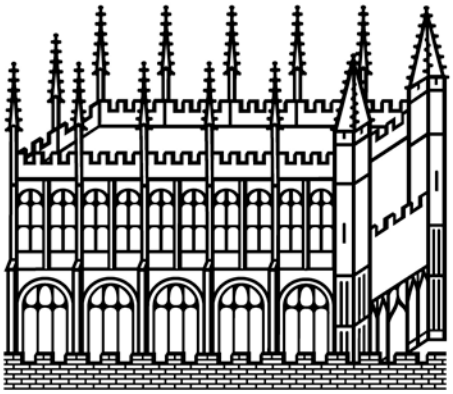

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RELIGIOUS REFORM.

PART III.

VEDIC HINDUISM.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM CONTAINED IN THE VEDAS AND BRAHMANAS, WITH ILLUSTRATIVE EXTRACTS; AN EXAMINATION OF THE CLAIMS OF THE ARYA SAMAJ; ETC.

COMPILED FROM THE WORKS OF MUIR, MAX MÜLLER, WILSON, RAJENDRALALA MITRA, MACDONALD, AND OTHERS.

Papers on Indian Reform.

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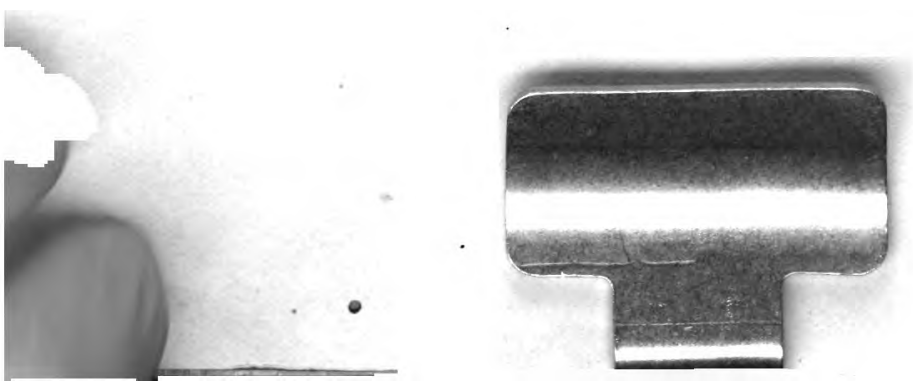

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Yatha devah, tatha bhaktah,
"As is the god, so is the worshipper."
"Thou thoughtest that I (God) was altogether such an one as thyself."
The Bible.

"What is not true cannot be patriotic."
Raja Sir Madhava Row, K. C. S. I.

MADRAS:
THE CHRISTIAN VERNACULAR EDUCATION SOCIETY.
S. P. C. K. PRESS, VEPERY.
1890.

INDIAN INSTITUTE
OXFORD

PREFATORY NOTE.

There are no books more esteemed by the Hindus than the Vedas, and few of which they know so little. The following pages, consisting chiefly of extracts from the writings of the best Orientalists —Indian and Western—are intended to give a general idea of the Vedas and Brahmanas, with translations of several of the hymns, quoted in full, as specimens.

The compiler is mainly indebted to the following works :—

Arya Samaj, Principles and Teaching of the. A Series of Lectures by Pandit Kharak Singh and Dr. Martyn Clark. The Punjab Religious Book Society, Lahore.

Banerjea, Rev. Dr. K. M. *Oxford Mission Papers.*

Eggeling, Professor. *Translation of the Satapatha Brahmana.* Sacred Books of the East.

Forman, Rev. H. *The Arya Samaj.* North India Tract Society, Allahabad.

Haug, Dr. *Translation of the Aitareya Brahmanam.* Bombay.

Kunte, Mr. M. M., B. A. *Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilization in India.* Bombay.

Macdonald, Rev. K. S., M. A. *The Vedic Religion.* Nisbet 5*s.*

Muir, Dr. John, *Sanskrit Texts.* 5 Vols. Trübner.

Müller, Professor Max, *Ancient Sanskrit Literature, Hibbert Lectures, &c., &c.*

Rajendralala Mitra, Dr. *Indo-Aryans.* 2 Vols. Newman, Calcutta.

Weber, Professor, *History of Indian Literature.* Trübner.

Whitney, Professor. *Oriental and Linguistic Studies.* Scribner.

Wilson, Professor H. H. *Translation of the Rig-Veda Sanhita.* Allen.

Wilson, Rev. Dr. J. *India Three Thousand Years Ago.* Bombay.

There are numerous short extracts, generally abridged or slightly altered, which are not acknowledged. Most of the above works are somewhat expensive. *The Vedic Religion,* by the Rev. K. S. Macdonald, is comparatively cheap, and contains much valuable information. It may be obtained at the Bible and Tract House, Chowringhee, Calcutta, price Rs. 2¼.

Students, well acquainted with Sanskrit, should study the Vedas

in the original. It must be acknowledged that at present, it is very difficult, to get access to them. The new edition of the Rig-Veda with Sayana's commentary, will help to remove this obstacle. Still, the translations give a fair idea of the contents.

The reader is earnestly invited to investigate the subject for himself, and consider how far the Vedic hymns and Brahmanas meet the wants of the soul. The concluding appeal of the late Rev. Dr. Krishna Mohun Banerjea deserves special attention.

J. MURDOCH.

MADRAS, *April,* 1888.

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RELIGIOUS REFORM.

PART III.

VEDIC HINDUISM.

INTRODUCTION.

In the series of *Papers on Religious Reform*, Part I. treats of POPULAR HINDUISM. This was defined to be the religion of the Epic Poems, Puranas, Tantras, and aboriginal Cults. Part II., PHILOSOPHIC HINDUISM, investigates the systems unfolded in the Upanishads, the Darsanas, or Schools of Philosophy, and the Bhagavad Gita.

Part III., VEDIC HINDUISM, takes up the most ancient form of the religion, contained in the Vedas and Brahmanas.

Though considered separately, it has been mentioned that the different systems blend into each other.

The Vedas the highest Hindu authorities.—The Hindu sacred books are divided into two great classes, called *Sruti* and *Smriti*. *Sruti*, which means hearing, denotes direct revelation; *Smriti*, recollection, includes the sacred books which are admitted to have been composed by human authors.

Professor Max Müller thus shows the estimation in which the Vedas are held:—

"According to the orthodox views of Indian theologians, not a single line of the Veda was the work of human authors. The whole Veda is in some way or other the work of the Deity; and even those who received the revelation, or, as they express it, those who saw it, were not supposed to be ordinary mortals, but beings raised above the level of common humanity, and less liable therefore to error in the reception of revealed truth. . . . The human element, called *paurusheyatva* in Sanskrit, is drawn out of every corner or hiding-place, and as the Veda is held to have existed in the mind of the Deity before the beginning of time, every allusion to historical events, of which there are not a few, is explained away with a zeal and ingenuity worthy of a better cause."

"The laws of Manu, according to the Brahmanic theology, are not revelation; they are not *Sruti*, but only *Smriti*. If these laws or any

other work of authority can be proved on any point to be at variance with a single passage of the Veda, their authority is at once overruled."*

The inspiration of the Veda, says Monier Williams, is regarded as so self-convincing, "as to require no proof, and to be entirely beyond the province of reason or argument."

Hindu Ignorance of the Vedas.—Although the Vedas are held in the highest estimation by the Hindus, their real character is almost entirely unknown to them. Very few copies of them existed until they were printed in Europe. It has often been said that if the Vedic Aryans were to reappear and act before their descendants their former life, they would be regarded with horror as a most impure and irreligious people. They killed cows and ate their flesh!

The later books were studied by the learned in India instead of the Vedas themselves. "When Rammohun Roy was in London," says Max Müller, "he saw at the British Museum a young German scholar, Friedrich Rosen, busily engaged in copying MSS. of the Rig-Veda. The Rajah was surprised, but he told Rosen that he ought not to waste his time on the Hymns, but that he should study the text of the Upanishads."†

Publication of the Vedas.—For a long time it was very difficult for European scholars to gain a knowledge of the Veda. "All other Sanskrit MSS. were freely communicated to Englishmen resident in India, but not the MSS. of the Veda. And even in cases where such MSS. had fallen into the hands of barbarians, the Pandits declined to translate them for them. Colebrooke alone seems to have overcome all these difficulties, and his Essays 'On the Vedas, or the Sacred Writings of the Hindus,' though published in 1805, are still extremely valuable."

Rosen published a specimen of the Hymns of the Rig-Veda in 1830. He died soon after, and only the first book of the Rig-Veda, translated into Latin, was finished by him, and published after his death in 1838.

In 1845 Max Müller was in Paris copying the text of the Rig-Veda with the commentary of Sayana Acharya. A year or two later, he was authorised by the East India Company to bring out an edition of both at its expense. The first Volume appeared in 1849. The editing occupied about twenty years. The cost of a new edition is to be borne by the Maharaja of Vizianagram.

The text of the Rig-Veda, in Roman character, was printed in Berlin in 1861.

An English translation of the Rig-Veda, based on the commentary of Sayana, was prepared by the late Professor Wilson.

The Rev. K. S. Macdonald mentions Shankar Pundit's *Vedarthayatna*, an English and Marathi translation with notes and com-

* *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I. † Max Müller, *Biographical Essays*, p. 39.

mentaries. Four volumes, of upwards of 900 pages each, containing 275 hymns, have appeared. A Bengali translation, by Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt, has lately been completed.

Dr. John Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, in five volumes, give many quotations classified under various heads. This is a most valuable work, which will be largely used in the following compilation. The text of the other Vedas has been published either in Europe or in India.

NAME AND DIVISIONS OF THE VEDA.

VEDA is from the Sanskrit *vid*, know, kindred with the Latin *vid*, and the English *to wit*. In its general sense it is sometimes applied by the Brahmans to the whole body of their most ancient sacred literature. More strictly, it denotes four collections of hymns which are respectively known by the names of Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, and Atharva-Veda. They are supposed to contain *the* science, as teaching that knowledge which, of all others, is best worth acquiring.

"The general form of the Vedas is that of lyric poetry. They contain the songs in which the first ancestors of the Hindu people, at the very dawn of their existence as a separate nation, while they were still only on the threshold of the great country which they were afterwards to fill with their civilization, praised the gods, extolled heroic deeds, and sung of other matters which kindled their poetical fervour."*

Metres.—Great importance is attached to the Metres used. Dr. Haug says :—

"The power and significance of the Hotri-priests at a sacrifice consists in their being the masters of the sacred word, which is frequently personified by *Vach*, *i. e.* Speech, who is identical with Sarasvati, the goddess of learning in the later Hindu Pantheon. Speech has, according to the opinion of the earliest divines, the power of vivifying and killing. The sacred words pronounced by the Hotar effect, by dint of the innate power of Vach, the spiritual birth of the sacrificer, form his body, raise him up to heaven, connect him with the prototypes of those things which he wishes to obtain (such as children, cattle, &c.,) and make him attain to his full life term, which is a hundred years; but they are at the same time a weapon by means of which the sacrificer's enemies, or he himself (if the Hotar have any evil designs against him) can be killed, and all evil consequences of sin (this is termed *papman*) be destroyed. The power and effect of Speech as regards the obtaining of any particular thing wished for, mainly lies in the form in which it is uttered. Thence the great importance of the metres, and the choice of words and terms. Each metre is the invisible master of something obtainable in this world ;

* Whitney's *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, Vol. I., p. 5.

it is as it were, its exponent, and ideal. This great significance of the metrical speech is derived from the number of syllables of which it consists; for each thing has (just as in the Pythagorean system) a certain numerical proportion. The Gayatri metre, which consists of three times eight syllables, is the most sacred, and is the proper metre for Agni, the god of fire, and chaplain of the gods. It expresses the idea of Brahma: therefore the sacrificer must use it when he wishes anything closely connected with Brahma, such as acquirement of sacred knowledge, and the thorough understanding of all problems of theology. The Trishtubh, which consists of four times eleven syllables, expresses the idea of strength and royal power; thence it is the proper metre by which Indra, the king of the gods, is to be invoked. Any one wishing to obtain strength and royal power, principally a Kshattriya, must use it. A variety of it, the Ushnih metre of 28 syllables, is to be employed by a sacrificer who aspires for longevity, for 28 is the symbol of life. The Jagati, a metre of 48 syllables, expresses the idea of cattle. Any one who wishes for wealth in cattle, must use it. The same idea (or that of the sacrifice) is expressed by the Pañkti metres (five times eight syllables). The Brihati, which consists of 36 syllables, is to be used when a sacrificer is aspiring to fame and renown; for this metre is the exponent of those ideas. The Anushtubh metre, of 32 syllables, is the symbol of the celestial world; thence a candidate for a place in heaven has to use it. The Viraj, of 30 syllables, is food and satisfaction; thence one who wishes for plenty of food, must employ it."*

One or two illustrative quotations are given below from the Aitareya Brahmana:

"He who wishes for long life, should use two verses in the *Ushnih* metre; for Ushnih is life. He who having such a knowledge uses two Ushnihs arrives at his full age (*i. e.*, 100 years).

"He who desires heaven should use two *Anushtubhs*. There are 64 syllables in two Anushtubhs. Each of these three worlds (earth, air, and sky) contains 21 places, one rising above the other (just as the steps of a ladder). By 21 steps he ascends to each of these worlds severally; by taking the sixty-fourth step he stands firm in the celestial world. He who having such a knowledge uses two Anushtubhs gains a footing (in the celestial world).

"He who desires strength should use two Trishtubhs. Trishtubh is strength, vigour, and sharpness of senses. He who knowing this, uses two Trishtubhs, becomes vigorous, endowed with sharp senses and strong.

"He who desires cattle should use two Jagatis. Cattle are Jagati like. He who knowing this uses two Jagatis, becomes rich in cattle."†

"The metres," says Max Müller, "were originally connected with dancing and music. The names for metre in general confirm this. *Chhandas*, metre, denotes stepping; *vritta*, metre from *vrit*,

* Introduction to the Aitareya Brahmana, pp. 75-77.

† Haug's Translation, pp. 12, 13.

to turn, meant originally the last three or four steps of a dancing movement, to turn, the *versus*, which determined the whole character of a dance and of a metre. *Trishtubh*, the name of a common metre in the Veda, meant three steps, because its turn, its vritta, or *versus*, consisted of three steps, one short and two long.

"The laws regulating the succession of long and short syllables within the limits of the hemistich are in general anything but strict; all that is aimed at seems to be to give the whole a kind of rhythmical flow, or general metrical movement, on which the four last syllables shall stamp the peculiar character; their quantity is much more definitely established, yet even among them exceptional irregularities are by no means rare."

Language.—The language of the Vedas is an older dialect, varying very considerably, both in its grammatical and lexical character, from the classical Sanskrit. Its grammatical peculiarities run through all departments. It is untrammeled by the rules by which Sanskrit after it passed into oblivion as a vernacular dialect was forced, as it were, into a mould of regularity by long grammatical treatment, and received a development which is in some respects foreign and unnatural. The dissimilarity between the two in respect of the stock of words of which each is made up is not less marked. Not single words alone, but whole classes of derivatives and roots, which the Veda exhibits in familiar use, are wholly wanting, or have left but faint traces in the classical dialect.*

Subdivisions.—The hymns are called *Mantras* or *Suktas*. The entire number form the *Sanhita* (or *Samhita*) collection. They are arranged in two methods. One divides them amongst eight *Khandas* (portions), or *Astakas* (eighths), each of which is again subdivided into eight *Adhyayas*, lectures. The other plan classes the *Suktas* under ten *Mandalas*, circles, subdivided into rather more than a hundred *Anuvakas*, or sub-sections. A further subdivision of the *Suktas* into *Vargas*, or paragraphs of about five stanzas each, is common to both classifications.†

Rig-Veda.—The name means the Veda of hymns of praise. *Rich*, which before the initial soft letter of Veda, is changed into *Rig*, is derived from a root which in Sanskrit means to celebrate. When standing by itself, *rich* becomes *rik*.

The Rig-Veda is divided into ten Mandalas or books. As early as about 600 B. C. every verse, every word, every syllable had been carefully counted. The number of verses varies from 10,402 to 10,622; that of the *padas*, or words, is 153,826; that of the syllables, 432,000.

The ten books form separate collections, each belonging to one of the ancient families of India. The first seven books resemble each

*Abridged from Whitney. †Professor Wilson's Introduction, p. xiv.

other in character and arrangement. They begin with hymns addressed to Agni, and these hymns, with the exception of the tenth Mandala, are invariably followed by hymns addressed to Indra. After the hymns addressed to these two deities we generally meet with hymns addressed to the Visva Devah, or 'all the gods.' This shows that the Mandalas do not represent collections made independently by different families; but collections carried out simultaneously in different localities under the supervision of one central authority.

The eighth Mandala contains 92 hymns, assigned to a great number of different authors; hymns of the same author do not always stand together, and of any internal arrangement according to divinities there is no trace. The ninth Mandala contains 114 hymns addressed to the Soma, the intoxicating drink prepared from the Soma plant. The tenth Mandala wears the appearance of being a later appendage to the collection. The first half is arranged upon no apparent system; the second commences with the longer hymns and diminishes their length regularly to the close. Many of the hymns do not differ from the mass of those found in the earlier books, but others are evidently of a later date and conceived in another spirit.

The Rig-Veda is an historical collection intended to preserve from further corruption those ancient songs which the Aryans had brought with them, as their most precious possession, from the earliest seats of the race.

In the eyes of the historical student the Rig-Veda is the Veda *par excellence*. The other Vedas contain chiefly extracts from the Rig-Veda, together with sacrificial formulas, charms, and incantations. The Rig-Veda contains all that had been saved of the ancient, sacred, and popular poetry, a collection made for its own sake, and not for the sake of any sacrificial performances.

The priests who specially recited the verses of the Rig-Veda were called Hotris.

YAJUR-VEDA.—The name comes from *Yaj*, sacrifice. It contains the formulas and verses to be muttered by the priests and their assistants who had chiefly to prepare the sacrificial ground, to dress the altar, slay the victims, and pour out the libations. The first sentences in one of the two divisions were to be uttered by the priest as he cut from a particular tree a switch with which to drive away the calves from the cows whose milk was to furnish the material of the offering.

There are two principal texts of the Yajur-Veda, called respectively the White and the Black, or the Vajasaneyi and Taittiriya Sanhitas. The Vishnu Purana gives the following explanation of their names: Vaisampayana, a pupil of the great Vyasa, was the original teacher of the Black Yajur-Veda. Yajnavalkya, one of his disciples, having displeased him, was called upon by his master to

part with the knowledge which he had acquired from him. He forthwith vomited the Yajur-Veda. The other disciples of Vaisampayana, assuming the form of partridges (tittiri), picked up from the ground its several dirtied texts. From this circumstance it received the name of *Taittiriya Krishna Yajur-Veda.* A more rational explanation is that Vaisampayana taught it to Yaska, who taught it to Tittiri, who also became a teacher. Yajnavalkya afterwards, by the performance of severe penances, induced the Sun to impart to him those Yajur texts which his master had not possessed. The Sun then assumed the form of a horse (Vajin), and communicated to him the desired texts. Hence the Sanhita was called Vajasaneyi, and also White (or bright) because it was revealed by the Sun.

Another explanation of the names is that the Vajasaneyins called their collection the White on account of its clear arrangement, while they applied the term Black, for the opposite reason, to the texts of the older school.

The Black and White Yajus differ in their arrangement. In the former the sacrificial formulas are for the most part immediately followed by their explanation; in the latter, they are entirely separated from one another.

A large portion of the materials of the Yajur-Veda is derived from the Rig-Veda, to about the half of which it is equal in both forms united. But it contains prose passages which are new.

As the manual of the priesthood, it became the great subject of study, and it has a great number of different Sukhas or Schools. The priests who used it were called *Adhwaryus,* offerers.

The text of both divisions has been printed either in India or in the West.

SAMA-VEDA.—This is wholly metrical. It contains 1549 verses, only 78 of which have not been traced to the Rig-Veda. The verses have been selected and arranged for the purpose of being chanted at the sacrifices of which the intoxicating juice of the Soma plant was the chief ingredient. Many of the invocations are addressed to Soma, some to Agni, and some to Indra. There are special song books directing the manner in which they were to be intoned. The priests who recited the Sama-Veda were called Udgatris, chanters.

The text has been printed, and there is an English translation by Doctor Stevenson.

ATHARVA-VEDA.—This Veda is of later origin than the others. Manu speaks of only the Three Vedas. One-sixth of the work is in prose, and about one-sixth of the hymns is found in the Rig-Veda. The number of the hymns is about 760, and of the verses about 6,000. Professor Whitney, who edited the work in America, thus describes its character :—

" In the earlier hymns of the other Vedas the gods are approached with

reverential awe indeed, but with love and confidence also; the demons, embraced under the general name *rakshas*, are objects of horror whom the gods ward off and destroy: the divinities of the Atharvan are regarded rather with a kind of cringing fear, as powers whose wrath is to be deprecated, and whose favour curried for. It knows a whole host of imps hobgoblins, and addresses itself to them directly, offering them homage to induce them to abstain from doing harm. The *mantra* or prayer, which in the older Veda is the instrument of devotion, is here rather the tool of superstition; it wrings from the unwilling hands of the gods the favours which of old their good-will to men induced them to grant, or by simple magical power obtains the fulfilment of the utterer's wishes. The most prominent characteristic of the Atharva is the multitude of incantations which it contains. These are pronounced either by the person who is himself to be benefited, or, more often, by the sorcerer for him, and they are directed to the procuring of the greatest variety of desirable ends. Most frequently, perhaps, long life or recovery from grievous sickness, is the object sought; in that case a talisman, such as a necklace, is sometimes given, or, in numerous instances some plant endowed with marvellous virtues is to be the immediate means of the cure; further, the attainment of wealth or power is aimed at, the downfall of enemies, success in love or in play, the removal of petty pests, and so on, even down to the growth of hair on a bald pate. Hymns of a speculative character are not wanting, yet their number is not so great as might naturally be expected.

"The Atharva Veda forms an intermediate step rather to the gross idolatries and superstitions of the ignorant mass, than to the sublimated pantheism of the Brahmans."*

Brahmanas.

The Brahmanas, 'belonging to Brahmans,' are that part of the Veda which is intended for the guidance of Brahmans in the use of the hymns of the Mantra, and therefore of later production; but the Brahmanas, equally with the Mantra, are held to be *Sruti*, revealed word. They contain the details of the Vedic ceremonies, with long explanations of their origin and meaning; they give instructions as to the use of particular verses and metres; and they abound with curious legends, human and divine, in illustration. Though their professed object is to teach the sacrifice, they allow a much larger space to dogmatical, exegetical, mystical, and philosophical speculations than to the ceremonial itself.

Each of the Sanhitas has its Brahmanas, and these generally maintain the essential character of the Veda to which they belong. Thus the Brahmanas of the Rik are specially devoted to the duties of the Hotri, who recites the verses, those of the Yajur to the performance of the sacrifices by the Adhwaryu, and those of the Saman to the chanting by the Udgatri. The Rik has the Aitareya Brahmana,

* *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, pp. 20-21.

which is perhaps the oldest and may date as far back as the seventh century B. C. It has another, called Kaushitaki. The Black Yajur Veda has the Taittiriya Brahmana, and the White Yajur Veda has the Satapatha Brahmana, one of the most important of all the Brahmanas. The Sama Veda has eight Brahmanas, of which one of the best known is the Tandya. The Atharva has only one, the Gopatha Brahmana. "The Brahmanas," says Professor Eggeling, "form our chief, if not our only, source of information regarding one of the most important periods in the social and mental development of India. They are also of the highest importance as the only genuine prose works which the Sanskrit as a popular language has produced."

The Aranyakas and Upanishads.

Aranyaka means 'belonging to the forest.' The Aranyakas are attached to the Brahmanas, and are intended for study in the forest by Brahmans who have retired from the world. They expound the mystical sense of the ceremonies, discuss the nature of God, &c. There are four of them extant: 1. Brihad; 2. Taittiriya; 3. Aitareya; and 4. Kaushitaki Aranyaka. The Aranyakas are closely connected with the Upanishads, and the names are occasionally used interchangeably. Thus the Brihad is called indifferently Brihad Aranyaka or Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad: it is attached to the Satapatha Brahmana. The Aitareya Upanishad is a part of the Aitareya Brahmana.

Max Müller says:—

"We cannot hesitate for a moment to consider the Aranyaka as an enlargement upon the Brahmana. The chief interest which the Aranyakas possess at the present moment consists in their philosophy. The philosophical chapters well known under the name of Upanishads are almost the only portion of Vedic literature which is extensively read to this day. They contain, or are supposed to contain, the highest authority on which the various systems of philosophy in India rest. Not only the Vedanta philosopher, who by his very name, professes his faith in the ends and objects of the Veda, but the Sankhya, the Vaiseshika, the Nyaya, and Yoga philosophers, all pretend to find in the Upanishads some warranty for their tenets, however antagonistic in their bearing. The same applies to the numerous sects that have existed and still exist in India. Their founders, if they have any pretensions to orthodoxy, invariably appeal to some passage of the Upanishads in order to substantiate their own reasonings. Now it is true that in the Upanishads themselves there is so much freedom and breadth of thought that is not difficult to find in them some authority for almost any shade of philosophical opinion."*

Ancient Sanskrit Literature, pp. 316, 317.

The Sutras.

The Sutra period forms the connecting link between the Vedic and the later Sanskrit. *Sutra* means string; and all the works written in this style, on subjects the most various, are nothing but one uninterrupted string of short sentences, twisted together into the most concise forms. Shortness is the great object of this style of composition, and it is a proverbial saying (taken from the Mahabhashya) amongst the Pandits, that an author rejoiceth in the economising of half a short vowel as much as in the birth of a son. "Every doctrine thus propounded, whether grammar, metre, law, or philosophy, is reduced to a mere skeleton." It is impossible to understand them without the commentary by which these works are usually accompanied.

"*The* Sutras" generally signify those which are connected with the Vedas, viz., the Kalpa Sutras, relating to ritual; the Grihya Sutras, to domestic rites; and the Samayacharika Sutras, to conventional usages.

The Sutras, although based upon the Sruti, are yet avowedly composed by human authors. Whenever they appear to be in contradiction with the Sruti, their authority is at once overruled.

The Vedas the Main Point of Consideration.

Although the different divisions of Vedic literature have been briefly described, attention will be chiefly confined to the Vedas strictly so called. The Upanishads have been considered under the head of Philosophic Hinduism.

Hindu Accounts of the Origin of the Vedas.

The common belief in India is that the Vedas are eternal. They existed in the mind of the Deity before the beginning of time. At the commencement of each Kalpa, Brahm reveals them to Brahma, and they issue from his four mouths. They are taught by Brahma to the Rishis whose names they bear.

The different opinions entertained regarding the origin of the Vedas will now be considered. The writings of Dr. John Muir furnish a storehouse of information on the subject. He gives the passages both in Sanskrit and in English translations. The Third Volume of his *Sanskrit Texts* treats of "The Vedas, Opinions of their Authors, and of later Indian writers of their Origin, Inspiration, and Authority." Only a few quotations can be made.

Opinions may be classed under two heads.

1. Opinions expressed in the Hindu Sacred Books.

1. *The Vedas sprung from the mystical sacrifice of Purusha.*

The hymn Purusha Sukta of the Rig-Veda (x. 90) contains the following:—

तस्माद् यज्ञात् सर्वहुतः ऋचः सामानि जज्ञिरे।
छन्दांसि जज्ञिरे तस्माद् यजुस् तस्माद्
अजायत।

"From that universal sacrifice sprung the Rich and Saman verses: the metres sprung from it: from it the Yajush arose."

2. *The Vedas were cut or scraped off from Skambha as being his hair and his mouth.*

The Atharva-Veda (x. 7, 20) says,

यस्माद् ऋचो अपातक्षन् यजुर् यस्माद् अपाकषन्।
सामानि यस्य लोमानि अथर्वाङ्गिरसो मुखम्।
स्कम्भं तं ब्रूहि कतमः स्विद् एव सः।

"Declare who is that Skambha (the Supporting-Principle) from whom they cut off the Rich verses; from whom they scraped off the Yajush, of whom the Saman verses are the hairs, and the verses of Atharva and Angiras the mouth."

3. *The Vedas sprung from Indra, and he sprung from them.*

The Atharva-Veda (xiii. 4, 38) says,

स वै ऋग्भ्यो अजायत तस्माद् ऋचो अजायन्त।

"Indra sprang from the Rich verses; the Rich verses sprung from him."

4. *The Vedas sprung from Time.*

Atharva-Veda (xix. 54, 3.)

कालाद् ऋचः समभवन् यजुः कालाद् अजायत।

"From Time the Rich verses sprung; the Yajush sprung from Time."

5. *The Vedas sprung from the leavings of Sacrifice.*

Atharva-Veda (xi. 7, 24.)

ऋचः सामानि छन्दांसि पुराणं यजुषा सह।
उच्छिष्टाज् जज्ञिरे सर्वे दिवि देवाः दिवि
श्रिताः।

"From the leavings of the sacrifice sprung the Rich and Saman verses, the metres, the Purana with the Yajush, and all the gods who dwell in the sky."

6. *The Vedas were produced from Agni, Vayu and Surya.*

The Chhandogya Upanishad contains the following:

प्रजापतिर् लोकान् अभ्यतपत् । तेषां तप्यमानानां रसान् प्राबृहद् अग्निम् पृथिव्याः वायुम् अन्तरिक्षाद् आदित्यं दिवः । स एतास् तिस्रो देवताः अभ्यतपत् । तासां तप्यमानानां रसान् प्राबृहद् अग्नेर् ऋचो वायोर् यजूंषि साम आदित्यात् । स एतां त्रयीं विद्याम् अभ्यतपत् । तस्यास् तप्यमानायाः रसान् प्राबृहद् भूर् इति ऋग्भ्यो भुवर् इति यजुर्भ्यः स्वर् इति सामभ्यः ।

"Prajapati infused warmth into the worlds, and from them so heated he drew forth their essences, viz. Agni (fire) from the earth, Vayu (wind) from the air, and Surya (the sun) from the sky. He infused warmth into these three deities, and from them so heated he drew forth their essences,—from Agni the Rich verses, from Vayu the Yajush verses, and from Surya the Saman verses. He then infused "heat into this triple science and from it so heated he drew forth its essences,—from Rich verses the syllable *bhuh*, from Yajush verses, *bhuvah*, and from Saman verses *svar*."

Manu assigns to them the same origin.

7. *The Vedas are the breathings of the Great Being.*

Satapatha Brahmana (xiv. 5, 4, 10):

स यथा आर्द्रेधाग्नेर् अभ्याहितात् प्रत्यग् धूमाः विनिश्चरन्ति एवं वै अरे ऽस्य महतो भूतस्य निश्वसितम् एतद् यद् ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदो ऽथर्वाङ्गिरसः इतिहासः पुराणं विद्या उपनिषदः श्लोकाः सूत्राण्य् अनुव्याख्यानानि व्याख्यानानि अस्यैव एतानि सर्वाणि निश्वसितानि ।

"As from a fire made of moist wood various modifications of smoke proceed, so is the breathing of this great Being the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda, the Atharvangirases, the Itihasas, Puranas, Science, the Upanishads, Slokas, aphorisms, comments of different kinds—all these are his breathings."

8. *The Vedas were dug by the gods out of the Mind-Ocean.*
Satapatha Brahmana (vii. 5, 2, 52)

"समुद्रे त्वा सदने सादयामि" इति । मनो वै समुद्रः । मनसो वै समुद्राद् वाचा ऽभ्या देवास् त्रयीं विद्यां निरखनन् ।

"Mind is the Ocean. From the mind-ocean, with speech for a shovel, the gods dug out the triple Vedic science."

9. *The Vedas are the hair of Prajapati's beard.*
Taittiriya Brahmana, (iii. 39, 1).

प्रजापतेर् वै एतानि श्मश्रूणि यद् वेदः ।

10. *Vach (speech) is the mother of the Vedas.*
Taittiriya Brahmana (ii. 8, 85).

वाग् अक्षरं प्रथमजा ऋतस्य वेदानां माता अमृतस्य नाभिः ।

"Vach is an imperishable thing and the first-born of the ceremonial, the mother of the Vedas, and the centre-point of immortality."

11. *The Vedas issued from the mouth of Brahma.*
The Bhagavata Purana (iii. 12, 34, and 37,) says:

कदाचिद् ध्यायतः स्रष्टुर् वेदाः आसंश् चतुर्मुखात् । कथं सृज्याम्य् अहं लोकान् समवेतान् यथापुरा । ... .ऋग् यजुस् सामाथर्वाख्यान् वेदान् पूर्वादिभिर् मुखैः । शस्त्रम् इज्यां स्तुतिस्तोमं प्रायश्चित्तं व्यधात् क्रमात् ।

"Once the Vedas sprang from the four-faced Creator, as he was meditating how shall I create the aggregate worlds as before? . . . He formed from his eastern and other mouths the Vedas called Rich,

Yajush, Saman and Atharvan, together with praise, sacrifice, hymns, and expiation."

The Vishnu Purana gives the same explanation.

12. *The Vedas were produced from the Gayatri.*

Harivamsa, verse 11516.

ततो ऽसृजद् वै त्रिपदां गायत्रीं वेदमातरम् ।

अकरोच् चैव चतुरो वेदान् गायत्रिसम्भवान् ।

After framing the world, Brahma "next created the Gayatri of three lines, mother of the Vedas, and also the four Vedas which sprang from the Gayatri."

13. *Sarasvati was the mother of the Vedas.*

Mahabharata, Santi-parva, verses 12, 920.

वेदानां मातरं पश्य मत्स्थां देवीं सरस्वतीम् ।

"Behold Sarasvati, mother of the Vedas, abiding in me."

14. *The Vedas are Vishnu.*

Vishnu Purana, iii. 3, 19:

स ऋङ्मयः साममयः स चात्मा स यजुर्मयः ।

ऋग् यजुः साम सारात्मा स एवात्मा शरीरिणाम् ।

"He is composed of the Rich, of the Saman, of the Yajush; he is the soul, consisting of the essence of the Rich, Yajush and Saman, he is the soul of embodied spirits."

2. Opinions of the Rishis with regard to the origin of the Vedic Hymns.

The names of the authors of each hymn are preserved in the *Anukramani*, or explanatory table of contents, which has been handed down with the Veda itself, and of which the authority is unquestioned. The names of the fathers of the writers are often given as well as their own.

In later times when the Vedas were claimed to be eternal, it was pretended that these writers were only the Rishis by whom the hymns "were seen," or to whom they were communicated by Brahma. Of this there is not the slightest proof.

The Rishis claim to have written the hymns themselves, just as a carpenter makes a car, &c.

In some hymns they express no consciousness whatever of deriving assistance from any supernatural source.

Rig-Veda, i. 47, 2.

.....कण्वासो वाम् ब्रह्म कृण्वन्ति अध्वरे तेषां
सुश्रुणुतं हवम् ।

"The Kanvas make a prayer to you : hear well their invocation."

एवा ते हरियोजन्द् सुवृक्ति इन्द्र ब्रह्माणि गोतमासः
अक्रन् ।

i. 64, 61. "Thus O Indra, yoker of steeds, have the Gotamas made hymns for thee efficaciously."

एतानि वाम् अश्विना वर्धनानि ब्रह्मस्तोमं गृतसम-
दासः अक्रन् ।

ii. 39, 8. "These magnifying prayers, [this] hymn, O Aśvins, the Gritsamadas have *made* for you."

.....अध प्रियं धूषम् इन्द्राय मन्म ब्रह्मकृतो
बृहदुक्थाद् अवाचि ।

x. 54, 6. "An acceptable and honorific hymn has been uttered to Indra by Vrihaduktha, maker of hymns."

सनायते गोतमः इन्द्र नव्यम् अतक्षद् ब्रह्महरि-
योजनाय इत्यादि ।

i. 62, 13. "Nodhas, descendant of Gotama, fashioned this new hymn for [thee] Indra."

एतं ते स्तोमं तुविजातविप्रो रथं न धीरः स्वपा
अतक्षम् ।

v. 2, 11. "I, a sage, have fabricated this hymn for thee, O powerful [deity], as a skilful workman fashions a car."

अस्मै इद् उ स्तोमं संहिनोमि रथं न तष्टा इव
इत्यादि ।

i. 61, 4. "To him (Indra) I send forth a hymn, as a carpenter a car."

The above are only specimens of 57 extracts given by Dr. Muir.

Some hymns ask for or acknowledge divine assistance just as poets of all nations often do. One poet says (Rig-Veda vi. 47, 10):

इन्द्र मृळ मह्यं जीवातुम् दृक्ष चोदाय धियम्
अयसो न धाराम्। यत् किञ्च अहं त्वायुर् इदं
वदामि तज् जुषस्व कृधि मा देववन्तम्।

"O god (Indra), have mercy, give me my daily bread; sharpen my mind, like the edge of an iron instrument. Whatever I now may utter, longing for thee, do thou accept it; give me divine protection."

स प्रत्नथा कविवृधा: इन्द्रो वाकस्य वक्षणि:।

viii. 52, 4. "Indra was of old the promoter of the poet, and the augmenter of the song."

Instead of the hymns being eternal, or of infinite age, many of them are spoken of as *new*, while others are of ancient date. The Rishis entertained the idea that the gods would be more highly gratified if their praises were celebrated in new, and perhaps more elaborate and beautiful compositions, than if older and possibly ruder, prayers had been repeated.

Dr. Muir gives 52 quotations under this head. Only a few need be given:

स न: स्तवान: आभर् गायत्रेण नवीयसा रयिं वीर-
वतीम् इषम्।

R. V. i. 12, 11. "Glorified by our newest hymn, do thou bring to us wealth and food with progeny."

तान् पूर्वया निविदा हुमहे वयम् भगम् मित्रम्
अदितिं दक्षम् अस्रिधम् इत्यादि।

i. 89, 3. "We invoke with an ancient hymn Bhaga, Mitra, &c.

य: पूर्वयाभिर् उत नूतनाभिर् गीर्भिर् वावृधे गिण-
ताम् ऋषीनाम्।

vi. 44, 13. "He (Indra) who grew though the ancient and modern hymns of lauding Rishis."

आ सखायः सुवर्दुघाम् धेनुम् अजध्वम् उपनव्य
वचः ।

vi. 48, 11. "Friends, drive hither the milch cow with a new hymn."

नु नव्यसे नवीयसे सूक्ताय साधय पथः प्रत्नवद्
रोचय रुचः ।

ix. 9, 8. "Prepare (O Soma) the paths for our newest, most recent hymn; and, as of old, cause the lights to shine."

Panini openly states the fact that there are old and new Brahmanas; whereas, according to the doctrine of later times, the Brahmanas are neither old nor new, but eternal and of divine origin. He rests his opinion as to the difference of dates on the evidence of language.

One argument for the eternity of the Vedas is that sound is eternal. To any person of common sense the simple statement of this proof, is its refutation. The same argument would prove every book to be eternal.

3. Internal Evidence of the Authorship of the Vedas.—When a deed is produced in court which is affirmed to have been written many hundred years ago, there are often means of judging from the document itself as to its age. Suppose, for example, it contained the names of Warren Hastings or Hyder Ali, it could at once be known that it could not be older than last century. If it were asserted that these referred to other persons of the same name who lived long before or that they were prophecies, the conclusion would be that it was an attempt to support one falsehood by another. If the Vedas are eternal, why are the names of so many persons mentioned in them who lived in comparatively recent times?

"The hymns of the Rig-Veda themselves supply us with numerous data by which we can judge of the circumstances to which they owed their origin, and of the manner in which they were created. They afford us very distinct indications of the locality in which they were composed. The Indus is the great river; the Ganges is only twice mentioned; the Sarasvati was the eastern boundary.

"The hymns show us the Aryan tribes living in a state of warfare with surrounding enemies (some of them, probably, alien in race and language), and gradually, as we may infer, forcing their way onward to the east and south. They supply us with numerous specimens of the particular sorts of prayers, viz., for protection and victory, which men so circumstanced would naturally address to the gods whom they worshipped,

as well as of the more common supplications which men in general offer up for the various blessings which constitute the sum of human welfare."*

The following hymn to Indra, asking him to destroy the Dasyus, the aborigines, and give food and a camp with running water, bears internal evidence that it was composed at a time when the Aryans were invading India.

1. Glad thee: thy glory hath been quaffed, lord of bay steeds, as 'twill the bowl's enlivening mead.
   For thee the strong there is strong drink, mighty, with countless powers to win.
2. Let our strong drink, most excellent, exhilarating, come to thee,
   Victorious, Indra! bringing gain, immortal, conquering in fight.
3. Thou, hero, winner of the spoil, urgest to speed the car of man.
   Burn, like a vessel with the flame, the lawless Dasyu, conqueror!
4. Empowered by thine own might, O sage, thou stolest Surya's chariot wheel.
   Thou barest Kutra with the steed of Wind to Sushna at his death.
5. Most mighty is thy rapturous joy, most splendid is thine active power,
   Wherewith, foe-slaying, sending bliss, thou art supreme in gaining steeds.
6. As thou, O Indra, to the ancient singers wast ever joy, as water to the thirsty,
   So unto thee I sing this invocation. May we find food, and camp with running water.†

4. Conclusion as to the Authorship of the Vedas.

Quotations have been given from Hindu sacred books containing fourteen different opinions as to the origin of the Vedas. In opposition to these, the authorship of many of the hymns is distinctly claimed by persons whose names are given. The hymns themselves show that they were written when the Aryans were entering India, when they had not advanced much beyond the border, and were engaged in constant wars with the aborigines.

Victory in battle was often ascribed to the virtue of some hymn. Thus in the Rig-Veda, vii. 33, 3, "Did not Indra preserve Sudras in the battle of the ten kings through your prayer, O Vasishthas?"

Such hymns were considered unfailing spells, and became the sacred war-songs of a whole tribe. They were handed down from father to son as the most valuable heirloom.

The legitimate conclusion is that the Vedic hymns were written by the authors whose names they bear, and that they are not eternal.

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* Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. III, 217, 218.

† Book I, Hymn 175. Translated by R. T. H. Griffith, formerly Principal of Benares College.

The Time when the Vedas were composed.

The Cambridge Professor of Sanskrit says, "The very word history has no corresponding Indian expression. From the very earliest ages down to the present time, the Hindu mind seems never to have conceived such an idea as an authentic record of past facts based on evidence."

Hindu writers framed their chronology, like their geography and astronomy, out of their own heads. It was as easy to write a crore of years as a century, and the former was the more marvellous.

There is no date in India known with certainty till the time of Chandragupta, about 300 B. C., which was ascertained through the Greeks. The precise time when the Vedas were written cannot, therefore, be known with certainty. Indeed, their composition probably extended over several centuries. Max Müller estimates that they were composed, such as we now have them, about 1500 B. C.* In his *Hibbert Lectures*, (p. 340), he expresses the opinion that the Samhita (collection) was closed about 1000 B. C. The Brahmanas may date from 800 to 600 B. C. The Sutras may range from 600 to 200 B. C.

The Vedas at first handed down by Tradition.

The oldest inscriptions in India are those of Asoka, the Buddhist king, who reigned from 259 to 222 B. C. Nearchus, the admiral of Alexander the Great, who sailed down the Indus (325 B. C.), mentions that the Indians wrote letters on cotton that had been well beaten together, "but that their laws were not written." Writing was used by merchants and others, but not for literary purposes.

The Vedas, for many centuries, were handed down entirely by memory. The Guru recited a portion, and his pupils repeated it after him. There is a reference to this in the hymn about the frogs: "the one repeats the sounds of the other, as a pupil the words of his teacher."

Years were spent in learning the books by rote. Some selected certain books; others different ones; so that in this way, hymns were preserved from generation to generation.

"A Brahman," says Max Müller, "is not only commanded to pass his apprenticeship in the house of his Guru, and to learn from his mouth all that a Brahman is bound to know, but the fiercest imprecations are uttered against all who would presume to acquire their knowledge from written sources. In the Mahabharata we read, 'Those who sell the Vedas, and even those who write them, those also who defile them, they shall go to hell.' Kumarila says, 'That knowledge of the truth is worthless which has been acquired from

* *India, What can it teach us?* p. 53.

the Veda, if the Veda has not been rightly comprehended, if it has been learnt from writing, or been received from a Sudra.'"*

The Brahmans persuaded the people to regard the Vedas with such superstitious awe, that a mere error of pronunciation was supposed to mar their miraculous power.

Professor Whitney thus explains why it was forbidden to write the Vedas:

"It is not very difficult to conjecture a reason why the Brahmans may, while acquainted with letters, have rigorously ignored them, and interdicted their confessed use in connection with the sacred literature. The Brahman priesthood was originally a class only, which grew into a close hereditary caste on the strength, mainly, of their special possession of ancient hymns, and their knowledge of how these were to be employed with due effect in the various offices of religion. The hymns had unquestionably long been handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation, in the custody of certain families or branches of the caste; each family having chiefly in charge the lyrics which its own ancestors had first sung. These were their most treasured possession, the source of their influence and authority. It might, then, naturally be feared that, if committed to the charge of written documents, when writing came to be known and practised among the more cultivated of the people—a class which could not be entirely restricted to the Brahmanic caste—and if suffered to be openly copied and circulated, passed from hand to hand, examined by profane eyes, the sacred texts would become the property of the nation at large, and the Brahmanic monopoly of them would be broken down. If, on the contrary, the old method of oral instruction alone in sacred things were rigidly kept up, if all open and general use of written texts were strictly forbidden, it is clear that the schools of Brahmanic theology would flourish, and remain the sole medium of transmission of the sacred knowledge, and that the doctrines and rites of religion would be kept under the control of the caste."†

The Druids, the ancient British priests, acted exactly in the same way. Cæsar says that some of them spent twenty years in learning a large number of verses by heart, and that they considered it wrong to commit them to writing.

The Vedas were first printed by European Scholars. Some of the editions have already been noticed.

SOCIAL LIFE IN VEDIC TIMES.

The ancestors of the Aryan nations, at a remote period, lived together, probably in the highlands of Central Asia. It was colder than India, for they counted their years by winters. In the Vedic prayers for long life, the worshipper asks for a hundred winters

* *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 502.
† *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, pp. 86, 87.

(*himas*). Like the northern tribes, they laid great stress upon the *ashvamedha*, or horse-sacrifice. Compared with their neighbours, they had a white or fair complexion.

When the Aryans increased in number so that their original home was unable to support them, they emigrated in bands. Some went westward towards the setting sun, and peopled Europe. Others turned their faces eastwards, and advanced towards the valley of the Indus. They marched in a large body, with their families, their servants, their cattle. India was probably entered by the mountain passes near Peshawar. Rivers were forded at conveniently shallow places, or, if deep, they were crossed in boats.

The greater part of India was then covered with forest, with scattered villages and towns belonging to the aboriginal tribes, who were of a dark complexion, and spoke a strange language. The Aryas had the pride of race in an extravagant degree, showing great contempt and hatred of the other nations with whom they came in contact. They called the aborigines the "black skin," and as their noses were not so large as theirs, they were described as "goat-nosed" or "noseless." The aborigines were also called *Dasyus*, a word supposed to mean *enemies*. So many of them were enslaved, that the word *dasa* was afterwards applied to a servant.

Some of the Dasyus were like the Bhils or other wild tribes of India at present; others had a partial civilization. In several of the Vedic hymns the wealth of the Dasyus is mentioned, *e. g.*: "Subdue the might of the Dasa; may we through Indra divide his collected wealth." They had forts and cities. "Indra and Agni, by one effort together ye have shattered 90 forts belonging to the Dasyus." "O Indra, impetuous, thou didst shatter by thy bolt 99 cities for Puru."

The Aryans, as they advanced, gradually established themselves in the forests, fields, and villages of the aborigines. The latter contended as bravely as they could against their invaders. Their black complexion, barbarous habits, rude speech, and savage yells during their night attacks, made the Aryas, speak of them as demons.

The Aryans were the more powerful. The Dasyus were either driven before them or were reduced to slavery. The first great distinction in India was between the white and dark races, the conquerors and the conquered, the freeman and the slave. One of the earliest aboriginal tribes brought under subjection was called Sudras, and the name was extended to the whole race.

The war of invasion lasted for centuries, nor were the aborigines, as a whole, subjugated at any period.

The Indus is the great river of the Vedas; the Ganges is only twice mentioned. By degrees the Aryas spread eastward till they reached the Sarasvati, which was the boundary in Vedic times.

The state of society among the Aryans, as indicated by the hymns, will now be described.

Villages and Towns.—The invaders gradually settled in the Panjab. Villages were placed near watercourses, in positions favourable for pasturage and agriculture. The villages in some cases grew into towns, and these into cities. The houses in general, as at present, were built of mud. Some were of so frail a construction that they trembled as the Maruts passed, that is, when the fierce winds blew. In tracts bordering on the hills, where stone was abundant, that material was sometimes used. Indra is said to have demolished a hundred cities of stone. Iron cities or fortifications are mentioned.

Rajas and Headmen.—The country occupied by the Aryas was people by various tribes, and divided unto numerous principalities. Many names of kings occur in the Rig-Veda. Their meetings, whether friendly or hostile, are mentioned. Indra is represented as living in the society of his wives like a king. When Mitra is said to occupy a great palace with a thousand pillars and a thousand gates, we may suppose that this is but an exaggerated description of a royal residence such as the poet had seen. The kings or chiefs did not acknowledge one superior. Hence sometimes an Aryan leader fought with an Aryan leader.

Mention is made of *purpati*, lords of cities, and *gramani*, heads of villages.

Domestic Relations.—In Vedic times the marriage of one wife seems to have been the rule. In some cases, from the *Svayamvara* ceremony, the bride could choose her husband. This shows that early marriage did not prevail. There was also more or less polygamy. A Rishi is said to have married in one day ten damsels. Two gods, the Ashvins, together took one wife. "Thus," says Dr. Rajendralala Mitra, "you have in the Rig-Veda, self-choice, polygamy, and polyandry." Widows were permitted to marry.

The general opinion of the female sex seems to have been that put into the mouth of Indra: "Indra declared that the mind of a woman was ungovernable and her temper fickle." R. V. viii, 33, 17.

Dress.—References are made to well-dressed females and to well-made garments. From these passages and others relating to jewels, it may be gathered that considerable attention was already paid to personal decoration. The materials of the clothing were probably cotton and wool. The form of the garments was much the same as among the modern Hindus. A turban is mentioned. References to the needle and sewing suggest that made dresses were not unknown.

Food.—Foremost came the products of the cow. Butter and curds were essential at every meal. Fried grain, mixed with milk, was particularly relished. Barley and wheat were ground and baked into cakes. But *flesh* was considered *the best food*. The

Satapatha Brahmana says : *Etad u ha vai paramam annádyam yan mámsam.**

One of the most remarkable changes in Hindu customs since Vedic times is that with regard to the use of certain kinds of animal food. Dr. Rajendralala Mitra occupies the highest rank at present among Indian scholars, and he has investigated the subject simply to give the real facts of the case. In his *Indo-Aryans,* he has a chapter headed, " Beef in Ancient India." It begins as follows :

" The title of this paper will, doubtless, prove highly offensive to most of my countrymen ; but the interest attached to the enquiry in connexion with the early social history of the Aryan race on this side of the Himalaya, will, I trust, plead my excuse. The idea of beef—the flesh of the earthly representative of the divine Bhagavati—as an article of food is so shocking to the Hindus, that thousands over thousands of the more orthodox among them never repeat the counterpart of the word in their vernaculars, and many and dire have been the sanguinary conflicts which the shedding of the blood of cows has caused in this country. And yet it would seem that there was a time when not only no compunctious visitings of conscience had a place in the mind of the people in slaughtering cattle—when not only the meat of that animal was actually esteemed a valuable aliment—when not only was it a mark of generous hospitality, as among the ancient Jews, to slaughter the 'fatted calf' in honor of respected guests,—but when a supply of beef was deemed an absolute necessity by pious Hindus in their journey from this to another world, and a cow was invariably killed to be burnt with the dead. To Englishmen, who are familiar with the present temper of the people on the subject, and to a great many of the natives themselves, this remark may appear startling ; but the authorities on which it is founded are so authentic and incontrovertible that they cannot, for a moment, be gainsaid."

Dr. R. Mitra quotes Colebrooke as follows : " It seems to have been anciently the custom to slay a cow on that occasion (the reception of a guest) and a guest was therefore called a *goghna,* or 'cow killer.'" In the " *Uttara-Rama-charitra* the venerable old poet and hermit Valmiki, when preparing to receive his brother sage Vasishtha, the author of one of the original law books (Smritis) which regulates the religious life of the people, and a prominent character even in the Vedas, slaughtered a lot of calves expressly for the entertainment of his guests. Vasishtha, in his turn, likewise slaughtered the 'fatted calf' when entertaining Visvamitra, Janaka, Satananda, Jamadagnya, and other sages and friends."†

In the Rig-Veda, 1st Ashtaka, 4th Adhyaya, 29th Varga, the following prayer is addressed to Indra : " Hurl thy thunderbolt against this Vritra and sever his joints as (butcher's cut up) a cow, that the rains may issue from him."

Mr. Kunte, B. A., of Poona, author of the *Suddarshana Chinta-*

* Quoted by Rev. F. Kittel on Sacrifice, p. 48.

† *Indo-Aryans,* Vol. I , pp. 356-358.

nika, says in his Prize Essay on *The Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilization in India*: "Hospitality was the rule of life, and guests were received with great ceremony: cows were specially killed for them." (p. 196).

The ancient Aryans highly valued their cows, but they did not make gods of them and worship them like the Hindus at the present time.

The sacrifice of oxen and cows, *gomedha*, will be noticed under another head.

Intoxicating liquors are mentioned in the hymns. Nearly a whole Mandala of the Rig-Veda is devoted to the praise of the Soma juice. Wine, *sura*, was also in use. "The earliest Brahman settlers," says Dr. R. Mitra, "were a spirit-drinking race, and indulged largely both in Soma beer and strong spirits. To their gods the most acceptable and grateful offering was Soma beer, and wine or spirit was publicly sold in shops for the use of the community. In the Rig-Veda Sanhita a hymn occurs which shows that wine was kept in leather bottles and freely sold to all comers. The *sura* of the *Sautramani* and the *Vajapaya* was no other than arrack, manufactured from rice meal. In the Ramayana the great sage Visvamitra is said to have been entertained with *maireya* and *sura* by his host Vasishtha. In the Mahabharata, the Yadavas are represented as extremely addicted to drinking.

Buddhism must have contributed much to check the spread of drunkenness in India, as it did in putting down the consumption of flesh meat; but it was never equal to the task of suppressing it.*

Grades of Society.—The two great divisions of the people in Vedic times were the Aryans and the aborigines, afterwards called Sudras. The chief occupations of the Aryans were fighting and cultivating the soil. Those who fought gradually acquired influence and rank, and their leaders appear as Rajas. Those who did not share in the fighting were called Vis, Vaisyas, or householders.

At first any one might preside at a sacrifice. In the Vedas there are kings who composed their own hymns to the gods, Rajarishis, who united in their person the power both of king and priest. Visvamitra, the author of the Gayatri, was a Kshatriya. The Brahman was at first simply an assistant at sacrifices; afterwards he became a *purohita*, or family priest, and thus acquired influence.

Fighting and cultivation were sometimes united. Mr. Kunte says: "The patriarch and his sons and perhaps grandsons quietly cultivated their land, but when necessary, they mounted their horses and, sword in hand, marched against their enemies. As yet the Brahmana was not afraid of wielding a sword, nor was the Kshatriya ashamed of tilling the land."†

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* Abridged from the *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. I., pp. 389—399.

† *Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilization*, p. 191.

The caste system, with its minute and absurd rules, was not developed till later times.

Professions and Trades.—Dr. Wilson, in his *India Three Thousand Years Ago,* gives the following sketch of the Social Life of the Aryas.

"The Aryas, in the times of the Vedas, were principally a pastoral, though to a certain extent an agricultural, people. Their flocks and herds and their sheep, goats, cows, buffaloes, horses, camels, and teams of oxen, with the hump on their shoulders, are frequently mentioned, and made the subjects of supplication and thanksgiving both to gods and men. A daughter among them in the earliest times was designated *duhitri*, or milk-maid (The English *daughter* has the same origin); and *Gopa* and Gopál, or keeper of cattle, among them, came to mean a protector in general, no doubt from the owners or keepers of cows having great importance in the community."

"*Gotra*, cow-house, was applied to the fences erected to protect the herd from violence or prevent the cattle from straying. The Brahman boasting of his sacred blood and divine generation speaks of the particular *gotra* to which he belongs, little dreaming that the word is itself a testimony that the fathers of his race were herdsmen."*

"That the Aryans were not, however, merely a nomadic people is very evident. As well as their enemies, they had their villages and towns as well as their cattle-pens; and many of the appliances, conveniences, luxuries, and vices, found in congregated masses of the human family. They knew the processes of spinning and weaving, on which they were doubtless principally dependent for their clothing. They were not strangers to the use of iron and to the crafts of the blacksmith, copper-smith, carpenter and other artisans. They used hatchets in felling the trees of their forests, and they had planes for polishing the wood of their chariots. They constructed rims of iron to surround the wheels of their carts. They fabricated coats of mail, clubs, bows, arrows, javelins, swords or cleavers, and discs to carry on their warfare, to which they were sometimes called by the sound of the conch shell. They made cups, pitchers, and long and short ladles, for use, in their domestic economy and the worship of the gods, they employed professional barbers to cut off their hair. They knew how to turn the precious metals and stones to account; for they had their golden earrings, golden bowls, and jewel necklaces. They had chariots of war from which they fought, and ordinary conveyances drawn by horses and bullocks; they had rider-bearing steeds and grooms to attend them. They had eunuchs in their community. The daughters of vice were seen in their towns, and that, it would appear, with but a small accompaniment of shame; venders of spirits were also tolerated by them. They constructed skiffs, boats, rafts and ships; they engaged in traffic and merchandise in parts somewhat remote from their usual dwellings. Occasional mention is made in their hymns of the ocean which they had probably reached by following the course of the Indus.

* Rev. W. O. Simpson.

Parties among them covetous of gain are presented as crowding the ocean in vessels on a voyage. A naval expedition to a foreign country is alluded to as frustrated by a shipwreck." pp. 29—33, (abridged).

The caste prohibition against crossing the "black water," is not found in the Vedas, but was a later invention of the Brahmans to keep the Hindus better under their control. While the Aryas were so far civilised, writing seems to have been unknown. They had no books and newspapers like their descendants at present.

Amusements.—Gambling was very common among the early Indians, and numerous illustrations are derived from the practice. In one of the hymns a gambler apparently describes his own experience:

1. The tumbling, air-born (products) of the great Vibhidaka tree (*i.e.*, the dice) delight me as they continue to roll on the dice board. The exciting dice seem to me like a draught of the soma-plant growing on mount Mujavat.

7. Hooking, piercing, deceitful, vexatious, delighting to torment, the dice dispense transient gifts, and again ruin the winner; they appear to the gambler covered with honey.

13. Never play with dice: practise husbandry; rejoice in thy property, esteeming it sufficient. x. 34.

"At a sacrifice," says Mr. Kunte, "the Kshatriya especially played at dice with his wife or wives and sons."

Dancers or actors afforded entertainment to the Aryans. Ushas is said to display herself like a dancer who decks himself with ornaments. Allusion is made to the living going forth to dance and laugh after a funeral. Drums are mentioned, and a hymn in the Atharva Veda is addressed to that musical instrument.

Crime.—Thieves or robbers are mentioned in some passages as infesting the highways or stealing secretly. The following occurs in a hymn to Pushan: "Drive away from our path the waylayer, the thief, the robber." Another hymn says: "Men cry after him in battle as after a thief stealing clothes." Cattle were often stolen. "The aborigines found it easy to revenge themselves on the invading Aryas by driving away their cows. But the Aryas were also prepared against the annoyance. As soon as the herd of cows disappeared, hue and cry was raised, and sharp men who traced the track of a thief by observing foot-prints, set to work. The thief was detected." With shouts of thanks to Indra, the herd was recovered and driven home.

Wars.—In the Rig-Veda, wars are frequently mentioned. Cows and horses were often the cause. Indra is thus addressed. "O mighty Indra, we call upon thee as we go fighting for cows and horses." Max Müller says, "Fighting among or for the cows (*Gosu-yudh*) is used in the Veda as a name for a warrior in general (I. 112,

122), and one of the most frequent words for battle is *gavisti*, literally 'striving for cows."

Mr. Kunte thus describes the mode of warfare:

"Different bands of the Aryas marched under their leaders, each having a banner of his own, singing of the prowess of their ancestors, and of the aid which Indra or Brihaspati granted them, and blowing conches. The leader drove in a war-chariot covered with cow-hides: some used the bow and arrows: others had darts. The army was divided into infantry and cavalry. Often did the leader of bands attack a town, and putting every inhabitant to the sword, occupied it. Sometimes they were content with large booty. Thus simultaneously, many Aryan leaders, independently of each other, waged war against the Dasas and Dasyus who were often able to make an impression upon the invaders."*

Disposal of the Dead.—While the Parsis and the ancestors of the Indian Aryans lived together in Central Asia, both probably exposed their dead to be devoured by vultures. After the Aryans came to India, burial was adopted. Dr. R. Mitra says: "This continued probably from their advent in India to about the 14th or 13th century B.C. Then came incremation with a subsequent burial of the ashes. This lasted from the 14th or 13th century B. C. to the early part of the Christian era, when the burial was altogether dispensed with, or substituted by consignment of the ashes to a river."†

THE GODS OF THE VEDAS.

Classification.—Yaska, in his Nirukta, the oldest commentary on the Vedas now in existence, says: "There are three deities, viz., Agni, whose place is on earth; Vayu, or Indra, whose place is in the air; and Surya, the sun, whose place is in the sky." "These gods might all be one as a priest receives various names at various sacrifices." "Or," says he, "it may be, these gods are all distinct beings, for the praises addressed to them are distinct, and their appellations also." The former "was certainly not the idea of most of the Vedic Rishis themselves, still less of the people who listened to their songs at fairs and festivals."

Yaska, in the latter part of his work, divides the deities into the three orders of terrestrial, aerial, and celestial.

Number.—The gods are generally spoken of as being "thrice-eleven" in number. "Ye gods, who are eleven in the sky, who are eleven on earth, and who in your glory are eleven dwellers in the (atmospheric) waters, do ye welcome this our offering." "Agni,

* *Vicissitudes*, pp. 118, 119. † *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. II, p. 120.

bring hither according to thy wont, and gladden the three and thirty gods with their wives."

In the Rig-Veda iii. 9, 9, the gods are mentioned as being much more numerous: "Three hundred, three thousand, thirty and nine gods have worshipped Agni."

Origin and Immortality.—In the Vedas the gods are spoken of as immortal, but they are not regarded in general as self-existent beings; in fact, their parentage, in most cases, is mentioned.

Very different accounts are given of the origin of the gods. In many passages the gods are described as being the offspring of Heaven and Earth. Ushas, the dawn, is characterised as the mother of the gods; Brahmanaspati is called their father; Soma is said to be the generator of Heaven, Earth, Agni, Surya, Indra, and Vishnu. Some of the gods are spoken of as being fathers and others as being sons. The most extraordinary feat is ascribed to Indra: "Thou hast indeed begotten thy father and mother together from thy own body." As Max Müller remarks, "A god who once could do that, was no doubt capable of anything afterwards."

"The same god is sometimes represented as supreme, sometimes, as equal, sometimes as inferior to others. There are as yet no genealogies, no settled marriages between gods and goddesses. The father is sometimes the son, the brother is the husband, and she who in one hymn is the mother, is in another the wife."

In some places Savitri and Agni are said to have conferred immortality on the gods; elsewhere it is said that the gods drink soma to obtain the same gift; but it is generally taught that they obtained their divine rank through austerities. The gods originally were all alike in power; but three of them desired to be superior to the rest; viz. Agni, Indra, and Surya. They continued to offer sacrifices for this purpose until it was obtained.

The immortality of the gods is only relative. They are supposed to be subject to the same law of dissolution as other beings. "Many thousands of Indras and of other gods have, through time, passed away in every mundane age." The gods both desire and are capable of *mukti*, liberation from future births.

Some of the principal gods will now be described.

Dyaus and Prithivi.

Dyaus seems to have been the oldest Aryan divinity. Max Müller says:—

"If I were asked what I consider the most important discovery which has been made during the nineteenth century with respect to the ancient history of mankind, I should answer by the following short line:

Sanskrit DYAUSH-PITAR=Greek ΖΕΤΣΠΑΤΗΡ (ZEUS PATER) =Latin JUPITER=Old Norse TYR.

"Think what this equation implies! It implies not only that our own ancestors and the ancestors of Homer and Cicero (the Greeks and Romans) spoke the same language as the people of India—this is a discovery which, however incredible it sounded at first, has long ceased to cause any surprise—but it implies and proves that they all had once the same faith, and worshipped for a time the same supreme Deity under exactly the same name—a name which meant Heaven-Father."*

"Those simple-hearted forefathers of ours," says C. Kingsley, "looked round upon the earth and said within themselves, 'Where is the All-father, if All-father there be? Not in this earth; for it will perish. Nor in the sun, moon, or stars; for they will perish too. Where is He who abideth for ever?'

"Then they lifted up their eyes, and saw, as they thought, beyond sun, and moon, and stars, and all which changes and will change, the clear blue sky, the boundless firmament of heaven.

"That never changed; that was always the same. The clouds and storms rolled far below it, and all the bustle of this noisy world; but there the sky was still, as bright and calm as ever. The All-father must be there, unchangeable in the unchanging heaven; bright and pure, and boundless like the heavens; and, like the heavens too, silent and far off."

"And how,' says Max Müller, "did they call that All-father?

"Five thousand years ago, or, it may be earlier, the Aryans speaking as yet neither Sanskrit, Greek, nor Latin, called him *Dyupatar*, Heaven-father.

"Four thousand years ago, or, it may be earlier, the Aryans who had travelled southward to the rivers of the Punjab called him *Dyaush-pita*, Heaven-father.

"Three thousand years ago, or, it may be earlier, the Aryans on the shores of the Hellespont, called him Ζεὺς πατήρ, Heaven-father.

"Two thousand years ago, the Aryans of Italy looked up to that bright heaven above, and called it *Ju-piter*, Heaven-father.

"And a thousand years ago the same Heaven-father and All-father was invoked in the dark forests of Germany by the Teutonic Aryans, and his old name of *Tiu* or *Zio* was then heard perhaps for the last time."†

There are clear traces in some of the hymns of the Rig-Veda that at one time Dyaus, the sky, was the supreme deity.

At an early period, however, the earth, under the name of Prithivi, was associated with Dyaus. The Aitareya Brahmana mentions their marriage. "The gods then brought the two (Heaven and Earth) together, and when they came together, they performed a wedding of the gods."

The ancient Greeks had the same ideas. The earth is addressed as, "Mother of gods, the wife of the starry Heaven." Their marriage too is described.

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* *Nineteenth Century*, Oct. 1885. † *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 216, 217.

The Hindus thought their gods were much like themselves; so heaven and earth were called the father and mother of the gods.

In the hymns there are various speculations about the origin of Dyaus and Prithivi. A perplexed poet enquires, "Which of these two was the first, and which the last? How have they been produced? Sages, who knows?"

Varuna.

Varuna, like Dyaus, is another representative of the highest heaven, as encompassing all things. The name is derived from *var*, to cover, and is identical with the Greek *Ouranos*, heaven.

"Varuna," says the Rig-Veda, "stemmed asunder the wide firmaments; he lifted on high the bright and glorious heaven; he stretched out apart the starry sky and the earth." In the Atharva-Veda, illimitable knowledge is ascribed to him:—

"Varuna, the great lord of these worlds, sees as if he were near. If a man stands or walks or hides, if he goes to lie down or to get up, what two people sitting together whisper to each other, King Varuna knows it; he is there as the third. This earth, too, belongs to Varuna, the King, and this wide sky with its ends far apart. The two seas (the sky and the ocean) are Varuna's loins; he is also curtained in this small drop of water. He who should flee far beyond the sky, even he would not be rid of Varuna, the King. His spies proceed from heaven towards this world; with thousand eyes they overlook this earth. King Varuna sees all this, what is between heaven and earth, and what is beyond. He has counted the twinklings of the eyes of men. As a player throws down the dice, he settles all things."

Varuna is the only Vedic deity to whom a high moral character is attributed. The few hymns calling for pardon and purity are, therefore, addressed to him. Specimens will be given in a subsequent chapter.

In some of the hymns, Varuna is called Aditya, or son of Aditi. Aditi, from *a*, not, *dita*, bound, means infinitude. Aditi itself is now and then invoked in the Veda as the Beyond, as what is beyond the earth and the sky. More frequently, however, than Aditi, we meet with the Adityas, literally the sons of Aditi, in one sense the infinite gods. One of them is Varuna; others are Nitra, Aryaman, Daksha, &c.

Mitra is generally associated with Varuna. He is a form of the sun, representing day, while Varuna denotes night. They together uphold and rule the earth and sky, guard the world, encourage religion, and with their nooses seize the guilty.

In the Puranas, Varuna is stripped of all his majestic attributes, and represented as a mere god of the ocean. The Mahabharata describes him as having carried off Bhadra, the wife of Utathya.

INDRA.

The gods of the Hindus are somewhat like kings who reign for a time, and then give place to successors. Max Müller says, "We see those two giant spectres of Heaven and Earth on the background of the Vedic religion, exerting their influence for a time, and then vanishing before the light of the younger and more active gods."*

Dyaus and Varuna, representing the bright blue sky or the starry heavens, were the highest deities of the Aryans in their original home. In India they came to a country where for months together the earth is exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, sometimes without a single shower, so that it is impossible for the fields to be ploughed or the seed to be sown. It is not surprising, therefore, that a god in whose hands are the thunder and lightning, at whose command the refreshing showers fall to render the earth fruitful, should most frequently be appealed to, and that the most laudatory songs should be addressed to him. Indra is the most popular deity of the Vedas.

"In the burning months of the hot season," says Dr. Mullens, "the ancient Aryans turn to Indra. It is Vritra (Drought) his enemy and theirs, that withholds the refreshing showers for which all eyes long. And when at length along the western horizon the vapours thicken, and the desired storm bursts in grandeur—when they see the blinding dust whirling in lofty columns on its mighty march, and the swift sand flies low along the ground—when they see the blue flashes which pierce the clouds, and hear the crashing peals of the awful thunder, it is Indra and his Maruts who are fighting the celestial battle on their behalf. And when the driving rain pours, from the heavy clouds, and the earth drinking it in, all nature renews its life, fresh verdure clothes the fields, and the birds carol their joyous songs, it is to the mighty Indra, the conqueror, that their thanks are paid, and from him that fresh blessings are humbly craved."†

Sometimes the clouds are represented under the figure of herds of cows stolen by the demons, and hidden in the hollows of the mountains. Indra finds them, splits the caverns with his bolt, and they are again set at liberty, and their teats shower down rain.

Different accounts are given of his parentage. In one hymn Ekashtaka is said to be his mother; in another he is said to have sprung from the mouth of Purusha; while a third makes him to have been generated by Soma. According to the Mahabharata, Indra is one of the sons of Kasyapa.

Indra is exalted above Dyaus. "The divine Dyaus bowed before Indra, before Indra the great Earth bowed with her wide spaces."

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* *India, What can it Teach us?* p. 163 † *Hindu Philosophy*, pp. 19, 20.

"At the birth of thy splendour, Dyaus trembled, the Earth trembled for fear of thy anger."

Indra drives a golden chariot drawn by two yellow horses; the thunderbolt is his weapon, the rainbow is his bow; the Maruts, or storm-winds, are his companions. Like other Hindu gods, he is provided with a wife, called Indrani.

In the Vedas, Indra is characterised by his fondness for war and the intoxicating soma juice.

Even as an infant, Indra is said to have manifested his warlike tendencies. "As soon as he was born, the slayer of Vritra grasped his arrow, and asked his mother, Who are they that are renowned as fierce warriors?" "His love of the soma juice was shown as early." "On the day that thou wast born, thou didst, from love of it, drink the mountain-grown juice of the soma plant."

In the hymns Indra is invited by his worshippers to drink like "a thirsty stag" or like a "bull roaming in a waterless waste"; to fill his belly by copious potations. His inebriety is said to be "most intense." The sensations of the god after drinking the soma are described: "The draughts which I have drunk impel me like violent blasts. The five tribes of men appear to me not even as a mote. I surpass in greatness the heaven and this vast earth."

Thus exhilarated, Indra goes forth to war. Some of his feats are thus described in the Rig-Veda, I. 53:

"6. These draughts inspired thee, O lord of the brave, these were vigour, these libations, in battles, when for the sake of the poet, the sacrificer, thou struckest down irresistibly ten thousands of enemies.

"7. From battle to battle thou advancest bravely, from town to town thou destroyest all this with might, when thou, Indra, with Nami as thy friend, struckest down from afar the deceiver Namuki."

The MARUTS, or storm-winds, are Indra's allies and companions. "They drive spotted stags, wear shining armour, and carry spears in their hands; no one knows whence they come nor whither they go; their voice is heard aloud as they come rushing on; the earth trembles and the mountains shake before them."

While the Aryans were engaged in fierce contests with the aborigines, Indra held the highest rank. When the latter had been reduced to subjection, Indra gave place to other deities. In the Puranas he reigns over Swarga; but is often in fear lest he should be dethroned. Many instances are recorded of his adultery. According to the Mahabharata, he seduced Ahalya, the wife of Gautama, his spiritual teacher. By the curse of the sage, Indra's body was impressed by a thousand marks, so that he was called Sa-yoni; but these marks were afterwards changed to eyes, and he is hence called 'the thousand-eyed.'

Agni.

Agni is the god of fire, the Latin *ignis*, fire. He is one of the most prominent deities of the Rig-Veda, as far more hymns are addressed to him than to any other divinity except Indra.

Fire is very necessary for human existence. It enables food to be cooked; it gives the power of carrying on work at night; in cold climates it preserves people from being frozen to death. In early times, when lucifer matches were unknown, fire was looked upon with somewhat like religious awe. The production of fire by the friction of wood or its sudden descent from the sky in the form of lightning, seemed as marvellous as the birth of a child. In the hymns of the Vedas fire is praised and worshipped as the best and kindest of the gods, the only god who had come down from heaven to live on earth, the friend of man, the messenger of the gods, the mediator between gods and men, the immortal among mortals. He, it is said, protects the settlements of the Aryans, and frightens away the "black-skinned enemies."

Soon, however, fire was conceived by the Vedic poets under the more general character of light and warmth, and then the presence of Agni was perceived, not only on the hearth and the altar, but in the Dawn, in the Sun, and in the world beyond the Sun, while at the same time his power was recognised as ripening, or as they called it, as cooking, the fruits of the earth, and as supporting also the warmth and the life of the human body. From that point of view Agni, like other powers, rose to the rank of a Supreme God. He is said to have stretched out heaven and earth—naturally, because without his light heaven and earth would have been invisible and undistinguishable. The next poet says that Agni held heaven aloft by his light, that he kept the two worlds asunder; and in the end Agni is said to be the progenitor and father of heaven and earth, and the maker of all that flies, or walks, or stands, or moves on earth.*

Various accounts are given of the origin of Agni. He is said to be a son of Dyaus and Prithivi; he is called the eldest son of Brahma, and is then named Abhimani; he is reckoned amongst the children of Kasyapa and Aditi, and hence one of the Adityas. In the later writings he is described as a son of Angiras, king of the Pitris. He is occasionally identified with other gods and goddesses, as Indra, Vishnu, Varuna, Rudra, Sarasvati, &c. "All gods," it is said, "are comprehended in him."

Agni was worshipped in the fire kindled in the morning. The whole family gathered around it, regarding it with love and awe, as

* Max Müller's *India, What can it Teach us?* pp. 176, 177.

at once a friend and a priest. It was a visible god conveying the oblation of mortals to all gods. His nobleness was extolled, as though a god he deigned to sit in the very dwellings of men. At sunset, Agni is the only divinity left on earth to protect mortals till the following dawn; his beams then shine abroad and dispel the demons of darkness.

Agni's proper offering is ghee. When this is sprinkled into the flame, it mounts higher and glows more fiercely; the god has devoured the gift, and thus testifies his satisfaction and pleasure. Several of his epithets describe his fondness for butter. He is butter-fed, butter-formed, butter-haired, butter-backed, &c. The poor man who cannot offer ghee, brings a few pieces of wood to feed the fire.

As destroyer of the Rakshas, Agni assumes a different character. He is represented in a form as hideous as the beings he is invoked to devour. He sharpens his two iron tusks, puts his enemies into his mouth, and swallows them. He heats the edges of his shafts and sends them into the hearts of the Rakshas.

The first hymn of the Rig-Veda is addressed to Agni.

Sun Deities.

Surya and Savitri are two names by which the sun is addressed in the Vedic hymns. Sometimes Surya is called son of Dyaus, sometimes of Aditi. In one passage Ushas, the dawn, is his wife; in another he is the child of the Dawn. He has several wives. According to later legends, his twin sons, the Asvins, who ride in a golden car as precursors of Ushas, were born of a nymph called Asvini, from her having concealed herself in the form of a mare. As the brightness of Surya was too great for his wife Sanjna, her father Visvakarma cut part of him away. The fragments fell blazing to the earth, and from them Visvakarma formed the discus of Vishnu, the trident of Siva, and the weapons of the other gods! Surya is represented in a chariot drawn by seven horses. When he unharnesses his horses, the night spreads out her garment over everybody.

Mitra was another name for the sun. He is most frequently invoked in conjunction with Varuna. Vishnu was originally a solar being. This is indicated by his three strides, his position in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. But in the later books his physical character soon vanishes. Pushan was the sun as viewed by shepherds. He carries an ox-goad and is drawn by goats.

Max Müller thus shows how the sun was gradually developed into a supreme being:

"The first step leads us from the mere light of the sun to that light which in the morning wakes man from sleep, and seems to give new life, not only to man, but to the whole of nature. He who wakes us in

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the morning, who recalls the whole of nature to new life, is soon called 'the giver of daily life.'

"Secondly, by another and bolder step, the giver of daily light and life, becomes the giver of light and life in general. He who brings light and life to-day, is the same who brought life and light in the first of days. As light is the beginning of the day, so light was the beginning of creation, and the sun, from being a mere light-bringer or life-giver, becomes a creator, then soon also a ruler of the world.

"Thirdly, as driving away the dreaded darkness of the night, and likewise as fertilizing the earth, the sun is conceived as a defender and kind protector of all living things.

"Fourthly as the sun sees everything and knows everything, he is asked to forget and forgive what he alone knows."*

The worship of Surya has continued to the present time. It is to him that the Gayatri is addressed at his rising by every devout Brahman. This short verse is supposed to exert magical powers. It is as follows: Tat Savitur varenyam bhargo devasyad hímahi | dhiyo yo nah prachodyát | It is differently translated. The following is one of the latest renderings: "May we receive the glorious brightness of this, the generator, of the god who shall prosper our works." It is simply an invocation to the sun to render religious performances successful. The Skanda Purana thus extols its powers:

"Nothing in the Vedas is superior to the Gayatri. No invocation is equal to the Gayatri, as no city is equal to Kasi. The Gayatri is the mother of the Vedas and of Brahmans. By repeating it a man is saved. What is there indeed that cannot be effected by the Gayatri? For the Gayatri is Vishnu, Brahma, and Siva and the three Vedas."

Soma.

Hindus, at present, differ in their habits in two remarkable respects from their forefathers in Vedic times. One has already been noticed. The ancient Aryans delighted in eating beef, which is an utter abomination to their descendants. The other change is with regard to the use of intoxicants. Nearly a whole book of the Rig-Veda, containing 114 hymns, is devoted to the praise of Soma, and there are constant references to it in a large proportion of the other hymns. The ancient Aryans rejoiced in drinking; respectable Hindus now wisely abstain from what inebriates.

Not only were the people themselves fond of drinking the Soma juice, but the gods were represented as eager to partake of the beverage. Professor Whitney thus explains how it came to be worshipped:

"The simple-minded Aryan people, whose whole religion was a worship of the wonderful powers and phenomena of nature, had no sooner per-

* *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 265, 266.

ceived that this liquid had the power to elevate the spirits, and produce a temporary frenzy, under the influence of which the individual was prompted to, and capable of, deeds beyond his natural powers, than they found in it something divine: it was to their apprehension a god, endowing those into whom it entered with godlike powers; the plant which afforded it became to them the king of plants; the process of preparing it was a holy sacrifice; the instruments used therefore were sacred."

The Soma is a creeping plant, with small white fragrant flowers. It yields a milky juice, which when fermented is intoxicating. The hymns addressed to Soma were intended to be sung while the juice of the plant was being pressed out and purified.

Various accounts are given of the way in which the Soma plant was obtained. In some passages the plant is said to have been brought from a mountain and given to Indra; in others King Soma is said to have dwelt among the Gandharvas. A third account is that Soma existed in the sky, and that Gayatri became a bird and brought it.

When Soma was brought to the gods, there was a dispute as to who should have the first draught. It was decided that a race should be run; the winner to have the first taste. Vayu first reached the goal, Indra being second.

The juice of the plant is said to be an immortal draught which the gods love. Soma, the god in the juice, is said to clothe the naked and heal the sick, through him the blind see, and the lame walk. Many divine attributes are ascribed to him. He is addressed as a god in the highest strains of veneration. All powers belong to him; all blessings are besought of him as his to bestow. He is said to be divine, immortal, and also to confer immortality on gods and men. Future happiness is asked from him. "Place me, O purified god, in that everlasting and imperishable world where there is eternal light and glory."

In later times Soma was a name given to the moon. When the Vishnu Purana was written, intoxicants were strictly forbidden; hence Soma, as the god of the Soma juice, was no longer known and praised. According to that Purana, Soma was the son of Atri, the son of Brahma.

The ancient Greeks had also a god of wine, called Bacchus.

Ka, Who?

"New gods," says Max Müller, "were actually created out of words which were never intended as names of divine beings. There are several hymns in the Rig-Veda containing questions as to who is the true or the most powerful god. A rule had been laid down, that in every sacrificial hymn there must be a deity addressed by the poet. In order to discover a deity where no deity existed

the most extraordinary objects, such as a present, a drum, stones, plants, were raised to the artificial rank of deities. In accordance with the same system we find the authors of the Brahmanas had so completely broken with the past that, forgetful of the poetical character of the hymns and the yearning of the poets after the unknown God, they exalted the interrogative pronoun itself into a deity, and acknowledged a god Ka or Who ?"* In some places it is said that Ka is Prajapati. In the later Sanskrit literature of the Puranas, Ka appears as a recognised god, as a supreme god, with a genealogy of his own, perhaps even with a wife. The Mahabharata identifies Ka with Daksha, and the Bhagavata Purana applies the term to Kasyapa.

Goddesses.

Several goddesses are mentioned in the Vedas; but with the exception of Prithivi, Aditi, and Ushas, little importance is attached to them. Sarasvati is celebrated both as a river and as a deity. The wives of Agni, Varuna, the Ashvins, &c., are mentioned, but no distinct functions are assigned to them. Their insignificance is in striking contrast to the prominent place assumed by the wife of Siva in the later mythology.

The Pitris.

The following account of the Pitris is abridged from Max Müller's *India, What can it Teach us?* :—

"There was in India, as elsewhere, another very early faith, springing up naturally in the hearts of the people, that their fathers and mothers, when they departed this life, departed to a Beyond, wherever it might be, either in the East from whence all the bright Devas seemed to come, or more commonly in the West, the land to which they seemed to go, called in the Veda the realms of Yama or the setting sun. The idea that beings which once had been, could never cease to be, had not yet entered their minds; and from the belief that their fathers existed somewhere, though they could see them no more, there arose the belief in another Beyond, and the germs of another religion.

Nor was the actual power of the fathers quite imperceptible or extinct even after their death. Their presence continued to be felt in the ancient laws and customs of the family, most of which rested on their will and their authority. While the fathers were alive and strong, their will was law; and when, after their death, doubts or disputes arose on points of law or custom, it was but natural that the memory and the authority of the fathers should be appealed to settle such points—that the law should still be their will.

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* *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 433.

Thus Manu says (IV. 178), 'On the path on which his fathers and grandfathers have walked, on that path of good men let him walk, and he will not go wrong.'

In the same manner then in which, out of the bright powers of nature, the Devas or gods had arisen, there arose out of predicates shared in common by the departed, such as pitris, fathers, preta, gone away, another general concept, what we should call *Manes*, the kind ones, *Ancestors*, *Shades*, *Spirits*, or *Ghosts*, whose worship was nowhere more fully developed than in India. That common name, Pitris, Fathers, gradually attracted to itself all that the fathers shared in common. It came to mean not only fathers, but invisible, kind, powerful, immortal, heavenly beings, and we can watch in the Veda, better perhaps than anywhere else, the inevitable, yet most touching metamorphosis of ancient thought,—the love of the child for father and mother becoming transfigured into an instinctive belief in the immortality of the soul.

In the Veda the Pitris are invoked together with the Devas, but they are not confounded with them. The Devas never become Pitris, and though such adjectives as *deva* are sometimes applied to the Pitris, and they are raised to the rank of the older classes of Devas, it is easy to see that the Pitris and Devas had each their independent origin, and that they represent two totally distinct phases of the human mind in the creation of its objects of worship.

We read in the Rig-Veda, VI. 52, 4: 'May the rising Dawns protect me, may the flowing Rivers protect me, may the firm Mountains protect me, may the Fathers protect me at this invocation of the gods.' Here nothing can be clearer than the separate existence of the Fathers, apart from the Dawns, the Rivers, and the Mountains, though they are included in one common Devahûti, or invocation of the gods.

We must distinguish, however, from the very first, between two classes, or rather between two concepts of Fathers, the one comprising the distant, half-forgotten, and almost mythical ancestors of certain families, or of what would have been to the poets of the Veda, the whole human race, the other consisting of the fathers who had but lately departed, and who were still, as it were, personally remembered and revered.

The old ancestors in general approach more nearly to the gods. They are often represented as having gone to the abode of Yama, the ruler of the departed, and to live there in company with some of the Devas.

We sometimes read of the great-grandfathers being in heaven, the grandfathers in the sky, the fathers on the earth, the first in company with the Adityas, the second with the Rudras, the last with the Vasus. All these are individual poetical conceptions.

Yama himself is sometimes invoked as if he were one of the Fathers, the first of mortals that died or that trod the path of the Fathers leading to the common sunset in the West. Still his real Deva-like nature is never completely lost, and, as the god of the setting sun, he is indeed the leader of the Fathers, but not one of the Fathers himself.

The following is from one of the hymns of the Rig-Veda by which those ancient Fathers were invited to come to their sacrifice:

1. May the Soma-loving Fathers, the lowest, the highest, and the

middle, arise. May the gentle and righteous Fathers who have come to life (again) protect us in these invocations!

4. Come hither to us with your help, you Fathers who sit on the grass! We have prepared these oblations for you, accept them! Come hither with your most blessed protection, and give us health and wealth without fail!

5. The Soma-loving Fathers have been called hither to their dear viands which are placed on the grass. Let them approach, let them listen, let them bless, let them protect us!

The daily Pitriyagna, or ancestor worship, is one of the five sacrifices, sometimes called the great sacrifices, which every married man ought to perform day by day."*

There are full descriptions of the worship due to the Fathers in the Brahmanas and Sutras. The epic poems, the law books, the Puranas, all are brimful of allusions to ancestral worship. The whole social fabric of India, with its laws of inheritance and marriage, rests on a belief in the Manes.

To the mind of a Hindu, says Professor Bhattacharyya, in his *Tagore Law Lectures* (p. 130), "Ancestor worship, in some form or other, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of what is known as the Hindu religion."

Sacrificial Implements, etc.

Divine powers are ascribed in the hymns to various objects. The Yupa, or sacrificial post, is thus addressed:—

"1. Vanaspati, (forest lord), the devout anoint thee with sacred butter at the sacrifice; and whether thou standest erect, or thine abode be on the lap of this thy mother (earth), grant us riches.

2. Standing on the east of the kindled (fire), dispensing food (as the source) of undecaying (health) and excellent progeny, keeping off our enemy at a distance, stand up for great auspiciousness.

3. May those (posts) which devout men have cut down, or which, Vanaspati, the axe has trimmed, may they standing resplendent with all their parts (entire), bestow upon us wealth with progeny." iii 8.

A hymn is especially dedicated to the arrow. It is addressed: "Arrow, whetted by charms, fly when discharged; go, light among the adversaries; spare not one of the enemy." The ladle, a kind of large spoon, likewise receives great honour. "We revile not the ladle which is of exalted race; verily we assert the dignity of the wooden implement. The ladle has established the sky."

The mortar is thus addressed: "Lord of the forest, as the wind gently blows before thee, so do thou, O Mortar, prepare the Soma juice for the beverage of Indra." The sacrificial grass is said to

* *India, What can it Teach us?* pp. 219—229.

support heaven and earth, and wonderful attributes are predicated of the Vasa, cow. There is a hymn professedly dedicated to frogs. It concludes thus: "May the cow-toned, the goat-toned, the speckled, the green (frog, severally), grant us riches. May the frogs in the fertilizing (season of the rains), bestowing upon us hundreds of cows, prolong our lives."

The Relation of the Worshippers to the Gods.

Varuna, from his majesty and purity, was regarded with awe by the early Aryans; but he was dethroned by Indra who was looked upon both as a mighty god and as one who would join with them in drinking the Soma juice.

The Rev. K. S. Macdonald has the following remarks on the light in which the gods were generally regarded: "In one word the relation was very familiar. There is little or no sense of love or fear, no sense of the holy or the pure or the spiritual. They treat the gods as of themselves, only more powerful, subject to the same weaknesses, the same desires, the same appetites. The Soma, the clarified butter, the horses, etc., in which the worshippers delighted, were supposed to be sources of still greater pleasure to their gods. The strength, the stimulus which they themselves experienced, or imagined they experienced, from their drinking of the Soma juice, they supposed their gods to receive in still greater measure...The worshipper offers his Varuna honey, sweet things which the god is sure to like, and then appeals to him, 'Now be good, and let us speak again.' 'Let us speak together again, because my honey has been brought.' 'Thou eatest what thou likest like a priest."* In another hymn Vasistha addresses Indra, "Desirous of milking thee like a milch cow at pasture, Vasistha has let loose his prayers to you." (VII. 18. 4.)

The Religion of the Vedas Polytheistic.

Monotheism is a belief in the existence of one God only; *polytheism* is a belief in a plurality of gods. Max Müller says, "If we must employ technical terms, the religion of the Veda is polytheism, not monotheism." The 27th hymn of the first Ashtaka of the Rig-Veda concludes as follows: "Veneration to the great gods, veneration to the lesser, veneration to the young, veneration to the old; we worship (all) the gods as well as we are able: may I not omit the praise of the elder divinities." As already mentioned, the gods are repeatedly said to "be thrice-eleven in number." Whitney says: "The great mass of Vedic hymns are absorbed in the praise and worship of the multifarious deities of the proper Vedic pantheon,

* *The Vedic Religion*, pp. 136-138.

and ignore all conception of a unity of which these are to be accounted the varying manifestations."

There are different kinds of polytheism. The ancient Greeks and Romans had a more or less organised system of gods, different in power and rank, and all subordinate to a supreme God, a Zeus or Jupiter. In the Veda, the gods worshipped as supreme by each sect stand still side by side, no one is always first, no one is always last. Even gods of a decidedly inferior and limited character assume occasionally in the eyes of a devoted poet a supreme place above all other gods. "It would be easy to find, in the numerous hymns of the Veda, passages in which almost every single god is represented as supreme and absolute." Only one can be supreme, but a Hindu has no difficulty in accepting the most contradictory statements. He may also select some deity as his special object of worship while professing to believe in all.

The hymns of the Rig-Veda were composed by many authors, extending over a period of several centuries. Hence the theology is often inconsistent. The polytheism of some hymns is very marked and distinct. In others it is hazy. Some hymns, in the absence of all others, might be regarded as monotheistic.

Some suppose that the Indo-Aryan worship in *Pre*-Vedic times was monotheistic. Max Müller says:

"There is a monotheism which precedes the polytheism of the Veda, and even in the invocation of their innumerable gods, the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the midst of an idolatrous phraseology, like the blue sky that is hidden by passing clouds."

The great Heaven-Father, Dyaus Pitar, *may* at a remote period have been the only object of worship. In Vedic times, however, polytheism prevailed. "A large number of so-called Devas, or gods, were called into existence, the whole world was peopled with them, and every act of nature, whether on the earth, or in the air, or in the highest heaven, was ascribed to their agency. When we say, *it* thunders, they said Indra thunders; when we say, *it* rains, they said Parjanya pours out his buckets; when we say, *it* dawns, they said the beautiful Ushas appears like a dancer displaying her splendour; when we say, *it* grows dark, they said Surya unharnesses his steeds. The whole of nature was alive to the poets of the Veda, the presence of the gods was felt everywhere."*

Deities sprung from the same source had a tendency, after a very short career of their own, to run together. Dyaus was the sky as the ever-present light. Varuna was the sky as the all-embracing. Mitra was the sky as lighted up by the morning. Surya was the sun as shining in the sky. Savitri was the sun as bringing light

* Max Müller, *India*, p. 199.

and life. Vishnu was the sun as striding with three steps across the sky; Indra appeared in the sky as the giver of rain, Rudra and the Maruts passed along the sky in thunderstorms; Vata and Vayu were the winds of the air; Agni was fire and light.

Hence it happened constantly that what was told of one deity could be told of another likewise; the same epithets are shared by many, the same stories are told of different gods.

Some of the old poets go so far as to declare that one god is identical with others. In the Atharva Veda (XIII. 3, 13) we read: "In the evening Agni becomes Varuna; he becomes Mitra when rising in the morning; having become Savitri he passes through the sky; having become Indra he warms the heaven in the middle." Surya, the sun, is identified with Indra and Agni; Savitri with Mitra and Pushan; Indra with Varuna: Dyaus, the sky, with Parjanya, the rain-god. One poet says (Rig-Veda I. 164, 46): "That which is *one*, sages name it in various ways—they call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan." Another poet says: "The wise poets represent by their words Him who is one with beautiful wings in many ways."

Sometimes all the gods were comprehended by one common name, *Visve Devas*, the All-gods, and prayers were addressed to them in their collective capacity.

Pantheism Developed.—The tendency towards unity shown by some of the Vedic poets, did not end in *monotheism*, but in *pantheism*, that the universe, as a whole, is God. Both the hymns and the Brahmanas teach a polytheistic religion. They form the *Karmakanda*, 'the department of works.' The Upanishads, philosophical treatises at the end of some of the Brahmanas, form the *Jnanakanda*, 'the department of knowledge.' According to the Upanishads there is only one real Being in the universe, which Being also constitutes the universe. This pantheistic doctrine is everywhere traceable in some of the more ancient Upanishads, although often wrapped up in mysticism and allegory. It is clearly expressed in the well-known formula of three words from the Chhandogya Upanishad, *ekam evadvitiyam*, 'one only without a second.'

Rammohun Roy, as already mentioned, despised the hymns of the Vedas; he spoke of the Upanishads as the Vedas, and thought that they taught monotheism. The Chhandogya formula was also adopted by Keshab Chunder Sen. But it does not mean that there is no second God, but that there is no second any thing—a totally different doctrine.

Later Development of Polytheism.—While the Vedic poets were generally satisfied with "thrice-eleven" or thirty-three deities, in the Puranas they were converted into 33 crores,—a number greater than every man, woman and child in the country.

It has been shown under "Popular Hinduism," "that there is

not an object in heaven or earth which a Hindu is not prepared to worship."

Pantheism and polytheism are often combined; but monotheism, in the strict sense of the word, is not found in Hinduism.

The Gods not Mentioned in the Vedas.

Many of the principal gods now worshipped by the Hindus, says Professor Wilson, are either wholly unnamed in the Veda, or are noticed in an inferior and different capacity. The name of Siva, of Mahadeva, of Durga, of Kali, of Rama, of Krishna, never occur, as far as we are yet aware; we have a Rudra, who, in after times, is identified with Siva, but who, even in the *Puranas*, is of very doubtful origin and identification, whilst in the *Veda* he is described as the father of the winds, and is evidently a form of either Agni or Indra. There is not the slightest allusion to the form in which for the last ten centuries at least, he (Siva) seems to have been almost exclusively worshipped in India—that of the *Linga*: neither is there the slightest hint of another important feature of later Hinduism, the *Trimurthi*, or Tri-une combination of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, as typified by the mystical syllable *Om*.*

The gods now chiefly worshipped by the Hindus were the inventions of later times. Sir A. C. Lyall explains, in his *Asiatic Studies*, how the worship of new gods sprang up. A man, looked upon as holy, when he died, had a shrine set up in his honour. If he was supposed to make a few good cures at the outset, especially among women and valuable cattle, his reputation spread through the country. "This," says he, "is the kind of success which has made the fortune of some of the most popular, the richest, and the most widely known gods in Berar, who do all the leading business." One of the richest temples in South India, Tirupati, near Madras, was set up in honour of a man named Balaji. When any local god acquired high repute, the Brahmans made him an incarnation of Vishnu or Siva.

The gods of the Hindus were, like their kings, one dynasty succeeding another.

The Offerings and Sacrifices of the Vedas.

Importance of Sacrifice in Vedic Times.—Mr. Kunte says:

"It is impossible to understand and appreciate the spirit of the civilization of the ancient Aryas as it is revealed in the collection of hymns called the Rik-Sanhita, without studying their sacrificial system, the soul of their civilization. No matter what hymn is read, it directly or indirectly cannot but refer to a sacrifice. Either the musical modes of the Udgata-

* *Introduction to the Translation of the Rig Veda*, pp. xxvi, xxvii.

singer are mentioned, or the name of a sacrifice such as *Yajna* or *Makha*, or some prayer asking a god to partake of their sacrificial portion (*Yajniya Bhaga*) occurs. The main ground of the picture of society drawn in the Rik-Sanhita is a sacrifice."*

Dr. Haug has the following remarks on the supposed influence attached to sacrifice :

"The sacrifice is regarded as the means for obtaining power over this and the other world, over visible as well as invisible beings, animate as well as inanimate creatures. Who knows its proper application, and has it duly performed, is in fact looked upon as the real master of the world ; for any desire he may entertain, if it be even the most ambitious, can be gratified, any object in view can be obtained by means of it. The *Yajna* (sacrifice) taken as a whole is conceived to be a kind of machinery, in which every piece must tally with the other, or a sort of large chain in which no link is allowed to be wanting, or a staircase, by which one may ascend to heaven, or as a personage endowed with all the characteristics of a human body. It exists from eternity, and proceeded from the Supreme Being (Prajapati or Brahma) along with the *Traividya*, *i. e.*, the three-fold sacred science (the Rik verses, the Samans or chants, and the Yajus or sacrificial formulas). The creation of the world itself was even regarded as the fruit of a sacrifice performed by the Supreme Being."†

Kinds of Offerings and Sacrifices.—The products of the cow were offered,—milk, curds, and butter. Grain was offered in different forms—fried, boiled, or as flour-balls (pinda). Sacrifices included goats, sheep, cows, buffaloes, horses, men—the last two being considered of the greatest value. Somayajna was the most frequent kind of offering. Incense was burnt, but tufts of wool and horse dung were also used.

Times of Offering, &c.—The central part of a house was dedicated to the gods. When a new house was entered upon, the fire was kindled for the first time by rubbing together pieces of wood, after which it was not allowed to go out. Morning and evening devout Aryas assembled around the sacred fire. The master of the house, as *agnihotri*, made offerings to it of wood and ghee, hymns were chanted, the children joining in the chorus and the words *svaha* and *vausat* were reiterated till the roof resounded.

The new and full moons were seasons of sacrifice. The house was decorated; grass was tied over the door and about its sides.

Every four months, at the beginning of spring, the rainy season, and autumn, sacrifices were offered.

The first ripe fruits were offered generally twice a year.

A he-goat was sacrificed once a year at the beginning of the rainy season in the house of the sacrificer.

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* *Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilization*, pp. 21, 22.

† *Introduction to Aitareya Brahmana*, pp. 73, 74.

If addition, offerings and sacrifices were made on many other occasions, some of which will be mentioned hereafter.

Sacrificial Implements.—Among these were the following: *Yúpa*, a post to which the animal to be sacrificed was tied; pots of various kinds of holding water, for boiling milk and flesh; a wooden tub in which to keep the filtered soma juice; a knife to cut up the body of the slain animal; an axe to divide the bones; a spit to roast parts of the flesh; several kinds of wooden spoons; a cup for drinking and offering soma, &c. The *sphya* was a piece of wood, shaped like a wooden sword, with which lines were drawn round the sacrificial ground. One of the priests had to hold it up high so long as the chief ceremonies lasted, to keep off rakshas, evil spirits.

Sacrificers and Priests.—In early times any one might preside at a sacrifice. The Brahman was at first simply an assistant. King Janaka asserted his right of performing sacrifices without the intervention of priests.

As great importance was attached to the hymns sung at sacrifices, Brahmans who committed them to memory acquired more and more power. As time advanced also, the ceremonies became more and more complicated, till at some sacrifices 16 priests were required, each performing his own peculiar office.

One priest watched over the whole in a sitting posture. The *Hotris* (callers) chanted the hymns of the Rig-Veda; the *Udgatris* (singers) sang the hymns of the Sama Veda; the *Adhvaryus* (persons of the ceremonies) muttered the mantras of the Yajur-Veda.

The last had to build the altar, bring the sacrificial implements, kill the animals, press the Soma, dress the offerings, throw some of them into the fire, &c.

A few of the principal offerings and sacrifices will now be described.

Soma.

Soma juice was an essential part of every offering of importance. Dr. Rajendralala Mitra says that it was made with the expressed juice of a creeper, diluted with water, mixed with barley meal, clarified butter, and the meal of wild paddy, and fermented in a jar for nine days. It may be concluded that a beverage prepared by the vinous fermentation of barley meal, should have strong intoxicating effects, and it is not remarkable, therefore, that the Vedas should frequently refer to the exhilaration produced by its use on men and gods.*

The Aryans were fond of the soma themselves. It is thus described: "O soma, poured out for Indra to drink, flow on purely in a most sweet and most exhilarating current."

* *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. I, p. 419.

"We have drunk the soma, we have become immortal, we have entered into light, we have known the gods. What can an enemy now do to us?"

All the gods are supposed to delight in the soma juice. The following are some extracts from the hymns:

"These sharp and blessing-bearing soma juices are poured out: come, Vayu, and drink of them as presented."

"We invoke Mitra and Varuna, becoming present at the sacrifice and of pure strength, to drink the soma juice."

"Earnestly art thou invoked to this perfect rite, to drink the soma juice: come, Agni, with the Maruts."

"Awaken the Ashvins, associated for the morning sacrifice: let them both come hither to drink of the soma juice."

"Agni, bring hither the loving wives of the gods, and Twashtri to drink the soma juice."

But Indra is the deity especially addicted to love of the soma. One of his epithets is "voracious drinker of the soma juice." "Indra, the destroyer of enemies, repairs assuredly to every ceremony where the libation is poured out, to drink the soma juice for (his) exhilaration." "May the stone (that bruises the soma) attract, by its sound, thy mind toward us." When Indra has come he is urged to drink as follows: "Rejoice, Indra! open thy jaws, set wide thy throat, be pleased with our offerings." "Indra gulps down the soma: quickly quaffing the libations." He drinks so much that his belly swells enormously.

After Indra has had his fill of soma, he is asked to grant cows: "Drinker of the soma juice, wielder of the thunderbolt, O friend, (bestow upon) us, thy friends, and drinkers of the soma juice, (abundance of cows) with projecting jaws." Another effect was to strengthen Indra to conquer Vritra:

"That exceedingly exhilarating soma juice which was brought by the hawk (from heaven), when poured forth, has exhilarated thee, so that in thy vigour, thunderer, thou hast struck Vritra from the sky, manifesting thine own sovereignty."

The soma juice offered to the gods was apparently poured on the bundles of kusa grass provided for them as seats. "These dripping soma juices are offered upon the sacred grass: drink them, Indra, (to recruit thy) vigour."

Animal Sacrifices.

The animals chiefly sacrificed were goats, sheep, cows, bullocks, buffaloes, deer, and occasionally horses. Large numbers were sometimes sacrificed. Three hundred buffaloes are mentioned as having been offered to Indra.

Modern Hindus, who now worship the cow, can scarcely believe that their Aryan forefathers sacrificed her and ate her flesh. But times without number the Vedas refer to ceremonies, called *gomedha*, in which the cow was sacrificed. Minute directions are given as to the character of the animal to be chosen. The Taittiriya Brahmana of the Yajur Veda gives the following rules:

"A thick-legged cow to Indra; a barren cow to Vishnu and Varuna; a black cow to Pushan; a cow that has brought forth only once to Vayu; a cow having two colours to Mitra and Varuna; a red cow to Rudra; a white barren cow to Surya, &c."

One great sacrifice, called the *Panchasaradiya sava*, was celebrated every five years. At this seventeen young cows were immolated. "Whoever wishes to be great," says the Taittiriya Brahmana, "let him worship through the Panchasaradiya. Thereby, verily, he will be great."

"In the Asvalayana Sutra," says Dr. Mitra, "mention is made of several sacrifices of which the slaughter of cattle formed a part. One of them, in the Grihya Sutra, is worthy of special notice. It is called *Sulagava*, or 'spitted cow,' *i.e.*, Roast Beef."*

Oxen were sacrificed as well as cows. The Taittiriya Brahmana prescribes: "A dwarf ox to Vishnu; a drooping horned bull to Indra; a piebald ox to Savitri; a white ox to Mitra, &c.

Ignorant Hindus now allege that the animals were not really killed, but that after the form of sacrificing had been performed, they were allowed to go free. This statement is a pure fabrication. "Nothing," says Dr. Clerk, "is more conclusive than the evidence on this point that the animal sacrificed was really killed and subsequently eaten. It was first tied to the sacrificial post after the recital of appropriate mantras and the performance of certain special rites; some kusa grass was then spread, and the animal was laid on it with its head to the west and its feet to the north." After it was killed, the Adhvaryu said, 'It is immolated (*sanjnapta*).'"

"That the animal slaughtered was intended for food," says Dr. R. Mitra, "is evident from the directions given in the Asvalayana Sutra to eat of the remains of the offering; but to remove all doubt on the subject I shall quote here a passage from the Taittiriya Brahmana in which the mode of cutting up the victim after immolation is described in detail: it is scarcely to be supposed that the animal would be so divided if there was no necessity for distribution."

Only a few extracts need be given:

"Separate its hide so that it may remain entire. Cut open its breast so as to make it appear like an eagle (with spread wings). Separate the

* *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. I, p. 363.

forearms; divide the arms into spokes; separate successively in order the 26 ribs. Dig a trench for burying the excrements. Throw away the blood to the Rakshasas. O slayer of cattle, O Adhrigu, accomplish your task; accomplish it according to rules."

The Gopatha Brahmana of the Atharva-Veda gives in detail the names of the different individuals who are to receive shares of the meat for the parts they take in the ceremony. The following are a few of them:

"The Prastata is to receive the two jaws along with the tongue; the Pratiharta, the neck and the hump; the Udgata, the eagle-like wings; the Neshta, the right arm; the Sadasya, the left arm; the householder who ordains the sacrifice the two right feet: his wife, the two left feet, &c."

Diverse imprecations are hurled against those who venture to depart from this order of distribution.

Some had poor shares, but all were allowed plentiful libations of the soma beer.

Ashvamedha.—This rite was probably borrowed from the Scythians in Central Asia, who often sacrificed horses. The same importance was not attached to it in Vedic times as it acquired in after ages.

A year's preparation was needed for the horse sacrifice. According to the Taittiriya Brahmana, "ten times eighteen" domestic animals were to be sacrificed with it. Two hundred and sixty wild animals were also brought and tied to the sacrificial posts, but they were let loose after the fire had been carried round them.

The first animal sacrificed was a goat to Pushan. That the horse was killed and cooked is evident from the following extract from the Rig-Veda II. 162.

"11. Whatever (portion) of thy slaughtered (body) fall from thy carcase when it is being roasted by the fire (escaping) from the spit; let it not be left on the ground, nor on the (sacred) grass, but let it (all) be given to the longing gods.

12. Let their exertions be for our good who watch the cooking of the horse; who say, It is fragrant; therefore give us some; who solicit the flesh of the horse as alms.

13. The stick that is dipped into the caldron in which the flesh is boiled, the vessels that distribute the broth, the covers of the dishes, the skewers, the knives, all do honour (to the horse).

18. The axe penetrates the 34 ribs of the swift horse: the beloved of the gods (the immolators) cut up (the horse) with skill, so that the limbs may be unperforated, and recapitulating joint by joint."

This hymn would be nonsense if the horse was not really killed and cooked. Professor Wilson says:

"That the horse is to be actually immolated admits of no question; that the body was cut up into fragments is also clear; that these frag-

ments were dressed, partly boiled, and partly roasted, is also undisputable; and although the expressions may be differently understood, yet there is little reason to doubt that part of the flesh was eaten by the assistants, part presented as a burnt offering to the gods."*

The horse, however, was comforted by the thought that it was going to the gods:—

"20. Let not thy precious body grieve thee, who art going verily (to the gods): let not the axe linger in thy body; let not the greedy and unskilful (immolator), missing the members, mangle thy limbs needlessly with his knife.

21. Verily at this moment thou dost not die; nor art thou harmed; for thou goest by auspicious paths to the gods. The horses of Indra, the steeds of the Maruts shall be yoked (to their cars), and a courser shall be placed in the shaft of the ass of the Ashvins (to bear thee to heaven)."

In the Rig-Veda the object of the *Ashvamedha* is no more than as usual with other rites, the acquiring of wealth and posterity:

"22. May this horse bring to us all-sustaining wealth, with abundance of cows, of excellent horses, and of male offspring; may the spirited steed bring us exemption from wickedness; may this horse, offered in oblation, procure for us bodily vigour."

In the Ramayana the horse sacrifice is employed by the childless Dasaratha as the means of obtaining sons. As one step towards this, the principal queen, Kausalya, is directed to lie all night in closest contact with the dead horse. "In the morning," says Wilson, "when the queen is released from this disgusting and, in fact, impossible, contiguity, a dialogue, as given in the Yajush, and in the Ashvamedha section of the Satapatha Brahmana, and as explained in the Sutras, takes place between the queen and the females accompanying or attendant upon her, and the principal priests, which, though brief, is in the highest degree both silly and obscene. We find no vestige, however, of these revolting impurities in the Rig-Veda, although it is authority for practices sufficiently coarse, and such as respectable Hindus of the present generation will find it difficult to credit as forming a part of the uncreated revelations of Brahma."†

A later idea was that the Ashvamedha was celebrated by a monarch desirous of universal dominion. Another fiction was that a hundred celebrations deposed Indra from the throne of Swarga, and elevated the sacrificer to his place.

Purushamedha, Human Sacrifices.

Human sacrifices, though now regarded with horror, were practised in ancient times by nearly all nations. The Aryan Hindus, the Greeks, Romans, Germans and Britons, once lived together,

* Introduction to Translation of Rig-Veda, Vol. II, pp. xiii, xiv.
† do. do. do. Vol. II., p. xiii.

speaking the same language, and following the same customs. We know that human sacrifices were offered by the Western Aryans at an early period. In England, large numbers of human beings were burnt alive in images made of wicker work. At Athens, a man and a woman were annually sacrificed to expiate the sins of the nation. The Germans sometimes immolated hundreds at a time. It is therefore very probable that the practice prevailed also among the Eastern Aryans.

The subject has been carefully investigated by Dr. Rajendralala Mitra, the most distinguished Indian scholar of modern times, in a paper originally published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Some maintain that human sacrifices are not authorised in the Vedas, but were introduced in later times. Dr. R. Mitra says: "As a Hindu writing on the actions of my forefathers—remote as they are—it would have been a source of great satisfaction to me if I could adopt this conclusion as true; but I regret I cannot do so consistently with my allegiance to the cause of history."

His paper on the subject occupies 84 pages in his *Indo-Aryans*, giving numerous quotations both in Sanskrit and English. The following is only a brief summary. Dr. R. Mitra first describes the prevalence of human sacrifices in all parts of the world, both in ancient and modern times. He adds: "Benign and humane as was the spirit of the ancient Hindu religion, it was not all opposed to animal sacrifice; on the contrary, most of the principal rites required the immolation of large numbers of various kinds of beasts and birds. One of the rites enjoined required the performer to walk deliberately into the depth of the ocean to drown himself to death. This was called *Mahaprasthana*, and is forbidden in the present age. Another, an expiatory one, required the sinner to burn himself to death, on a blazing pyre—the *Tushanala*. This has not yet been forbidden. The gentlest of beings, the simple-minded women of Bengal, were for a long time in the habit of consigning their first-born babes to the sacred river Ganges at Sagar Island, and this was preceded by a religious ceremony, though it was not authorised by any of the ancient rituals. If the spirit of the Hindu religion has tolerated, countenanced or promoted such acts, it would not be by any means unreasonable or inconsistent, to suppose that it should have, in primitive times, recognised the slaughter of human beings as calculated to appease, gratify, and secure the grace of, the gods."

But to turn from presumptive evidence to the facts recorded in the Vedas. The earliest reference to human sacrifice occurs in the first book of the Rig-Veda. It contains seven hymns supposed to have been recited by one Sunahsepha when he was bound to a stake preparatory to being immolated. The story is given in the Aitareya Brahmana of the Rig-Veda.

Harischandra had made a vow to sacrifice his first-born to Varuna if that deity would bless him with children. A child was born, named Rohita, and Varuna claimed it; but the father evaded fulfilling his promise under various pretexts until Rohita, grown up to man's estate, ran away from home, when Varuna afflicted the father with dropsy. At last Rohita purchased one Sunahsepha from his father Ajigarta for a hundred cows. When Sunahsepha had been prepared, they found nobody to bind him to the sacrificial post. Then Ajigarta said, "Give me another hundred, and I shall bind him." They gave him another hundred cows, and he bound him. When Sunahsepha had been prepared and bound, when the Apri hymns had been sung, and he had been led round the fire, they found nobody to kill him. Next Ajigarta said, "Give me another hundred, and I shall kill him." They gave him another hundred cows, and he came whetting the knife. Sunahsepha then recited the hymns praising Agni, Indra, Mitra, Varuna, and other gods. He says:—

"13. Sunahsephas, seized and bound to the three-footed tree, has invoked the son of Aditi: may the regal Varuna, wise and irresistible, liberate him; may he let loose his bonds."

Varuna, pleased with the hymns of Sunahsephas, set him free. Disgusted with his father, he forsook him, and became the adopted son of Visvamitra, his maternal uncle.

This story shows that human sacrifices were really offered. If Harischandra had simply to tie his son to a post and after repeating a few mantras over him, let him off perfectly sound, he could easily have done so. "The running away of the son from his father would also be unmeaning; the purchase of a substitute stupid; the payment of a fee of a hundred head of cattle to undertake the butcher's work quite supererogatory; and the sharpening of the knife by Ajigarta a vain preliminary." Dr. R. Mitra adds: "Seeing that, until the beginning of this century, the practice of offering the first-born to the river Ganges was common, and the story simply says that Sunahsephas was offered to the water-god Varuna as a substitute for the first-born Rohita, he can perceive nothing in it inconsistent or unworthy of belief."

This view is supported by Max Müller. He says that the story in the Aitareya Brahmana "shows that, at that early time, the Brahmans were familiar with the idea of human sacrifices, and that men who were supposed to belong to the caste of the Brahmans were ready to sell their sons for that purpose."

The *Purushamedha* was celebrated for the attainment of supremacy over all created beings. Its performance was limited to Brahmans and Kshatriyas. It could be commenced only on the tenth of the waxing moon in the month of Chaitra, and altogether it required 40 days for its performance, though only 5 out of the 40 days

were specially called the days of the Purushamedha, whence it got the name of *panchaha*. Eleven sacrificial posts were required for it, and to each of them was tied an animal fit for Agni and Soma (a barren cow), the human victims being placed between the posts.

The earliest indication of this rite occurs in the Vajasaneyi Sanhita of the White Yajur Veda. The passage in it bearing on the subject is supposed to describe the different kinds of human victims appropriate for particular gods and goddesses. The section, in which it occurs, opens with three verses which, the commentator says, were intended to serve as mantras for offerings of human victims. Then follows a series of 179 names of gods in the dative case, each followed by the name of one or more persons in the objective case; thus: "to Brahma a Brahmana, to the Maruts, a Vaisya," &c. The copula is nowhere given, and it is quite optional with the reader to supply whatever verb he chooses. The whole of their names occurs also in the Taittiriya Brahmana of the Black Yajur Veda, with only a few slight variations, and in some cases having the verb *alabhate* after them. This verb is formed of the root *labh*, "to kill" with the prefix *á*, and commentators have generally accepted the term to mean slaughter, though in some cases it means consecration before slaughter.

Dr. R. Mitra quotes the 179 names in full, and gives long explanatory extracts from the Brahmanas and Apastambha. He arrives at the following conclusion: "Probably the number originally sacrificed was few, and that when the rite became emblematic, the number was increased in confirmation of some liturgical theory, particularly as it did not involve any trouble or difficulty. But whether so or not, certain it is that at one time or other men were immolated for the gratification of some divinity or other in this rite or its prototype."

The presumption is strong that the real sacrifice belonged to the Sanhita, and the Brahmana divested it of its hideousness and cruelty and made it emblematic, even as the Vaishnavas have, within the last five or six hundred years, replaced the sacrifice of goats and buffaloes to Chandika by that of pumpkins and sugar-cane.

Nor is the Purushamedha the only sacrifice at which human sacrifices were ordained. The Ashvamedha, or horse sacrifice, required the immolation of a human being just as much as the former, and hence it is that the horse sacrifice was prohibited in the Kali Yuga along with it.

The Satapatha Brahmana, in another passage, has a verse which is remarkable for the manner in which the human victim is therein referred to. It says, "Let a fire offering be made with the head of a man. The offering is the rite itself (*yajna*); therefore does it make a man part of the sacrificial animals; and hence it is that among animals man is included in sacrifice."

Passing from the Brahmanas to the Itihasas, we have ample evidence to show that the rite of Purushamedha was not unknown to their authors. The Institutes of Manu affords the same evidence, but it would seem that when it came into currency, the rite was looked upon with horror, and so it was prohibited as unfit to be performed in the present age.

But while the Puranas suppressed the Purushamedha they afford abundant indications of another rite requiring the immolation of a human victim having come into vogue. This was *Narabali*, or human sacrifice to the goddess Chamunda, or Chandika,—a dark, fierce sanguinary divinity.

The Kalika Purana says: "By a human sacrifice attended by the forms laid down, Devi remains gratified for a thousand years, and by a sacrifice of three men one hundred thousand years." A human sacrifice is described as *atibali* (highest sacrifice.) "The fact is well known," says Dr. R. Mitra, "that for a long time the rite was common all over Hindustan; and persons are not wanting who suspect that there are still nooks and corners in India where human victims are occasionally slaughtered for the gratification of the Devi."

"Apart from the sacrifices enjoined in the Sastras, there used, in former times, to be offered human victims to several *dii minores* (inferior gods) by way of expiations or good-will offerings whenever a newly excavated tank failed to produce sufficient water, or a temple or building cracked, accidents which were attributed to malevolent divinities who generally yielded to the seductive influence of sanguinary offerings."

"The offering of one's own blood to the goddess is a mediæval and modern rite. It is made by women, and there is scarcely a respectable house in all Bengal, the mistress of which has not, at one time or other, shed her blood under the notion of satisfying the goddess by the operation. Whenever her husband or a son is dangerously ill, a vow is made that, on the recovery of the patient, the goddess would be regaled with human blood, and in the first Durga Puja following, or at the temple at Kalighat, or at some other sacred fane, the lady performs certain ceremonies, and then bares her breast in the presence of the goddess, and with a nail-cutter (*naruna*) draws a few drops of blood from between her busts, and offers them to the divinity."

Dr. R. Mitra gives the following summary of the conclusions which may be fairly drawn from the facts cited above:

1*st*. That looking to the history of human civilization and the rituals of the Hindus, there is nothing to justify the belief that in ancient times the Hindus were incapable of sacrificing human beings to their gods.

2*nd*. That the Sunahsepha hymns of the Rik Sanhita most probably refer to a human sacrifice.

3*rd*. That the Aitareya Brahmana refers to an actual and not a typical human sacrifice.

4*th*. That the Purushamedha originally required the actual sacrifice of men.

5*th*. That the Satapatha Brahmana sanctions human sacrifice in some cases, but makes the Purushamedha emblematic.

6*th*. That the Taittiriya Brahmana enjoins the sacrifice of a man at the Horse Sacrifice.

7*th*. That the Puranas recognise human sacrifices to Chandika, but prohibit the Purushamedha rite.

8*th*. That the Tantras enjoin human sacrifices to Chandika, and require that when human victims are not available, the effigy of a human being should be sacrificed to her."

Reaction against Sacrifices.

There have been many changes in the religious beliefs and practices of the Hindus. They have changed their gods again and again as has been already shown; Dyaus, Varuna, Agni, Indra, now being superseded by Vishnu, Siva, Rama, and Krishna.

Their practices have also changed. When the Aryans entered the Punjab, they were largely a pastoral people, their flocks and herds affording a large proportion of their food. It has been shown that the Aryans in Vedic times ate beef and drank freely the intoxicating soma beer. Much of their time was spent in fighting with the aborigines, whose fields and cattle they sought to take. Indra, supposed to be strong in battle, was therefore the principal god.

By degrees the Aryans were settled in peaceful possession of the country, the aborigines having either retired to the mountains or been reduced to slavery. The Aryans became milder than their forefathers. Instead of considering beef the best of food and delighting in soma beer, they began to think that no life should be taken and that no intoxicating liquors should be tasted.

The new doctrine of transmigration arose, unknown to the Vedic Aryans, who did not believe that at death they passed from one body to another. This was a strong reason against the use of meat. A man's grandmother might become a sheep, and if killed, he might eat her.

Animal worship, which sprang up, was another influence. The old Aryans worshipped chiefly the heavenly bodies; they did not look upon cows as sacred, but killed and ate them freely. For a people to eat their gods, seemed as wicked as to eat their parents.

The chief leader in the movement against sacrifices and the use of soma beer, was Gautama Buddha, the son of an Indian Raja, who lived about 2,400 years ago. His first command was, "Thou shalt not take any life." This referred to life of any kind. His

priests were forbidden even to pluck up any vegetable, which was supposed to have life like animals, and into which a person might pass in another birth. The following was one argument used by the Buddhists against sacrifices. The Vedic hymns say that animals sacrificed went to heaven. A man should therefore sacrifice his father, because he would go to heaven!

Another command of Buddha was, "Thou shalt not taste any intoxicating drink." The evils of drunkenness began to be felt, and though the Rig-Veda has 114 hymns in praise of the soma beer, its use was given up by the great body of the Hindus, though some tribes have retained their drinking habits.

The changes which Buddha advocated were largely carried out by the influence of Asoka, the powerful king of Magadha, whose empire extended from Bengal to the borders of Afghanistan. He reigned from about B. C. 260 to 220. There are rock inscriptions which he caused to be made in different parts of India. One of them is as follows: "This is the edict of the beloved of the gods, the Raja Piyadasi. The putting to death of animals is to be entirely discontinued."

The reaction can be gradually traced. Panini, the grammarian, says that there are old and new Brahmanas. The Aitareya Brahmana of the Rig-Veda, supposed to be the oldest, refers to sacrifices as really offered. The Satapatha Brahmana in some cases attempts to spiritualize them away. Animals and men were let loose after being tied to the sacrificial posts. Some of the leading doctrines of Buddha were adopted by the Brahmans, and the slaying of animals, even in sacrifice, became revolting to them. When Manu's Code was compiled, things were partly in a transition stage, and it is inconsistent. It says:

"22. The prescribed beasts and birds are to be slain by Brahmans for the sacrifice, and also for the support of dependents; for Agastya did (so) formerly.

23. There were, indeed, offerings of eatable beasts and birds in the ancient sacrifices and in the oblations of Brahmans and Kshatriyas." Bk. V.

On the other hand it says:

"46. He who desires not to cause confinement, death, and pain to living beings, (but is) desirous of the good of all, gets endless happiness." V.

The superiority of not eating flesh to sacrifices is thus shown:—

"53. He who for a hundred years sacrifices every year with a horse-sacrifice, and he who eats not flesh, the fruit of the virtue of both is equal." V.

Animal sacrifices are declared to have passed away, and others are substituted:

"84. All the Vedic rites, oblational (and) sacrificial, pass away; but this imperishable syllable *Om* is to be known to be Brahma and also Prajapati."

"85. The sacrifice of muttering (this word, &c.) is said to be better by tenfold than the regular sacrifice; if inaudible, it is a hundredfold (better); and a thousandfold, if mental." II.

The "five great sacrifices ordered for householders every day by the great seers" were:

"70. Teaching the Veda, the Veda sacrifice; offering cakes and water, the sacrifice to the manes; an offering to fire, the sacrifice to the gods; offering of food, to all beings; honour to guests, the sacrifice *to* men." III.

The Vaishnava worship has had a considerable influence *in* putting a stop to animal sacrifices. It has been mentioned that within the last five or six centuries has been replaced the sacrifice of goats and buffaloes, even to Chandika, by pumpkins and sugar-cane.

Goats and buffaloes are still offered to Kali, but the image of a man, after the ceremony of *pranpratishta*, is substituted for a human being.

THE PRAYERS OF THE VEDAS.

Prayer is an essential part of religion. Belief in God leads a man to ask Him for such blessings as he thinks himself to need.

Prayer is an index both to a man's own character and to the supposed nature of the deity he worships. Most people are worldly, and their prayers are only for temporal blessings, for wealth, for sons, recovery from sickness, deliverance from earthly enemies, &c. Only a few are spiritually minded, and seek for pardon of sin, holiness, and communion with God.

The Vedic Aryans had a firm belief in the virtue of prayer. One hymn says, "May he (Indra) hear us, for he has ears to hear. He is asked for riches; will he despise our prayers?" At the consecration of a house the guardian spirit is thus addressed: "Lord of the dwelling! bid us welcome hither; freedom from harm grant us, and happy entrance; as we approach with prayer, accept it of us; propitious be to bipeds and quadrupeds." The Vedas are largely a collection of prayers.

The hymns usually begin by praising the gods for their supposed

excellencies, their great deeds, sometimes even their personal beauty. The following are some examples:

"I offer especial praise to the most bountiful, the excellent, the opulent, the verily powerful and stately Indra."

Indra is praised for his exploits:—

"Thou hast slain Karanja and Parnaya with thy bright gleaming spear, in the cause of Athigwa: unaided, thou didst demolish the hundred cities of Vandrida, when besieged by Rijiswan."

Agni is thus celebrated:

"The immortal and resplendent Agni, the bearer of oblations, honoured by the Rudras and Vasus, the invoker of the gods, who presides over oblations, and is the distributer of riches, praised by his worshippers, and admired like a chariot amongst mankind, accepts the oblations that are successively presented."

"Agni, the head of heaven, the navel of earth, became the ruler over both earth and heaven: all the gods engendered thee, Vaiswanara, in the form of light for the venerable sage."

In another hymn supreme power is ascribed to Varuna:

"Thou, O wise god (Varuna), art lord of all, of heaven and earth, listen on thy way."

The Maruts are thus addressed:

"Ho, Maruts, leaders (of rites), be propitious to us, you who are infinitely opulent, immortal, shedders of rain, renowned for truth, wise, young, greatly glorified, and worshipped with copious oblations."

The gods are sometimes praised for their beauty. "Good-looking" is a common epithet. The aborigines had small noses: hence the Aryans called them "goat-nosed," "noseless." On the other hand, Indra is thus addressed.

"Indra, with the handsome nose, be pleased with these animating praises."

"Offer the oblation to that Sinivali (the Moon), the protectress of mankind, who has beautiful arms, beautiful fingers, who is the parent of many children."

Blessings asked.

Wealth.—The ancient Aryans were largely a pastoral people. Professor Bhattacharyya infers this from "cows, the recovery of cows, the plunder of cows, the increase of cows and gifts of cows being described in the Rig-Veda in such permutations and combina-

tions."* Prayers for cows form a frequent petition, but wealth in every form is desired. The following are some examples:—

"Grant us, Indra, wealth beyond measure or calculation, inexhaustible, the source of cattle, of food, of all life."

"Agni, procure for us the food that is in heaven and mid-air, and grant us the wealth that is on earth."

"Indra, of boundless wealth, enrich us with thousands of excellent cows and horses.

"We solicit, Indra, for a thousand well-trained, swift-going horses, for a hundred jars of Soma juice. We seek to bring down from thee thousands and hundreds of cattle; may riches come to us from thee."

"We solicit the good-looking (Pushan) for riches."

"Affluent Ushas, bestow upon these (thy) devout adorers, food and posterity, so that, being opulent, they may, without stint, bestow riches upon us: bright-born goddess (who art) sincerely praised for (the gift of) horses."

Rain.—Indra is often invoked for this blessing:

"Indra, by thee is food (rendered) everywhere abundant, easy of attainment, and assuredly perfect: wielder of the thunderbolt, set open the cow pastures, and provide (ample) wealth."

"Heaven and earth are unable to sustain thee when destroying thine enemies: thou mayest command the waters of heaven: send us liberally kine."

Children.—These form a frequent petition:—

"Agni, confer upon me vigour, progeny, and life."

"Borne in your car that traverses the three worlds, bring to us, Ashwins, present affluence, attended by (male) progeny."

"Wide-hipped Sinivali (the Moon,) who art the sister of the gods, accept the offered oblations, and grant us, goddess, progeny."

Debt.—Getting into debt has been common in India from the earliest times. The following prayer refers to it:—

"Discharge Varuna, the debts (contracted) by my progenitors, and those now (contracted) by me; and may I not, royal Varuna, be dependent (on the debts contracted) by another."

Preservation from Danger.—Amidst constant wars with the aborigines, this request frequently occurs in the hymns:

"Indra, who art the object of praises, let not men do injury to our persons: thou art mighty, keep off violence."

"Invincible Indra, protect us in battles abounding in spoil, with insuperable defences."

"Youthful and most resplendent Agni, protect us against evil spirits, and from the malevolent (man) who gives no gifts: protect us from noxious (animals), and from those who seek to kill us."

* *Tagore Law Lectures*, p. 119.

Destruction of Enemies.—Some prayers included all who are unfriendly :—

" Resplendent Agni, invoked by oblations of clarified butter, consume our adversaries who are defended by evil spirits."

" Indra, destroy every one that reviles us ; slay every one that does us injury."

" Indra, destroy this ass, (our adversary), praising thee with such discordant speech."

" Do ye, O lord of the virtuous, slay our Aryan enemies, slay our Dasya enemies, destroy all those that hate us."

The Rishis who wrote the hymns were not always friendly with one another. " Especially prominent," says Weber, " is the enmity between the families of Vasishtha and Visvamitra, which runs through all Vedic antiquity, continues to play an important part in the epic, and is kept up to the latest times ; so that, for example, a commentator of the Veda who claims to be descended from Vasishtha, leaves passages unexpounded in which the latter is stated to have had a curse imprecated upon him. This implacable hatred owes its origin to the trifling circumstance of Vasishtha having been once appointed chief sacrificial priest instead of Visvamitra by one of the petty kings of those early times.'*

In the Markandeya Purana, Vasishtha curses Visvamitra and turns him into a crane, while Vasishtha is changed into a starling. The two fought so furiously that the course of the universe was disturbed, and many creatures perished.

The Rishis showed their hatred of the niggard who gave no gifts, who presented no offerings :—

" When will Indra crush the illiberal man like a bush with his foot ?"

" Indra consorts not with the man who offers no libation, however flourishing ; but overwhelms and at once destroys such a person, whilst he gives the godly man a herd of kine as his portion."

" Hurl thy burning bolt against the hater of devotion, O wise deity ; pierce the hearts of the niggards with a probe ; and then subject them to us."

But the fiercest indignation is reserved for the aborigines who are looked upon as demons :—

" Indra and Soma, burn the Rakshasas, destroy them, throw them down, ye two Bulls, the people that grow in darkness, throw down the madmen, suffocate them, kill them, hurl them away, and slay the voracious. Indra and Soma, up together, against the cursing demon ! May he burn and hiss like an oblation in the fire ! Put your everlasting hatred on the villain who hates the Brahman, who eats flesh, and whose look is abominable."

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* *History of Indian Literature*, pp. 37, 38.

"Hurl upon them thy hottest bolt, cut them up from beneath, shatter them, overpower them; kill and subdue the Rakshasas, O Maghavan! Tear up the Rakshasas by the roots, Indra, cut him in the midst, destroy him at the extremities. How long dost thou delay? Hurl thy burning shaft against the enemy of the priest."

Pardon of Sin.—Petitions for this are comparatively very rare. They occur chiefly in two or three hymns to Varuna which will hereafter be quoted in full. The following are other examples:—

"Waters, take away whatever sin has been (found) in me, whether I have (knowingly) done wrong, or have pronounced imprecations (against holy men), or have spoken untruth."

"Aditi, Mitra, and also Varuna, forgive, if we have committed any sin against you! May not the long darkness come over us! May Aditi grant us sinlessness."

"May our sin, Agni, be repented of; manifest riches to us; may our sin be repented of."

Prayer a Bargain.—The praises and offerings of worshippers are supposed to increase the power of the gods:—

"May these our praises augment the power of thee (Indra), who art long-lived, and being agreeable to thee, may they yield delight (to us).

"Depart (Indra); take the reins in your hands; the effused and exciting juices have exhilarated thee; wielder of the thunderbolt; thus filled with nutriment, rejoice with thy spouse.

"They, Indra, who present to thee oblations, augment thy vast strength and thy manly vigour."

There is little love or gratitude expressed in the hymns. The gods and their worshippers are like traders in a bargain. "I give this for that." Barth, a great Sanskrit scholar, sums up the prayers of the Vedas in the words, "Here is butter; give us cows." The following are examples:

"Agni and Soma, give ample (recompense) to him who presents to you both this clarified butter." I. 93.

"Agni, thou art praised by us for the sake of wealth." I. 31.

"Indra, propitiated by these offerings, by these oblations, dispel poverty with cattle and horses." I. 53.

"What suitable praise may bring the son of strength, Indra, before us to give us wealth?" III. 24, 1.

"Indra bestows wealth upon him who offers a libation to him." III. 24, 6.

The god Rudra is entreated not to "take advantage, like a trader, of his worshippers."

The Rev. K. S. Macdonald says: "Canon Rawlinson points out the

relation as almost the very opposite to what one would expect—the worshipper being the lord and master, the worshipped being the servant, if not the slave: 'The offerings of praise and sacrifice, and especially the offering of the Soma juice, were considered not merely to please the god who was the object of them, but to lay him under a binding obligation, and almost to compel him to grant the request of the worshippers.' 'Who buys this—*my* Indra,' says Vamadeva, a Vedic poet, 'with ten milch kine? When he shall have slain his foes, then let the purchaser give him back to me again;' which the commentator explains, as follows: 'Vamadeva, *having by much praise got Indra into his possession or subjugation*, proposes to make a bargain when about to dispose of him;' and so he offers for ten milch kine to hand him over temporarily, apparently to any person who will pay the price, with the proviso that when Indra has subdued the person's foes, he is to be returned to the vendor!"*

In later times this idea was still more strongly developed. The performance of austerities for a continued period was supposed to constrain the gods to grant the desired boon, although fraught with peril and even destruction to themselves.

SPECIMENS OF THE RIG-VEDA HYMNS.

Verses have already been quoted from a number of the Vedic hymns. To give a better idea of their character, some are given entire. The translations are chiefly from Professor Wilson, based on the Commentary of Sayana, regarded as the greatest commentator on the Vedas. Only a few hymns can be extracted, but all are very much alike.

Hymns to Agni.

Of these there is a very large number. The following is the first in the Rig-Veda:

1. "I glorify Agni, the purohit of the sacrifice, the divine, the ministrant, who presents the oblation (to the gods), and is the possessor of great wealth.

2. May that Agni who is celebrated both by ancient and modern sages, conduct the gods hither.

3. Through Agni the worshipper obtains that affluence which increases day by day, which is the source of fame and the multiplier of mankind.

* *The Vedic Religion*, p. 137.

4. Agni, the unobstructed sacrifice of which thou art on every side the protector, assuredly reaches the gods.

5. May Agni, the presenter of oblations, the attainer of knowledge, he who is true, renowned and divine, come hither with the gods.

6. Whatever good thou mayest, Agni, bestow upon the giver (of the oblation), that verily, Angiras, shall revert to thee.

7. We approach thee, Agni, with reverential homage in our thoughts, daily, both morning and evening.

8. Thee, the radiant, the protector of sacrifices, the constant illuminator of truth, increasing in thine own dwelling.

9. Agni, be unto us easy of access, as is a father to his son; be ever present with us for our good."

The following, addressed to the same deity, is from Ashtaka I, 67.

"1. Born in the woods, the friend of man, Agni protects his worshipper, as a Raja favours an able man; kind as a defender, prosperous as a performer of (good) works, may he, the invoker of the gods, the bearer of oblations, be propitious.

2. Holding in his hand all (sacrificial) wealth, and hiding in the hollows (of the waters), he filled the gods with alarm; the leaders (the gods), the upholders of acts, then recognize Agni when they have recited the prayers conceived in the heart.

3. Like the unborn (sun) he sustains the earth and the firmament, and props up the heaven with true prayers; Agni, in whom is all sustenance, cherish the places that are grateful to animals; repair (to the spots) where there is no pasturage.

4. He who knows Agni hidden in the hollows; he who approaches him as the maintainer of truth; those who performing worship, repeat his praises, to them assuredly he promises affluence.

5. The wise (first) honouring Agni, as they do a dwelling, worship him who implants their (peculiar) virtues in herbs, as progeny in their parents, and who, the source of knowledge and of all sustenance, (abides) in the domicile of the waters."

The next translation is from Max Müller, II. 6.

1. Agni, accept this log which I offer to thee, accept this my service; listen well to these my songs.

2. With this log, O Agni, may we worship thee, thou son of strength, conqueror of horses! and with this hymn, thou high-born!

3. May we thy servants serve thee with songs, O granter of riches, thou who lovest songs and delightest in riches.

4. Thou lord of wealth and giver of wealth, be thou wise and powerful; drive away from us our enemies!

5. He gives us rain from heaven, he gives us inviolable strength, he gives us food a thousandfold.

6. Youngest of the gods, their messenger, their invoker, most deserv-

ing of worship, come, at our praise, to him who worships thee and longs for thy help.

7. For thou, O sage, goest wisely between these two creations (heaven and earth, gods and men), like a friendly messenger between two hamlets.

8. Thou art wise, and thou hast been pleased, perform thou, intelligent Agni, the sacrifice without interruption, sit down on this sacred grass![*]

Hymns to Indra.

As already mentioned, more hymns are addressed to this god in the Rig-Veda than to any other. He is especially supplicated for rain and the destruction of enemies. To strengthen him for battle, he is encouraged to quaff abundantly the Soma juice. The following are examples from Wilson's translation :

1. Voracious (Indra) has risen up (as ardently) as a horse (approaches) a mare, to partake of the copious libations contained in the ladles; having stayed his well-horsed, golden and splendid chariot, he flies himself, capable of heroic (actions, with the beverage).

2. His adorers, bearing oblations, are thronging round (him), as (merchants) covetous of gain crowd the ocean (in vessels) on a voyage : ascend quickly, with a hymn to the powerful Indra, the protector of the solemn sacrifice, as women (climb) a mountain.

3. He is quick in action and mighty; his faultless and destructive prowess shines in manly (conflict) like the peak of a mountain (afar), with which clothed in iron (armour), he, the suppressor of the malignant, when exhilarated (by the Soma juice), cast the wily Sushna into prison and bonds.

4. Divine strength waits, like the sun upon the dawn, upon that Indra who is made more powerful for protection by thee, (his worshipper), who with resolute vigour resists the gloom, and inflicts severe castigation upon his enemies, making them cry aloud (with pain).

5. When thou, destroying Indra, didst distribute the (previously) hidden life-sustaining, undecaying waters through the different quarters of the heaven, then, animated (by the Soma juice), thou didst engage in battle, and with exulting (prowess) slewest Vritra, and didst send down an ocean of waters.

6. Thou, mighty Indra, sendest down from heaven by thy power, upon the realms of earth, the (world) sustaining rain; exhilarated (by the Soma juice), thou hast expelled the waters (from the clouds), and hast crushed Vritra by a solid rock. I. 4. 6.

1. The sages have formerly been possessed of this thy supreme power, Indra, as if it were present with them, one light of whom shines upon the earth, the other in heaven, and both are in combination with each other, as banner (mingles with banner) in battle.

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[*] *Chips*, Vol. I. p. 34.

2. He upholds, and has spread out, the earth; having struck (the clouds), he has extricated the waters; he has slain Ahi, he has pierced Rauhina, he has destroyed, by his prowess, the mutilated (Vritra).

3. Armed with the thunderbolt, and confident in his strength, he has gone on destroying the cities of the Dasyus. Thunderer, acknowledging (the praises of thy worshipper), cast, for his sake, thy shaft against the Dasyu, and augment the strength and glory of the Arya.

4. Maghavan, possessing a name that is to be glorified, offers to him who celebrates it these (revolving) ages of man; the thunderer, the scatterer (of his foes), sallying forth to destroy the Dasyus, has obtained a name (renowned for victorious) prowess.

5. Behold this, the vast and extensive (might of Indra); have confidence in his prowess; he has recovered the cattle, he has recovered the horses, the plants, the waters, the woods.

6. We offer the Soma libation to him who is the performer of many exploits, the best (of the gods), the showerer (of benefits), the possessor of true strength, the hero who, holding respect for wealth, takes it from him who performs no sacrifice, like a foot pad (from a traveller), and proceeds (to give it) to the sacrificer.

7. Thou didst perform Indra, a glorious deed, when thou didst awaken the sleeping Ahi with thy thunderbolt; then the wives (of the gods), the Maruts, and all the gods, imitated thy exultation.

8. Inasmuch, Indra, as thou hast slain Sushna, Pipru, Kuyava, and Vritra, and destroyed the cities of Sambara, therefore may Mitra, Varuna, Aditi,—ocean, earth, and heaven, grant us that (which we desire).

I. 7. 10.

The Maruts.

The Maruts, the storm-gods, often associated with Indra, have many hymns addressed to them. The following is an example:

1. Annihilators (of adversaries), endowed with great strength, loud-shouting, unbending, inseparable partakers of the evening oblation, constantly worshipped, and leaders (of the clouds), (the Maruts), by their personal decorations, are conspicuous (in the sky), like certain rays of the sun.

2. When Maruts, flying like birds along a certain path, (of the sky), you collect the moving passing (clouds) in the nearest portions (of the firmament), then, coming into collision with your cars, they pour forth (the waters); therefore, do you shower upon your worshipper the honey-coloured rain.

3. When they assemble (the clouds) for the good work, earth trembles at their impetuous movements, like a wife (whose husband is away): sportive, capricious, armed with bright weapons, and agitating (the solid rocks), they manifest their inherent might.

4. The troop of Maruts is self-moving, deer-borne, ever young, lord of this (earth), and invested with vigour: you, who are sincere liberators

from debt, irreproachable, and shedders of rain, are the protectors of this our rite.

5. We declare by our birth from our ancient sire, that the tongue (of praise) accompanies the manifesting (invocation of the Maruts) at the libations of the Soma; for, inasmuch as they stood by, encouraging Indra in the conflict, they have acquired names that are to be recited at sacrifices.

6. Combining with the solar rays, they have willingly poured down (rain) for the welfare (of mankind), and hymned by the priests, have been pleased partakers of the (sacrificial food); addressed with praises, moving swiftly, and exempt from fear, they have become possessed of a station agreeable and suitable to the Maruts. I. 6. 3.

Parjanya.

Parjanya has three hymns addressed to him as the rain-god. In later times the name is applied to Indra. The following, says Max Müller, is a very fair specimen of Vedic hymns.

1. Invoke the strong god with these songs! praise Parjanya, worship him with veneration! for he, the roaring bull, scattering drops, gives seed-fruit to plants.

2. He cuts the trees asunder, he kills evil spirits; the whole world trembles before his mighty weapon. Even the guiltless flees before the powerful, when Parjanya thundering strikes down the evil-doers.

3. Like a charioteer, striking his horses with a whip, he puts forth his messengers of rain. From afar arise the roarings of the lion, when Parjanya makes the sky full of rain.

4. The winds blow, the lightnings fly, plants spring up, the sky pours. Food is produced for the whole world, when Parjanya blesses the earth with his seed.

5. O Parjanya, thou at whose work the earth bows down, thou at whose work hoofed animals are scattered, thou at whose work the plants assume all forms, grant to us thy great protection!

6. O Maruts, give us the rain of heaven, make the streams of the strong horse run down! And come hither with thy thunder, pouring out water, for thou (O Parjanya) art the living god, thou art our father.

7. Do thou roar, and thunder, and give fruitfulness! Fly around us with thy chariot full of water! Draw forth thy water skin, when it has been opened and turned downward, and let the high and the low places become level!

8. Draw up the large bucket, and pour it out; let the streams pour forth freely! Soak heaven and earth with fatness! and let there be a good draught for the cows!

9. O Parjanya, when roaring and thundering thou killest the evil-doers, then everything rejoices, whatever lives on earth.

10. Thou hast sent rain, stop now! Thou hast made the deserts passa-

ble, thou hast made plants grow for food, and thou hast obtained praise from men.* V. 83.

Surya.

Surya, the sun, is one of the chief Vedic deities. The following hymn is addressed to him:—

1. The wonderful host of rays has risen; the eye of Mitra, Varuna, and Agni; the sun, the soul of all that moves or is immoveable, has filled (with his glory) the heaven, the earth, and the firmament.

2. The Sun follows the divine and brilliant Ushas, as a man (follows a young and elegant) woman; at which season pious men perform (the ceremonies established for) ages, worshipping the auspicious (Sun) for the sake of good (reward).

3. The auspicious, swift horses of the Sun, well-limbed, road-traversing, who merit to be pleased with praise, reverenced by us, have ascended to the summit of the sky, and quickly circumambulate earth and heaven.

4. Such is the divinity, such is the majesty of the Sun, that when he has set, he has withdrawn (into himself) the diffused (light which had been shed) upon the unfinished task; when he has unyoked his coursers from his car, then night extends the veiling darkness over all.

5. The Sun, in the sight of Mitra and Varuna, displays his form (of brightness) in the middle of the heavens, and his rays extend, on one hand, his infinite and brilliant power, or, on the other (by their departure), bring on the blackness of night.

6. This day, gods, with the rising of the Sun, deliver us from heinous sin; and may Mitra, Varuna, Aditi,—ocean, earth, and heaven, be favourable to this our prayer. I. 8. 10.

Ushas.

The following hymn is addressed to Ushas, the Dawn, the daughter of heaven and sister of the Adityas:—

1. She shines upon us, like a young wife, rousing every living being to go to his work. When the fire had to be kindled by men, she made the light by striking down darkness.

2. She rose up, spreading far and wide, and moving everywhere. She grew in brightness, wearing her brilliant garment. The mother of the cows (the mornings), the leader of the days, she shone gold-coloured, lovely to behold.

3. She, the fortunate, who brings the eye of the gods, who leads the white and lovely steed (of the sun), the Dawn was seen revealed by her rays, with brilliant treasures, following every one.

4. Thou who art a blessing when thou art near, drive far away the unfriendly; make the pasture wide, give us safety! Scatter the enemy, bring us riches! Raise up wealth to the worshipper, thou mighty Dawn.

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* *India, What can it Teach us?* pp. 186, 187.

5. Shine for us with thy best rays, thou bright Dawn, thou who lengthenest our life, thou the love of all, who givest us food, who givest us wealth in cows, horses, and chariots.

6. Thou daughter of the sky, thou high-born Dawn, whom the Vasishthas magnify with songs, give us riches, high and wide; all ye gods protect us always with your blessings.* VII. 77.

The Aswins.

The Aswins (see page 35) have several hymns addressed to them. The following is a specimen :—

1. We invoke Aswins, to-day, your rapid car, the associator of the solar ray: the banked car which bears Surya, vast, wealthy, and laden with praises.

2. Aswins, grandsons of heaven, divinities, you enjoy that glory by your actions, that (sacrificial) food is administered to your persons, and powerful horses draw you in your chariot.

3. What offerer of oblations addresses you to-day with hymns for the sake (of obtaining) protection, for the drinking of the Soma, or for the ancient fulfilment of the sacrifice? what offerer of adoration may bring you Aswins (to this rite.)?

4. Nasatyas, who are manifold, come with your golden chariot to this sacrifice; drink of the sweet Soma beverage, and give precious things to the man who celebrates (your worship).

5. Come to our presence, whether from heaven or earth, with your well-constructed golden chariot: let not other devout worshippers detain you, for a prior attraction awaits you (here.)

6. Dasras, mete out for us both great opulence, comprising many descendants, since the leaders of the rite (the *Purumilhas*,), have addressed to you, Aswins, their praise, and the *Ajamilhas* have united with it their laudation.

7. May the earnest praise wherewith, distributors of food, I associate you both like-minded at this sacrifice, be (beneficial) to us; do you protect your worshipper; my desire Nasatyas, directed towards you is gratified. III. 7. 12.

Soma.

It has been mentioned that nearly the whole of one Mandala of the Rig-Veda is devoted to the praise of Soma, and most of the hymns contain allusions to the juice. The following hymn is too long to be given entire. The opening and closing verses will give an idea of the whole :—

1. Thou Soma, art thoroughly apprehended by our understanding; thou leadest us along a straight path; by thy guidance, Indra, our righteous fathers obtained wealth among the gods.

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* *Chips*, Vol. I.

2. Thou, Soma, art the doer of good by holy acts; thou art powerful by thine energies, and knowest all things; thou art the showerer (of benefits) by thy bounties, and (art great) by thy greatness; thou, the guide of men, hast been well nourished by sacrificial offerings.

20. To him who presents (offerings), Soma gives a milch cow, a swift horse, and a son who is able in affairs, skilful in domestic concerns, assiduous in worship, eminent in society, and who is an honour to his father.

21. We rejoice, Soma, contemplating thee, invincible in battle, triumphant amongst hosts, the granter of heaven, the giver of rain, the preserver of strength, born amidst sacrifices, occupying a brilliant dwelling, renowned and victorious.

22. Thou, Soma, hast generated all these herbs, the water, and the kine; thou hast spread out the spacious firmament; thou hast scattered darkness with light.

23. Divine and potent Soma, bestow upon us, with thy brilliant mind, a portion of wealth; may no (adversary) annoy thee; thou art supreme over the valour of (any) two (mutual) opponents; defend us (from enemies) in battle. I. 6. 7.

Miscellaneous Hymns.

Some hymns are addressed to several deities.

1. May Varuna and the wise Mitra lead us by straight paths (to our desires), and Aryaman rejoicing with the gods.

2. For they are the distributers of wealth (over the world); and, never heedless, discharge their functions every day.

3. May they, who are immortal, bestow upon us mortals, happiness, annihilating our foes.

4. May the adorable Indra, the Maruts, Pushan, and Bhaga, so direct our paths, (that they may lead) to the attainment of good gifts.

5. Pushan, Vishnu, Maruts, make our rites restorative of our cattle; make us prosperous.

6. The winds bring sweet (rewards) to the sacrificer; the rivers bring sweet (waters); may the herbs yield sweetness to us.

7. May night and morn be sweet; may the region of the earth be full of sweetness; may the protecting heaven be sweet to us.

8. May Vanaspati be possessed of sweetness towards us; may the sun be imbued with sweetness; may the cattle be sweet to us.

9. May Mitra be propitious to us; may Varuna, may Aryaman, be propitious to us; may Indra and Brihaspati be propitious to us; may the wide-stepping Vishnu be propitious to us. I. 6. 6.

On the other hand, Max Müller regards the following hymn of a late date as expressing monotheism:—

In the beginning there arose the Hiranyagarbha (the golden germ)—

He was the one born lord of all this. He established the earth, and this sky:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

He who gives breath, He who gives strength; whose command all the bright gods revere; whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death:—Who is the god to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

He who through His power became the sole King of the breathing and slumbering world;—He who governs all, man and beast:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

He through whose power these snowy mountains are, whose power the sea proclaims: with the distant river:—He of whom these regions are the two arms:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

He through whom the sky is bright and the earth firm—He through whom the heaven was stablished—nay, the highest heaven; He who measured the space in the sky:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

He to whom heaven and earth, standing firm by his will, look up, trembling inwardly; He over whom the rising sun shines forth:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

Wherever the mighty water-clouds went, where they placed the seed and lit the fire, thence arose He who is the sole life of the bright gods:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

He who by His might looked even over on the water-clouds, the clouds which gave strength and lit the sacrificial fire; He who alone is God above all gods:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

May He not destroy us,—He the Creator of the earth; or He, the righteous, who created the heaven; He who also created the bright and mighty waters:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? X. 121.

The 129th hymn of the Tenth Mandala of the Rig-Veda, thus attempts to describe the mystery of creation.

1. There was then neither nonentity nor entity; there was no atmosphere, nor sky above. What enveloped (all)? Where, in the receptacle of what (what it contained)? Was it water, the profound abyss?

2. Death was not then, nor immortality; there was no distinction of day or night. That One breathed calmly, self-supported; there was nothing different from, or above, it.

3. In the beginning darkness existed, enveloped in darkness. All this was undistinguishable water. That One which lay void, and wrapped in nothingness, was developed by the power of fervour.

4. Desire first arose in It, which was the primal germ of mind; (and which) sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects entity with nonentity.

5. The ray (or cord) which stretched across these (worlds), was it below or was it above? There were there impregnating powers and mighty forces, a self-supporting principle beneath, and energy aloft.

6. Who knows, who here can declare, whence has sprung, whence, this creation? The gods are subsequent to the development of this (universe); who then knows whence it arose.

7. From what this creation arose, and whether (any one) made it or not,—he who in the highest heaven is its ruler, he verily knows, or (even) he does not know.*

Brahmanaspati, or Brihaspati, is in one hymn styled the father of the gods (*devanam pitaram*) and to have *blown forth the births of the gods like a blacksmith.*

1. Let us, in chanted hymns, with praise, declare the births of the gods,—any of us who in (this) latter age may behold them.

2. Brahmanaspati blew forth these births like a blacksmith. In the earliest age of the gods the existent sprang from the non-existent.

3. In the first age of the gods, the existent sprang from the non-existent: thereafter the regions sprang, thereafter, from Uttanapad.

4. The earth sprang from Uttanapad, from the earth sprang the regions: Daksha sprang from Aditi, and Aditi from Daksha.

5. For Aditi was produced, she who is thy daughter O Daksha. After her the gods were born, happy, partakers of immortality.

6. When, gods, ye moved, agitated upon those waters, then a violent dust issued from you, as from dancers.

7. When, gods, ye, like strenuous men, replenished the world, then ye drew forth the sun which was hidden in the (aerial ?) ocean.

8. Of the eight sons of Aditi who were born from her body, she approached the gods with seven, and cast out Marttanda (the eighth).

9. With seven sons Aditi approached the former generation (of gods): she again produced Marttanda for birth as well as for death. X. 72. †

As Dr. Muir remarks, the "share which Aditi took in the process of creation is not very intelligibly set forth." How could Daksha spring from Aditi and Aditi from Daksha ?

One of the most recent and celebrated hymns of the Rig-Veda is the Purusha-sukta. As Sir Monier Williams remarks, it serves "to illustrate the gradual sliding of Hindu monotheism into pantheism, and the first foreshadowing of the idea of sacrifice. It is also the only hymn in the Rig-Veda which alludes to the distinction of caste, which, for so many centuries, has held India in bondage."

1. Purusha has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. On every side enveloping the earth, he overpassed (it) by a space of ten fingers.

2. Purusha himself is this whole (universe), whatever has been, and whatever shall be. He is also the lord of immortality, since (or when) by food he expands.

3. Such is his greatness, and Purusha is superior to this. All existences are a quarter of him; and three-fourths of him are that which is immortal in the sky.

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* Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. V. pp. 356, 357.
† Do. do. Vol. V. pp. 48, 49.

4. With three-quarters Purusha mounted upwards. A quarter of him was again produced here. He was then diffused everywhere over things which eat and things which do not eat

5. From him was born Viraj, and from Viraj, Purusha. When born, he extended beyond the earth, both behind and before.

6. When the gods performed a sacrifice with Purusha as the oblation, the spring was its butter, the summer its fuel, and the autumn its (accompanying) offering.

7. This victim, Purusha, born in the beginning, they immolated on the sacrificial grass. With him the gods, the Sadhyas,* and the rishis sacrificed.

8. From that universal sacrifice were provided curds and butter. It formed those aerial (creatures) and animals both wild and tame.

9. From that universal sacrifice sprang the Rich and Saman verses, the Metres and the Yajush.

10. From it sprang horses and all animals with two rows of teeth; kine sprang from it; from it goats and sheep.

11. When (the gods) divided Purusha, into how many parts did they cut him up? What was his mouth? What arms (had he)? What (two objects) are said (to have been) his thighs and feet?

12. The Brahman was his mouth; the Rajanya was made his arms; the being (called) the Vaisya, he was his thighs; the Sudra sprang from his feet.

13. The moon sprang from his soul (*manas*), the sun from his eye, Indra and Agni from his mouth, and Vayu from his breath."

14. From his navel arose the air, from his head the sky, from his feet the earth, from his ear the (four) quarters; in this manner (the gods) formed the worlds.

15. When the gods, performing sacrifice, bound Purusha as a victim, there were seven sticks (stuck up) for it (around the fire), and thrice seven pieces of fuel were made.

16. With sacrifice the gods performed the sacrifice. These were the earliest rites. These great powers have sought the sky, where are the former Sadyas, gods.†

It has been mentioned that very few of the hymns of the Rig-Veda contain any petitions for the pardon of sin. Only two or three, like the following, are generally quoted :—

1. Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

2. If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

3. Through want of strength, thou strong and bright god, have I gone wrong; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

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* Inferior deities or the personified rites and prayers of the Vedas.

† Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. I. pp. 9–11.

4. Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters; have mercy, almighty, have mercy.

5. Whenever we men, O Varuna commit an offence before the heavenly host, whenever we break the law through thoughtlessness; punish us not, O god, for that offence.* VII. 89.

The following is the 86th Hymn of the same Mandala: —

1. Wise and mighty are the works of him who stemmed asunder the wide firmaments (heaven and earth). He lifted on high the bright and glorious heaven; he stretched out apart the starry sky and the earth.

2. Do I say this to my own self? How can I get unto Varuna? Will he accept my offering without displeasure? When shall I, with a quiet mind, see him propitiated?

3. I ask, O Varuna, wishing to know this my sin. I go to ask the wise. The sages all tell me the same: Varuna it is who is angry with thee.

4. Was it an old sin, O Varuna, that thou wishest to destroy thy friend, who always praises thee? Tell me, thou unconquerable lord, and I will quickly turn to thee with praise, freed from sin.

5. Absolve us from the sins of our fathers, and from those which we have committed with our own bodies. Release Vasistha, O king, like a thief who has feasted on stolen oxen; release him like a calf from the rope.

6. It was not our doing, O Varuna, it was necessity, (or temptation) an intoxicating draught, passion, dice, thoughtlessness. The old is there to mislead the young; even sleep brings unrighteousness.

7. Let me without sin give satisfaction to the angry god, like a slave to his bounteous lord. The lord god enlighteneth the foolish; he, the wisest, leads his worshipper to wealth.

8. O lord Varuna, may this song go well to thy heart! May we prosper in keeping and acquiring! Protect us, O gods, always with your blessings!*

It will be seen that the second hymn, in the conclusion, refers to wealth.

THE BRAHMANAS.

The Brahmanas, as already explained, are that part of the Veda which is intended to guide the Brahmans in Vedic ceremonies. Like the hymns, they are held to be *Sruti*.

Max Müller thus estimates their character:

"The Brahmanas represent no doubt a most interesting phase in the history of the Indian mind, but judged by themselves as literary productions, they are most disappointing. No one would have supposed that

* *Chips*, Vol. I.

at so early a period, and in so primitive a state of society, there could have risen up a literature which for pedantry and downright absurdity can hardly be matched anywhere. There is no lack of striking thoughts, of bold expressions, of sound reasoning, and curious traditions in these collections. But these are only like the fragments of a *torso*,* like precious gems set in brass and lead. The general character of those works is marked by shallow and insipid grandiloquence, by priestly conceit, and antiquarian pedantry. It is most important to the historian that he should know how soon the fresh and healthy growth of a nation can be blighted by priestcraft and superstition. It is most important that we should know that nations are liable to these epidemics in their youth as well as in their dotage. These works deserve to be studied as the physician studies the twaddle of idiots, and the raving of madmen. They will disclose to a thoughtful eye the ruins of faded grandeur, the memories of noble aspirations. But let us only try to translate these works into our own language, and we shall feel astonished that human language, and human thought should ever have been used for such purposes."†

The estimate of the Brahmanas by Professor Eggeling, the translator of the Satapatha Brahmana, is much in the same terms. He says in the Introduction:

"The translator of the Satapatha Brahmana can be under no illusion as to the reception his production is likely to meet with at the hand of the general reader. In the whole range of literature few works are probably less calculated to excite the interest of any outside the very limited number of specialists than the ancient theological writings of the Hindus, known by the name of Brahmanas. For wearisome prolixity of exposition, characterised by dogmatic assertion and a flimsy symbolism rather than by serious reasoning, their works are perhaps not equalled anywhere."

Specimens will be given from two of the principal Brahmanas.

The AITAREYA BRAHMANA of the Rig-Veda contains "the earliest speculations of the Brahmans on the meaning of the sacrificial prayers, and on the origin, performance, and sense of the Rites of the Vedic Religion." The Sanskrit text, with an English translation, was published by the late Dr. Haug, Superintendent of Sanskrit Studies in the Poona College.

The work, as translated by Dr. Haug, begins as follows:

"Agni, among the gods, has the lowest, Vishnu the highest place; between them stand all the other deities.

They offer the Agni-Vishnu rice-cake (*purudosa*) which belongs to the *Dikshaniya Ishti* (and put its several parts) on eleven potsherds (*kapala*). They offer it (the rice-cake) really to all the deities of this (Ishti) without foregoing any one. For Agni is all the deities, and Vishnu is all the deities. For these two (divine) bodies, Agni and Vishnu,

* The trunk of a statue deprived of head and limbs.
† *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 389, 390.

are the two ends of the sacrifice. Thus when they portion out the Agni-Vishnu rice-cake, they indeed make at the end (after the ceremony is over) prosper (all) the gods of this (ceremony).

Here they say : if there be 11 potsherds on which portions of the rice-cake are put, and (only) two deities, Agni and Vishnu, what arrangement is there for the two, or what division ?

(The answer is) the rice-cake portions on 8 portions belong to Agni ; for the *Gayatri* verse consists of 8 syllables, and the Gayatri is Agni's metre. The rice-cake portions on the 3 potsherds belong to Vishnu ; for Vishnu (the sun) strode thrice through the universe. This the arrangement (to be made) for them ; this is the division.

He who might think himself to have no position (not to be highly respected by others) should portion out (for being offered) *Charu* (boiled rice) over which ghee is poured. For on this earth no one has a firm footing who does not enjoy a certain (high) position. The ghee (poured over this *Charu*) is the milk of the woman ; the husked rice grains (of which Charu consists) belong to the male ; both are a pair. Thus the Charu on account of its consisting of a pair (of female and male parts) blesses him with the production of progeny and cattle, for his propagation (in his descendants and their property.) He who has such knowledge propagates his progeny and cattle.

He who brings the New and Full Moon oblations, has already made a beginning with the sacrifice, and made also a beginning with (the sacrificial worship of the) deities. After having brought the New or Full Moon oblations, he may be inaugurated in consequence of the offering made at these (oblations) and the sacrificial grass (having been spread) at these (oblations, at the time of making them). This (might be regarded) as one Diksha (initiatory rite).

The Hotar must recite 17 verses for the wooden sticks to be thrown into the fire (to feed it). For Prajapati (the Lord of all creatures) is seventeen-fold, the months are twelve, and the seasons five by putting *Hemanta* (winter) and *Sisira* (between winter and spring) as one. So much is the year. The year is Prajapati. He who has such a knowledge prospers by these verses (just mentioned) which reside in Prajapati."

Vol. II. pp. 1—6.

According to the foregoing, the offering of boiled rice on which ghee has been poured, secures to the worshipper children and cattle.

The SATAPATHA BRAHMANA is called the Brahmana "of a hundred paths," because it consists of a hundred lectures (Adhyayas).

The first Kanda treats of New and Full Moon Sacrifices.

The first 11 verses show how purification is to be obtained the day before the sacrifice begins. The remainder of the first Brahmana is as follows :

"12. By way of his first act on the following morning he (Adhvaryu priest) betakes himself to the water, and brings water forward : for water

is (one of the means of) sacrifice. Hence by this his first act he approaches (engages in) the sacrifice; and by bringing (water) forward, he spreads out (prepares) the sacrifice.

13. He brings it forward with those mysterious words: 'Who (or Prajapati) joins (or yokes) thee (to this fire)? He joins thee. For what (or, for Prajapati) does he join thee? For that (or him) he joins thee!' For Prajapati is mysterious; Prajapati is the sacrifice: hence he thereby yokes (gets ready for the performance) Prajapati, his sacrifice.

14. The reason why he brings forward water is, that all this (universe) is pervaded by water; hence by this his first act he pervades (or gains) all this (universe).

15. And whatever here in this (sacrifice) the Hotri or the Adhvaryu, or the Brahman or the Agnidhra, or the sacrificer himself, does not succeed in accomplishing, all that is thereby obtained (or made good).

16. Another reason why he brings forward water is this: whilst the gods were engaged in performing sacrifice, the Asuras and Rakshas forbade (*raksh*) them saying, 'He shall not sacrifice!' and because they forbade (*raksh*), they are called Rakshas.

17. The gods then perceived this thunderbolt, to wit, the water: the water is a thunderbolt, for the water is indeed a thunderbolt; hence wherever it goes, it produces a hollow, (or depression of ground); and whatever it comes near, it burns up. Therefore they took up that thunderbolt, and in its safe and foeless shelter they spread (performed) the sacrifice. And thus he (the Adhvaryu priest) likewise takes up this thunderbolt, and in its safe and foeless shelter spreads the sacrifice. This is the reason why he brings forward water.

18. After pouring out some of it (into the jug) he puts it down north of the Garhapatya fire. For water (*ap*) is female and fire (*agni*) is male; and the Garhapatya is a house: hence a copulative production of offspring is thereby effected in this house. Now he who brings forward the water takes up a thunderbolt; but when he takes up the thunderbolt, he cannot do so unless he is firmly placed; for otherwise it destroys him.

19. The reason then why he places it near the Garhapatya fire is, that the Garhapatya is a house, and a house is a safe resting-place; so that he thereby stands firmly in a house, and therefore in a safe resting-place; in this way that thunderbolt does not destroy him,—for this reason he places it near the Garhapatya fire.

20. He then carries it north of the Ahavaniya fire. For water is female and fire is male: hence a copulative production of offspring is thereby effected. And in this way alone a regular copulation can take place, since the woman lies on the left (or north) side of the man.

21. Let nobody pass between the water (and the fire), lest by passing between them he should disturb the copulation which is taking place. Let him set the water down without carrying it beyond (the north side of the fire, *i. e.*, not on the eastern side); nor should he put it down before reaching (the north side, *i. e.*, not on the western side). For, if he were to put the water down after carrying it beyond,—there being, as it were, a great rivalry between fire and water,—he would cause this

rivalry to break forth on the part of the fire; and when they (the priests and the sacrificer) touch the water of this (vessel), he would, by carrying it and setting it down beyond (the northern side), cause the enemy to spirt in the fire. If, on the other hand, he were to put it down before gaining (the northern side), he would not gain by it the fulfilment of the work for which it had been brought forward. Let him therefore put it down exactly north of the Ahavaniya fire.

22. He now strews sacrificial grass all round (the fires), and fetches the utensils, taking two at a time, viz., the winnowing basket and the Agnihotra ladle, the wooden sword and the potsherds, the wedge and the black antelope skin, the mortar and the pestle, the large and the small millstones. These are ten in number; for of ten syllables consists the Viraj (metre) and radiant (*Viraj*) also is the sacrifice: so that he thereby makes the sacrifice resemble the Viraj. The reason why he takes two at a time is, because a pair means strength; for when two undertake anything, there is strength in it. Moreover, a pair represents a productive copulation, so that a productive copulation (of these respective objects) is thereby effected."*

The directions for the New and Full Moon Sacrifices occupy 273 pages. Even the specimen given shows that they abound with wearisome repetitions; while the logic is absurd, as in 14, 16, 18, &c. The Second Kanda treats of the establishment of Sacred Fires, the Worship of Fires, &c. The directions about the Agnihotra, or Morning and Evening Milk Offerings, are quoted below:

Fourth Kanda.

II. The Agnihotra or Morning and Evening Libations; and the Agny-Upasthâna or Homage to the Fires.

1. Prajapati alone, indeed, existed here in the beginning. He considered, 'How may I be reproduced?' He toiled and performed acts of penance. He generated Agni from his mouth; and because he generated him from his mouth, therefore Agni is a consumer of food: and, verily, he who thus knows Agni to be a consumer of food, becomes himself a consumer of food.

2. He thus generated him first (Agre) of the gods; and therefore (he is called) Agni, for Agni (they say) is the same as Agre. He, being generated, went forth as the first (pûrva); for of him who goes first, they say that he goes at the head (Agre). Such, then, is the origin and nature of that Agni.

3. Prajâpati then considered, 'In that Agni I have generated a food-eater for myself; but, indeed, there is no other food here but myself, whom, surely, he would not eat.' At that time this earth had, indeed, been rendered quite bald; there were neither plants nor trees. This, then, weighed on his mind.

4. Thereupon Agni turned towards him with open mouth; and he (Prajâpati) being terrified, his own greatness departed from him. Now

* *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XII, pp. 7-11.

his own greatness is his speech: that speech of his departed from him. He desired an offering in his own self, and rubbed (his hands); and because he rubbed (his hands), therefore both this and this (palm) are hairless. He then obtained either a butter-offering or a milk-offering;—but, indeed, they are both milk.

5. This (offering), however, did not satisfy him, because it had hairs mixed with it. He poured it away (into the fire), saying, 'Drink, while burning (osham dhaya)!' From it plants sprang: hence their name 'plants (oshadhayah).' He rubbed (his hands) a second time, and thereby obtained another offering, either a butter-offering or a milk-offering;—but, indeed, they are both milk.

6. This (offering) then satisfied him. He hesitated: 'Shall I offer it up? Shall I not offer it up?' he thought. His own greatness said to him, 'Offer it up!' Prajâpati was aware that it was his own (Sva) greatness that had spoken (âha) to him; and offered it up with 'Svâhâ!' This is why offerings are made with 'Svâha!' Thereupon that burning one (viz., the sun) rose; and then that blowing one (viz., the wind) sprang up; whereupon, indeed, Agni turned away.

7. And Prajâpati, having performed offering, reproduced himself, and saved himself from Agni, Death, as he was about to devour him. And, verily, whosoever, knowing this, offers the Agnihotra, reproduces himself by offspring even as Prajâpati reproduced himself; and saves himself from Agni, Death, when he is about to devour him.

8. And when he dies and when they place him on the fire, then he is born (again) out of the fire, and the fire only consumes his body. Even as he is born from his father and mother, so is he born from the fire. But he who offers not the Agnihotra, verily, he does not come into life at all: therefore the Agnihotra should by all means be offered.

9. And as to that same birth from out of doubt;—when Prajâpati doubted he, while doubting, remained steadfast on the better (side), insomuch that he reproduced himself and saved himself from Agni, Death, when he was about to devour him: so he also who knows that birth from out of doubt, when he doubts about anything, still remains on the better (side).

10. Having offered, he rubbed his (hands). Thence a Vikankata tree sprung forth; and therefore that tree is suitable for the sacrifice, and proper for sacrificial vessels. Thereupon those (three) heroes among the gods were born; viz., Agni, that blower (Vâyu), and Sûrya: and, verily, whosoever thus knows those heroes among the gods, to him a hero is born.

11. They then said, 'We come after our father Prajâpati: let us then create what shall come after us!' Having enclosed (a piece of ground), they sang praises with the Gâyatri stanza without the 'Hin:' and that (with) which they enclosed was the ocean; and this earth was the praise ground (Astâva).

12. When they had sung praises, they went out towards the east, saying: 'We (will) go back thither!' The gods came upon a cow which had sprung into existence. Looking up at them, she uttered the

sound 'Hin.' The gods perceived that this was the 'Hin' of the Sâman (melodious sacrificial chant); for heretofore (their song was) without the 'Hin,' but after it was the (real) Sâman. And as this same sound 'Hin' of the Sâman was in the cow, therefore the latter affords the means of subsistence; and so does he afford the means of subsistence whosoever thus knows that 'Hin' of the Sâman in the cow.

13. They said, 'Auspicious, indeed, is what we have produced here, who have produced the cow: for, truly, she is the sacrifice, and without her no sacrifice is performed; she is also the food, for the cow, indeed, is all food.'

14. This (word 'go'), then, is a name of those (cows), and so it is of the sacrifice: let him, therefore, repeat it, (as it were saying, 'Good, excellent!' and verily, whosoever, knowing this, repeats it,) as it were saying, 'Good, excellent!' and, verily, whosoever, knowing this, repeats it (as it were) saying, 'Good,' excellent! with him those (cows) multiply, and the sacrifice will incline to him.

15. Now, Agni coveted her. 'May I pair with her,' he thought. He united with her, and his seed became that milk of hers: hence, while the cow is raw, that milk in her is cooked (warm): for it is Agni's seed, and therefore also, whether it be in a black or in a red (cow) it is ever white, and shining like fire, it being Agni's seed. Hence it is warm when first milked, for it is Agni's seed.

16. They (the men) said, 'Come, let us offer this up!' 'To whom of us shall they first offer this?' (said those gods).—'To me!' said Agni; 'To me!' said that blower (Vâyu),—To me! said Surya. They did not come to an agreement; and not being agreed, they said, 'Let us go to our father Prajâpati; and to whichever of us he says it shall be offered first, to him they shall first offer this.' They went to their father Prajâpati, and said, 'To whom of us shall they offer this first?'

17. He replied, 'To Agni: Agni will forthwith cause his own seed to be reproduced, and so you will be reproduced.' 'Then to thee,' he said to Sûrya; and what of the offered (milk) he then is still possessed of, that shall belong to that blower (Vayu)!' And, accordingly, they in the same way offer this (milk) to them till this day: in the Evening to Agni, and in the Morning to Sûrya; and what of the offered (milk) he then is still possessed of, that, indeed, belongs to that blower.

18. By offering, those gods were produced in the way in which they were produced, by it they gained that victory which they did gain: Agni conquered this world, Vâyu the air, and Sûrya the sky, and whosoever knowing this, offers the Agnihotra, he, indeed, is produced in the same way, in which they were then produced, he gains that same victory which they then gained;—indeed, he shares the same world with them, whosoever, knowing this, offers the Agnihotra. Therefore the Agnihotra should certainly be performed.

Every intelligent reader of the foregoing must admit that the severe criticism of Professors Max Müller and Eggeling is deserved.

THE ARYA SAMAJ.

The great bulk of the Hindus, pandits as well as the common people, in addition to the Vedas properly so called, accept as sacred the Brahmanas, Upanishads, the Laws of Manu, the Itihasas, Puranas, &c., and understand them in the sense in which they have been explained in the commentaries for many centuries.

Western science, in different degrees, is spreading in India. Some Hindus get only a glimmering of it through the vernaculars or through an imperfect knowledge of English. Such men sometimes attempt to jumble together Hindu and Western ideas. The two, in many respects, are absolutely contradictory. Agreement is sought by torturing and twisting the Hindu books, so as to give them an entirely different meaning from the true one. Of men of this class, the late Dayanand Sarasvati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, was a striking example.

A short account will first be given of his life.

Dayanand was born at Morvi, in Kathiawar, about 60 years ago. His father was a zealous Saivite. Dayanand, at an early age, studied Sanskrit grammar, and learnt the Vedas by heart. Afterwards his father wished to initiate him in the worship of the Linga; for which purpose he was to fast a whole night in the temple of Siva. When he was left alone he began to meditate. He says:—

"Is it possible, I asked myself, that this idol I see bestriding his bull before me, and who, according to all accounts, walks about, eats, sleeps, drinks, holds a trident in his hand, beats the drum, and can pronounce curses on men, can be the great deity, the Mahadeva, the Supreme Being? Unable to resist such thoughts any longer I roused my father, asking him to tell me whether this hideous idol was the great god of the scriptures. 'Why do you ask?' said my father. 'Because,' I answered, 'I feel it impossible to reconcile the idea of an omnipotent living God with this idol, which allows the mice to run over his body, and thus suffers himself to be polluted without the slightest protest.' Then my father tried to explain to me that this stone image of the Mahadeva, having been consecrated by the holy Brahmans, became, in consequence, the god himself, adding that as Siva cannot be perceived personally in this Kali-Yuga, we have the idol in which the Mahadeva is imagined by his votaries." This explanation, however, was not satisfactory.

When Dayanand was 21 years of age his father wished him to be married against his will; so he left home secretly. Afterwards he was found and brought back, but again he ran away. For years

he wandered about, for a time becoming a Sannyasi. Even when ten years of age he saw the folly of idolatry. When he grew older, he rejected all the Hindu sacred books as inspired except the four Vedas and the Isa Upanishad which is found in the Yajur Veda.*

In 1881, a large convocation of 300 Pandits from Gauda, Navadipa, and Kasi, was held to discuss with Dayanand his opinions. The following resolutions were carried against him:

(1.) That the Brahmanas are as valid and authoritative as the Mantras, and that the other Smritis or law-books are as valid and authoritative as Manu.

(2.) That the worship of Vishnu, Siva, Durga, and other Hindu deities, the performance of the Shraddha ceremonies after death, and bathing in the Ganges, are sanctioned in the Shastras.

(3.) That in the first hymn of the Rig-Veda, addressed to Agni, the primary meaning of Agni is fire, and its secondary meaning is God.

(4.) That sacrifices are performed to secure salvation.

Besides lecturing, Dayanand devoted some of the later years of his life to the publication of books. Before his death he had completed a translation into Hindi of one-half of the Vedas. The principal points of his teaching are embodied in his *Rig-Vedadi Bhashya Bhumika*, 'A Prefatory Exposition of the Rig-Veda and others.' His *Satyarth Prakash*, 'Manifestation of True Meanings,' gives his teaching as to religious and social customs.

Latterly Dayanand became very corpulent. He died at Ajmere in 1883 at the age of 59.†

Dayanand accepted and rejected what he pleased of the Hindu sacred books, and put his own meaning upon them. All who differed from him were denounced as ignorant. All the translations, commentaries, and dictionaries prepared by pandits during the last 2,500 years were wrong; he alone was right. It was his plan in discussions to have a company of admirers who would join him in loud derisive laughter at his opponents. He tried this when arguing with pandits at Benares. On the second day of the debate, they gathered together a larger number of men, who hooted and laughed at whatever Dayanand said, so that the tables were turned, and he was completely defeated.

Numerous Societies have been formed in North India and the Punjab, called Arya Samajes, professing to follow Dayanand's interpretation of the Vedas. An Anglo-Vedic College has been established at Lahore, and a weekly newspaper in English, called the *Arya Patrika*, is issued.

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* See his letter to Raja Sivaprasad, *Athenæum*, Feb. 5, 1881.

† Chiefly abridged from *Biographical Essays*, by Max Müller.

The following are the principal opinions of Dayanand :—

1. **The Eternity of the Vedas.**—Mr. Forman says :

"The pundits are content with putting the origin of these books back near the beginning of the world when Brahm taught Brahma, and Brahma issued each of the four Vedas out of each of his four mouths in turn, teaching them to the holy Rishis who wrote them down. Dayanand laughs at all this. He says Brahma was not a god, but only a great Raja, and that he could not possibly have been the author of the Vedas, for he himself was a student of them. He says the Vedas are eternal absolutely ; that they are the knowledge of God, and hence as eternal as God himself, that they have been given in just their present form to this world and to other worlds through all eternity, in their long passages from formation to destruction, each occupying hundreds of billions of years. That the edition for the present world was taught by God to the first four men created 100,960,852,975 years ago. These four men were named Agni, Vayu, Suraj and Angira. They, having learned the Vedas from God, each wrote one of the four books."*

Calculations differ as to the exact period of creation. The *Aryan Magazine*, published in 1884, makes the Aryan era 196 crores, 8 lakhs 52,984 years. A writer in the same periodical makes the time yet to pass as 235 crores, 91 lakhs, 47,015 years. Upon this claim to antiquity, the *Indian Spectator* remarks :—

"AGE WITHOUT WISDOM OR PROGRESS.—The Hindu Aryas do not count their existence by centuries but by millions of years. This is their 1,961st million. What a contrast to our miserable 19th century ! But alas and alas ! These millions and billions of years have left the Hindus no wiser than the mushroom Europeans in the Dark Ages. Far better is the 19th century of Europe than the 1,961st millionth year of Aryan India."

Dayanand argues that the Vedas are eternal from the eternity of sound. "Thus take the word *gau*, a cow : he says the sound *g* has always existed, so also the sound *au* ; the Four (Agni, Vayu, &c.) only combined these, and in writing gave the word *gau*. He further explains that all space is filled with these sounds ; that when a man speaks he simply chooses whichever of the sounds he wants, and taking them in, arranges them in whatever order he wishes, and so forms words and sentences. That as soon as each sound has performed its duty, it separates from those to which it has been temporarily joined and goes again to its own place in space, ready to be used again when wanted." Dayanand adopted this opinion from the Purva Mimansa of Jaimini. On the above reasoning, every book may be proved to be eternal.

It has been shown that Dayanand's theory of the Vedas being eternal is contradicted by the hymns themselves. Some of the hymns are said to be quite new, others old. The names of the

* *The Arya Samaj*, p. 13.

writers are given. It has also been already explained that internal evidence shows that the hymns were composed when the Aryans were entering India, and had frequent wars with the aborigines.

Raja Siva Prasad, of Benares, asked Dayanand why he regarded the Samhita as inspired and not the Brahmanas. The reply was, "Samhita is *per se* (of itself) visible, proved by perception." Dayanand was next asked his reply to, "The disputant says that the Brahmanas are *per se* visible, and proved by perception;" to which no answer was given.

Like the rest of Hindus, Dayanand considered the inspiration of the Vedas to be self-evident, and not to require any proof. The *Arya Patrika* says of them: "They are engraved in the starry heavens. They are kneaded into the mould of the earth. They are written in the beams of the sun. They are seen in the light of the moon. They are in the flashes of lightning. In short, they are always with God who fills all in all." (*Jan.* 16, 1886).

2. **A Belief in One God.**—Dayanand rejected the 33 crores of Hindu gods and goddesses, and claimed the Vedas to be monotheistic. It has been shown that the Vedas teach polytheism. The deities are again and again said to be thrice-eleven in number. They have different names, parents, wives, and children, and live in different places. If they are all one, it might as well be said that 33 persons now living are all one. In later times pantheism was developed. The well known phrase *Ekam evadvitiyam*, "One only without a second," does not mean that there is no second God, but that there is no second anything.

Monotheism was learned from Christianity.

3. **The Eternity of Souls and Prakriti.**—It has been mentioned that Dayanand mixed up his old ideas as a Hindu with the slight western knowledge he had acquired through the vernaculars. He learned the eternity of souls and his ideas about Prakriti from the Sankhya Darsana of Kapila, of which they are the chief doctrines. Kapila's system is known among Hindus as the Niriswara Sankhya, or *the Sankhya without the Lord*, its founder being accused of atheism.

The *Arya Patrika* reasons thus:—

"If the soul is immortal, how it can be regarded as a created essence is what completely passes our comprehension. The assumption of the immortality of the soul necessitates the assumption of its eternity. If the soul is to exist for ever, it must have been existing from time indefinite. In fact whatever exists at the present time has existed always and shall always exist. Not a single particle of what the universe at present contains can be blotted out of existence. Every thing in the universe is eternal and unperishable. The existence of anything at the present time presupposes its existence in the past, and necessitates its existence in the future." *Jan.* 31, 1888.

The above is a clear statement of the Sankhya doctrine. It is a fixed Hindu dogma, *navastuno vastusiddhih*, nothing can be produced out of nothing.

The fundamental error of Hinduism is that expressed in the words of the Bible on the title page: "Thou thoughtest that I (God) was altogether such an one as thyself." Because a carpenter cannot work without materials, the Almighty God cannot do it. "Ye do err, not knowing the power of God." He does not require, like weak and imperfect man, to stop for materials, but can call them into existence by the mere *fiat* of His will.

If souls are eternal, we are all little gods. But not only men are such, so is every reptile that crawls on the ground, and every insect that flutters in the air. Souls, according to Hinduism, may also pass into plants and even into inanimate objects. Who then can estimate the number of these eternal *svayambhu* essences!

Whether is it more rational to suppose the existence of one Being, infinite in power and wisdom, or to imagine that countless unintelligent atoms and spirits have existed from all eternity?

The reasoning that if the soul is to live for ever, it must have had an eternal pre-existence, is equally unfounded. This is also a denial of God's power. He can give a future eternal existence to any creature He has called into being.

For further remarks on this point, see *Philosophic Hinduism*, pp. 29-31 and 38, 39.

4. **Transmigration.**—This doctrine is held by the followers of the Arya Samaj, although Max Müller says that the Vedas do not contain a "trace" of it. As one error often requires another to support it, so the false belief in the eternal existence of the soul, required to be accounted for by transmigration.

This dogma is considered in *Popular Hinduism*, (pp. 61—63). Only a few remarks can be made here on the subject.

1. *It is contrary to the course of Nature, in which like always produces like.* Every animal and plant produces animals and plants exactly like itself. According to transmigration, a man in his next birth may be a tiger, a pig, a fly, or a pumpkin.

2. *No one has the slightest recollection of any previous birth.* If the soul is eternal, why does it not recollect anything that happened previous to its present life?

3. *By transmigration persons virtually become new beings, so that they are in reality punished for the actions of others.* It is said that at every new birth something takes place by which the remembrance of former things is destroyed. In this case the person on whom it is wrought is no longer the same person. One man is really punished for the faults of another of which he is quite ignorant.

The world is not a place where we are rewarded or punished for actions in imaginary former births; but one where our conduct is tried. We are like the servants of a great King, who has allotted to us different duties, and according as we discharge them, we shall be dealt with at death.

5. **The Rejection of Sacrifice.**—Dayanand professed the greatest reverence for the Vedas, but his teaching is in direct opposition to their whole tenor. The remark of Mr. Kunte has been quoted: "No matter what hymn is read, it directly or indirectly cannot but refer to a sacrifice." As Dr. Clark says: "In life or in death, sacrifice was the pivot on which the whole religion of the Arya turned. It met him in every phase of life, in every state of being,—it was his all in all."

One great object of sacrifice in the Vedas is the forgiveness of sin. It is repeated again and again that sacrifice is the "annulment of sin." Dayanand looks upon this idea as absurd. Sin cannot be pardoned; its punishment must be endured. He says that the Vedas prescribe things to be burned to make an excellent smoke which purifies the air; also rising, it mixes with and forms clouds and comes down as rain; the rain thus also being purified by its presence. The object and effect of sacrifices, as ordered in the Vedas, is the purifying of air and water, and hence the destroying of disease.

Dayanand, when asked why there is a platform prescribed for sacrifice, an excavation, &c., replies: A platform is ordered to be made round, square, three-cornered, &c., in order that it may be an object-lesson in geometry for the people; a hole is made that it may be lined with brick, and thus the people, in calculating the number of bricks needed for a hole of given dimensions, may have an exercise in arithmetic!

6. **Caste.**—"Caste," says Mr. Forman, "as held by the Hindus, Dayanand repeatedly denounces as the creation of Brahmans and as a great evil. Of *eating from the hands of others*, he says that the Hindu is free to eat from the hand of any, excepting only Christians and Muhammadans—and these are excepted because in the composition of their bodies there are mixed bad-smelling particles! Not only *may* a Hindu eat from the hands of a low-caste man, but men of the higher castes (in his sense of the word) should not cook their own food, but should eat only food cooked by *Shudras* or low-caste men. For, says he, working over the fire in cooking, heats the head and thus injures the brain; and the lower people ought to do this for the higher."

7. **Education of Children.**—After five years of age the sexes are to be kept strictly apart. The teachers and servants in boys' schools are to be only men, and in girls' schools only women. The school is to be at least 8 miles from the nearest village. So long as

the children are pupils their parents are not to see them. Nor are there any letters to pass between children and parents.

The subject of study in these schools is to be only and always the Vedas, for in them alone is truth and only truth.

The study of the Vedas should be prosecuted at the very least 24 years—*i.e.*, from 8 until 32 years of age—better until 50, and better still 56 years of age. The benefits to be derived from these courses of study are as follows:—By the first course, studying each of the first two Vedas 12 years, one attains to freedom from disease and a lengthening of life to 70 or 80 years of age; by the second course, giving 12 years to each of the first 3 Vedas and 8 years to the last, the life, members, heart and spirit being joined in strength, one becomes a man who causes all enemies to weep, and who nourishes all good men; by the third course, from 8 to 56 years of age, or "48 years of study as there are 48 letters in the alphabet," giving 12 years to each of the Vedas, one gets his life in his power.

And now the men and women thus educated may go forth well-fitted for life; let them marry and settle down as householders. When one complies with these conditions, he gains such a hold on life, that he may live on to be 400 years of age. It is rather hard for this theory that Dayanand who studied the Vedas throughout his life died at the age of 59.

8. **Marriage.**—Child marriage is denounced. The allowable ages for marriage are for men from 25 to 48, and for women from 16 to 25.

The *Satyarth Prakash*, (pp. 80-83) gives the following directions about marriage. The photographs of all pupils in the boys' school who are old enough to be married, are to be sent to and kept by the Principal of the girls' school, and photographs of the marriageable girls to be in possession of the Principal of the boys' school. When either Principal thinks that one of the pupils should be married, let him, or her, choose from among the photos in hand the one, the original of which would seem by appearance best suited for the match. Then let this photograph be sent to the Principal of the other school, accompanied by a description of age, height, character, family, property, &c. If both Principals agree that the marriage is desirable, the photograph and description of the young man are presented to the young woman, and the photograph of the young woman is presented to the young man. If all is favourable, the parents are to be notified, and the marriage is to take place. The parents may carry on these negociations if they wish to do so.

Second Marriage is forbidden, but what he calls *Niyog* (rejoined) is allowed. Widowers and widows may live together for a time for the sake of producing children. This compact is to last only until the birth of two children, to be given to whichever of the parents desired to have it for the sake of children. If both parents

desire children, the compact is to last until the birth of four—two to be taken by each parent. The compact must then end. Dayanand further declares that should any man or woman break this law, as to the limit of Niyog, they are to be cast out from among the Aryas.

Niyog is also allowed in certain cases to men and women whose wives and husbands are living.

9. **Ideas of Geography.**—The following is an example : In the *Satyarth Prakash*, "Concerning Travel," Dayanand says that Munis and Rishis and other excellent people used to go to other countries. Viyash Muni and his son Sukhdeo and their disciples went to Pátál, *i. e.*, America (!) and dwelt there. One day, while living in America, Sukhdeo asked his father, Viyash Ji, some question concerning knowledge. Viyash Ji told him to go to Janakpur in Hindustan, and ask the Raja there. We then have an account of the countries Sukhdeo passed through on his journey. Going on and on he arrived at Harivarsh, *i. e.*, *Hari* a monkey, and *Varsh*, country,—*i. e.*, the country of monkeys—*i. e.*, the country of people who are like monkeys, or those who have red mouths and light-coloured hair—*Europe*. From Europe he went on to Hundish, the country of the Jews ; thence he came into China and thence to India. Dayanand probably knew scarcely enough of geography to be aware that an explanation of Sukhdeo's choosing so circuitous a route in passing from Europe to Hindustan would have been in place.

Again it is related that Krishna went to America in a ship, and called from there Udalak Muni, and brought him to the sacrifice prepared by Raja Yudhistir. At one time Arjuna, an Indian Raja of the same date, went to America, and fought with the Raja of America. When the Raja of America was conquered, he gave his daughter, Ulupi by name, to Arjuna !

10. **Modern Inventions supposed to be found in the Vedas.**—Max Müller says of Dayanand :—

"To him not only was everything contained in the Vedas perfect truth, but he went a step further, and by the most incredible interpretations succeeded in persuading himself and others that everything worth knowing, even the most recent inventions of modern science, were alluded to in the Vedas. Steam-engines, railways, and steam-boats, all were shown to have been known, at least in their germs, to the poets of the Vedas, for Veda, he argued, means Divine Knowledge, and how could anything have been hid from that ?"*

The following is the mode in which Dayanand finds railways in the Vedas :—

Pandits explain *Shwetam Ashwam* to mean the white horse. "But Dayanand sees more in it ; the meaning is the steam horse or steam.

* *Biographical Essays*, p. 170.

In *Ashwi* then (meaning here fire and water, and hence steam) we find the motive power for these vehicles. Again, *Karashwa, i. e., chhah ghore* (six horses), so the pandits, but Dayanand says, the meaning is, that the vehicles are to contain six compartments for fire and water."*

By similar reasoning, balloons, guns, &c., are discovered in the Vedas.

Dayanand's teachings concerning the sciences and the arts are but a crude combination of the ideas he had imbibed from Hinduism with the most primary and incorrect ideas of the sciences and arts introduced by the English.

It has been shown that in Vedic times cows were killed and their flesh eaten. Modern Hindus worship the cow, and accordingly think it very wrong to eat one of their gods. Dayanand thus argues against the use of animal food :

" He calculates that a cow will give on an average 8 or 8½ maunds of milk in a month, or in a year 99 maunds, in a life time 1,201 maunds, enough with a proper admixture of ghee and sugar to furnish food for a day to 25,740 men. How trivial, in comparison with this, the number that could be fed for a day on that cow's meat. But when you add to this the produce of even the immediate progeny of this cow, how much stronger the comparison and the conclusion from it ! Supposing this cow to have 13 calves and allowing for the early death of one, there remain as producers 6 cows and 6 oxen. The milk given by these cows would feed 1,54,440 men, while the grain produced by the labor of the oxen during their life time would feed once, on a ration of 3 paos to a man, an army of 2,56,000 men. Thus as the result of one spared cow, you have food sufficient to satisfy the hunger of 4,10,440 men. He then carries out a similar calculation with regard to goats and sheep."

The absurdity of this reasoning is easily apparent. Dayanand balances the number of men that could be fed for one day on the flesh of a cow, with the number that could be fed by a number of cows and oxen for several years requiring large quantities of land. On the same principle a much larger number could be fed by eating the cow. Suppose the flesh of the cow to be equal in nourishment to 30 seers of wheat, and that each seer that is sown produces 10 seers. The increase by eating the cow and sowing the wheat would be as follows :

Sown	30 seers.
1st Crop	300 „
2nd „	3,000 „
3rd „	30,000 „
4th „	300,000 „
5th „	3,000,000 „
6th „	30,000,000 „
	3,33,33,300

* Rev. H. Forman, *The Arya Samaj*, pp. 52, 53.

Allowing one seer a day, 6 crops would yield sufficient grain to feed, not merely four lakhs of men, but upwards of three crores, and all this from eating one cow!

Dayanand's Criticisms on the Bible.—If Dayanand twists and tortures the Vedas, giving them quite a different meaning from the true one, it is not surprising that he should do the same with the Bible. One or two examples may be given.

The Sabbath, or Sunday, was to be kept holy, and it is said God blessed it. Upon this Dayanand remarks, "When He blessed the Sunday, what did He do to Monday and the other days? He must have cursed them. Such is not the conduct of a wise man; how can it be the work of God?"

"Not only are baseless inference drawn from texts, but the passages quoted are sometimes represented as saying something very different from what they do say. In Gen. xxxi. 30, we find Laban asking Jacob, 'Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?' But the verse is so quoted as to make it appear that God is the speaker, and not Laban. Then comes the objection, that the 'Christian's God also acknowledges gods of stone, or why should he speak of stealing the gods?'"*

The hostility of Dayanand to Christianity is inherited by his followers. There is a class of vulgar, half-educated men in England, called Secularists. They are the same as the Indian Charvakas. They do not believe in God or in any life after this world. They scoff at all religion, but they especially try to caricature Christianity and to attack it with low abuse. The Arya Samajists, in their ignorance, suppose the Secularist tracts against Christianity to be "unanswerable," and have translated some of them into the vernaculars. Their objections have been known for nearly eighteen centuries; but, as a rule, they are misrepresentations of Christianity and without weight. In general they are treated with contempt in Europe. A very wise man long ago said, "A scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not." Sanskrit writers, before entering upon a subject, usually consider who are "competent" to enter upon the study. Vishvanath Bhattacharyya in the *Nyaya Sutra Vritti*, justly says: "They who desire to know the truth are competent for discussion." Unless there is this desire, all discussion is useless.

Although the Arya Samajists are glad to use Secularist attacks upon Christianity, their own belief in God is ridiculed nearly as much as belief in the Bible.

The Future of the Arya Samaj.—The Hindus are very open to flattery. Even an ordinary man is often addressed as Maharaj! National vanity is pleased with the thought that their sacred books

* Rev. J. Gray, in *Indian Evangelical Review* for October, 1886. See the paper for many other examples.

are eternal, and contain the germs of all knowledge. Dayanand also gave up some of the grosser forms of Hindu superstition. The forecast of Max Müller will doubtless prove correct: "For a time this kind of liberal orthodoxy started by Dayanand may last; but the mere contact with Western thought, and more particularly with Western scholarship, will most likely extinguish it."*

The Vedas themselves only require to be known to show the absurdity of Dayanand's interpretation of them. His ignorance of geography is simply ridiculous. His want of common sense is shown by his proposed scheme of education. But worst of all is his disgusting doctrine of *niyog*. It alone is sufficient to disprove his claims to be regarded as a true teacher.

The foregoing remarks are chiefly compiled from a pamphlet by the Rev. H. Forman, entitled, "The Arya Samaj, its Teachings and an Estimate of it." It is published by the North India Tract Society, Allahabad, price 1 anna.†

REVIEW.

Before giving a summary of the conclusions which seem to follow from the foregoing review, some remarks may be made on the false patriotism, or love of country, now very prevalent, and which is one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of India in enlightenment and true civilization.

False and true patriotism may be illustrated by an example from family life.

One father is very proud of his children. He thinks them so clever that they do not require to be taught by any one; he does not allow them to mix with other children, so that they grow up full of conceit; he looks upon them as far wiser than himself, and, in his ignorance, boasts of their childish sayings as the utterances of Rishis.

Another parent loves his children, but acts in a different way. He provides them with teachers; he allows them to study with other children that they may learn that there are others as clever as themselves. While he is pleased to hear their talk, he knows that he cannot expect them to be very wise, and feels that they should rather learn from him than the reverse.

Both these parents might love their children equally, but the love of the one would have a mischievous, and that of the other a good, influence. In like manner there is a false and true patriotism.

An error has prevailed in all countries and in all ages to regard persons who lived long ago as the ancients—very old and very wise, while people now living are looked upon as children. The

* *Biographical Essays*, p. 182.

† It may also be obtained from the Tract Depôt, Madras.

very opposite is the case. *We are the ancients*; those who lived long ago are the children. The world is thousands of years older now than it was then.

In Vedic times there were no books, and printing was unknown. All the valuable knowledge which has been gained in any quarter of the globe during the last twenty-five centuries is now at command. During these many years, lakhs of learned men have been adding to our stores. Every fresh discovery is now flashed by the electric telegraph, and by means of newspapers is at once made known to the whole civilised world.

An adult deserves no credit for being wiser than when a young child. The present generation should be,

"The heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time."

A false patriotism leads some Hindus to defend every thing belonging to their country. Sir Madhava Row is one of the most distinguished Indians of modern times, and deeply interested in the welfare of the people. He enunciates the right principle, "*What is* NOT TRUE *cannot be* PATRIOTIC." One of the worst enemies of his country is the man who stands up for what is false because it is national.

The reader is no doubt aware that, according to Hinduism, eclipses are caused by the Asurs Rahu and Ketu trying to seize the sun and moon; that there is an immense mountain, called Meru, in the centre of our system, surrounded by seven seas of salt water, sugar-cane juice, ghee, milk, &c. He probably feels that it would be absurd to defend these ideas because they are national: it is equally wrong and far more dangerous to attempt to justify false beliefs because they are national. There is no more a national religion than there is a national science. The family motto of the Maharaja of Benares is a noble one, "*There is no religion higher than truth.*" This is what should be sought. In the end it will prove the best.

Estimates of the Vedas.—Two classes of persons entertain the most exalted notions of the Vedas. First those who *know nothing of them*. This includes the great mass of the people of India, educated and uneducated. According to the Latin proverb, "Everything of which we are ignorant is taken for something magnificent." The other class consists of these who *know nothing else*. Such are the pandits, frogs in a well, and men like Dayanand Sarasvati. The latter held that whatever was not to be found in the Vedas was false or useless; whatever was found in the Vedas was beyond the reach of controversy.

Max Müller thus describes the conclusion arrived at by intelligent Indians:

"The friends of Rammohan Roy, honest and fearless as they have always proved themselves to be, sent some young scholars to Benares to

study the Vedas and to report on their contents. As soon as their report was received, Debendranath Tagore, the head of the Brahma-Samaj, said at once that, venerable as the Vedas might be as relics of a former age, they contained so much that was childish, erroneous, and impossible as to make their descent from a divine source utterly untenable."*

Mr. K. K. Bhattacharyya, late Professor of Sanskrit in the Presidency College, Calcutta, in his Tagore Law Lectures, describes the thousand hymns of the Rig-Veda as a "dreary wilderness, at but distant intervals redeemed by slight flashes of satire or quaint flights of fancy." (p. 119).

Professor Max Müller has spent many years, in editing the Rig-Veda, with the commentary of Sayana. He is not likely to undervalue it—rather the reverse. He himself makes the following confession in his "Preface to the Sacred Books of the East":—

"Scholars also who have devoted their life either to the editing of the original texts or to the careful interpretation of some of the sacred books, are more inclined, after they have disinterred from a heap of rubbish some solitary fragments of pure gold, to exhibit these treasures only than to display all the refuse from which they had to extract them. I do not blame them for this, perhaps I should feel that I was open to the same blame myself, for it is but natural that scholars in their joy at finding one or two fragrant fruits or flowers should gladly forget the brambles and thorns that had to be thrown aside in the course of their search." Page x.

In his Lecture on the Vedas he expresses the following opinion of the hymns:—

"The historical importance of the Veda can hardly be exaggerated, but its intrinsic merit, and particularly the beauty or elevation of its sentiments, have by many been rated far too high. Large numbers of the Vedic hymns are childish in the extreme: tedious, low, common-place. The gods are constantly invoked to protect their worshippers, to grant them food, large flocks, large families, and a long life; for all which benefits they are to be rewarded by the praises and sacrifices offered day after day, or at certain seasons of the year. But hidden in this rubbish there are precious stones."

"I remind you again that the Veda contains a great deal of what is childish and foolish, though very little of what is bad and objectionable. Some of its poets ascribe to the gods sentiments and passions unworthy of the deity, such as anger, revenge, delight in material sacrifices; they likewise represent human nature on a low level of selfishness and worldliness. Many hymns are utterly unmeaning and insipid, and we must search patiently before we meet, here and there, with sentiments that come from the depth of the soul, and with prayers in which we could join ourselves."

The hymns which have been quoted in full are some of the most interesting, and scarcely give a fair general idea of the contents.

* *Biographical Essays*, pp. 168, 169.

The repetitions are endless, the same epithets and images are applied first to one and then to another of the gods. *Give us wealth* is the request that runs through nearly the whole of them.

The following are some of the reasons why the Vedas cannot be accepted as a revelation from the mouth of Brahma, given crores of years ago:

1. *The writers of the hymns, in many cases, claim to be their authors, and internal evidence shows that they were composed when the Aryans were entering India.*

These points have been already noticed so fully (see pp. 17, 13) that it is unnecessary to recapitulate what has been said.

2. *The low conceptions given of God show that the writers were not inspired.*

The Vedas unquestionably teach polytheism; but as every intelligent man is now a monotheist, attempts are made to show that the "thrice eleven" deities mean only one God.

The Aryans framed their gods after themselves. They bargained with their gods just as they did with one another; they flattered them; they offered them sweet things and told them to be good. They themselves were fond of Soma-beer; so they thought it was so with Indra. Just as the smell of liquor attracts the drunkard, so as soon as Indra knew of some any one preparing Soma-beer, he mounted his chariot and drove to the place. Grant that Indra was fond of Soma beer, is it to be supposed that the king of heaven could not get it except by coming to some Aryan peasant's home. One hymn says that (the worshipper) brings Indra to drink the Soma by a rapid seizure, like a loaded horse (by a halter).

3. *The worldly character of the hymns shows their origin.*

Bishop Caldwell justly says: "If any person reads the hymns of the Vedas for the first time, he will be struck with surprise at the utterly worldly, unethical, unspiritual tone by which they are generally pervaded." The Rev. K. S. Macdonald expresses the same opinion:

"In the Veda, man is generally looked upon as essentially of this world. He is constantly represented as taken up with the things of this world, what he sees, hears, tastes, and feels in it,—the glowing of the fire, the flashing of the lightning, the howling of the storm, the rushing of the wind, the splash of the rain, the rising and setting of the sun, the dawning and gloaming of the day, the number of his cows, camels, sons, and horses, the burning of his enemies' towns and the carrying off booty, the slaughter of the Dasyus and Rakshasas, the offering of *ghi* and Soma to Indra and Agni in the hope of receiving more sons and cattle and slaughtering more enemies. These and such like things seem to constitute the whole duty of man as he is represented in the hymns of the Rig-

Veda. As a matter of fact, there is no attempt in the Vedas, or indeed in modern Hinduism, to give a correct conception of man's duties."*

The Rishis, from whom better things might have been expected, were as worldly as the common people. Many of their hymns solicit wealth. A few examples may be given :—

"The Rishi Panavatsa prays: "When Maruts will you repair with joy-bestowing riches to the sage thus adoring you, and soliciting (you for wealth) ?"

The Rishi Vatsa prays : "Give, Nasatyas, food of many kinds dripping with butter to him, the Rishi Vatsa, who has magnified you both with hymns. Give, Aswins, invigorating food, dripping with butter, to him who praises you, the lords of liberality to obtain happiness ; who desires affluence.

The Rishis did not live in huts or hovels. One of them prays thus : "We solicit of the divine protector of the Maruts, of the Aswins, of Mitra, and of Varuna, a spacious dwelling for our welfare. Mitra, Aryaman, Varuna, and Maruts, grant us a secure, excellent, and well-peopled dwelling, a three-fold shelter."

Another thus reasons : "If, Indra, I were as thou art, sole lord over wealth, then should my eulogist be possessed of cattle."

One Rishi prays not only that Pushan should protect him in all his doings, but should also "provide him with a supply of damsels." ix. 67.

Besides praying directly for wealth, the Rishis sought to gain it by invoking blessings on those who bestowed gifts, and by cursing those who offered no oblations :—

"May the opulent prince who bestows on me speckled cows with golden housings never perish, O gods."

"Let this man now multiply ; may he shoot up like a sprout, he who at once lavishes a thousand hundred horses for a gift."

"Indra, who is the slayer of him, however strong, who offers no oblations."

Some of the Rishis either told great lies or received immense gifts. The Rishi Brahmatithi says :

"Become apprised, Aswins, of my recent gifts, how that Kasu, the son of Chidi, has presented me with a hundred camels and ten thousand cows. The son of Chidi, who has given me for servants ten Rajas, bright as gold, for all men are beneath his feet. (Having taken these Rajas prisoners in battle, he gives them to me in servitude)." VIII. 5.

The Rishi Devatithi says :

"I, the Rishi, have received subsequently the complete donation, the 60,000 head of pure cattle merited by the devotions of the pious son of Kanwa, and by the illustrious Priyamedhas. Upon the acceptance of this donation to me, the very trees have exclaimed, (see these Rishis) have acquired excellent cows !" viii. 4.

* *The Vedic Religion*, p. 229.

4. *The "Brotherhood of Man" is not taught in the Vedas.*

"The horizon of the Rishi," says the Rev. K. S. Macdonald, "is confined almost invariably to himself. He prays for the happiness of neither wife nor child, not for the good of his village or his clan, nor yet for his nation or people. His eye is shut to the sufferings of his fellows. He manifests no common joys, any more than common sorrows."

But there is much that is worse than this negative side. Christianity teaches, "Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself." We should forgive and pray for our enemies. Jesus Christ says: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

The Aryans not only did not regard the non-Aryan races, and even some Aryans, as brothers; they simply wished their destruction and to obtain their wealth.

"Do ye, O lord of the virtuous, slay our Aryan enemies, slay our Dasya enemies, destroy all those who hate us."

"Kill all those who make no oblations, though difficult to destroy, and who cause thee no gladness; give us their wealth: the worshipper expects it."

"Root up like an ancient tree overgrown by a creeping plant, subdue the might of the Dasya; may we share with Indra his collected wealth."

Numerous other passages of similiar import might be quoted.

5. *The Vedas do not contain any satisfactory statement as to the way of salvation.*

The Rev. K. S. Macdonald says: "No Rishi, so far as I am aware, has ever claimed to be commissioned by God or by the gods, or by any of the gods, to enlighten men in regard to his will concerning men, or men's duties to God, or to one another. No one claimed to have any authoritative announcement to make as to whence man came, or whether he is going, what is his chief end here or hereafter."

Libations of the Soma juice and the offering of sacrifices are the chief means prescribed for the attainment of blessings. No intelligent man of the present time will be satisfied with such recommendations.

Truths in the Vedas.—But while the foregoing prove that the Vedas are not a Divine revelation, it is acknowledged that, along with error, they contain some great truths, either plainly expressed or dimly shadowed forth. The following may be mentioned:

1. *Prayer.*—The Aryans were, in their way, a religious people. They daily acknowledged their dependence upon the gods, and sought every blessing from them. In this they set us an example.

2. *Praise.*—The gods are praised for what they are, and for what they have done for man. This feeling of thankfulness is highly to be commended.

3. *An acknowledgment of God's Omniscience.*—Scoffers have said, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" On the contrary, in the Vedas, even the winkings of men are said to be known to Varuna.

4. *A confession of Sinfulness.*—It is true that these are not very numerous, but they occur, especially in hymns to Varuna.

5. *Mediation.*—There are few doctrines in the Christian religion to which Hindus more object than to mediation, but it is distinctly found in the Vedas. Max Müller calls Agni "the messenger and mediator between God and men." Agni, it is said "goes wisely between these two creations (heaven and earth, gods and men) like a friendly messenger between two hamlets." He announces to the gods the hymns, and conveys to them the oblations of their worshippers.

But mediation is not found merely in the Vedas. In every-day life it is universally acted upon. When any one has offended another, it is a common thing to seek reconciliation through a friend; a favour, such as an office, is often sought through the intervention of a person known to both.

6. *Sacrifice.*—One of the chief doctrines of Christianity is that the Son of God, for man's redemption, became incarnate, and suffered death upon the cross as a sacrifice for sin. The late Rev. Dr. Krishna Mohun Banerjea, for many years one of the Sanskrit Examiners of the Calcutta University, thus shows how this doctrine is shadowed forth in Vedic Hinduism:

The two propositions* which he enunciates are:—

1*st.* That the fundamental principles of Christian doctrine in relation to the salvation of the world find a remarkable counterpart in the Vedic principles of primitive Hinduism in relation to the destruction of sin, and the redemption of the sinner by the efficacy of Sacrifice, itself a figure of *Prajápati*, the Lord and Saviour of the Creation, who had given himself up as an offering for that purpose.

2*ndly.* That the meaning of "*Prajápati*," an appellative, variously described as a *Purusha*, begotten in the beginning, as *Viswakarma* the creator of all, singularly coincides with the meaning of the name and offices of the historical reality JESUS CHRIST, and that no other person than JESUS of Nazareth has ever appeared in the world claiming the character and position of the self-sacrificing *Prajápati*, at the same time both mortal and immortal.

The proofs of these propositions are next submitted:—

The first and foremost rites of religion which the Indo-Aryans regu-

* These are given fully his in *Aryan Witness to Christianity.*

larly celebrated, and on which they most firmly relied as the great cure for all the evils of life, and the secret of all success in the world, were *sacrificial rites*. Not idolatrous worship, not observances of caste, not any popular ceremony of our days, but *yajna* (sacrifice) and its connectives were the religious rites cherished by them.

The authorship of the institution is attributed to "Creation's Lord" himself. The world was called into being by virtue of sacrifice and is still upheld by its force, being indeed its "navel." Rig Veda i. 164. 35.

Sacrifice offered according to the true way—the right path—has been held in the Rik, Yajus, and Saman to be the good ferrying boat or raft by which we may escape from sin. It was expressly declared to be the authorised means both for remission and annulment of sin.

The sacrificer offered the victim in place of himself. The Taittiriya Brahmana says, "The sacrificer is the victim; it takes the sacrificer to the blessed place." Sacrifice was regarded as the way of deliverance from sin. The Rig Veda x. 133. 6, says, "Do thou, by means of sacrifice, take away from us all sin." The Tandya Maha Brahmana of the Saman Veda says of sacrifice: "Whatever sins we have committed by day or by night, thou art the annulment thereof. Whatever sins we have committed, knowingly or unknowingly, thou art the annulment thereof. Thou art the annulment of sin—of sin."

Sacrifice was regarded as the destroyer of Death. In the Taittiriya Aranyaka it is said, "O Death! the thousand myriads of thy bands for the destruction of mortals we annul them all by the mysterious power of sacrifice." Sacrifice opens the way to heaven. "Whosoever desires the felicity of heaven, let him perform sacrifices in the right way."

The secret of this extreme importance attached to sacrifice, and the key to the proper understanding of the whole subject was the self-sacrifice of *Prajápati*, the Lord or Supporter of the Creation, the "*Purusha*, begotten before the world," "the *Viswakarma*, the author of the universe." The idea is found in all the three great Vedas—Rik, Yajus, and Saman—in Sanhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads. The Divine *Purusha* who gave himself up as a sacrifice for the Devas, *i.e.*, *emancipated* mortals, had, it is said, desired and got a mortal body *fit for sacrifice*, and himself became *half mortal* and *half immortal*.

The Yajus puts into the mouth of the Divine Self-sacrificer the words: "Let me offer myself in all creatures, and all creatures in myself." The Satapatha Brahmana says, "The Lord of creatures gave Himself for them for He became their sacrifice." The Taittiriya Aranyaka contains the following: "They slew Purusha the victim—Purusha who was born from the beginning." The Rig Veda styles him, "the giver of himself, the giver of strength, whose shadow, whose death, is immortality."

The world was condemned and offered for sacrifice, that is to say, was devoted to destruction, for sin; and the Divine Saviour then offered Himself for its deliverance. The Bible says, "If one died for all, then were all dead." The Veda says conversely: *Because all were devoted to destruction, therefore one died for all.*

All that has just been shown appertaining to the sacrifice of *Prajápati* curiously resembles the Biblical description of CHRIST as God and man,

our very Emmanuel (God with us), mortal and immortal, who "hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour," of whom all previous sacrifices were but figures and reflections, who by His sacrifice or death hath "vanquished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

The Vedic ideal of Prajápati, as we have seen, singularly approximates to the above description of our Lord, and therefore remarkably confirms the saving mysteries of Christianity.

Christian evangelists when they draw our attention to the claims of Gospel truth do not utter things which can be called *strange* to Indian ears. Salvation from sin by the death of a Saviour, who was God and man himself, was a conception which had administered consolation to our ancient *Rishis*, and may yet, in a higher form, and to a greater degree, do the same for all India.

I proceed now to discuss the second proposition. The name *Prajápati* not only means "the Lord of creatures," but also "the supporter, feeder, and deliverer of his creatures." The great Vedic commentator *Sayana* interprets it in that wider sense. The Lord and Master has to feed and maintain his servants and subjects. The name JESUS, in the Hebrew, means the same. The radical terms stands for *help, deliverance, salvation.* And that name was given Him because He would *save* His people from their sins. In the prophecy cited by St. Matthew, He is described as a leader or ruler, who "shall *feed* my people Israel." He is therefore to His people what a shepherd is to his flock—both leader, ruler, and feeder. The same is the import of *pati*; the name *Prajápati*, therefore, singularly corresponds to the name JESUS.

Not a single character in the Hindu pantheon, or in the pantheon of any other nation, has claimed the position of one who offered himself as a sacrifice for the benefit of humanity. There is, as all educated persons must know, only one historical person, JESUS of Nazareth, whose name and position correspond to that of the Vedic ideal—one mortal and immortal-who sacrificed himself for mankind. By the process of exhaustion you may conclude that JESUS is the true *Prajápati*, the true Saviour of the world, "the only name given among men whereby we must be saved."

I think I may therefore declare our second proposition to be also demonstrated. CHRIST is the true *Prajápati*—the true Purusha begotten in the beginning before all worlds, and Himself both God and man. The doctrines of saving sacrifice, the "primary religious rites" of the Rig-Veda,—of the double character, priest and victim, variously called *Prajápati, Purusha* and *Viswakarma*,—of the Ark by which we escape the waves of this sinful world—these doctrines I say, which had appeared in our Vedas amid much rubbish, and things worse than rubbish, may be viewed as fragments of diamonds sparkling amid dust and mud, testifying to some invisible fabric of which they were component parts, and bearing witness like planets over a dark horizon to the absent sun of whom their refulgence was but a feeble reflection.

The Christian, with the wide sympathy which incites him to invite all

nations to the faith of Christ, can only rejoice that the JESUS of the Gospels responds to the self-sacrificing *Prajápati* of the Vedas, and that the evangelist's chief work will be to exhibit before his neighbours and fellow-subjects the true Ark of salvation—that true "vessel of sacrifice by which we may escape all sin." He will only have to exhibit for the faith of the Hindus the real personality of the true Purusha, "begotten before the worlds," mortal and yet divine, "whose shadow, whose death is immortality itself."

The Veda tells us of the ark of Salvation by which sin may be escaped, and repeatedly exhorts us to embark in it. The ark of Salvation, with the *Purusha* begotten in the beginning at its head, can be no other than the Church of Christ. In addition then to the exhortations of Christian evangelists, you have your own Veda calling on you to embark on that very Ark, if you desire to be delivered from the waves of sin.

A RETURN TO VEDIC HINDUISM IMPOSSIBLE.

Vedic Hinduism is, in some respects, greatly superior to modern Hinduism with its 33 crores of divinities. As already mentioned, the system of caste is not found in the Vedas; infant marriages were unknown; women were not secluded as they are now. Still, no educated man of the present day can return to the creed and rites of the Vedas. Some profess to do this, but it is only by giving the hymns a meaning directly the opposite to the sense in which they were understood by their authors.

1. *You cannot go back to the* GODS *of the Vedas.*—You cannot believe in "thrice eleven" deities. Heaven and earth, sun and moon, the clouds, the dawn, can never be endowed in your minds with intelligence, with wrath or mercy. No imagination can make them anything else to you than what they are:—varied, beautiful forms of matter, but matter still. You feel that you should adore the great Creator Himself, and not the objects He has made.

2. *You cannot offer the* PRAYERS *of the Vedas.*—You need something more than cows and horses, health and wealth, the destruction of public and domestic enemies.

3. *You cannot make the* OFFERINGS *of the Vedas.*—You cannot invite Indra to drink the Soma juice "like a thirsty stag;" you cannot sacrifice buffaloes, bullocks, cows and sheep; you cannot perform the *ashvamedha*. These were but shadows of the true sacrifice.

Follow the course urged upon you by your learned countryman, Dr. K. M. Banerjea, who now, as it were, addresses you from the tomb:

If it were possible for the hoary Rishis to reappear in the world, they themselves would exhort you, nay, beseech you, implore you, perhaps also constrain you not to neglect so great a salvation; not to waver in your

duty to acknowledge and embrace the true Prajápati, the true Purusha begotten before the world, who died that you might live, who by death hath vanquished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Denying CHRIST, whether actively or passively, you virtually repudiate every thing that is good. Embracing CHRIST, you will find in Him a strength and comfort which your ancient Rishis would have regarded as a most valuable treasure had they lived in these days. You will find in Him everything worthy of your lineage, worthy of your antiquity, worthy of your traditions, and worthy of your education, and at the same time just to your children and to your successors in life.

For further information about Christian doctrine, see some of the publications mentioned in the lists which are given; but, above all, study the New Testament, with earnest prayer to God to show you the truth.

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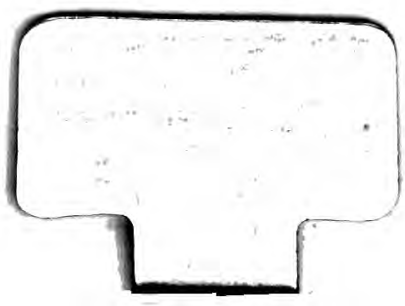

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