plain at the coronation of king James II. In 1689 he was declared dean of Canterbury ; but never could be perſuaded to fill up any of the vacancies made by the deprived bishops. Upon the death of Dr Lamplugh, he was promoted to the ſee of York. In 1702 he preached the ſermon at the coronation of queen Anne ; and the same year was ſworn of the privy-council, and made lord almoner to her majeſty. He died at Bath in 1713 ; and was interred in the cathedral of York, where a monument is erected to his memory.—His sermons, which were collected after his death and publiſhed in 7 vols 8vo, are juſtly admired.

SHARP, in muſic. See Interval.

SHASTER, or Bedang, the name of a ſacred book, in high eſtimation among the idolaters of Hindostan, containing all the dogmas of the religion of the bramins, and all the ceremonies of their worſhip ; and ſerving as a commentary on the Vedam.

The term *Shaster* denotes “ ſcience” or “ ſyſtem ;” and is applied to other works of aſtronomy and philoſophy, which have no relation to the religion of the In­dians. None but the bramins and rajahs of India are allowed to read the Vedam; the prieſts of the Banians, called *ſhuderers,* may read the Shaſter ; and the people, in general, are allowed to read only the Paran or Pouran, which is a commentary on the Shaſter.

The Shaſter is divided into three parts: the firſt con­taining the moral law of the Indians ; the ſecond, the rites and ceremonies of their religion ; and the third, the diſtribution of the people into tribes or claſſes, with the duties pertaining to each claſs.

The principal precepts of morality contained in the firſt part of the Shaſter are the following: that no ani­mal be killed, becauſe the Indians attribute souls to brute animals as well as to mankind ; that they neither hear nor ſpeak evil, nor drink wine, nor eat fleſh, nor touch any thing that is unclean ; that they obſerve the feaſts, prayers, and waſhings, which their law preſcribes ; that they tell no lies, nor be guilty of deceit in trade ; that they neither oppreſs nor offer violence to one ano­ther; that they celebrate the ſolemn feaſts and fasts, and appropriate certain hours of ordinary ſleep to cultivate a diſpoſition for prayer ; and that they do not ſteal or defraud one another.

The ceremonies contained in the ſecond part of the Shaſter are ſuch as theſe : that they waſh often in the rivers, hereby obtaining the pardon of their sins ; that they mark their forehead with red, in token of their re­lation to the Deity ; that they preſent offerings and prayers under certain trees, ſet apart for this purpoſe ; that they pray in the temples, make oblations to their pagodas, or idols, sing hymns, and make proceſſions, &c. that they make pilgrimages to diſtant rivers, and eſpecially to the Ganges, there to waſh themſelves and make offerings; that they make vows to particular ſaints, according to their reſpective departments ; that they render homage to the Deity at the firſt sight of the ſun ; that they pay their reſpect to the ſun and moon, which are the two eyes of the Deity ; and that they treat with particular veneration thoſe animals that are deemed more pure than others; as the cow, buffalo, &c. ; becauſe the souls of men have tranſmigrated into theſe animals.

The third part of the Shaſter records the diſtribution of the people into four claſſes ; the firſt being that

of the bramins or prieſts, appointed to inſtruct the people ; the ſecond, that of the kutteris or nobles, who are the magiſtrates ; the third, that of the ſhudderis or merchants ; and the fourth, that of the mechanics. Each perſon is required to remain in the claſs in which he was born, and to purſue the occupation aſſigned to him by the Shaſter. According to the bramins, the Shaſter was imparted by God himſelf to Brahma, and by him to the bramins ; who communicated the con­tents of it to the people.

Modern writers have given us very different accounts of the antiquity and importance of the Shaſter. Mr ', who had made considerable progreſs in the tranſlation of this book, apprehends, that the mytholo­gy as well as the coſmogony of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, were borrowed from the doctrines of the bramins, contained in it, even to the copying of their exteriors of worſhip, and the diſtribution of their idols, though groſsly mutilated and adulterated. With reſpect to the Vedam and Shaſter, or ſcriptures of the Gentoos, this writer informs us, that V*edam,* in the Mala­bar language, ſignifies the same as *Shaster* in the Shanſcrit; and that the firſt book is followed by the Gentoos of the Malabar and Coromandel coaſts, and alſo of the iſland of Ceylon. The Shaſter is followed by the Gentoos of the provinces of Bengal, and by all the Gentoos of the rest of India, commonly called *India Proper,* along the courſe of the rivers Ganges and Jum­na to the Indus. Both theſe books (he says) contain the inſtitutes of their reſpective religion and worſhip, as well as the hiſtory of their ancient rajahs and princes, often couched under allegory and fable. Their anti­quity is contended for by the partiſans of each ; but he thinks, that the ſimilitude of their names, idols, and great part of their worſhip, leaves little room to doubt, nay plainly evinces, that both theſe ſcriptures were ori­ginally one. He adds, if we compare the great purity and chaſte manners of the Shaſter with the great abſurdities and impurities of the Vedam, we need not hesitate to pronounce the latter a corruption of the former.

With regard to the high original of theſe ſcriptures, the account of the bramins is as follows. Brahma (that is, “ Mighty Spirit”), about 4866 years ago, aſſumed the form of man and the government of Indoſtan. He tranſlated the divine law (designed for the reſtoration of mankind, who had offended in a pre-exiſtent ſtate, and who are now in their laſt ſcene of pro­bation, to the dignity from which they were degraded) out of the language of angels into the well known Shanſcrit language, and called his tranſlation the *Chartah Bhade Shastah of Birmah,* or *the Six Scriptures of Divine Words of the Mighty Spirit.* He appointed the bramins, deriving their name from him, to preach the word of God; and the doctrines of the Shaſter were according­ly preached in their original purity 1000 years. About this time there was publiſhed a paraphraſe on the Chartali Bhade ; and about 500 years afterwards, a ſecond expoſition, called the *Aughtorrah Bhade Shasta,* or E*ighteen Books oſ Divine Words,* written in a character compounded of the common Indoſtan and the Shanſcrit. This innovation produced a ſchiſm among the Gentoos ; on which occaſion, it is said, thoſe of Coroman­del and Malabar formed a ſcripture of their own, which they pretended to be founded on the Chartah