

IX.

*On the Religious Ceremonies of the HINDUS,
and of the BRÁMENS especially.*

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ESSAY III.

HOSPITALITY has been already mentioned in the preceding Essay, as one of the five great sacraments which constitute the daily duty of a *Hindu*. The formal reception of such guests as are entitled to peculiar honour, was reserved for the subject of the present tract. The religious rites, intermixed with acts of courtesy, which are practised by way of formal hospitality, are nearly the same, whether it be high rank, a venerable profession, or cordial friendship, which entitles the guest to be welcomed with distinction. They chiefly consist in presenting to him a stool to sit on, water for ablutions, and honey mixed with other food for refreshment. It seems to have been anciently the custom to slay a cow on this occasion; and a guest was therefore called *góghna*, or cow killer. Imperfect traces of this custom remain in the hospitable ceremonies, which I shall now describe from the ritual of *Bráman'as*, who use the *Sámarvéda*. As the marriage ceremony opens with the solemn reception of the bridegroom by the father of the bride, this part of the nuptial solemnity may be fitly chosen as an example of hospitable rites. It will furnish occasion too for proceeding to describe the whole of the marriage ceremony.

HAVING previously performed the obsequies of ancestors, as is usual upon any accession of good fortune, the father of the bride sits down, to await the bridegroom's arrival, in the apartment prepared for

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for the purpose; and at the time chosen for it, according to the rules of astrology. The jewels, and other presents intended for him, are placed there; a cow is tied on the northern side of the apartment; and a stool or cushion, and other furniture for the reception of the guest, are arranged in order. On his approach, the bride's father rises to welcome him, and recites the following prayer, while the bridegroom stands before him.

“MAY she, [who supplies oblations for] religious worship, who constantly follows her calf, and who was the milch-cow, when YAMA was [the votary], abound with milk, and fulfil our wishes, year after year.”

THIS prayer is seemingly intended for the consecration of the cow, which is let loose in a subsequent stage of the ceremony, instead of slaying her, as appears to have been anciently the custom. The commentator, whose gloss has been followed in this version of the text, introduces it by the remark, that a guest, entitled to honourable reception, is a spiritual preceptor, a priest, an ascetick, a prince, a bridegroom, a friend, or in short any one, to welcome whose arrival a cow must be tied for the purpose of slaying her, whence a guest is denominated *góghna*, or cow-killer. The prayer seems to contain an allusion, which I cannot better explain, than by quoting a passage from CA'LIDÁSA's poem, entitled *Raghuvansa*, where VAS'ISHT'HA informs the king DILÍPA that the cow *Surabhí*, who was offended by his neglect, cannot be now appeased by courtesy shown to herself, because she remains in a place inaccessible to him: “PRACHE'TAS is performing a tedious sacrifice, to supply the oblations of which, *Surabhí* now abides in the infernal region, whose gates are guarded by huge serpents.”

AFTER the prayer above mentioned has been meditated, the bridegroom sits down on a stool or cushion, which is presented to him: he first recites a

text of the *Yajurveda* ; “ I step on this for the sake of food and other benefits, on this variously splendid footstool.” The bride’s father presents to him a cushion made of twenty leaves of *cus’a* grass, holding it up with both hands, and exclaiming, “ the cushion ! the cushion ! the cushion ! ” The bridegroom replies, “ I accept the cushion,” and, taking it, places it on the ground under his feet, while he recites the following prayer : “ May those plants, over which SÓMA presides, and which are variously dispersed on the earth, incessantly grant me happiness while this cushion is placed under my feet.” Another is presented to him, which he accepts in the same manner, saying, “ May those numerous plants, over which SÓMA presides, and which are salutary a hundred different ways, incessantly grant me happiness while I sit on this cushion.” Instead of these prayers, which are peculiar to the *Bráhmaṇas*, that use the *Sámarvéda*, the following text is commonly recited : “ I obscure my rivals, as the sun does other luminaries ; I tread on this as the type of him who injures me.”

THE bride’s father next offers a vessel of water, thrice exclaiming, “ water for ablutions ! ” The bridegroom declares his acceptance of it, and looks into the vessel, saying, “ Generous water ! I view thee ; return in the form of fertilizing rain, from him from whom thou dost proceed ; ” that is, from the sun ; for it is acknowledged, says the commentator, that rain proceeds from vapours raised by the heat of the sun. The bridegroom takes up water in the palms of both hands joined together, and throws it on his left foot, saying, “ I wash my left foot, and fix prosperity in this realm ; ” he also throws water on his other foot, saying, “ I wash my right foot, and introduce prosperity into this realm ; ” and he then throws water on both feet, saying, “ I wash first one, and then the other ; and lastly both feet, that the realm may thrive, and intrepidity be gained.”

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The following is the text of the *Yajush*, which is generally used instead of the preceding prayers: "Thou dost afford various elegance; I accept thee, who dost so: afford it for the ablution of my feet."

AN *arghya* (that is, water, rice, and *durvā* grass in a conch, or in a vessel shaped like one, or rather like a boat,) is next presented to the bridegroom in a similar manner, and accepted by him with equal formality: he pours the water on his own head, saying, "Thou art the splendour of food; through thee may I become glorious." This prayer is taken from the *Yajush*; but the followers of that *Vēda* use different texts, accepting the *arghya* with this prayer, "Ye are waters (*áp:*) through you may I obtain (*áp*) all my wishes," and pouring out the water with this text, "I dismiss you to the ocean; return to your source, harmless unto me, most excellent waters! but my beverage is not poured forth."

A VESSEL of water is then offered by the bride's father, who thrice exclaims, "take water to be sipped:" the bridegroom accepts it, saying, "thou art glorious, grant me glory;" or else, "conduct me to glory, endue me with splendour, render me dear to all people, make me owner of cattle, and preserve me unhurt in all my limbs."

THE bride's father fills a vessel with honey, curds, and clarified butter; he covers it with another vessel, and presents it to the bridegroom, exclaiming three times, "take the *mad'huparca*." The bridegroom accepts it; places it on the ground; and looks into it, saying, "thou art glorious: may I become so." He tastes the food three times, saying, "thou art the sustenance of the glorious; thou art the nourishment of the splendid; thou art the food of the fortunate; grant me prosperity." He then silently eats until he be satisfied.

ALTHOUGH these texts be taken from the *Yajush*, yet other prayers from the same *Vēda* are used by

the sects, which follow it. While looking into the vessel, the bridegroom says, "I view thee with the eye of the sun [who draws unto himself what he contemplates.]" On accepting the *mad'huparca*, the bridegroom says, "I take thee with the assent of the generous sun; with the arms of both sons of *As'winí*; with the hands of the cherishing luminary." He mixes it, saying, "may I mix thee, O venerable present! and remove whatever might be hurtful in the eating of thee." He tastes it three times, saying, "may I eat that sweet, best, and nourishing form of honey, which is the sweet, best, and nourishing form of honey; and may I thus become excellent, sweet-tempered, and well nourished by food." After eating until he be satisfied, and after sipping water, he touches his mouth and other parts of his body with his hand, saying, "may there be speech in my mouth; breath in my nostrils; sight in my eye-balls; hearing in my ears; strength in my arms; firmness in my thighs: may my limbs and members remain unhurt together with my soul."

PRESENTS suitable to the rank of the parties are then presented to the guest. At the marriage ceremony, too, the bride is formally given by her father to the bridegroom, in this stage of the solemnity according to some rituals, but later according to others. The hospitable rites are then concluded by letting loose the cow at the intercession of the guest. A barber, who attends for that purpose, exclaims, "the cow! the cow!" Upon which the guest pronounces this text: "Release the cow from the fetters of VARUN'A. May she subdue my foe: may she destroy the enemies of both him (the host) [and me.] Dismiss the cow, that she may eat grass and drink water." When the cow has been released, the guest thus addresses her: "I have earnestly entreated this prudent person, [or, according to an-

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other interpretation of the text, each docile person,] saying, kill not the innocent harmless cow, who is mother of RUDRAS; daughter of VASUS, sister of A'DITYAS, and the source of ambrosia." In the *Yajurveda* the following prayer is added to this text: "May she expiate my sins, and his (naming the host.) Release her that she may graze." It is evident that the guest's intercessions imply a practice, now become obsolete, of slaying a cow for the purposes of hospitality.

WHILE the bridegroom is welcomed with these ceremonies, or more properly before his arrival, the bride bathes during the recital of the following texts. Three vessels of water are severally poured on her head, with three different prayers. 1. "Love! I know thy name. Thou art called an intoxicating beverage. Bring [the bridegroom] happily. For thee was framed the inebriating draught. Fire! thy best origin is here. Through devotion wert thou created. May this oblation be efficacious." 2. "Damsel! I anoint this thy generative organ with honey, because it is the second mouth of the Creator: by that thou subduest all males, though unsubdued; by that thou art lively, and dost hold dominion. May this oblation be efficacious." 3. "May the primeval ruling sages, who framed the female organ, as a fire that consumeth flesh, and thereby framed a procreating juice, grant the prolific power, that proceeds from the three-horned [bull] and from the sun. May this oblation be efficacious." To elucidate the first of these texts, the commentator cites the following passage: "The sage VAS'ISHT'HA, the regent of the moon, the ruler of heaven, the preceptor of the Gods, and the great forefather of all beings, however old in the practice of devotion, and old by the progress of age, were deluded by women. Liquors distilled from sugar, from grain, and from the blossoms of

Bassia, are three sorts of intoxicating drinks: the fourth is woman, by whom this world is deluded. One, who contemplates a beautiful woman, becomes intoxicated; and so does he who quaffs an inebriating beverage: woman is called an inebriating draught, because she intoxicates by her looks." To explain the second text, the same author quotes a passage of the *Vêda*, intimating that BRAHMA has two mouths, one containing all holiness, the other allotted for the production of all beings, for they are created from his mouth."

AFTER the bridegroom has tasted the *Mad'huparca* presented to him, as above mentioned, the bride's right hand is placed on his, both having been previously rubbed with turmerick or some other auspicious drug. A matron must bind both hands with *cus'a* grass amidst the sound of cheerful musick. To this part of the ceremony, the author of the poem entitled *Naishada* has very prettily alluded in describing the marriage of NALA and DAMAYANTI (b. xvi. v. 13 & 14.) As he tasted the *Mad'huparca*, which was presented to him, those spectators, who had foresight, reflected, "he has begun the ceremonies of an auspicious day, because he will quaff the honey of BHAIMI'S lip. The bridegroom's hand exults in the slaughter of foes; the bride's hand has purloined its beauty from the lotos; it is for that reason probably that, in this well-governed realm of *Viderbha*, both [guilty] hands are fast bound with strong *cus'a*."

THE bride's father, bidding the attendant priests begin their acclamations, such as "happy day! auspicious be it! prosperity attend! blessings! &c." takes a vessel of water containing *tila** and *cus'a*† grass; and pours it on the hands of the bride and bridegroom, after uttering the words, "*O'm! tat sat!*"

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sat!" "God the existent!" and after repeating at full length the names and designations of the bridegroom, of the bride, and of himself; and then solemnly declaring, "I give unto thee this damsel adorned with jewels, and protected by the lord of creatures." The bridegroom replies, "well be it!" The bride's father afterwards gives him a piece of gold, saying, "I this day give thee this gold, as a fee for the purpose of completing the solemn donation made by me." The bridegroom again says, "well be it!" and then recites this text: "Who gave *her*? to whom did he give *her*? Love (or free consent) gave *her*. To love he gave *her*. Love was the giver. Love was the taker. Love! may this be thine! with love may I enjoy *her*!" The close of the text is thus varied in the *Sāmaveda*: "Love has pervaded the ocean. With love I accept *her*. Love! may this be thine." In the common rituals another prayer is directed to be likewise recited immediately after thus formally accepting the bride. "May the ethereal element give thee. May earth accept thee."

Being thus affianced, the bride and bridegroom then walk forth, while he thus addresses her: "May the regents of space, may air, the sun, and fire, dispel that anxiety, which thou feelest in thy mind; and turn thy heart to me." He proceeds thus, while they look at each other: "Be gentle in thy aspect, and loyal to thy husband; be fortunate in cattle, amiable in thy mind, and beautiful in thy person: be mother of valiant sons; be fond of delights; be cheerful; and bring prosperity to our bipeds and quadrupeds. First [in a former birth] SÓMA received thee; a celestial quirister next obtained thee; [in successive transmigrations] the regent of fire was thy third husband: thy fourth is a human being. SÓMA gave her to a celestial quirister; the *Gandharba* gave her to the regent of fire; fire gave her to me: with her he has given me

wealth and male offspring. May she, a most auspicious cause of prosperity, never desert me, &c."*

It should seem that, according to these rituals, the bridegroom gives a waistcloth and mantle to the bride before he is affianced to her; and the ceremony of tying the skirts of their mantles precedes that of her father's solemnly bestowing her on the bridegroom. But the ritual of the *Sāmavēdi* priests make the gift of the damsel precede the tying of the knot; and, inconsistently enough, directs the mantles to be tied before the bridegroom has clothed the bride. After the donation has been accepted as above-mentioned, the bride's father should tie a knot in the bridegroom's mantle over the presents given with the bride: while the affianced pair are looking at each other. The cow is then released in the manner before described; a libation of water is made; and the bride's father meditates the *gāyatrī*, and ties a knot with the skirts of the bride's and bridegroom's mantles, after saying, "ye must be inseparably united in matters of duty, wealth, and love." The bridegroom afterwards clothes the bride with the following ceremonies:

HE goes to the principal apartment of the house, prepares a sacrificial fire in the usual mode, and hallows the implements of sacrifice. A friend of the bridegroom walks round the fire, bearing a jar of water, and stops on the south side of it. Another does the same, and places himself on the right hand of the first. The bridegroom then casts four double handfuls of rice, mixed with leaves of *S'ami*†, into a flat basket: near it he places a stone and mullar, after formally touching them: and then, entering

* I omit the remainder of the text, which it would be indecorous to translate into a modern language. The literal sense of it is here subjoined in a Latin version: "Illa redamans accipito fascinum meum, quod ego peramans intromittam in eam, multæ quæ illicebæ sistunt."

† *Adenanthera aculeata*.

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entering the house, he causes the bride to be clothed with a new waistcloth and scarf, while he recites the subjoined prayers. "May those generous women, who spun and wound the thread, and who wove the warp and weft of this cloth, generously clothe thee to old age: long lived woman! put on this raiment." "Clothe her. Invest her with apparel. Prolong her life to great age. May thou live a hundred years. As long as thou livest, amiable woman! revere [that is, carefully preserve] beauty and wealth." The first of these prayers is nearly the same with that which is used by the followers of the *Yajush*, when the scarf is put on the bride's shoulder. It is preceded by a different one, which is recited while the waistcloth is wrapped round her. "May thou reach old age. Put on this raiment. Be lovely: be chaste. Live a hundred years. Invite [that is, preserve and obtain] beauty, wealth, and male offspring. Damsel! put on this apparel." Afterwards the following prayer is recited: "May the assembled gods unite our hearts. May the waters unite them. May air unite us. May the creator unite us. May the god of love unite us."

BUT according to the followers of the *Sāmaveda*, the bridegroom, immediately after the scarf has been placed on the bride's shoulder, conducts her towards the sacrificial fire, saying, "SOMA [the regent of the moon] gave her to a heavenly quirister*: the *Gandharba* gave her to the regent of fire: fire has given her to me, and with her wealth and male offspring." The bride then goes to the western side of the fire, and recites the following prayer, while she steps on a mat made of *Viran'a* grass †, and covered with silk. "May our lord assign me the path by which I may reach

* GUN'AVISHN'U here explains *Gandharba* by the word *A'ditya*, which may signify the sun, or a deity in general.

† *Andropogon aromaticum* or *muricatum*.

reach the abode of my lord." She sits down on the edge of the mat, and the bridegroom offers six oblations of clarified butter, reciting the following prayers, while the bride touches his shoulder with her right hand. 1. "May fire come first among the gods; may it rescue her offspring from the fetters of death; may VARUN'A king [of waters] grant that this woman should never bemoan a calamity befallen her children. 2. May the domestic perpetual fire guard her; may it render her progeny long-lived; may she never be widowed; may she be mother of surviving children; may she experience the joy of having male offspring. 3. May heaven protect thy back; may air, and the two sons of *Aswinî* protect thy thighs; may the sun protect thy children while sucking thy breast; and *VRIHASPATI* protect them until they wear clothes, and afterwards may the assembled gods protect them. 4. May no lamentation arise at night in thy abode; may crying women enter other houses than thine; may thou never admit sorrow to thy breast; may thou prosper in thy husband's house, blest with his survival, and viewing cheerful children. 5. I lift barrenness, the death of children, sin, and every other evil, as I would lift a chaplet off thy head, and I consign the fetters [of premature death] to thy foes. 6. May death depart from me, and immortality come; may (*YAMA*) the child of the sun, render me fearless. Death! follow a different path from that by which we proceed, and from that which the gods travel. To thee who seest and who hearest, I call, saying, hurt not our offspring, nor our progenitors: and may this oblation be efficacious." The bridegroom then presents oblations, naming the three worlds, separately and conjointly, and offers either four or five oblations to fire and to the moon. The bride and bridegroom then rise up, and he passes from her left side to her right, and makes her join her hands in a hollow form.

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THE rice *, which had been put into a basket, is then taken up, and the stone is placed before the bride, who treads upon it with the point of her right foot, while the bridegroom recites this prayer, "Ascend this stone, be firm like this stone; distress my foe, and be not subservient to my enemies:" the bridegroom then pours a ladleful of clarified butter on her hands, another person gives her the rice, and two other ladlefuls of butter are poured over it; she then separates her hands, and lets fall the rice on the fire, while the following text is recited; "this woman, casting the rice into the fire, says, may my lord be long lived, may we live a hundred years, and may all my kinsmen prosper; be this oblation efficacious." Afterwards the bridegroom walks round the fire, preceded by the bride, and reciting this text; "the girl goes from her parents to her husband's abode, having strictly observed abstinence [for three days from factitious salt, &c.] Damsel! by means of thee we repress foes, like a stream of water." The bride again treads on the stone, and makes another oblation of rice, while the subjoined prayer is recited: "The damsel has worshipped the generous sun, and the regent of fire; may he and the generous sun liberate her and me from this [family;] be this oblation efficacious." They afterwards walk round the fire as before. Four or five other oblations are made with the same ceremonies and prayers, varying only the title of the sun, who is here called *Pushan*, but was entitled *Aryaman* in the preceding prayer; the bridegroom then pours rice out of the basket into the fire, after pouring one or two ladlefuls of butter on the edge of the basket; with this offering he simply says, "May this oblation to fire be efficacious."

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* From this use of raw rice at the nuptial ceremony, arises the custom of presenting rice, tinged with turmeric, by way of invitation to guests whose company is requested at a wedding.

THE oblations and prayers directed by the *Yajurvéda*, previous to this period of the solemnity, are very different from those which have been here inserted from the *Sāmavéda*; and some of the ceremonies, which will be subsequently noticed, are anticipated by the priests, who follow the *Yajush*.

TWELVE oblations are made with as many prayers.

1. May this oblation be efficacious, and happily conveyed to that being, who is fire in the form of a celestial quirister, who is accompanied by truth, and whose abode is truth; may he cherish our holy knowledge and our valour. 2. Efficacious be this oblation to those delightful plants, which are the nymphs of that being, who is fire in the form of a celestial quirister, who is accompanied by truth, and whose abode is truth. 3. and 4. The foregoing prayers are thus varied, "to that being who is the sun, in the form of a celestial quirister, and who consists wholly of the *Sāmavéda*. Those enlivening rays, which are the nymphs of that sun. 5. and 6. That being, who is the moon, in the form of a celestial quirister, and who is a ray of the sun, and named *Sushman'a*. Those asterisms, which are the nymphs of the moon, and are called *Bhécuri**. 7. and 8. That being, who is air, constantly moving, and travelling every where. Those waters, which are the nymphs of air, and are termed invigorating. 9. and 10. That being, who is the solemn sacrifice in the form of a celestial quirister, who cherishes all beings, and whose pace is elegant. Those sacrificial fees, which are the nymphs of the solemn sacrifice, and are named thanksgivings. 11. and 12. That being, who is mind in the form of a celestial quirister, who is the supreme ruler of creatures, and who is the fabricator of the universe.

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* This term is not expounded by the commentator. *Bha* signifies an asterism: but the meaning of the compound term is not obvious. *Sushman'a* bears some affinity to *Shusumna* mentioned in a former essay; but neither of these names is explained in the commentaries which I have consulted.

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Those holy strains (*Rich* and *Sáman*) who are the nymphs of mind, and are named the means of attaining wishes."

THIRTEEN oblations are next presented, during the recital of as many portions of a single text.

"May the supreme ruler of creatures, who is glorious in his victories over [hostile] armies, grant victory to INDRA, the regent of rain: all creatures humbly bow to him; for he is terrible: to him are oblations due; may he grant me victory, knowledge, reflection, regard, self-rule, skill, understanding, power, [returns of] the conjunction and opposition of the sun and moon, and holy texts (*Vrihat* and *Rat'hantara**)."

EIGHTEEN oblations are then offered, while as many texts are meditated; they differ only in the name of the deity that is invoked. 1. "May fire, lord of [living] beings, protect me in respect of holiness, valour and prayer, and in regard to ancient privileges, to this solemn rite, and to this invocation of deities. 2. May INDRA, lord or regent of the eldest (that is, of the best of beings) protect me, &c. 3. YAMA, lord of the earth. 4. Air, lord of the sky. 5. The sun, lord of heaven. 6. The moon, lord of stars. 7. VRIHASPATI, lord [that is, preceptor] of BRAHMA' [and other deities.] 8. MITRA (the sun) lord of true beings. 9. VARUNA, lord of waters. 10. The ocean, lord of rivers. 11. Food, lord of tributary powers. 12. SOMA (the moon,) lord of plants. 13. SAVITRI (the generative sun,) lord of pregnant females. 14. RUDRA (SIVA) lord of [deities, that bear the shape of] cattle." 15. "The fabricator of the universe, lord of forms." 16. "VISHNU, lord of mountains." 17. "Winds (*Maruts*), lords of (*gánas*) sets of divinities." 18. "Fathers, grandfathers, remoter ancestors,

* Texts of the *Sámarvéda* so named.

an estors, more distant progenitors, their parents, and grandsires."

OBLATIONS are afterwards made with prayers corresponding to those which have been already cited from the *Sāmaveda*. 1. "May fire come, first among the gods, &c." 2. "May the domestick perpetual fire guard her, &c." 3. "Fire, who dost protect such as perform sacrifices! grant us all blessings in heaven and on earth: grant unto us that various and excellent wealth which is produced on this earth and in heaven." 4. "O best of luminaries! Come, show us an easy path, that our lives may be uninjured. May death depart from me, and immortality come. May the child of the sun render me fearless." 5. "Death! follow a different path, &c."

THE bride offers the oblations of rice mixed with leaves of *S'ami**, letting fall the offerings on the fire in the manner before mentioned, and with the same prayers, but recited in a reversed order, and a little varied. 1. "The damsel has worshipped the generous sun in the form of fire. May that generous sun never separate her from this husband." 2. "This woman, casting the rice into the fire, says, may my lord be long lived. May my kinsmen reach old age." 3. "I cast this rice into the fire, that it may become a cause of thy prosperity. May fire assent to my union with thee†."

ACCORDING to the followers of the *Yajurveda* the bridegroom now takes the bride's right hand, reciting a text which will be subsequently quoted. The bride then steps on a stone while this text is recited: "Ascend this stone: be firm like this stone. Subdue such as entertain hostile designs against me, and repel them." The following hymn is

* *Adenanthera aculeata*.

† This version is conformable to a different commentary, from that which was followed in the former translation.

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is then chanted. "Charming SARASWATI', swift as a mare! whom I celebrate in face of this universe; protect this [solemn rite.] O thou! in whom the elements were produced; in whom this universe was framed. I now will sing that hymn [the nuptial text] which constitutes the highest glory of women." The bride and bridegroom afterwards walk round the fire, while the following text is recited: "Fire! thou didst first espouse this female sun [this woman, beautiful like the sun:] now let a human being again espouse her by thy means. Give her, O fire! with offspring, to a [human] husband." The remainder of the rice is then dropped into the fire as an oblation to the god of love.

The next ceremony is the bride's stepping seven steps. It is the most material of all the nuptial rites: for the marriage is complete and irrevokable, so soon as she has taken the seventh step, and not sooner. She is conducted by the bridegroom, and directed by him to step successively into seven circles, while the following texts are uttered: 1. "May VISHN'U cause thee to take one step for the sake of obtaining food." 2. "May VISHN'U cause thee to take one step for the sake of obtaining strength." 3. "Three steps for the sake of solemn acts of religion." 4. "Four steps for the sake of obtaining happiness." 5. "Five steps for the sake of cattle." 6. "Six steps for the sake of increase of wealth." 7. "Seven steps for the sake of obtaining priests to perform sacrifices*." The bridegroom then addresses the bride, "Having completed seven steps, be my companion. May I become thy associate. May none interrupt thy association with me. May such as are disposed to promote

* In the *Yajurvéda* the texts are varied, so that the third step is for increase of wealth, and the sixth for obtaining happy seasons.

promote our happiness, confirm thy association with me." The bridegroom then addresses the spectators: "This woman is auspicious: approach and view her: and having conferred [by your good wishes] auspicious fortune on her, depart to your respective abodes."

THEN the bridegroom's friend, who stood near the fire bearing a jar of water, advances to the spot where the seventh step was completed, and pours water on the bridegroom's head, and afterwards on the bride's, while a prayer above mentioned is recited: "May waters and all the Gods cleanse our hearts: may air do so; may the Creator do so; may the divine instructress unite our hearts *."

THE bridegroom then puts his left hand under the bride's hands, which are joined together in a hollow form, and taking her right hand in his, recites the six following texts: 1. "I take thy hand for the sake of good fortune, that thou mayst become old with me, thy husband: may the generous mighty and prolific sun render thee a matron, that I may be a householder." 2. "Be gentle in thy aspect, and loyal to thy husband; be fortunate in cattle; amiable in thy mind, and beautiful in thy person; be mother of surviving sons; be assiduous at the [five] sacraments; be cheerful; and bring prosperity to our bipeds and quadrupeds." 3. "May the lord of creatures grant us progeny, even unto old age; may the sun render that progeny conspicuous. Auspicious deities have given thee to me. Enter thy husband's abode; and bring health to our bipeds and quadrupeds." 4. "O INDRA, who pourest forth rain! render this woman fortunate and the mother of children: grant her ten sons; give her eleven protectors." 5. "Be submissive to thy husband's father, to his mother, to his sister, and to

* It is here translated according to the gloss of GUN'A VISHN'U. In the former version I followed the commentary of HELAYUD'HÄ.

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to his brothers." 6. "Give thy heart to my religious duties; may thy mind follow mine; be thou consentient to my speech. May VRIHASPATI unite thee unto me."

THE followers of the *Yajurveda* enlarge the first prayer, and omit the rest, some of which, however, they employ at other periods of the solemnity. "I take thy hand for the sake of good fortune, that thou mayst become old with me, thy husband: may the deities, namely, the divine sun (*aryaman*), and the prolific being (*savitri*), and the god of love, give thee as a matron unto me, that I may be a householder. I need the goddess of prosperity. Thou art she. Thou art the goddess of prosperity. I need her. I am the *Sáman* [*véda*.] Thou art the *Rich* [*véda*.] I am the sky. Thou art the earth. Come: let us marry: let us hold conjugal intercourse: let us procreate offspring: let us obtain sons. May they reach old age. May we, being affectionate, glorious and well disposed, see during a hundred years, live a hundred years, and hear a hundred years."

ACCORDING to the ritual, which conforms to the *Sámarvéda*, the bridegroom sits down near the fire with the bride, and finishes this part of the ceremony by making oblations, while he names the three worlds severally and conjointly. The taking of the bride's hand in marriage is thus completed. In the evening of the same day, so soon as the stars appear, the bride sits down on a bull's hide, which must be of a red colour, and must be placed with the neck towards the east, and the hair upwards. The bridegroom sits down near her, makes oblations while he names the three worlds as usual; and then makes six oblations with the following prayers, and each time pours the remainder of the clarified butter on the bride's head. 1. "I obviate by this full oblation all ill marks in the lines [of thy hands,] in thy

thy eye-lashes, and in the spots [on thy body].” 2. “I obviate by this full oblation all the ill marks in thy hair; and whatever is sinful in thy looking, or in thy crying.” 3. “I obviate by this full oblation all that may be sinful in thy temper, in thy speaking, and in thy laughing.” 4. “I obviate by this full oblation all the ill marks in thy teeth, and in the dark intervals between them; in thy hands, and in thy feet.” 5. “I obviate by this full oblation all the ill marks on thy thighs, on thy privy part, on thy haunches, and on the lineaments of thy figure.” 6. “Whatever natural or accidental evil marks were on all thy limbs, I have obviated all such marks by these full oblations of clarified butter. May this oblation be efficacious.”

THE bride and bridegroom rise up; and he shews her the polar star, reciting the following text: “Heaven is stable; the earth is stable; this universe is stable; these mountains are stable; may this woman be stable in her husband’s family*. The bride salutes the bridegroom, naming herself and family, and adding a respectful interjection. The bridegroom replies, “be long lived and happy.” Matrons then pour water, mixed with leaves, upon the bride and bridegroom, out of jars, which had been previously placed on an altar prepared for the purpose; and the bridegroom again makes oblations with the names of the worlds, by way of closing this part of the ceremony.

THE bridegroom afterwards eats food prepared without factitious salt. During this meal he recites the following prayers: “I bind with the fetters of food thy heart and mind to the gem [of my soul]; I bind them with nourishment, which is the thread of life; I bind them with the knot of truth.” 2. “May that heart which is yours, become my heart; and

* *Dhruva*, the pole, also signifies stable, fixed, steady, firm.

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3. “ Since food is the bond of life, I bind thee therewith.” The remainder of the food must be then given to the bride.

DURING the three subsequent days, the married couple must abstain from factitious salt, live chastely and austerely, and sleep on the ground. On the following day, that is, on the fourth exclusively*, the bridegroom conducts the bride to his own house on a carriage or other suitable conveyance. He recites the following text when she ascends the carriage: “ O wife of the sun ! ascend this vehicle resembling the beautiful blossoms of the cotton tree †, and butea ‡, tinged with various tints ; and coloured like gold ; well constructed ; furnished with good wheels ; and the source of ambrosia [that is, of blessings :] bring happiness to thy husband.” Proceeding with his bride, he, or some other person for him, recites the following text on their coming to a cross road : “ May robbers, who infest the road, remain ignorant [of this journey,] may the married couple reach a place of security and difficult access by easy roads, and may foes keep aloof.”

ALIGHTING from the carriage, the bridegroom leads the bride into the house, chanting the hymn called *Vámadévya*. Matrons welcome the bride, and make her sit down on a bull’s hide, of the same colour, and placed in the same manner as before. The bridegroom then recites the following prayer : “ May kine here produce numerous young ; may horses,

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* The Muslemans of India do not scruple to borrow from the Hindus superstitious ceremonies that are celebrated with festivity. They take an active part in the gambols of the *Hóli*, and even solicit the favours of the Indian Plutus, at the *Díwali*. The bridal procession, on the fourth day, with all the sports and gambols of the *Chaut’bi* (*Chaturt’hí*), is evidently copied from the similar customs of the Hindus. In Bengal the Muslemans have even adopted the premature marriage of infant brides and bridegrooms.

† Bombax heptaphyllum.

‡ Butea frondosa.

and human beings do so; and may the deity sit here, by whose favour sacrifices are accomplished with gifts a thousand fold.

THE women then place a young child in the bride's lap; they put roots of lotos, or else fruit of different kinds, in his hand. The bridegroom takes up the child, and then prepares a sacrificial fire in the usual manner, and makes eight oblations with the following prayers, preceded and followed by the usual oblations to the three worlds. 1. "May there be cheerfulness here." 2. "May thine own [kindred] be kind here." 3. "May there be pleasure here." 4. "Sport thou here." 5. "May there be kindness here with me." 6. "May thine own [kindred] be here, benevolent towards me." 7. "May there be here delight towards me." 8. "Be thou here joyous towards me." The bride then salutes her father-in-law and the other relatives of her husband.

AFTERWARDS the bridegroom prepares another sacrificial fire, and sits down with the bride on his right hand. He makes twenty oblations with the following prayers, preceded and followed as usual by oblations to the three worlds. The remainder of each ladleful is thrown into a jar of water, which is afterwards poured on the bride's head. 1. "Fire, expiator of evil! thou dost atone evils for the gods themselves. I, a priest, approach thee, desirous of soliciting thee to remove any sinful taint in the beauty of this woman." 2. "Air, expiator of evil! &c." 3. "Moon, expiator of evil! &c." 4. "Sun, expiator of evil! &c." 5. "Fire, air, moon, and sun, expiators of evil! ye do atone evils for the gods. I, a priest, approach thee, desirous of soliciting thee to remove any sinful taint in the beauty of this woman." 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, "soliciting thee to remove any thing in her person which might destroy her husband." 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, "any thing
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THE priests who use the *Yajurveda*, make only five oblations with as many prayers address to fire, air, the sun, the moon, and the *Gandharba* or celestial quister: praying them to remove any thing in the person of the bride, which might be injurious to her husband, to her offspring, to cattle, to the household, and to honour and glory. The following text is recited while the water is poured on the bride's head: "That blameable portion of thy person, which would have been injurious to thy husband, thy offspring, thy cattle, thy household, and thy honour, I render destructive of paramours: may thy body, [thus cleared from evil,] reach old age with me." The bride is then fed with food prepared in a caldron, and the following text is recited: "I unite thy breath with my breath; thy bones with my bones; thy flesh with my flesh; and thy skin with my skin."

THE ceremonies, of which the nuptial solemnity consists, may be here recapitulated. The bridegroom goes in procession to the house where the bride's father resides, and is there welcomed as a guest. The bride is given to him by her father in the form usual at every solemn donation; and their hands are bound together with grass. He clothes the bride with an upper and lower garment; and the skirts of her mantle and his are tied together. The bridegroom makes oblations to fire, and the bride drops rice on it as an oblation. The bridegroom solemnly takes her hand in marriage. She treads on a stone and mullar. They walk round the fire. The bride steps seven times, conducted by the bridegroom, and he then dismisses the spectators, the marriage being now complete and irrevokable. In the evening of the same day the bride sits down on a bull's hide, and the bridegroom points out to her the polar

star as an emblem of stability. They then partake of a meal. The bridegroom remains three days at the house of the bride's father. On the fourth day, he conducts her to his own house in solemn procession. She is there welcomed by his kindred: and the solemnity ends with oblations to fire.

AMONG *Hindus* a girl is married before the age of puberty. The law even censures the delay of her marriage beyond the tenth year. For this reason, and because the bridegroom too may be an infant, it is rare that a marriage should be consummated until long after its solemnization. The recital of prayers on this occasion constitutes it a religious ceremony, and it is the first of those that are performed for the purpose of expiating the sinful taint which a child is supposed to contract in the womb of his mother. They shall be described in a future essay.

ON the practice of immature nuptials, a subject suggested in the preceding paragraph, it may be remarked, that it arises from a laudable motive; from a sense of duty incumbent on a father, who considers as a debt the obligation of providing a suitable match for his daughter. This notion, which is strongly inculcated by *Hindu* legislators, is forcibly impressed on the minds of parents. But in their zeal to dispose of a daughter in marriage, they do not perhaps sufficiently consult her domestic felicity. By the death of an infant husband, she is condemned to virgin widowhood for the period of her life. If both survive, the habitual bickerings of their infancy are prolonged in perpetual discord.

NUMEROUS restrictions in the assortment of matches impose on parents this necessity of embracing the earliest opportunity of affiancing their children to fit companions. The intermarriages of different classes, formerly permitted, with certain limitations, are now wholly forbidden. The prohibited degrees

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degrees extend to the sixth of affinity: and even the bearing of the same family name is a sufficient cause of impediment.

To conclude the subject of nuptials, I shall only add, that eight forms are noticed by *Hindu* legislators. (MENU, c. 3.) But one only, which has been here described from the Indian rituals, is now used.