

PROFESSIONAL GODPARENTS.

The Hindu Guru Makes It a Business to Serve as Godfather to as Many Children as Possible.

In the United States almost all professions have been specialized. There are colleges of agriculture, mining, psychology, and what not; but it has been reserved for the Hindu people so far to recognize the godfather as a distinct calling; to inaugurate colleges of godfathers, with professorships, students, and handsome prizes for those most successful in this unique field of strenuous endeavor.

Long ago there were established at various places in India colleges of grand gurus or godfathers. They were perhaps more in the nature of seminaries or retreats than colleges proper, but nevertheless the line of work taken up was that of fitting one's self for what we can best understand by the term godfather, says the Boston Globe.

Not that anyone or everyone could enter these colleges, because in the first place the profession of a godfather, like that of most others in India, was, and is, strictly hereditary, and in the second they were reserved for the godfathers of the great kings, princes, and so forth. Still, for the instruction of godfathers they were so intended and so remain.

These godfathers, whether grand or ordinary, occupy a most curious and interesting place in the Indian family. Its hereditary nature is explained in the manner that if Dat is godfather to Das, Dat's eldest son becomes godfather to Das' eldest son, and so on for generations. But as the Dats could scarcely expect to live on one family of Das', the former have numerous other godchildren bearing the same relative position, and over whom they exercise a lifelong influence.

In fact, the Hindu godfather spends his life going on a circuit of his godchildren, and as the latter often live far apart, the period of a circuit may take up a year or longer. But whether he be the godfather to a prince or farmer, his reception is always attended with the highest honors. In the old days the grand godfathers raveled in great style, with escorts of soldiers, bands of music, a parade of gorgeously caparisoned elephants and horses, etc. They often exercised great political, as well as confidential powers, and sometimes rose to become ministers of state.

The ordinary godfather still goes his rounds according to the wealth and position of his clients or godchildren in ox carts or on foot, as the case may be. In general his reception among the middle and lower classes is as follows: When he approaches his godson's house, notice of the event having been sent on in advance, the wife comes forth with bowl of water and greets her husband's godfather with the salutation: "O, holy guru, live forever!" Then she reverently kneels and proceeds to wash the godfather's feet, afterward drying them with the new cloth which covers her head. After this she performs what we could regard as not a very nice act, she drinks some of the dirty water and reserves the rest as a talisman against evil spirits.

On entering the house the godfather is met by his godson with presents and the probably not very sincerely expressed hope that he will ever go away again. But still, as long as he stays, he is treated as the most honored guest. During his visit he settles up any family troubles, arranges with other godfathers the arrangements of his godson's children, accepting fees on each transaction.

Then, when he pleases, he goes his way to his next godson's abode with oney and provisions to provide for a journey.

Thus does the Hindu godfather make a lucrative profession of what to us is a sentimental calling. His gifts, instead of silverware, valuable inkets, etc., partake of the nature of flowers from some altar, sacred herbs or crumbs from his food, all of which are kept as relics.

As his benediction is supposed to remove all sins, and his curse is regarded as a calamity, it will be understood how very much more important a personage he is than his counterpart in an occidental family.

Pigeons in Constantinople.

Pigeons are sacred in Constantinople. No Moslem will kill a geon under any circumstances, and certain parts of the city they are found by the millions. One of the most sacred temples is called the geon mosque because of the number of birds which live there. They are so numerous that the air is often dark with them. Rich people leave gracies to pay for their food. At 1 of the mosques peddlers are found to sell corn for the faithful to offer the birds, and it is regarded as a religious sacrifice. The superstition against killing pigeons is based on the belief that the Holy Ghost inhabits the body of a pigeon, and one can be put to death without fear of sacrificing the right one.—William E. Curtis, in Chicago Record.

Japanese Hotels.

All the houses and places of business in the foreign settlements are owned by the coolies by their numbers, which in Japanese and Arabic numerals are fastened to each door gate. One may learn the numbers and their written character from the hotel menu cards, as each dish numbered in Japanese on one side the card and in English at the other side. The guest points to the number and the waiter brings the desired dish.—San Francisco Bulletin.

UP-TO-DATE FABLES.

Tom McNeil in his Tropic Mail and Breeze.

A monkey that had been trained and dressed by a New York millionaire to sit at the table along with the other guests, was afterward seen by a companion sitting on a box with a disgusted expression on his face.

"Well, how did you enjoy the dinner?" asked the companion.

"Oh, the dinner was all right so far as the feed was concerned," answered the first monkey, "but it is mighty trying to a person of ordinary monkey sense to have to listen to the remarks made by that gang of duds and dadeses. Their style of conversation gives me a pain."

A mastiff stood one day by the side of a stream watching a man and a water spaniel. The man would take a stick, throw it into the water and tell the spaniel to get it. The obedient spaniel time after time jumped into the water, swam out to where the stick was and brought it back and laid it at his master's feet. The spaniel was mightily pleased with himself and an hour later seeing the mastiff he asked: "What did you think of the way I performed down there at the river? Did you ever see a smarter dog?"

"Well," said the mastiff, "if you were doing that because you had to and because your bread and butter depended on it, it was all right, in that case your master was a fool to ask you to do something that was of no use; if you didn't have to do it, then it occurs to me that a dog who will jump into a river a dozen times to save a stick that isn't worth a cent after he gets it isn't smart. He is just an industrious blundered fool."

The mother of a couple of boys left them at home one day and when she returned she found that the jar of preserves had been eaten. She called up the younger of the boys and asked him if he had been at that jar. "No, ma'am, I never took a bite; Jim ate 'em all an' deserves to be licked good and plenty."

Then the mother called Jim on the carpet. "Why did you eat those preserves, Jimmie?"

"I did it just to save Johnny, mamma," promptly answered Jim.

"I knowed if that boy ever got at them preserves he would make himself sick and prob'ly git a good lickin' besides. I was awful sorry to have to do it, but you always told me to take care of my little brother an' I was bound to do it or bust."

A foolish Kansas colt got access to a bin of corn and ate until he nearly foundered himself. As the colt was standing and grunting with pain an old horse on to what was the trouble, said: "My son, it appears to me that you have no more sense than a good many politicians I have known. You don't know when it is time to quit."

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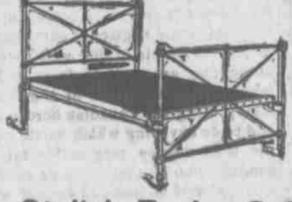
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