some sound, probably at first an imitation of the cry or other characteristic of the animal, which came to connote it. We have to suppose that language was at the commencement a help in the struggle for life, because otherwise men, as yet barely emerged from the animal stage, would never have made the painful mental efforts necessary to devise and remember the words. Words which would be distinctly advantageous in the struggle would be names for the animals and plants which they ate, and for the animals which ate them. By saying the name and pointing in any direction, the presence of such animals or plants in the vicinity would be intimated more quickly and more accurately than by signs or actions. Such names were then, it may be supposed, the first words. Animals or plants of which they made no use nor from which they apprehended any danger, would for long be simply disregarded, as nothing was to be gained by inventing names for them. The first words were all nouns and the names of visible objects, and this state of things probably continued for a long period and was the cause of many erroneous primitive conceptions and ideas. Some traces of the earliest form of language can still be discerned. Thus of Santāli Sir G. Grierson states: "Every word can perform the function of a verb, and every verbal form can, according to circumstances, be considered as a noun, an adjective or a verb. It is often simply a matter of convenience which word is considered as a noun and which as an adjective … Strictly speaking, in Santāli there is no real verb as distinct from the other classes of words. Every independent word can perform the function of a verb, and every verbal form can in its turn be used as a noun or adjective."[107] And of the Dravidian languages he says: "The genitive of ordinary nouns is in reality an adjective, and the difference between nouns and adjectives is of no great importance … Many cases are both nouns and verbs. Nouns of agency are very commonly used as verbs."[108] Thus if it be admitted that nouns preceded verbs as parts of speech, which will hardly be disputed, these passages show how the semi-abstract adjectives and verbs were gradually formed from the names of concrete nouns. Of the language of the now extinct Tasmanian aborigines it is stated: "Their speech was so imperfectly constituted that there was no settled order or arrangement of words in the sentence, the sense being eked out by face, manner and gesture, so that they could scarcely converse in the dark, and all intercourse had to cease with nightfall. Abstract forms scarcely existed, and while every gum-tree or wattle-tree had its name, there was no word for 'tree' in general, nor for qualities such as hard, soft, hot, cold, etc. Anything hard was 'like a stone,' anything round 'like the moon,' and so on, the speaker suiting the action to the word, and supplementing the meaning to be understood by some gesture."[109] Here the original concrete form of language can be clearly discerned. They had a sufficiency of names for all the objects which were of use to them, and apparently verbal ideas were largely conveyed by gesture. Captain Forsyth states[110] that though the Korkus very seldom wash themselves, there exist in their language eight words for washing, one for washing the face, another for the hands and others for different parts of the body. Thus we see that the verbal idea of washing was originally conceived not generally, but separately with reference to each concrete object or noun, for which a name existed and to which water was applied.

[107] *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. iv., *Munda and Dravidian Languages*, pp. 40, 41, 45.

[108] *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. iv., *Munda and Dravidian Languages*, pp. 292, 294.

[109] Dr. A.H. Keane, *The World's Peoples*, London, Hutchinson, 1908, p. 50.

[110] *Nimār Settlement Report*.

56. Concrete nature of primitive ideas

The primitive languages consisted only of nouns or the names of visible objects, possibly with the subsequent addition of a few names for such conceptions as the wind and the voice, which could be heard, but not seen. There were no abstract nor semi-abstract terms nor parts of speech. The resulting inability to realise any abstract conception and the tendency to make everything concrete is a principal and salient characteristic of ethnology and primitive religion.[111] All actions are judged by their concrete aspect or effects and not by the motives which prompted them, nor the results which they produce. For a Hindu to let a cow die with a rope round its neck is a grave caste offence, apparently because an indignity is thus offered to the sacred animal, but it is no offence to let a cow starve to death. A girl may be married to inanimate objects as already seen, or to an old man or a relative without any intention that she shall live with him as a wife, but simply so that she may be married before reaching puberty. If she goes through the ceremony of marriage she is held to be married. Yet the motive for infant-marriage is held to be that a girl should begin to bear children as soon as she is physically capable of doing so, and such a marriage is useless from this point of view. Some castes who cannot afford to burn a corpse hold a lighted brand to it or kindle a little fire on the grave and consider this equivalent to cremation. Promises are considered as concrete; among some Hindus promises are tied up in knots of cloth, and when they are discharged the knots are untied. Mr. S.C. Roy says of the Oraons: “Contracts are even to this day generally not written but acted. Thus a lease of land is made by the lessor handing over a clod of earth (which symbolises land) to the lessee; a contract of sale of cattle is entered into by handing over to the buyer a few blades of grass (which symbolise so many heads of cattle); a contract of payment of bride-price is made by the bridegroom’s father or other relative handing over a number of *baris* or small cakes of pulse (which symbolise so many rupees) to the bride’s father or other relative; and a contract of service is made by the mistress of the house anointing the head of the intended servant with oil, and making a present of a few pice, and entertaining him to a feast, thus signifying that he would receive food, lodging and some pay.”[112] Thus an abstract agreement is not considered sufficient for a contract; in each case it must be ratified by a concrete act.

[111] See also *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 408.

[112] *The Oraons*, pp. 408, 409.

Gāyatri or sacred verse personified as a goddess

The divisions of time are considered in a concrete sense. The fortnight or Nakshatra is presided over by its constellation, and this is held to be a nymph or goddess, who controls events during its course. Similarly, as shown in *The Golden Bough*,[113] many kinds of new enterprises should be begun in the fortnight of the waxing moon, not in that of the waning moon. Days are also thought to be concrete

[113] 2nd ed. vol. ii. p. 457 *et seq.*

and governed by their planets, and from this idea come all the superstitions about lucky and unlucky days. If a day had been from the beginning realised as a simple division of time no such superstitions could exist. Events, so far as they are conceived of, are also considered in a concrete sense. The reason why omens were so often drawn from birds[114] is perhaps that birds fly from a distance and hence are able to see coming events on their way; and the hare and donkey were important animals of augury, perhaps because, on account of their long ears, they were credited with abnormally acute hearing, which would enable them to hear the sound of coming events before ordinary people. The proverb 'Coming events cast their shadows before,' appears to be a survival of this mode of belief, as it is obvious that that which has no substance cannot cast a shadow.

The whole category of superstitions about the evil eye arises from the belief that the glance of the eye is a concrete thing which strikes the person or object towards which it is directed like a dart. The theory that the injury is caused through the malice or envy of the person casting the evil eye seems to be derivative and explanatory. If a stranger's glance falls on the food of a Rāmānuji Brāhman while it is being cooked, the food becomes polluted and must be buried in the ground. Here it is clear that the glance of the eye is equivalent to real contact of some part of the stranger's body, which would pollute the food. In asking for leave in order to nurse his brother who was seriously ill but could obtain no advantage from medical treatment, a Hindu clerk explained that the sick man had been pierced by the evil glance of some woman.

57. Words and names concrete

Similarly words were considered to have a concrete force, so that the mere repetition of words produced an effect analogous to their sense. The purely mechanical repetition of prayers was held to be a virtuous act, and this idea was carried to the most absurd length in the Buddhist's praying-wheel, where merit was acquired by causing the wheel with prayers inscribed on its surface to revolve in a waterfall. The wearing of strips of paper, containing sacred texts, as amulets on the body is based on this belief, and some Muhammadans will wash off the ink from paper containing a verse of the Korān and drink the mixture under the impression that it will do them good. Here the belief in the concrete virtue and substance of the written word is very clear. The Hindus think that the continued repetition of the Gayatri or sacred prayer to the sun is a means of acquiring virtue, and the prayer is personified as a goddess. The enunciation of the sacred syllable Aum or Om is supposed to have the most powerful results. Homer's phrase 'winged words' perhaps recalls the period when the words were considered as physical entities which actually travelled through the air from the speaker to the hearer and were called winged because they went so fast. A Korku clan has the name *lobo* which means a piece of cloth. But the word *lobo* also signifies 'to leak.' If a person says a sentence containing the word *lobo* in either signification before a member of the clan while he is eating, he will throw away the food before him as if it were contaminated and prepare a meal afresh. Here it is clear that the Korku pays no regard to the sense but solely to the word or sound. This belief in the concrete force of words has had the most important effects both in law and religion. The earliest codes of law were held to be commands of the god and claimed obedience on this ground. The binding force of the law rested in the words and not in the sense because the words were held to be those of the god and to partake of his divine nature. In ancient Rome the citizen had to take care to know the words of the law and to state them exactly. If he used one wrong word the law gave him no assistance. "Gaius tells a story of a man whose neighbour had cut his vines; the facts were clear; he stated the law applying to his case, but he said vines, whereas the law said trees; he lost his suit."[115] The divine virtue attached to the sacred books of different religions rests on the same belief. Frequently the books themselves

[114] For instances of omens see article Thug and Index. Also Miss Harrison's *Themis*, pp. 98, 99.

[115] *La Cité Antique*, p. 225.

are worshipped, and it was held that they could not be translated because the sanctity resided in the actual words and would be lost if other words were used. The efficacy of spells and invocations seems to depend mainly on this belief in the concrete power of words. If one knows an efficacious form of words connoting a state of physical facts and repeats it with the proper accessory conditions, then that state of facts is actually caused to exist; and if one knows a man's name and calls on him with a form of words efficacious to compel attendance, he has to come and his spirit can similarly be summoned from the dead. When a Malay wishes to kill an enemy he makes an image of the man, transfixes or otherwise injures it, and buries it on the path over which the enemy will tread. As he buries it with the impression that he will thereby cause the enemy to die and likewise be buried, he says:

It is not I who am burying him,
It is Gabriel who is burying him,

and thinks that the repetition of these words produces the state of facts which they denote so that the guilt of the murder is removed from his own shoulders to those of the archangel Gabriel. Similarly when he has killed a deer and wishes to be free from the guilt of his action, or as he calls it to cast out the mischief from the deer, he says:

It is not I who cast out these mischiefs,
It is Michael who casts them out.
It is not I who cast out these mischiefs,
It is Israfel who casts them out,

and so on, freeing himself in the same manner from responsibility for the death of the deer.[116] Names also are regarded as concrete. Primitive man could not regard a name as an abstract appellation, but thought of it as part of the person or thing to which it was applied and as containing part of his life, like his hair, spittle and the rest of his body. He would have used names for a long period before he had any word for a name, and his first idea of the name as a part of the substantive body to which it is applied has survived a more correct appreciation. Thus if one knew a person's name one could injure him by working evil on it and the part of his life contained in it, just as one could injure him through the clippings of his hair, his spittle, clothes or the earth pressed by his foot. This is the reason for the common custom of having two names, one of which, the true name, is kept secret and only used on ceremonial occasions when it is essential, as at a wedding, while the other is employed for everyday life. The latter, not being the man's true name, does not contain part of his life, and hence there is no harm in letting an enemy know it. Similarly the Hindus think that a child's name should not be repeated at night, lest an owl might hear it, when this bird could injure the child through its name, just as if it got hold of a piece of cloth worn or soiled by the child. The practice of euphemism rests on this belief, as it was thought that if a person's name was said and a part of him was thus caused to be present the rest would probably follow. Hence the rule of avoiding the use of the names of persons or things of which one does not desire the presence. Thus Sir E.B. Tylor says: "The Dayak will not speak of the smallpox by name, but will call it 'The Chief,' or 'Jungle leaves,' or say, 'Has He left you?' The euphemism of calling the Furies the Eumenides, or 'Gracious Ones,' is the stock illustration of this feeling, and the euphemisms for fairies and for the devil are too familiar to quote."[117] Similarly the name of a god was considered as part of him and hence partaking of his divine nature. It was thus so potent that it could not be mentioned on ordinary occasions or by common persons. Allah is only an epithet for the name of God among the Muhammadans and his

[116] W.W. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, pp. 178, 571.

[117] *Early History of Mankind*, 3rd ed. p. 143.

True or Great Name is secret. Those who know it have power over all created things. Clearly then the divine power is held to reside in the name itself. The concealment of the name of the tutelary deity of Rome, for divulging which Valerius Soranus is said to have paid the penalty of death, is a case in point.[118] Sir E.B. Tylor gives many other interesting examples of the above ideas and points out the connection clearly existing in the savage mind between the name and the object to which it is applied. The Muhammadans think that Solomon's name is very efficacious for casting out devils and evil spirits. The practice of naming children after gods or by the epithets or titles applied to the divine being, or after the names of saints, appears to be due to the belief that such names, by reason of their association with the god or saint, acquire a part of his divine life and virtue, which when given to children the names will in turn convey to them.[119] On the other hand, when a Hindu mother is afraid lest her child may die, she sometimes gives it an opprobrious name as dirt, rubbish, sweepings, or sold for one or two cowries, so that the evil spirits who take the lives of children may be deceived by the name and think that such a valueless child is not worth having. The voice was also held to be concrete. The position of the Roman tribune was peculiar, as he was not a magistrate chosen by divine authority and hence could not summon people to his court; but the tribune had been dedicated to the city gods, and his person was sacrosanct. He could therefore lay hands on a man, and once the tribune touched him, the man was held to be in the magistrate's power, and bound to obey him. This rule extended even to those who were within hearing of his voice; any one, even a patrician or consul, who heard the tribune's voice was compelled to obey him. In this case it is clear that the voice and spoken words were held to be concrete, and to share in the sanctity attaching to the body.[120]

[118] *Ibidem*, p. 125.

[119] See article Joshi for examples of Hindu names.

[120] *La Cité Antique*, p. 357.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.