

Casiri
Caste.

of Theology, which in their systems generally holds the first place. The title of each Manuscript is given in the original Arabic, with a Latin translation, and its age and author, when these are known, are pointed out; but this is not all; the title and description of the work is frequently followed with extracts, also in Arabic and Latin, by which some of the most curious or peculiar features of the piece are brought before the reader; thereby supplying the want of the original, as well to those who could read it if accessible, as to those who could not read it though at hand. The learned author has also collected various interesting and authentic particulars of Saracenic Biography, and corrects some prevalent errors regarding the lives of these writers. We have noticed an error of this kind, in our account, derived from Casiri, of the celebrated Arabian Philosopher ALHAZEN, given in the first volume of this Supplement.

In the preface, which is of considerable length, Casiri gives a general view of his labours, and commemorates the assistance which he received from the Government and from the Learned. Rich as the Escorial is in Arabic Manuscripts, its present stores are small, compared to what they once were; for Casiri mentions that, by a fire which happened in 1670, more than *three thousand* of these interesting pieces were consumed. They who have not access to this valuable work, which is indeed but rarely to be met with, will find a full view of its contents, with some critical comments, in the *First Appendix* to Harris's *Philological Inquiries*, and in the *Second Appendix* to Barington's *Literary History of the Middle Ages*. The latter writer closes his review by stating it as his opinion, that the Arabian literature, though it greatly outshone ours during the same period, has experienced upon the whole too much prodigality of praise. This may perhaps be true; but this writer has failed, as abler writers likewise have, to furnish a sound and thorough estimate of the attainments and services to which the Arabians are fairly entitled to lay claim in regard to the culture and advancement of learning. The erudition of Gibbon, vast and varied as it was, did not nearly embrace all that was necessary to a full appreciation of this portion of literary history. His general view may be just, his criticisms penetrating and comprehensive; but he was ignorant of the language, and of some branches of science, without a proficiency in which, such an estimate could not be drawn up with any pretensions either to critical or philosophical accuracy. He who attempts, with requisite endowments, to supply that great desideratum—a literary history of the Saracens during the flourishing periods of their literature, will find the work of Casiri an invaluable assistant in such an undertaking.

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CASTE. By this term is here distinguished the classification and distribution of the members of a community into certain classes or orders, for the performance of certain functions; with the enjoyment of certain privileges, or the endurance of certain burthens; and the establishment of hereditary permanence in these orders, the son being ordained to perform the functions, to enjoy the privileges, or

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sustain the burthens of the father, and to marry only in his own tribe, without mixture of the classes, in regular succession, through all ages.

The term *Caste* is borrowed from the Portuguese. It was the term applied by that people, who first of the European nations formed establishments in India, to the classes which they found established upon this principle among the inhabitants of that portion of the globe; and from them, as it was from their intercourse that the rest of the nations of modern Europe first derived their familiarity with the manners and institutions of the people of India, the term made its way, and was established in the other languages of Europe.

The institution itself appears in the early ages of society to have been very extensively introduced.

In regard to the ancient Egyptians, the fact is universally and familiarly known. The President Goguet, who, with singular industry, and no ordinary judgment and sagacity, explored the remains of ancient times, comprehends a great body of history in a few words. "We may farther observe," says he, "that, in the Assyrian empire, the people were distributed into a certain number of tribes, and that professions were hereditary; that is to say, children were not permitted to quit their father's occupation, and embrace another. We know not the time nor the author of this institution, which, from the highest antiquity, prevailed over almost all Asia, as well as in several other countries." It is not necessary here to surcharge the reader with the authorities which he quotes. The passage itself (*P. i. B. i. Ch. i. Art. 3.*) will be consulted by all who distrust the legitimacy of his inference, or desire to prosecute the inquiry.

It is stated in the common histories of Greece, that Cecrops distributed into four hereditary classes, or tribes, all the inhabitants of Attica. And we are informed by Plutarch, in his *Life of Theseus*, that by this prince, the class of priests, and that of nobles, in other words the magistrates or military leaders, were united into one: whence the society was composed of three classes; 1. The sacerdotal, legislating, and ruling class; 2. The class of husbandmen; and, 3. The class of tradesmen. "To the nobility," says the illustrious biographer, "he committed the choice of magistrates, the teaching and dispensing of the laws, and the interpretation of all holy and religious things; the whole city, as to all other matters, being as it were reduced to an exact equality; the nobles excelling the rest in honour, the husbandmen in profit, and the artificers in number. And Theseus was the first who, as Aristotle says, out of an inclination to popular government, parted with the regal power; which Homer also appears to attest, in his catalogue of the ships, where he gives the name of *PEOPLE* to the Athenians alone." There is a passage near the beginning of Plato's *Timæus*, which, though in a work of fancy, is not without some weight, as evidence either of conclusions which were drawn by men of research, or of traditions which were current among the people. In this passage, not only is it asserted, that, in the primeval state of the inhabitants of Attica, they resembled the Egyptians in the division into hereditary classes

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and professions; but a very accurate description is given of those classes, five in number; viz. 1. The class of priests; 2. The class of handicrafts; 3. The class of shepherds and hunters; 4. The class of ploughmen; 5. The military class. Πρωτον μιν το των ιερων γινος, απο των αλλων χωρις αφωρισμενον μετα δε ταυτο το των δημουργων, οτι καθ' αυτο ελασος, αλλω δε εκ επιμεμεργμενων, δημουργοι το τε των νομων και των θεσπειων το τε των γεωργων και δη το μαχιμων γινος, απο παντων των γενων καχωρισμενοι, ος εδεν αλλο πλην τα περι τοι πολαιμον υπο τε νομα προσεταχθη μελιν.

We are informed by Aristotle, that the people of Crete were divided into castes, after the manner of the Egyptians, by the laws of Minos. Εκει δε ε νυν αδη νωσθε. τατ' ειναι γνωριμον τοις περι πολιτιας φιλοσοφουσι, οτι δει διαρησθαι χωρις κατα γνην την πολιν, και το τε μαχιμων ιερων ειναι, και το γεωργων εν Αργυρατι τι γαρ εχει τον τροπον ταυτον οτι και νυν τα τε περι την Κρητην. Τα μιν εν περι Αργυρατον, Σισωεριοι, ως φασι, ειναι νομοθετησαντος Μινωι δε τα περι Κρητην. *Polit.* vii. 1.

It is worthy of observation, that certain vestiges at least of that ancient institution are still visible in Egypt. "La distinction par familles," says General Reynier (*De l'Egypte*, p. 56), "se retrouve encore dans les villes: l'exercice des arts et metiers est hereditaire: le fils imite les procedes de son pere, et ne les perfectionne pas."

We have a remarkable passage to prove, that, among the ancient Persians, the same division into castes existed which now has place among the Hindoos. In the *Zendavesta*, as translated by M. Anquetil Duperron, it is said: "Ormuzd declared, There are three measures (literally weights, i. e. tests, rules) of conduct, four states, and five places of dignity. The states are, that of the priest; that of the soldier; that of the husbandman, the source of riches; and that of the artisan or labourer."—"We are told," says Sir John Malcolm (*Hist. of Persia*, i. 205), "that Jemsheed divided his subjects into four classes, and that he allotted to each a separate and fixed station in life; which seems to imply that the condition of the ancient Persians was like that of the modern Hindoos; and that the extraordinary institution of cast, which now exists in India, was once known in Persia." Sir John proceeds to state some reasons which induce him to doubt the reality of the fact; in not one of which, however, there is a particle of weight.

Sir John quotes, and translates for us a passage from Strabo, which asserts that a similar institution existed in Iberia. "Four kinds or classes of people inhabited that country. From what they consider the first class, they appoint their kings according to nearness of kindred and seniority; these administer justice, and head their armies: The second is of priests, who take charge of their political rights with respect to their neighbours: The third of soldiers and husbandmen: The fourth of the people in general, who are slaves of the king, and perform every menial office." This account of the distinctions of the castes is evidently incorrect, and by a man who was not well informed. The fact of the Iberians being distributed in a remarkable and uncommon manner, he knew; otherwise there would have been no occasion to single out the fact, in the description

of this particular people. He knew also that they were divided into four principal classes. With regard to the matters of detail, however, his words bear internal evidence that either his information had been vague and inaccurate, or that his recollection had become so.

From a dissertation of Mr Joinville, on the religion and manners of the people of Ceylon, (*Asiat. Researches*, vii. 430.) we find that there is sufficient evidence to prove the existence of a similar institution, anciently, among the Buddhists of Ceylon; and by consequence to infer it, among the other Buddhists, spread over so large a portion of Asia.

After this evidence of the general diffusion of the institution of castes, in the rude ages of the world, especially in Asia, there is a temptation, from the following passage of Herodotus, (*Lib. I. cap. 101.*) to infer its existence among the Medes, at the commencement of the monarchy. Εσι δε Μηδων τριακ γινεα, Βασαι, Παρητακηνοι, Αδιζαρτοι, Βυδοι, Μαγοι. There is nothing in the passage which serves to fix the meaning of the word γινεα; and the names, it is plain, are words of the ancient Median language. But we know that the Μαγοι were the priests; and hence there is reason to conclude, that the other words also are names of classes and professions; in other words, of hereditary castes.

The institution of castes may be traced in places with which we are more intimately connected. Mr Millar, to whom the world is indebted for almost the first lessons which it received, in tracing the facts of history up to the general laws of the human mind, has called our attention to the fact, that in the ancient condition of our Saxon ancestors, they were divided into four great classes: 1. The artificers and tradesmen; 2. the husbandmen; 3. those who exercised the honourable profession of arms; and, 4. the clergy. Mr Millar adds, (*Hist. View of the English Gov. B. i. ch. ii.*) "From the natural course of things, it should seem, that, in every country, where religion has had so much influence as to introduce a great body of ecclesiastics, the people, upon the first advances made in agriculture and in manufactures, are usually distributed into the same number of classes or orders. This distribution is accordingly to be found, not only in all the European nations, formed upon the ruins of the Roman Empire; but, in other ages, and in very distant parts of the globe. The ancient inhabitants of Egypt are said to have been divided into the clergy, the military people, the husbandmen, and the artificers. The establishment of the four great castes, in the country of Indostan, is precisely of the same nature."

Human nature is very uniform in the phenomena which it exhibits. The new world displays a striking resemblance to the old. The same stage of society presents nearly the same results. There is reason to conclude, that something which resembled the institution of castes existed among the ancient inhabitants of Peru and Mexico. The Count Carl, the celebrated author of the *Lettres Americaines*, when treating (*Lett. xiii. and xiv.*) of the laws of the Peruvians says: "Les citoyens furent distribues en classes ou tribus. * * * Il n'etoit pas permis, ni par mariage, ni par changement d'habitation, de co-

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fondre une classe avec l'autre : car la loi défendoit de se marier dans une autre famille que celle d'où l'on sortoit. * * * N'oublions pas le soin qu'on avoit de l'éducation des enfans. C'étoit toujours le pere qui elevoit son fils. L'éducation consistoit à apprendre aux enfans roturiers le metier que chaque pere de famille exerçoit," &c. We are informed by Clavigero (*Hist. of Mexico*, B. iv. § 5.), that "the sons in general learned the trades of their fathers, and embraced their professions; thus they perpetuated the arts in families, to the advantage of the state."

Such is the extent to which this institution has existed on the surface of the globe. We shall next endeavour to ascertain the state and condition of the human mind, to which it may be considered as owing its origin.

Origin, and Causes of the Wide Diffusion of this Institution.

The lowest and rudest state in which the human race are found to exist, may, in a certain general way, be described as the hunter state. That of the shepherd is the next stage in the progress toward the advantages of civilized life. The agricultural state succeeds; when men begin to cultivate the ground for the means of subsistence, and experience the benefit of fixed habitations.

So long as they continue in the condition of hunters or of shepherds, the division of labour is unknown, and all the multitude of blessings which it brings. Every family is itself the author of all the simple accommodations which it knows. The tent or hovel, the waggon or cart, is constructed by the men; the coarse garment is spun and even woven by the women.

In this situation of things, the accommodations with which it is possible for human beings to supply themselves are few and imperfect; and life is a scene of privation.

When population has so far multiplied as to render the produce of flocks and herds insufficient for the means of subsistence, and the cultivation of the land has become necessary, the inconveniences arising from the want of the division of labour becomes still more sensible and oppressive. The labours of the field are neglected while the family are engaged at the loom, or repelling the incursions of an enemy. The accommodations of lodging, of clothing, of taste, and fancy, are wretchedly supplied, when the business of extracting the means of subsistence from the soil, exacts the greater part of their time and attention.

The progress, however, of human improvement, though not necessarily, is commonly, in point of fact, at least in the more uncultivated ages, exceedingly slow. Men continue to suffer under the inconveniences which their present condition imposes upon them, complaining of their miseries, but unable to form a clear conception of the means of exemption, and doubtful of all the remedies which are pointed out to their attention. In the mean time, as the human mind is essentially progressive, and, unless in very extraordinary circumstances, never fails to make progression, the uneasiness which is felt under the inconveniences of a state to which the mind has become superior, and above which it is rising higher and higher every day, is continually increasing; and at last rises to such a height

that some change is unavoidable; and the society are prepared to welcome the most plausible of the schemes which are proposed to them.

The grand steps which are made in improving the condition of mankind, though essentially the result of a progression in the minds of the society taken as a whole, are commonly the immediate suggestion of some one individual, or small number of individuals, whose conception of the necessity of a change, and of the means of relief, is more clear and determinate than that of the rest of the community.

In the earliest stages, when the human mind is weak and prone to superstition, the individuals who project the great improvements in the state of society, endeavour to accelerate the consent of the people, and overcome their reluctance to innovation, by giving to their projects the character of a divine revelation and command. The first legislators of almost every country, we find to have represented themselves as depositaries of the divine will, and entrusted with a revelation from heaven.

If we take the Hindoos as a model, the people divided into castes with whom our acquaintance is the most complete, we shall conclude, that some individual, wise enough to perceive the cause of the inconveniences under which men suffer while the division of labour is unknown, and placed in circumstances which enabled him to clothe himself with a divine authority, overcame in most places the reluctance of the people to so great a change of their manners and habits, and accelerated the date of their improvement, by persuading them that the divine power, or divine powers, now commanded them to be divided into classes for the performance of certain offices.

In the early stages of society, however, the wants of men are few; and the ideas of the legislator himself are incapable of extending to a great variety of cases. In such periods, the power of superstition is always exceedingly great. Unacquainted with the laws of nature, and exposed to the most dreadful vicissitudes, which they are altogether unable to foresee, human life appears to men in that situation to hang altogether upon invisible powers. The human mind is incessantly occupied with conjectures respecting what those unknown powers will produce, and with tormenting apprehensions that they will produce evil rather than good. The persons who, in this state of things, are skilful enough to create a persuasion that they are better acquainted than others with the will of these powers, more especially if accompanied with a persuasion that they have an influence over that will, and can turn it more or less whichever way they please, become an object of supreme regard. Nothing can be done without them. They are the most important class in the community. When society is first divided into classes, for the sake of the division of labour, the priests, therefore, are always a separate class, and always in the place of highest distinction.

After the evils to which men in the rude state of society conceive themselves liable from the unknown and invisible authors of physical events, the evils to which they are liable from the incursions of hostile men, appear the next in magnitude. While the in-

Caste. institutions of society are imperfect, and the human mind is weak, these evils are very great, and present a terrific picture to an imagination perpetually haunted with fear. In the rude ages of society, therefore, the soldier is always a character of great importance. He is the barrier against those evils which rank next in order after the evils against which the priest affords relief. When classes are first formed, the military are, therefore, always a separate class, and next in rank and veneration to the class of the priests. It is remarkable, that the rank and consequence of both classes are founded upon fear. It is also remarkable, though a natural consequence, that, in all ages, they are most apt to be venerated by the most timid persons,—the most timid sex, for example; over whose imagination the priest and the soldier have a proverbial sway. It is farther observable, and a necessary consequence, that as the fears with respect to invisible powers, and with respect to the incursions of hostile men, gradually decline as society advances, and have less and less effect upon the imaginations even of those who are most apt to be governed by the passion of fear, so the respect for the castes of priest and soldier are destined to sink in relative importance, as the institutions of society are improved, and the human mind becomes strong.

After provision is made, in that early stage of society which we are endeavouring to describe, against the two classes of fears against which the priest and the soldier held up their respective shields, the care of subsistence is the object of greatest importance. A class of husbandmen, therefore, is a necessary and never failing institution, and, in the scale of rank and consequence, this order follows immediately after the sacerdotal and the military castes.

Beside the means of subsistence, other accommodations are required. But, at first, very few are so much as known, and, by consequence, very few are demanded. One class of the community are, therefore, supposed to be sufficient for the supply of all other wants, and the performance of all other services.

It is obvious, that reflection upon the laws of human nature would lead us to draw a picture, nearly the same with this, if we were called upon to describe the state of society, at the time when the division of labour is first introduced, even if we had no specific facts to direct our inquiries. In a remarkable passage in Plato, in his second book *De Republica*, he ascribes the origin of political association and laws, to the benefits which were sought for by the division of labour. *Γινεται πάλαι, ὡς εἴ' ὤμαι, σπουδῇ, συγγαμὴ ἑκαστοῦ, καὶ ἀνταγωγῇ, ἀλλὰ πολλὴν οὐδὲν.* As men cannot be supplied with accommodations in any tolerable degree, but by the division of labour and employments, one man producing one thing, another another, and every man getting what he wants, by exchange with other men, an association of a certain number of men is necessary for well being; and hence society and laws. In exact coincidence with the deduction which we have presented above, he says, that the simplest form of a society would consist of four or five orders of men. *Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπειρὴ καὶ καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἑξῆς τῆς πόλεως ἀρχῆς*

καὶ, δευτέρῃ δὲ ἀποστολῇ, ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν, καὶ τὴν πόλιν. The coincidence is very nearly complete between the speculation and the practice; between what is in this manner inferred, and what is recorded of ancient nations, and witnessed among the Hindus.

Under all the difficulties under which, especially in rude ages, human society, and the human mind, make progress, small are the steps which can be taken at once. When professions were separated, and the vast benefits derived from the separation began to be felt, the human mind was not sufficiently strong to perceive, that there was no danger whatever that they should ever again be combined and confounded. No; it was imagined to be another grand effort of the same wisdom which had made the separation, to take care of its permanence, and to make provision for securing the benefits of it through all ages. With this view it was thought necessary to ordain and sanction, by divine authority, that the son should follow the profession of the father, and be subject to the severest punishment if he engaged in any other occupation. To secure also, in each profession, the due succession of sons to fathers, it was necessary that marriage should be strictly regulated; and the method which obviously enough suggested itself for that purpose was, that the members of each class, male and female, should be compelled, under the severest penalties, to marry only among themselves, and never, by intermarriage, to ruin and confound the separate castes.

So far the aim, at any rate, was good. The benefit of the whole society was the object which all these regulations were accounted useful to promote, and no degradation of any of the classes was either intended by any of these enactments, or necessary for the ends which they were destined to serve.

The degradation of one set of the castes, in comparison with another, was the result of an after-thought, and in the pursuit of ends of a different description. When one of the castes, as that of the priests, or the soldiers, found itself possessed of an influence over the minds of the rest of the community, such, that it could establish certain points of belief in its own favour, it was never long before it availed itself of that advantage, and pushed it to the utmost. If it could inspire the belief that it was more noble, worthy of higher privileges, and greater honour, than the rest of the community, it never failed to get this point established as an incontrovertible right, not the result of the mere will of the community, but of an absolute law of nature, or even a revelation and command from God.

As every elevation of one class implies a correspondent degradation of another, and as there is no end to the elevation which one class will aim at, there is no end to the degradation which will be imposed upon another, if the state of the human mind is sufficiently weak to give to one class an unbounded influence over the belief of another. How naturally this extreme degradation is grafted upon the institution of castes, will immediately appear.

As we derive our most minute and practical acquaintance with the shape into which society is

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moulded by the establishment of caste, from our intercourse with the Hindus, the particulars which are at this day exhibited in Hindustan, and provided for by their laws, afford the most certain means of acquiring precise and specific ideas concerning this remarkable institution.

According to the sacred law book, entitled the "*Ordinances of Menu*," the Creator, "that the human race might be multiplied, caused the Brahmen, the Kahatriya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra (so named from the *Scripture, protection, wealth, and labour*), to proceed from his mouth, his arm, his thigh, and his foot." "For the sake of preserving this universe, the Being, supremely glorious, allotted separate duties to those who sprung respectively from his mouth, his arm, his thigh, and his foot. To Brahmen he assigned the duties of reading the Veda, of teaching it, of sacrificing, of assisting others to sacrifice, of giving alms, if they be rich, and, if indigent, of receiving gifts: To defend the people, to give alms, to sacrifice, to read the Veda, to shun the allurements of sensual gratification, are, in a few words, the duties of a Kahatriya: To keep herds of cattle, to bestow largesses, to sacrifice, to read the scripture, to carry on trade, to lend at interest, and to cultivate land, are prescribed or permitted to a Vaisya: One principal duty the Supreme Ruler assigns to a Sudra, namely, to serve the before-mentioned classes, without depreciating their worth."

Such is the employment of the castes; and such the authority whence it is derived. The next great peculiarity is, the degree of elevation which one set of the castes was enabled to usurp, and the correspondent degradation of the others.

Priests.

1. The Brahmen, or the priests. "Since the Brahmen spring from the most excellent part," says the same divine code, immediately quoted, "since he was the first born, and since he possesses the Veda, he is, by right, the chief of this whole creation. Him the Being, who exists of himself, produced in the beginning from his own mouth, that, having performed holy rites, he might present clarified butter to the gods, and cakes of rice to the progenitors of mankind for the preservation of this world. What created being then can surpass Him, with whose mouth the gods of the firmament continually feast on clarified butter, and the manes of ancestors on hallowed cakes? Of created things, the most excellent are those which are animated; of the animated, those which subsist by intelligence; of the intelligent, mankind; and of men, the sacerdotal class. When a Brahmen springs to light, he is born above the world, the chief of all creatures. Whatever exists in the universe, is all, in effect, the wealth of the Brahmen; since the Brahmen is entitled to it all by his primogeniture and eminence of birth."

As the Brahman exclusively, or at least to a supreme degree, engrosses the regard and favour of the Deity, so he is entitled to the worship and adoration of mortals. Kings themselves, and the most exalted of men, are infinitely inferior to the meanest of the Brahmen. "Let the king," we again quote the ordinances of Menu, "having risen at early dawn, respectfully attend to Brahmen learned in the three Vedas, &c. . . and by their decision, let

him abide. Constantly must he show respect to Brahmen, who have grown old, who know the scriptures, who are pure." "The king must appoint seven or eight ministers, &c. . . . To one learned Brahmen, distinguished among them all, let the king impart his momentous counsel. To him, with full confidence, let him entrust all his transactions; and with him, having taken his final resolution, let him begin all his measures." "Let him not, although in the greatest distress, provoke Brahmen to anger, by whom Brahma, the all-devouring fire, was created, the sea with waters not drinkable, and the moon with its wane and increase. What prince would gain wealth by oppressing those, who, if angry, could frame other worlds, and agents of worlds, could give being to new gods and mortals? What men, desirous of life, would injure those by the aid of whom, worlds and gods perpetually subsist; those who are rich in the knowledge of the Veda? A Brahmen, whether learned or ignorant, is a powerful divinity; even as fire, is a powerful divinity, whether consecrated or popular. Thus, though Brahmen employ themselves in all sorts of mean occupations, they must invariably be honoured; for they are something transcendently divine."

The least disrespect to one of the sacred order, is the most atrocious of crimes. "For contumelious language to a Brahmen," says the code of Menu, "a Sudra must have an iron style, ten fingers long, thrust red-hot into his mouth; and for offering to give instruction to priests, hot oil must be poured into his mouth and ears."

The laws give to the Brahmen the most remarkable advantages, over the other classes of the community. Neither the person, nor so much as the property of the Brahmen, can ever be touched, in awarding punishment for the most atrocious crimes. "Never shall the king," says one of the ordinances of Menu, "slay a Brahmen, though convicted of all possible crimes; let him banish the offender from his realm, but with all his property secure, and his body unhurt." This privileged order was entirely exempt from taxes. One of the most important of all duties is to bestow wealth upon the Brahmen, by incessant gifts and donations.

2. The Kahatriyas, or the military caste. Though Military the Brahmen look down upon this class, they are Caste. looked up to by all the rest of the classes, with a prostrate veneration, inferior only to that with which the Brahmen are regarded. The difference of rank in India, is not a mere ceremonial distinction. The advantages which are conferred by it, or the injuries endured, are immense; and to the suffering party unspeakably degrading. Any infringement, even of the external marks of the abjectness of the degraded party, is punished as a heinous crime. "If a man of an inferior caste," says Halhed's *Gentoo Code*, "proudly affecting an equality with a person of superior cast, should speak at the same time with him, the magistrate in that case shall punish him to the extent of his abilities." It is unnecessary, under this head, to enter into details, which would occupy a disproportionate space.

3. The Vaisyas, the agricultural and commercial Agricultural class. It is still less necessary to multiply particular Caste.

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lars under this head. When the two extremes are sufficiently explained, what modifications of respect or disrespect belong to the intermediate stages, may be easily inferred.

4. As much as the Brahman is an object of intense veneration; so much is the Sudra an object of contempt, and even of abhorrence, to the other classes of his countrymen. The business of the Sudras is servile labour; and their degradation inhuman. The most abject and grovelling submission is imposed upon them as a religious duty, enforced by the most dreadful punishments. They are so completely deprived of an equal share in the advantages of the social union, that few of those advantages are reserved to them. The classes above them are restrained from injuring them, even in the case of the greatest crimes, by punishments far slighter, than those which are appointed for injuries done to the superior classes. The crimes which they commit, are punished with much heavier inflictions than equal crimes committed by individuals of the classes above them. Neither their persons nor their labour is free. "A man of the servile caste," says the sacred ordinance of Menu, "whether bought or unbought, a Brahman may compel to perform servile duty; because such a man was created by the Self-existent for the purpose of serving Brahmens."

According to the principles of the same code, the Sudra was excluded from the benefits of property. "No collection of wealth must be made by a Sudra, even though he has power, since a servile man who has amassed riches gives pain even to Brahmens." "A Brahman may seize without hesitation, the goods of his Sudra slave; for as that slave can have no property, his master may take his goods."

The degradation of the wretched Sudra extends not only to every thing in this life, but even to religion, and the prospect of future happiness. "Let not a Brahman," says the above code, "give advice, nor what remains from his table, nor clarified butter, of which part has been offered, nor let him give spiritual counsel to such a man, nor inform him of the legal expiation for his sin; surely he who declares the law to a servile man, and he who instructs him in the mode of expiating sin, sinks with that very man into the hell named Asamvrita." Not only are the Sudras not allowed to read any of the sacred books; but, "If," says the *Gentoo Code*, "a man of the Sooder reads the Beids of the Shaster, or the Pooran, to a Brahman, a Chehteree, or a Bice" (Halhed's mode of spelling the names of the four castes), "then the magistrate shall heat some bitter oil, and pour it into the aforesaid Sooder's mouth; and if a Sooder listens to the Beids of the Shaster, then the oil, heated as before, shall be poured into his ears, and arzeez and wax shall be melted together, and the orifice of his ears shall be stopped up therewith. If a Sooder gets by heart the Beids of the Shaster, the magistrate shall put him to death. If a Sooder gives much and frequent molestation to a Brahman, the magistrate shall put him to death." From this specimen of particulars, a judgment may be formed with regard to the rest.

Though this is the primary and original formation

of castes, the institution, unless where it happens to be early broken up, does not rest here. The distribution of the members of the community into four classes only, and the appropriation of their services to four species of employment, though a great step in improvement at the time they were instituted, must have become productive of many inconveniences, as the wants of society multiplied. The bare necessities of life, with a few of its rudest accommodations, are all the means of gratification which it affords, or is capable of affording to mankind. As the desires of mankind, however, speedily extend beyond such narrow limits, a struggle must have early ensued between the first principles of human nature, and those of the political establishment.

And this was not the only evil to which, under this primary institution, society was exposed. The different castes were strictly commanded to marry with those exclusively of their own class and profession; and the mixture of the classes by the union of the sexes, was guarded against by the most sanguinary laws. This, however, was a result which laws were not sufficiently powerful to prevent. Irregularities occurred, and children were born who belonged to no caste, and for whom there was no occupation. A more calamitous event could not fall upon human society. Unholy and infamous on account of that violation of the sacred law to which they owed their unwelcome birth, those wretched outcasts had no resource for subsistence, except two; either the bounty of the regular classes, to whom they were objects of contempt and abhorrence, not of sympathy, or the plunder of those classes by whom they were oppressed; a resource to which they would betake themselves with all the ingenuity of necessitous, and all the ferocity of injured men.

When a class of this description became numerous, they must have filled society with the greatest disorders. The nature of the case would have drawn the philosophical mind to this conclusion, had no testimony existed. It so happens, however, that this is one of the few facts in the ancient history of the Hindus, which can be ascertained from their records. In the preface to that compilation of the *Hindu Laws*, which was translated by Mr Halhed, it is stated that, after a succession of good kings who secured obedience to the laws, and under whom the people enjoyed felicity, came a monarch, evil and corrupt, under whom the laws were violated, the mixture of the classes was perpetrated, and a new and impious race were produced. The Brahmens put this wicked king to death; and, by an effect of miraculous power, created a successor, endowed with the most excellent qualities. Nevertheless the kingdom did not prosper, by reason of the Burren Sunker (so were the impure and irregular brood denominated); and it required all the wisdom of this sage and virtuous king to devise a remedy. He resolved to form a classification of the mixed race; and to assign them occupations. This accordingly was the commencement of arts and manufactures. The Burren Sunker became all manner of artisans and handicrafts. Of the classes into which they were distributed, one was appointed to the weaving of cloth, another to works in iron, and so in all other cases;

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till the subdivisions of the race were exhausted, and the wants of the community were provided for. Among the Hindus, thirty-six castes of the impure race are enumerated, all inferior in rank and privileges even to the Sudra. To proceed farther in the detail, would be inconvenient and useless. By this supplement to the institution of the four primary castes, two great evils were remedied at once; the increasing wants of an improving society were supplied, and a class of men, who had been the pest of the community, were converted to its service.

The only remaining inquiry with respect to the institution of castes, which seems appropriate to this place, is that of its utility or inutility as a part of the social establishment.

A few words, we think, will suffice, to convey clear and determinate ideas upon this subject.

General
View of the
Effects of
this Institution.

It is the distinction of man's nature, that he is a progressive being. It is by this grand characteristic that he is separated so widely from the inferior animals. When found in circumstances and situations in which the benefits of progression seem not to have been reaped, he is raised but a slight degree above the condition of some of the more perfect of the inferior animals. His peculiarity is, that he is susceptible of progression; and unless when he is placed in circumstances which impose extraordinary restraints upon the principles of his nature, does invariably and incessantly make progress. Even when he originates in a state little above that of the inferior animals, he rises, and gradually ascends from one stage to another, till his elevation above all the other inhabitants of this globe is immense; nor is there any limit which our knowledge permits us to set, to his final attainments and felicity. In whatever state the other animals originate, in that same state they remain through all ages; and seem altogether incapable of improvement.

In regard to man, therefore, considered as a class of beings, or an order of existence; every thing is to be considered as beneficently important, in proportion as it favours his progression; every thing is to be considered as mischievously important, in proportion as it obstructs and impedes that progression.

It is by this grand test of all that is good and evil in human institutions, that we shall endeavour to estimate the effects of the establishment of castes.

We shall not here adduce the elevation of one set of the classes, and the correspondent degradation of another, obviously the cause of infinite evil; because it may be with justice maintained, that this horrid elevation, and equally horrid depression, are not essential parts of the institution of caste, but arise from other causes, and may, in fact, be separated from that institution.

First of all, it is evident, that at the time when the number of castes and professions is established, unless it could be foreseen what are all the species of operations or arts, by which the desires of man, in all their possible varieties, are capable of being gratified; and what are all the possible divisions of labour from which any good can arise; the appointment of fixed, unalterable castes and professions, must oppose an irresistible barrier to human advancement in these two grand instruments of progression, the divi-

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sion of labour, and the practice of new arts, as invention may suggest them, or the multiplying desires of an improving society may create the demand. Since it is obviously impossible that all these things can be foreseen, it is abundantly certain, that the institution of any fixed number of arts and trades is exactly an institution for preventing the progression of mankind. This deduction appears to be conclusive; and, if there were no other argument, affords a complete answer to the question respecting the utility of castes.

Even in the trades and arts which are known and provided for at the time of the institution, it is by no means certain, that this fixed order of the persons who are to practise them is a contrivance well adapted for carrying these arts themselves, whether large in number or small, to their highest state of perfection. It by no means follows, that a man will do any thing better than any other man because his father did it before him. To establish a caste for any particular art or profession, is giving a sort of monopoly to that particular description of men. It is a wide monopoly, to be sure; but as far as the appropriation of the art to one class is calculated to have any effects, they must so far be such as it is of the nature of a monopoly to produce, and hence unfavourable to the progress of the art. The way which presents itself to the reasoning mind, as that which is best calculated for improving every branch of human industry or skill, is to open, as widely as possible, the doors to competition; not to exclude any man, of whatever origin, who may appear to have an extraordinary genius for any particular thing, but allow him, through competition, to reap the reward of his superiority, and hence to feel all the motives that can prompt him to excel. The acquirements of one generation are not transmitted to another more surely when they are transmitted from father to son, than when they are transmitted in the way of promiscuous instruction. Nor does it necessarily, or even commonly, happen, that the learner gets more careful instruction from his father, than he would from a man who is not his father; or, that he himself is more intent in his application, and careful to learn, because it is his father who instructs him.

In the sciences and the fine arts, the power of excelling in which depends upon rare combinations of circumstances, to limit the number of competitors, and shut up the field from all but the members of a particular tribe, is obviously a powerful expedient for diminishing the chance of progression. In regard to literature and knowledge the case is clear and decisive. To confine the prosecution of it to a particular tribe, is to insure a perpetuity of ignorance and misery to the human race. It will be decidedly the interest of the knowing class to maintain as much ignorance as possible among the rest of the community, that they may be able the more easily to turn and wind them conformable to their own purposes; and, for that end, to study, not real knowledge, not the means of making mankind wiser and happier, but the means of deluding and imposing upon them; the arts of imposture. With this clear and incontrovertible inference, how exactly does the historical fact cor-

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respond? How truly and faithfully have the Brahmins acted up to that rule? They have made it a law revealed from heaven to keep the great bulk of the community in ignorance. And what branch of knowledge have they ever studied but the sciences of delusion? There is first their theology; a mass of absurd fictions to chain the imagination of ignorant and foolish men. And then there is astrology, which concludes the circle of all their studies, and may be justly styled the "Second Part of the Act of Imposture;" even their mathematics, in which they made some little progress, being studied in no other shape than as a part of the business of astrology.

Another circumstance appears to merit no slight regard. The institution of castes is calculated to multiply the evils, so dreadful in magnitude, which are apt to arise from the principles of population, and is opposed to the measures which are calculated to lessen or prevent them. The evils which are apt to be produced by an occasional superabundance of people in any one of the departments of industry and subsistence, are exceedingly diminished, when the greatest possible facility is given to the supernumerary individuals, of distributing themselves through all the other departments of industry and subsistence. And these evils, it is obvious, are all raised to the greatest height when the possibility of that distribution is taken away; and individuals, in whatsoever degree superabundant, are still confined to their own department. As this is a topic, the elucidation of which is easy to carry on, we shall content ourselves with the bare hint which has thus been given, and leave the developement to the reflections of the reader.

It may be added, as a supplement to what was said about the obstruction which, by the institution of castes, is given to progression, not only in the division of labour and the multiplication of arts, but even in perfecting the arts which are known and practised, that the strict confinement of one tribe of men to one tribe of operations must have a strong tendency to create a habit of routine, and hence an aversion to all innovation; a disposition to acquiesce in what has constantly been done, as if it were that which ought to be constantly done; and hence to deaden that activity of mind which is on the alert to catch at every chance of improvement,—that admirable temper, on which the greatest rapidity in the march of human amelioration essentially depends.

It was intended, after thus presenting the reasons on which we conclude that the institution of castes is an arrangement altogether opposite to the interests of human nature, to have stated and answered the reasons which have been advanced by Dr Robertson, in the *Appendix* to his *Historical Disquisition Concerning India*, and very recently by the Abbé Du Bois, in his *Description of the Character, &c. of the People of India*, to prove that the institution of castes is really beneficial. But after looking over these reasonings, with a view to that answer, they have appeared to us to be so weak and insignificant, as to be altogether unworthy the trouble of transcription. A sufficient answer to every point which they adduce,

will be found in the considerations which we have already urged upon the subject; and we doubt not, that we may safely intrust the decision to the judgment of the reader. (P. 7.)

CASTI (GIAMBATTISTA), an Italian Poet, was born of humble parents, in the year 1721, at Montefiascone, a small town in the States of the Church. It was there, too, that his studies commenced, in which he made such rapid progress, that he was appointed, in early youth, Professor of Greek and Latin, in an academy of his native town,—an employment which peculiarly directed his attention to Classical Poetry and Literature. He soon, however, quitted this obscure situation, and repaired to Rome, in search of more noble examples of emulation, and a higher recompense of public esteem than his birth-place afforded him. His learning, acuteness, and agreeable disposition, recommended him to the notice and friendship of the most eminent individuals of that capital. He was admitted a Member of the Academy *Degli Arcadi*, and it is believed he might easily have risen from a Canonship in the Cathedral of Montefiascone, which he had already obtained, to the enjoyment of much higher church benefices, had such been the chief objects of his ambition. But his love of freedom, and his restless inclination for travelling (which appears to have been characteristic of all the literary men of Italy), interfered with his ecclesiastical preferment. He gladly accepted the invitation of Prince Rosenberg (tutor to the Grand Duke Leopold), with whom he had become acquainted at Florence, to accompany him to Vienna, where he was presented to the Emperor Joseph. After this introduction, he visited almost all the capitals of Europe, from Petersburg to Lisbon, and from Constantinople to Stockholm, directing his particular attention to the manners and civil institutions of the various countries through which he passed. On his return to Vienna, he was appointed *Poeta Cæsario*, or Post-Laureate, in the room of Metastasio, a situation which he held till some time after the death of the Emperor Leopold, when he resigned it, and retired to Florence in 1796. During two years residence in that city, he composed a great number of his works. At the end of that period, he went to live in Paris; and, though now far advanced in life, neither his habitual gaiety nor ardour of literary composition were in any degree abated. Scarce a day passed in which he did not add something to his principal poem, *Gli Animali Parlanti*, or write one of his poetical novels. At the same time, he delighted the society with which he lived by the unceasing liveliness of his conversation, which was rendered highly entertaining and interesting, by his knowledge of the world, and the extensive opportunities he had possessed of observing the manners and characters of mankind. Though, in 1808, he had passed the age of 82, the strength both of his mind and body still afforded the promise of a yet longer life; but he died during this year, in consequence of having caught a severe cold, in returning home at a late hour from a house where he had spent the evening. His funeral was attended by a great concourse of French and Italians, distin-

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