

**A POPULAR ACCOUNT  
OF THE MANNERS AND  
CUSTOMS OF INDIA**

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A Popular Account of the Manners and Customs of India by Charles Acland

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A POPULAR ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF INDIA.

By REV. CHARLES ACLAND,  
LATE CHAPLAIN AT POORIE, CUTTACK, AND MIDNAPORE.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE author of the present work was a clergyman, who, along with his wife, quitted England about the beginning of the year 1842, leaving behind him several young children, to whom, as appears from the letters he constantly addressed to them, he was most affectionately attached.

They left the country full of hope that they should all be reunited at some future period ; but, before he had been three years exposed to the climate of India, he fell a victim to it. It is somewhat melancholy to find him at the outset rejoicing in the very circumstance which in some measure perhaps occasioned his death. The first destination selected for him was little in accordance with his own taste ; and when it subsequently was altered from Assam to Cuttack, he expresses himself delighted with the change, though the first-named province was much more remarkable for its healthfulness than that to which he at length proceeded.

Mr. Acland felt the warmest interest in the education of his children, and, to improve their minds, determined, on quitting England, to send home, from time to time, accurate accounts of his progress, that they might be made acquainted with all he beheld—the places through which he passed,

the aspect of the country, its climate, productions, flowers, trees, shrubs, and wild animals. Many an interesting adventure is related in these pages which the author met with in the jungle; the beating of which by the hunting parties, who go forth in bands for that purpose, is described with an animation calculated to awaken much interest.

The letters addressed by Mr. Acland to his children have now been thrown into the form of a Journal, as this method was considered best suited to the general reader. The Editor has, however, been careful to preserve throughout the easy familiar style in which the father first wrote them, that to the children of others they may be equally acceptable and useful.

The books hitherto published on India have been in general, from their bulk, confined to persons arrived at a more advanced period of life; and the Editor of the present volume hopes in some measure to familiarise the subject by bringing it down nearer the comprehension of the youthful reader. This work is intended to describe Indian manners in an interesting way, and will in some measure, it is hoped, supply a portion of the want that has long existed in our literature in this respect. To render the subject more attractive, Mr. Acland was careful to introduce anecdotes and short narratives throughout, which are calculated to amuse, while instruction is at the same time conveyed.

One distinguishing feature may be observed in the whole—viz. a fervent spirit of devotion, which breathes through



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every page of the original manuscript. Such passages the Editor has thought it better to omit, as the advice from a father to his children, clothed in the simple language he considered it best to employ, though beautiful and touching in itself, would scarcely appear interesting to the general reader. For this reason the substance of his counsel has been compressed into the present brief Preface.

He impresses upon his children the necessity of living ever in brotherly love, of sustaining and comforting one another, and of seeking the Divine aid in every emergency of life, whether great or small. He shows them how, by trusting implicitly in God and acting according to His commandments, they will attain a peace of mind above all the happiness which an indulgence in the pleasures of this life can bestow. He explains to them, in the gentlest terms, how necessary it is for their welfare here and hereafter that they should act ever in accordance with the expressed wishes of the Almighty; and that they must never cease to remember that He moves about them everywhere, and sees their every action, hears each passionate word, beholds each unbecoming gesture, and will reward or punish according as they indulge in or abstain from evil. In several beautiful passages he portrays the unceasing watchfulness of the Almighty in providing for our daily wants, in supplying us with every necessary of life; and inquires, with truth, Ought not every little heart to be daily grateful to Him, without whose will the sun cannot shine, or rise, or set; without

whose will the refreshing showers could not force and raise up around us the beautiful and necessary things of life? Then he inquires, How can we better show our gratitude for these blessings than by acting in accordance with the wishes of Him who is the cause of so much good?

These words were spoken by a father to his own children; but I would ask those of my young friends into whose hands this little volume may fall, does it not equally touch them? Do they not feel the truth of these sentences? Coming over the many thousand miles which stretch between India and this country, these letters were cherished the more by the three little children to whom they were addressed; and now that the hand is cold which traced the lines, how much more will they be prized!

Whatever may be the fate of the volume with the public, to those whom it more intimately concerns it will be a lasting remembrance of their father, and of the melancholy circumstances connected with his early death. For their sake, the Editor trusts that the present work may meet with at least a moderate share of success; and that, in the endeavour to render more familiar to the youthful mind the names and habits of some of the inhabitants of India, he may not altogether fail.

*London, Sept. 1847.*

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