

WASHING AWAY AN ECLIPSE.

To the Hindus, the River Ganges is a symbol of purification - and this year it has a special meaning, for an eclipse of the sun is due. They come to the Holy Ganges to wash away their sins - and to evade disaster. Garmukteshwar is a particularly holy spot - so thousands gather here to enter the water as the eclipse approaches.

The eclipse is only partial, but for the devout Hindu it is a time of evil omen; so until the life-giving sun recovers its full strength, the sacred river offers protection against bad luck for him and his cattle.

Without the sun, there would be no seedtime nor harvest, no life upon the earth; so in his own way, the Hindu gives thanks for its safe return.