

ART. III.—*Account of the Wáralís and Kátodís,—two of the Forest Tribes of the northern Konkan. By JOHN WILSON, D.D., President of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.*

(Read 17th April, 1841.)

THAT India is not the cradle of the Brahmanical faith, may be a proposition startling to many who are not acquainted with its ancient literature. To the orientalist of the humblest pretension, however, it needs no proof. The predecessors of the Brahmans, it is admitted by all who have considered their records and traditions, were first associated together as a religious fraternity in a country beyond the Indus, or exterior to the Hímálaya mountains. Our greatest men are divided in their opinions as to the country from which they came. Sir William Jones brings them from Iran, or Central Asia; Adelung from a similar locality; Klaproth, from the Caucasian mountains; Kennedy, from the plains of the Éuphrates; and Schlegel, from the borders of the Caspian Sea. The theories of these scholars are all plausibly supported; and they generally agree in this respect, that they take it for granted, that the Brahmans in ancient times were found in the territories immediately north of India. The occurrence of about three hundred Sanskrit words in the Persian language¹, the Hindú notion of the northern position of the residences of the gods, the situation of the Manu-sarovar, or Lake of Intelligence, still a celebrated place of religious pilgrimage, and the source of the river Brahmaputra, whose etymological meaning, the "son of Brahma," is similar to that of the usual designation of the priestly class to whom I refer, are in favour of this agreement. After the Brahmans entered India, they continued for a considerable time to inhabit its northern territories. The "Holy Land" of Manu, which is of no great extent, lies between the Drishadwatí and Saraswatí². On the banks of the latter river, according to some authorities, lived Vyása, the reputed compiler of the Vedas and Puránas³. In the north are to be found the shrines, junctions of rivers, and lakes, esteemed most sacred by the Hindús in all ages. In the same division of the country, the solar and lunar races of kings, the most distinguished in Indian tradi-

¹ See KENNEDY on the *Affinity of Languages*.

² Manu ii, 17.

³ See II. II. WILSON's preface to his *Translation of the Vishnu Purána*.

tions, ruled and reigned. The Sanskrit language, which the Brahmans carried along with themselves, is more copiously mixed and closely associated with the languages of the north, than with those of the south of the peninsula. The different tribes of Brahmans claim rank according to their connexion with the north. Of the actual spread of Brahmanism to the southward, some indistinct notices are given in the Rámáyana, the work next in point of antiquity to the Vedas, the Mahábhárata, and some of the Puránas. Ráma, who is represented as an incarnation of Vishnu, was undoubtedly a historical personage; and the accounts which are given of his march to Lanká, or Ceylon, clearly prove that he was opposed by a people who belonged to a faith different from that to which he lent his powerful aid to support and establish. As he proceeded on his career of victory, he formed many alliances with the tribes which he subdued, and who co-operated with his endeavours to overcome the Rákshasas, or devils, alias barbarians, who were the objects of his hate. Several castes of the present day ascribe some of their peculiar privileges to his munificence, as the Bhatelá Brahmans, of the Ativísí¹, who, though only agriculturists, are permitted to read the Vedas and perform sacrifices in their own behalf, though not in the behalf of others. Ráma encountered great difficulties in the forests, especially in that of Dandak, bordering on the Nirmadá; and it is in the forests, and on the mountains of India, that the tribes who have most successfully opposed Brahmanism are principally to be found. The legend of the creation of the Konkan, or the region intermediate between the Western Ocean and the Sahyádrí range of gháts, and the subjection of a great part of its territory to newly created Brahmans, by Parasuráma, another incarnation, is nothing more nor less than a faint tradition of the first triumph of Hinduism, over other forms of superstition prevalent in the province.

The Brahmanical religion, which was thus gradually propagated, is now dominant in India. It is not, however, and it has never been, universal in its sway. Buddhism, which claims alliance with it in its origin, but which differs greatly from it in its essential principles, was, for several centuries at least, more than its rival².

¹ The country intermediate between the Taptí and the Daman-Gangá.

² This is evident from the numerous cave-temples, and other monuments of the Baudhdhas, and the edicts of Asoka, and other princes, the patrons of their faith, which are found throughout India. It is a curious fact, that a few months after I put into the hands of the late James Prinsep, Esq., the fac-simile of the Baudhdhist inscriptions of Girnár, procured for me after my visit to that celebrated mountain

Many tribes, inhabiting principally the forests and mountains of the country, have either not succumbed to its authority, or refrained from receiving its doctrines and rites, without great concessions being made to their original superstitions and observances. The situation of these tribes, forming part as they do of the great family of man, would in any circumstances be worthy of investigation ; for few will dissent from the opinion of the eloquent and philosophic Hall, that "whatever tends to render our acquaintance with any portion of our species more accurate and profound, is an accession to the most valuable part of our knowledge." There are peculiar circumstances, however, which recommend them to attention. On several occasions they have made irruptions into the more peaceable portions of the British and native territory, and have not retreated to their wilds without inflicting extensive injury on life and property, and in some instances, as in the case of the Bháls and "Coles," without requiring the intervention of an armed force. They have not yet been permitted, in any considerable degree, to share in the bounty which the benevolence of our country has furnished for the instruction of the people of this land. Much, in many districts, remains to be done to inspire them with the love of a productive and self-rewarding industry. The question of permitting, under a temporary contract, their emigration to the colonies, till lately cultivated by the labour of the slave, or protecting them from every enticement to form engagements which they can but little understand, and which are to be implemented in a foreign land, is at present pending before the British Parliament.

by my friend Captain Lang, the exact counterpart of what is most important in them, though in a less perfect state, was found by Lieutenant Kittoe so far distant as Dhault in Kattak.

"The opinions of the learned," I have said in another place, "are divided as to the superior antiquity of the Buddhist and Brahmanical systems. The extensive geographical distribution of the Baudhdhas, giving to Hindúism an almost insular situation, has formed the most plausible plea on their behalf ; but it is entirely destroyed when it is borne in mind, that the Singhalese, Burmese, Chinese, Tibetans, &c., as Mr. Hodgson remarks, point to India as the father-land of their creed, have all their ancient books in the languago of that country, and set forth the founders of their faith merely as reformers, or improvers, of Brahmanism. How far Hindúism, in its most ancient forms, may have countenanced them in their speculations and practices, it is difficult to determine. In their controversial works, they point to numerous precedents and authorities to be found in the Hindú Sástras. They are decided fatalists in their notions, teaching the eternity both of matter and spirit, while the Hindús, as spiritual pantheists, deny the reality of matter. From their first appearance as sectaries, they have had a great aversion to animal sacrifices, and a love of the monastic life."—*Memoir of Mrs. Wilson.*

To some of these tribes, in the territories included in, or adjoining to, the Bombay Presidency, my attention has at different times been particularly directed; and as a small contribution to a general exposition of their state, I shall now give a short account of two of them, the Wáralís and Kátodís, who inhabit the jungles of the Northern Konkan. Of the first, no description, as far as I am aware, has yet been given by any of our countrymen. Of the second, a brief but interesting notice has been published by Major A. Mackintosh. For the sake of convenience, I shall give my notes much in the form of a personal narrative. The conferences which, in conjunction with the companion who is afterwards mentioned, I held on the subject of their religious sentiments and practices, were in no small degree curious and interesting to our own minds.

THE WÁRALÍS.

The first time that I came into contact with any persons belonging to this tribe, was the 22nd December, 1834. "When Dr. Smyttan and I," as I noted on the occasion, "went out to view the village [of Umargaum], we found three or four Wáralís, who had come down from the jungles with the view of disposing of bamboos which they had cut, and procuring some little necessaries which they required. Their hair was black and lank. Their bodies were oiled, and altogether they had a very wild appearance. They spoke Maráthí, and seemed to be highly amused at having a European to speak with them. On questioning them, we found that they have no connexion either with the Brahman or the Hindú religion; that they have priests of their own, and very few religious rites of any kind; and that these rites principally refer to marriages and deaths. They move about in the jungles according to their wants, many of their villages being merely temporary. Their condition is well worthy of being inquired into. In an old book of travels, I find their tribe represented as much addicted to thieving. In the Puránas, they are spoken of as the *Kálo prajá*, in contradistinction to the common Hindús, who are denominated the *Subhrá prajá*. There are other tribes in the jungles whose state is similar to theirs, and should be investigated. The wildness of their country, and the difficulties and dangers of moving in it, are obstacles in the way of research. The knowledge of them, however, might lead to important consequences." From this time, I became exceedingly desirous of visiting the Wáralís in their native forests; and my friend and fellow-labourer, the Rev. James Mitchell of Poona, having entered into my views, we left Bombay on the 9th of January, 1839,

for the express purpose of particularly inquiring into the circumstances of this strange people, and proclaiming to them the glorious tidings of salvation through the Son of God. It was not till the 21st of the month, that we came in contact with any of their number. Mr. Mitchell, who found a few of them sitting round a fire in Umargaum, had a conversation with two of them who were on a visit to the town. "They were," he wrote, "the most ignorant persons I have ever met with. They did not know what sin is till I explained it. They answered all my questions with the exclamation, 'How is it possible for us to know such matters,' and laughed most immoderately at my inquiries, both as to their novelty, and the idea of my expecting them to know anything about such matters." Two days afterwards, at a neighbouring village, I sat down beside a small company, with the view of examining them at length respecting their tenets and habits. Amongst other questions, I asked them if they expected to go to God after death. "How can we get to God after death?" said they, "men even banish us from their abodes; how will God allow us to approach him?" This reply affected me more than I can express. It marked the sense which they had of their own degradation; and it revealed the error of their conceptions of the divine nature. It showed that they thought God to be somewhat *greater* than man, but only greater in pride and wickedness; and that they imagined that to him they were not responsible. The individuals to whom I have now referred being in the habit of occasionally visiting the coast, and holding intercourse with others more civilized than themselves, may be considered as not altogether fair representatives of the body in general.

When we reached the Portuguese settlement of Daman, we were able to form our plans for continuing our journey through the dense and gloomy forests in which the Wáralís reside. We directed our course to the eastward. Our second march brought us to Rakhólí, in which many of them reside. We succeeded in getting them assembled together; and, with the help of my companion, I proceeded to examine them at great length, and to record verbatim the replies which they gave to our inquiries. It may be curious for some to have a few extracts from the catechism which was the result of our interviews. The following is its commencement.

What are your names? Láshis, Kákawá, Shamjí, Gopají, Badagá, Hindio, Rupají, Dival, Devají, Holo¹.

What were the names of your fathers? Bhiku, Sukho, Samo,

¹ O is a Gujaráthí termination of a masculine noun, and í, a Maráthí. The village of Rakhólí is intermediate between Gujarát and Maháráshitra.

Dhanjí, Dhakío, Zanío. [Three persons did not know the names of their fathers.]

What are the names of your wives? We never mention the names of our wives.

But were you ever asked before by a *Sahéb*? Never, never. Their names are Harkhu, Thakalí, Sonái (the lady of the gold), Kaluná, Rupái (the lady of the silver). [No individual mentioned the name of his own wife; each man gave that of his neighbour.]

Did the Brahmans marry you? No, we are our own Brahmans, our own priests. Our women marry us, by singing over a cup of *dírú* (spirits), the bridegroom drinking first, the bride second, and and afterwards the whole company.

At what age do you marry? Girls from twelve years and upwards, and boys from sixteen years and upwards.

Do you choose wives for yourselves? We look out for a woman to our own liking, and then ask our parents and friends to conclude the bargain for us.

How much do you pay for a wife? Nine rupees and a half.

Why don't you give ten? This is not our custom.

Do you ever pay a smaller sum for a wife than nine rupees and a half? Sometimes, we conclude the bargain for eight rupees. In your country [the Company's territories; we were then in the Havoli parganá of the Portuguese] wives are cheap.

Do any of you keep more wives than one? Re! Re! We can scarcely feed one; why should we think of more?

Do you consult any book before giving names to your children? No, we give names from our own minds. The father chooses the name.

When do you give names to your children? When they are able to understand them.

How do you address your children before they get their names? We call them Dádu, Bálu (Sir), and Báí (Ma'am!)

When do you first give clothes to your children? To boys when they are twelve years old.

How do you treat your children when they disobey your commands? We scold them.

Do you never whip your children? What! strike our own offspring? We never strike them.

When your wives disobey your commands, how do you treat them? We give them chastisement less or more. How could we manage them without striking them?

But don't they get angry with you when you beat them? They get angry of course.

Do you give any instructions to your children? Yes, we say to them, Don't be idle, Work in the fields, Cut sticks, Collect cow-dung, Sweep the house, Bring water, Tie up the cows.

Do you give them no more instructions than these? What more do they need?

Don't you teach them to read or write? No Wáralís can either read or write.

Do you give them any instructions about God? Why should we speak about God to them?

What God do you worship? We worship Wághiá (the lord of tigers).

Has he any form? He is a shapeless stone, smeared with red-lead, and ghí (clarified butter).

How do you worship him? We give him chickens and goats, break cocoa-nuts on his head, and pour oil on him.

What does your god give to you? He preserves us from tigers, gives us good crops, and keeps disease from us.

But how can a stone do all this for you? There is something besides the stone at the place where it is fixed.

What is that thing? We don't know; we do as our forefathers showed us.

Who inflicts pain upon you? Wághiá, when we don't worship him.

Does he ever enter your bodies? Yes, he seizes us by the throat like a cat, he sticks to our bodies.

Do you find pleasure in his visits? Truly, we do.

Do you ever scold Wághiá? To be sure, we do. We say, You fellow, we have given you a chicken, a goat, and yet you strike us! What more do you want?

Do you never beat Wághiá? Never.

Whether do you bury or burn your dead? We burn them.

What interval occurs between the death and the burning? We allow no interval when the death occurs during the day. When it occurs during the night, we keep the body outside till the break of day.

Why are you so hasty in the disposal of your dead? Why should we keep a corpse beside us?

Where does the soul go after death? How can we answer that question?

When a man dies in sin, whither does he go? How can we answer that question?

Does he go to a good place, or a bad place? We cannot tell.

Does he go to heaven or to hell? He goes to hell.

What kind of a place is hell? It is a bad place; there is suffering in it.

Who are in hell? We don't know what kind of a *town* it is.

Where do good people go after death? They go to Bhagaván (the Self-existent).

Don't they go to Wághiá? No, he lives in the jungles.

Where is Bhagaván? We don't know where he is, and where he is not.

Does Bhagaván do anything for you? How can God do any thing for us? He has neither *deha* (body) nor *daya* (mercy), that is to say, he is destitute of qualities.

Before I proceed farther, I must make a few remarks on the object of some of our questions and the replies which we received. Our inquiries relative to the names of the Wáralís were instituted with the purpose of ascertaining whether or not they conform to those commonly current among the Hindús. From the list which I have given, as well as from many others in my possession, it is clear that they have not been bestowed in accordance with the institutes of Brahmanism. According to these authorities, names should be given to children about the twelfth day after birth; they should be selected by the Brahman astrologer, after consulting the horoscope and almanac; their first term should be that of a god, for there is the merit of prayer in pronouncing such a term, even when calling to a person in common discourse; they should not be unmeaning and absurd; they should not consist of an uneven number of syllables; and they should be communicated with various rites and ceremonies, which need not be mentioned. It is in the celebration of marriages, that the Brahmans are most in requisition among the Hindús; and the fact that they are entirely discarded by the Wáralís on these occasions, is particularly to be noted. The family government brought to our notice corresponds with that of many of the lower orders in this country, and, to a good extent, with that of the uncivilized aborigines of North America. Wághiá, the object of worship, is evidently viewed as a malevolent being, who may be either frightened, or cajoled, according to the convenience of his devotees. The abusive treatment which he sometimes receives, is not peculiar to himself, for even the Hindú Sástra sanctions the resort to *virodha-bhakti*, or the worship of opposition, and presents us with many examples of its signal success both amongst gods and men! The notions entertained of the future state

are faint to a degree which we seldom see exemplified among the Hindús; and there is scarcely evinced any feeling of responsibility. Many persons, after receiving the first answers which we obtained respecting Wághiá, would have set down the Wáralís as having no belief in a Supreme God. Incidentally, however, they evince, that though nearly entirely ignorant of his character, they admit his existence.

When we had concluded our examination, we told our friends that as they had said much to *us*, we had much to say to *them*; and we both preached to them and our other auditors at great length. Some philosophers would have said to us, when we commenced our address, you may as well harangue the trees and bushes around you, as seek to communicate religious knowledge to these children of ignorance, before they are diciplined and trained by regular education. Had they been present with us, however, they would have seen the fallacy of the judgement on which they rest. We found access to their understandings and to their hearts, studying of course the greatest simplicity of speech, and illustrating our statements by numerous allusions to their own economy. They listened to us with attention; they acknowledged the charge of guilt which we brought against them, when we expounded the precepts of the law of God; they confessed that they had acted both unreasonably and impiously in worshipping a devil instead of God; they declared that they would henceforth call on the name of Jehovah; they expressed the interest which they felt, when we showed them how "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." A subsequent catechising proved that they remembered much of our discourse. Thus, we see that there is an essential adaptation between the mind of man, and the word of God, formed in the all-perfect wisdom of their Author. In saying this, I am not forgetful of the incalculable advantages of education, and not undesirous that as many as possible should have line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.

After leaving Rakhólf, we visited a considerable number of other *hutteries* belonging to the Wáralís, and situated in the Company's territories. The principal of them were those of Kudád, Parjé, Dhabárá, Phalsuní, Kinhaulí, Thalásarí, and Pimpurí. As we took short marches, our arrival was generally expected; and persons from different villages voluntarily assembled to meet us, and to listen to our instructions. At Dhabárá, we found the old chief of the tribe, named Chandráo, with about thirty-five villagers, who, to

do him honour, were content for a day to be reckoned his followers; and to arm themselves with bows, and swords, and matchlocks. Our conversation with this party elicited greater intelligence than we had hitherto witnessed; and we thought the principal man was somewhat unwilling to be considered entirely excluded from the service of the Brahmaus. Some of them, he said, have occasionally visited him, and after repeating some *chatar-matar*, have got a prize of a couple of silverlings for their trouble. It was, perhaps, from them that he had learned the doctrine, which he avowed, that the human soul is identical with the Supreme Mind. The country in which we were travelling, he represented as the everlasting inheritance of the Wáralís; but he could not define the bounds of their habitations. As the result of all our inquiry, I would state generally, that, omitting a belt of six or seven miles of country on the coast, they are formed by a line running east of Daman to Jawár, and south-east from Jawár to the Dánu creek. My friend Mr. Duncan Davidson, of the Civil Service, who was for several years in charge of the district in which they reside, and who has had much intercourse with them on the occasion of his making the usual revenue settlements on the coast, gives me this information respecting them:—"The boundaries of the country of the Wáralís it is difficult to specify. I am not aware how far they extend into the Surat Collectorate; but their principal locations in this Zillah, are in the Maháls forming its northern boundary, viz., Nchar, Sunján, Udwach, Báharach, Asharí, Thalásarí and Gambirgad. They are also found near the coast, but less frequently the farther south. Their total number may be about 10,000." He also adds, in reference to the land-rent of the Wáralís, the following observations, in which there are both wisdom and benevolence:—"The Wáralís inhabit the very jungly districts of the Zillah, and the system of taxation pursued in them is the *nángar-bandí*, so called from *nángar*, a plough, each of which is rated at from five to fifteen rupees per annum, partly a fixed money payment, and partly a commutation for kind, the commutation rate being annually fixed by the collector, according to prevailing *bázár* prices, just as the fiars are fixed in Scotland. The *nángar-bandí* system obtains in all the Maháls from Asharí round by the eastern side of the Jawár territory, southward along the Gháts to where the Kolwan Táluka joins Morbád, about twenty miles below the Tal-Ghát. It is a system which is well suited to the people, whose superstitious aversion to measurements and minute surveys it has been as yet found difficult to overcome; and if it were properly administered,

that is to say, if the quantity of land for each plough were marked out as a whole, they would become much more attached to it. As it is, if a man puts an additional plough to increase its productiveness, on the same land which last year he scratched with only one, he has to pay for two. The implements of his industry, and his stock, are thus at once taxed double; the 'taille' system, in fact, is here carried as far as ever it was in France, and consequently the depressed state of agriculture and the cultivators is easily to be accounted for. It would not be necessary for Government to be at the expense of a minute survey for such a country, indeed the country is not worth it; but it would require neither great expense, nor much time to settle the number of ploughs for each village, and to register the boundaries of the land assigned to each plough, so that the cultivator within them might do as he pleased." It is the richness of the soil, I would remark, which in many places retards its cultivation. The vegetation in the forests is so luxuriant, that the inhabitants fail to subdue it.

I need not enter into farther details connected with our movements among the Wáralís; but I shall content myself by giving the sum of such of my notes as I have not already used in this Paper.

The Wáralís are more slender in their form than the common agriculturists in the Maráthá country, and they are somewhat darker in their complexion. They seldom cut either the hair of their heads or beards; and on ordinary occasions they are but slightly clothed. Their huts are sometimes quadrangular, and sometimes circular; and on the whole are very convenient, being formed by bamboos and bramble, twisted into a framework of wood, and so thickly covered with dried grass as to be impervious both to heat and rain. They do not rear many cattle; but they have a superfluity of domestic fowls. The grains which they raise are principally *nágali* (*Eleucina colocarus*), *tár*, or pigeon pea, *udid* (*Phaseolus radiatus*), *wál* (*Lablab vulgaris*), and, to a small extent, *bhát*, or rice. The wood which they fell near the banks of some of the principal streams, brings them some profit; and altogether they appear to be in comfortable circumstances. It is probable from their consciousness of this fact, and their desire to preserve themselves from the intrusion of other tribes, that many of them are not unwilling to be esteemed sorcerers. They are immoderately addicted to the use of tobacco, which they purchase on the coast; and almost every man amongst them carries the materials for striking a light for smoking whenever he may please, which are generally accommodated in a hollow cocoa-nut. They are unfortunately fond of ardent spirits;

and the Parsís have many shops in the wilderness, placed under Hindú servants, for their accommodation. The scarcity of money is no obstacle to their indulgence, as liquor can be procured for grain, grass, wood, or any other article which may be at their disposal.

There are many *kuls*, or family divisions, amongst the Wáralís, such as the Rávatiá, Bantria, Bhángará (that of the chief), Bhávar, Sankar, Pileyaná, Meriá, Wángad, Thakariá, Jhadavá, Karbat, Bhendár, Kondáriá, &c. The clans, indeed, are so numerous, that we are forced to come to the conclusion, that they must at one time have been a very powerful people. The population appears to be at present nearly stationary. On account of the unhealthiness of the jungles, many of the children are cut off at a very early age. No person marries in his own clan.

The Wáralí villages have not the common officers found in similar places among the Maráthás. They have, generally speaking, a head man, who is in some degree responsible to the government for their behaviour. The Wáralís are not particularly noted for crime.

We have seen what is the general system of worship among the Wáralís. Unless when calamities overtake them, they are not frequent in their visits to the images of the Wághiá, which at the best are only very rude forms of a tiger. They have an annual service for the dead, when their bhagats, or elders, repeat incantations, kindle lights, and strew flowers, at the place where the ashes of the dead have been scattered. They partially observe the two festivals of the *Shímgá*, and *Diváli*, which, are connected with the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, and which though celebrated by the Hindús in general, are often supposed to be ante-Brahmanical.

I have alluded to the readiness of the Wáralís to listen to the Gospel message, and even to declare that their customs are vain and foolish, and worthy of a complete abandonment. They are by no means so systematically, intelligently, and habitually attached to error as the common Hindús; and they are certainly, in appearance, more willing to receive the truth than the majority of the inhabitants of this country. They are, consequently, not to be overlooked in the general arrangements which may be made for the propagation of Christianity. It is amongst persons in a situation somewhat similar to their own, that much success has been experienced by some missionaries in the south of India and in Barmah.

THE KÁTODÍS.

2. The Kátodís receive their name from the occupation on which they are principally dependent for support, the manufacture of the

kát, or terra japonica, from the Khair tree, or *Acacia catechu*. They principally inhabit the part of the Northern Konkan which lies along the base of the Sahyádrí range, and is intermediate between the Násik and Poona roads. A few of them, I rather think, may be occasionally found on the eastern face of the Gháts on the same latitude as the district which I have now mentioned. Major Mackintosh, who has written an interesting notice of the manner in which they prepare the catechu, and of some of their peculiar habits, speaks of them as also inhabiting the jungles of the Ativísí, between the Daman Gangá and Taptí rivers. "They may be considered as nomades to a certain extent," he says, "for notwithstanding they always reside in the same country, yet they frequently change their place of residence. If we are to believe their own account, they have been settled in the Ativísí from time immemorial. They have the tradition among them, that they are the descendants of the demon Rávana, the tyrant monarch of Lauká, and the same whom the god Ráma vanquished, and whose exploits are related by the distinguished poet Valmíki." They are the most degraded body of natives with whom I am acquainted. They have not settlements of their own like the Wáralís, but they live, as outcasts, near villages inhabited by other classes of the community. They are held in great abhorrence by the common agriculturists, and particularly by the Brahmans; and their residences are wretched beyond belief. Their miserable huts are situated where all the refuse of the villages is thrown, and they have companionship with all that is impure. Looking to the position in which they are found, and to the profession of familiar intercourse with malignant spirits which they make, we can scarcely fail to associate them with the words of the Revelation,—"*without* are dogs and sorcerers." Though they receive considerable sums from the native merchants for the catechu which they prepare during the cold season, they are most improvident in their habits, and often compelled by want to feed on what is most loathsome to the human species. I have seen in their cooking vessels the coarsest vegetables and roots. The animals which they devour, they enumerated to me in the following order: "chickens, goats, deers, *rats*, *coucals*, *lizards*, *squirrels*, *blood-suckers*, the black-faced monkey (*Semnipithecus entellus*), doves, partridges, swine, *barbets*, and *serpents*," and the conclusion was inevitable, that they will readily eat whatever they can digest, with the exception of the brown-faced monkey, which they declare is inhabited by a human soul! They are very depraved, as well as debased, and are particularly addicted to drunkenness. "Should

one of them happen," says Major Mackintosh, "to pass near a liquor shop, without either money or grain to barter for a dram, he will most likely pawn the only rag of cloth on his person to gratify his appetite, and go home naked, in the hope that he may redeem the pledged article on some future day. Owing to their ignorance and prodigality, their circumstances frequently become very desperate; and they have consequently to contend against misery and the many temptations to which want reduces them. They have the credit of being great robbers, stealing corn from the cultivators' fields and farm-yards, also committing robberies in the villages at night, and plundering solitary travellers during the day." Such is the dread entertained of their magical powers, that few of the natives have sufficient courage to give information to the authorities respecting their misdeeds or even atrocities. I am not aware that they frequently resort to murder.

It is now upwards of nine years since I first met with a few individuals belonging to the Kátkarí tribe. Having had occasion to address the inhabitants of a village on the continent, to the north-east of Bombay, I was struck with the attention which many of them were lending to my discourse. "When I and a native convert who was with me began to return home," I wrote at the time, "two men came running up to us on the way. They appeared to be much interested in what they had heard, and with much simplicity declared, 'Your word is true.' They belong to that curious class of the natives called Kátkarí, who principally live in the desert, and collect firewood, and prepare kát, the produce of the Catechu mimosa, which the natives use as an astringent, along with the betel-nut and lime. They took my companion to their huts; and when he came back, he said that they and their neighbours, about a score in number, had got him to promise that he would afterwards spend a day or two with them, to declare the Gospel."

From this time I occasionally met with some of the Kátkarís, but I had no particular intercourse with them till I undertook the journey with Mr. Mitchell, to which I have already adverted. In the notes of my companion, under date the 11th of February, I find the following entry: "In the afternoon we rode to Morbár. On the way thither, in one of the villages which we passed, at which we had stopped to inquire if any could read, that we might leave some books, we found a few families of the Kátkarís, a people to inquire into whose circumstances was a particular object of our coming in this direction. On visiting them, we found only one of the men at home, the rest having gone into the jungles, some to cut wood for

the villagers, and some to seek for roots to use for their own food. The appearance of their houses—mere huts, was wretched in the extreme; they were very little better, as habitations, than the open air. The women and children had a half-famished appearance, and wild and savage manner. The young, on seeing us, generally took to their heels, as so many wild goats, and when we proposed to the elder people to give a few pice to each of the young who would make his appearance, it was with difficulty they could induce any number of them to come out from their hiding places, or return from their flight. Dr. Wilson gave the Patel some money to be distributed among the children. Our interest in them, which was intense, seemed to please the people. As it was getting late, we could not converse long with them, but took on the man with us to Morbár, intending to get information from him regarding the tribe; on reaching that place, however, the people informed us, that there was a colony of them in the village; we, therefore, rewarded the person we had brought with us, and let him return to his own village, as the Government Kárkún here promised to call some of their principal men to meet us in the morning."

Most of the subsequent day we devoted to the work of conferring with and instructing the Kátkarís of Morbár and a neighbouring village. In order to induce them to remain with us till our curiosity was satisfied, we promised that those who would continue to sit with us should each receive a day's wages, for their patience which had never in this way been formerly tried. I proposed to them the same set of queries which we had used with the Wáralís; and made an exact record of the answers which we obtained. The result of our inquiries, not already forestalled, may be given in a small space.

After having mentioned the liberty which they take with reference to food, and the fact of their devouring the sacred monkey of India, I need hardly say that they avowed a total disconnexion with Brahmanical institutes. Their names are entirely different from those of the Hindús, and lead to the inference which has already been made in the case of the Wáralís. They represented themselves as accustomed to call on the name of the Supreme God (*Iswara*), without proffering any particular requests when engaged in his worship, except those which pertain to their immediate bodily wants and the removal of their complaints. Their notions of the divine spirituality they expressed to us by saying, that "God comes like the wind, and goes like the wind." To the divine Being they attributed the rain which waters the fields; but whether or not he is the author of life,

they could not tell. They appeared scarcely at all conscious of their responsibility ; and they observed that their friends had died without offering up a single prayer, or manifesting the slightest anxiety about their final destiny. Of the nature of the future state, they actually knew nothing ; and they could scarcely understand our meaning, when we asked them, whether their souls have to transmigrate or not into other bodies. " We give the crows something to eat," they said, " when our relatives die. On a particular day of the year, we cry out Káva, Káva, to the memory of our fathers. We don't know, however, the reason. We do as others do." They burn their dead, and, contrary to the custom of the Hindús, the bodies of their children who survive a few days. Diseases, they remarked, walk up and down, and rest where they please. Their aged men are their priests ; but except when they use incantations for the control of devils, and celebrate marriages, and are about to commence their annual work of the preparation of the Kát, they have few ceremonies to perform. The ceremony of wedding, on which the natives in general are accustomed to lay so much stress, is with them a very simple affair, and is performed by placing, without any form of words, a chaplet of leaves or paper, first on the head of the bride, and then of the bridegroom, and afterwards besmearing them with turmeric, a popular unguent. The cost of a wife is fixed at two rupees ; but about ten times this sum is required to pay the expenses of the feasting and rioting which are the invariable consequences of the first formation of a matrimonial connexion. Children are named as soon as they are born. The family circle is anything but the abode of peace ; but women are viewed as more on a parity with men than among other classes of the Aborigines. They are greatly addicted to prognostications respecting lucky and unlucky days ; but they do not state the grounds of their conjectures. When they proceed to the jungles, for the purpose of preparing the Kát, they hold their encampments as sacred, and will allow no persons of other castes to approach them without giving previous warning. It is from the inner portion of the Khair, that, by the process of boiling and afterwards inspissating the juice and reducing it to the form of a cake, they procure the catechu. Before felling a single tree in the forest, they select, according to their families, one of the kind on which they have to operate, which they constitute a god, and which they worship by presenting a cocoa-nut, burning frankincense, applying a red pigment, and soliciting it to bless their undertaking. It is singular that they are not accustomed to partake of the catechu which they manufacture. Of the pith of the tree, however, they are very fond.

The Kátkarís whom I have seen have all belonged to two clans,—the Helam and the Pawár. Major Mackintosh mentions other two,—the Jádava and the Sindhí. It is scarcely possible at present to form an estimate of the extent of the entire population.

I do not think that it is likely that such efforts to bring the Kátkarís within the pale of Hindúism, will be made by the Brahmans and religious mendicants of this quarter, as are now to be witnessed among the Aborigines in other parts of India. Though, from sympathy with their neighbours, and a desire to share in the offerings of superstition, they pay some regard to the Holí, Diválí, and Dasahara, the three most popular festivals of the Hindús, the Kátkarís have no respect for the Hindú gods. Instead of seeking to place themselves under the restrictions of other castes, they sometimes, in revenge for supposed insults, compel strangers, by the hands of their women, whose touch communicates defilement almost irremediable, to join their own community. Christian benevolence in fact, powerful and disinterested, is required to descend to the depths of their degradation. Without entering at present on the general question of the conversion of the Aborigines, I would remark, that the Moravian system of erecting villages would probably be found most suitable to *their* circumstances. I have no doubt, that if ground were assigned to them on easy terms by the government, and if they were put in possession of the means of bringing it under cultivation, and prevented from dissipating these means by a resort to the liquor-shop, they would be content to establish themselves as a body of agriculturists. I am happy to be able to say, that the authorities here are showing for them a paternal concern, much in the way to which I have now alluded ; and that success promises to be the result. Till they are more collected together, and till schools can be formed for their special benefit, the prospect of their education must be considered remote. No other native children would sit with their youth under the same teacher, till they are reformed in their habits.

I trust that the simple narrative which I have now given, will not be altogether uninteresting to the Christian mind, even though it supplies a mere iota of the information of which the moral geography of India must be composed. The state of society in this great country, in order to be understood, must be narrowly examined in all its amplitude and modifications. Every tribe, and sect, and caste, in the land, is surrounded by moral and social barriers, which greatly impede salutary intercommunion, and which will agonize the greatest ingenuity and energy before they be surmounted

or removed. How glorious is the consideration, that the Gospel of Christ is as much suited to the circumstances of man in whatever situation he may be placed, as it is imperiously needed by him as condemned by the law of God, and placed under the tyranny of sin, the source of all his misery !
