

Idols.

I.



EW people realize that the terms "idolatry" and "idolator" are applied in a very loose and general manner to very different things and people. An idolator, in the general view, is a person who worships an image; and the term is considered equally applicable to the poor African savage grovelling before a wooden scarecrow, and the refined and intelligent Japanese, who, as a strict matter of fact, never worshipped images at all. He, indeed, acquired the reputation of doing so, in the minds of the hastily misinformed, because of the numerous Japanese figures representing the geniuses of Good Fortune and other abstractions, which Europeans called gods, but which were no more the actual gods of the Japanese than the symbolical figures of Liberty, Commerce, Industry, and the rest, to be found on our own public monuments, are the gods of the English.

Perhaps the only images which may strictly be called idols are those which the worshippers veritably believe to be, in themselves, conscious and powerful. A very large class of images are held merely to represent a superior and invisible being, and to this class most of the Hindu idols belong.

The innumerable images of Buddha, for instance, are not objects of idolatrous worship, strictly speaking, but merely visible representations of the great invisible Buddha, and are bowed down before simply in token of adoration of that deity. Generally, it may be assumed that to the class of idols, pure and simple, worshipped for their own supposed intrinsic power, belong all those which are individual and unique, such as were and

are worshipped in Africa and Polynesia; and to the higher class of images—merely representations of invisible gods—belong all the similar figures of Buddha, Vishnu, Hanuman, Rama, and the rest, found in the great Eastern civilizations and semi-civilizations. Speaking, by-the-bye, of Indian idols, it may not be generally known that vast numbers of those metal images are made in Birmingham and exported to India, together with silk umbrellas, tall hats, and other blessings of civilization.

Let us begin with specimens of the lower class of actual idol, to which no definite mythology attaches, and which is worshipped for its own *beaux yeux*. We reproduce a photograph of such an idol from West Africa (1). The entire height of this reverend object is about 30in., and it is carved in wood and painted in lively colours. The deity is a tall sort of gentleman, rather too big for his horse, whose knees—and they are not

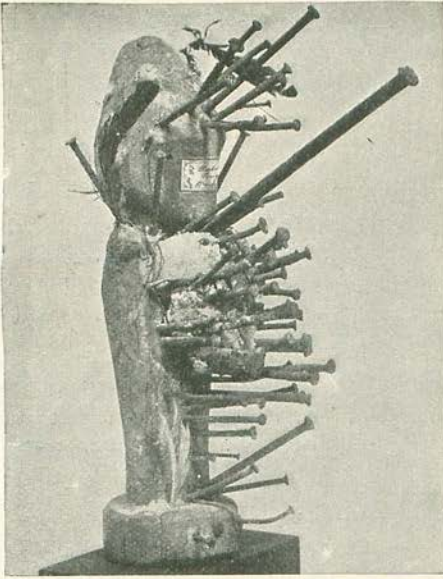
slender—exhibit signs of giving way under the strain. He is accompanied by four retainers, armed with formidable clubs, each retainer just about tall enough to reach his master's breeches-pocket with a little stretching. We regret our inability to supply the gentleman's name, though the fact probably saves us from a serious spelling calamity. It is simply one of the innumerable individual idols made by an ignorant savage to his own fancy, and fellow-idol with the half-dozen or so ensuing.

Our second specimen (2) is also from West Africa. He is not a great work of art—he is even less admirable as a piece of work than his compeer just

noticed. He is no more than a half-shaped, upright figure, without limbs or features, unless you count as a feature a lump of



1.—WEST AFRICAN IDOL.



2.—IDOL FROM WEST COAST OF AFRICA, WITH OFFERINGS OF NAILS.

white clay stuck against his chest. One's first impression is that he must have been unlucky in his profession, and possibly have incurred unpopularity by neglecting to answer prayers or something of the kind, the indignation of his disciples taking the spiteful form of nails driven viciously into his sacred person.

This is wrong, however. The nails are most amiably meant, and he likes them. The idol comes from a part where iron of all sorts is extremely scarce, and nails are some of the most precious possessions of the natives. So the devout West African who was anxious to propitiate this particular divinity sacrificed one of his most valuable nails to it by the simple and respectful process of hammering it into the hallowed stomach. So that, as a matter of fact, he was quite a popular power; loved, dreaded, and perforated by a numerous congregation. Let us be thankful that friendly presentations in this country are conducted by a different method.

So much for Africa. It is a large place, but there are more interesting idols elsewhere. In the many islands of the broad Pacific, idolatry in its lowest form still largely prevails, and prevailed universally until recent times. Such worship as was practised was extorted by fear; consequently one does not look to Oceanic idols for models of personal beauty.

We reproduce a photograph of one from the Sandwich Islands (3). It is a sort of Polynesian Tom Noddy, consisting entirely of head and neck, and it is made—or rather its exterior surface is—of feathers. The interior frame is wicker, and the covering is of red and yellow feathers. The not particularly languishing eyes are of mother-of-pearl, with black beads for pupils, and the smile is bordered by a pleasant and numerous company of dogs' teeth. The whole affair is considerably bigger than the usual human head, and would prove of little use in quieting a nervous baby. In regard to the feathers, it may be of interest to state that the yellow feathers are of a most precious and rare sort. They come from a little bird which the naturalists call *Melithreptes Pacifica*, and which the Sandwich Islanders call by some name which may be nearly as long, though it can hardly be as ugly. This little bird has under each wing one single yellow feather and no more, and that only an inch long, so that anybody anxious to stuff a bed with these feathers would get a deal of gun practice in the process.

The late King of the Sandwich Islands, as a matter of fact, did have a cloak made of these feathers alone. It hung 4ft. from the shoulder, and was 11ft. wide at the bottom, and it was in process of making while nine successive Kings reigned and died in the Sandwich Islands.

When Dr. John Williams arrived at Rarotonga, in the Cook or Hervey Islands, he found that the natives engaged in fishing affixed their idols to the bows of their canoes. The same practice prevailed in the Sandwich Islands. We illustrate, first, one of the Rarotongan idols treated in this manner (4), and



3.—IDOL FROM THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.

next two of the same sort from the Sandwich Islands (5).

The Rarotongan is a little more than a foot high, is painted black, and doesn't appear, at first sight, to be a very intelligent person, but he is quite respectable in comparison with the two Sandwich Islanders, who are obviously drunk, and singing rowdy songs; in addition to which the larger of the two has a shocking black eye. It was a native of Rarotonga, by the way, that sighted the ship *Bounty* after she was in possession



4.—IDOL FROM RAROTONGA, COOK'S ISLAND.



5.—FISHERMEN'S IDOLS FROM HAWAII, SANDWICH ISLANDS.

of the mutineers, and even ventured on board. On his return to his friends, he described the ship as a floating island, with two rivers flowing on it; that plantations were growing there, with sugar-cane and bread fruit complete; the facts probably being that the pumps at work produced the illusion of rivers, and that the large boxes fitted up in the vessel for the conveyance of exotic plants to the West Indies were the plantations.

This man brought back with him a great prize—a pointed bar of iron about 3oin. long. This was at once dedicated to the Rarotongan gods. It was found to be much more effectual for digging into the ground to plant crops than were their own wooden tools, and so it was borrowed from the gods at each sowing time and used with all reverence; and when the produce appeared, parts of it were taken to the sacred places for the gods' benefit. One part was the usual sacrifice; a second was interest on the loan of the iron spike; and a third was a gift, designed to induce the gods to bring more ships, with more iron spikes aboard.

We reproduce a photograph (6) of an ancient and ill-used idol from a neighbouring island to Rarotonga, who never had any feet to speak of, and who has lost one of the arms he had, as well as the ear on the same side. He has a valuable necklace about his neck, and his face, stomach, and knees have been cut in starry patterns; but, notwithstanding all, he does not look really happy. That may be because—to judge from the position of his hands—he may possibly be the god, or demon, of indigestion.



6.—IDOL FROM HERVEY ISLANDS.



7.—IDOL FROM TAHITI.

Another little god from the same neighbourhood—from Tahiti, in fact, in the Society Islands—also expresses indigestion as much by his face as by his hands (7). He is carved from a very hard brown wood, his height is twenty-one inches, and his wig is made of black cocks' feathers.

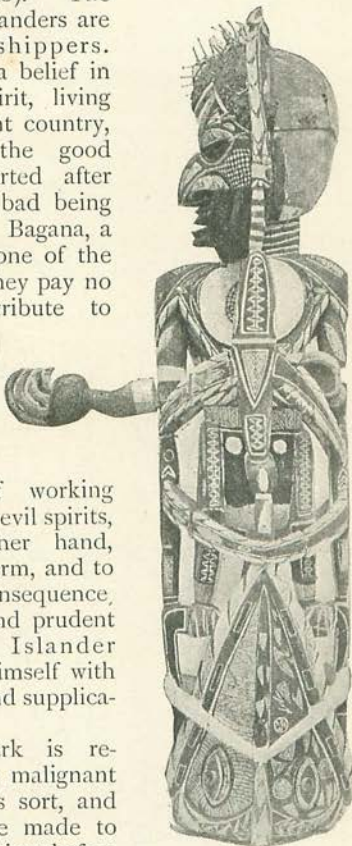
Far west of Tahiti lie the Solomon



8.—IDOLS FROM THE SOLOMON ISLANDS.

Islands, whence come the row of half-a-dozen assorted ineffables whose representation is subjoined (8). The Solomon Islanders are devil-worshippers. They have a belief in a good spirit, living in a pleasant country, whereunto the good are transported after death; the bad being relegated to Bagana, a volcano on one of the islands. They pay no particular tribute to this good spirit, however, because he is supposed incapable of working harm. The evil spirits, on the other hand, can work harm, and to them, in consequence, the pious and prudent Solomon Islander addresses himself with sacrifices and supplications.

The shark is regarded as a malignant deity of this sort, and offerings are made to it by the natives before



9.—IDOL FROM NEW IRELAND.

at the loss of his dinner. In such circumstances the Solomon Islands will probably never become a fashionable bathing resort.

Here, too, the practice obtains of fishermen attaching such idols as those here shown to their canoes, the idea being apparently that the fish will be so charmed with the beauty of the thing as to be attracted and easily caught. Those fish have a very easily satisfied taste.

Travelling further west still, we come to New Ireland, which contributes a couple of quaint specimens to our little collection. The first (9) is a mere skeleton, a framework of a god. It is carved out of a solid block of wood, nevertheless, and it is painted in the brightest colours the New Irishman can muster. This idol was brought to England and presented to the British Museum by Mr. H. H.

Romily, whose book of travels in the Western Pacific and New Guinea is a valuable record of many of the superstitions of natives of these parts.

As far as one can recognise human like-

they undertake canoe voyages; sometimes these offerings consist of food, sometimes of porpoise teeth, and sometimes of the shells which are used as money. In the event of a shark having seized a man who, however, manages to get away from the creature, the correct Solomon Islands practice is for his companions to fling him back into the water to be properly and completely eaten, lest the shark should be offended



10.—CHALK IDOL FROM NEW IRELAND.



II.—NEW GUINEA IDOL.

ness in the article at all, the features and expression belong more to Houndsditch than to any Ireland, new or old; more especially, perhaps, the expression of the extended hand—hard bargain and tight grip all over. The second of these specimens (10) was also presented to the British Museum by Mr. Romily. It is carved of a very hard chalk, and coloured with the arrangement of hyphens that will be noticed in the illustration. Its height is 2oin.

Westward of New Ireland is New Guinea, where the natives are still mostly devil-worshippers, like the Solomon Islanders. Each family keeps

offerings designed to propitiate. Many districts have their especial and particular devils, but there is no irksomely rigid law, and any gentleman may invent his own devils according to his own particular fears and fancies, and can invent as many as he likes.

The first New Guinea idol we illustrate (11) was used at ceremonies of initiation for the priests of the demoniac cult. Its only distinct expression would seem to be one of hunger, and its general appearance suggests that of a Wild Boy from a penny show where there was nothing to eat. It was carved from wood of a deep brown colour. The group of five (12) are assorted devils of private and individual invention. They are as different from one another as very ugly things well can be, and their only common attribute is a lack of cheerfulness of expression. Possibly their worshippers mingled too much bullying with too few sacrifices in the course of their ministrations.

There's a good deal to put up with in this world, even for a New Guinea bogie. Indeed, it is often a most uncomfortable situation. A white man who was once deified by the gentle savages of this island was stuck full of spears, because his worshippers were anxious to know if he bled. They satisfied themselves that he did, but he died suddenly during the process, and the devout flock cut him up in little pieces and buried each piece separately, for fear he might return to life

a little hut for the devils, with a little grass hammock slung therein for the devil to sleep in, and there they place nuts each morning as a sacrifice.

The people appear to have no notion of any well-disposed divinity or spirit, and everything supernatural is to their minds malignant, mischievous, and horrible. They have only two ways of getting what they want of these deities: by bullying them and by abject



12.—PRIVATE IDOLS FROM NEW GUINEA.



13.—MAORI IDOL.

of these spirits and called Tikis, and representations of them are carved in wood.

The specimen here illustrated (13) was taken from the house of a distinguished Maori chief. It is made of brown wood, and is very finely carved to represent the tattoo marks wherewith the old Maoris were wont so completely to adorn themselves. In cases where such images were made to represent dead chiefs, this close imitation of the dead men's tattoo marks enabled the natives to recognise for whom the representations were intended. Perhaps the last of the really great specimens of Maori tattooing disappeared when King Tawhiao was buried in 1894. His was a truly regal suit of tattoo, and his also was a pretty regal name. Exhibited at full-length it was Tawhiao Matutaera te Pukepuke te Pawa te Korato te A-Potatan te Whereo-whereo; a name that ought to satisfy any monarch.

Sumatra is an island of mixed races, mixed aspects, and mixed religion. There is a little Mohammedanism there, a little Buddhism, and a great deal of independent idolatry. This latter is itself of a mixed sort. First, the belief is in one supreme ruler, whom they call Batara-Guru; he rules in heaven, and is father of all mankind. Next to him come two other gods, Soripada and Mangola-Bulury, who govern the air and the earth

and do something unpleasant.

Turn we now for a moment to New Zealand. There is little now left of the old idolatrous practices of the Maories, even in their own especial reservations, but there is some. The old Maori religion was an indefinite sort of thing, scarcely, indeed, to be called a religion at all. They believed in spirits, mainly those of departed ancestors. Immense monuments, very elaborately carved, were raised in honour

respectively. These three have a number of relatives and friends, who, between them, build up quite a respectable Sumatran mythology.

Naga-Padoka, a god with three horns, originally supported the earth on the points of the horns in question, but after a time, very naturally grew rather tired and shook his head. The earth promptly sank, and the water rose over it, covering the whole world. (This, by the way, is plainly the Sumatran tradition of the Flood.)

Now, Batara-Guru, the chief god, had a daughter, named Puti-oria-bulan, who came down from heaven on a white owl to visit the earth, accompanied by a dog whose method of descent is not precisely explained. Finding the place so unexpectedly wet, she complained to her father, who picked up the first available mountain and dropped it into the water. The mountain's name was Bakarra, and in case anybody should be disposed to doubt the story, there the mountain stands to this day in simple proof. Puti-oria-bulan lived on the mountain, which raised a family of other mountains and land in general, and set the world up in business again, properly fixed on Naga-Padoka's horns. This unhappy divinity is now tied up so that the earth sha'n't fall off again, but he does shake his head now and again, and then, of course, there is an earthquake.

But beside these aristocrats of divinity the Sumatrans have an almost illimitable number of inferior gods, one for every sort of object on the earth, and at least one for every circumstance in a person's life. One of these gods we illustrate (14). His height is 28in.; he is not prepossessing in appearance, and we do not know his name. If appearances are to be trusted, however, one might fairly suppose him to be the god of hatters.



14.—SUMATRAN IDOL.

Idols.

II.



URN we now to India, that land of gods, with its vast and tangled mythology, into the details whereof one can scarcely venture without bewilderment and confusion of brain. By far the chief religion of India is Brahmanism, Buddhism being much less prevalent than it used to be. The chief deities of the complicated Brahmanic system are a trinity, called the Trimurti, consisting of Brahman, Vishnu, and Siva. Brahman, although originally head of the trinity, has now become an abstraction merely, and Vishnu and Siva are the chief gods of the Hindus, some placing Vishnu first, others chiefly honouring Siva or his wife, Durga. Vishnu is always a benevolent and friendly god, but Siva is the Destroyer. By a seeming contradiction, which, however, has its meaning, he is also the Creator. Siva is of comparatively recent invention, and was first, in the Middle Ages, simply Rudra, the god of storms and such destructive agencies.

We reproduce a photograph (1) of a rather fine bronze figure of Rudra, wherein he is represented in the congenial occupation of dancing on a corpse. Rudra is said to have sprung from the forehead of Brahman, a grown youth. With a certain babyish inconsistency he immediately began crying for a name. Brahman called him Rudra, but the Destroyer was inconsolable, and kept up his blubbing till Brahman had given him seven more names to pacify him, when he mopped up his tears and set about his regular occupation as a purveyor of disease, tempest, battle, murder, and sudden death. The

seven extra names are Bhara, Sarva, Isana, Pasupati, Bhima, Ugra, and Maha-diva, and these now form part of the outfit of names (there are a thousand altogether) which Siva uses, or which are used for him. Rudra, in fact, is Siva as he was first invented.

But Siva is an unpleasant sort of person, while Vishnu (the Preserver) is a beneficent and kindly deity. His history tells us that he became especially the friend of men in his various "avatars" or incarnations. Some reckon ten of these incarnations, others twenty - two. Sometimes he was a fish, sometimes a boar, sometimes a tortoise, sometimes a hero. By far the chief and most celebrated of his incarnations were the seventh and eighth, as Rama and as Krishna respectively, both heroes. But the guise wherein he is, perhaps, most celebrated in this country is that of Juggernaut, or, more precisely, Jagannatha, "Lord of the World."

This idol represents Vishnu in a general sort of way, and its story is this. Krishna was killed by a hunter, and the body was left under a tree. Some time after, a pious Hindu found the bones and carried



1.—RUDRA DANCING ON A CORPSE.

them to the king of the country. This king felt himself impelled by direct inspiration from Vishnu to set up the image of Juggernaut and place the bones inside it. So he gave the job to one Viswa-Karma, who held the responsible situation of architect to the gods, and who undertook to complete the image in a workmanlike manner on condition of being left entirely undisturbed until the contract was finished. But the king was an impatient gentleman, and turned up in fifteen days to see how the work was going

on. The result was disastrous. Visva-Karma organized himself into a strike, "chucked up" the job, and picketed the premises; the consequence being that Juggernaut remained for ever incomplete, having neither hands nor feet.

The king appealed to Brahman to act as arbitrator, but Brahman, wise in his generation, declined the thankless task, and compromised matters by giving Juggernaut eyes and a soul and consecrating it personally.

At the great Temple of Juggernaut, at Puri, twenty-four annual festivals are held, the chief, of course, being the famous car festival, when crowds of pilgrims drag Juggernaut in his car to his country house, a mile away. The car is 45ft. high and 35ft. square, and has sixteen wheels, each 7ft. in diameter. The distance is not far, and there are plenty to pull, but the sand is so deep that the journey takes several days. The world-famous smashing of devotees under the wheels never actually took place, except as a result of accident. Sir W. W. Hunter and Mr. H. H. Wilson, after exhaustive researches, have effectually disposed of that myth.

The specimens we present (2) are small copies of the great Juggernaut, made of wood and plaster, and rather suggestive of a good-tempered, armless lady in a penny show.

The most famous, perhaps, of all the in-



3.—RÁMA.

the gods. Just at this time Ravana, the demon king of Ceylon, was terrifying the gods by his atrocities and his threats, and Vishnu determined to descend to earth in the person of Dasa-ratha's son, to put a spoke in the wheel of that same Ravana. Consequently he was born Ráma. A certain sage supplied him with magical arms, and he went about assaulting and battering Rakshasas or demons.

In course of his travels he came to the court of Janaka, king of Videha. Janaka had a lovely daughter, called Sita, who was put up as a matrimonial prize for anybody who could bend a certain bow. Ráma not only bent the bow, but broke it, and so walked off with the princess. Soon after this a dispute arose as to Ráma's right to be installed heir-apparent, and his step-mother had him sent into exile for fourteen years with his wife and one brother. While he



2.—JUGGERNAUT.

carnations of Vishnu was that of Ráma, the hero of the Rámáyana (3). Ráma was eldest son of a king called Dasa-ratha, and a near relation of the sun. Dasa-ratha had long prayed for sons, and was promised four by

was away his father died, and another of his brothers acted as regent.

During the exile a hermit recommended Ráma to live at Panchavati, which turned out to be anything but a desirable district for a family residence, owing to the prevalence of devils. One of these was a sister of Ravana, the aforesaid demon king of Ceylon, and this lady fell in love with Ráma. Ráma virtuously drove her away, whereupon she "went for" Sita. This so enraged Ráma's brother, that he cut off her ears and nose; whereupon she naturally went away and brought all her big brothers and an army of Rakshasas to avenge her. The upshot was a noble scrimmage, wherein all the demons were destroyed.

Not to be done, the lady repaired to her powerful brother Ravana, and persuaded him to steal Ráma's wife. This he did in Ráma's absence, who, on his return, set out after Ravana as fast as he could go, accompanied by his brother. On the way they killed a headless monster, whose disembodied spirit, harbouring no malice, advised them to ask the aid of the monkeys. They took this advice and gathered all the monkeys together, under the generalship of Hanuman, king of all the monkeys, who is now a most important Hindu god himself. Then ensued the most wonderful and complicated shindy recorded in all the mythology of India.

But before describing it, we shall find it most convenient to give some description of the wicked god Ravana, and the friendly Hanuman, representations of both of whom accompany this article. Ravana (4) was a sly and calculating person. First he did the extremely pious, and by a series of severe penances and austere subservience to

Brahman, he attained extraordinary and previously unheard-of power. Once having secured this, he changed entirely, and became the most shockingly disreputable criminal in the whole Indian mythology. By his natural talents, combined with a strict attention to business, he managed to attain the very utmost degree of wickedness possible, and in time ably fulfilled the honourable post of the incarnation of all evil. Being the fortunate possessor of ten heads and twenty arms, he was able to fulfil the duties of the situation with workmanlike thoroughness. His eyes, too, were a little startling, being copper-coloured, and his teeth are not very

definitely described as being "like the young moon." In addition to this, he was quite a tall person, since he was able to reach up and stop the sun and moon in their courses. Naturally terrified by such surprising interference, the sun temporarily suspended business, and the winds retired into private life. Our portrait of this amazing creature is from a carving in ivory.

Hanuman was also a powerful person for a monkey, and much more respectably dis-

posed. He was the son of Pavana, "the wind," and he had high monkey connections on the mother's side. He could fly—or at least, what was much the same, he could jump one or two thousand miles at a time whenever inclined for active exercise. His personal description, if not quite so astounding as that of Ravana, is at least sufficient to distinguish him in an ordinary crowd. His size is somewhat inexactly described as equal to that of a mountain. His complexion is "yellow and glowing like molten gold," although the same account describes his face as "red as the brightest ruby"; but all



4.—RAVANA.



5.—HANUMAN.

accounts agree that there is simply no end to his tail.

Our illustration (5) is from a carving in wood, wherein Hanuman adopts the attitude of an unpractised after-dinner speaker, delicately coughing behind his hand while trying to remember his next sentence.

Such, then, were the great powers, one hostile and the other friendly, who joined with Ráma, and any number of thousands of monkeys and miscellaneous fiends, in the most destructively mixed

scrimmage in all Indian records.

On being appealed to by Ráma, Hanuman took a little jump from India into Ceylon, and began a search for the lost wife. He found Sita there in captivity, and came back with the report. At once the monkeys began work, and Hanuman tore up trees and pitched them, with select mountains lifted from the Himalayas, into the sea between India and Ceylon, so as to form a bridge for the monkeys to pass over. There is no doubt possible of this fact, for there is the remnant of the bridge to this day, sunk below the surface of the water, and called Adam's Bridge. All the monkeys, reinforced by the bears, swarmed over to Ceylon and, the demons coming out to meet them, a gorgeous fight ensued, lasting for weeks. The combat went against the monkeys, till Hanuman bounced over to the Himalayas and fetched back the Herb of Life to resuscitate all the killed.

Still the fight went on, and Ravana and his son Indrajit were very hard nuts to crack. The advantage went sometimes one way and sometimes another, and the monkeys looked like being badly beaten, when the gods them-

selves, Brahman and Vishnu, rushed into the stramash, and bowled over Indrajit. Some malignant fiend greased Hanuman's tail and set fire to it; but that was a sad mistake, for the conflagration utterly burnt up the demon city Lanka.

Hanuman, stimulated by his burnt tail, went into the scramble like mad, and hurled the devils over right and left, till at last he was killed by Ravana himself. Then up came Ráma, and a royal fight ensued between the two principals. Ráma knocked off Ravana's heads one at a time with arrows, but new heads popped up every time. So the fight went on, till at last Ráma fired an extra special arrow, of Brahman's own manufacture, which went clean through Ravana, plunged into the ocean, washed itself, and came intelligently back to Ráma's quiver. And so the row ended in the total defeat and destruction of the Ravana faction and the return of Sita to her husband.

Only the barest outlines of the fight are given here—a complete description would have filled a whole volume of the magazine. As to Hanuman, being killed was no great inconvenience to him, since the Herb of Life soon put that right, and secured him perpetual



6.—GANESA.

youth in addition, by way of bonus. And the Hanuman or Entellus monkey is sacred in India to this day.

Of the innumerable inferior Indian deities Ganesa is the chief. We reproduce a photograph of a finely executed black wood carving of Ganesa (6). He is especially the god of wisdom, and his aid is invoked at the beginning of every undertaking. Every Hindu book begins with the words: "Namō Ganesaya," which means "Honour to Ganesa." He is the son of the great Siva, and is represented as a short and portly yellow person, with a good deal of stomach, from four to ten hands, and an elephant's head with one tusk cut off. He is also sometimes represented riding on a rat, which would seem to be rather hard on the rat.

He carries in his hands a shell, a discus, a club, a lily, and other miscellaneous property. The elephant's head is very simply and plausibly accounted for. Ganesa's mother, Parvati, naturally proud of her bouncing boy, showed him to Sani, quite forgetting the terrible effects of that deity's glance. Sani looked and burnt the baby's head off, and Parvati, rushing to replace it with the first head she could find, happened on an elephant's and used that. Quite an easily explained accident, you see, which might have happened to anybody. Ganesa is leader of his mighty father's retainers, and has a number of complimentary names, which, translated, savour rather of street Arab courtesy. For instance, "Long-eared," "Elephant-faced," "Boastful," and "Pot-bellied."

The religions of China are the famous three: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

Of these Taoism is the religion of superstition, and a specimen of the innumerable Taoist idols is here illustrated (7). It is that of Peh-ko, a goddess, whose attributes, though confused, and differing by different accounts, are mild and pleasant, notwithstanding the lapful of snakes wherewith she is here represented. The specimen is from the Brandt collection; is nearly two feet high, and is a handsome piece of work.

Buddhism is very prevalent in Japan, though Shintoism is the State religion. Japan boasts the greatest and perhaps the most beautiful idol in the world—if any image of Buddha may strictly be called an idol—namely, that at Kamakura, which was set up in the year 1250. This immense seated image is more than 50ft. high, and nearly 100ft. in circumference of waist; the circumference of a single thumb is between 3ft. and 4ft. It was cast in bronze by Ono Goroyemon, a famous worker in metal, and in the alloy there is a quantity of gold which exceeds 500lb. in weight, and imparts much of its beautiful colour to the bronze.

But most familiar among Japanese household gods are the Shichi-fuku-jin, or seven gods of prosperity; though,

as has already been hinted, they are not gods in the proper acceptation of the term, but rather embodiments of ideas.

These are a pleasant and jolly set of people, and the Japanese artist of every sort delights to represent them all in circumstances of undignified comicality, in a spirit quite foreign to the reverence shown for a god proper. The seven are: Fukuroku-jin, the god or genius of longevity; Hotei, he of contentment and the friend of children; Daikoku, who presides over wealth; Yebisu, who embodies commercial honesty and is



7.—THE CHINESE GODDESS PEH-KO.



8.—FUKUROKU-JIN.

patron of fishermen; Juro-jin, the jolly old patron of learning; Bis-hamon, genius of military glory; and last, but certainly not least, Ben-ten, the one lady of the seven, and perhaps the greatest favourite of all, chiefly regarded as presiding over marriage, but whose patronage is also claimed by music, the sea, dancing, and all the arts.

We reproduce a photograph of Fukuroku-jin (8) from a beautiful old piece of Japanese porcelain. Here he is shown accompanied by the aged stag, but his more usual companions are the crane and the hairy tortoise, emblems of long life. His tremendously tall head is in sign of his accumulated wisdom and experience, and the artist often uses the peculiarity to cut his little jokes—making him vainly attempting to reach a wicked mosquito who is busy on the very top, far out of reach, and so forth. All the seven gods are indulgent to children, and Fukuroku-jin sometimes ties a cloth over his slippery pate (as he is, in fact, here represented), and allows good and industrious children to climb on top.

But the prime friend of children is Hotei (9), genius of contentment. He is said originally to have been a Chinese priest of the tenth century, remarkable for his obesity, his love



9.—HOTEI.

of children, and the bag he carried on his shoulder. His name, indeed, translated into English, is simply Cloth-bag. His bag contained many wonderful things, including the Hut of Invisibility, the Sacred Key, the Inexhaustible Purse, the Lucky Rain Coat, and a number of other symbols of prosperity. He makes toys, kites, pictures, and dolls for children, and is, generally speaking, a jolly, slovenly, lovable, but drunken old vagabond, to whom children look as to their greatest friend.

Daikoku (10), in a general way the patron of wealth, is more particularly patron of cereals; rice, of course, forming a prime factor of wealth in old Japan. He is represented as a good-tempered black gentleman, very short in the legs (which are wholly hidden in immense boots), and carrying a hammer, symbolical of the hard work necessary to attain wealth. He is shown either sitting or standing on fat round bales of rice, and sometimes he is attended by a rat, because the day set apart in his honour is called, in the Japanese calendar, the day of the rat. He usually, as in the representation before us, carries a sack loosely over his left shoulder. He and Fukuroku-jin are great friends, and in their hours of relaxation indulge in many friendly bouts of wrestling.



10.—DAIKOKU.

Daikoku usually wins, because he is so extremely short that Fukuroku-jin, reaching down to take hold of him, is apt to lose his balance by the weight of his head, and be tumbled over; unless, indeed, Fukuroku-jin can manage to catch hold of Daikoku's enormous ears, when they both roll over together in a grinning heap. Our illustration is taken from a carving in wood, gilded and lacquered.

Benten is a comely and pleasant lady, usually represented as playing some musical instrument. The beautiful carving, which we illustrate (11), shows her with ten arms and a halo—a most unusual representation. On one side of her stands Bishamon, patron of military glory, with his spear, and the usual pagoda held in his left hand; and on the other we find our old friend Daikoku, mallet, rice-bales, and all complete. Below the rock whereon Benten sits, her fifteen sons stand, each representative of some trade or occupation, and each carrying his particular trademark—the mill-stone, the pestle and mortar, or what not. Benten has especial guardianship of the sea and all the world under it. Snakes and dragons are represented as following and serving her.

A meeting of all the genial seven takes place once a year, when they banquet and tell each other their adventures since the last meeting. After this they proceed, under the special advice of Benten, to arrange all

marriages for the ensuing year. They bring out a number of skeins of red and white silk, each representing the fate of some person to be married—white for the men, red for the women. To begin with, the threads are very carefully selected and tied together, with the result of happy marriages. Soon, however, the operators grow tired and inclined to amuse themselves. So they hurry and tumble carelessly over the work and finish up with a general tangle. This is the reason of so many unhappy marriages—a thing otherwise difficult to account for.

After the wedding business is scrambled through, the jovial seven amuse themselves. Benten plays on the *samisen* or the *biwa*, and perhaps dances. Hotei drinks too much *saké*, and Daikoku and Fukuroku-jin begin their usual wrestle, while Bishamon lies on the floor and enjoys the spectacle. The others eat fish and play games, and the party usually breaks up in several days' time with bad headaches, each of the members setting about his appointed business with as much energy as is left. They are a jolly family, these seven, and,

indeed, all Japanese religion, Shinto or Buddhist, seems to be impressed with a spirit of kindness, charity, and good-fellowship. The Japanese are a cheerful people, and they have religions fitted to their dispositions. The gloomy, pessimistic form even of Buddhism is unknown among them.



11.—BENTEN, WITH HER FIFTEEN CHILDREN.