

tion. We ascertain on examination, however, that in the superstition they are not scientific ideas at all, but mere chance guesses, set, like those of Brahminism, in a farago of wild and monstrous fable. Each of the many systems of which the universe is composed consists, say the Buddhists, of three worlds of a circular form, joined together at the edges, so that there intervenes between them an angular interspace, which constitutes their common hell; and to each of these systems there is a sun and moon apportioned, that take their daily journeys over them, returning at night through a void space underneath. And each of the bygone successive creations was a creation originated, it is added, out of chaos, through the stored-up merits of the Buddhas, and the effects of a life-invigorating rain, and which sank into chaos again when the old stock of merit, accumulated in the previous period, was exhausted. The creatures of each period, too, whether brute or human, were animated by but the souls of former creatures embodied anew. In the centre of each of the three worlds of which a system or *sackwala* consists, there is a vast mountain, more than forty thousand miles in height, surrounded by a circular sea, which is in turn surrounded by a ring of land and rock. Another circular sea lies outside the ring, and a second solid ring outside the sea; and thus rings of land and water alternate from the centre to the circumference. According to the geography of the Buddhas, a model of our own earth would exactly resemble that old-fashioned ornament,—a work of the turning-lathe,—which some of my auditors must have seen roughening the upper board of the ornate parlour-bellows of the last century, and which consisted of a large central knob, surrounded by alternate circular rings and furrows. And as in the old-fashioned bellows each ring flattened, and each furrow became shallower, in proportion as it was removed from the centre, so in the Buddhist earth, the seas, from being