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THE

BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

EARLY RELIGION OF THE HINDUS.

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FIRST PAPER.[1]

THE religion of any people is not a thing to be easily mastered. The early religion of a heathen people is a matter which may well require careful and painstaking study if it is to be understood in any but the most superficial manner. The best that can be done, as a rule, in conducting an investigation of this kind, is to study all the objects of a religious nature that have come down to us; but, especially, to examine the religious literature, where such exists, and endeavor to comprehend what it meant to the people who used it.

This in itself is no easy task; for it means the shutting out of all extraneous ideas and the confining of the text

[1] SYMBOLS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES.

A. Edwin Arnold, Indian Idylls. Boston, 1889.
AJP. American Journal of Philology. Baltimore.
B. A. Barth, The Religions of India. Authorized Translation by J. Wood. Boston, 1882.
CB. Chr. Bartholomae, Handbuch der Altiranischen Dialekte. Leipzig, 1883.
EB. Encyclopædia Britannica. Ninth Edition. New York.

strictly within its original bounds, so far as it is possible to do so. In other words, the investigator must put himself in the place of the heathen whose religion he wishes to become acquainted with, and must, for the time being, empty himself of all his modern ideas and standards; lest, in the course of his study, he read into the original that of which its authors and users never dreamed; for it must be remembered that there is a perspective in religion and in morals just as truly as in art.

To ignore in the slightest detail the laws of perspective may mar or even spoil an otherwise beautiful picture, and in a similar way the failure to perceive the true position in intellectual or moral space, so to speak, of any given fact may vitiate results which might otherwise be considered admirable. It is therefore evident that a mere knowledge of the religious literature of a people is not of itself sufficient; indeed, every possible means must be used at the very beginning to obtain a faithful picture of the people themselves, and even of their history and environment; for

H. The Hindoos. Library of Entertaining Knowledge. London, 1834.
EH. E. W. Hopkins, The Religions of India. Boston, 1895.
J. F. B. Jevons, Introduction to the History of Religion. London, 1896.
JAOS. Journal of the American Oriental Society. New Haven.
K. Adolf Kaegi, The Rigveda. Translated by R. Arrowsmith. Boston, 1886.
L. C. R. Lanman, A Sanskrit Reader. Boston, 1884.
M. J. Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts. London, 1872–74.
MM. F. Max Müller, India: What Can It Teach Us? New York, 1883.
PAOS. Proceedings of the American Oriental Society. New Haven.
SBE. Sacred Books of the East. Edited by F. Max Müller. Oxford.
S&J. Schrader and Jevons, Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples. London, 1890.
T. C. P. Tiele, Outlines of the History of Religion. Translated by J. E. Carpenter. Fifth Edition. London, 1892.
TAPA. Transactions of the American Philological Association. Boston.
W. W. D. Whitney, A Sanskrit Grammar. Boston, 1891.

nothing which may enter as a factor into the final result can afford to be ignored.

In the case of the Hindus, the student has an unusually favorable field. The literature of the people, religious and otherwise, is enormous and reaches back indefinitely into the past: some have even placed parts of the sacred writings as early as 3500 B.C. In all of the literature, which has a distinct individuality of its own, the marvelous holds an important place: in fact, the Arabian Nights is so strikingly Indian in its construction and general character that many students of the Aryan tongues would not be surprised if a manuscript should some day be found in India which would go to show that the Arabian tale was simply an extension and adaptation of a Hindu story.[1] The grounds offered for such a belief are, briefly, that no other book of like construction appears to have originated in Arabia, while the general plan of a tale within a tale is the prevailing characteristic not only of the Sanskrit epic but also of other Hindu books intended for entertainment or instruction.

Such were the Hitopedeça and its predecessor the Pañcatantra; each intended to teach, by means of the fable, the best practical wisdom of the time in which the author or compiler lived. A çloka,[2] or distich, containing some

[1] The Arabic system of notation came from India, and the best of the tales of the Arabian Nights are reported to be found in the Sanskrit Bṛhatkathā. See H., Vol. ii. p. 316. It accordingly seems likely, unless they were transferred to Arabia by oral tradition, that they may have been borrowed from that source directly; but the materials of the literature have been so often worked over that they may possibly have been so treated in this case, and the result may then have been used, with Persian additions or possibly in a Persian form, by the Arabian compiler. Cf. F. D. Chester, in JAOS., Vol. xvi., 1896, p. 264.

[2] It is customary to cite the stem or root (verb) form of Sanskrit or Zend words, unless there is special reason for using some other form. It is hoped that such technicalities as could not well be avoided have been made clear to the general reader.

choice bit of wisdom, in each instance precedes the fable, which is then told to explain its meaning; but these books belong to the later period.

Not so with the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa; for both epics are supposed to have been handed down by tradition long before they were committed to writing.. These two books, then, may be supposed to mirror more or less accurately the character and condition of the people of early Indian times, or at least to shed some light upon their manners and customs, their modes of thought and mental characteristics, and their religious practices and beliefs; although, in this last regard particularly, they undoubtedly show in their present form the influence of later times. A brief description of each may not be amiss in attempting to give an intelligible picture of what the old Vedic religion was; for our real knowledge on this point comes from the literature, since the sacred objects, numerous as they are, that have come down to us belong to the later period.

In various places in the Sanskrit, Viṣṇu, later regarded by his adherents as the chief of the three great Hindu gods, the so-called Hindu trinity,—it is rather a triad,—is represented as manifesting himself or 'descending'[1] in bodily form to relieve gods or men from extreme peril or from some great moral evil; for the *deus ex machina* is very much at home on Hindu soil. He appears as a fish, a tortoise, a man-lion, man, etc.; and these manifestations are commonly called incarnations, a word apt to be misunderstood by the layman. The Hindu conception is this,—Viṣṇu sends a small part of his essence into a child that is to be born of earthly parents, or causes it to take the shape of some wonderful being, as in the case of the man-lion sent

[1] It is a familiar truism, that it is, for the most part, impossible to exactly reproduce in any given language even a single word of any other language; and it has come to be the fashion, in recognition of this fact, to use the single quotation marks for translations.

to slay the demon Hiraṇyakaçipu whom no created thing was able to kill; for he had obtained this boon for himself from Braman by practicing severe austerities. This minute portion of the essence of Viṣṇu, when manifested in human form, fairly outdoes the labors of Hercules himself. It is such a manifestation that is described in the Rāmāyaṇa, which is nearly twice as long as the Iliad and Odyssey combined. It is the younger of the two epics.

The story relates how King Daçaratha, 'Possessing-ten-wagons, (Man)-with-ten-wagons,' having performed the horse sacrifice to obtain sons, is presented, by a supernatural being, with a divine drink containing the essence of Viṣṇu. His wives drink the beverage, as directed. In time, Rāma is born of her who received the larger portion, and it is his destiny to slay the monster Rāvaṇa, 'Howl-maker.' Other sons are born of the other wives to be his helpers. The monster is possessed of ten heads and twenty arms and,—having obtained by austerities a promise from Braman, chief deity of the universe, that neither gods nor demons should be able to take his life,—is oppressing the entire universe and threatening the very existence of the world and even of the gods themselves. Rāma performs many marvels, such as breaking the bow of Çiva, bending that of Viṣṇu, destroying the worlds of a rival, etc.; but is banished to the forest for fourteen years in consequence of a rash promise made by his father. Here he destroys many demons, his wife is stolen by Rāvaṇa, who thus invites his fate, and extensive preparations are made for her recovery. At last, with the help of many wonderful animals divinely prepared to assist him, he crosses over to the abode of the monster, whose death follows, and Rāma receives his wife again unharmed.

The other epic, almost five times as long as the one just described, or about eight times the length of the Iliad and Odyssey combined, tells of the struggles of the Pāṇḍu

princes, models of virtue, with their cousins who cheat them out of their kingdom and are in every way bad. Only about a fifth of the poem is occupied with the main story. The rest is made up of episodes, added probably in large measure by succeeding generations of poets. One of the best, oldest, and least affected by the later influence of Vishnuism, is the story of Nala.

The chief of the Pāṇḍávas, Yudhiṣṭhira, 'Firm-in-battle,' bewails his lot as the most unfortunate of men, and the sage Bṛhadaçva, 'Possessing-great-horses, (Man)-with-strong-horses,' tells him of one yet more unfortunate. Nala was a prince, and Damayantī a lovely princess. They hear of each other, and golden geese, met by Nala in the forest, go and advise her to marry him. She thereupon becomes sad, pale, and much given to sighing. Her father, therefore, invites all the kings and princes to her svayaṁvara, 'self-choice,' and the great gods, Indra, Agni, Varuṇa, and Yama, decide to go also. They see Nala on his way, win a promise that he will go at once and press their suit, and make him invisible to the guards. Damayantī asks his name, refuses to accept any of the gods, and declares that she will destroy herself if Nala himself refuses her. In the meantime the kings and princes have assembled with their troops, wagons, and elephants. On the day set, all gather in the appointed place; but five Nalas appear. The princess looks in vain for the distinguishing marks of the gods which have been told her by old men. She turns to the gods for refuge, assumes a posture of reverence, does obeisance with voice and mind, begs them to point out the gods to her, and prays the great 'Earth-lords' to assume each his proper form. She now sees that four of the Nalas have fixed eyes, are free from sweat, have garlands that are unwithered and free from dust, and do not touch the earth; while the real Nala casts a shadow, has withered garlands, is covered with dust and sweat, stands on the ground, and

winks. She hastily chooses the fifth to the consternation of the kings and the delight of the gods, who give Nala miraculous gifts. But the demon Kali, coming too late, is filled with wrath because she chose a mortal, and vowing vengeance bides his time.

After twelve years, Nala forgets to wash his feet and goes impure to his devotions. This is Kali's chance, and he forthwith enters Nala's body, who, thus influenced, loses his kingdom in games with the dice and is compelled to leave home with his wife. Her he would not stake; but in his misery he deserts her in the forest. She ultimately reaches her father's home in safety, however; for he sends in search of her. Nala sees a fire in the woods and rescues an enchanted serpent from it, at his request. He is told to count as he walks and at the word daça, 'ten' (it means also 'bite'), the snake bites him and becomes a man. Nala shrinks into a dwarf with a withered arm; but is assured that it is for his good and is given a means of resuming his proper form. He enters the service of a prince as charioteer and cook, and Damayantī at last gets tidings of him by reason of her great sagacity in sending out her messengers. The rajah whom Nala serves is led to think that he may be able to obtain the hand of Damayantī if he can reach her father's capital in a single day. She knows that Nala alone can drive the distance, about five hundred miles, in that time. He does it for the rajah and teaches him the training of horses in return for perfect skill with dice. Then Kali appears beside him. It was he that the serpent had really bitten and, now that Nala knew the dice, he could no longer escape expulsion.

The rajah is received with due ceremony and Damayantī sets a watch on the charioteer, especially while he cooks for his master. Fire comes at the will of the dwarf and water gushes up in the pot, the lintel of a low doorway rises to let him pass, and he weeps over his children saved.

Then Damayantī, i.e., 'Victoria,' knows that it is Nala. She receives him back, he assumes his true form, wins back his kingdom, and lives happy ever after.

This tale greatly pleases Yudhiṣṭhira. In due time the princes go to war with their hundred cousins, the Kurus, and, after much fighting, win back their kingdom. Yudhiṣṭhira is crowned king; and the chief of the Kurus, though mortally wounded, instructs him, for about twenty thousand distichs, on the duties of kings, etc., and then dies. Finally the five Pāṇḍus renounce the kingdom and ascend to heaven with their common wife Drāupadī.

It must be clear, from even so hasty[1] a glance at the great Hindu epics, that the people possessed a comparatively high degree of civilization even in early times, and the evidence of the Vedas on this point is conclusive. Nomadic life had given way to the fixed dwelling,—a simple hut to be sure, but a house,—and village life had begun. The wealth of the people still consisted of flocks and herds; but the soil was cultivated with rude plows and harrows, mattocks and hoes; and the fields were watered, when necessary, by artificial canals. Crops, especially barley, were raised twice a year; and grain was threshed on the floor, winnowed, ground in the mill, and made into bread. Hunting with bow and arrow, snare and trap, was still continued; but it had lost its importance as a means of livelihood. Bread of a simple sort, cakes of flour and butter, milk in various forms, vegetables, and fruits of many kinds formed the chief articles of diet; while meat, cooked on spits or in pots, was little used. The question of food, however, was of small importance in comparison with drink. The praises of water were sung, to be sure; but they drank surā and soma, both intoxicating, and in

[1] For fuller accounts, see encyclopedias, articles; "Vishnu," "Mahabharata" (cf. L., pp. 297–300), "Sanskrit Literature," etc. For the Nala Episode, see A., pp. 53–211.

fact worshiped the latter as a god. Wood-workers, metal-workers, tanners, and potters plied their craft with considerable skill; the women knew how to plait mats, weave, and sew; and golden ornaments and jewelry were worn. The cow was the unit of value for barter; the family was the foundation of the state; and the father was the head of the family, the wife being next in importance. Children married in the order of their age, and the mother assisted at the match-making. If the father gave his consent, the bride was purchased from him with rich gifts. Monogamy seems to have been the rule and the union was a close one. The government was monarchical, but not absolute, and caste had not yet developed. The unchangeableness of all law was asserted, and it was believed that wrongdoing, even though unconscious, must be atoned for. Gaming with dice was a favorite sport, as was also the chariot race, while battle was a source of delight. Of sciences there were practically none, though a slight beginning had been made in arithmetic and astronomy. Of the arts, with a single exception, the same can be said. They had distinguished a few diseases which were treated, for the most part, with charms; but writing was still unknown. These were the conditions, in the main, which prevailed in Vedic times.[1] The one art which had long flourished was poetry, and that seems to have had its beginnings in the very cradle of the race.[2]

A second point, brought out by the two epics, is that they were a highly imaginative people, a trait in perfect keeping with the fact that poetry had such a hold upon them; and it is also clear that in some directions they were equally simple minded. They belong in the childhood[3]

[1] K., pp. 11–20.

[2] I.e., among the Indo-Europeans, whose history must reach back for centuries before their appearance in the world's drama.

[3] In these matters terms are relative: the time may come when we shall be regarded as belonging in the period of the world's youth. It is for

period of the world; and this must never be lost sight of, if a correct view is to be obtained of their religion.

Two other leading characteristics, which also appear in the poems, were ingenuity and a love of truth. Only the worst of creatures ever break a promise once given; but a modern criminal lawyer is not more ingenious in getting around a point in law than Braman is in surmounting the difficulty of keeping his promise, while helping to accomplish the thing prohibited by it; for it is by his advice that Viṣṇu is induced to make his 'descent' as Rāma, since Rāvaṇa had forgotten to include men in the agreement.

One other fact showing that they were a people of great capacity, in some directions at least, may be mentioned. After writing was introduced and the alphabet had been perfected, it contained fifty characters (one is Vedic), representing with great care all the sounds of the language, and a system of phonetics was developed which has been the wonder of modern scholars. R and l were recognized as vowels in certain connections (cf. Eng. mant*le* and b*ur*row) and, in addition to nasalized vowels, four distinct n's were used, three of which (n, ñ, and n̄) we have in the English words in, inch, and ink.[1] This indicates a wonderful

this reason that the word "primitive" has such a broad signification: in the absolute sense it takes us into the field of pure hypothesis.

[1] These n's are respectively dental, palatal, and guttural. The other is a lingual, or cerebral, formed between the dental and palatal positions. In transliterating Sanskrit letters (Whitney's method), linguals are represented by placing a dot below the English letters which they most resemble in sound. They are commonly pronounced like those letters; but *ṣ*, like palatal s (written *ç*), is pronounced as sh. *H*, after a preceding surd or sonant (such a combination is written as a single letter in Sanskrit), is always sounded in connection with it. *C* is pronounced like ch. Vowels have their continental value, while *ṛ* and *ḷ* (dental in this one instance), because they possess the syllable-carrying quality, are added to the list.

The transliteration of Zend shows quite as much diversity as that of Sanskrit and it presents fully as many difficulties. As far as possible, the same plan has been followed for both, where Zend words occur. San-

delicacy of ear, if nothing else, and it does not seem out of keeping with their poetic temperament, which in turn is not incompatible with an utter lack of the scientific faculty as applied to natural phenomena.

That they were thus deficient is testified on every side; indeed, the modern Hindus are sufficient evidence on that point. That consistency also was not, to them, a jewel, and that the people were not troubled by little difficulties of that kind, may be clearly seen when the Vedic poet sings in one of the later hymns:—

> 'What poets, pray, of those that lived before us,
> Have reached in fact the end of all thy greatness?
> Who both thy mother and thy father also
> From thine own body caused to spring together.'[1]

To the prosaic minds of our practical age, this seems a trifle strong: to the Hindu mind, it was only what might have been expected. The true relation of cause and effect, to such an intellect, must of necessity be a *terra incognita*, and it is not surprising that many a Hindu saw in the red rag, which some enemy had placed above his door, a cause of misfortune or death; much as the negroes of our own "Black Belt" often feel a severe attack of rheumatism coming on if some one has sprinkled black sand on the door step. In fact, there is much in the illiterate plantation "darkey" which is a help in understanding the peculiarities of the Hindus, though it must be borne in mind that the latter, as they appear in the Rig-Veda at least, were of an intellectual and metaphysical temperament. It was only on the practical side that they were weak and helpless. There are not wanting, even among the cultured and re-

skrit *e* (made up of a+i: see W., § 28) frequently appears in Zend as *aê* (there are four e's in Zend), representing the original sounds. It is certainly objectionable to transliterate the second letter as though it alone was equivalent to Sanskrit *e*; and *ê* has therefore been used. The corresponding long e may stand for Sanskrit *e*, as may also *ōi*. See CB., §§ 25, 41.

[1] Said of Indra, Rig-Veda, x. 54, 3.

fined of our own day, those who delight in soaring platitudes which soothe all thought to rest and leave the mind a blank; and it is not to be wondered at that in India a type of mind should be developed which found its chief delight in esoteric doctrines.

Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Theosophy are natural growths in such a soil; but the earliest period shows little trace of such teachings, and the various stages in the development are plainly shown in the literature. The farther back this is traced, the simpler it becomes, until philosophic speculations disappear and only hymns are left. If a cause is sought for this gradual change, it must be looked for in the environment of the people.

What the original home of the Aryans was, is still a matter of conjecture.[1] It is perfectly well established, however, that Hindus[2] and Persians, Greeks and Romans, Teutons and Slavs, Celts and Lithuanians, all came from a common race, which, though scattered abroad before the dawn of history, has left many traces of itself in the language of its descendants.[3] In the general dispersion, one branch of

[1] See S&J., pp. 80-106; but see also the final chapter, pp. 426-443, which contains the most satisfactory attempt at a final solution yet offered.

[2] In the narrow sense; for the word has been extended so as to include all the inhabitants of modern India, only about six per cent of whom are pure Aryans. About as many more are direct descendants of the earlier races whom they conquered. The rest are a mixture of the two.

[3] Even the familiar Celtic word Erin appears in Old Bactrian (East Iranian or Zend) in the form airyana, i.e., '(Land?)-of-the-Aryans,' (the Iranians called their traditional fatherland, Airyana Vaėjah, 'Aryan Might'), and in New Persian as Irān (formerly Erān), the official name of the country. The word airyana is an adjective from airya, Old Persian (West Iranian) ariya, Sanskrit aryá, 'good, true, noble,' which in the masculine form, though with change of accent in Sanskrit, was used to mean a member of their own race, as distinguished from the evil (foreign) tribes about them. In Sanskrit the derivative árya, 'belonging to the faithful, one of the faithful,' is commonly used to designate members of the tribe and it is from this word that the term Aryan comes. See K., note 37; and cf. EH., p. 25, footnote. The circumflex (á) indicates an accented long vowel.

the family became the Hindu-Persians, or the Aryans, in the narrow sense of the word; for it is sometimes used as synonymous with Indo-European; and this branch in turn, finding its way through the passes of the Hindu Kush into the eastern part of what is now Afghanistan, divided after a time into two others. Of these, one became the Iranians, or Persians; while the other, retaining possession of the valley of the river Kābul—for this is probably the Vedic Kubhā—became the Hindus. At first, both spread to the south and east into the extreme northwest of what is now India: and, encountering a broad river, they called it the Sindhu, 'Stream', i.e., the Indus (Iranian, Hindu). Finding fertile land to the east, the Hindus gradually pushed their way to the Satlaj, the last tributary in that direction. They gave it the name of Çutudrī, later changed into Çatadru, 'Hundred-course.'[1]

It was not until near the end of the early, or Rig-Veda, period that the Aryans reached the upper Ganges, and the conquest of the peninsula came long afterwards. It is supposed that the conquest of the Deccan, 'South,' is portrayed in the story of Rāma; for the monster whom he was born to slay was the king of Ceylon. As it is fair to suppose that the Epic demi-gods were simply ancient heroes, it is also fair to infer that the monsters and demons of the forest were the dark-skinned tribes whose only means of escaping slavery was to retire before the oncoming invaders. Here again the strong imagination of the people is apparent. That the Mongolian faces of the Dravidians, Kolarians, and Tibeto-Burmans, whom they found in the land, were especially hateful to them, is sufficiently clear[2]; and the rest follows naturally. It is also plain that they looked with scorn and contempt upon the customs and beliefs of the Dásyavas, 'Fiends,' as they were pleased to call their

[1] Cf. EH., pp. 31–36.

[2] See EB., article, "India," section, "History."

foes; and little or no influence upon early religious beliefs is to be looked for in that quarter.

What the religion of these despised races was, is not certainly known. In two passages of the Rig-Veda (vii. 21, 5, and x. 99, 3) they may(?) be referred to by the word çiçnádevās (pl.), whose accent requires it to mean, 'having-a-çiçna-as-god,' i.e., phallus-worshipers.[1] In the course of centuries, whatever their religion, contact with these tribes and their presence as slaves among the people must have had its effect upon the Aryan immigrants. It may have been one of the factors which led to the enormous exaggeration of the importance of the priestly office and of the sacrificial rites, together with that peculiar caste system which has been the curse of India. Among the newcomers, there were three divisions of the people: Brahmâṇas, '(Professional)-prayers, Priests'; Kṣatríyās, 'Rulers, Princes,' the military classes; and Vāíçyās, 'Settlers,' the mass of the people, the middle classes.[2] These all felt themselves infinitely superior to the native population, especially in their religion, and began to call themselves dvijá, 'twice-born,' because invested with the sacramental cord; while the Çūdrâs, or lower classes, enjoyed no such privilege. Investiture was the placing of a cord over the left shoulder and under the right arm of a boy when taken to a teacher to learn the sacred knowledge. It seems to have sprung up with the formal ritual, and the care with which both it and the sacred knowledge were kept from the lower classes must have favored the development of a rigid caste system.

In the early days prince and priest alike officiated at the tribal sacrifice; but, as the bulk of the religious hymns

[1] Cf. the conjectural origin of dancing girls in the temple service (H., ii. p. 96), and the worship of Çiva as a generative power. But see EB., article, "Brahmanism" (p. 207); B., pp. 261-262; and EH., p. 471.

[2] See EH., pp. 27-29.

and rites increased, princes began to employ priests to perform the sacrifice for them, and in time the Brahmans claimed the office as their own. The sultry heat of their new home had relaxed the sturdy fiber of the Aryans, and constant warfare with the hostile natives left little time to keep up with the growing ritual. This the Brahmans as a whole did, and gradually obtained, because of their superior knowledge of the Vedas, that wonderful ascendency which they still maintain. One of the most powerful factors which led to this result is possibly to be found in the diseases which are incidental to a tropical climate. To the Aryan, disease was a punishment for some wrongdoing, which must be expiated by the doer. The knowledge of such matters was in the hands of some Brahman: what more natural, then, than that the importance of the Brahman should be greatly increased? Anything done to cure the disease would be useless without the proper formulas pronounced over the remedies: and here the Brahman was all-important, even if he did not practice medicine himself; as he was forbidden to do so, in later times at least, unless driven to it by necessity. He had the knowledge and was the ultimate authority on prayers and rites, which were the things of greatest importance.

This knowledge which gradually came to be the special possession of the priestly classes constituted the Vedas. Oldest and of greatest importance is the Ṛgvedá,[1] 'Praise-knowledge,' from which, in a sense, selections best adapted to be sung or chanted, with some modifications and a few additions, grew into the Sāmavedá, 'Chant-knowledge.'[2]

[1] The true spelling; but Rig-Veda (Rigveda) is the established form in English. See W., §§ 23–26.

[2] Both Vedas probably drew from a common source (see W. D. Whitney, in PAOS., October, 1883, p. xx.), and some even maintain that the Sāman has the older form. See K., note 9. The Atharva-Veda and parts of the tenth book of the Rik (Rig-Veda) probably also drew from a common source. More Mantra ('Thought, Text,' the ordinary name of

These seem to have been used in the early days as the impulse of the individual 'twice-born' directed; but when a fixed ritual had been established and the priests were in charge of the sacrifice, formulas of various kinds, such as blessings, explanations, etc., with admixtures from the Rik, were developed and out of these grew several different forms of a Yajurvedá, 'Worship-knowledge,' i.e., the knowledge of the sacrificial formulas. Two of these, distinguished by the names White and Black, are known, and there are three recensions of the latter and two of the former. In the meantime, a large body of charms and incantations had arisen, apparently among the people. In the course of time, these also came into the possession of the Brahmans, accepted possibly as a help in the struggle which they had long waged with the princely class for the supremacy; and out of these grew the Atharvaveda, 'Atharvan-knowledge,' i.e., the knowledge of the 'fire-priests,' the supposed descendants of the first legendary priest who obtained fire from heaven and instituted the sacrifice; for the advocates of the fourth Veda sought to make it chief of all.[1] This Veda also contains material found in the Rik, especially in its late hymns, amounting to perhaps a sixth of the stanzas which in this last recension became a part of the 'sacred-knowledge.'

With the lapse of time, changes gradually took place in the language itself, so that the meaning of the hymns and formulas was no longer plain. To meet the resulting need, commentaries on the sacred text were made by learned priests, and each received the name of Brâhmaṇa,[2] 'Relating-to-devotion.' These in turn were added to the 'sa-

the Vedic hymns and formulas) was in existence than was ever committed to writing, as is shown by occasional citations from hymns now lost.

[1] Cf. SBE., xlii., Introduction, pp. lxii.–lxxi.

[2] The word commentary only faintly expresses the nature of these works. No one word can do them justice. They contain Mythology,

cred-knowledge' and became a part of the Vedas, which at length grew to such proportions that brief rules for the proper observance of the rites were a necessity; and certain formulas, composed to supply the want (each was called a Sûtra, 'Thread'), came to be regarded as the third and last division of the Vedas.[1] In later times the Sūtras were spoken of as smṛti, 'remembrance, tradition,' while the hymns, formulas, and their commentaries were known as çrúti,[2] 'hearing, revelation.'

These changes which took place in the language have an important bearing on the whole Vedic question. If the classical Sanskrit, the language of the epics, be compared to that of Lysias, the Brāhmaṇas, roughly speaking, may be said to correspond in a similar way to Herodotus; the Atharva-Veda, to the Odyssey; and the Rig-Veda, to the Iliad, though the difference in the last instance is much more marked in the Sanskrit than in the Greek. But the Rig-Veda itself exhibits marked linguistic differences, and the composition of its hymns, exclusive of late additions, is supposed to have covered a period of about five hundred years. On this point, however, opinions differ.[3] Professor Whitney, whose view is looked upon with most favor, placed the time of their composition during the first half of the second thousand years before our era (2000–1500 B. C.); but the question will always remain a difficult one, and probability seems to be all that can be hoped for.

Philosophy, Legend, Etymology, Exegesis, etc., most of which is worthless, except as a curiosity or as a means of studying the curious phases of priestly superstition.

[1] There were still only four Vedas; but the Rig-Veda, for example, came to include its Brāmaṇas and Sūtras. As ordinarily used, it means the hymns only.

[2] The later extensions of the Brāhmaṇas—the Āraṇyaka and Upaniṣad treatises—were not çruti; but they do not concern this paper. See K., p. 5. For these treatises, see K., note 16; W. D. Whitney, in AJP., April, 1886, Vol. vii. pp. 1–2; B., pp. 64–86; EH., pp. 178 and 216–241; and SBE., i. and xv.

[3] See K., note 38; also EH., pp. 4–7.

It has already been mentioned that the epics are supposed to have been in existence long before the art of writing was known. That the Vedas were in the same manner handed down by tradition can no longer be questioned; indeed, "at the present moment, if every MS. of the Rig-Veda were lost, we should be able to recover the whole of it—from the memory of the Śrotriyas[1] in India."[2] Mantra, Brāhmaṇa, and Sūtra, for each of the four Vedas, were thus preserved for centuries; and, when at last, only a few hundred years before the Christian era, the introduction of an alphabet made it possible to commit the hymns to writing, the meaning had been so long obscure that, in many instances, the ancient authors of the Brāhmaṇas themselves had been at a loss to know how to interpret the Mantras, and, in their perplexity in one case, had even gone so far as to evolve out of a refrain beginning, kásmāi devâya, 'to what god,' a special highest unknown god Ka, 'Who.' This alone is sufficient to show that the real meaning of the hymns cannot be looked for with certainty in the native interpretation.[3] Indeed, one of their own Vedic scholars is even said to have gone so far as to declare that it was useless to attempt to explain the words of the text, since the hymns themselves had no meaning.

How this obscurity came about can be easily surmised. Among the early Aryans, when a man of greater than average intellectual power, fired by some unusual event or pressed by some urgent need, composed a prayer or hymn of praise, it became the property of the family, or clan, to

[1] Brahmans who know the Vedas. [2] MM., Lecture vii., p. 227.

[3] The value of the native commentaries varies in proportion to their approach to an unbroken continuity of tradition. There is no such continuity in the main, as is made clear by the marked difference in the language used; but there are degrees of difference; and the native documents in the case of the Atharva-Veda, for example, are more likely to be reliable sources of information than in that of the Rik. But here again opinions differ. See EH., pp. 12–23.

which the poet belonged, and was sacredly cherished. Such hymns were passed down from father to son with little or no change for generations. From time to time, other members of the clan, similarly affected, composed new hymns which in turn were added to the general family collection. For hundreds of years the process went on; but the original form of each of the hymns was carefully preserved as a sacred inheritance and the meaning thus became more or less obscure.

The hymns themselves for this very reason, however, grew in sanctity, until at length Brahmans possessing the requisite knowledge made definite collections of the oldest and best of them; and in time, presumably about a thousand years before our era, these collections were united into one. In this way arose the Mantra of the Rig-Veda, or the Ṛgveda-Saṁhitā, i.e., the collection of hymns which forms the basis of this Veda in the broad sense of the term; and it is probable that the history of the Sāma-Veda is not materially different. In a similar way, sacrificial formulas which had come into use in different communities formed the basis for the Yajur-Vedas; while the Atharva-Veda, resembling more closely the Rik, is connected by tradition with two mythical priestly families. But variations and additions began to creep into the different Saṁhitās and thus, in connection with each of the Vedas, here and there a cáraṇa, 'school,' arose which had its own çâkhā, 'branch, recension.' While the other Vedas have been more fortunate, but one recension of the Rik has survived; yet this was committed to writing in so many different ways, made possible by the peculiar laws of Sanskrit word combination, that no possibility of change except by interpolation remained; and, in this way, it has been preserved.

The Rig-Veda is divided artificially into 'eighths'; but its historical division is into books. Of these, the first consists of fifteen (some authorities say fourteen, some six-

teen) minor groups, each referred to a single source; the following seven (ii.–viii.) are each ascribed to a separate clan, from which they get the name "Family-books," and are considered on linguistic grounds to be the oldest; the ninth consists of hymns to the drink Soma, treated as a divinity; while the tenth and last, like the first, is attributed to different poet-sages, or, as the Hindus put it, to different 'seers' (a 'seer' is an Ṛṣi), i.e., men who saw the hymns the last time they were revealed; for the true Hindu believes that they have always existed somewhere. The first and last books are said to be the youngest as a whole.[1] The age of the hymn, as will be readily seen, is an important matter in every case. It is determined chiefly by the linguistic form; but metre, arrangement, and subject-matter are also considered.

The Brāhmaṇas, although they have their beginning in some of the prose portions of the Black Yajur-Veda, are shown by their language to be later than the Mantras, and they may safely be said to mark the development of the influence and power of the Brahmans,[2] which took place in the Madhyadeça, 'Mid-land,' the region of the Jumna and the upper Ganges; while Buddhism[3] arose later on, in the

[1] Books ii.–vii. are commonly grouped together as the "Family-books," because of the similarity in their arrangement. Book viii. is peculiar in its meters and, like ix., is called one of the chief sources of the Sāma-Veda. Book x. resembles the Atharva-Veda in language, etc., and is the book from which that Veda has the appearance of drawing most largely. For this reason it is regarded by many as the youngest of the books, though it contains material which is evidently old. The chronological order usually given is iv., vi., vii., v., iii., ii., then parts of i., viii., ix., x., and lastly parts of i., viii., ix. But see K., note 73; EB., article, "Sanskrit Literature"; E. W. Hopkins, in JAOS., Vols. xvi., 1896, pp. 275 ff., and xvii., 1896, pp. 23 ff; and E. V. Arnold, in JAOS., xviii., 1897, pp. 204–236 and 352–353.

[2] Cf. T., pp. 117–118. Also L., pp. 356–357, §§ 90–93.

[3] Important for the study of both religions are SBE. The canonical books of Buddhism are contained in Vol. x., The Dhammapada. Others are: xi., Buddhist Suttas; xiii., xvii., and xx., Vinaya Texts; xxi.,

fifth century B.C., in the region of the lower Ganges. The various stages in the development may be made clear, if it is borne in mind that Buddhism is related to Brahmanism somewhat as Christianity is related to Judaism, while Brahmanism is in turn related to the earlier Vedic beliefs somewhat as Catholicism is related to the Apostolic Church.

It must now be clear that it is with the formative period, the days of the poet-sages, that the present paper has most to do, and it must also be evident that the early religion of these Aryan settlers in the Pañjāb, 'Five-rivers,' was not Brahmanism, but something which Brahmanism adapted to its own uses and made to serve its ends. With this position agrees the fact that the Rig-Veda knows nothing of the doctrine of metempsychosis, which has had a wide acceptance in the world, but which nowhere else attained to such proportions in the daily life of the people as in India. It follows that the theosophic speculations of the Brahmans must be excluded, although it will be allowable to consider the material upon which they were based, so far at least as it appears in the Mantras, and it will also be necessary to shut out the religious teachings of the epics, except such as plainly coincide with the doctrines of the Rik and are therefore survivals from the early Vedic period.

Beyond the hymns themselves, then, provided the prevailing view is the correct one, nothing upon which to rest remains except what can be shown to have belonged to the entire family before its dispersion, together with such side-

The Saddharma-Pu*nd*arīka; and xlix., Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts. Most important for Brahmanism, are Vols. xii., xxvi., xli., xliii., and xliv., The Śatapatha-Brāhma*n*a. Others are: i. and xv., The Upanishads; ii. and xiv., The Sacred Laws of the Āryas; vii., The Institutes of Vish*n*u; viii., The Bhagavadgītā; xxv., The Laws of Manu; xxix. and xxx., The G*r*i*y*a-Sūtras; and xxxiv. and xxxviii., The Vedānta-Sūtras. It should be noted that vii. and viii. are the products of sects. See AJP., ii., 323–341; iii., 391–410; vii., 1–26; and x., 91–94. Valuable material is also to be found in M., which has not been available for reference.

lights as can be obtained from other religions and the conditions existing in the periods following most closely after the one in question; unless it appears that there were influences either from without or from within which affected the popular beliefs. From without, nothing really tangible appears until a much later period; for Brahmanism was well established centuries before the Greek invasion, and the same is true of the introduction of the alphabet from Semitic sources, which was brought into general use by the Buddhists. There may have been an occasional borrowing from some foreign source, and yet an eminent authority says: "I think I may say that there really is no trace whatever of any foreign influence in the language, the religion, or the ceremonial of the ancient Vedic literature of India."[1] Influences from within there must have been, and they appear to have come from the environment of the people.

It is a commonly accepted doctrine that nature religions —as opposed to ethical—are based on superstition. The word, however, is an unfortunate one for several reasons: it now almost universally carries with it a certain amount of opprobrium; the supposed original meaning, which seems to be the one intended, is still open to question and is almost never thought of even by scholars; and all men are prone to class all religions save their own as superstitions. The two undoubtedly are closely related; but so are courage and rashness, self-love and selfishness, reverence and fear, faith and credulity, firmness and obstinacy, caution and cowardice, and that too in the same way. Moreover, in these cases without exception it is clearly easier for the good quality to degenerate into the corresponding evil one than for the reverse to take place. Why not so in the matter of religion and superstition? Is not the latter closely allied to fear on the one side and the for-

[1] MM., Lecture iv., p. 159.

mer to reverence on the other? That the two are commonly mixed is nothing strange; for it is the same with all things human; the dross is always present, if not in evidence. It does not necessarily follow that all heathen nations have developed a religion first and then relapsed into superstition in most cases later on; but rather that some heathen nations may never have really developed a religion at all in any true sense of the word, precisely as some men have never risen above the possession of the bad quality in the list given. A beginning must have been made, however, even in these cases, since no savage tribe has ever been found in which there were no germs of religious belief; but the classification must depend, as in every other matter affecting the human will, on what has been the ruling motive. Where the religious element is weak, degeneration soon sets in and progress ends.[1]

The truth seems to be that non-ethical religions develop out of a natural desire for the help of some protecting power in the struggle for existence, coupled with the mixed feelings of fear and reverential awe with which primitive peoples view all objects and phenomena too complex for their comprehension. In other words, whatever amazes the savage or causes him to feel his own weakness, arouses in him a sense of the supernatural and either draws to itself or to its supposed cause the worship and trust which grow out of the universal longing of the human heart for something above itself upon which to lean, or drives him in terror to seek protection elsewhere in something more familiar or previously chosen from similar causes.[2] The practical result, from our standpoint, is superstition. The heathen, however, often make a sharp distinction where we fail to detect a difference, and the Hindus will place one act under the head of religion and another under that of witchcraft (a form of superstition), when we would

[1] Cf. J., p. 5. [2] Cf. J., pp. 17–26.

promptly classify both as magic. Where it seems to be clear that reverence or gratitude have led to faith and worship, it may be safe to place the result under the head of religion; while obeisance and credulity growing out of fear are plainly the characteristics of superstition. Heathen practices, as a rule, so combine and confuse the two that either word seems applicable and neither satisfactory[1]; but it may be safe to say, on the basis now laid down, that the hymns of the Rig-Veda, taken as a whole, are the product of a religion[2]—a religion somewhat primitive and childish to be sure, but still a religion.

The Atharva-Veda, on the other hand, which as a whole probably represents the belief of the less intellectual classes, is clearly in the main the outgrowth of superstition.[3] For some centuries it seems to have had no currency among the more intelligent of the people, and it never gained so complete an ascendency over the thinking classes of the whole country as the other Vedas did. In linguistic form, it belongs between the Rik and the Brāhmaṇas; but it contains material which in substance seems to have gone back to the earliest times, since some of its spells in both purpose and content (partly also in form) are said to resemble old Germanic ones so closely that the two may well have come from a single source.[4] This does not, however, go to show that the Atharva-Veda contains material that is older than that in the Rik; but rather that parts of both

[1] A good illustration of what is meant is to be found in Paul's sermon to the Athenians, Acts xvii. 22,—old reading, "too superstitious": new, "somewhat superstitious"; margin, "religious"; appendix, "very religious." English lacks a word for the middle ground (Greek δεισιδαιμονία) and superstition is made to do double duty with the inevitable loss of clearness common in such cases. If it could stop at Samaria instead of being made to reach from Dan to Beersheba, a real gain might be realized.

[2] Cf. L., p. 352, § 72. [3] Cf. L., p. 355, § 85.

[4] Cf. K., note 12. But see also SBE., xlii., pp. 313-314, 321, 386, 388, and 567.

reach back in substance to the Indo-European period. Religion is either progressive or retrogressive,[1] while superstition tends to perpetuate itself unchanged.[2] For this reason there may be more that is of a primitive nature in the former than in the latter; but if there is, it in no way weakens the main argument. It rather tends to strengthen it on the whole; for the evidence seems to show that old religious beliefs were giving place to new ones, when the earliest hymns were composed, as will presently appear.[3]

That the Vedic religion should have the slightest resemblance to our own is not to be expected. The Hindus had no revelation in our sense of the word, and in comparison with men trained in the schools of modern religious

[1] Cf. J., p. 139.

[2] This fact does not seem to have been given the prominence which is its due. The religious elements in a system of heathen beliefs may disappear entirely and the superstitious ones may still persist for centuries. This is perhaps the chief reason why magic still holds such sway in the world. Cf. J., pp. 39–40.

[3] It may be confidently asserted that some simple form of religious belief existed among the Aryans quite as early as any form of superstition. Cf. J., pp. 7–10, and see below. It seems clear that the religiously inclined have ever been the leaders in formulating tribal rites (cf. J., pp. 101, 105–107) and especially in setting up the "blood-covenant" with the "god," which appears to have been the earliest form of sacrifice (cf. J., p. 147, and E. Riess, in TAPA., Vol. xxvii., 1896, p. 15); but the two tendencies must have been in man from the beginning, and just as one man is courageous and another rash, one is cautious and another timid; so, in the same community with the same tribal rites, the nobler and more intelligent tended to the religious, and the baser and less intelligent to the superstitious side, with the result that the stronger won the day, causing progress in a few cases but degeneracy in the many. This agrees in part with the assumption that prayer and "charm-song" both go back to a "common source" (Riess, *L. c.*, p. 17); for the "charm-song" may well be "a survival of an earlier stage of intercourse with the divine power" (*ibid.*) and would thus bear "out the definition of superstition as religion become *stark*" (*ibid.*); but, if magic of any sort copied the earliest religious forms, it could hardly fail to copy later ones (cf. J., pp. 42, 178–179), and it appears to have also originated in part in "savage science" (*ibid.*, pp. 31–38).

thought were but children. It would be quite as reasonable to expect an illiterate day laborer to understand as much by the word "sun" as is conveyed by that term to the mind of the specialist who spends his days with spectroscope and camera photographing and analyzing the wonderful lines of the solar spectrum, as to imagine that a nature religion in primitive times can be held to the standards prevailing among ourselves just before the twentieth century so soon to dawn. The important question is the attitude of mind. If it shows worship and faith, the rest is simply a question of knowledge, or light. Modern standards may indeed make it clear that the faith shown has no reasonable ground and that the object of worship is unworthy of reverence: on practical grounds we may perhaps call it superstition, in the broad or general sense of the word: but, from the worshiper's standpoint, it is still a form of religion; inasmuch as, with our light, its followers might put us to shame. In the case of some of the early Vedic worshipers at least, this statement is certainly not too strong.

It should be borne in mind, however, that nothing regarding the nature of the Vedic deities is to be inferred from what has been said thus far. To understand just what was suggested to the Hindu mind by such words as Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, and the rest, is an extremely difficult and delicate task; not from any lack of material descriptive of them and of their deeds, nor yet altogether from the complexity of the concepts; but rather from the vagueness of the latter and the inevitable desire of the modern mind with its analytical and scientific tendencies to bring down to a definite fixed system what was never intended to be so treated. It is the difficulty of the grown man trying to think the thoughts of the child. To illustrate.

One of the commonest words in the Rig-Veda is devás, which we render 'god'; yet it is an adjective in reality and

appears to mean 'belonging-to-the-sky' (d i v); i.e., it seems to have been used originally to describe something observed in the sky which was spoken of as belonging there or having to do with the sky; but the concept was not sufficiently lofty to prevent the term from being applied in later times to such terrestrial things as priests and princes,[1] somewhat as the corresponding Latin word *deus* was used of distinguished or highly honored persons.[2] This does not go to show that the d e v â s of the Rig-Veda were not objects of reverence; but rather that the general character of the word lacked sufficient definiteness to prevent it from coming to be applied to men exalted above their fellows, or possessing unusual authority. To the poet-sages, a d e v a was something manifesting powers which excited the wonder and admiration of the beholder and led him to believe that blessings could be and were obtained by propitiating the object exciting his adoration. Early *deus* may perhaps define the word; but classical *deus* has become too much like θεός. Θεός will not do, because the θεοί were essentially "men writ large"; while, in the Vedic hymns, d e v a means something above and beyond the human in its fundamental conception,[3] and implies a certain vagueness which likeness to the human does not satisfy. To be sure, a d e v a may show human traits, good or bad; but that is nothing strange: the savage thinks that even stones may have life and intelligence,[4] and the civilized man does not

[1] The word is even said to have been used of fools and idiots; but it has never been cited in this sense in the literature. It may have been so used, somewhat as our own ancestors applied the term 'happy' (A.-S. *sælig*, Eng. silly) to the same class of persons.

[2] On the contrary, Lat. *dominus*, Gr. κύριος, and Eng. lord, all started from the definite human side, though in widely different ways, and came at last to be used of the supreme being.

[3] Cf. Herodotus (I., § 131) on the gods of the Persians. The same idea comes out in the later philosophical writings. Cf. also MM., Lect. v., p. 179.

[4] Cf. J., pp. 11, 21–22, 28, 99, etc. This animism must not be taken to

always easily rid himself of the notion when he suddenly stubs his toe against a projecting rock. A deva may even make use of language like a man and be subject to human conditions: the human side is all the poet knows and his language must of necessity take the form of human experience; but, for all that, a deva is a deva still and the human elements are simply the outgrowth of the effort to grasp the nature and character of the divine (sky) power which has impressed itself upon the poet's heart.

But allowance must be made for two things. Attention has already been called to the difference in the age of the hymns and to the changes and additions in them made by the Brahmans. The evidence of this Brahmanical tampering is clear, even in the present state of Vedic knowledge, and in the latest additions, possibly younger by a thousand years[1] than the oldest hymns, it must be expected that the

mean that primitive man consciously thinks his own characteristics into certain objects animate and inanimate, as we are obliged to do to think his thoughts after him; but rather that he simply takes these things for granted. It does not occur to him that anything that affects him can be different from himself in the matter of intelligence and will; for he has no idea of what intelligence and will really are. He supposes that whatever moves, makes a noise, or seems to have power to benefit or injure him, must of necessity know and do, as he knows and does; he then likens such things more and more to himself, as he begins to think, until his reasoning finally breaks down and doubt becomes possible. Knowing nothing of the nature of logic, his reasoning is often but the association of ideas and the strange and sometimes apparently contradictory notions which result are a sore puzzle at times to the scholar. The untangling of the web of associated ideas, a thing which the original thinkers were incapable of doing, is the problem which such matters present for solution. Cf. E. Riess, *L. c.*, p. 14.

[1] Cf. K., p. 25. But see also M. Bloomfield, in JAOS., Vol. xvii., 1896, p. 175, footnote ‖. In the case of the Atharva-Veda, it seems likely that much that is late in form is early in substance, and the same may be true of portions of the Rik. For some reason,—either because they were not regarded as especially sacred or because they were in such common use, probably as charms,—the original form of certain hymns appears not to have been preserved but to have suffered a change corresponding to the shifting which took place in the language, at least this seems to be the

content of words has greatly changed; while the intermediate stages may be expected to appear in the original hymns. Such is, apparently, the fact: mere animistic personification has steadily grown into an abstraction until a d e v a has come to be more of an actual definite personality than was possible in the early days. To cover this growth from a somewhat vague sky power into a distinct heavenly being by a single word is manifestly impossible, unless the content of the word is made to vary consciously with the varying needs. Even in English no two persons mean exactly the same by the words they use, and in this far-away time, so many centuries before the art of definition, it is only fair to allow the greatest latitude to the singers not only in hymns far apart in point of time, but even in those of approximately the same age; for here and there a poet-sage will outstrip his generation and appear to see with a clearness of vision belonging to a later day: in short, the deities of the Rik are in the process of becoming anthropomorphic; but, with a possible exception or two, they have not yet actually become so. That belongs to the age of the Brāhmaṇas and still more clearly to the Epic period; and yet the single word "god" is made to cover all these varying conceptions.

A late stanza summons to the sacrifice, 'the eleven gods in the sky, the eleven on the earth, and the eleven dwell-

most natural explanation of the differences in the dialect used and it may possibly account for the fact that certain hymns and especially certain stanzas seem to have suffered a change of use in the ritual. This shifting may perhaps have continued in some cases until the form of the hymn was finally fixed by its adoption into one of the priestly collections. The existence of this and similar possibilities complicates the question of the distinction between early and late. The "new school" holds that these terms refer to dialect rather than to chronology, i.e., hymns of widely different form may belong to approximately the same age. That there is a possible factor of this kind in the question is only beginning to be recognized, and it is impossible at present to tell exactly what effect it may have on Vedic exegesis.

ing-in-the-waters,' i.e., the clouds, i. 139, 11.[1] Later the gods were said to rule over the three 'regions,' or 'worlds,' i.e., earth, air, and sky; and they are accordingly classed as terrestrial, aerial, and celestial. There were, however, poets whose imagination was not satisfied with so limited a company, and one late hymn concludes with the remarkable stanza:—

> 'Three times eleven hundred gods did Agni,
> With yet thrice ten and nine gods more, great honor,
> In that they melted butter gave for increase;
> With sacred straw installed they him as hotṛ.' x. 52, 6.[2]

But these passages are doubtless the work of the Brahmans. When an established ritual had been set up and the Mantra-material of the Yajur-Vedas was beginning to take shape, Brahmanism may be said to have been born. It was of slow growth, however, and there can hardly be any question that some of the late hymns of the Rik were composed subsequent to that period,[3] since many additions are supposed to have been made at the time of the final compilation, or even later.[4] It is more than likely that the hymns quoted belong in this number; for the Rik as a whole knows little of thirty-three gods.[5] The original number of gods in this Veda has been put at ten,[6] or, by Brahmans, as low as three, to which, however, different

[1] All numbers inserted in the text or footnotes refer to the Rig-Veda, unless otherwise specified.

[2] Also iii. 9, 9; but there, probably an interpolation, as is shown by the metre. There are a number of metres in the Vedas (metrical translations follow them as far as possible and seek to preserve the general character of the original), all depending on the fixed quantity of the last three or four syllables in a certain number of feet. They are supposed to have developed from a sort of poetry based on syllable counting in Indo-European times which has survived in the Zend-Avesta. See K., note 85.

[3] See T., pp. 118 and 122.

[4] See L., p. 354, § 80; EB., article, "Sanskrit Literature," section, "Ṛigveda"; and K., pp. 21–22.

[5] See Hopkins, in JAOS., xvi., p. 280. [6] *Ibid.*

names were applied.[1] Three may have been a sacred number even in Indo-European times,[2] and three and seven (their product also) were sacred in the younger Vedic hymns.[3] Three thousand three hundred and thirty-nine is a multiple of all three numbers and may possibly have been consciously so used to express the utmost reach of the poet's imagination concerning the honor paid to Agni. That the stanza as a whole belongs to incipient Brahmanism rather than to the early Vedic beliefs might also seem to be shown by the fact that Agni is made hotṛ, or priest; for it has been held that the classification of the gods, on human models or otherwise, was one of the minor changes produced by the evolution of Brahmanism,[4] the essential feature of which was the sacrificial service.[5] The difficulty about that position, however, is the fact that Agni is constantly referred to as hotṛ throughout the Rik and is also spoken of in such a way as to make it probable that the idea that he was installed in the office was an early one.[6] However this may be, it is quite unnecessary to comment further upon such passages; for they are of little consequence in comparison with the great mass of the Veda and the points that remain can barely be touched upon in the limits of the paper which is to follow.

[1] MM., Lecture v., p. 167. [2] Cf. K., note 117.

[3] See Hopkins, *L. c.*, pp. 276–279. [4] See T., p. 124.

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 122, and B., pp. 47–60.

[6] Cf. R–V., ii. 2, 1; iii. 6, 3; iv. 15, 1; v. 3, 4; and vii. 16, 12.