



**Smithsonian Institution**

*Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*

## **The People of India, Volume One**

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COLE CHRISTIANS.  
THE MISSION IN CHOTA NAGPORE.

The Lutheran Mission in Chota Nagpore was established in 1845. Its main object was the evangelization of the interesting people described in preceding papers, the Moondahs and Oraons of Chota Nagpore. With undefined notions on the subject of religion, and comparatively free from the deep-rooted prejudices of the Hindoo and Mahomedan races, these tribes appeared to offer an unusually promising field to missionary labor; but it was not till 1850 that any indications of the impression made were apparent. In that year eleven adults from four villages were admitted to baptism, with twelve children; and since that period the movement has been most encouragingly progressive.

In 1857, the year of the mutiny, the number baptized amounted to 780, of whom 237 were communicants. When the officers of the Government were compelled to quit their station owing to the mutiny of the troops at Ranchee, the missionaries had likewise to leave their flock; and the native Christians, left to themselves, were subjected to much hardship and persecution; but they nevertheless held firmly to the faith they had embraced. Since the suppression of the mutiny, the increase and spread of the influence of the Mission have been very rapid. In 1858 the number of baptisms was 247; in 1859, 196; in 1860, 305; in 1861, 522; and in only two months of 1862, 376. The total number is now close on 2500, of whom one-fifth are communicants.

Christianity has been presented to the Coles in its simplest and least alluring form. The system pursued is to avoid, as much as possible, whatever could be construed into an offer, or could raise hopes, of any worldly advantages to be derived from embracing the new creed.

The present condition of the mission and progressive rapidity of increase render a systematic division of work imperative; and it is very desirable that no more time should be lost in laying the foundation of a system that shall hereafter render it a self-sustaining mission, ready to meet all the wants of those who join it.

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