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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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1879
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THE AUTHOR'S NOTE

TO

THE ENGLISH EDITION.

THE present number of Mr. Trübner's Series, although but a single portion of a more extended work, will nevertheless, it is believed, be found suitable for the series, as constituting by itself an independent treatise on the relations of Hindu civilization to the principles set forth in the Introductory Section. In reviewing the older religions of mankind, I have preferred a separate treatment of each race-stock, in order to refer its specific traits with the more precision and completeness to their functions in the evolution of psychological laws.

BOSTON, MASS.,
April, 1879.

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INTRODUCTORY.

THE pages now offered as a contribution to the Natural History of Religion are the outgrowth of studies pursued with constant interest for more than twenty years. These studies have served substantially to confirm the views presented in a series of Lectures, delivered about that number of years since, on the Universality of Religious Ideas, as illustrated by the Ancient Faiths of the East. So imperfect were the sources of positive knowledge then accessible, that I chose to defer publication; and such increase of light has been constantly flowing in upon this great field of research ever since, that I have continued to defer my report thereon, in view of the existing state of scholarship, until the present moment, when such reasons are comparatively without force. Engaged for many years in the public presentation of themes and principles of the nature here illustrated, I cannot but note that a trustworthy statement of what the non-Christian world has to offer to the eye of thoroughly free inquiry, in matters of belief, is more and more earnestly demanded; that in the present stage of religious questions it is indispensable; and that the sense of inadequacy felt by all who have thoughtfully approached the subject, in a degree which none but themselves can compre-

The Standpoint.

pend, should no longer prevent us from performing our several parts in this work. I need hardly add that the response to this demand is already admirable on the part of liberal thinkers in Europe and America. To them the present contribution is dedicated, in cordial appreciation of their spirit and their aim. It has been a labor not of duty only, but of love. I have been prompted by a desire of combining the testimony rendered by man's spiritual faculties in different epochs and races, concerning questions on which these faculties are of necessity his court of final appeal. I have written, not as an advocate of Christianity or of any other distinctive religion, but as attracted on the one hand by the identity of the religious sentiment under all its great historic forms, and on the other by the movement indicated in their diversities and contrasts towards a higher plane of unity, on which their exclusive claims shall disappear.

It is only from this standpoint of the Universal in Religion that they can be treated with an appreciation worthy of our freedom, science, and humanity. The corner-stones of worship, as of work, are no longer to be laid in what is special, local, exclusive, or anomalous; but in that which is essentially human, and therefore unmistakably divine. The revelation of God, in other words, can be given in nothing else than the natural constitution and culture of man. To be thoroughly convinced of this will of itself forbid our imposing religious partialism on the facts presented by the history of the soul.

Yet it should perhaps be stated that the following outline of what I mean by the idea of Universal Religion, although prefatory, represents no purely *a priori* assumption, but the results to which my studies have

led me, as well as the spirit in which they have been pursued.

Man's instinctive sense of a divine origin, interpreted as historical derivation, explains his infantile dreams of a primitive "golden age." In this crude form he begins to recognize his inherent relation to the Infinite and Perfect. But while, as his happy mythology, these dreams have an enduring symbolic value, they no longer stand as data of positive history or permanent religious belief. And the same fate befalls the claims of special religions to have been opened by men in some sense perfect from their birth, and to possess revelations complete and final at their announcement. All these ideas of genesis are transient, because they contradict the natural processes of growth. We come to note, as they depart, a progressive education of man, through his own essential relations with the Infinite, commencing at the lowest stage, and at each step pointing onward to fresh ascension; an advance not less sure, upon the whole, for the fact that in special directions an earlier may often surpass a later attainment, proving competent, so far, to instruct it.[1]

The historical process.

And this progress is as natural as it is divine. It proceeds by laws inherent and immanent in humanity; laws whose absoluteness affirms Infinite Mind as implicated in this finite advance *up to* mind, and then *by means of mind;* laws whose continuous onward movement is inspiration.

If this be true, the distinction hitherto made between

[1] I insist on the indispensableness of the infinite element to every step of evolution, because I find this nowise explicable as *creation of the higher by the lower.* The very idea of growth involves more than mere historical derivation. Genesis is a constant mystery of origination. And an ascending series is to be accounted for by what is greater not less, than its highest term.

"sacred" and "profane" history, interpret it as we will, vanishes utterly and for ever. "Profane history" is a misnomer. The line popularly drawn between Heathenism and Christianity as stages respectively of blindness and insight, of guess-work and authority, of "nature" and "grace," is equally unjust in both directions, because unjust to man himself. In all religions there are imperfections; in all, the claim to infallible or exclusive revelation is alike untenable; yet, in all, experience must somehow have reached down to authority and up to certitude. In all, the intuitive faculty must have pressed *beyond* experience into the realm of impalpable, indemonstrable, indefinable realities. In all, millions of souls, beset by the same problems of life and death, must have seen man's positive relations with the order of the universe face to face. In all, the one spiritual nature, that makes possible the intercourse of ideas and times and tribes, must have found utterance in some eternally valid form of thought and conduct.

Ancient and modern types of civilization.

The difference between ancient and modern civilization is not to be explained by referring to Christianity, whether as a new religious ideal or life grafted into the process of history, or as the natural consummation of this process. The Christian ideal is but a single force among others, all equally in the line of movement. Civilization is now definitely traceable to a great variety of influences, among which that of Race is probably the most prominent; its present breadth and fulness being the result of a fusion of the more energetic and expansive races; while the freedom and science, which are its motive power, have found in the manifold ideals of the Christian Church on the whole quite as much hindrance as help.

But, apart from the *causes* of difference between ancient and modern conceptions of life, the fact itself may be described as simply the natural difference between the child and the man. This transition is not marked in either case by sudden changes in the nature of growth, nor by the engrafting of new faculties, nor by special interferences of the kind called "supernatural," whatever that may mean, but is gradual and normal. Reflection supplants instinct, and, with the self-consciousness which brings higher powers and bolder claims, enters the criminality of which the child was less capable. In the child there was more than childishness; for his whole manhood was there in germ. The leaf needs no special miracle to become a flower; nor does the child, to become a man. *The whole process of growth* is the miracle, — product of a divine force that transcends while pervading it.

Continuity of the natural process.

The history of Religion follows the same law. There is no point where Deity enters; for there is no point where Deity is absent. There is no need of divine interference, where the very law by which all proceeds is itself divine. It is as tenderly faithful to minutest needs at the beginning as at any later stage of growth. Whatever forms may arise, they require neither fresh legitimation nor explanation, since their germs lay in the earlier forms, their finest fruit encloses the primal seeds, and history, when read backward, is discerned to have been natural prophecy.

Thus there are differences of higher and lower in the forms of revelation; but there is no such thing as a revealed religion in distinction from natural religion. So, too, spiritual and physical differ; but *natural* can be opposed to spiritual only in a very restricted and

questionable sense. Any distinction thus indicated must lie within the limits of each and every religion taken by itself. It cannot mark off one positive religion from another, still less one from the rest; since, whatever meanings be given to these terms, every such religion will be found to have its own spiritual and natural sides, *if any one has them.*

False pretensions set up for Christianity.

Christianity is nevertheless constantly opposed, as a "spiritual" religion, to the earlier faiths, as merely *natural* ones; as if there were some essential contradiction to truth and good in our human nature, which was abolished by the advent of Jesus. The history of religion, so far from teaching such a schism between the human and the divine, —or this bridging over at a certain epoch of a gulf which, by its very definition, was impassable, — demonstrates the exact contrary, — a substantial unity of God and Man beneath all outward alienations. It points to perfection in the laws of human nature, under all the varying phases of human character; to constitutional health unshaken by the diseases incident to growth; to moral and spiritual recuperation, as human as the vices that required it; to divine immanence, under finite conditions, from the beginning onwards.

Where is the Universal Religion?

Universal Religion, then, cannot be any one, *exclusively*, of the great positive religions of the world. Yet it is really what is best in each and every one of them; purified from baser inter-mixture and developed in freedom and power. Being the purport of nature, it has been germinating in every vital energy of man; so that its elements exist, *at some stage of evolution*, in every great religion of mankind.

If any belief fails to abide this test, the worse for its

claims on our religious nature. "If that were true which is commonly taken for granted," wrote Cudworth,[1] "that the generality of the Pagan nations acknowledged no sovereign *numen*, but scattered their devotions amongst a multitude of independent deities, this would much have stumbled *the naturality* of the divine idea;" an effect equivalent, in his large and clear mind, to disproval of the divineness itself.

As distinctive Christianity was in fact but a single step in a for ever unfolding process, so those earlier beliefs are disparaged when they are made to point to it as their final cause. They stand, as *it* has stood, in their own right; justified, as it has been, by meeting, each in its own day and on its own soil, the demands of human nature. They point forward, but not to a single and final revelation entering history from without their line, and reversing at once their whole process in its new dealing with their attained results. They point forward; but it is with the prophecy of an endless progress, which no distinctive name, symbol, authority, or even ideal, can foreclose. They are misrepresented, when they are held to be mere "forerunners" or "types" in the interest of a later faith, which has in fact entered into the fruit of their labors, and in due season transmits its own best to the fresh forces that are opening up a larger unity, and already demanding a new name and a broader communion. They are misrepresented, when, to contrast them with what is simply a successor, they are called "preparations for the truth of God." The exigencies of Christian dogma have required that they should even be described as mere "fallacies of human reason," tending inevitably to despair; a charge re-

Rights of the older Faiths.

[1] Preface to *Intellectual System of the Universe.*

futed alike by the laws of science and the facts of history, since man never did, and never can, despair. Prejudices of this nature, inherent, it would seem, in the make-up of a distinctive religion, which forbid its disciples to render justice to other forms of faith, are rapidly yielding to the larger scope and freer method of inquiry peculiar to our times.

Misrepresentation of them.

Every historical religion embodies the sacred personality of man; announcing his infinite relations to life, duty, destiny. Yet it has been an almost invariable instinct of the Christian world to ignore this presence of the soul in her own phases of belief, and to hold "heathenism" to be her natural foe. However non-Christian morality and sentiment may have harmonized with what is best in the New Testament, it has seldom been accorded the name of revelation. Although there is always a comparatively intelligent orthodoxy, which assents to the idea of a divine immanence in all ages, yet the divinity thus recognized being, after all, "*the Christ*,"— and moreover the Christ of especial tradition, — and, further still, this Christ in a merely preliminary and provisional form, — there can be but little freedom in such appreciation of the faith or virtue extant in non-Christian ages. A mode of presenting these, not unlike that of the early apologists of the Church, is common even with writers of the so-called liberal sects; while, with the more exclusive ones, to praise the heathen being regarded as despoiling Christianity, it is an easy step to the inference that Christianity is exalted by referring heathenism to the category of delusions and snares. And it is not too much to say, upon the whole, that the most affirmative treatment of the older religions would hardly suffice to adjust the balance fairly, and to place them on their

real merits before the conscience of a civilization which has, until very recently, expended almost all its hospitality on the claims of Christianity alone.[1]

Many of those who write in the interest of denominational efforts have trained themselves to shrink from no assumptions in the line of their purpose; while others are blinded by its logic to the most patent facts of history. It has been common to deny boldly that moral and religious truth had any positive *existence* for the human mind before the Christian epoch; to assume that the Sermon on the Mount actually introduced into human nature that very love and trust to whose pre-existing power in the hearts of its hearers it could itself have been but an appeal. As if ideal principles could have been imported into man by a special teacher, or be traced back to some moment of arrival, like commercial samples or inventions in machinery! So powerful is a traditional religious belief to efface the perception that every moral truth man can apprehend must be the outgrowth of his own nature, and has al-

[1] We may mention, as in striking contrast to this general record of Christendom, such works as Dupuis' *Origines de Tous les Cultes*, Constant's *De la Religion*, Creuzer's *Symbolik*, Duncker's *Geschichte des Alterthums*, Cousin's *Lectures and Fragments on the History of Philosophy*, Denis' *Théories et Idées Morales dans l'Antiquité*, Quinet's *Génie des Religions*, Michelet's *Bible de l'Humanité*, Menard's *Morale avant les Philosophes*, Mrs. Child's *Progress of Religious Ideas*, and R. W. Mackay's *Progress of the Intellect*. To these, in the special field of Oriental Literature, we must add the Shemitic studies of Renan and Michel Nicolas; and those of Abel Rémusat, Rückert, Lassen, Roth, and Muller, on the remoter Eastern races. All of these are distinguished from the mass of writers on this theme by a spirit of universality, which proves how far the scholarship of this age has advanced beyond the theological narrowness of Bossuet, the critical superficiality of Voltaire, and the hard negation of the so-called rationalistic schools of Lobeck and Voss. But it is to be observed that these scholars are still reputed heretical, and stand in disfavor with distinctive Christianity in exact proportion to their historical impartiality. Of unequalled significance are Lessing's *Treatise on the Education of the Human Race*, and Herder's *Ideas of a Philosophy of Man;* works of marvellous breadth, freedom, and insight, to which, more than to any other historical and literary influences, we must assign the parentage of modern thought in this direction. Heine finely says of Herder, that, "instead of inquisitorially judging nations according to the degree of their faith, he regarded humanity as a harp in the hands of a great master, and each people a special string, helping to the harmony of the whole."

ways been seeking to reach expression, with greater or less success.

Until very recently it was the most confident commonplace of New England preaching that all positive belief in immortality came into the world with Jesus. And it is still repeated, as a fact beyond all question, that no other religion besides Christianity ever taught men to bear each other's burdens, or preached a gospel to the poor.

Nor has there been wanting a somewhat discreditable form of special pleading, for the purpose of reducing the claims of heathenism to the smallest possible amount; a grudging literalism, a strict construction, or a base rendering, of ancient beliefs; which would prove every apparent spiritual perception a phantom of fancy or blind hope, or else a mirage reflected from the idealism of the present on the background of the past. Resolving the fair imaginations and delicate divinations of the childlike races into mockery betrays, however, far more scepticism in the critic than in the race he wrongs. The same disposition has often arisen from philosophical prejudice. Thus the desire of Locke to disprove the notion of innate ideas led him to a degree of unbelief in this direction, which has had noticeable effect on subsequent thought.

But we have yet to mention one of the worst effects of traditional religion on the treatment of history. It is still held consistent with Christian scholarship to deny moral earnestness and practical conviction to the noblest thinkers of antiquity, in what they have affirmed of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. They were "theorists, not believers;" "talked finely about virtues, but failed to apply them;" "gave

no such meanings to their great words as we give to them;" were "aristocrats in thought, whispering one doctrine to their disciples, and preaching another to the people;" and so on. All of which is not only exaggerated or false in details, but in its principle and method utterly destructive of historical knowledge. Substantially, too, it amounts to rejecting all foundation for morality in the nature of man, and the constant laws of life. Critics of this temper have not now the doctrinal excuse of Calvin, who ascribed the apparent virtues of the heathen to hypocrisy; and Dugald Stewart was hardly more wanting than they must be in the true spirit of scholarship, when he met the first modern revelations of Oriental wisdom with the charge that the Sanskrit language was a mere recent invention of the Brahmans, and Sanskrit literature an imposture.

The large historical relations of the Roman Catholic Church have permitted its scholars to gather up the spiritual wisdom of the heathen, though in the interest of its own authority.[1] But even this appreciation, such as it was, the Reformation included in its sweeping malediction upon a "Church of mere human traditions." And Protestantism, with few exceptions, has continued to show, in its treatment of non-Christian piety and morality, the narrow sympathies incident to a self-centred and exclusive movement of reaction, and to an attitude inherently sectarian.

When other grounds of depreciation failed, there remained the presumption that all such outlying truth must have been carried over into Pagan records by Christian or Hebrew hands. In its origin, doubtless, this idea was the natural outgrowth of Christian enthusiasm, and the sign of a geniality and breadth in the

[1] See especially Lamennais, *Essai sur l'Indifférence en Matière de Religion.*

religious consciousness which was reaching out everywhere to find its own. But there was also a dogmatic interest in the development of these claims; and this foreclosed the paths of fair inquiry. Just as the Alexandrian Jews referred Greek philosophy to Moses (some of them even resorted to pious frauds to prove it), so under the exigency of their creeds of depravity and natural incapacity, of atonement, incarnation, and mediation, Christians have been impelled to trace all ancient piety to their own records; to imagine late interpolations or communications with Jewish doctors or Christian apostles, in explanation of what are really but natural correspondences of the religious sentiment in different races. And when for such imputed influence there could not be found even the shadow of a historical proof, well-reputed writers in all times have not been wanting, who dared to affirm it without hesitation upon purely *a priori* grounds.[1]

A common method of dealing with the relative claims of positive religions is illustrated in a recent writer,[2] whose extensive reading is almost nullified for the purposes of comparative theology and ethics by the absolutism of his authoritative creed. He begins with affirming that "Christianity will tolerate no rival; that they who wish to raise a tabernacle for some other master must be warned that Christ, and Christ alone,

[1] Thus Hyde (A.D. 1700) supposes that the Persians must have been converted from idolatry by Abraham, and that their fire-altars have been imitations of that of Jerusalem; and a writer in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1859) attributes the Avesta to the prophet Daniel, and declares that the Persians must have borrowed their notion of a Messiah from the "revealed religion of the Hebrews." Another instance of the same kind is the attempt, not very scrupulously conducted, to derive the moral philosophy and spiritual faith of Seneca from St. Paul, so thoroughly defeated by Hilgenfeld (*Zeitschr. d. Wiss Theol.* 1858)

[2] Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, i. pp. 39, 43. Examples of the extreme incapacity of this learned writer to render justice to pre-Christian beliefs may be found on pages 133 and 336 of the first volume.

is to be worshipped;" and proceeds to state the limits of his recognition of character in the theory that "the most effectual way of defending Christianity is not to condemn all the virtues of distinguished heathens, but rather to make them testify in its favor," — *not at all, be it observed, in their own.* All of which reminds us of St. Augustine's saying, that whatever of truth the Gentiles taught should be "claimed by Christians from its heathen promulgators, as unlawful possessors of it, just as the Hebrews spoiled the Egyptians;" a process of historical justice still extensively practised by the Church.

It is not surprising that appreciative Orientalists should be moved to enter their protest with some warmth against audacities like those here mentioned. "The reaction from extravagant theories goes too far," exclaims Max Müller, "if every thought which touches on the problems of philosophy is to be marked indiscriminately as a modern forgery; if every conception which reminds us of Moses, Plato, or the Apostles, is to be put down as necessarily borrowed from Jewish, Greek, or Christian sources, and foisted thence into the ancient poetry of the Hindus." Friedrich von Schlegel at the outset of Oriental studies, as well as Müller at a later stage, found it necessary to reprove this disposition among Christian scholars. Yet he himself does not hesitate to use Oriental errors to point an appeal to Christianity as "affording the only clew to principles too lofty to have been elicited by human reason."[1]

Their independent validity.

It is time the older religions were studied in the light of their own intrinsic values. They are at once spontaneities of desire and faith, and ele-

[1] *Indian Literature*, B. III. ch. iv.

ments in an indivisible unity of growth, which includes at each stage natural guarantees of all that has since been or shall yet be attained. We should go back to them now, in the maturity of science, with something of the tenderness we feel for our own earliest intuitions and emotions; with a reverent use, too, of those faculties of imagination and contemplation which are our real way of access to essential relations and eternal truths. For the race as for the individual, —

> "The child 's the father of the man;
> And we could wish our days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety."

Ideal elements.

The first universal principle of religion is that all great beliefs have their ideal elements; just as in the natural world the bud is not a bud merely, but the guarantee of a flower. And it is these with which we are mainly concerned, as pointing to fulfilments beyond themselves, in a future that will not be mortgaged to any names, nor to any claims. They are that promise in the first belief, which the last cannot fulfil alone; the dream which only their mutual recognition can interpret. And it becomes us to find in our own experience the secret which explains how they have met the problems of ages and answered the prayers of generations.

Illustrations of these ideal elements, high-water marks of ancient faith, readily suggest themselves.

The religious toleration prevailing in China from very early times is not fairly estimated when it is shown to have lacked that deep moral earnestness and spiritual dignity which distinguish the highest forms of modern religious liberty in Europe or America.

The question for our religious philosophy is, whether it is not of essentially the same nature; a germ out of which that highest freedom might come by pure force of the familiar laws of social and scientific growth, by the intercourse of races and the intimacies of diverse beliefs; whether it has not, even on its own ground, reached a point of development, in certain instances or certain respects, which makes these our greater outward opportunities look less than we thought them; and whether it may not hold elements of moral value whereof our culture needs the infusion. Similarly with the self-abnegation of the Buddhist. It is not that perfect devotion of the human powers to social good which would involve the best culture and the largest practical efficiency. Neither is this, we may add, the quality and extent of the same virtue, even as illustrated and taught in the Christian records. But to suppose that there would be need either of miraculous re-enforcement or essential change, to unfold Buddhistic self-denial into the best morality and piety known to our time, would be to ignore the fact that it has shown itself fully equal to these in the *spirit* of practical benevolence, and in ardent zeal for an ideal standard of purity and truth. In the same way, an implicit germ of Monotheism, even in the "element-worship" of the early Aryans, fully guarantees progress into the pure and definite Theism of the best Indo-European minds; and shows the assumption of a divine deposit of this central truth with the Shemitic Hebrews alone, for distribution to the rest of mankind, to be entirely groundless and gratuitous. Thus the cardinal virtues and beliefs belong not to one religion, but to all religions; and the diversities of form into which each of these ideals is broken by differences of race and culture do

not affect its essential identity in them all. We everywhere find ourselves at home in the world's great faiths, through their common appeal to what is nearest and most familiar to us in solving the great central facts and relations with which the soul is for ever called to deal. Everywhere we greet essential meanings of the unity of God with man, of fate and freedom, of sacrifice, inspiration, progress, immortality, practical duties and humanities, just as we everywhere find the mysteries of birth and death, the bliss of loving and sharing, the self-respect of moral loyalty, the stress of ideal desire.

It will be found, in following the course of these studies, that all those forms of moral and spiritual perception which are wont to be regarded as peculiar gifts of Christianity are visible through the crude social conditions of the old Asiatic communities; in such brave struggle, too, for growth as demonstrates not only their vitality under those conditions, but also the fact that they fulfil functions inherent and constant in the nature of man. Such are the recognition of ultimate good through transient evil; of spiritual gain through suffering and hindrance; of freedom through acceptance of divinely natural conditions; of love, beyond a thought of constraining law; of the rightful authority of the soul over the senses; of the sacredness of conscience, and of somewhat immutable in its decrees; of the inevitableness of moral penalty, and the beauty of disinterested motive; of invincible remedial energies in the spiritual universe; of Divine Fatherhood and Human Brotherhood, and Immortal Life.

Wherein lies our advantage.

Our advantage over older civilizations will thus be seen to consist not, as is generally imagined, in some new force, infused miraculously, or

otherwise, by the Christian religion; but in something of a quite different nature. It is found, in fact, in the immense special development of the understanding; of the faculties of observation and the forces of analysis; in the advancement of science, and the fusion and friction of races; and, finally, in the wealth of practical material opened to all. So impressive is this growth of the understanding, and the sciences thereon dependent, that writers like Buckle go to the extent of inferring that morality and religion, on the other hand, as being the comparatively "unchanging factors" in history, have had "no influence on progress." But this is to reduce history to a sum in arithmetic. History is a living process. Its factors are dynamic, and are not to be pulled apart like dead bones or a heap of sticks. These ethical forces are "unchanging," only in the sense of being constant and unfailing; and the mental growth, which clears their vision and develops their practical capacities, in fact enables them to exert an ever-increasing influence, a completer fulfilment of their own ideal.

And so, in holding the vantage of modern civilization to lie specially in the sphere of the understanding, I do not overlook the force with which the manifold ideals of Christian belief have wrought, like other and older ones, at its vast looms of productive power. But I note also how perfectly these variations in the religious ideal of Christianity correspond with and depend on the steps of intellectual progress; how analogous they are to those of other religions; and finally, a point of no light import, how little what is broadest and best in our civilization has to do with what is *distinctive* in Christian faith,—namely, its exclusive concentration on Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ. It is, moreover, pre-

cisely in its moral and religious aspects that the Christendom of eighteen centuries can claim least practical superiority to the older civilizations.

Spiritual Reaction.

I have sought to bring into view a law of progress, in which the most important transitions in religious history find their true explanation. I refer to *Spiritual Reaction*. It is mainly from habitual disregard of this familiar law in its broader aspects that such transitions have been referred to special divine interference with the natural processes of history.

It is commonly supposed that *natural* growth in things moral and spiritual can proceed only in a direct line. When a divine life appears in a degenerating age, this theory requires the inference that, natural human forces having become effete and exhausted, a miraculous interference, like the "creation of new species" in the old theory of biology, had become necessary. What else should stop the downward tendency of "unaided nature"? Such is the usual method of accounting for Jesus of Nazareth and his religion; such the principle of historical construction which is assumed throughout the growth of Christian dogma:— the Christ and his gospel were a new spiritual species. So far as Jesus is concerned, this theory in fact rests on a very superficial survey of the condition of mankind at his birth; since his ethical and spiritual faith had their tap-roots within his native soil, and followed a line of strong democratic and spiritual tendencies in that age. Yet it is also true both of the Roman Empire as a whole, and of the old faiths that were perishing in its bosom, that social and religious life had, on the whole, become fearfully degenerate. Grant this to the fullest extent possible, yet "miraculous inter-

ference" need not be assumed in explanation of the revival.

For there is a law of self-recovery by reaction, in mind as well as in matter; different indeed from that, as developing not an equivalent, but a new and greater force. It has been described as "forbidding that vicious ideas or institutions shall go so far as their principle logically demands."[1] It strikes back individuals and nations from degeneracy. It restrains excess in the passions with timely warnings. And it shows us each historic period hastening to an extreme in some special direction, only that the next may be forced into doing justice to a different and balancing class of energies, and so in good time all faculty be liberated into free play. This natural law of reaction is quite as essential and constant as the law of steady linear growth; though perhaps, when clearly apprehended, it will be found to be but a more interior and less obvious form thereof. It is not only essential to the explanation of primitive Christianity in its relation to the degeneracies of the epoch, but thoroughly competent to that end. It is adequate to prove the phenomenon a sign not that the spiritual forces of human nature had become exhausted, but that they were exhaustless, since even suppression only nerved them to unprecedented vigor.

Of course this natural solution of religious progress does not exclude personal or social inspiration, in any rational sense of the word. It leaves to religious genius, as to intellectual, its own unfathomed mystery, its immediate insight, its spontaneity, its enthusiasm, its fateful mastery of life and of men. It leaves unquestioned the fact that there is an element in the present instant which the past cannot explain.

Inspiration.

[1] Guizot, *History of Civilization.*

Nay: it affirms the *constancy* of this transcendence and of this primacy in the instantaneous fact of spiritual perception. It recognizes the special energy of intuition in the saint and the seer.

But it implies that religious genius also has its conditions, and inspiration its laws; and it demands that in this respect they be placed in the same line with intellectual and poetic genius, even if in advance of them. They are not less purely human than these, either in their original source, or in the law of their appearance.

The energy of all these forces in the early Oriental world has seemed to me a very noble illustration of their universality. And I may add that we need not be surprised to find, amidst the weaknesses of spiritual childhood, certain superiorities also, incident to that stage, in the qualities of imagination, intuition, and faith, over maturer civilizations.

Religions judged by their fruits.

In point of moral earnestness and fidelity also, it admits of serious question whether what we call the highest form of civilization is an advance upon the phases of faith it has been accustomed to contemn. Admitting the clearer light in which science has revealed the laws of social progress, it would be difficult to prove that races in this respect far behind us are in any degree our inferiors in those qualities of the heart and the conscience which lead to the faithful service of what one worships, and the honest practice of what he believes. I venture the prediction that we shall yet learn of the Oriental nations many lessons in moral simplicity and integrity. Nothing could be more unfortunate for those who wish to exalt Christianity by comparison with Heathenism than to rest their argument on what they call "judging

religions by their fruits." A distinguished orator has said, "My answer to Buddha is India, past and present." It would be as reasonable for a Buddhist to say, "My answer to Christ is Judaism, past and present;" for India *rejected* Buddha, as Judaism did Christ. What India is and has been, the Western world will probably be better able to state half a century hence than it is now. But if the power of a specific religion is shown in its ability to mould a civilization into the image of its own moral and spiritual ideal, what shall be said of one whose results after eighteen centuries of preaching and instituting our orator must characterize by saying that no one would know its Founder if he came among us to-day; that there is no Christian community at all; and that Christianity goes round and stamps every institution as a sin? We need not give too literal a construction to expressions whose substantial meaning is justified by the facts. What we would note is that these admissions concerning the practical fruits of Christianity are made by its noblest disciples; and that they virtually confess its inadequacy to meet the actual demands of social progress.

Nevertheless, its religious ideal is still confidently presented as all productive, and final. Here is evidently some misunderstanding of the origin of these nobler demands.

It is in fact not the Christ-ideal at all, as is here imagined, but an advancing moral standard, due to many new causes, that now criticises the institutions in question. Such institutions were in fact unmolested by definite Christian precepts or prohibitions for many ages. Our reformer's inspiration is indeed as old as Christianity, — nay, more than that, as old as heroism and love; but its practical present resources lie in

science and liberty, and even represent the triumph of secular interests over distinctively religious opposition. And every fresh task of the reformer is made conceivable only through the accomplishment of the last. How then can it have been evolved solely out of the faith and virtue of eighteen centuries ago? It is not the fruit of Christianity alone, but generated by living experience, in the breadth and freedom of modern civilization.

On this whole subject of judging religions by their fruits, we are yet to collect the data for a just decision; since it involves the study of civilizations whose inner movements have hitherto been in great measure sealed from the view of our Western world.

Meaning of natural equality.

Man=Man is the broad formula of historical science, as well as of practical brotherhood. But it must not be superficially interpreted. It does not mean the falsehood and egotism of communistic theories, which disintegrate personality and society alike in the name of an unconditioned "equality" which natural ethics nowhere allows. It means that in every age and race, under the varying surface-currents of organization and intellectual condition, you shall find a deep-sea calm, — the same essential instincts and insights, aspirations, tendencies, demands. The first vital problem of historical research is to find the constant factor, the guarantee of immutable and eternal laws, by means of the variables. Its first duty is never to pause at mere negation, nor indulge in arrogant disparagement, but to draw from every form of earnest faith or work its witness of immutable law and endless good. Not till this is done, can we wisely apply analysis, and interpret the diversities of human belief.

The inspiration of modern physical studies is in the universality of their idea and aims. This fine idealism in the exploration of nature, by lens and prism and calculus, which casts theologies into the background of human interest, is preparing the way for a religion of religions, whose Bible shall be the full word of *Human* Nature. How opulent the time with encyclopedic survey and comparative science! Humboldt's "Cosmos" was representative of the drift of the century; a search for that all-insphering harmony, of which the worlds and ages and races are chords. Humboldt, pursuing the idea of unity through immeasurable deeps of law, with a reverence that is too full of the spirit of worship to need the current phraseology of religion; Pritchard, tracing the physiological, and Müller the linguistic, affinities of the human tribes; Ritter, unfolding the function of every continent and sea, every mountain range and river basin, in the development of humanity as a whole; Kirchhoff and Bunsen, with their successors, applying spectrum analysis to the rays of every star, till the determination of the "sun's place in the universe" is but a single element in the immeasurable significance of light now opening before this marvellous instrument of research; Tyndall, making the subtlest phases of force a revelation of poetry and philosophy, and a delight for the general mind, — these, with others not less earnestly pursuing the unities of law, whether wisely or imperfectly interpreting its evolution and defining its higher facts and relations, represent the physical science of our time.

Universality in physical studies.

How should the spiritual nature fail to be explored by the same instinct? It is a deepening sense of the unity of human experience, and so of its reliability as

well as dignity, that banishes supernaturalism, affirms universal laws in place of miracle, and bids us rest in them with entire trust; "loving," as the Stoic Aurelius said, "whatever happens to us from nature, because that only can happen by nature which is suitable, and it is enough to remember that law rules all." The growing belief that the stability of law is the guarantee of universal good, or, to translate it into the language of the spirit, that *Law means Love*, is the sign that Love, in its practical and universal sense, is itself becoming the all-solving calculus and all-analyzing prism of our spiritual astronomy, — the pursuer, diviner, interpreter of Law.

In relation to Humanity

And therefore they who disapprove our inevitable exodus from distinctive religions, upon the ground that organizing good works would be better than reconstructing theology, have very slight comprehension of that which they distrust. It is the very spirit of *humanity* that is moving in this religious emancipation; clearing its own vision, reaching out to consistency and self-respect, and finding its sphere to be, as Herder has said, "not merely universal as human nature, but properly no less than human nature itself."[1]

"The object of all religions," sings the Persian Hafiz, "is alike. All men seek their beloved. And is not all the world love's dwelling? Why talk of a mosque or a church?" Hindu teachers have said: "The creed of the lover differs from other creeds. God is the creed of those who love Him; and to do good is best, with the followers of every faith." "He alone is a true Hindu whose heart is just, and he only a good Mussulman whose life is pure." "Remember

[1] *Philosophy of Man*, B. VIII ch. v.

Him who has seen numberless Mahomets, Vishnus, Sivas, come and go, and who is not found by one who forgets or turns away from the poor." "The common standpoint of the three religions," say the Chinese, "is that they insist on the banishment of evil desire."

The Chinese Buddhist priest prays at morning that the music of the bell which wakens him to his matins "may sound through the whole world, and that every living soul may gain release, and find eternal peace in God."[1] The Buddhist Saviour[2] vows "to manifest himself to every creature in the universe, and never to arrive at Buddhahood till all are delivered from sin into the divine rest, receiving answer to their prayers." What else, or wherein better, is the claim of the Christian or the Jew?

It is so far from being true that the effort to lift religions to a common level is antagonistic to the humanities of the age, that these humanities could not possibly dispense with such an effort. It is their natural expression. It is the demand not so much of comparative science even, as of instant social duty. Is it not quite time that the excuses which religious caste has constantly furnished for treating the heathen as lawful prey of the Christian in all quarters of the globe were finally refuted, by bringing to view the unities of the religious sentiment, and the ethical brotherhood of mankind? Is it not time that claims of exclusive revelation ceased, which can only flatter this spirit of caste?

Fourier tried to circumnavigate the globe of human "passions," that he might show how it could be regulated for the utmost good of all: surely a magnificent

[1] *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures.* [2] Avalokitiswara.

aim, however beyond any man's accomplishment, and whatever his mistakes of method. A similar idealism testifies to the same inspiration in all leading movements of modern thought. It is the humanitarian instinct that guarantees them: it is this instinct that forbids their falling away from the very principles that make them colossal in stature and infinite in reach. Hence the new sciences of mind, theories of progress, analyses of social function, brave and broad claims of equal opportunity for the races and the sexes. Let us be assured that Liberty, Democracy, Labor Reform, Popular Progress, are to reach beyond the assertion of exclusive rights or selfish claims into full recognition of universal duties; that liberty is not to stop in license, nor democracy in greed and aggression, nor progress to be earned through bloody retributions alone.

And this humanitarian instinct, which impels each private current towards the universal life, is not only recreating literature and art, but changing the heart of scholarship also. It demands an ideal culture, that shall give breadth and freedom to our philosophy of life. It culls the choicest thought of all time. It would nurse every child at the breast of that oldest wisdom of love which Jesus confessedly but repeated as the substance of the Hebrew Law and Prophets, and which in them was but the echo of all noble human experience from the beginning of time. It transmutes that one mother's blood which flows through the veins of all ages to practical nerve and manly sinew of present service. It will discern the fine gold in all creeds and rites, which gave them enduring currency. It will read in sphynx and pyramid, in prehistoric bone heap and sculptured wall, in Druid

Circles and Greek Mysteries, and Shemitic Prophecies and the antique Bibles and Codes, the varied hieroglyph of man's assurance of Deity, duty, and immortality. It will trace through all transformations of faith the eternal right of man's ideal to reinterpret life and nature, and to change old gods for new.

Even so decided an opponent of naturalistic religion as Guizot bears witness to the constructive spirit of this aspiration to a larger synthesis of faith. "What gives the modern movement against Christianity its most formidable character," he says, "is a sentiment which has found heroes and martyrs, the love of truth at all risks, and despite of consequences, for the sake of truth and for its sake alone." If such a spirit as this is "formidable" to Christianity, could there be stronger proof that the time for that free culture which it demands is fully come?

Duty of the Scholar.

The scholar must identify himself with the social reformer, and demonstrate brotherhood out of the old Bibles and the stammering speech of primitive men. It is his duty to show that the human arteries beat everywhere with the same royal blood. It is his duty to help break down the strongholds of theological and social contempt, and refute the pretences by which strong races have ever justified their oppression of the weak. He may avail himself of Comparative Philology, or Comparative Physiology, or of any other branch of ethnological science. The materials are at last abundant, the laborers in these harvests equal to his utmost need. But if all these resources should prove inadequate; if the language, physical organization, and social condition of any race, should all appear to invite the contempt of

Christian nations, there is still left the testimony of the religious sentiment. The essential unity of man does not rest on physiological, but on psychological grounds.

A true philosophy of History will know how to reconcile this identity in the substance with phases of progressive development. But no theory will serve, which fails to recognize it as real in every one of these phases. Formulas are as dangerous as they are fascinating. Thus Hegel, compelled by his formal logic, regards the Oriental religions as merely representing man in the undeveloped state of non-distinction from nature; in other words, in pure bondage to the senses. And so, as elsewhere, his philosophical generalization plays into the hands of theological prejudice. It tells but half the truth. It ignores the fact that man himself was the soul of these earlier faiths. There were incessantly noble reactions which protested against such bondage as he describes, and justified human nature, as genius and intuition and free self-consciousness, even in the crude experience of its earlier children; although men had not yet learned to analyze the mysteries of subject and object, Being and Thought. Let us be admonished by the hint of the old Buddhist poet: —

"The depths of antiquity are full of light. Scarcely have a few rays been transmitted to us. We are like infants born at midnight. When we see the sun rise, we think that yesterday never was."

Religious revolution approaching.

The opening of China to the Western nations, and of the West to Chinese emigration and labor, are events as momentous in their religious as in their commercial and political bearings.

Taken in connection with revolutions in Japan indicating the growth of a liberal policy, and with the rapid disclosure of the field of Hindu literature and life during the past half century, they announce a new phase in the education of Christendom. It is as certain that the complacent faith of the Christian Church in itself as the sole depositary of religious truth is to be startled and confounded by the new experience, as that the fixed ideas of that huge population which swarms along the great river-arteries of China, and heaps flowers in the temples of spirit-ancestors, and bows at shrines of Confucius and Fo, are to be astounded at the immense resources of the "outside barbarians," and their peculiar worship of Mammon and Christ. The time has arrived, in the providence of modern social and industrial progress, for a mutual interchange of experience between the East and the West, for which neither was prepared, but which is quite indispensable to the advancement of both forms of civilization.

Not an ecclesiastical opportunity

In their natural impatience to count these unknown millions as converts to Christian theology, the Churches but feebly comprehend the seriousness of the situation. Dreams of denominational trophies won in these realms of Pagan night, where the tidings of salvation by the power or the blood of Christ are to come as a long-desired dawn of day, will probably prove illusory. Missionary zeal has been but a poor spell to conjure with. All its auguries and exorcisms have failed. The real opportunity and promise is of another kind. The world of religion is wider than Christendom has apprehended, and it is undoubtedly destined to widen in the sight of man as much as the world of population and trade.

Christianity, as well as Heathendom, is on the eve of judgment. It is to discover that it has much to learn as well as to teach. I firmly believe that in making the worship of Jesus as "the Christ" — which, more than any essential difference in moral precept or religious intuition, forms its actual distinction from other religions — a prescriptive basis of faith, it will strike against a mass of outside human experience so overwhelming as to put beyond doubt the futility of pressing either this or any other *exclusive* claim as authoritative for mankind. I have written in no spirit of negation towards aught that deserves respect in its faith or its purpose; in no disparagement of what is eternally noble and dear to man in the life of Jesus; but with the sincere desire to help in bridging the gulf of an inevitable transition in religious belief, and in pointing out the better foundations already arising amidst these tides that will not spare the ancient footholds and contented finalities of faith. And in this spirit it is, that, after such serious study of the Religions of the East, their bibles and traditions, as has been possible, without direct acquaintance with the Oriental languages, — through the labors of scholars like Lassen, Schlegel, Weber, Rosen, Kuhn, Wilson, Burnouf, Bunsen, Spiegel, Rückert, Müller, Legge, Bastian, our own Whitney, and of many others, rendering such direct acquaintance comparatively needless, — I have reached the conviction that these *oldest* religions have an exceedingly important function to fulfil in that present transformation of the *latest* into a purer Theism, which is still irreverently denounced as infidelity. The mission of Christianity to the heathen is not only for the overthrow of many of their religious peculiarities, but quite as truly for the essential mod-

ification of its own. The change from distinctive Christianity to Universal Religion is a revolution, compared with which the passage from Judaism to Christianity itself was trivial.

Here is the practical situation. Christendom is henceforth to face those older civilizations out of which its own life has in large measure proceeded, and on which its reactions have hitherto made scarcely any impression. Brought into intimate relations with races whose beliefs are more obstinate than its own, and even more firmly rooted in "supernatural" claims, it will be obliged to drop all exclusiveness and absolutism, defer to the common light of natural religion, and do justice to instincts and convictions that have sustained other civilizations through longer periods than its own. The movement is not retrograde, but in the direct line of our own American growth; a promise of science and a consequence of liberty. It can be regarded as a return to bygone systems only by those whose own feet cling too closely to special traditions to venture on testing what lies beyond them. As well think it makes no difference whether one goes to China with Agassiz in a Pacific steamer, or as a Middle Age monk across the sands of Gobi. The new wisdom makes and finds all the old life new. A richer and deeper synthesis beckons us, of which telegraph and treaty are but symbols. There are *divine* recognitions in that grasp of brotherly hands which will soon complete the circuit of the physical globe. The Situation.

Scholars have not been wanting who bring us hints of this large communion from the Scriptures of the East. Here and there a thoughtful traveller or a liberal missionary has noted the brighter facts, that

tell for human nature, and explain the social permanence and enduring faith of these strange civilizations. Even from the Catholic Church, as we have already said, have come many willing tributes, however perverted to the support of its own claims, to the idea that revelation has in no wise been confined to one person, race, or religion. But the strongest evidence has failed of its due effect thus far, because the practical interests of society had not compelled attention to these distant fields. At last their immensity, as well as actuality, becomes a fact of common experience; and the ethics of Confucius and the piety of the Vedas are to stand as real and positive before the mind of Christendom as the mercantile and political interests that give dignity to this opening of the great gates of the Morning Land.

The Promise.

"*Ex Oriente Lux!*" Light from the East once more! As it came to Greece in the "Sacred Mysteries" with the Dorians and the Pythagoreans and the Chaldaic Oracles; to Alexandria in Philo and Plotinus; to Europe in Judaism and Christianity; to the Middle Ages by the Crusades, in floods of legend and fable, the imaginative lore that was itself an education of the ideal faculty, and prepared the way for modern liberty and æsthetic culture, — so now again it comes to modern civilization through literature and commerce and religious sympathy; and, as ever before, with a mission to help clear the sight and enlarge the field of belief. Christendom will not become Buddhist, nor bow to Confucius, nor worship Brahma; but it will render justice to the one spiritual nature which spoke in ways as yet unrecognized, in these differing faiths. It will learn that Religion itself is more than any positive

form under which it has appeared, and rests on broader and deeper authority than can ever be confined in a prescribed ideal. The religious sentiment demands freedom from its own exclusive venerations, that it may recognize principles in their own validity, and instead of revolving in endless beat around some pivotal personality, some fixed historic name or symbol, front directly the spiritual laws and facts which man has ever sought to recognize and express, and find them ample guaranties of growth, and ministers of good.

Limits and Purpose of the Inquiry.

These bearings of the present work on questions now uppermost in the religious consciousness are summed up in the outset, not in order to forestall the reader's judgment on the field of inquiry before him, but in justice to that independent attitude towards distinctive religions, which is demanded alike by science, philosophy, and humanity, enforced by the results of historical study, and recognized by religion itself as a new birth of intellectual freedom and spiritual power. While our criticism must point out deficiency of this universal element, and hostility to it, wherever they appear, yet the substantial spirit and motive of these studies is not polemical nor even theological. As far as they go in regions of research whose immensity the largest scholarship does but open (and of these I would be understood as but aspiring to sketch the general outline), they would record the ethical and spiritual import of those older civilizations, whose seats were in India, China, and Persia previous to the Christian epoch; with such light from their later forms and results as may be required for their appreciation. I would emphasize in them whatever may encourage

respect for human nature, while hiding none of their darker features; which indeed do but illustrate the common inadequacy of all past forms of faith in view of our new and still advancing ideals, and so must the more commend religion to the forward step and aim. Ill-understood beliefs and institutions, whereof we ourselves are not without representative forms, I would trace to their roots in the spontaneities of spiritual being, and make as clear as I may the essential identity of human aspirations, under conditions of experience and in stages of progress the most diverse.

Finally, within these limits of inquiry, I would note directions in which the differing civilizations may help to supply each other's defects; and, in sum, endeavor to bring the old antipodal races now practically at our doors under that light of free and fair inquiry which justice to them and to the common good requires.

INDIA.

RELIGION AND LIFE.

I.

THE PRIMITIVE ARYAS.

THE PRIMITIVE ARYAS.

THAT elevated region in Central Asia extending from the Hindu Kuh to the Armenian mountains, which is now known as the plateau of Iran, is entitled to be called in an important sense the homestead of the human family. It was at least the ancestral abode of those races which have hitherto led the movement of civilization. Its position and structure are wonderfully appropriate to such a function; for this main focus of ethnic radiation is also the geographical centre of the Eastern hemisphere. "There, at the intersection of the continental axes, stands the real apex of the earth."[1] And its borders rise on every side into commanding mountain knots and ranges, that look eastward over the steppes of Thibet and the plains of India, westward down the Assyrian lowlands towards the Mediterranean, northward over the wide sands of Central Asia, and southward across Arabia and the Tropic Seas. "Where else," demands Herder, with natural enthusiasm, if not with scientific knowledge, "should man, the summit of creation, come into being?" Whatever answer be given to this still open question, the symbolism of the majestic plateau points, we may suggest,

The Aryan Homestead.

[1] Reclus, *The Earth.*

to higher human meaning than that of the mere historical beginning of the race.

The languages and mythologies of nearly all the great historic races, in their widest dispersion, point back to these mountain outlooks of Iran. Hindu, Persian, Hebrew, Mongol, kneel towards these venerable heights, as their common fatherland; a primeval Eden, peopled by their earliest legends with gods and genii, and long-lived, happy men. The homes of ancient civilization rose around their bases, as under the shadow of a patriarchal tent; and there they were gathered to the dust. The drift of forty centuries of human history lies amidst their recesses, and strewn over the spaces which they enclose; attesting what storms and tides of life have preceded our own; vestiges of aspiration and achievement hid in prehistoric times; relics of old religions; inscriptions in mysterious tongues; local names, whose vague etymological affinities suggest startling relations between widely separated ages and races. The highways of the oldest commerce strike across this plateau, and out from it on either side; and caravan tracks of immemorial age hint the lines of those primitive migrations that issued from its colossal gates. We seem to be contemplating a marvellous symbol of the unity of the human race and of its movement in history; born out of the mystic intimacy of Nature with its inmost meaning.

Of the primeval life of races on this grander Ararat we know but little. Why indeed should we call it primeval? It is but a step or two that history or science can penetrate towards any form of human life that would really deserve that name. Should we gain much by knowing the crudest human conditions, after

all? It is said that there are tribes in Thibet that glory in believing themselves descended from apes.[1] Darwinians would probably be content to glory in merely getting sight of the process, if that could be found. But even if we should come upon traces of it, whether in Thibet or elsewhere, would it show the origin of man, *as mind;* that is, *as Man?* This is a mystery involved in every step of mental evolution; in the fact of thinking, *now;* and we cannot account for this evolution by any *previous* steps. We shall hardly find the source of our personality by tracking it backward and downward into nought.

I do not even enter here into the question, whether the eastern or the western edge of the great plateau was first peopled; or whether Armenia or Bactria was the earliest centre of ethnic radiation. The oldest Bibles "belong to the modern history of the race." What are patriarchal legends, what is Balkh, "mother of cities," what is Ararat or Belur-Tagh, what are Aryas or Shemites, what is Adam or Manu, — to him who explores the pathless, voiceless ages of prehistoric man? There is no respect of persons or places in that silence of unnumbered centuries that shrouds the infancy of the soul.

It suffices to say that in the dawn of history we find the Hindus descending from these heights of Central Asia to the South,[2] the Iranians to the West, and the Chinese to the East.

Let us turn to that focus of movement, of which we know the most, — to the Bactrian Highlands, at the north-eastern extremity of Iran, nestling under the multitudinous heights of the Belur-Tagh and Hindu

[1] Klaproth, *Asia Polyglotta.*

[2] See proofs and authorities in Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, ii 306–322.

Kuh. They who have penetrated farthest into these mountain ranges report that the silent abysses of the midnight sky with its intensely burning stars, and the colossal peaks lifting their white masses beyond storms, impress the imagination with such a sense of fathomless mystery and eternal repose as no other region on earth can suggest. The mean altitude of these summits of Himâlaya, the Home of Snow, is loftier than that of any other mountain system in the world; and their mighty faces, unapproachable by man, overlook vast belts of forest which he has not ventured to explore. From one point Hooker saw twenty snow peaks, each over twenty thousand feet in height, whose white ridge of frosted silver stretched over the whole horizon for one hundred and sixty degrees. Here are splendors and glooms, unutterable powers, impenetrable reserves, correspondent to that spiritual nature in whose earlier education they bore an essential part.

Here is the mythological Mount Meru of the Hindus, — "centre of the seven worlds, and seed-vessel of the Universe." Here are Borj and Arvand, the celestial mountain and river of the Persians. Here perhaps is the Eden of the Semites. "Kashmir," says the Mahâbhârata, "is all holy, inhabited by saints." Here is the plateau of Pamer, regarded throughout Asia as the "dome of the world." "Men go to the North," say the Brâhmanas, "to learn speech." Here Manu, the Hindu Noah, led by a fish through the deluge waters, comes to shore on a mountain-top, and when they subside descends to people the Southern land.[1] Here the Greeks saw an ideal climate, allowing every variety of product, wondrously fecund

[1] Śatapatha Brâhmana.

in plants, animals, and men; and guarded from intrusion by mysterious tribes and half-human creatures, with marvellous powers over the hidden treasures of the earth.[1] It was the great unwritten Bible of Asia, the free field of imagination and faith. Here was Balkh, in Oriental tradition the "Mother of Cities," the starting-point of culture, the birthplace of the Zoroastrian fire. Here are sacred lakes and mystic fountains, the immemorial resort of pilgrims from every quarter of the East. The Chinese Buddhists say that a lake on the summit of the Himâlaya is the origin of all the rivers of the world. And in fact, from the mountain system of which this region is the centre, the great rivers of Asia descend on every side, — the Oxus, the Yaxartes, the Yang-tze-kiang, the Brahmapootra, the Indus, and the Ganges. Again we cannot but recognize an impressive symbol of the wealth and scope of human nature; and not less of its love of broad divergence into special forms, made kindred by far-reaching supplies of one inspiration, ever flowing from central springs.

It is in a spot so rich in spiritual suggestion that we are to seek our earliest data for the Natural History of Religion. What were the resources of human nature at that remote epoch when the ancestors of the principal modern races dwelt on these highlands of Central Asia? It is only of the Indo-European family — comprising the historical Hindus, the Persians, and the various races of Europe, excepting Jews, Turks, Basques, Finns, and Magyars — that we can render a positive answer. And even of this pre-eminent family of nations we cannot speak from data afforded by the ordinary forms of testimony. For we

The Witness.

[1] Curtius, Strabo, Ptolemy.

have here to do with a period far antecedent, not only to the oldest Bibles of mankind, but even to the very notion of such a thing as the transmission of knowledge. But in these prehistoric deeps, where even the half-blind guides of mythology and tradition fail, we greet a fresh source of scientific certainty. It seems as if the infancy of man became but a starless night, in respect of all those dubious guides by whose aid we penetrate the past, in order that the pure testimony of language, alone illuminating it, might make his divine origin unmistakable. For language is, as the oldest faith and the latest science unite to declare it, an inspiration. It is no arbitrary invention, like the steam engine or the cotton gin; no mere imitation of natural sounds; but the natural result of a perfect correspondence between the outward organ and the inward processes, which must have material expression. Its testimony proceeds from no interested witnesses, from no treacherous prejudices, from no play of imagination, but from the certainties of organic law. Men do not invent names for things of which they have no idea. A people puts its character and its history into its language, without hypocrisy and without reserve. It is a spontaneous creation. The "Word" has always been recognized as the fittest symbol of truth, as the purest manifestation of deity.

This unimpeachable witness it is, that testifies of man in an antiquity where no other is possible. And the most primitive fact we know of his nature is thus a certain unconscious *honesty*, that discloses his inner life without disguise.

It is by the testimony of Language that the nations called Aryan or, more properly, Indo-European, are

brought into a single class and referred to a common origin.[1] And the next step has been, to recover out of the mass of words or roots common to the languages of these nations as much as possible of the primitive language spoken by the parent race in its prehistoric antiquity previous to dispersion into many branches.[2] The best philological scholarship of the age has been employed upon this reconstruction. It may fairly be said that we are able already to look directly in upon the character and condition of these hitherto unknown ancestors of the Hindu and the Persian, of the Greek and the Roman, the Celt and the Teuton. No achievement of modern science is more brilliant or more marvellous. It is the result of a comparative Philology as subtile as the calculations of Astronomy. It has evoked from human data hitherto unintelligible the substance of a lost language and a forgotten race, as astronomers have applied the strange perturbations of the solar system to effect the discovery of hidden planets. It is not over-confident to claim positive certainty for the general result here stated. Enough is already achieved in this field to justify its most skilful explorers in claiming for it the name of Linguistic Palæontology.[3]

[1] See especially the researches of Burnouf and Bopp.

[2] We do not mean that Pictet, Eichhoff, Schleicher, Kuhn, Fick, and other scholars, have succeeded in reconstructing the language actually spoken by the original Indo-Europeans, out of the radicals afforded by this comparison of tongues. But their researches, though of very unequal value, have resulted in bringing into view a large number of the ideas and objects which that language was used to designate.

[3] Pictet, *Origines Indo-Européenes*, or *Les Aryas Primitifs*. See also Spiegel's *Avesta*, III, *Einleit.* cxi.–cxv.; A. Kuhn in Weber's *Indische Studien*, I. 321-363; Lassen's *Indische Alterthumskunde*, I. 527; Müller, *Science of Languages*, 234-236; Duncker, *Gesch. d. Alterthums*, III 9; Schoebel, *Recherches sur la Religion Prem. de la Race Indo-Europ.* (Paris, 1868); Whitney, *Study of Language* (Lect. V.); Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, II.; Fick, *Wörterbuch d. Indog Sprache.*

The Testimony.

The common name by which the Indian and Iranian (or Persian) branches of this great family designated themselves was Aryas (in Zend, Airyas); a title of honor,[1] which now, after thousands of years, returns, in scientific nomenclature, to justify their self-respect by the magnificent record of European civilization. The first fixed datum for our primeval people is therefore their name.

It further appears from these researches that the Aryas lived in fixed habitations, kept herds, and tilled the soil. They occupied a diversified region, richly watered and wooded, and highly metalliferous; its climate, flora, and fauna corresponding with the descriptions of Bactriana which have come down to us from the Greek geographers, and which are confirmed by modern travellers.[2] It was cold enough to stir the blood and to make them number their years by winters. Their houses were roofed, and had windows and doors. Barley, the grain of cool climates, was their commonest cereal. Their wealth was in their cattle. Names for race, tribe, family relations, property and trade, for the inn, the guest, the master, the king, were all taken from words which designated the herd. They called dawn the "mustering time of the cows;" evening, the "hour of bringing them home." They had domesticated the cow, the sheep, the goat, the horse, and the dog. The cow was the "slow walker;" the ox, "the vigorous one;" the dog was "speed;" the wolf, "the destroyer." They used yokes and axles and probably ploughs; wrought in various metals; spun and wove; had vessels made of wood, leather, terracotta, and metal; and musical instruments of

[1] Compare Greek ἀρετή, valor, and German *ehre*, honor.

[2] Pictet, I. 35-42.

shells and reeds. They counted beyond a hundred. They navigated rivers in oared boats; fought with bows, clubs, bucklers, lances, and swords, in battle chariots and to the sound of trumpets and conchs. They besieged each other in towns; employed spies, and reduced their enemies to some kind of servitude, of which we know not the extent.

Domestic relations rested on sentiments of affection and respect. There are no signs of polygamy. Patriarchal absolutism was tempered by natural instincts. Father meant "the protector;" mother, "the former and disposer;" brother, "the supporter;" and sister, "the careful," or "the consoling, pleasing one." The primitive names of these forms of relationship have been transmitted with slight change through most branches of the Indo-European race even to the present day. And thus the closest domestic ties not only became, as common speech, the symbols of an ethnic brotherhood, which time and space are bound to guard and expand, but were sealed also to immortal meanings for the moral nature by the oldest testimony of mankind. And the affirmations of conscience, the words of the Spirit, were not less clearly pronounced, in other directions.[1]

The Aryas had clear conceptions of the rights of property and definite guarantees for their protection. These guarantees were based on ownership of the soil where the family altar stood, concentrating the sentiment of piety. We see at how early a period men recognized the natural dependence of those necessary conditions of social order, the family and

[1] Kuhn, in Weber's *Ind. Studien*, I. 321–363; Lassen, I. 813; Müller, *Oxford Essays for* 1856; Weber, *Lecture on India* (Berlin, 1854); Müller, *Science of Language*, 236; Pictet, II. 746.

the home, on fixed and permanent ownership of land. Communistic schemes have never yet succeeded, among the Indo-Europeans, in overcoming this instinctive wisdom, which loyally maintains the Family, the Home, and private Property in Land as mutually dependent factors of civilization. And we may infer from the sacredness attached by the Hindus, Greeks, and Romans to *bounds*, whether by stones, or by ploughed trenches, or by vacant spaces, — each family thus marking off its real estate from its neighbors, — that this reverence for property limits was also a trait of the older race of which they were the branches.[1]

The Aryas had formalities for transactions of exchange and sale, for payment of wages, and for the administration of oaths. All the essential elements of social order were evidently present in this primitive civilization, the cradle of historic races. Law was designated by a word which meant *right*. The notion of justice was associated with the straight line, suggestive of directness and impartiality. Transgression meant *falling off*, and oath *constraint*.[2]

Their psychological insight surprises us. They seem to have distinguished clearly the principle of spiritual existence. Soul was not merely vital breath, but thinking being. Thought was recognized as the essential characteristic of man, the same word designating both. For four thousand years man has been called "the thinker." For consciousness, will, memory, the Aryas had words that are not traceable to material symbols. They even made a distinction, it is believed, between concrete existence and abstract

[1] See De Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*, B. I. ch. V.

[2] Pictet, *Les Aryas Primitifs*, II. 237, 427, 435, 456.

being;[1] a germ of that intellectual vigor which has made the Aryan race the fathers of philosophy. Their language abounded in signs of imaginative and intuitive processes. They believed in spirits, good and evil;[2] and their medical science consisted in exorcising the latter kind by means of herbs and magical formulas.

There are no signs of an established priesthood, nor of edifices consecrated to deities. But terms relating to faith, sacrifice, and adoration, are so abundant as to prove a sincere and fervent religious sentiment. The similarity of meaning in numerous words descriptive of divine forces has seemed to "point to a primitive monotheism, more or less vaguely defined."[3] Yet the Aryas had probably developed a rich mythology before their separation into different branches.[4] They had also firm belief in immortality and in a happy heaven for those who should deserve it,[5] beholding the soul pass forth at death as a shape of air, under watchful guardians, to its upper home. Some of these inferences of linguistic palæontology may require further evidence to give them scientific certainty. But there are other features in the picture of Aryan religious life which admit of no dispute. The word *Div*, designating at once the clear light of the sky, and whatsoever spiritual meanings these simple instincts intimately associated therewith, has endured as the *root-word of worship* for the whole Aryan race: in all its branches the appellatives of Deity are waves of this primal sound, flowing through

[1] Pictet, II. 539-546, 749.

[2] Developed afterwards in the Yâtus and Râkshasas of the Veda, and in correspondent evil spirits of the Avesta. Pictet, I. 633.

[3] Ibid., 720, 690. [4] Ibid., 689. [5] Ibid., 748.

all its manifold and changing religions with the serene transcendence of an eternal law.

Again, it has been shown[1] that the whole substance of Greek mythology is but the development, with exquisite poetic feeling, of a primitive Aryan stock of names and legends, recognizable through comparison with the Hymns of the Hindu Rig Veda, where they are found, in simpler and ruder forms. In these early yet secondary stages of their development, they represent the daily mystery of solar movement, the swift passage of dawn and twilight, the conflict of day with night, of sunshine with cloud, of drought with fertilizing rain, the stealthy path of the breeze, the rising of the storm wind, the wonder-working of the elements, the loss of all visible forms at night only to return with fresh splendors in the morning. This old Aryan religion of intimacy with the powers of air and sky has in fact been aptly called a *meteorolatry*. And recent scholarship has applied much ingenuity as well as insight, in bringing all Vedic names and legends under the one title of "solar myths," using the word in the wide descriptive sense just indicated. And there can be no doubt that they all are more or less intimately related to natural phenomena, though proceeding primarily, it is none the less true, from moral and spiritual experiences in their makers, as all mythology must do. But what we have now to observe is that the amount of this mythologic lore, inherited by both the Asiatic and European branches of the Aryan race, warrants our ascribing very great productive capacity, both æsthetic and religious,

[1] Especially by the recent researches of Müller. See Cox's *Manual of Mythology* for a popular summary of these. Also the valuable articles of Mr. John Fiske, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for 1871.

to their common ancestors, the mountain tribes of Central Asia.

And, again, names and traditions, found alike in the Indian Veda and the Iranian Avesta, indicate that these unknown fathers of our art, science, and faith, must have venerated a mountain-plant, and used its sap as a symbol of life renewed through sacrifice;[1] that they believed in a human deliverer, who, after saving men from destruction, had reorganized their reviving forces for social growth;[2] in a human-divine guardian of the world beyond this life;[3] and in a true Aryan hero who slew the serpent of physical and moral evil.[4] And so we learn how early and how cordial was man's prophetic sense of his proper unity with the Order of the Universe, the ideal which it is the main business of all our religion and science to make good.

I add another fact of equal significance. The thought that those patient domestic animals, which gave milk, and bore burdens, and were in other ways indispensable to man, deserved a better lot than they were apt to receive, and that the kind treatment of them was a religious duty, is common to both the Aryan races, and redounds not to their own honor only, but to that of their common progenitors, from whom it must have descended.[5]

Finally, we may infer from the testimony of the

[1] The *Soma* (Zend, *haoma*), or *Asclepias acida*. The haoma was perhaps a different plant, yet must have nearly resembled it.

[2] *Yima* (Iran) and *Manu* (Ind.). They have common functions as mythical beings, and descend alike from *Vivasvat* (Zend, *Vivanghvat*). See Lassen, I. 517

[3] *Yama* (Ind) and *Vohumano* (Iran.). Schoebel points out the curious transference of functions between the four personages just mentioned, in consequence of the separation of the Iranian and Indian branches of the family.

[4] *Trita* (Ind) and *Thraetona* (Iran.).

[5] Roth, in *Zeitschr. d Deutsch. Morg. Gesellsch.*, XXV. 7.

two related bibles that the oldest Aryas found God in all the forms and functions of Fire; that they had great faith in prayer, as intercourse with Deity in purity and simplicity of trust; and that they were endowed with qualities that help to explain a certain emphasis on sincerity and abhorrence of falsehood, equally characteristic of the precepts of these old ethnic scriptures, and of the reputation of the early Persians and Hindus among the Western races of antiquity.

The sacred Fire, kept kindled on the domestic altar, as the centre of religious sentiment and rite, and as consecrating all social, civil, and political relations, is found to be a common heritage of all Aryan races. Its flame ascended from every household hearth, watched by the *pitris*, or fathers, alive and dead, of this primitive civilization. Modern scholars have traced its profound influence, as type and sacrament of the Family, in shaping the whole religious and municipal life of ancient Greece and Italy.[1]

Not only are the words we now use to designate domestic relations and religious beliefs explained by the radicals of this primitive Aryan tongue, but even our terms for dwellings, rivers, mountains, and nations,[2] are in like manner associated with these patriarchal tribes. So much are we at home among the prehistoric men. The largest part of our knowledge of the ancient Aryas has been reached through Language alone. The fleeting words of a people have become its most enduring record!

And here is the tribute the philologist ends by ac-

[1] See a recent remarkable work by Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique* (Paris, 1870), in which this special subject is presented for the first time, so far as I am aware, in all its bearings, and with great clearness and force.

[2] See Eichhoff, *Grammaire Indo-Européene*, p 248, 252.

cording them: "What distinguishes the Aryan race is the harmonious balance of the faculties. It was revealed in the formation of their language, and presided at the opening of their social organization. A happy disposition, in which energy was tempered with mildness; a lively imagination, and strong reasoning faculty; a spirit open to impressions of beauty; a true sense of right; a sound morality and elevated religious instincts, — united to give them, with the consciousness of personal value, the love of liberty and the constant desire of progress."[1]

I add the impressive words of Renan: "When the Aryan race shall have become master of the planet, its first duty will be to explore the mysterious depths of Bokhara and Little Thibet, where so much that is of immense value to science probably lies concealed. How much light must be thrown on the origin of language when we shall find ourselves in presence of the localities where those sounds were first uttered which we still employ, and where those intellectual categories were first formed which guide the movement of our faculties! Let us never forget that no amount of progress can enable us to dispense with the verbal and grammatical forms spontaneously chosen by the primeval patriarchs of the Imaus, who laid the foundations of what we are and of what we shall be."[2]

[1] Pictet, II. 755.
[2] *De l'Origine du Langage*, p. 232.

II.

THE HINDU MIND.

THE HINDU MIND.

A GREAT civilization is a collective personality. Like great men, whom the past does not account for, it is a mystery of genius and spiritual gravitation. Races at the dawn of history.

We can report the conditions of its development. We can trace climatic and historical influences that have educated it. Behind these we note determinative qualities of race, which, while constantly modified by such external forces, are yet inexplicable by them. The word "race," moreover, is used quite indefinitely, and, like "species," serves but to prove the limitations of our science. It is applied to kinds of relation widely differing not in breadth only, but in origin and substantial meaning. Thus the term "Aryan" or "Semitic" marks a class of unities wholly distinct from that designated by such terms as "Teutonic" and "Hebrew;" and these again differ to an equal extent from that kind of unity which would constitute races as American, African, or Polynesian.

But, in whatever sense conceived, races are fragmentary; and the growth of civilization is dependent on their fusion. However we may decide the question of their origin, it is certain that, when we mark their first appearance in history, it is their incompleteness

that most impresses us. This embryological phase, it is true, combines the just apparent germs of those forces which subsequent stages of growth must differentiate and develop. Yet, while each race is thus endowed with all properly human elements, it manifests some one of them out of all proportion to the rest. The very exaggeration, however, is both present vigor and prospect of reaction. The law of progress must at last bring out all the diverse energies of races, and blend them in due proportion, in the nobler humanity that is yet to come.

The Special Types.

The Oriental races in antiquity, though by no means without mutual intercourse, did not attain real fusion. Owing to peculiar circumstances, climatic and other, they have not yet attained it. They are still isolated columns, awaiting their place in that universal temple of religion, politics, and culture, which our widest experience is as yet inadequate to design.

I venture to borrow from the physical world an illustration, which may serve to indicate the general result of their ethnological qualities. It is, I need hardly say, symbolical merely, and not to be taken either in a materialistic sense, or as defining impassable limits of race capacity.

The Hindu mind is subtle, introversive, contemplative. It spins its ideals out of its brain substance, and may properly be called *cerebral*. The Chinese — busy with plodding, uninspired labor, dealing with pure ideas to but little result, yet wonderfully efficient in the world of concrete facts and uses — may be defined as *muscular*. And the Persian, made for mediating between thought and work, apt alike at turning speculation into practice, and raising practice to fresh speculation, so leading out of the ancient form of civil-

ization into the modern, no less plainly indicates a *nervous* type.

We observe therefore that in the dawn of history, and more or less through its later periods in the East, the brain was dreaming here, while hands were drudging there; and yet again, elsewhere, the swift nerve, made to ply between brain and hand, was unduly preponderant over both. Here are great disadvantages for the growth of ethical and spiritual capacity, the natural bloom of due proportion and right understanding between the faculties. So that it would be not a little encouraging to us as students of universal religion, and lovers of its progress and its promise, if these imperfect societies should reveal even germs, which familiar appliances might seem competent to expand into noble forms of thought and desire. Better still, if these forms themselves are found to have spontaneously arisen in such races, in despite of the adverse conditions.

The Hindu Mind.

Our first study is of the Hindu. I have called the mind of this race, or more properly of the Aryan portion of the population of India, the Brain of the East, isolated from muscle and nerve. By this I do not mean that either of the latter elements was absent. On the contrary, many of the tribes into which these Aryan Hindus were divided, — and the *semi*-Aryan, mountain tribes generally, — have shown very decided military tendencies; while the race, as a whole, is agricultural, and nowise wanting in industry or perseverance, as their development of the physical resources of the country and the wonders of their architecture amply prove.[1]

Nevertheless, the contemplative faculty seems com-

[1] See illustrations in Craufurd's *Ancient and Modern India*, ch. x.

petent to the control of these and all other tendencies, shaping them in the long run to speculative rather than material or practical results. The most impressive works of Hindu genius are modes of celebrating the power of meditation. The Rig Veda sings of the "deep sea of mind." And it has been finely said that the name, "Father of gods and men," which the Greeks loved to give to the ocean, would well apply to India, that immeasurable sea of dogmas and beliefs.[1]

Productivity.

The latest philosophical and religious systems lay prefigured in the depths of this Hindu Brain. It exhausted most forms of devotional mysticism and subtle speculation. In these spheres "it left its pupils little to learn from Zeno or Aristotle, or the controversies of later theology." It created one of the most artistic languages, and one of the richest literatures, in the world. It compiled elaborate Law Codes in great numbers, and, besides its voluminous Bibles, gathered immense treasures of sacred lore, ritual, philosophical, devotional. Its poetic productivity was prodigious. Its great epics, the Râmâyana and Mahâbhârata, containing the one 50,000, the other 200,000 lines, glow with a luxuriance of imagery which contrasts with the Iliad or Æneid as the stupendous vegetation of India differs from that of Italy or Greece. All that this colossal people have dreamed or done, in philosophy, mythology, ethics, in imaginative or didactic thought, is here transmuted into song. The Hindu alone has made his whole life and experience an epic. These two great accretions of rhythmic lore represent a constant necessity for such expression in all ages of Hindu history. In

[1] *Ballanche*, quoted in Laprade's *Sentiment de la Nature avant le Christianisme*, p. 115.

their main substance they go back as far as the fourth or fifth century before our era. Many of their legends may be referred to a much earlier period. And, while their relations to each other are not very clearly settled, this at least is certain, — that in both have been worked over very ancient Vedic myths from age to age, in the interest of fresh experiences, all taken up, as they came, into this epical transfiguration. Such the creative imagination of the race.[1]

Disunity.

Yet it could never organize itself into one united nation. From the beginning this vast peninsula, one-third as large as Europe, has been divided among a multitude of distinct tribes. The little kingdoms warred with each other; and now and then some greater chief would master his neighbors on every side, and build up some brilliant dynasty, like the Maurya or the Gupta, or in later times the Mahratta, and perhaps organize a wide movement for Hindu independence: all of which would last a little while, and then disappear, like cirrus streamers in the blue deeps of the Indian sky, or fleeting thoughts in the heaven of Hindu dreams. It was the mutual jealousy and strife of the Hindu kings, not the lack of military spirit nor of military resources, that made this great people a prey to the invading Moslem from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries of our era. A glut of food in one English province of India has often occurred at the same time with a famine in an adjoining one; yet the intercourse between them has been insufficient to make the abundance of the one supply the lack of

[1] The *Râmâyana* has been translated into Italian by Gorresio, and into French by Fauche. Monier Williams has given a careful abstract of it, as also of the Mahâbhârata, in his admirable little volume on *Indian Epic Poetry*, and a new English rhymed version by Griffith is in course of publication. Many of the finest episodes in both poems will be found translated in Jolowicz's *Orientalische Poesie*.

the other.[1] There are at this very day, it is estimated,[2] twenty-one distinct nations in India, each of which possesses a language in many respects peculiar to itself. "Villages lie side by side for a thousand years, without any considerable intermixture of these distinct tongues." Hindustâni in the north of India and Tamil in the south, represent, generally, the difference between the two great classes of languages derived respectively from the Aryan and the indigenous, perhaps Negrito, perhaps Turanic, tribes. But, however widely diffused, these two types but feebly express the diversities of speech which render the writings of Hindustâni schools in Bombay unintelligible to races in the north-west of India, and make it more easy for an educated native of that city to hold intercourse with one from Bengal or Madras in English than in any other tongue.[3]

Political organization.

The earlier Hindus had well-organized governments, much lauded by the Greek writers, to whom we owe our earliest reliable notices of India, for the wise and thoughtful manner in which the interests of trade and agriculture were protected, the wants of strangers, as of the sick and needy, supplied, and the defence of the state secured.[4] The law-books contain minute regulations for freights and markets, and just rules for partnerships and organizations in trade, for testing weights, measures, and money, and punishing dishonest dealing.[5] And the organization of the village communities throughout

[1] *Westminster Review*, July, 1859.

[2] Mackay's *Reports on Western India*, p. 29.

[3] Perry on the Distribution of the Languages of India, *Journal of Roy. Asiatic Soc.* (Bombay branch), for January, 1853

[4] See especially Megasthenes, in Strabo, *De Situ Orbis*, B. xv.

[5] See Lassen, in *Ztschr. d. D M. G.* (1862).

Northern India, from very early times, was an elaborate system of local self-government, that showed how large an amount of personal and social freedom could be maintained, even under the depressing shadow of caste. But these steps in political science never led onwards to unity and nationality, nor to any form of constructive policy on a large scale, or for a common end.

India has at all times been famous for its domestic and foreign trade. In the early days of the Roman Empire, it was a great commercial centre for the merchants of Italy and Egypt, as it was at a much earlier period for all Asiatic races, from Phœnicia in the West to China in the East. The oldest codes record a very advanced system of commercial exchanges among the Hindu tribes, regulated by wise and just provisions; and a high respect for trade is shown by the permission granted the Brahmans, in violation of caste, to earn their support by assuming the functions of the Vaiśya, or mercantile class.[1] In more than one epoch, the resources of India, natural and industrial as well as intellectual, have made the wealth of great empires.[2] Its delicate tissues, its marvellous colors and dyes, its porcelains, its work in metals and precious stones, its dainty essences and perfumes, have not only been the wonder and delight of Europe, but in no slight degree helped in the revival of art. But, after all, the Hindus have shown little practical enterprise, and there was a certain passive quality in their best performance; even in that fine manipulation that wove gossamer fabrics, and wrought the precious metals with such eminent suc-

Foreign Relations.

[1] *Manu*, X. 83; *Yâjnavalkya*, III.; Lassen, *Ind. Alt.*, II. 572–576.

[2] See Crawfurd, *Ancient and Modern India*, ch. xiii.

cess. It has been believed that they could have taken little pains to export these products, since the sailor was held in slight respect by their laws; that most of their trade was carried in foreign bottoms; and that the Mohammedans first introduced coinage among them, their only previous currency being shells.[1] We read indeed of wealthy merchants in their dramatic works, and traces of their mercantile establishments are found far to the east and west of India. Yet, on the whole, it is probable that other nations had to come to them. They have always been mainly an agricultural people, the whole population averaging only about one hundred to the square mile. Their scholars did not travel. Only a great religious and moral inspiration, like Buddhism, could rouse Hindu thought to seek geographical expansion. Only here and there we find traces of embassies; and these, mainly for political objects, to the courts of China, Rome, and Egypt. Yet the intellectual life of India was profoundly felt throughout the ancient world. Greece, Persia, Egypt even, went to sit at the feet of these serene dreamers on the Indus and under the banyan shades, from the time of Alexander downwards; and there they marvelled at the power of philosophy to achieve ideal virtue. And what treasures of European fable, legend, and mythic drama further testify to the extent of our indebtedness to India in the sphere of imagination and fancy, down to the magic mirror, the golden egg, the purse of Fortunatus, the cap of invisibility!

The Hindus reasoned of war itself as if it were a Sciences. flash out of the brain, a piece of metaphysics.[2]

[1] *Journal Roy As. Soc. of Bengal* (Philolog., 1867).

[2] See the *Bhagavadgitâ*.

They loved to press beyond material successions or conditions to general forms and essential processes; pursuing with special success those studies that afford the largest field for abstraction and contemplation, — the orderly movement of the stars, the laws of numbers, the structure of language, the processes of thought. They made much progress in analytic arithmetic, and not only applied algebra to astronomy and geometry, but geometry to the demonstration of algebraic rules.[1] They seem to have invented numerical signs and the decimal system; the zero itself being of Sanskrit descent, and the old Hindu figures being still clearly traceable in those of the later Arabic digits. The introduction of these numerical signs in place of the alphabetic characters before used by all other nations of antiquity — a change ascribed by old writers to the Pythagoreans, those Orientalists of the Greek world, but probably an importation from India through the Arabians of Bagdad — was the finest ideal impulse ever given to arithmetical studies. The decimal system was developed in India as a speculative calculus so earnestly, that special names were given to every power in an ascending scale of enormous reach. The fifty-third power of ten was taken as a unit, and on this new base another scale of numbers rose till a figure was reached consisting of unity followed by four hundred and twenty-one zeros. And these elements were applied to the solution of ideal problems, such as "the number of atoms containable in the limits of the world taken as a fixed dimension;" representing mathematical reality none the less for being so utterly past conception.[2] The Arabians

[1] Colebrooke, *Hindu Algebra*, Introd., pp xiv., xv

[2] Woepcke., *Mem. sur les Chiffres Indiens*, in *Journal Asiatique* (1863).

called the Indian arithmetic the "sandgrain calculus." Eighteen centuries ago at least, the Hindus had elaborate systems of arithmetical mnemonics, based on numerical values attached to letters of the alphabet.[1] "They reached a stage of algebraic science," says Weber, "which was not arrived at in Europe till the close of the last century; and, if their writings had been known a century earlier, they would certainly have created a new epoch."[2] Aryabhatta, their greatest astronomer and mathematician, in the fourth century determined very closely the relation of the diameter of a circle to the circumference, and applied it to the measurement of the earth.[3] They invented methods also for solving equations of a high degree.

In the time of Alexander they had geographical charts; and their physicians were skilful enough to win the admiration of the Greeks. Their investigations in medicine have been of respectable amount and value, lending much aid to the Arabians, the fathers of European medical science, especially in the study of the qualities of minerals and plants.[4] In much of their astronomy they anticipated the Arabians; their old Siddhântas, or systematic treatises on the subject, indicating a long period of previous familiarity with scientific problems. And in such honor did they hold this science that they ascribed its origin to Brahma. They made Sarasvati, their goddess of numbers, the parent of nearly a hundred children, who were at once musical modes and celestial cycles.[5] They gave names to the great constellations, and noted the motions of heavenly bodies three thousand

[1] Lassen, II. 1140.
[2] *Lecture on India.*
[3] Lassen, II. 1138–1146.
[4] Weber, *Vorlesungen*, p. 238.
[5] Creuzer, *Relig. de l'Antiq.*, p. 261.

years ago. The Greeks appear to have derived much aid from their observations of eclipses, as well as to have been in some astronomical matters their teachers. Lassen mentions the names of thirteen astronomers distinguished in their annals. A Siddhânta declares that the earth is round, and stands unsupported in space. The myth of successive foundations, such as the elephant under the tortoise, is rejected for good and sufficient reasons in one of these works, as involving the absurdity of an endless series. "If the last term of the series is supposed to remain firm by its inherent power, why may not the same power be supposed to reside in the first, that is in the earth itself?"[1]

Aryabhatta appears to have reached by independent observations the knowledge of the earth's movement on its axis;[2] and to have availed himself of the science of his time in calculating the precession of the equinoxes and the length of the orbital times of planets.[3]

Especially attractive to Hindu genius were Grammar and Philosophy. They alone among nations have paid honors to grammarians, holding them for divine souls, and crowning them with mythical glories. Panini in the fourth century B C. actually composed four thousand sutras, or sections, in eight books, of grammatical science, in which an adequate terminology may be found for all the phenomena of speech.[4] Grammar.

[1] *Siddhânta Siromani*, quoted by Muir, IV. 97.

[2] Colebrooke (Essay II.) quotes his words: "The starry firmament is fixed: it is the earth which, continually revolving, produces the rising and setting of the constellations"

[3] See Lassen, II. 1143-1146. Also, Craufurd, *Ancient and Modern India*, ch. viii. The views of Lassen and Weber as to the origin and age of Hindu astronomy are criticised by Whitney, whose opinions are entitled to very high respect. These criticisms, however, do not affect the substance of what is here stated.

[4] Lassen, II. 479.

His works have been the centre of an immense literature of commentation, surpassed in this respect by the Vedas alone. No people of antiquity investigated so fully the laws of euphony, of the composition and derivation of words. "It is only in our own century, and incited by them," says Weber, "that our Bopp, Humboldt, and Grimm have advanced far beyond them."[1] The Hindu Grammar is the oldest in the world. The Nirukta of Yâska belongs probably to the seventh century B.C., and quotes older writings on the same subject.[2] In whatsoever concerns the study of words and forms of thought, the Hindus have always been at home; anticipating the Greeks, and accomplishing more at the outset of their career than the Semitic race did in two thousand years.

History.

Yet not more than the Semites are they inclined to pure history. There are, it should seem, no reliable Hindu annalists. The only sources of important historical information are the records of royal endowments and public works preserved in the temples, and the inscriptions on monuments and on coins, fortunately discovered in large numbers, and covering many periods otherwise wholly unknown. The scattered Brahmanical Chronicles of several kingdoms are but dynastic lists and meagre allusions. The Buddhists, on the other hand, have made a really serious study of history, though even they have not had enough of the critical faculty to distinguish fact from legend. It is only by careful study, and comparison with Greek, Chinese, and other testimony, that their voluminous records can be made to yield the very great wealth of historical truth they really contain. There are in fact

[1] *Lecture on India* (Berlin, 1854), p 28.
[2] Renan, *Langues Sémitiques*, 365.

only two general histories of India from native sources; one quite recent, and the other dating from the fourteenth century. A most valuable Indian chronicle is, however, the Buddhist Mahâvanśa, which gives a more complete and trustworthy account of Ceylon, reaching from the earliest times down to the last century, than we possess of any other Oriental State except China.[1] For determining chronology, there are as yet few landmarks; both Brahmans and Buddhists making free use of sacred and mystic numbers, with whose multiples they strive to express a haunting sense of interminable space and time. But though the mythology of the latter deals in extravagances beyond all parallel, they far surpass the Brahmans in serious historical purpose, in observation of human affairs, and in the taste for recording actual events.[2] Their earliest Sutras are of great value in the investigation of an epoch of which we have scarcely any other record. This superiority as chroniclers is due in part to their freedom from caste; a system whose theoretic immobility and practical lack of motive, either for the backward or the forward look, forbid the growth of a historic sense. They differ from the Brahmans also in a deeper interest in *the human for its own sake*. A philosophy which wholly absorbs man in Deity cannot allow that independent value to the details of life, the recognition of which is an indispensable condition of historical study. How to escape the flow of transient events, and know only the Eternal One, was the Brahmanical problem; and it would seem quite incompatible with even observing the details of posi-

[1] Lassen, II. 13, 16.

[2] Of the services of Buddhist literature to the geographical and historical study of India, see a just recognition in St. Martin's *Géographie du Veda* (Introd.), Paris, 1860.

tive fact, not to speak of tracing the chain of finite causes and effects. It is only remarkable that the Brahmans should have shown any capacity whatever in this direction. Especial notice is therefore due to the opinion of a thoroughly competent scholar that they have not indulged in conscious invention, and the falsification of facts, to such extent as would justify European writers in casting stones at them on this account.[1]

The historic sense is indeed by no means wanting, at least in certain directions. We are told that, in every village of the Panjâb, the bard, who fills in India the place which in Europe is taken by the "Herald's Office," can give the name of every proprietor who has held land therein since its foundation, many hundreds of years ago, and that the correctness of these records is capable of demonstration.[2] It would, in fact, be far from becoming, in the present state of Sanskrit studies, to deny that the Hindus have ever written genuine history. The destructive effect of the climate of India on written documents is of itself a discouragement to literary pursuits, and to the preservation of records.

Force of the contemplative element.

Yet we cannot overlook their natural propensity to reluct at limitation by positive facts, and to the objective authority of details. This was not owing, as in a great degree with the Semites, to intensity of passion and the worship of autocratic caprice, but to a *stronger attraction towards pure thought*. Whatever they may have accomplished in astronomy and medicine, an ideal generalization was always easier to them than observation. The

[1] Lassen, II. 7.

[2] Griffin's *Rajahs of the Panjâb*, p. 494.

Hindu has, after all, effected little in the purely practical sciences; almost as little as the Hebrew did in ancient times, and in his distinctively Semitic capacity. But while the Hebrew failed here by reason of his defective appreciation of natural laws, and his appetite for miracle and sign, the Hindu, belonging to a family in which the scientific faculty is supreme, failed for a different reason; namely, his excessive love of abstraction and contemplation. This enfeebled the sense of real limits. His imagination spurned the paths of relation and use. It dissolved life into intellectual nebula, and then tried to create the worlds anew, weaving ideal shapes and movements in phantasmal flow, out of this star-dust of thought.

Its boundless desire to bring the universe under one conception, and make it flow for ever from Mind as the perfect unity and sole reality, *by contemplative disciplines alone*, — though one-sided and ill-balanced, was yet a magnificent aspiration in days when practical and social wisdom was in its infancy. Limit, the true balance of ideal and actual, fate and freedom, divine and human, — limit, which is not limitation, but harmony and order and justice of the parts to the whole, — this, the inspiration of Greek genius, the Hindu did not know. Compare his art with the Egyptian and the Greek. Egyptian sculpture is a plain prose record of actual life; or else it binds the idea within fixed types, which are conventional, and, though often grandly serene, everywhere mechanically repeated and allegorically defined. Greek sculpture demonstrates the capacity of the Human Form for every æsthetic purpose, embodying divine ideas therein with pure content and noble freedom. Here Œdipus has solved the riddle, and pronounced the answer, —

Man. But in Hindu Art you see mythological fancy overpowering real life; and, instead of the actual human form, a boundless exaggeration and reduplication of its parts, a deluge of symbolic figures, gathered from every quarter and heaped in endless and stupendous combinations, the negation of limit and of law.[1] Every thing here is colossal. This aspiration to enfold the Whole cannot find images vast enough to satisfy its purpose. It excavates mountains, piling chambers upon chambers through their depths, for mile after mile of space.[2] It carves them into monstrous monolithic statues of animals and gods. It brings the elephant to uphold its columns, and stretches their shafts along the heavy vaults of Ellora and Karli, like the interminable spread of the banyan trunks in its tropical forests. Its temples represent the universe itself; gathering all elements and forms around central deity, yet seldom pausing to bring out of these forms the artistic beauty of which they are *individually* capable. Intellectual abstraction — as of mind fascinated by the vague sense of cosmic wholeness, and not yet definitely constructive — excluded Art, except in the one grand, all-enfolding form of Architecture. And here sculpture is involved; yet not as with the Greek, in separate freedom, but adherent to the whole edifice, and absorbed in it, save in the instances of a few special forms of statuary.

Its significance.

The contemplative element did not fail at last to engulf outward forms, and even human personality, to an extent elsewhere unparalleled.

[1] See Kugler's *Kunstgeschichte*, p. 121; Renan in Nott's *Indigenous Races*, p 103; Ramée, *Hist de l'Architecture*, vol. i.

[2] There are forty series of caves in Western India; and at Ellora the architecture extends more than two miles.

But we should say that these facts had not yet reached their real values for the mind, rather than that the values themselves were denied. At the least we are allured by the sense of an immeasurable scope in these mystical aspirations to unity with God, which bears witness of genuine intuition. Here abides an illimitable Whole, instead of the manifold symbols of special faith, that have come to stand out, for our sharper Western understanding, in mutually exclusive and even hostile attitudes, plainly enough needing to recognize some higher unity, even though it were by suggestion of the Hindu dream.

To appreciate the results of these contemplative tendencies, we must recall the old Aryan worship of the clear Light of Day. It seems to have given place, in the development of Hindu thought, to its exact opposite, of which the gloom of the Forest and the Cave would be a truer symbol. But it is in fact not lost. It is transformed into an *inward* representative and analogue, becoming a worship of the serener Light of Meditation. It is this divinity, which with full confidence in its power to pass through and dissolve all possible barriers, is here invoked to illumine mystic depths, whether of matter or mind, which the outward sunlight cannot pierce. This aspect of Hinduism must not be forgotten, when, in order to see its true embodiment, we endeavor to picture to ourselves those sunless caves of Ellora and Elephanta; where columns and symbolic statues loom dim and colossal through a silent abyss, and only the mystical imagination finds play, losing itself in its own hovering phantoms; those deeps where all shape is spellbound, and all action dream; where puny, awe-struck men light up some little patch of lifeless wall with

feeble torches, or wake some little space around them with half-whispered words, — a wizard gleam, a stealthy sound, — and all is dark again and still. To make these profound sepulchral recesses of nature and art endurable, light must have shone through them from an Invisible Sun.

The Hindu thinker found Deity most near to him, not as Person nor as visible Shape, but as *Word*, the symbol of pure thought, in his own marvellous Sanskrit. It was in language, the most purely intellectual, most nearly spiritual, of all human products, — and we might almost say it was in language only, — that he showed absolute mastery in constructive work. With pious zeal he perfected and transmitted this, the express image of his ideal life. He wrought it out in love and faith and patience, in the depths of mind, far back in antiquity, without aid from abroad; and then slowly developed or decomposed this divine "Word" into many popular dialects, — still holding its purest form sacred and inviolable.[1] "Speech, melodious Vâch," says the Rig Veda, "was queen of the Gods; generated by them, and divided into many portions."[2] So grew up this typical language, if not the norm of Indo-European speech, yet the centre and hearth of this brotherhood of tongues; revealing their several resources through the wealth of its radical forms and structural aptitudes. Its rich grammatical elements are combined with unequalled simplicity of law. It is pre-eminent among languages

The Language

[1] The Sanskrit was the vernacular tongue of Northern India in early times. It began to die out in the ninth century B.C. In the sixth it was no longer spoken. In the third it became a sacred language; and by the fifth of the Christian era was established as such throughout India. (See Benfey, in Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, II. 143.) Muir has carefully traced it back to Vedic times, and shown that the oldest hymns were composed in the every-day speech of their authors.

[2] R. V., VIII. 89, 10; X. 125

in creative faculty, in flexional and verbal development; full of terms descriptive of intellectual and spiritual processes; deficient only in those which relate to practical details. The profound thirst of the Hindu mind for unity is indicated in its wonderful synthetic power of fusing radical words into composites; so great, that a Sanskrit verse of thirty syllables may be made to contain but a single word. Its makers gave it a name which means *perfected*, and not perfected only, but *adorned;* for to them Beauty was in the Word of the Mind, not the Work of the Hand. This was their Kosmos. They created it by pure force of native genius, and as in sport; when, and in how long a time, we know not. We know only that it was too near and too dear to their hearts to need letters for its transmission. It is a mature product when we first find it in the oldest Vedas, which were preserved without an alphabet for ages, in the memory alone. At last came writing. Then as sound had been "God's music," so letters became the chords thereof.[1] The Sanskrit letters are not transformed picture-signs, but something more abstract and intellectual. They are phonetic, symbols of articulate sounds. Infinite was the toil the Hindu grammarians for thousands of years expended in developing the laws of euphonic structure; drawing from this fine and facile tongue of theirs as from a perfect instrument, with what has been called a "profound musical feeling," harmonious assonances more regular and delicate than the Greek. They referred its primal sounds to the organs by which they were severally shaped. And, with a presentiment of scientific truth, they sought to divine an essential relation,

[1] Karma Mimânsâ.

existing in the nature of things, between the sounds of words and the objects they represented.[1] They went so far as to trace back the whole language to about fifteen hundred root-words, to all of which they ascribed distinct meanings. Eichhoff enumerates nearly five hundred of these in his Indo-European Grammar, fully illustrating the clear light they throw upon the comparative etymology of this whole family of languages.[2]

But it was not till the Buddhist reaction that the uses of writing were recognized. The Brahmanical laws indicate contempt of this instrument for the diffusion of truth. Was their opposition based partly on the fact of its democratic tendencies, as was that of the Christian Church afterwards to the invention of printing?

Practical and physical interests.

Recent writers have described the Hindus as ignorant and wasteful, careless to better their condition, lacking in comprehension of the uses of money. They have pointed to the primitive and almost worthless structure of their ploughs and other agricultural implements; to the comparative absence of variety and ingenuity in their earlier attempts at construction in the useful arts; to the imperfection of their materials for dye-work, glass-blowing, and all chemical operations, and especially their disabilities in art from the want of substantial stonewares and fire-bricks for furnaces; and to the lack of all provision in their laws for the protection of mechanical, artistic, or literary genius in the fruit of their labors. Much of this is the result of depressing causes in the history of the last few centuries. It is certainly in many respects in striking contrast with

[1] Karma Mimânsâ. [2] Eichhoff, pp. 21, 29, 162.

the state of the fine as well as of the useful arts, as described in the old national epics and dramas, as in the account of India, with special reference to Buddhist art, given by Fahian, the "Chinese Pilgrim," in the fifth century. British officials describe many of the tax-free lands as showing marks of agricultural skill quite equal to those of Western Europe.[1] Nor must we do injustice to the genius that may show itself in the very use of crude conditions. The Hindu woman, working up raw cotton into thread for the incomparable muslins they call "running waters" or "webs of woven air," with no other instrument than a fish-bone, a hand roller, and a little spindle turning in a bit of shell, is at all events an artist, endowed with the rare gift of making the most of simplest and nearest materials. The above unfavorable report is certainly exaggerated. But enough of truth remains in it to indicate that there are drawbacks in the qualities of this race to steady progress in practical directions, without impulse from abroad.

The Hindu mastered many physical uses. Yet he was, on the whole, disinclined to the labor of developing them. His passive temperament was unsuited for material progress, having little curiosity and little zeal for conflict with reluctant nature. The caste-system was an exponent of his dislike of movement. His favorite games are dice and chess; the latter his own invention, his typical gift to all civilized races; and both answering to the combination of a passive body with a speculative mind. The pivot of most Hindu philosophy has been the pure unreality of phenomena. It was as if this busy brain, debarred from social construction, teeming with thoughts it

[1] *Speeches before the British India Society* (1839-40).

could not liberate into the world of action, had declined to accept all external tests of validity whatever. And the history of its metaphysical speculation proves in many ways that man cannot live by Thought alone.

It is not implied that these tendencies shape the whole current of Hindu thought. We do not forget how the people of India have gloried in their great epochs of wide literary culture. We do not forget that twice at least, in their history, all the rays of Oriental learning, science, and song were gathered into a focus of free energy, — at the brilliant courts of Vikramâditya, the companion of poets, and Akbar, the "Guardian of Mankind." We do not forget the opportunity constantly open, on this great mustering ground of nations, for the friction of races and the sympathy of religions. Nor can we overlook that passionate love of the Hindus for dramatic personation, — the sign of a wide scope of the imaginative and sympathetic faculties, — which has shown such productivity in their literature, and makes the social delight of every village in the land.

The results of excessive abstraction and contemplation, even in India, are equally far from encouraging the widely held belief that these mental habits are devoid of noble uses. The reactions to realism that were involved in their natural processes of development will claim our admiration. And we are especially to study the splendid capacity, philosophical and religious, — or both, since the two in Oriental life are substantially one, — which was brought out in the *endeavor* to live by Thought alone.

Force of Physical Nature.

It should seem that personal energy belongs of right to the Hindu, as a member of that Indo-European family of nations, in whom a vigorous

practical genius, whether as Persian, Greek, Roman, or Teutonic, appears to be inherent and irrepressible. How is it that, in his case, the old Aryan manliness and vigor have yielded to enervation, and the instincts of liberty and progress comparatively failed? Though the extent of this failure has been greatly overstated, there is truth enough in the prevailing estimate to mark an exceptional fact, which requires explanation. It is doubtless an extreme illustration of the power of *climatic conditions*. In every other instance Aryan migration has been westward or north-westward: in this alone it has been southward. The dreamy and passive element obtained mastery only after the tribes had penetrated the whole breadth of Northern India from the Indus eastwards, and settled in the sultry valley of the Ganges; where to this day it is scarcely possible to rear children of English blood, without annual migrations to the cooler hills.[1] Montesquieu has suggested,[2] as one cause of the general absence of practical energy and free progress in the Asiatic races, the fact that Asia has not, like Europe, — and we may add America, — a temperate zone open in all directions, where races of equal force can enter into free mutual relations, whether of collision or of combination. Her tribes are brought together only by sharp transitions of climate; and easy conquests by superior physical vigor are followed by rapid enervation of the conquerors, whose movement, from obvious causes, has usually been from the mountains to the plains. The descent of the Aryans into a tropic wilderness, where the invigorating alternations of summer and winter

[1] See Jeffrey's *British Army in India*, Appendix.
[2] *Esprit des Lois*, XVII. 3.

were wanting, and every day renewed the same bewildering luxuriance of leafage, blossom, and fruit throughout the year, was subject to these transforming conditions. We should naturally expect that these hardy mountaineers, sweeping down from their cool eyries in the Hindu Kuh and Kashmir, into a land wherein

> "the languid air did swoon,
> Breathing like one that had a heavy dream,
> A land where all things always seemed the same," —

would lose intellectual muscle and nerve. The colossal unity and simplicity of movement in the natural world would be reflected in their mental processes; and an atmosphere heavy with perfumes would lull them to rest in mystical reverie.

We may easily exaggerate these forces, as well as the enervation we adduce them to explain. Portions of India have a cool and bracing atmosphere; and the tribes that occupy the higher levels are vigorous, active, and enterprising. But the climate of the lowlands, where Hindu culture has had its centre, although modified by the wind and rain of the wet season, is in all essential respects determined by the tropical heats. A colossal vegetation covers this rich alluvion, through which enormous rivers flow from the Himâlaya to the sea, enclosed between vast mountain ranges on the north and lofty plateaus on the south. An almost vertical Sun, whose beams have ever held the Hindu's love and awe, — all the more strongly because relied on to smite the sensitive head of the invading Englishman, while they have been slowly transforming the texture of his own dark skin till it ceased to suffer from their shafts, — has proved master

of the very movement of his thought, and disposed it to the languor of contemplation and the melting passivity of dreams.

Intellectual reactions and results.

Yet that Aryan vitality, which in the North turned to Teutonic sinew and in the West to Persian and Hellenic nerve, even here wrought its special wonders. Its brain, self-centred, enclosed in tropical forests and under all-mastering heats, and without the fine stimulation from climate and the intermingling of vigorous races which the Greek enjoyed, nevertheless became an immensely productive force. And the fact tends to show that, while climatic or other physical conditions modify original spiritual forces, they are not adequate to explain civilizations, nor to supply the inspiration which sustains and directs them. The elements which characterize the later development of Hindu mind were, as we shall see, present in its infancy. The solitude and heat of the Indian wilderness gave it no new forces, but subserved a certain original ethnic personality, its special essence; some of whose qualities indeed they forced into excessive action, thereby provoking the others to bring out their latent strength in energetic reactions. Such historical results as these have an important bearing on the philosophy of development, by which modern science seeks to interpret the growth of man. They illustrate the truth which all evolutionists affirm, that no historical changes require to be explained by creative interference with the natural order. But they also tell against the tendency which prevails, in many scientists of this class, to mistake the physical conditions of phenomena for their productive cause, and to ignore forces, inexplicable by such conditions, which work in every step of the process, involving the *precedence*

and creativity of mind, and constituting *spiritual substance;* more or less enduring forms of which appear in race, in personality, and in the constancy and wisdom of natural law.

As it is not incapacity, so it is by no means pure enervation that we note in the passive quality of Hindu temperament. It is rather, as one has well defined it, an "inclination towards repose;" a constant reference to coming rest, alike in things material and spiritual, as the consummation of endeavor and the end of strife; explicable in part by the recurrence of a sultry, relaxing season, as the predestined end of the climatic year, and the most salient fact of its monotonous round. This is of course compatible with a degree of active energy. The religion of Brahman and Buddhist alike was aspiration to repose; yet its disciplines were pursued with incomparable energy and zeal.

"If the Hindus are not enterprising," says Lassen, "they are industrious, wherever they have real labors to perform. They show much power of endurance, and bear heavy burdens with patience. And they avoid toils and dangers more from a dislike to have their quiet disturbed, than from want of courage; a quality in which they are well known to be in no way deficient." [1]

The freedom and force of self-conscious manhood could hardly be expected of a people who were migrating further and further into tropical lowlands and wildernesses. The keen goads of the mountain air were forgotten. Lassitude crept over the will and relaxed the practical understanding, till they seemed to lie buried in the helplessness of dreams, confounded with this overwhelming life of physical nature; and

[1] Lassen, I. pp. 411, 412.

their place came to be defined by the philosopher as that stage in human development where man as yet knows not that he is other than the world in which he dwells. But, if we look more closely, we shall find that the facts are not wholly as they have seemed, and that the severity of the Hegelian formula is far from fairly representing them; since man is not here as an embryo in the womb of nature, but as living force that reacts upon it, though with little help from the practical understanding. And, if we listen attentively, we become assured that even the somnambulism of the soul may be inspired; hearing from these dreamers, also, who at least have faith in their dream, not a few of those accents

> "of the Holy Ghost
> The heedless world hath never lost."

III.

THE RIG VEDA.

"I have proclaimed, O Agni, these thy ancient hymns; and new hymns for thee who art of old. These great libations have been made to Him who showers benefits upon us. The Sacred Fire has been kept from generation to generation." — *Hymn of Viśvāmitra.*

THE HYMNS.

IT is not yet determined at what period the Aryas descended into the plains of India; whether moved by one impulse or in successive waves of immigration; whether impelled by disaster or desire.[1] While their religious traditions indicate a march of conquest, those of agriculture, on the other hand, as embodied in the extensive organization of the village communes, have been supposed to point with greater probability to a peaceful colonization.[2] Their earliest footprints at the base of the Himâlayas are effaced. It is even doubtful whether their name means "men of noble race" or tillers of the earth.[3] The etymology which derives it from roots (*ar*, or *ri*) that signify *movement*,[4] is at least finely suggestive of the destiny of their race. It is pleasant too to trace, however dimly, a primitive association of labor with dignity and success, and to note that the name assumed by this vigorous people for themselves served also for their gods.[5] In later times it was applicable to the Vaiśyas, or third caste, who consti-

Antiquity of the Hymns.

[1] Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, I. 515; Müller, in *Bunsen's Philos. of History*, I. 129; Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. ii.; Ludlow's *Brit. India*, I. 37.

[2] Maine, *Village Communities in the East and West*, p. 176.

[3] Müller's *Science of Language*, I 238; Lassen, I. 5; Pictet, I. 28; Weber, *Indische Studien*, I. 352. Schoebel considers it the title of the family chiefs, or patriarchs.

[4] Pictet, I. 29. See the *Lexicons* of Roth and Burnouf.

[5] *Rig Veda*, V. 2, 6; II. 11, 19.

tuted the mass of the community.[1] Dates are uncertain in this remote antiquity. There are signs that, as early as twelve centuries before our era, the Aryas were not only a powerful people spread along the banks of the Indus, making obstinate resistance with trained elephants to the Assyrian invaders, but had even reached the mouths of the Ganges on the extreme east of India.[2] The whole intermediate country lies before us in the half-light of a heroic age, the scene of epic and doubtless historic wars, of tribe with tribe and dynasty with dynasty.

But we have a record more precious than many precise facts and dates. We have the sacred song (Veda, or *wisdom*[3]) of these otherwise silent generations. The Rig Veda, oldest of the four Hindu Bibles, — the other three are mainly its liturgical development,[4] — is a collection of about a thousand Hymns ("Mantras," *born of mind*) composed by different Rishis, or *seers* — not one of which can have originated later than twenty-six hundred, and few of them later than three thousand years ago. These initial syllables of Hindu faith are probably the devotions of still earlier times.[5] They appear to have been composed in that part of north-western India now called the Panjâb, whose wide slopes descend seaward between the upper Indus and the Jumna; a land always famous for the spirit and grace of its free

[1] St. Martin, *Géographie du Veda*, p. 84: Müller, *ut supra.*

[2] Ktesias: Duncker, *Gesch d. Alterth.*, II. 18.

[3] From the root *vid*, to know: Greek, *οἶδα*; Lat., *video*; Germ., *wissen*; Eng, *wit*, *wisdom*

[4] "The *Rig Veda*," says Manu, "is sacred to the gods: the *Yajur* relates to man; the *Sama*, to the manes of ancestors." The *Atharva* consists, mainly, of formulas for use in expiations, incantations, and other rites.

[5] Müller's *Sansk. Literat.*, 481, 572; Whitney, in *Chr. Exam.*, 1861. p. 256; Wilson's *Introd. to Rig Veda*; Duncker, II. 18; Koeppen, *Relig. d. Buddha*, I. 12; Colebrooke's *Essays*, I. 129; Lassen, I. 749.

tribes, having its outlook on soaring mountains and limitless snow-reaches; a land of picturesque hill ranges and of redundant streams, whose rushing waters these children of Nature loved to celebrate in their sacred songs.

We possess this Rig Veda in precisely the state, down to the number of verses and syllables, in which it existed centuries before the Christian era.[1] It probably represents the earliest distinctly expressed phase of religious sentiment known to history.[2] There is not the slightest sign of a knowledge of writing in the whole collection.[3] In all ancient literature, there is no parallel to this inviolable transmission of "sacred text," and the veneration with which men are wont to regard such protection from the vicissitudes of time may be more justly claimed for this the *oldest* of Bibles, than for any other in the world.

And the respect deepens when we reflect that these Hymns are outcomes of a yet remoter Past; that they point us beyond themselves to marvellous creative faculty in the imagination and faith of what is otherwise wholly inaccessible, the childhood of Man. They present a language already perfected without the aid of a written alphabet;[4] a literature already preserved for ages in the religious memory alone! They sing of older hymns which the fathers sang, — of "ancient sages and elder gods." They

Pre Vedic Religion.

[1] Müller and Whitney, *ut supra*; Colebrooke, in *Asiatic Researches*, VIII. 481; Craufurd's *Ancient and Modern India*, ch. VIII.

[2] Müller, 557.

[3] Müller (497, 528) finds no sign of writing in ancient Hindu history. Whitney (*Chr. Exam.*, 1861) thinks it may have been employed, though not for higher literary purposes.

[4] The language of the Rig Veda differs in many respects from the later Sanskrit, the learned language of its commentators. "Its freedom is untrammelled by other rules than those of common usage." Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, II. 223; Whitney, in *Journal of Amer. Oriental Society*, III. 296.

were themselves old at the earliest epoch to which we can trace them. Their religion, like their language, was already mature when they were born. Do not seek in them the beginning of the religious sentiment, the dawning of the Idea of the Divine. Their deities are all familiar and ancestral. It is already an intimate household faith, which centuries have endeared. "This is our prayer, the old, the prayer of our fathers."[1] "Our fathers resorted to Indra of old: they discovered the hidden light and caused the dawn to rise; they who showed us the road, the earliest guides." "Now, as of old, make forward paths for the new hymn, springing from our heart." "Hear a hymn from me, a modern bard."[2] As far back as we can trace the life of man, we find the river of prayer and praise flowing as naturally as it is flowing now. We cannot find its beginning because we cannot find the beginning of the soul.

The Vedic People.

The earliest religion is one with the maturest in this respect: that it records itself in the details of life. And these primitive Hymns have been called the "historical" Veda, so real is the picture they give of the Aryas after their descent into India. They are described as a pastoral and to some extent agricultural race, divided into clans, and often engaged in wars of ambition or self-defence.[3] Their enemies, designated as Dasyus, or foes,[4] and Rakshasas, or giants,[4] are unquestionably the aborigines of Northern India, and are described as of beastly appearance.

[1] *R. V.*, III. 39, 2; I. 48, 14.

[2] Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, III. 220–230.

[3] It has been suggested that the hymns contain traces of an opposition between a peaceful and a warlike element within the old Aryan community, ancestors perhaps of the priestly and soldier castes, respectively Wheeler, *Hist. of India*, II. 439.

[4] Muir See also Bunsen's *Philos. of History*, I. 343.

every way abominable, and even mad. They are sometimes represented as magicians, who withhold the rain in the mountain fastnesses; and identified mythologically with darkness and drought. They are declared to be living without prayers or rites, or any religious faith; charges which go further to prove the devotion of the invaders to their own belief, than the atheism of the tribes they despised. The extreme religious sensitiveness of the Aryas is attested by the frequency with which these charges of godlessness are repeated, in the strongest terms of indignation as well as contempt; feelings which point perhaps to barbarous practices abhorrent to their own purer faith. Their social ideas indicate primitive relations and pursuits. Their political institutions very closely resembled those of the Homeric Greeks. Their names for king meant father of the house and herdsman of the tribe. Their public assemblies they called "cowpens," and war was "desire of cattle." They prayed for larger herds, for fleet horses, broader pastures, and abundant rain; for nourishing food; for valor and strength; for long life and many children; for protection against enemies and the beasts of the wild.

This infantile human nature nevertheless adored the Light. The dawn and the decline of Day, and the starlit Night that hinted in its splendors an unseen sun returning on a path behind the veil, were dear to its imagination and its faith; and Fire, in all its mysterious forms, from the spark that lighted the simple oblation, and the flame that rose from the domestic hearth, to that central orb, in which the prescience of their active instinct saw, so long ago, an all-productive cosmic energy,[1] was every- The Worship of Light.

[1] See Hymns quoted by Burnouf, *Essai sur le Veda*, ch. xv.

where one and the same, alike mysterious, alike divine. And this vital fire of the universe was ever within call, stooping to human conditions, respondent to their need and will; at once a father and a child; born when the seeker would, out of dark wombs in herb and tree; waiting there to kindle at the touch of his hand, when he rubbed the two bits of wood, or turned the wheel of his fire-churn, — as if his busy fingers reached through the bright deeps on high, and brought life at their tips, *kindred* life, fresh from the central flame.[1] In the imagery of the hymn, they are "the ten brothers, whose work, one with the prayer, brings forth the god." The worshipper, plying them with power, "plants the eye of Surya in the sky, and disperses the delusions of darkness."[2]

Its creative and prophetic meaning.

Thus early in the history of religion the act of worship is blended with a sense of creative faculty. Man is here dimly aware of the truth that he makes and remakes his own conception of the divine; that the revealing of deity must come in the natural activity of his human powers.

This prophetic instinct thrilled within him, at each spark he drew from the splinter's cleft to kindle his altar-fire, so long before science had secularized his mastery of nature in lightning-conductor and electric jar. There was more in this delight than the mere satisfaction of physical necessities. With every upward dart of flame from the dark wood, the god was new born; a mystery of answered prayer and expanded oblation. So the omnipotence of the child's dream

[1] So the North-American tribes. Brinton (*Myths of the New World*, p. 144) quotes a Shawnee prophet as saying: "Know that the life in your body and the fire on your hearth are one, and both from the same source."

[2] *R. V.*, V. 40; X. 62.

was the first regenerator of the heavens and the earth. The out-goings of the morning shone with the courage and strength of his inward day.[1]

Such was the religious rite of the old Vedic families. Each had its altar and its sacred Fire. The family hearth was the first "holy of holies;" and the flame kept burning in every household was the sign of perpetuity for all powers that bound men in social relations. And not for the Vedic families alone. The Romans and the Greeks also made the hearth the centre of religious faith and rite; and so the word Hestia, or Vesta (the altar), originally signifying the *fixed place* for the family hearth-flame, came to represent the divine mother, to whom all deities bent the knee with the old filial reverence for that flame, at the hearth of the world. Vesta, or womanly purity, was worshipped in the "ever-living fire," which meant the inviolability of the family, and the sacred meaning that invests its transmission of human life.[2]

In the later age of the Hindu epics, the rites of a whole people in honor of their king are still performed with the primitive instruments of these joyful oblations: not only mortar and pestle for crushing the Soma plant, but the two pieces of wood for kindling the altar fire.[3]

This original delight in producing the element

[1] Pillon (*Les Religions de l'Inde*, in *L'Année Philosophique* for 1868) traces the tyranny of the *priesthood* in later times to this Vedic faith in the power of prayer and sacrifice to bring forth and sustain the god. "It is not man, but the priest, that thus creates the divine, in those early sacrifices; and this naturally developed itself into the divinity of the Brahman." But the writer seems to forget that the priesthood, as a distinct class, was not then conceived of as masters of this simple rite. And the feeling of creative power involved in it belonged to the self-confidence of the religious sentiment, was its natural faith, its wonder at the work of its own hands That its prestige came to be concentrated in the worship of the priest as such was due to other causes, tending to narrow and ritualize the religious life of the Hindus; to such, among others, as ecclesiastical organization, climate, and, later, passivity of temperament.

[2] Cicero, *Pro Domo*, § 41.

[3] Râmâyana, II. ch lxxxiii.

which animates the world, and in preserving its pure and helpful forces, is retained in all religions of the Indo-European race. It is consecrated in myth and rite, and fable and spell. Its vestiges are in the legend of Prometheus, civilizer of men through this secret of power; in the Roman Vestal Fire; in the lighting of the sacred lamps in Christian churches; and in the "need-fires" to remove evil and cure disease, familiar to the Germanic tribes.[1] The races of the New World also guarded the sacred element with the same loyalty, and renewed it by the same primitive method of friction which the Aryas of the Veda employed.[2] Man could not forget that pregnant dawn of revelation, the discovery of his own power to rekindle the life of the universe.

Primitive Symbolism.

From first to last, what significance he has read in Light; as element of nature, as vision of the soul! The symbol is for ever dear. And it was *as* symbol, not as mere material element, that it had religious homage in the early ages. It is true that developed symbolism requires the separation of the thing from what it represents, and the choice of it *as* representative; and this can hardly belong to Vedic experience. But we must remember that there must be an early stage of *unconscious* symbolism, — a sense of help, beauty, power in the elements, already obscurely suggesting the intimate unity of nature with man; the condition and the germ of all later development in this direction. And this is what we find in the Veda.

From the first stages of its growth onwards, the

[1] Kelly's *Indo-European Folk-Lore*, ch. ii.

[2] Compare Brinton, p. 143; Prescott's *Peru*, I. 107; and Domenech's *Deserts of America*, II. 418.

spirit thus weaves its own environment: nature is for ever the reflex of its life. And what but an unquenchable aspiration to truth could have made it choose Light as its first and dearest symbol, reaching out a child's hand to touch and clasp it, with the joyous cry, "This is mine, mine to create, mine to adore!"

That instinctive cry predicts not only the whole light-loving mythology of the Indo-European races, and its free play through the heavens and the earth, but the concentration of the ripest intelligence on Light in all forms and in all senses, physical, moral and spiritual. That primitive pursuit of a cosmic fire centred in the sun was indeed natural divination: it struck the path which science was ever afterward to trace through the subtle forms and processes of force, paying an ever nobler homage to solar light and heat. It is interpreted across thirty centuries by Tyndall's song of science to this centre and source of living powers.[1] That wonder and joy over the first kindling of the flame is an earnest of the rapture which has ever celebrated Light as type of spiritual resurrection. That infantile thrill at generating the "eye of Surya" is a germ of man's mature consciousness that knowledge is power. And that fearless clasp on the elemental fires predicts the full trust in Nature, which at last affirms her, against all implications of dogmatic theology, to be not the spirit's darkness, but its day.

Such prophecy was in that primal attraction to the Light. Well might its priest and poet sing at morning, his face to the rising sun: "Arise! the breath of our life has come! The darkness has fled. Light

[1] *Heat as Mode of Motion*, pp. 455-459.

advances, pathway of the Sun! It is Dawn that brings consciousness to men: she arouses the living, each to his own work: she quickens the dead. Bright leader of pure voices, she opens all doors; makes manifest the treasures; receives the praises of men. Night and Day follow each other and efface each other, as they traverse the heavens: kindred to one another for ever. The path of the sisters is unending, commanded by the gods. Of one purpose, they strive not, they rest not; of one will, though unlike. They who first beheld the Dawn have passed away. Now it is we who behold her; and they who shall behold her in after-times are coming also. Mother of the gods, Eye of the Earth, Light of the Sacrifice, for us also shine!"[1]

Iranian and Indian

The old Vedic deities all centre in this purest of the elements. In this, as in many other respects, their affinity with the Avesta-deities of the Iranians is so striking as to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the two races were originally one. Of this primitive unity we have already spoken.[2] A sharp discordance seems to have struck into it; and the two sections of the Aryan family, moving in different directions, are found using the same mythological names in opposite and hostile meanings. The gods of the one are the evil spirits of the other. But the antagonism touches the names only. The worship of the Light stands unchanged for both.

Unchanged in essence. Yet there was a difference in the application of this common symbol to express the inward experience. While the Iranians converted

[1] *Rig Veda*, I. 113; Muir.

[2] Lassen, I. 527, 529; Bunsen, *Philos. Hist.*, I. 130; Schoebel, *Récherches sur la Religion Première de la Race Indo-Européene*, Paris, 1868.

the phenomena of nature into signs of moral conflict, the Indians, on the other hand, made them the divine reflex of simple social instincts and practical pursuits. We see here a happy confidence in these nearest elements of experience, rising to the form of religious trust. It is coextensive with the tasks and the desires; and there was, moreover, sufficient self-respect in this primitive sense of natural order to claim freely for human interests the sanction of an intimate relation to all vast, unfathomable forces in the Universe. So early was man, the purport of nature, at home in its mysteries. Titanic Powers have tenderly waited on the processes of his growth, and taken the significance his childish purpose craved. This lord of the manor rules it from his birth.

The Horse and the Cow, the nomad's earliest helpers and sustainers, are the earliest symbols of his poetic faith. The clouds are the "herds of the sky;" "the many-horned, moving cattle, in the lofty place, where the wide-stepping Preserver shines." "When the dawns bring rosy beams, then these ruddy cows advance in the sky." The Pastoral Symbols.

Vritra (the enveloper), or Ahi (the serpent), encamped on the mountains, withholds their bounty. Indra, as the lightning, pierces this foe with his gleaming spear, and milks the nourishers of man. Down go the drops to the sea "like kine." Ahi lies felled by the bolt, under his mother, "like a dead cow and her calf, and the floods go joyfully over him." The streams are the "herds of the earth." The summer drought is Ahi's work, who has driven them to the mountain caves, or castles, and holds them bound. Indra follows, and sets them free. His thunder is "like a cow lowing for her calf." Swift as thought,

the winds (Maruts), "born among kine, strengthened with milk," attend him. "With their roaring they make the rocks tremble, they rend the kings of the woods; and men hear their talk to each other, as they rush on, with awe." The clouds are their "spotted deer, the lightnings their bright lances:" they are "heroes, ever young, that bring help to man." Indra smites down Vritra as "an axe fells the woods; breaks down the castles (of cloud); hollows out the rivers; splits the mountain in pieces like a shard." And therefore the singers "bring their praises to heroic Indra, as cows come home to the milker."

Ushas,[1] the morning light, is now a "maiden, like the dun heifer;" now twin youths, Aśvins,[2] on fleet steeds; now a "stately spouse, who steps forth, awakening all creatures, stirring the birds to flight, and man to his toil." Saramâ, the dawn, creeps up the sky, seeking right and left for the bright herds, whom the night has stolen, and hidden in its caves. "As mares bring up their new-born foals, so the gods bring up the rising sun." Savitri[3] is the risen sun. "Bright-haired, white-footed steeds draw him along his ancient upward and downward paths, the paths without dust, and built secure; the wise, the golded-handed, bounteous Sun." He is himself "a steed, whom the other gods follow with vigorous steps."

Agni.

Agni,[4] Fire, is the "herdsman's friend, bright in the sacrifice, and slays his foes." He is the child of the two pieces of wood rubbed together, hidden in the cleft between them; brought to birth by

[1] From *us*, to burn; Gr., ἠως; Lat., *uro*; Germ., *ost*; Eng., *east*.

[2] From *aś*, to penetrate; the *swift ones*: Gr., ὠκυς; Lat., *equus*.

[3] From *su*, to produce.

[4] From *ag*, to move; Lat., *ignis*.

trees and shrubs, by the clouds and the waters. He is god of the hearth, "born in the house, gracious as a dwelling, bringing joy." He is the "son of power, neighing like a horse when he steps out of his strong prison, spreading over the earth in a moment when he has grasped food with his jaws, devouring the wood, surrounding his path with darkness, and sweeping his tail in the wind, as, in the smoke column, he ascends to heaven." When the lightning illumines the storm, he is the "bull, born in the bed of waters, who impregnates the herds of heaven." He is "wealth," and whatsoever means wealth to the herdsman; "like a good son, like a milch cow, like women in a dwelling;" "the light of the sun;" "the soul of what moves or rests;" a deity pervading the world, who is at once bearing gifts to the gods from man, and coming on the earth to bless him.[1]

[1] Rig Veda, *passim*. All versions of the Rig Veda Hymns now accessible to students have been carefully consulted. They are: 1. Prof. H. H. Wilson's English translation, made under the auspices of the East India Company, and extended since his death, so that it now covers more than half the original collection; and this, faithful as it is, has the twofold disadvantage of not discriminating the original text from the later commentary of Sâyana, and of being deficient in poetic appreciation and simplicity of style. 2. The French version of Langlois, which evidently errs in the opposite direction of too great liberality and poetic freedom. 3. Dr. Rosen's admirable Latin version, of the highest authority with all scholars, but unfortunately brought to a close by his early death, and covering only the greater part of the First Book. 4. Translations of a large number of Hymns, — into German, by accurate Oriental scholars like Benfey, Aufrecht, and Roth, in the German Oriental Journals; and into English by Max Muller (*Sanskrit Literature*) and by Dr. Muir, in his invaluable *Sanskrit Texts*. 5. Müller's long-desired English version, of which only the first volume has appeared. The quotations in the present work have been made with preference of Benfey and Rosen to Wilson, where the three cover the same ground, and give different renderings of the text. A less scrupulous regard to accuracy would have greatly enlarged, and in the view, perhaps, of many readers, greatly improved. this account of the Rig Veda, by a fulness of quotation, which, however tempting, the present state of scholarship on the subject does not, in my judgment, warrant. I have, in general, often with no little sacrifice of taste and inclination, avoided quoting texts for which there is but one authority; except such as are furnished by Muller and Muir, whose versions have, in general, been adduced without hesitation. Quotations from the Vedas, in popular works upon ancient religions, must be received with great caution, being often drawn, without investigation, from very imperfect versions. No one, at all acquainted with the materials now on our hands, would quote the best version of a Rig Veda Hymn with the same assurance of minute accuracy with which he adduces translations from the

These and other deities are, with simple confidence, invited to descend and recline on the sacred Kusa grass, and quaff the juice of a mountain plant,[1] expressed in a mortar or between stones, strained through a goat's hair sieve into clarified butter, and sprinkled on the grass. Exhilarated by this draught of vital juices, they are nerved to supreme labors in behalf of their worshippers. Perhaps the mingling of these elements symbolized the propagation of life in man and beast, to these primitive tribes doubtless the holiest mystery and the dearest hope. And this beverage, though a mild acid of no great potency, was thought helpful to the lyrical powers of the psalmists themselves. "Soma, like the sea, has poured forth thoughts and hymns and songs."[2]

Soma.

But the language of the Hymns to Soma shows that its virtue was associated with the idea of new and purer life, given through voluntary sacrifice. The sap of the mountain plant, slain and brayed in the mortar, became the "all-purifier, all-generator; father of the gods;" "its ocean transcends the worlds," and its filter is their "support."[3] Both Soma (Hindu) and Haoma (Persian) are "healers, deliverers from pain." The Sâma Veda says of this god, that he "submits to mortal birth, and is bruised and afflicted that others may be saved."[4] This is the rudest type of mediation through sacrifice, of strength through weakness, of life through death. A later hymn has been thought to represent the Supreme Spirit as sacrificing himself, to create the world.[5]

Greek or Latin classics. Yet the path through this difficult literature is already so well cleared that we need not misconceive its bearings on any important question of Comparative Religion.

[1] The *Asclepias acida*. [2] *R. V.*, IX. 96.

[3] See texts in Muir, vol. iv. Soma means "*extract*,"—from *su*, to express or beget.

[4] Stevenson's Transl. Pt. II., x. 2, 6; vi. 4. [5] *R. V.*, X. 81. But see Muir, vol. iv.

Here surely is what religion and philosophy have been wont to call "man in bonds of nature;" man rudimentary, instinctive, absorbed in material objects, "unaided by revelation," dependent on what comes in the "mere" structure and necessity of his faculties. This is that "natural incapacity," which is believed to require "supernatural grafting" in order to the generation of spiritual truth. And yet what do we find here? The religious sentiment intensely active, indeed an all-pervading consciousness. These Hymns are full of implicit trust, of childlike awe. They are addressed to deities, not arbitrarily fashioned in human shape, nor out of any material of human device, nor yet enclosed in temples made by hands; but felt directly by the religious instinct, face to face with nature. It was not a sense so much of diverse deities, as of dependence and divine guardianship, and even of a closer relation. Prayers were espousals with deity, and the very car itself by which the blessing descended. They even "uphold the sky." He who asked devoutly, received. No god could resist constancy in one's prayer. Whatsoever he needed, prayer would bring, — food, healing, riches, victory, knowledge, daily protection. Strong in the force and promise of nature, the instinct knows no distrust of itself or its object.[1] "My prayers fly to Him who is seen of many, as herds to their pasture;" "fly upwards, to win highest good, as birds to their nest."[2] "Indra, preserver, refuge, leave us not subject to the evil disposed; let not the secret guilt of men harm us; be with us when afar, be with us when nigh; so supported, we shall not fear. We have no other friend but thee, no other happiness, no other

Spirituality.

[1] *R. V.*, V. 44, 8. [2] Ibid., I. 25, 16, 4.

father. There is none like thee, in heaven or earth, O mighty One. Give us understanding, as a father his sons: let not the wicked tread us down. Thine we are, we who go on our way upheld by thee." "Thou whose ears hear all things, keep near thee this my hymn."[1] "Free from harm, we praise bounteous Vishnu who harmeth none. Listen, O self-moved Deep, to our early hymn."[2]

"Agni, guardian of the dwelling, observer of truth, remover of diseases, ever-watchful, and provident for us, life-giver."[3] "As everlasting beams dwell in the Sun, so all treasures are in thee, their king." "Men find thee who sing the words made in their hearts."[4] "Day after day we approach thee with reverence: take us into thy protection, as a father his son: be ever present for our good." "Break not the covenant with our fathers. Decay threatens the body like a cloud. From this ill be my guardian." "Thou art like a trough of water in the desert to the man who longs for thee."[5] "O Agni, in thy friendship I am at home."[6]

The wise Pushan (food-giver) is invoked to continue the protecting care he bestowed on the men of old. — The divine Rivers,[7] that refresh the herds with their healing streams, are invoked to grant length of life. — The Aśvins are invoked in the last watches of night, as doers of all noble and generous deeds, to break forth in the dawn with their wonder-works of restora-

[1] *R. V.*, I. 11, 2; II. 32, 2; VII. 32; I. 10, 9.
[2] Ibid., VIII. 25.
[3] Ibid., I. 12.
[4] Ibid., I. 59, 3; I. 60, 3.
[5] Ibid, I. 1, 7, 9; I. 71, 10; X. 4, 1.
[6] Ibid., V. 44, 14 (Müller).
[7] Of the richly watered Panjâb they might well have been the gods. In the Veda their flowing speeds onward the hymn and rite. More than thirty streams are mentioned in a single hymn. "O Sindh, the rivers bring their tributes to thee, as cows their milk to the milker; thou movest, like a king extending his wings for battle, at the head of thy tempestuous waves."

tion on the sick, the lame, the blind. — Parjanya, rain-giver, is invoked to "cry aloud, to thunder, to flood the earth and impregnate it, that all that is therein may rejoice and be glad."—The love of Vishnu, "the Preserver,"[1] "embraces all mankind," an "unpreoccupied love."[2]

"May the opening dawns, the swelling streams, the firm-set hills, the ancestors present at this invocation, preserve us! May we at all seasons be of sound mind; may we ever behold the rising sun." "Shine for us with thy best rays, thou bright Dawn, lengthener of life, giver of food and wealth. Drive far away the unfriendly; make our pastures wide, give us safety. All ye divine Ones, protect us always."[2]

These are not the prayers of slaves, nor even of mere suppliants. They incessantly break forth into praises. "O Indra, gladden me! Sharpen my thought like a knife's edge; whatever I, longing for thee, now utter, do thou accept."[3] A poetic enthusiasm glows in these earliest matins and nocturns. They exalt the splendors of the Dawn and the orderly paths of the Night. They dwell with joyful wonder on the changes which pass over the sky and the earth, tracing step by step the marvellous beneficence that follows the paths of the Light. All this is not mere "meteorolatry." Man is not prostrate here before the material universe, but erect, greeting the sublimity and magnificence of nature as tokens of a divine good-will. The sense of physical dependence is constantly more or less absorbed in the delight of this recognition. It would be doing great injustice to primitive Aryan piety to overlook this fine freedom of

[1] From *viś*, to hold, or maintain.
[2] *R. V.*, I. 42, 5; 23, 18; 112; V. 83; VII. 100; VI. 52, 4, 5; VII. 77.
[3] Ibid., VI. 47, 10.

the imagination, this exultation in the beauty as well as the bounty of the visible world, and the proof it affords that we have here something quite other than adoration of visible things. It is the happy sense of harmony with the universe, a healthful confidence that the world and man are made for each other, that life and nature mean his good. "Surya has produced the heavens and earth, beneficent to all: from the desire to benefit men, he has measured out the worlds, with their undecaying supports. To Him we render praises." [1]

Spontaneity of Song.

The rishis were "associates of the gods; found out the hidden light, and brought forth the dawn with sincere hymns." [2] The singers "seek out the thousand-branched mystery, through the vision of their hearts." [3] Their hymns are "of kin to the god, and attract his heart;" [4] for "Agni is himself a poet." [5] The "thoughtful gods produce these hymns." [6] The rishis "prepare the hymn with the heart, the mind, and the understanding." [7] They "fashion it as a skilful workman a car;" "adorn it as a beautiful garment, as a bride for her husband." [8] They "generate it from the soul as rain is born from a cloud;" "send it forth from the soul, as wind drives the cloud;" "launch it with praises, as a ship on the sea." [9]

Delight in the World

These rude bards have not analyzed their consciousness: the material and the spiritual are still blended together in their conceptions. This is not the anthropomorphism which we find in the maturer faith of the Greek, a clear full disengagement

[1] *R. V.*, I. 160. [2] Ibid., VII. 76, 4. [3] Ibid., VII. 33, 9.
[4] Ibid, VIII. 12, 31; 13, 36. [5] Ibid., VI. 14, 2. [6] Ibid., X. 62, 7.
[7] Ibid, I. 61, 2. [8] Ibid., I. 130, 6; V. 29, 15; X. 39, 14.
[9] Ibid, VII. 94; I. 116; X. 116. See Muir, III. 220–240.

of the personal deity from the physical element or form in which he is felt to be present. For wonder and awe are not analyzers nor definers of thought: the lines between infinite and finite, man and nature, spirit and matter, are not of their drawing. But neither is this Vedic worship the mere "personification of the elements," the mere calling the thing fire, or cloud, or moon-plant, a god. What we do in fact note here, in the not yet differentiated instinct, is a predominance of the spiritual element; and this not only in its constant recognition of intelligence as everywhere the substance of nature, and in its admiration of conscious energies and volitions, — mantra, the prayer, itself meaning thought, — but even more decisively in that open sense of beauty and hospitality, of invitation even, in life and the world to which I have just referred; a prelude, we may call it, to the æsthetic grace and geniality of the Greek.[1] It is indeed what Quinet finely declares to be the meaning of the whole Vedic religion, — "Revelation by Light."

It is not the mere worship of the elements. Bondage to the senses will not explain this spontaneity and joy; these cordial relations with the universe; this home-feeling so assured and fearless as to permit undistracted contemplation and living praise; this creative force of imagination; this feeling of beauty and

[1] Very close affinities, not only etymological, but profoundly psychological and moral also, have been traced between the three principal divinities of the Greeks, — Zeus, Dionysus, and Heracles, — on the one hand, and the three Vedic gods, — Indra, Agni, and Savitri, — on the other. The relations between the gods of the Veda and those of Greece and Rome, and the close affinities of name and function, pointing to a common origin, are matters of literary inquiry which lie outside the direct line of our purpose. They will be found fully treated in the writings of Müller, in Lassen's *Indische Alterthumskunde*, I. 756; and in Mr. Cox's new volumes on *Aryan Mythology* (1870). Also by Néve, *Mythe des Ribhavas;* and Pococke, *India in Greece.*

benignity, in full play, neither repressed by fear, nor enslaved by animal instincts. It is very refreshing to see the religious sentiment recognizing the æsthetic faculty, the guarantee of all liberties, and pronouncing it good, in the morning of time. It was a great step in the evolution of intellectual life. We cannot be inattentive to such an assertion of inherent capacities and rights of the soul.

It shows us in the infancy of Indo-European development that innate disposition to accord liberty to every faculty, welcoming all to their own several uses and delights, and accepting the world as their natural furtherance and plastic material, which has given this ethnic family the leadership of intellectual progress and religious freedom. The Vedic Hymn is the primal guarantee, the infantile presage of these future powers. The oldest Greek sages, like the Vedic, wrote their wisdom under poetic inspiration and in verse. Solon, Thales, and the rest, were called *Sophoi*, or knowers; a word having nearly the same meaning with the word "rishis." Their cosmogonies, which trace all things to fire, or water, or their intermixture, are, like the Vedic faith, no mere element-worship, and clearly indicate the recognition of life and mind as the essence of these outward forms. This is the characteristic of all early Aryan thought.

All Religions in germ.

It is the mind of a child that we are exploring. All is yet indeterminate, vague, instinctive. But for that very reason we can the better recognize the capacities of human nature, observing the primitive impulses from which its laws of growth have evolved such diverse forms of revelation as the history of religion presents. The Veda cannot be claimed exclusively by any one of the great theological

systems, — by monotheism, polytheism, or pantheism; but it contains the common principle of them all, the germ, of which the highest is but a natural development, — the consciousness of deity.[1]

This nebulous universality of the Rig Veda, this potentiality of all religions, this prophetic star-dust of historic systems, may well enough be called pantheism. Yet in no exclusive sense. It is not philosophical abstraction, but intense realization: it is man wide awake and intent, in eye and ear, and to the very finger-tips. It is the rounding continent of his religious instincts, and holds a wealth of imagination that supplies prototypes for the mythologies of India, Persia, Greece, Italy, Germany; and a geniality in its love of personification, that endowed with living sympathies each and every phase of the elements, every metamorphosis of fire, and the very sacrifices and prayers of the worshippers themselves.[2]

Its polytheism, like its pantheism, is in the free, plastic stage, and clearly discloses its dependence on a theistic instinct, deeper than itself, in the constitution of man. Intuition of the One.

I do not intend to convey the idea of what Müller calls a "monotheism which *precedes* the polytheism of the Veda; a remembrance of One God, breaking through the mists of idolatrous phraseology."[3] Such antecedent revelation does not appear to me to be

[1] There is, also, a hint of dualism in the fact that twin deities are often invoked, yet not as antagonistic. Müller, *Science of Language*, II. 585. There is even a tendency to triple forms of deity, pointing to later conceptions of a trinity.

[2] For an excellent *résumé* of Vedic worship, as regards the illustration of its vigor and wealth of imagination, and its affinities with other religions, see Alfred Maury's *Croyances et Légendes de l'Antiquité*. On the personification of *Soma*, the sacrifice see Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. iv., and Stevenson's *Sâma Veda*. Mr. Fiske's articles on Mythology, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, trace many of these relations.

[3] *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 559.

proved. But that a profound theistic instinct, the intuition of a divine and living whole, is involved in the primitive mental processes we are here studying, I hold to be beyond all question.

For these Hymns are in reality not so much the worship of many deities, as the recognition of deity everywhere; the upward look of reverence, wonder, gratitude, and trust, from hearts to which all aspects and powers of nature spoke in essentially the same language. There is manifold revelation; but there is also unity of impression. The response to these divine invitations takes outwardly different directions, is addressed to different objects; but intrinsically it is seeking the same spirit in all. In no other way can we explain the fact that these Vedic deities are in no essential respect distinguishable from each other. It is not merely that they are mostly forms of light or fire: this recognition of unity in the symbol points back to the intuition of a deeper spiritual and moral oneness.[1] They are all described in the same way. All are truthful, beneficent, generous, omniscient, omnipotent. All are bestowers of life, inspirers of knowledge. They are alike the refuge of men, alike immortal; creators and measurers of the world, for the benefit of man; radiant with all-searching light, transcending and pervading all worlds. "Among you, O gods, there is none that is small, none that is young: you are all great indeed." They have all equal praise. All are invoked for the same blessings. They are even mutually interchangeable. "Thou, Agni, art Indra, art

[1] Even where an opposition of interests is for a moment conceived, as where Indra is supposed to contend with the Maruts about their respective rights, this is but in order to reassert the unity of divine interests more positively. "The Maruts, O Indra, are thy brethren" *R V.*, I. 170, 2. See Roth's translation of I. 165, in *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, XXIV p. 302.

Vishnu, art Brahmanaspati." "Thou, Agni, art born Varuna; becomest Mitra when kindled: in thee, son of strength, are all the gods." And all alike are supreme. Soma, the sacrificial plant, itself "generates all the gods, and upholds the worlds." [1] The fact now before us has been admirably stated by Müller. "Each god is to the mind of the suppliant as good as all the gods. He is felt at the time as supreme and absolute, in spite of the necessary limitations which to our minds a plurality of gods must entail on every single god." [2] And the reason of this can only be that, in all these diverse directions, the *act of worship* was essentially one and the same, and gave its own boundless meaning to all its instruments, forms, and objects. A like assignment of equal and supreme authority to many different deities is found also in Egyptian polytheism; and the trait has in this case been admitted to indicate an approximation to belief in the Unity of God, even by those who can find no other evidence of the theistic bearings of that primeval faith.[3] The same fact has been noted in respect to the names applied to their deities by the North American tribes, such as, "Maker of all," "Father and Mother of Life," "One perfect God," "endless," "omnipotent," "invisible," and the like; all of which, according to the latest and best researches on the myths of the New World, were familiar terms of homage for what was felt to be higher than man, and clearly indicate a "monotheism which is ever present, not in con-

[1] *R. V.*, VII. 30, 1; II. 1, 3; V. 3, 1; IX. 86, 89, 109.

[2] *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 532. Müller's fine spiritual instinct and profound acquaintance with the original text of the Vedas combine to make him, on the whole, our best authority for their verbal meaning.

[3] Kenrick's *Ancient Egypt*, I. 367.

trast to polytheism, but in living intuition, in the religious sentiments."[1]

It is impossible not to discern in the Vedic passages which have been quoted, and indeed in Vedic forms of worship generally, the presentiment of that profound unity into which the wisest pupils of ancient polytheism resolved the gods of their fathers, and which Maximus Tyrius expresses in terms that strikingly recall our Vedic texts. "Men make distinctions between the gods. They are not aware that all the gods have one law, one life, the same ways, not diverse nor mutually hostile; all rule; all are of the same age; all pursue our good; all have the same dignity and authority; all are immortal; one their nature, under many names."[2] And as the Greek philosopher, so also the Vedic seer was conscious of a still deeper unity than this.

Mystical sense of unity.

In these vague embodiments of religious wonder and awe, there could be none of that distinctness of individuality which later and more reflective polytheism gave to its separate deities. Doubtless many Vedic terms translated as proper names were really meant as *appellatives* only, or else record natural facts which were not intended to be personified at all, so that our ignorance of their meaning may have greatly multiplied the distinct figures of this older Olympus, as well as exaggerated their distinctness. Müller has called attention to a striking difference between the Semitic and Aryan *languages*, in the tendency to *invite* polytheistic distinctions. In the former, the original root-name always remains unaltered in the body of any word

[1] Brinton, p. 58.

[2] *Diss.*, XXXIX. 5.

that may be formed from it; while in the latter it is merged and lost in each fresh combination, so that every new appellative tends to independent meaning, and starts a special personality. That these linguistic peculiarities explain the intenser monotheism of the one race, and the freer polytheism of the other, seems, however, to be less conceivable than that both the linguistic and the religious differences arise from a common cause in the constitutional unlikeness of the two races. Yet the influence of the transforming process alluded to must have been very great. And we can infer, even from the Veda, how this multiplication of individual deities must have gone on in the Aryan religions, by the change of mere appellatives into personal forms of deity. Thus a great many names to which prayers are addressed are simply expressions of qualities that were, undoubtedly, first attributed to the Sun, and became distinctive through the linguistic obscuration described above; until Macrobius could find ready to hand quite ample materials for proving his great thesis, so often reproduced, that all ancient worship was resolvable into heliolatry alone.

But at so early a stage in the observation of nature as that of the Vedas, even this process could hardly have had time to produce very clearly marked distinctions of personality in the objects of worship.

Those mysterious forms and processes of Light, to which diverse names were attached, really flowed into one another; sometimes by imperceptible gradations, sometimes by instantaneous shift, as of feeling or mood. Whether the face of the universe changed before the eyes of the worshipper, or showed behind the change an ever-abiding heaven and earth, it was

still the same face of the universe, and power could not be definitely held apart from power. The sentiment of worship, too, was ever the same, whithersoever it turned for the moment, to every name going forth in the same yearning and faith. It was natural that in every moment of deeper thought the poet should pronounce these names interchangeably. It was not their individuality that impressed him, but the common fact of their power. He would instinctively feel that unity which these experiences suggested. It was the perpetual need to find for every act of prayer and praise the *highest possible object* of prayer and praise, which caused him perpetually to regard that deity as supreme to whom he was for the moment addressing his thought. *This is the very germinal principle of Theism; for it is the instinct of undivided homage.* And if this claim to hold communion in every act of worship with the highest sovereignty nevertheless allows *many* different powers successively to appear *as* highest, if it does not yet draw the logical inference that the object of such aspiration can only be unity, it is simply because the mind is not yet introversive enough to recognize what is really involved in this spiritual process. It can require no aid from "supernatural intervention," whatever that may mean, to advance to the perception that supreme sovereignty *cannot* be divided among many. *Given the impulse to rise in every act of worship to the highest known conception of the Divine*, there can be need only of a deeper absorption in some one tribal deity, as with the Hebrew prophet, or a finer speculative habit, as with the Greek philosopher, to develop it into a clear and positive form of Theism.

It was not requisite that some special race should

be "supernaturally" gifted with the vision, and "intrusted with the charge" of this indefeasible truth, that Deity is One. It was requisite only that the religious consciousness of man should become intently concentrated upon its own deeps. Greek, Roman, and Oriental literature, as well as Hebrew, show that this was the experience of all thoughtful minds long before the Christian era.

The whole Veda hovers on the verge of this higher experience. Its free devotion, guided like the wild fowl's flight by the mysterious instinct of natural desire, steeps unwearied wings from time to time in this purer light. There are hints of a Father of all the gods, in Dyaushpitar;[1] of a Lord of Creation, Prajâpati; of a generator and lord of all Prayer, Brahmanaspati.[2] Visvakarman is "wise and pervading, creator, disposer, father, highest object of vision."[3] Varuna is "King of all, both gods and men."[4] Surya is the concentration of all powers in one; "the wonderful host of rays," the "eye of Mitra, Varuna, Agni;" "soul of all that moves or rests."[5] "Indra contains all the gods, as the felloe of a wheel surrounds the spokes."[6]

Even so is this whole religion contained in the adoration of Light; in the sense of a vital fire in the Universe, one with the life that stirred within the soul; in the search for this through all disguises, and the recognition of it in all visible powers. The *Gâyatri*, or holiest verse of the Veda, reads: "We meditate on that desirable light of the divine Savitri, the Sun who governs our holy rites."[7] It was this verse which the

[1] Ζεὺς πατήρ, Jupiter. [2] *R. V.*, I. 40, 5; II. 23, 1; 24, 5; 25, 5.
[3] Ibid., X. 82, 1. [4] Ibid., II. 27, 10. [5] Ibid., I. 115, 1.
[6] Ibid., I. 32, 15. [7] Ibid., III. 62, 10.

later worship affirmed to have been milked out by Brahma as the substance of the Veda, and "to contain all the gods," being interpreted with the largest freedom of spiritual meaning.

The Veda goes beyond these vague intimations. It distinctly announces the unity of the religious sentiment, and anticipates philosophy in referring monotheism and polytheism to a common root. "That which is One the wise call many ways. They call it Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, the winged heavenly Garutmat." [1]

In the light of this mystical instinct, which to a greater or less extent pervades every Vedic Hymn, we must interpret the fact that all these, so-called, nature-gods are freely declared creators of the world. It even concentrates the whole of this transcendence within each in turn with such intensity and fulness as makes the personality of the Vedic God as vivid and absolute as that of the Hebrew. There are abundant passages descriptive of the all-creative and all-mastering energy of Indra, in which it seems as if we were listening to the praise of Jehovah from a Hebrew Psalmist. Nor is the spirituality of deity much more obscured by outward and sensuous imagery in the one case than in the other.

"To Indra the heavens and earth bow down. With his thunderbolt he looses the waters. At his might the mountains are afraid. He established the quivering earth; he propped up the sky for the good of all creatures, upholding the sky with its golden lights in void space; he spread also the green earth. Let us

[1] *R. V.*, I. 164, 46. There are similar hymns to Osiris, in which he is identified with other Egyptian deities — *Rev Archéologique*, 1857. The *Book of the Dead* gives him a hundred appellations. So the Greek Zeus absorbed almost every name dear to popular faith. See Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, I. 555.

worship him with reverence, the exalted, the undecaying, the ever young. The worlds have not measured his greatness. Many his excellent works: not all the gods can frustrate the counsels of Him who established the heavens and the earth, and produced the sun and the dawn. He transcends the whole universe; architect of all things and lord of all."[1]

Yet even of this Supreme Aryan Jehovah it is said elsewhere that "a divine and gracious mother bore him, when like the dawn he filled the worlds."[2] And he is not only undecaying, and adored of old, but "for ever young." Birth and parentage of deity.

And when the poets turn to Savitri, or to Soma, or to Agni, there is not only the same vividness in the description of sovereign power, but the same recurrence to this limiting fact of birth and beginning. How shall this be explained?

It is to be remembered that, after all, the Vedic Hymns belong to different epochs, and must represent many changes in the special ideal associated with each of the gods; and that every fresh form would naturally be held the offspring of the last. Doubtless, too, these images of birth and youth in part refer to natural transitions or phases of the heavenly bodies, the visible symbols of deity; and report the ever-fresh productive vigor of their outgoings and renewals. They are indeed the natural play of the poetic faculty, which recognizes the life of the universe as for ever new, and creation as an instant fact,—long before science learns to find the same significance in natural laws.

But the root of the idea that the gods are subject to birth and parentage probably lies deeper. While the

[1] Other examples may be found in Maury, *Légendes et Croyances*, from Langlois. See texts in Muir, vol. iv.

[2] *R. V.*, X. 134, 1. *Sâma*, Pt. II. vii 16.

religious imagination was busied with bringing out the sense of deity in ever-changing forms, there was naturally as constant a sense of the limitations in which these definite deities were involved. None of them could satisfy the thirst to reach the origin of power. These creators are but outbirths of what went before. They are "young;" and the ancient deep is behind them. The eye still pierces, the soul presses, beyond them, and finds no end to the series. "A divine mother bore them." What is this but to say, "God is, after all, beyond all our gods"?

Is science any wiser than song? In protoplasm, or elsewhere, has it ever found us a beginning? What else does the Vedic faith in birth and parentage of deity, but foreshadow this endless inadequacy, and in the tenderest way? It finds rest by resolving its series of divine powers into syllables of a word whose meaning for the heart was not to be fathomed, a life which only the sacred name of motherhood could express.

The depth of Deity.

This unfathomed background of life, out of which each and every god was born, must have haunted the religious consciousness as a constant suggestion of *unity* beyond all these changing forms. But it was a unity, which so far from insisting on being represented in one way only, inspired men with the intensest desire to multiply forms and symbols of it. And this diversity, bearing witness of its productive resources, must have prompted it, in turn, to seek ever more and more stars in this all-enfolding depth of spiritual space, which shut no doors of dogma, and spread no mythic firmament to stay the wings of thought. The religious imagination was not only left free, but invited to incessant creation of mythical names and forms, ever

promising to embody more and more fully the unmortgaged ideal that welcomed them all. Here was an open path for progress, so far as progress depends on religious forces. This made the old Aryan mythologies so rich and full. It was in this way that polytheism, free from the exclusiveness that besets strictly monotheistic conceptions, became the real parent of æsthetic and scientific liberty.

It is to be observed that all these definite conceptions of deity are interfused with a sense of man's *harmonious relation to what lies beyond all conception*.[1] And of the spiritual content and confidence hereby made possible, we may cite in illustration, first, a hymn to Hiranyagarbha, or the Light as embryo, born in the waters.

Recognition of the Infinite.

1. "In the beginning there arose the source of golden light. He was the only born Lord of all that is. He established the earth and the sky. Who is the God[2] to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

2 "He who gives life; he who gives strength; whose blessing all the bright gods desire; whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death. Who is the God, &c.?

3. "He who through his power is the only King of this breathing and awakening world; he who governs man and beast. Who, &c.?

4. "He through whom the sky is bright and the earth firm; who measured out the light in the air. Who is, &c.?

5. "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, &c.?

6. "Wherever the mighty water-clouds went, where they placed the seed and lit the fire, thence arose He who is the only life of the bright gods. Who is, &c.?

7. "He who by his might looked even over the water-clouds, the clouds which gave strength and lit the sacrifice. He who is God above all gods. Who is, &c.?

[1] I do not here employ the term "unknowable," which, as used in scientific parlance, does not convey my meaning.

[2] Langlois translates it, "To what other god."

8. "May he not destroy[1] us. He the Creator of the earth, the righteous, who created the heavens. He who also created the bright and mighty waters. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?"[2]

Who is this that is "born in the waters," an "embryo of light"? Even He of whom the waters and the light are but the garment, "the only life of all these bright gods;" their *life*, not apart from them only, but *in* them.[3]

And here is a farther venture into those abysses of the consciousness, where finite so blends with infinite, that its very darkness deepens into light; where deity, felt as mystery beyond all names or forms of conception, yet is also highest personality and instant life of all.

1. "There was then neither nonentity nor entity; neither atmosphere nor sky beyond. What covered all?

2. "Death was not, nor therefore immortality; nor day nor night. That One breathed, breathless, by Itself [in essence]: there was [or has been] nothing different from It, nor beyond It.

3. "The covered germ burst forth by mental heat.

4. "Then first came Love upon it, the spring of mind. This the poets in their hearts discerned, the bond between being and nought.

5. "The ray which shot across these, was it above or below? There were mighty productive powers, nature beneath and energy above.

6. "Who can declare whence this creation? The gods came later.

7. "Who then knows what its source, or whether created or not? He who rules it in highest heaven knows, or He knows not."[4]

And in the following passages we mark the pro-

[1] "Injure," according to Muir.

[2] *R. V.*, X. 121. Müller's transl. is in *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 569. Muir's, in *Sansk. Texts*, vol iv., is essentially the same.

[3] Of the monotheism of the Hindus, recurring at every stage of their history, and its independence of foreign influences, see Lassen, II. 1105.

[4] *R. V.*, X. 129, translated by Müller and Muir. Colebrooke translates the last clause, "none other can know."

found yearning to transcend that imperfect solution of the mystery of existence which ascribes it to a special creative fiat: — Beyond creative power.

"That which is beyond the earth and sky, beyond gods and spirits; what earliest embryo did the waters hold, in which all the gods were assembled? Ye know not Him who produced these things. Something else is within you. The chanters of hymns go about enveloped in mist, and unsatisfied with idle talk.[1]

"Who has seen the First Born? Where was the life, the blood, the soul of the world? Who went to ask it of any that knew it.[2]

"What the tree from which they shaped heaven and earth? Wise men, ask indeed, in your minds, on what He stood when He held the worlds."[3]

It is the inadequacy of all conceptions of Original Cause as a definite form of existence that one of these poets would express when he says, "The existent sprang from that which exists not."[4]

There is but one solution of these mysteries, and that is for all time: the unity of human and divine through the moral being.

Every one of these Vedic deities is a moral guardian and saviour. "This day, ye gods, with the rising sun, deliver us from sin." "Whatever sin we may have committed, O Indra, let us obtain the safe light of day: let not the long darkness come upon us." "Preserve us, O Agni, by knowledge, from sin; and lift us up, for our work and for our life." "Thou leadest the man who has followed wrong paths to acts of wisdom." "Deliver us from evil" is the constantly recurring prayer.[5] The moral element in Vedic worship.

"The gods are not to be trifled with." "They are with the righteous: they know man in their hearts."

[1] *R. V.*, X. 82. [2] Ibid., I. 164, 4. [3] Ibid., X. 81, 4. [4] Ibid, X. 72, 2.
[5] Ibid, I. 115, 6; II. 27, 14; I 36, 14; I. 35.

"They behold all things, and hear no prayers of the wicked." "May I, free from sin, propitiate Rudra, so as to attain his felicity, as one distressed by heat finds relief in the shade!" "I have committed many faults, which do ye, O gods, correct, as a father his ill-behaving son. Far from me be bonds, far be sins." "May our sins be removed," or "repented of" is the burden of a whole hymn.[1] What rude tribes, unused to self-examination, may have meant by the terms here translated "sinning" and "repenting," may not be easy fully to determine. We may readily overestimate their moral aspirations. But we shall err even more seriously if we recognize in their hymns nothing better than the desire to buy material advantages from their deities, or the fear of losing these advantages, or of suffering outward penalties at their hands.[2] It is very clearly a sense of wrong-doing from which the worshipper is seeking relief. It is conscience that pricks him, the rebuke of his moral ideal. Because the evil he thinks or does offends himself, *therefore* he holds it an offence to the All-discerning. Its penalties, whether inward distress or outward failure and loss, — and both kinds, as will hereafter be noticed, are confessed, — he construes as signs of its opposition to a rectitude to which he aspires. It is purity of heart, it is peace with the conscience, that these prayers pursue. Their simple confessions of weakness and ignorance are laden with earnest feeling. "I do not recognize if I am like this: I go on perplexed in mind."[3] "O Agni, thou art like a trough in the desert, to one who longs for thee."[4]

[1] *R V*, VII. 32, 9; VIII. 13, 15; II. 33, 6; II. 24, 5; I. 97.

[2] For this kind of criticism, see Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, I. 182, and even Wilson's *Lectures at Oxford* (1840), p. 9, 10.

[3] *R. V.*, I. 164, 37.

[4] Ibid., X. 4, 1.

The moral law is eminently embodied in Varuna. His name, kindred with the Greek *Ouranos* and the Zend *Varena* — from *var*, to veil or surround — remands us to the outermost confines of the universe.[1] He is essentially the Limit, which enfolds the thought of these simple natures, and protects it from being bewildered and oppressed by the mysteries of immensity. He is the measurer of depths, whose wise ordinances round them in. His world is farthest space. His calm unswerving legislation is the safety of all beings and forms.[2] His worship expresses man's instinctive sense of natural law, of the bands that cannot be loosed. He is adored as framer and sustainer of the everlasting order of the world; who appointed the broad paths of the sun, prepared from of old, free from dust, well-placed in the firmament; who holds the stars from wandering, and keeps the streams from overfilling the sea. "The constellations, visible by night, which go elsewhere by day, are his inviolable works." "Wise and mighty are his deeds who has stemmed asunder the wide firmaments. He lifted on high the bright heavens: He stretched apart the starry sky and the earth, and made great channels for the days."[3] He is calm and immovable, the Aryan Fate: inevitable things are "his bonds."[4] Night, with its mysterious deeps and steadfast orderly watches, is his special realm; and he it is who brings back the sun to his place, to reappear after passing invisibly through the heavens. Thus the world was instinctively felt to be stanch with orderly cycles, long before the conception of law could be fully formed.

Varuna; the moral limit.

[1] Lassen, I. 758.

[2] *R. V.*, VIII. 42. [3] Ibid, V. 85; VII. 86, 87: I. 24, 10.

[4] Roth, *Die höchsten Götter d. Arischen Völker* (*Zeitschrift d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, VI. 72).

But in this physical order was reflected also the divine law which shone in the conscience, and proclaimed eternal decree against moral disobedience. "By day, by night, there is said one thing. The same is spoken to me by my own conscious heart."[1] This unseen Eye of the Night "beholds all that has been and all that will be done."[2] To Varuna the darkness shineth as the light. It is he who is offended at the evil-doer, who is satisfied only when the sin is put away. "Desirous of beholding thee, I ask what is my offence."[3] A later hymn from the Atharva Veda says of him, "If one stand or walk, or hide, the great Lord sees as if near; he knows what two whisper together; he is there the third. He who should flee beyond the sky would not escape Varuna. He hath counted the twinklings of the eyes of men."[4]

He is "merciful to the evil-doer, and takes away sin, extricating man from its bonds."[5] This morality is plainly not the bondage of an inexorable physical necessity, nor the blind fear of a wrathful judge. It has sight of a divine compassion, that spares and restores.

Deliverer from evil.

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 wind, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

3. "Through want of strength, thou Strong One, have I gone to the wrong shore. Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

4. "Thirst came on the worshipper, in the midst of the waters. Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

5. "Wherever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the

[1] *R. V.*, I. 24, 12. [2] Ibid., I 25, 11. [3] Ibid., VII. 86.
[4] Muir, V. p. 53; Müller, *Chips*, I. p 41. [5] *R. V.*, VII. 87; I. 25, 21.

heavenly host; wherever we break thy law through thoughtlessness, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!"[1]

Similar trust in forgiving love inspires the prayers to all the Vedic gods. They are all called by the names Saviour and Father.

It has been said that "we look in vain in the Vedas for penitential psalms, or hymns commemorating the descent of spiritual benefits."[2] This is true only if we take these expressions in their Semitic meaning. In most Hebrew piety, the sentiment of moral obligation, yielding much fruit of sublimity and tenderness, is yet more or less an overbearing despotism. Its austere and jealous God tends to paralyze the worshipper's freedom with dread of having done, or of being about to do, something that trenches upon exclusive and sovereign claims. Hence an intensity of contrition, and a disposition to dwell on what is called the "malignity" of sin, amounting, in the ultimate phases to which Christian theology has developed it, to a demand for self-contempt and even self-abhorrence as the first condition of piety! Now it is certain that nothing like this will be found in the Vedic or any other religion of Aryan origin. But it is not to be inferred that such religions do not rest on moral and spiritual foundations. If they know nothing of these moral agonies, so liable to narrow and enslave the mind, they are not for this reason incapable of recognizing the inevitable penalty, and the need of divine renewal, involved in evil thinking and ignoble living.

Aryan sense of moral evil.

On the other hand, the gods are not jealous of the liberties of their worshipper. They cordially beckon him on every side, and make the world a genial

[1] *R. V.*, VII. 85. [2] Hardwick, I. 281.

climate for all his energies. If there is danger lest this entire spontaneity should relax the authority of conscience, there is at least implied in it a guarantee of freedom and progress indispensable to conscience itself. It does not dwell mournfully and hopelessly on the past, nor on the enormity of offence; but passes readily on to greet fresh opportunity, accepting the future as still its friend. This moral elasticity and ready recovery of self-estimation, this good understanding between the conscience and a happy development of all human powers, is the needful corrective of a despotic moralism in religion and culture, which Semitic earnestness has mingled with its better gifts to the inward life of man.

The Adityas.

The Hymns to Varuna, which have suggested these remarks concerning a common criticism upon religions of non-Semitic origin, are not the only illustrations of the Vedic conscience. Varuna is one of Seven Adityas, or Everlasting Ones.[1] These are the "Children of Aditi," who is "The Unlimited, Immortal Light Beyond." Sleepless, beholding all things, far and near, evil and good, the innermost thoughts of men, — irreproachable protectors of the universe, haters of falsehood, punishers of sin, yet forgivers too, and abandoning none, they "bridge the paths to immortality, and uphold the heavens for the sake of the upright."[2] And to them the herdsman prayed that he might escape the vices that were "like pitfalls in his path;" calling on them to spread their protection over him, "as birds spread their wings over their young."[3] Of these the nearest to Varuna is Mitra, "*the Friend.*"

[1] Roth, *ut supra*, *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, VI. 69; Müller's *Rig Veda*, I. *Notes*, p. 237.
[2] *R. V.*, II. 27. [3] Ibid., VIII. 47, 2. See Muir, V. 57.

"Neither is the right nor the left hand known to us, neither what is before nor what is behind. O givers of our homes, may I, weak and afraid, be guided by you to the light that is free from fear. Far or nigh, there can come no harm to him who is in your leading." [1]

Though called "children of the light," these Immortals are not to be confounded with the heavenly bodies: they are not mere phases of the Sun, as the later Purânas have been supposed to represent them. They were conceived as the unseen support and background of his radiance. Their light was of the spirit. Their very names have moral and religious import, born of the conscience and the heart. They mean Friend, Protector, Beholder, Sympathizer, Benefactor, Giver without Prayer.[2] They preserve from the evil spirits, or druhs, that follow the sins of men." The oldest Aryan faith centres in these Shining Ones. The Adityas are, in fact, radiant witnesses that the visible heavens have always been recognized as the symbol of a Higher Light, through which the soul lies for ever open to infinite wisdom, justice, and care.

Their spiritual meaning.

In all ancient religion there is no name more interesting than that of Aditi, the "mother" of the Aryan gods. To maternity all deities pay reverence; and to the bosom of its infinite tenderness man must refer his whole conception of the divine. "Aditi," says Max Müller, "is the earliest name invented to express the Infinite, — the *visible* infinite. A-diti is the unbound, unbounded, one might almost say, the Absolute. It is a name for the distant East, the Dawn, — but more, *Beyond the Dawn;* and in one place the Dawn is called the 'Face of

The mother of the gods.

[1] *R. V.*, II. 27, 11, 13.

[2] Roth, *ut supra.*

Aditi.' In her cosmic order she is The Beyond, the unbounded realm beyond earth and sky." Beyond Aditi, however, was Daksha, literally "the powerful." "She, O Daksha, who is thy daughter; after her, the gods."[1] Yet Daksha is also said to be born of Aditi.[2] And here it must be noted that this phraseology of descent does not indicate chronological succession, but ideal relation; just as we may say, with equal truth, that light is the child of power, and that power is the offspring of light. Yet there can be no doubt that this reaching forth to an all-embracing Life beyond and behind special forms of deity, — an ultimate in which the two conceptions of love and power, under the symbols of male and female, are combined in the interchangeableness of Daksha and Aditi at the fountain of being, — is but a typical expression of the whole religious experience of the Vedic poets. For we find the same unlimited capacity invoked, in each and every deity, to reach out beyond itself, with a care and a power that should absorb all the rest.

The earliest apotheosis.

The study of the Rig Veda has revealed the fact that the earliest apotheosis of which we have record was a form of homage to virtue. Some of the hymns are addressed to deified men, who had attained their divinity through beneficent work.[3] They are the "dexterous, humble-minded artisans of the gods."[4] The miracles ascribed to them indicate what was then thought godlike in conduct. They had restored their parents to youth; an act typical, to the Oriental mind, of all social virtues.

[1] Müller's *Rig Veda*, I. p. 230, 237; Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, IV. 10–13.

[2] *R. V.*, X 72, 4, 5.

[3] Névo, *Mythe des Rikhavas*; Roth, *Brahma und die Brahmanen, in Zeitsch. d. Morg. Ges.*, I. 76.

[4] *R. V.*, V. [illegible] (Wilson)

They had made a chariot for the dawn, that daily blessings might be brought to all men. They had multiplied sacred vessels for the service of the gods. They had created, or brought back to life, cattle for the poor.[1] Their name, Ribhavas, formed from that most fruitful of Aryan roots, which indicates upward movement, points to aspiration and growth. It is closely related to the Greek Orpheus, both names symbolizing the arts of orderly and rhythmic construction; and to the German Elfen, denoting the busy, serviceable elves.[2] To these divine helpers, who seem to have been in some respects identical with the *pitris*, or ancestral fathers of families, especially in their beneficence, prayers were addressed for the same blessings which the older deities bestowed. Thus the good man ascends to heaven, and stands among the gods. The stars of the generous shine in the firmament: they partake of immortality.[3] They are like the Aśvins, those divine physicians, who enabled the lame to walk, the blind to see; who restored the aged to youth, were guardians of "the slow and weak," relieved burns with snow, cured cattle, sowed fields, and delivered sailors from storms.[4]

This instinctive recognition of the divine in the human gave shape to the Vedic idea of a Future Life. The first man who had passed through The Future Life.

[1] *R. V.*, IV. 33, 35, 36; V. 31, 3.

[2] See Kelly's *Indo-European Folk-Lore*, p. 19

[3] *R. V.*, X. 88, 15 (See Maury, *Croyances*, &c., 147.) Even if, as Néve supposes, the multiplication of the goblets for worship, as well as the other services to the gods ascribed to the Ribhavas, signify that they "extended the pomp and importance of the religious ritual," and represented the tendency to priestly organization in those early times, it will be none the less true that they were exalted to divinity for acts held in grateful remembrance as serviceable to men. That they were *merely* priests, or beloved for merely vicarious and official acts, the whole account of them in the *Rig Veda* disproves

[4] See Muir, V. 242, and *R. V.*, I. 116–120. For remarks on the relations of the Ribhus and Pitris to the bright spirits or elves of the Teutonic mythology, see Kelly's *Indo-Europ Folk-Lore*, p. 19.

death waited, enthroned in immortal light, to welcome the good into his kingdom of joy.[1] This "Assembler and King of Men" in another life had himself been human, and knew all human needs. Death was thus Yama's kindly messenger, "to bring them to the homes he had gone before to prepare for them, and which could not be taken from them."[2] It was far in Varuna's world of perfect and undying light, in the "third heaven," in the very "sanctuary of the sky, and of the great waters," and in the bosom of the Highest Gods. Thither the fathers had gone, and "the earth, the air, and the sky were underneath them;" and thither the children were following, each on his own appointed path.[3] That which men desire is the attainment of good in the world where they may behold their parents and abide, free from infirmities, "where the One Being dwells beyond the stars."[4] The morning and evening twilight, the gloaming in which darkness mingles with light, were the "outstretched arms of death," the two watchful dogs of Yama, guiding men to their rest.[5] The poet sang the inevitable longing, and the assurance that has for ever come with it. "There make me immortal, where action is free, and all desires are fulfilled."[6] And age after age the simple tribes repeated the Hymn. And while the mourners for the dead, in their rude symbolism of mingled faith and fear, set a stone between themselves and the grave, and placed the clog upon the feet that were to move no more, and

[1] Roth, in *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, IV. 426; *R. V.*, X. 1, 14.
[2] *R. V.*, IX. 113, 7.
[3] Hymns in *R. V*, X.
[4] *R. V*, X. 82, 2.
[5] Muller's *Science of Language*, II. 496.
[6] *Rig Veda Burial Hymns*, translated by Muir, *Sansk. Texts*, II. 468, and by Whitney, *Bib. Sac.*, 1859; Roth, *D. M. G.*, II. 225; IV. 428.

took the bow from the nerveless hands, placing in them — in token of Nature's bounty and protecting care — portions of the body of the goat or cow, their trustful ritual made appeal to the Earth to "receive him kindly, and cover him with her garment as a mother her child;" to the Fire-gods, to "warm by their heat his immortal part;" and to the Guide of Souls, "to bear him by his sure paths to the world of the just." To the body it said, "Go to thy Mother, the wide-spread, bounteous, tender Earth. I lay the covering on thee: may it press lightly; thou feelest it not. Pass, at thy will, to the earth or sky." And to the spirit, "Go thou home to the fathers, on their ancient paths: lay aside what is evil in thee: guarded by Yama from his sharp-eyed sentinels, by right ways ascend to the farthest heaven, if thou hast deserved it, and dwell, in a shining body, with the gods. May the fathers watch thy grave, and Yama give thee a home."[1] "Let him depart," it is sometimes added, "to the mighty in battle; to the heroes who have laid down their lives for others, to those who have bestowed their goods on the poor."[2] "Wash the feet of him who is stained with sin," says the Atharva; "let him go upward with pure feet."

And so, amidst prayers, libations of water, and purifying fires, the loved were sped on their unseen way; and death was conquered, in these rude children of Nature, by an unquestioning trust in the eternal validity of virtue, in the fidelity of the departed, in

[1] Müller's *Transl. of Burial Hymns*, in *Zeitschr d. D. M. G.*, IX. [*Appendix*], and Whitney, *ut supra*. The tender invocation, "may it press lightly," was a part of the burial rite of the Greeks and Romans also. Eurip., *Alcest.*, 463; Juvenal, VII. 207.

[2] *R. V.*, X. 154.

the care of a Providence as wide as their thought of being, or their need.

The honor paid by such childlike instincts of gratitude and trust to the souls of parents at their graves was the natural bond of these simple tribes with an unseen world and future life. The Śrâddha, or offering of rice-cakes to his father's spirit, is the first duty of the Hindu son; and it has descended from remotest antiquity. This oldest religion of filial piety appears in all branches of the Aryan race.

"So great," says Cicero, "is the sanctity of the tomb. Our ancestors have desired that those who departed this life should be held as deities."[1] Plato says: "Let men fear in the first place the gods above; next, the souls of the dead, to whom in the course of nature it belongs to have a care of their offspring."[2] The Latin "Dii Manes" and the Greek "Theoi Chthonioi" correspond perfectly to the Vedic Pitris, blessed divinities who watch over their descendants, and expect their tribute of holy rites. The Pitris were in fact fathers of families, and represent the religion of those patriarchal times when the family, isolated and self-sustained, was the centre of social life and the foundation of all law and rite.

The spiritual body.

Whether the body was buried or burned, the garment of the spirit was to be fire, "the bright armor of Agni."[3] Of course it cannot here receive the symbolic meaning which it holds in the mature religious imagination, in the poetry of the later mystics. But it would be equally wrong to take it in a merely gross and material sense. In fact, we detect in it the natural

[1] *De Leg.*, II. 22. So Eurip., *Alcest.* "Stant manibus aræ:" Virgil (III. 64).

[2] *Laws*, XI. 8.

[3] *R. V.*, X. 14, 8; 16, 4 So, in the later epic belief, the perfect men, the great sages, cast off their old bodies and ascend in new ones of a splendor like the sun, and in chariots of fire.

germ of all ideas, Christian or other, of *a spiritual body;* a blending of sense and soul; a clinging of the imagination and the affections to the familiar organs through which life has been manifested, as if still existing or destined to resume existence, even after they have turned to dust. Vedic Hymns not only exhort the fire "not to burn nor tear the body," but even invoke the fathers to "rejoice in heaven with all their limbs." Even the gods themselves have material enjoyments. Here it is the deep natural instinct of respect for life, that attributes permanence and power over death even to its corporeal exponents. But the maturer doctrines of a glorified spiritual body and a corporeal resurrection spring originally from the same instinct. They betray the same confused perception of the relations of the physical with the moral. And if this is not gross materialism in the Christian dogma, neither is it so in the Vedic hymn.

Of the same nature, and equally common among early races of the Aryan stock, is the apparent inconsistency of treating the departed spirit as if shut up under ground, and dependent on food provided at the grave by living relatives, while it is at the same time invoked as moving in a freer sphere, and addressed as conscious of their veneration and love.[1]

The moral aspect of Vedic immortality points to the same respect for life and its uses. The spirit in his armor of fire was not to live for self: he was to protect the good, to attend the gods, and to be like them.[2] Such is the immortal function of the *pitris*, as intimated in the hymns, which represent

Immortal Life.

[1] Juvenal, VII. 207; Eurip., *Alcest.*, 463,993–1003; *Helene*, 962; Virgil, *Æn.*, III. 67; *Cic. Tusc. Ques.*, I. 16; Ovid's *Metam.* [*Orph. and Euryd.*], X. 1 85

[2] Roth in *D. M. G.*, I. 76; IV. 428; *R. V.*, X. 15.

them as altogether happy therein. "They have adorned the sky with stars, placed darkness in the night and light in the day." Even when drinking up the libations of their worshippers, as if to satisfy physical thirst, they are busy in offices of guardianship. Their immortal life is none other than the *actual* life of the best men.

"On the path of the fathers, there are eight and eighty thousand patriarchal men, who turn back to the earthly life to sow righteousness and to succor it." [1]

"He who gives alms goes to the highest heaven, goes to the gods." [2]

"To be kind to the poor is to be greater than the great there." [3]

We find the same belief among the Greeks. "The souls of the dead," says Plato, reproducing the oldest faith of his race, "incline, like the gods, to the care of the orphans and the destitute: they are kind to those who act justly, but angry with those who act otherwise." [4]

No Inferno.

Vedic futurity has its heaven, but no very distinct traces of a hell.[5] Not that sins are without their penalties. This would be impossible in Varuna's world. "The Druhs, 'powers of evil,' follow the sins of men, binding as with cords." [6] But these simple hymns are natural outpouring of the trust, rather than of the fears or hates, of the poet. Their divinity is merciful, and loves to efface the marks of transgression. And the yearnings of the heart to brighten and warm the shadows of futurity leave no room for that sternness

[1] *R. V.*, X. 15; *Yâjnavalkya*, III 186.

[2] *R. V.*, I. 125, 5, 6.

[3] See Müller, *Chips*, I. 46.

[4] *Laws*, XI. 8.

[5] The same is true of the oldest Chinese Scriptures, or "Kings." The Veda has two or three intimations of an abyss of darkness. Muir V. 312.

[6] *R. V.*, VII. 61, 5; 59, 8.

of judgment which would blacken them with its own spirit of avenging wrath.[1] The theological hell of civilized races has been worked up with a refined vindictiveness, and a morbid exaggeration of moral evil under the name of organic "sin," that does not shrink from staining the eternity of God with blind inexorable hate. But this systematized ferocity in judicial logic comes from the perversion of *developed* mind and conscience. The childish familiarities of rude races with their gods are not so audacious and irreverent as this; and if they lack the constraints of its infernal terrors, they escape also their fearfully demoralizing power.

Here is a period of pure spontaneity in man's experience, before he had begun to brood over the hideous fantasy of everlasting woe; and we are glad to note how far the good impulses of Nature have sped him without the goads of that dismal lore. Spontaneity.

We hail the simplicity of these moral and spiritual instincts, so frank and direct, like the opening eyes of a child, or the movement of his limbs at play. This entire confidence in immortality was based on an intuitive trust in the continuity of life, and in destiny proportioned to the best desires. It associated itself with filial and parental love, a firm belief in the continued interest of ancestors, who had entered Varuna's world beyond death.

"Give me, O Agni, to the great Aditi, that I may again behold my father and my mother."[2]

[1] In the early teaching of Buddhism, there seems to have been a similar effect, arising from the intensity of sympathy and pity. Among certain savage races, as the Kamskadales and the North American Indians, there is no definite idea of a hell.

[2] *R. V.*, I. 24, 2.

Such reliance on the demands of the affections is prophetic of immortality in its highest meaning. It comports, too, with the genial sense of present realities which predominates in these Hymns. Yet this very quality has perhaps led to an impression that they indicate but faint belief in a *future* existence. The constant tributes to the pitris, for example, have been represented as "*merely* an expression of grateful remembrance."[1] Such estimates fail of justice to that instinct of continued existence which would naturally be developed by a healthful confidence in life itself. It is earnest and deep in the Vedic poets, for the very reason that it is so closely associated with the affections. Every god and every good act, it would seem, was the promise of "immortality."

The sense of living, the feeling of real import in actual, present experience, must have been very intense in such a race as the Vedic Aryans. And this is ever the germ and the guarantee of all genuine sight in the direction of a future life. In the Rig Veda it is perfectly pure and simple: it has not a trace of the later schemes of transmigration, with their elaborate ingenuity of fear; nor of ascetic disciplines bartering comfort in this life for bliss in another. This religion is just the inborn impulse to believe, to aspire; the natural search that finds the hand it feels after, because it is this very hand that moves it to feel. "The belief in the immortality of the soul," says Burnouf, "not naked and inactive, but living and clothed with a glorious body, was never interrupted for a moment: it is now in India what it was in those ancient times, and even rests on a similar metaphysical basis."[2]

[1] Wheeler's *History of India*, II. 436.
[2] *Le Veda*, p. 186.

Here is as yet no idolatry nor organized priesthood, no ecclesiastical nor mediatorial authority. The Aryans had risen beyond the fetichism which is found in the *lowest* races to be without these elements,[1] to a stage which dispensed with them through higher insight. The parent, as transmitting the mysterious life principle, was the centre of religion. Each householder was as Arya, capable of immediate relation with the family deities; was priest and psalmist in one: and rites were still domestic.[2] There is no trace of the burning of widows, no prohibition of their marrying again. The filial instincts were the basis of a social order as yet innocent of castes.[3] The marriage relation had its sacramental rites; and polygamy, though not absent, was exceptional.[4] We are still farther from the barbarous custom of polyandry, which appears more distinctly in the epics, and of which a trace is discovered in but one Vedic hymn.[5]

Simplicity of life and worship.

A delicate sense of the significance of family ties is indicated in the words chosen to represent them, — words which remain in all Aryan tongues to testify of this fine instinct in the childhood of the race.[6] The sexes are on the same level, and the Vedic idea of their mutual relations strongly reminds us of that which prevailed in the old Germanic tribes.[7] The marriage rite by joining hands and walking round the

The sexes equal.

[1] See instances in Lubbock's *Origin of Civilization*.

[2] Wilson's *Introd. to Rig Veda*, Burnouf, p. 226.

[3] Haug, *Brahma und die Brahmanen*, affirms, contrary to the opinion of most scholars, that the castes existed in an organized form in the oldest Vedic times. At most, however, his illustrations seem to prove only that germs of these distinct orders of society were visible in the early rituals. His principal authority, *R. V.*, X. 90, is generally regarded as of late origin. See Muir's effective reply to this theory of Haug and Kern, in *Sanskrit Texts*, II. 457. Wilson, *R. V.*, II. xi.

[4] Muir, V. 457.

[5] Wheeler's *Hist. of India*, II. 502.

[6] Burnouf, *Le Veda*, ch vii.

[7] Weber's *Ind. Stud.*, V. 177: Pictet, *Orig. Indo-Europ.*, II. 338

hearth does not seem to imply either a "natural" or "ordained" supremacy of the male over the female.[1] Husband and wife were equal in the household, and at the altar of sacrifice.[2] Woman cares for the sacred vessels, prepares the oblation, often composes the hymn. There are references, perhaps symbolical, to the mother of the altar fire, who gathers the Soma, and holds it in her bosom as a babe;[3] to the sacred mothers, who adorn this child of the sky.[4] There are hymns descriptive of domestic affection, and breathing the sentiment of love. The union of husband and wife is likened to the "embrace of Indra by the hymn." The sun follows the dawn as a man a woman; and the dawn is like "a radiant bride."

"As a loving wife shows herself to her husband, so does she, smiling, reveal her form; moving forth to arouse all creatures to their labors." "All life, all breath, is in thee, O Dawn, as thou ascendest. Rise, daughter of heaven, with blessings!"[5]

The religion of labor is honored in harvest hymns. The husbandman prays that "the ploughshare may cut the earth with good fortune." The physician blesses his healing herbs, and hints, with a touch of humor, that it is not a bad thing to cure the sick, and make money, at one stroke.[6] A democratic instinct has play in this Vedic community of functions, in which "the purohita could till the earth or pasture flocks, as well as crush the Soma or kindle the sacred fire."[7]

Ethics.

Some hymns have serious moral purport, and record the effects of vicious habits on personal and domestic happiness, in descriptions which have

[1] Pictet, *Orig. Indo-Europ.*, II. 338.
[2] Weber, *Vorlesungen*, pp. 37, 38, Muller, *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 28. *R. V.*, IX. 96.
[3] *R. V.*, V. 2, 1, 2 [4] Ibid, II. 33, 5.
[5] *Rig Veda*, II 3), 2; I. 1, 23, X. 4½, 1; I. 48, 9.
[6] *R V.*, X. 97. Roth, in *D. M. G*, XXV. [7] Burnouf, *Essai sur le Veda*, p. 227.

lost none of their truth for human nature by the lapse of three thousand years. The gambler "finds no comfort in his need: his dice give transient gifts, and ruin the winner: he is vexed to see his own wife, and the wives and happy homes of other men." Rudra is entreated not to "take advantage, *like a trader*, of his worshippers." "Men anoint Savitri with milk, when he makes man and wife of one mind."

Here too are philanthropic sayings: —

"I regard as king of men him who first presented a gift."

"The wise man makes the giving of largess his breastplate."

"The bountiful suffer neither want nor pain."

"The car of bounty rolls on easy wheels."

"He who, provided with food, hardens his heart against the poor, meets with none to cheer him. Let every one depart from such an one: his house is no home."

"Let the powerful be generous to the suppliant: let him look to the long path."

"For riches revolve like wheels: they come now to one, and now to another."

"He who keeps his food to himself has his sin to himself also."[1]

And here finally is a quaint benediction from the later Atharva Veda, which sounds like an echo of this simpler domestic age: —

"I perform an incantation in your house. I impart to you concord, with delight in each other, as of a cow at the birth of her calf. Let not brother hate brother, nor sister sister."[2]

Of the Vedic sacrifices, we cannot speak so positively. Yet, so far as we can see, there was the same frankness and simplicity in these as in other matters. Sacrifice is always from the highest to the lowest, from the earliest to the latest form, in some sense the consecration of one's best and dearest possession to his ideal. Even in the

Meaning of sacrifice.

[1] *R. V.*, X. 107, 117 (Muir). [2] *Ath. Ved.*, III. 30.

lowest tribes this cannot be the mere reluctant service of fear, or atonement of sin: gratitude, trust, and love, must mingle in these primal relations with the invisible. And the very sincerity of the instinct involves searching for the mysterious and even the noble qualities of things, beyond their mere barter price; an effort to discover their representative values; in other words, an ideal aim.

Vedic sacrifices.

And so the Aryan offered these three gifts: *the plant*, whose juices promised new life to all inactive powers; *clarified butter*, as choicest gift of his herds and his simple art, just as the Hebrew offered his corn and wine; and, above all, *fire*, as the purest of elements, the light and life of nature and of man. These his best he brought with awe,[1] not only as his own choice, but as themselves partaking of the divinity, to whom he yielded them as to their natural source and home. He had chosen them *because* he saw divineness in them; for nothing less than a god could meet his desire. In the sacrificial act he stood their ministrant; to further, not to destroy, their life. It was meant not only to effectuate their saving power towards himself, but also to second their own inmost purpose, and inspire the divinity with the joy of finding his own; speeding the inherent goodwill that nestled within them to its fulfilment in the bright track of the altar flame. The offering, this bright Agni, was thus a radiant messenger, swift to bring the earthly blessing and the divine society, and winged with freedom and delight. Do we not note here in its early form that intuition, which makes the saint or martyr see his own powers transfigured, by the ideal to which they have been dedicated, as his

[1] *Rig Veda*, I. 91; VI. 47; VI. 16, 42.

best gift? Such meaning was hinted in Soma, symbol of life given for the good of men, to quicken them to "immortality." It is the vital fire of the universe poured out through the mystery of death in the plant, to resurrection in the flame. "It generates the great light of day, common to all mankind."[1]

Human sacrifices.

This covering up of destruction by consecration, this absorption of the death involved in sacrifice by the life it is to effect, this belief in the exaltation of the victims above all loss, through satisfaction of the divine affinities within them, — is forever the significant fact in the sacrificial impulse, under whatever name it appears. Even its darkest forms are interwoven with this redeeming instinct. This is our key to the painful fact that at some time or in some form human sacrifice has been the custom of almost every race of men.[2] It has everywhere been regarded, to a greater or less extent, as an exaltation of the victim, a fulfilment of his best desire; as his sublime opportunity of representing the affections of the worshippers, the atonement of their sins, or the assurance of their hopes. Thus the Nicaraguans believed that only such as offered themselves on the funeral piles of the chiefs would become immortal.[3] The Aztec victim was held to be the favorite of the god; and every gift and honor was lavished on him in preparation for his exalted destiny. We are told of a Mexican king who devoted himself with many of his lords to sacrificial death, to efface the dishonor of an insult![4] The Khonds regard their chosen human victims as divine, rear them with utmost tenderness,

[1] *Rig Veda*, IX. 61.

[2] The sad record is summed up in Baring Gould's work on the *Origin of Religious Belief*, ch. xviii. See also Mackay's *Progress of the Intellect*, vol. ii.

[3] Brinton's *Myths*, &c., p. 145.

[4] Prescott's *Mexico*, I. 84.

and teach them that a noble destiny awaits them.[1] The choice of such victims as were free from blemish, as well as most precious and honored, whether of beast or man, in the rites of Baal, Moloch, or Zeus, is sufficient evidence that the fate was believed to be essentially a blessing. In the Râmâyana, the hermit Sarabhanga, believing himself desired by Brahmâ for his heaven, only defers self-immolation till Râma's coming. Having seen this incarnation, he is content, and "hastens to cast off his body as a serpent his slough." He prepares a funeral pile, enters the fire, and being burned, arises as a youth from the ashes, bright as flame.[2]

The burning of widows with their husbands, practised under Brahmanical rules, and not yet quite extinct, was not only commended by the hope of rejoining the lost, but even desired as a crown of glory in the eyes of the assembled people. It was also a deliverance from the doom to solitary asceticism, or to new repulsive relations for securing male descendants to the deceased. Mutual attachment alone would have made *sati* quite natural under these circumstances.[3] It has been estimated that five-sixths of the women who undergo it are moved by devotion to their affections.[4] The actual spirit of this rite lifts it high among those forms of martyrdom which have grown out of ignorant notions of duty, whether Pagan or Christian. Women have been seen seated in the flames, lifting their joined hands as calmly as if at ordinary prayer.[5] Ibn Batuta reports, in the fourteenth century, that the woman was usually surrounded

[1] Mrs. Spier's *India*, p. 21.
[2] Râmâyana, B. III.
[3] See Wheeler's *Hist of India*, II. 116, and Arnold's *Life of Dalhousie*, II. 316.
[4] Arnold, II. 314.
[5] *Life of Elphinstone*, I. 360.

by friends who gave her commissions to spirits departed, while she laughed, played, or danced, down to the moment of being burnt. And the Dabistân tells us it is "not considered right to force a woman into the fire."

In the Mahâbhârata, two widows of a râja dispute for the privilege, one pleading that she was the favorite wife, the other that she was the first and chief. Herodotus mentions the custom of the Thracians to select the best beloved wife for this honor, to the grief of the rest.[1] And the Norse Sagas refer to widows who, like Nanna, the wife of Baldur, insisted on following their dead husbands and sharing their destiny.[2]

In the Vedas.

If, then, human sacrifice existed among the Vedic Aryans, it must have been regarded as an exaltation of the victim; and to a greater extent than we can now realize accepted by him as such. Even in the later Purânas, this barbarous rite, which had become a part of the established worship of Śiva, is found still penetrated by such beliefs; and without them would surely have been a far more cruel superstition than it was. Siva declares the victim to be "even as himself." Brahmâ and all the deities "assemble in him, and be he ever so great a sinner he is made pure, and gains the love of the universe."[3] That such sacrifices were ever offered by the Vedic Aryans is by no means clear; and the supposed notices of this, as well as of the "Horse Sacrifice," in the Hymns and the Brâhmanas, are very uncertain historical data;[4] while sacrifices destructive of life in any

[1] Herod., V. 5.

[2] Keyser, *Private Life of the Northmen*, p. 42.

[3] *Kalikâ Purâna*, *As. Res.*, vol. v.

[4] See, on one hand, Colebrooke (I. 61, 62); Wilson, in *As. Jour.*, XVII.; Roth, in

form seldom appear in the Rig Veda."[1] There is nowhere any mention of human sacrifices, *in distinct terms*, in the whole Rig Veda; and the only evidence for even an allusion to them rests on an inference from the later form of one old Vedic legend. Śunahśepa, afterwards the centre of this sacrificial tale, is in the Vedic Hymn itself simply a prisoner, bound and in deadly peril, who is delivered through his prayer to Varuna, as Master of life and death. And so the poet sings, "May He, the far-ruling One, hear us without wrath, taking not away our life. This they say to me day and night; this my own heart teaches me. He whom the fettered Śunahśepa sought in prayer, Varuna our King, shall us also free."[2] There is no necessary allusion here to a sacrificial rite; and the only ground for supposing such reference is in the mythic story found in the later Aitareya Brâhmana;[3] in which Śunahśepa is the son of a starving Brahman, and bought for a price, to be offered to Varuna, as substitute for a certain prince, who, having been devoted from his birth, is taking this method to ransom himself from the doom. Here also Varuna acts the part not of a destroying, but of a preserving God, which is his natural function in old Hindu faith. For again and again he defers exacting his claim to the prince's life, and when Śunahśepa is

Weber's *Ind. Stud.*, II. 112. On the other, Müller's strongly expressed suspicions, *Sansk. Lit.*, 419, and Weber's additional illustrations to confirm them, in *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, XVIII. 262. Of the two Vedic Hymns concerning the Horse Sacrifice, "one at least," says Burnouf, "is certainly symbolical;" and Weber himself has shown (*ut supra*, p. 276) that the long list of *persons of every class*, enumerated as victims in the Vâyasaneyi Sanhitâ, must certainly be, in part if not altogether, of a similar character.

[1] Wilson's *Introd.*, xxiv.

[2] *R. V.*, I. 7, 1, 12; V. 1, 2, 7.

[3] See Müller's *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 408; Weber's *Ind. Stud.*, II. 112. The myth of a sacrifice of Purusha, the Spirit, by the gods (*R. V.*, X. 90), believed by Haug to prove the existence of human sacrifice in the oldest time, is regarded by Muir as of late origin.

bound in his stead, at the altar, answers his prayer, as in the older legend, with deliverance, bidding him "praise the gods and so be free."

Here, however, it is plainly implied that men were sometimes offered up in these *post*-Vedic ages of the Brâhmanas. The same ages record a substitution of the horse for man as a sacrificial victim; then of the ox for the horse; then successively of the sheep, the goat, and lastly of the earth and its products.[1] These mythic intimations of what was perhaps historic fact derive strength from analogous legends recorded of other races; as that of the ram substituted for Isaac in the Hebrew story, and of the hind received for Iphigenia, by Diana, in the Greek. Manetho relates that Amasis, King of Egypt, abolished the sacrifices of Typhonic men at the tomb of Osiris, and substituted wax figures; and Ovid, that images made of bulrushes were thrown into the Tiber in place of the old sacrifices of living beings. Many Greek heroes are credited with abolishing this barbarity, as Cecrops, Hercules, Theseus. And to Krishna in the Mahâbhârata myth, who punishes it as a crime to have offered victims to Siva, corresponds the historical Mexican monarch, who delivered Anahuac from similar rites.

Records of human sacrifice.

These analogies, however, do not prove that the custom in India went back, as Haug has insisted, to Vedic times. Such testimonies, if mythologic, may but prove a consciousness of the inherent cruelty of such forms of worship, and the desire to find far back in antiquity an authority for discontinuing them. They would thus testify to a germ of progress, even in stages of social decay. That human

Results.

[1] *Aitareya Brâhmana*, as quoted by Müller.

sacrifices were offered in later periods of Hindu history is certain; but there may well have been an earlier age when they had not yet an existence, as there was for that noble Toltec civilization on the Western continent, whose pure and simple religion was all engulfed in the sanguinary institutions of the Aztecs. And there is much in the character of Vedic civilization to make us hesitate, in the present state of the evidence, to believe that it could have mingled immolation of men with its simple offerings of the product of the dairy and the plant of the field.

Different forms of human sacrifice.

The Vedic gods were indeed believed to approve the destruction of the evil-doer who offended their people and resisted their claims; and to slay "godless Dasyus" was an acceptable service. But this desire to find a religious sanction for inflicting extreme penalties on real or imagined crime is manifestly to be distinguished from the desire to please the deity by bestowing on him a human victim purely as an oblation. The national gods of the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Norseman, were appealed to in the same way, as fully disposed to destroy their enemies, and to accept for service such revenges as the worshipper chose to inflict in their name, on his own. Substantially the same spirit is ascribed to the Christian God in the doctrine of eternal punishment, which is simply a refinement of the belief that deity would fain deal inexorably with its foes, though carried over into the other life and from physical to eternal woe. It appears frequently in the New Testament,[1] and apparently comes from the lips of Jesus,[2] as well as from the intolerant disciple he rebukes. But incomparably

[1] Matt. xxv. 41, 46; Romans ix. 17-23; 1 Tim. 1. 20; Apocalypse, *passim*.
[2] Matt. x. 33; xi. 32; xxiii. 33; xviii. 17, 18, 35; xxv. 41.

the worst form of the inference that God is pleased by the severest punishment of crime is to be found in those bloody inquisitions upon the persons of heretics and witches, in which Christian ages have certainly surpassed all others in human history. Many instances in Hebrew annals, mistaken for human sacrifices,[1] were of this character. They were in fact barbarous *penalties* inflicted on actual or supposed criminals; such as "hewing" hostile kings in pieces, and "hanging up" law-breakers or tyrannical families "before the Lord," and "consecrating" one's self to Him, by putting to the sword those who had relapsed into idolatry. They were simply the earlier analogues of modern Christian rejoicings over barbarous massacres of the heathen in India and Algeria, and of Christian arguments for the death penalty as based on a commandment of God. In all these cruel atonements, the victim is held to be *paying the penalty for his sins;* and they differ very decidedly from human sacrifices in the proper sense, such as Jephthah's offering of his virgin daughter, or the abominations of Baal worship,[2] or the dreadful *Cherem*, devoting to death men "not to be redeemed;"[3] or, we may add, the Christian "atonement," which is of essentially similar nature, — a death of the best to satisfy divine justice for the sin of the worst.

In the former or simply primitive class of sacrifices, the Vedic age of course abounded; though there is no evidence of special cruelty in their warfare, or special barbarism either in dealing with offenders, or in gratifying personal revenge. Of distinctive human sacrifice there seems on the whole to be no positive proof.

[1] Numbers, xxv. 4, 13; xxi 2; 1 Sam. xv. 33; 2 Sam. xxi. 9; Exod. xxxii. 27, 29. See Mackay, *Progress of the Intellect*, II. 456.

[2] Psalm cvi. 38; Ezek. xx. 31. [3] Levit. xxvii. 28.

It is said in a Hymn in praise of Vishnu that "men worship him, offering him their libation face to face."[1] And Agni is ever a "companion" and "confidant." We note with especial interest this cordial freedom in the bearing of the early Aryans towards their gods. Deity was the "gracious, well-beloved guest" of the householder's altar and hearth, invited to find home there, to give and receive; praised among the people as their "food and dwelling," reverenced as a "kinsman" and "friend."[2] So the Greeks addressed the gods standing, and sometimes prayed sitting. The Homeric heroes converse freely with the Olympians, whose human interests are as profound and absorbing as their divine; are in fact one and the same thing with these. And this was not due to irreverence, or to a low ideal of the divine. It was partly a form of childlike confidence, and partly a manly self-respect, to which slavishness was unknown and impossible. While the religious sentiment is yet untaught by science, this freedom is a strong defence; and wherever in such epochs it does not exist, there must be grovelling fear before the phantoms of the religious fancy; and thence that blind intolerance and savage cruelty which befit the spiritual slave.

Free bearing towards the gods.

It is one of the grand compensations for all errors involved in polytheism, that it consulted individual liberty far more than the stern exclusiveness and absolute will of monotheism. Its principle has been finely stated to be the "independence of forces."[3] The soul protects its own right to grow in every direction, by creating a divine balance of powers; the basis of which is in its instinct of

Our debt to Polytheism.

[1] *R. V.*, X. 1, 7. [2] Ibid., IV. 1, 20; VI. 16, 42; VI. 2. 7, 8; I. 31, 10.
[3] Ménard, *La Morale avant les Philosophes*, p. 94.

equal justice to all. And thus while the religion of the monotheistic Semites, wherever it has followed its native instincts, has proved ungenial to many forms of growth, that of the polytheistic Aryans has been a hearty tolerance, inviting the full expansion of human nature. But for Greek liberty and culture, Hebrew concentration on the Unity of God, descending through its Christian modifications, would, with all the purity of its spiritual ideals, have been to the modern world a legacy of moral bondage and intellectual death. The early error had its truth, which saved us from that one-sided and narrow view of another truth, which would make it error. Faith in many gods was in fact a recognition of that manifoldness of expression by which the divine really becomes human; and therefore, in the beautiful and orderly path of human evolution, it has not been wanting; so that we know how to worship The One in fulness of free opportunity and integrity of culture. The keys of progress were not committed to any single race or religion. Greek and Jew alike were inspired; alike heard eternal truths, and bore divine messages to the generations whose day was to be more liberal for the mingled light of this twofold dawn. The Semite has sought to preserve the principle of authority in the divine; the Aryan, that of development in the human. Only the maturer reason of man could learn the true meaning of both these principles and their unity in Universal Religion.

The Hebrew, or Christian, and the Aryan Bibles are very unlike each other. The resemblance of the praises of Indra or Varuna to the praises of Jehovah goes, after all, but a little way. Even the Gospel of John, with all its Alexandrian inspiration, is touched

only at certain points with the creative religious imagination of the Aryan mind. Semitic ardor has warmed and illumined many of the dark passages of nature and life. But the Rishis also, lovers and searchers of the Light, "saw" what they sang. The debt we owe to the prophets and psalmists of Jehovah, and to the Christian ideal, we are not likely to overlook or to undervalue. But we do need to be reminded of other historical obligations and affinities. The monotheist, whether of Athens, Rome, or Palestine, was not the sole parent of our modern faith. The plastic susceptibility which secures it from permanent intolerance, opening broad paths of experience in every direction, comes, so far as it depends on the past, of our *polytheistic* affinities and descent. Our liberty and our science, the sense of free communion with God and Nature through principles, ideas, laws, — are in the line of the Veda rather than of the Thora or the Gospels. These Aryan children feel no separation from God through their thirst to know. To them deity is not apart from man, but *in* him, revealed in the free play of his own energies. They look straight at the facts with their own eyes, not as aliens, and under ban; no sense of a "fall" comes in between to disable the natural sight, nor is miracle made to disparage the familiar facts of life; no exclusive incarnation limits the divine meaning of Nature as a whole; no external authority judges or supplants free thought, aspiration, pursuit of truth. The modern spirit recognizes its own features here in their infancy. This is plainly the inextinguishable spark that has flamed at last into our free arts and sciences and beliefs, and shines with steady radiance in the civilization that issues in such diverse types of universality as Goethe

and Humboldt and Emerson. And for the germs of this our larger opportunity, which guarantees wisdom and gladness to man's present and future thought; of his genial outlook upon life as a home, and his fearless hospitality to its forces and laws; of the home-born courage to use all faculties and open all paths; of the assurance that we are not slaves of prescription, whether to person, creed, or distinctive religion, but natural heirs to universal truth; of the self-respect whose religion is rational, and the liberty whose ideal is endless progress, — we must go back to the frank Aryan herdsman, inviting his gods to sit as guests beside him on his heap of Kuśa-grass.

IV.

TRADITION.

TRADITION.

"AND Brahma said to Manu, 'Divide the Veda, O Sage! The age is changed; the strength, the fire is gone down; every thing is on the path of decay.'" This passage from the Vâyu Purâna shows us that the later Hindus were not without perception of the causes which brought three ritualistic Scriptures out of the simple Rig Veda Hymns.

The spontaneity of a germinant faith greets us only to disappear. We are to pass from primitive Aryan piety along a track, such as every religion has seemed fated to tread; wherein we should find bitter discouragement, as being led ever further from the promise of the morning, were not every lapse the guarantee of a coming self-recovery of human nature, the nobler for the depth of the apparent fall. We shall see this social equality exchanged for the complex hierarchy of caste; this liberty of private worship for the despotism of an official priesthood; this inspiration for the pedantic echoes of past revelations, themselves regarded as but mediators of a yet older gospel, — those same manly Hymns which we have just now admired as made to rebuke, not to compel, a servile fear. We shall see this genial practical vigor yield to expiatory sacrifices and the

Limits of degeneracy.

terrors of transmigration; this freedom of the mountaineer to the enervation of dreamers among tropical banyans and palms. In a word, we shall note a twofold degeneracy, caused by the forces of Ecclesiastical Organization and Physical Nature.

But this is by no means a full account of the process; and that we may deal fair measure in our interpretation of it, we must be able to enter into the spirit of these remote civilizations, as we would enter into the inner life of a new personality, to do it justice for its own sake.

Oriental worship of the past.

At the outset then, let us appreciate that *Worship of Tradition*, which lies at the root of Oriental faith. It is not to be judged by the patent vices of modern traditional*ism*, whose preference of outworn, lifeless finalities to an ever-open spirit of inquiry is not a foundation of faith, but a form of unbelief. This is a trailing shadow, flowing away from the living substance of worship. But, whatever else was wanting to it, Oriental veneration for the Past was at least a fervent and supreme faith. That profound absorption in religious sentiment which we saw in the Veda is typical of the whole mind of these Eastern races. Their tradition-worship was a rude form of reverence for the Eternal: it was *awe before everlastingness*. They built their temples and hewed out their caves and their rock statues on a scale that should symbolize this awe. It was because the religious books, rites, legends, hymns, seemed as old as the stars and streams and patriarchal trees, and memory went not back to their beginnings, that they were held sacred. Their permanence belittled the fleeting lives, the vanishing dreams and deeds of men: it did not minister to their vanity, but to their humility. Man

could have had things so ancient and so stable, only of God. If the hoary head was believed the patriarchal chrism, the visible sign of divine appointment to the oldest priesthood, much more should God be present in words white with the love and awe of untold generations; words which could no more come to death than they could be traced back to any mortal birth. The earliest sense of immortality came, as we have seen, in the feeling of a continuous existence traceable through the *pitris* or progenitors, and in the aspiration to become one with them in their inviolable home; for the serene silence of the past in which they dwelt was a fit shrine to hold the moral and spiritual idealism of their descendants. "The pitris," according to this faith, "are free from wrath, intent on purity, without sensual passion; primeval divinities, who have laid strife aside."[1] It was a worship founded in gratitude, the apotheosis of the tenderest sentiments. "A parent's care in producing and rearing children," says the law, "cannot be compensated in a hundred years."[2] This authority of ideal love and duty penetrated all worlds. Even the gods could not turn recreant to the past, and forsake their duties to progenitors, without penalty: they were even invoked by the priests, in sacrifice, by the names of their special ancestry.[3]

Reverence for the Vedas.

Under such conditions, Bibliolatry deserves a certain respect. As these old Vedic Hymns, in process of time, came to be collected, arranged, and enlarged into Sâmaveda and Yajurveda for purposes of ritual service, we note indeed the failure of inspiration, and the growth of ecclesias-

[1] *Manu*, III. 192.
[2] Ibid., II. 227
[3] Muke', *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 386.

ticism; yet there is something tender as well as noble in the faithfulness with which the Hindu cherished them as "reminiscences of a former state;"[1] as "words heard from above,"[2] committed to him by a long line of ancestors, who still sought him with yearning care, and who were cherished with the whole strength of his affections; their primitive Sanskrit the very language of God; their syllables so full of virtue that they needed not to be uttered or even understood, only silently whispered in the heart; yet every one of them laden with ineffable meanings, which endless commentaries sought in vain to exhaust; laden with Brâhmanas, Upanishads, Sutras, Purânas; literally a thousand schools of biblical science founded on their mooted texts; wells of theology, literature, science, legislation, for ever brimming, let never so much be drawn off from age to age.[3] It is but a *childish* thought of everlastingness; but this child is Humanity! Then how colossal that outgrowth of the intuition, how utter that faith, how prodigal that toil in its service! And if age be indeed venerable, surely there was better ground for such Bibliolatry than for any other that has ever existed. What records, what institutions, can be called time-hallowed by the side of these? When Solon boasted of the antiquity of Greek wisdom, the old priest of Sais led him through the sepulchral chambers, showed him the tombs of a hundred dynas-

[1] *The Vedânta.* [2] *Manu.*

[3] Manu (XII. 94–102) declares the Vedas "an eye giving constant light, not made by man, nor to be measured by his powers. All that has been, is, or shall be, is revealed by them, all creatures are sustained, all authority is imparted, all prosperity given, by the knowledge of these, which burns out the taint of sin, and makes one approach the divine nature though he sojourns in this low world" — "Brahma has milked out of them three holy letters, — A. U. M.: three mystic words, — Earth, Sky, Heaven; three sacred measures of verse, — the Gâyatri: and these immutable things, the essence of this wisdom that was from the beginning, shall be sanctity and salvation to him who ceaselessly utters them with faith." II. 74–84.

ties, recounted to him the annals of nine thousand years, and admonished him that he was but a child, that there lived no aged Greek. "You have no remote tradition, O Solon, nor any discipline that is hoary with age." What must the pandits of Benarès think of the Christian missionary, who would supplant their veneration for the Sanskrit Vedas by claiming that divine guardianship has transmitted his Greek or even his Hebrew Scriptures? Wherein is his advantage? Is not *every* Bible a cup that holds what the drinker wills? "Every one who pleases," says the Dabistân, "may derive from the Vedas arguments in favor of his particular creed, to such a degree that they can support by clear proofs the philosophical, mystical, unitarian, and atheistical systems; Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Fire-worship, the tenets of the Sonites or Shiites; in short, these volumes consist of such ingenious parables and sublime meanings, that all who seek may find their wishes fulfilled." [1]

A mature, self-conscious generation cannot compete with races of instinctive faith, upon their own ground, without making itself more childish than they. Its own liberty to inquire and grow is what represents, in a nobler way, that very authority of age which tradition-worship but dimly divined. Nature is older than ritual or Bible, and the personality of Man more venerable, even with years, than all his "special revelations." We cannot forsake the insight nor the tasks of the man for the unquestioning credence of the child. But in the child we none the less admire a tender respect for age. We recognize the "trailing cloud of glory;" a filial instinct towards eternity; an inborn sense of our affinity with imperishable life.

[1] *Dabistân*, ch. II. 2.

Memory: its divine function.

To the unfolding consciousness of the race as of the individual, the first great mystery is memory. All dear and honored things pass into one silent but living fold, and there await the call that evokes them from their sleep. There death is incessantly overcome, and swallowed up in resurrection. In this light of endless preservation and renovation the fact of immortality is first revealed. Megasthenes tells us that no monuments were erected in India to the dead, because the people believed that their virtues would make them immortal in the *memory of posterity*. We are far away now from those days when man bent in natural wonder before this experience of renewal. The memory is, for us, one of many faculties, into which our science has analyzed the mind, and with which we have grown but too familiar as human instruments to venerate them as mysteries of power. But to the awakening soul it was the wonder of wonders, the power of powers. It might well be, as it was, the earliest purely spiritual deity of the human race. It was the only preserver of man's "winged words," the only conductor between his past and his future; and its stupendous achievements were at once result and warrant of the reverent culture it received. For many centuries the treasures of human experience, of hymn, meditation, and ritual, accumulating from remotest time, were in its keeping alone; and the immense deposit was transmitted more faithfully than by the later devices of writing and printing. The prophet was "the rememberer," the "bearer on" of an ancient message. *Never to forget* was the most sacred and tender duty. The Greeks preserved Homer in their memory alone for four hundred years. Down to the time of Buddha there is no positive evidence of

a *written* Sanskrit. Veda does not mean Scriptures, does not mean Bible, or Book at all, but, more spiritually, *Wisdom*. The Hindus know no dearer name for it than "Words remembered from the beginning." Through indefinite ages this whole literature was transmitted in this invisible way, by means of incessant mnemonic practice,[1] and guarded from the desecrating hand of the penman, even after the introduction of writing, by stern prohibitions as well as by traditional contempt. And it has been finely suggested that the ample satisfaction afforded to every need of intellectual and religious communication, by their splendid culture of the memory, may have prevented the early Hindus from inventing a written alphabet; an achievement which other races, such as the Chinese, Egyptians, and Hebrews, owed to their inability to mature this more intellectual instrument.[2] In Plato's Egyptian myth in the Phædrus, the god who invents letters as a medicine for memory is told that he is doing detriment to the mind, by teaching men to remember outwardly by means of foreign marks, instead of inwardly, by their own faculties. We can at least admire the fine economy of Nature, in opening the resources of this faculty in men, while as yet science had not secured other means of preserving and transmitting thought. How should we ever, in this age of discontinuous reading and ephemeral journalism, — chopped feed for ruining these powers, — come to realize, as Müller has well suggested, how vast they are?

Thus even Oriental worship of tradition has its own proper root in human nature, and its noble germs also

[1] See Müller's account of such exercises in Hindu schools, *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 504.
[2] Pictet, II. 558.

of future dignities; nor had those children of memory turned their faces, like our religious traditionalists, coldly and unbelievingly to a *dead* Past.

Oriental ritualism an ideal.

And so, when we see the Hindu slowly elaborating his minute ritualism [1] in that still life along the Ganges, twenty-five hundred years ago, until he had transferred, out of his brooding thought of the Everlasting, its inviolable permanence into all works and ways, we cannot permit any superstition or puerility involved in it to hide the fact that it brings also its incentives to respect for human nature. That hypocrisy and sanctimony were quite as possible in this as in any other religious form, is palpable; but the *essence* of Oriental ritualism was certainly *reality*. The absorbed ascetic, girt with sacrificial cord, gesticulating before animals and plants, bowing to his platter, walking round it, wetting his eyes, shutting his nostrils and mouth by turns, muttering spells as in a dream, performing his three suppressions of the breath, whispering the three sacred letters, pronouncing at intervals the three holy words and measures,[2] is to nature, reason, and common sense, in many ways, an unedifying spectacle; yet, as compared with much modern formalism of a less detailed and visible sort, he will compel a serious moral esteem. "These Hindu gesticulations," says Professor Wilson,[3] "are not subjects of ridicule, because reverentially practised by men of sense and learning." That quaint writer, James Howell, the contemporary of Sir Thomas Browne, whom he in many ways resembled, tells us frankly: "I knock thrice every day at heaven's gate,

[1] See the microscopic regulation of times, rites, food, and auguries detailed in the first book of Yâjnavalkya's Law Code, and the fifth of Manu.

[2] *Manu*, II. 74.

[3] *Essays on Hindu Religion*, II 57.

besides prayers at meals, and other occasional ejaculations, as upon the putting on of a clean shirt, washing my hands, and lighting the candles. And as I pray thrice a day, so I fast thrice a week," &c. These quaint devotions, somewhat in the Oriental spirit, may help us to distinguish the idea which its round of observances sought to embody, from the formalism of mercantile piety that pays off a business-like God at a fixed rate, in days, words, and rites; setting apart for this exalted Personage, a Church, a Bible, an abstract morality, that it may keep its houses, trades, politics, and practical prudence for quite other dedications. Oriental ceremonial was at least essentially an effort to cover the *whole* of life with divine relation. It was recognized that the primacy of religion did not cease at some given point, where men may have chosen to draw the line. That is not religion whose outward law and set plan fastens on us like a thumb-screw, is endured as penance, and gladly thrown off to escape the pain and awkwardness of its constraints. Relations which are affirmed in theory to be unnatural, and shown in practice to be so by systematic evasion, have certainly little to do with either faith or freedom.

Behind the dreary ceremonialism of the old religions, there is the aspiration of an ideal. The despotism of priestcraft does not explain such phenomena as the requirements of Burmese law, that a priest when eating shall inwardly say, "I eat not to please my palate, but to support life;" when dressing, "I put on these robes, not to be vain of them, but to conceal my nakedness;" and in taking medicine, "I desire recovery, only that I may be the more diligent in

devotion."[1] That minute regulation of the form, whether inward or outward, in which we should find the death not of spontaneity only, but of sincerity, must be taken in connection with the permanent habit of the Oriental mind, which in each individual was itself, more or less, a constant reproduction of the original meaning of the precept. The instinctive demand for enduring things required that the whole of life should reflect divine unchangeableness, from the largest relations to the least. There must be nothing hurried, erratic, impulsive: all must be fixed and serene, an image of brooding deity. Human action had surer determination than the impulses of the moment. Fate was the dearest of divinities to these contemplative minds, because it expressed this idea of an unalterable path, and satisfied this instinctive yearning for absolute devotion to the religious ideal. Where reason has not yet come to its sure revolt against implicit faith, men move in the chains of habit, which they themselves have forged, with slight sense of bondage, and without the moral degradation which always enters with enforced conformity. There is freedom in spontaneity, even of Religious Form.

Its freedom.

It is generally allowed that the Oriental races wear their robes of ceremony, whether in worship or in manners, with real ease, and even a strange grace, in spite of endless petty elaboration. "There is more civility and grace among all classes in India," we are told, "than in corresponding classes in Europe and America."[2] This is because their etiquette is spontaneous, without doubleness and self-rebuke in the person, a wholeness, a genuine faith.

[1] Malcom, *Travels in Burmah.* [2] Allen's *India*, p. 483.

Manners are here a part of religion, and common actions grow punctilious from an instinctive sense of accord with the ideal form. There is, I doubt not, a kind of freshness and even freedom in the Hebrew boy, as he binds the thongs of his tephillin seven times round his wrist, and thrice round his finger, and repeats the formularies over every bit of food, and at sight of every change that passes over the face of Nature, and on the "enjoyment of any new thing."[1] For the Hebrew still retains in some measure the infantile faith in forms as the natural body of piety, and in piety which clothes the whole of life in a time-hallowed ritual. It is not Form *as such* that is ungracious, constrained, or undevout, but forms that do not express the life in its unity and integrity. In the instinctive ease and freedom of Oriental routine there is even an image, not so faint as to be insignificant, of that perfect liberty of the wise and just person, whose every act is unconditional, inevitable, precise as the planet's sweep.

> "Slight those who say, amidst their sickly healths,
> Thou livest by rule. What doth not so, but man?
> Houses are built by rule, and commonwealths.
> Entice the hasty sun, if but you can,
> From his ecliptic line: beckon the sky!
> Who lives by rule then, keeps good company."

There is a self-idolatry of passions and cupidities, a failure of respect for great social and moral traditions of civilization, on which order and culture, as well as purity and decency stand, that would remand us to infinitely worse barbarism than all the tradition-worship of the older races combined.

[1] See *Instructions in the Mosaic Religion*, from the German of Johlson (Philadelphia, 1830), p. 112.

The ritualism of Eastern devotees is of course not the intelligent freedom of living according to universal laws of culture and use. But at least the ease, precision, and minute perfection of both, flow alike from free surrender of the whole life to the ideal faith; though this faith be ever so different in the two cases, and though in the one case the principle itself be but germinant, in the other mature.

The protest of thought.

When we recognize therefore that in all the history of religious forms there is nothing like Hindu ritualism for complexity, thoroughness, and rigor, we really concede to this people a certain pre-eminent integrity in its religious conviction. We have here in fact a great, all-surrounding abstract idea, admitting no exception, no evasion, no compromise, no practical limit. It is the first product of that pure brain-work which makes the inward life of the Aryans of the Ganges. In their clime of beating suns and towering forests, one element of the old Iranian energy made vigorous protest against the forces of physical nature, — the *intellectual* element. It would create after its own vast aspiration, even though it were in *idea only*. Of the manifold beauty and wealth of which this dream-life was capable, the whole history of Hindu poetry, from the Vedas to the Purânas, is the impressive record. In philosophy and religion, the contemplative faculty produced yet more marvellous results. Its grasp on pure ideas was extraordinary, and its faith in living by them absolute. It was bound to take the whole of life into its mighty impulse to create and rule. It was bound to construct all forms of action in the image of its own eternity; a world whose very freedom should be in the absoluteness of its sure and perfect ways. So that in the

absence of that struggle with practical conditions and for visible uses which educates us to independence and progress, ritualism, all-pervading and all-ordaining, became the natural language of its ideal; the more so in proportion as it sought to organize itself in a Brahmanical or other ecclesiastical communion.

For how insignificant and impotent would the individual come to appear, seen through this absorbing vision of everlastingness. Heart-deadening asceticism was but a natural result. But let us remember that all real self-abnegation, though it may fail of due balance from the practical and social energies, none the less truly involves the substance of practical virtue. And its upward aim surely deserves our thoughtful study, as an element of universal religion, however the mist of dreams rolled in between it and the goal it sought.

V.

THE LAWS.

THE LAWS OF MANU.

WHEN Vedic inspiration ceased, there came ages of organized traditional religion. To the Mantras, or Hymns of seers, succeeded the Brâhmanas, or theological homilies *about* the hymns; explanations of the sacrifices and rituals, definitions of faith, directions for efficacious use of formulas in prayer. They are the work of a priestly class, gradually formed by the development of the old patriarchal or family religion into close clans or fraternities, with distinct functions in the ritual; and dealing for the most part, naturally enough, in quite spiritless pedantry and verbiage, ringing changes on "revealed texts" with superstitious and pompous verbal commentary, after the manner of biblical functionaries everywhere. Müller has traced this traditionalism even in the latter part of the Vedic period, busily at work arranging and combining the hymns for ceremonial purposes.[1] Gradually priestly authority became elaborated in the caste-system, and expressed itself in ideals of legislation. These were based in part on natural wants of the social organization, and in part on the logic of the religious idea, as

Growth of ecclesiastical institutions.

[1] *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 456. There were more than twenty of these old clans, out of which sacerdotal families were developed.

traditionally received, and developed by its representative class. Doubtless there were many such codes, emanating from different priestly schools and fellowships;[1] but their ecclesiastical compilers could hardly have possessed the means of imposing them upon the population of India. It is probable therefore that they were carried into practice only in so far as they really embodied popular customs and beliefs. Their development, too, must have been very slow; and many ages must have elapsed before so vast an edifice of rules and relations could have been constructed, even in theory, as we find presented, with a serene and simple absolutism, as if by universal consent of gods and men, in the Dharmaśâstra of the Mânavas, commonly called the Laws of Manu.

This serene self-assurance, in fact, rested upon public recognition. Law itself, we must remember, was originally but the mandate of religious sentiment, and the oldest legislation was everywhere *honestly* ascribed to the gods; for these ruder ages heard secret whispers of an eternal truth, on the acceptance and right following of which depends the life of the latest and freest states.

Age of the Code of Manu.

It is still undetermined at what period the theological, moral, political, and social ideal of the Brahmanical schools became embodied in this code. It has been usual, ever since its translation by Sir William Jones, in 1794,[2] to place it next in antiquity to the three oldest Vedas, as one of the few great landmarks of Hindu literature; and most Orientalists have dated it somewhere between the eighth and thirteenth centuries before the Christian

[1] Parishads and Charanas. See Müller, *Sansk Lit.*

[2] The version here used.

era.[1] Yet other recent scholars find the evidences of this great antiquity inadequate, and hold its date to be altogether unknown, the most eminent of these being Max Müller.

It is certain that Greek authors, from the time of Alexander, agree that Hindu courts appealed to no written codes; though Lassen may be correct in his suggestion that their references are to special occasions only, and do not prove that such written laws were not in existence. It must be allowed, too, that legislative codes depend on the current use of writing; and this cannot be traced back in India beyond the age ascribed to Buddha. True, a wonderful development of the memory supplied the place of books; and as the Vedic hymns were preserved by oral tradition alone for centuries, so, doubtless, were definite social customs and rules. But a code so elaborate as this, embodying the whole Brahmanical system in its developed form and full application to all branches of human conduct, would imply a common understanding of relations and duties for which *written* docu-

[1] This is the view of such eminent authorities as Lassen and Burnouf, as well as of Koeppen in his very thorough investigations into the history of Buddhism; and Weber's exhaustive researches into the literature of India result in the judgment that it is the oldest of the numerous Hindu Codes. The grounds of this general agreement are given by Duncker, *Geschichte d. Alterthums*, II. pp. 96, 97. The following is a summary: The oldest Buddhist Sutras describe a more developed stage of Brahmanism in many respects than this code, and must therefore have a later origin: yet they are traceable far back beyond the Christian era. It is probably cited in the Buddhist legends and in the Mahâbhârata. It is cognizant of only three Vedas, while the Buddhist Sutras are acquainted with the latest Veda also. It contains no allusion to Buddhism by name, and makes only general reference to rationalists who denied the Veda, as was in fact done by many schools previous to Buddha. It knows nothing of the worship of Śiva, familiar to Buddhist Sutras; nothing of that of Vishnu-Krishna, — its only allusion to Vishnu being in a passage of doubtful antiquity, and this after a purely Vedic manner, — nothing finally of the epic heroes, while it freely mentions kings famous in the Vedic age. Finally, its geographical knowledge extends no farther than the Vindhya Mountains, though the Aryans had conquered much of Southern India long before our era. See Lassen, I. 800, Burnouf, *Introd. à l'Hist. du Bouddhisme*, p. 133. Koeppen, I 38; Weber, *Vorlesungen*, p. 242–244. Wilson, *Introd. to Rig Veda*, places it as early as the fifth century B.C.

ments appear absolutely necessary. And the use of such documentary form for systems or ideals of jurisprudence was not likely to have been undertaken in India, until a comparatively late period; both because of the general dislike for written teachings and because all authoritative priesthoods are disinclined to limit themselves to defined and recorded rules. Such self-limitation came, doubtless, only when it could no longer be resisted, and may have been compelled by the advance of Buddhism. Yet even these considerations would not greatly diminish the supposable antiquity of the Code, at least in its main elements. That in its present form it represents a gradual growth of the Brahmanical ideas, and contains additions belonging to very different periods, is more than probable, especially from the confused and contradictory elements in its legislation. At all events, it alludes to earlier codes, whose elements are doubtless incorporated into this, the fullest and most perfect in form of all that are yet known to us.[1] Of these Indian codes, early and late, there would seem to be no end. Stenzler enumerates forty-seven law-books by different authors, besides twenty-two special revisions; the codes of Manu and Yâjnavalkya only being now practically accessible to us.[1] Most of these books, however, are metrical versions, based on older texts.

Both these codes define the extent of their territorial validity by calling themselves the "law of the land (Âryavârta) where dwells the black gazelle." It was thus admitted that a portion of the peninsula lay outside their jurisdiction. Whatever antiquity may be ascribed to Manu, or however late the origin of its

[1] Stenzler, in Weber's *Indische Studien*, I. 236, 237.

present form, it is difficult to find the age when it can have had practical recognition by any large portion of the people of India. It is in fact but the Law Code of the Mânavas, one of the old Brahmanical fellowships founded on common guardianship of sacred texts, and is valuable mainly as embodying what was undoubtedly *Orthodox Brahmanism in its most vigorous age*, as well as a vast number of the recognized usages and institutions of ancient Hindu life. And there is reason for believing, in accordance with what is stated by Mr. Maine to be the opinion of the best scholars, that "it does not as a whole represent a set of rules ever actually administered in Hindustan, but is an ideal picture of what, in the view of the Brahmans, *ought* to be the Law."[1]

As further evidence of a later origin than the Brâhmanas, we may observe that the Mânava-Dharmaśâstra belongs to the class of writings defined by the orthodox Hindus as *Smriti*, or tradition, in distinction from Sruti, or revelation. It is difficult to explain this fact, except upon the supposition that a *more recent date* was ascribed to it than to the Brâhmanas, which, as we know, by reason of their antiquity were held to be verbally inspired. For it represents Manu as receiving the eternal rules of justice from Brahma himself, and as delivering them to the ten great rishis, who reverently address him as master of all divine truth.[2]

Notwithstanding this inferior position, the Brahman-

[1] *Ancient Law*, p. 16. See Sykes, *Polit. Condition of Anc. Ind a Journal R. As. Soc.*, 1851, VI.; *Annals of Rural Bengal*, p. 104. The Code of Manu is nominally the law of the Burmese empire. But we are told that every monarch alters it to suit himself, and that it is null for all practical purposes, being never produced or pleaded from in courts. Malcom, *Travels in Burmah*, *Notes*, IV.

[2] *Introduction to Manu.*

ical commentators have not failed to recognize its immense value as authority in whatever relates to their traditional faith. And they labor earnestly to prove, not quite true to their bibliolatry here, that Manu's knowledge of the Vedas gave him equal claims with their authors; yet they bring the testimony of Vedic text itself, that "whatever Manu said is medicine."[1]

The Name.

Of all Institutes of Government, this, to the Brahmanical tribes, was the consummate and sacred flower. Manu signifies Thought. The word is kindred with the Latin *mens*, as also with *man*, and indicates the honor paid by the Aryan race to the intellectual nature.[2] The name thus expressive of divine intelligence revealed in the human, was applied by the Hindus to the mythical first man and first king, as to many other imaginary rishis in primeval legend.[3] The Institutes called by his name are in twelve books of metrical sentences, covering all branches of speculation and ethics, of public and private life. The first reveals a Cosmogony; the second and third regulate Education and Marriage as duties of the first and second stages of Hindu culture; the fourth treats of Economics and Morals; the fifth, of Diet and Purification, also of Women; the sixth, of Devotion, or the duties of the third and fourth stages; the seventh, of Government and the Military Class; the eighth, of Private and Criminal Law; the ninth, of the Commercial and Servile Classes; the tenth, of Mixed Classes and Regulations for Times of Distress; the

[1] See quotations in Müller, p. 89. 103.

[2] Minos of Greeks, Menes of Egyptian, Mannus of Germans, Menw of Welsh. See Pictet, II. 621–627.

[3] See *Ztschr. d. D. M. G.*, IV. 439; Muller, p. 532.

eleventh, of Penance and Expiation; the twelfth, of Transmigration and Final Beatitude.[1]

As the basis of Brahmanical speculation is that self is nothing, and that of their ethics that self-ishness is hell, so the substance of their juris-prudence is a discipline of entire self-renunciation. The theoretic aim of the Mânavaśâstra is the utter suppression of selfish desire. It is absolute despotism; but a despotism *by* the conscience rather than over it; enslavement not of subjects by rulers, but of souls by their religious idea. Manu begins, and Yâjnavalkya ends, with reverent ascription of the Law to the Self-existent. Highest and lowest castes alike confess its terrible sanctions, present and future. Its minuteness of legislation is unequalled. If we should judge Oriental prescription by the principles we must apply among ourselves, we should say that its regulations, purifications, penances — an endless reach of absurdity — had not left the slightest loop-hole for the self-assertion of private reason or will. They are doubtless framed with special regard to the prerogative of the priesthood, as divinely appointed, and as conscious of being the intelligent and controlling class; but the legislation was law *for* the priesthood, as well as *by* it, and demanded of this class as complete self-abnegation as it exacted from the Pariah. The Brahman was fully invested with the duty of concealing its inner meaning from all but such as are worthy to receive it from his sacred lips; and an appalling secrecy repelled curiosity and

Basis in self-abnegation.

[1] The Law Code of Yâjnavalkya, probably next in the order of time to Manu, and referred by Stenzler to the period between the second and fifth centuries of our era, covers substantially the same ground with its predecessor, but with much less of detail, and in a style and diction in many respects peculiar to itself. Its speculative contents are different from those of Manu, comprising a curious treatise on the physical birth and structure of man, and a philosophy that strangely combines astrological fancies with mystical, Buddhistic, and positive tendencies. It consists of three books only, which have been translated by Stenzler (Berlin, 1849), from whose German version our extracts are taken.

repressed ambition in the lay classes. This is their sacrifice. He has also his: to surrender himself, body, mind, and soul, to its ascetic observances; and faithfully to fulfil its minutest precepts, on penalty of dreadful transmigrations for ages. Thus a master instinct of sacrifice sweeps the whole compass of life and thought. It is because this instinct, however blind, has yet essentially noble elements, that we find even a spiritual and social thraldom like caste, though bristling with insensate ceremonies and penalties, alive with the endeavor to subdue selfish desires. We see this alike in the implacable *severity* with which sensual and brutal appetites are punished, and in the benevolence which runs in fine veins and broad arteries through the gloomy organism, forbidding wrath and revenge, binding the heart to the least of sentient creatures,[1] and in its way anticipating the tenderness of the modern poet: —

> "He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all."[2]

We see the same endeavor in the stern disciplines laid upon servants, priests, and kings, a deeper democracy of renunciation beneath the tyrannies of caste; and in the final aim of the whole to make saints whose motive shall lie in virtue, not in its rewards; whose ultimate freedom shall be to lose them-

[1] *Manu*, IV. 238, 246; VI. 40, 68.

[2] A striking instance of this mixture of superstition with tenderness to the brute world, as a discipline of self-denial, is in the penance prescribed in Manu for having chanced to kill a cow; a creature inviolably sacred for the Hindu, from his sense of her benefits to his fathers in the early nomad days. The offender "must wait for months all day on the herd, and quaff the dust raised by their hoofs; must stand when they stand, move when they move, and lie down by them when they lie down. Should a cow fall into any trouble or fear, he must relieve her; and, in whatever heat, rain, or cold, must not seek his own shelter, without having cared for the cows." *Manu*, XI. 109–116.

selves in Deity, whose method to "shun all worldly honor as poison, and seek disrespect as nectar,"[1] "reposing in perfect content on God alone."[2] And we see it in the creed which inspires all this asceticism, and proves it to have been a living faith, not an enforced bondage: — "The resignation of all pleasures is better than the enjoyment of them."[3]

The product of Brahmanical self-renunciation was the Yogi, a creature of penances, purifications, and ascetic feats; the conventional type of heathen degradation; whom the law book itself paints as crouching at the foot of a gloomy banyan, his hairs growing over him, and his nails growing in, gazing listlessly on the tip of his nose, or moping along with his eyes fixed on the ground, lest he should unawares destroy some ant or worm; "waiting release from his body as a servant his wages," yet wishing neither life nor death, and receiving his food from others without asking it, as the due of his austerities for the public good.[4] Unpromising enough; yet the desert monks of Christendom in the fourth century were, as a class, less gentle and thoughtful, and certainly far less cleanly, than these Eastern devotees; while they drew from Christian dogma the same unnatural theory of self-abnegation which the others drew from Hindu caste. And, repulsive as he may be, the Yogi is a specimen, such as these crude social conditions could furnish, of devotion to a purely contemplative ideal. Under all the circumstances even squalid asceticism appears as a positive moral protest. For sensuality must have all the more fiercely beset the temperament of the Hindu, under

The Yogi.

[1] *Manu*, II. 162.
[2] Ibid., VI. 43, 34.
[3] Ibid., II. 95.
[4] Ibid., VI. 42, 45, 58, 68; *Yâjnavalkya*, III. 45, 62.

hot suns, amidst a voluptuous physical nature, the more he was devoted to seclusion and meditation; and these relentless disciplines were in fact a vigorous reaction against titanic attractions in the senses. Their very name, *tapas*, signifying heat, hints of a torrid climate, in which the moral sense was finding itself severely tried. This virtue is of the passive Hindu quality, lacking self-consciousness and freedom, a divine instinct struggling against hard conditions; but how complete its command! Man shall know nothing, and be nothing, apart from the God of his ideal thought; and in finding Him all things else shall be found. Such is its law and its promise. To escape the finite dream, and the petty limit of self, and to enter into the real and eternal, as a blessed life worthy of all price, is the mystic desire into which all great religions have flowered, each in its own hour and way.

The Brahmanical poets certainly knew how to picture their wilderness-life in very attractive colors, even for the civilized mind.[1] The hermitages are described in the Râmâyana, as well as by Kâlidâsa, as surrounded by spacious lawns, well planned and scrupulously neat; frequented by antelopes, deer, and birds, creatures "taught to trust in man;" shaded by fruit-bearing trees; laved by canals, strewed with wild-flowers, and set with clear pools, where white lilies, symbols of holy living, spread their floating petals, never wet by their contact with the element beneath, to the clear sky.[1] And here the peaceable saints, husbands and wives, purified bodily by continual ablutions, and spiritually by happy meditation on sacred themes, lived amidst supernatural delights

[1] *Raghuvanśa*, B. I.; *Śakuntalâ*, Act I.

in the society of celestial guests, and received the visits of their admirers with hospitality in their leafy huts; performing stupendous feats of asceticism without physical injury; multiplying their simple roots and herbs into splendid bouquets, large enough for armies, with resources beside which those of Hebrew and Christian miracle must, to this Oriental imagination, be hopelessly tame. Through the mythological dress, we detect an ideal which could not have failed in some degree to reconcile ascetic life with natural occupation and social good.

The active virtues.

And we, in fact, find that the active virtues are not forgotten. "All honor to the householder," says the law, "and let him faithfully fulfil his duties." "He who gives to strangers, with a view to fame, while he suffers his family to live in distress, having power to support them, touches his lips with honey, but swallows poison. Such virtue is counterfeit."[1] And the purely contemplative life was not allowable till three stages of practical activity had been passed through: the *student* life; *domestic married* life, or social service of some sort; and *anchoret* life, a kind of missionary function, to feed the forest creatures, and preach to disciples, — doubtless, like St. Francis, to the fishes and the fowls also. "Low shall he fall who applies his mind to final beatitude, before having paid the three debts, to the gods, the fathers, and the sages; read the Vedas according to law; begotten a son; and sacrificed, to the best of his power."[2] Then only "shall the twice-born man, *perceiving his muscles relaxing and his hair turning gray*, leave his wife to his sons, or else, accompanied

[1] *Manu*, XI. 9.

[2] Ibid., VI. 35.

by her, seek refuge in a forest, with firm faith and subdued organs of sense." There he is to live, patient of extremities, a perpetual giver, benevolent towards all beings, content with roots and fruit, studying what the Vedas teach of the being and attributes of God; proving his mastery over outward things; in the hot season by adding four fires to the sun's heat; uncovered in the cold; putting on wet garments in rain; and, if incurably diseased, living on air and water til his frame decays and his soul is united with the Supreme.[1] Thus he advances to the final disciplines of a Sannyasi, whose sole employment is "to meditate on the transmigrations caused by sin and the imperishable rewards of virtue, on the subtle essence of the Supreme Spirit and its complete existence in all beings." So "his offences are burned away;" "all that is repugnant to the divine nature is extinguished;" "higher worlds are illuminated with his glory," and he is "absorbed in the divine essence."[2] Here the balance of the active and passive elements is indeed lost, since the ideal of life is contemplation alone; but both elements are at all events recognized, and the system in this respect compares very creditably with Christian asceticism, by insisting, as that has seldom or never done, on the fulfilment of practical duties as passport to contemplative repose.

Spirituality.

Far back in the ages, without doubt long before the Christian era, Hindu formalism was met by these trenchant rebukes: —

"By falsehood sacrifices become vain; by pride, devotions. By proclaiming a gift, its fruit perishes." [3]

"For whatever purpose a man shall bestow any gift, according to that purpose shall be his reward." [4]

[1] *Manu*, VI. 1–31.
[2] Ibid., VI. 62, 72, 81.
[3] Ibid, IV. 237.
[4] Ibid., 234.

"One who voluntarily confesses his sin shall, so far, cast it off: when his heart shall loathe it, the taint then only shall pass away."[1]

"Let no man, having committed sins, perform penance, under pretext of devotion, disguising his crime under fictitious religion: such impostors, though Brahmans, are despised."[2]

"A man who performs rites only, not discharging his moral duties, falls low: let him discharge these duties, even though he be not constant in those rites."[3]

"He who governs his passions, though he know only the *Gâyatri*, or holiest text, is more to be honored than one who governs them not, though he may know the three Vedas."[4]

Though with Eastern extravagance it is said elsewhere that "sixteen suppressions of the breath, with the constant repetition of the holy syllables for a month, will absolve even the slayer of a Brahman for his hidden faults,"[5] passages like the foregoing certainly imply also that only a repentant spirit could give such efficacy to the form. So this frank confession of bibliolatry — "as a clod sinks into a great lake, so is every sinful act submerged in the triple Veda" — should be taken in connection with such precepts as the following: —

"The wise are purified by forgiveness of injuries; the negligent of duty, by liberality; they who have secret faults, by devout meditation."[6]

"Of all pure things, purity in acquiring wealth is pronounced most excellent; since he who gains this with clean hands is truly pure, not he who is purified with earth and water."[7]

"Penance brings purification for the Veda student; patience for the wise; water for the body; silent prayer for the secret sin; truth for the mind: for the soul the highest is the knowledge of God."[8]

"Let the wise consider as having the quality of darkness every act which one is ashamed of his having done, or doing, or being about to do; to that of passion, every act by which he seeks celebrity in the world; to that of goodness, every act, by which he hopes to acquire

[1] *Manu*, XI. 229–232.
[2] Ibid., IV. 198.
[3] Ibid., IV. 204.
[4] Ibid., II. 118.
[5] Ibid., XI. 249.
[6] Ibid., V. 107.
[7] Ibid., V. 106.
[8] *Yâjn.*, III. 33, 34.

divine knowledge, which he is never ashamed of doing, or which brings placid joy to his conscience. The prime object of the foul quality is pleasure; of the passionate, worldly prosperity; of the good, virtue."[1]

"To be a hermit is not to bring forth virtue," adds Yâjnavalkya: "this comes only when it is practised. Therefore, what one would not have done to him, let him not do to others."[2]

The Spirit.

"God is Spirit," says the Christian Gospel, "and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Hear the Hindu Law:—

"O friend to virtue, that Supreme Spirit, which thou believest one with thyself, resides in thy bosom perpetually, and is an all-knowing inspector of thy virtue or thy crime."

"If thou art not at variance with that great divinity within thee, go not on pilgrimage to Gunga, nor to the plain of Curu."[3]

"The soul is its own witness, its own refuge. Offend not thy conscious soul, the supreme internal witness of men."

"The wicked have said in their hearts, 'None sees us.' Yes, the gods see them, and the spirit within their own breasts."[4]

Retribution.

"The wages of sin," says the Christian Bible, "is death." Quite as distinctly says the Hindu Law:—

"The fruit of sin is not immediate, but comes like the harvest, in due season. Little by little, it eradicates the man. Its fruit, if not in himself, is in his sons or in his sons' sons."[5]

"Even here below, the unjust is not happy, nor he whose wealth comes from false witness, nor he who delights in mischief."[6]

"One grows rich for a while through unrighteousness, and vanquishes his foes; but he perishes at length from his root up."[7]

"Justice, being destroyed, will destroy; preserved, will preserve. It must therefore never be violated."[8]

"In whatever extremity, never turn to sin."[9]

[1] *Manu*, XII. 35–38.
[2] *Yâjn.*, III. 65.
[3] *Manu*, VIII 91, 92.
[4] Ibid., VIII. 84, 85.
[5] Ibid., IV. 172, 173.
[6] Ibid, IV. 170.
[7] Ibid., IV. 174.
[8] Ibid., VIII. 15.
[9] Ibid., IV. 171.

"Let one walk in the path of good men, the path in which his fathers walked."[1]

"Vice is more dreadful by reason of its penalties than death."[2]

"Whosoever," says the New Testament, "shall break one of these commandments, is guilty of all." The Dharmaśâstra of Manu affirms the same natural law of integrity. "If one sins with one member, the sin destroys his virtue, as a single hole will let out all the water in a flask."[3]

"Let one collect virtue by degrees, as the ant builds its nest, that he may acquire a companion to the next world. The Future Life.
For, in his passage thither, his virtue only will adhere to him.

"Single is each man born; alone he dies, alone receives the reward of his doings. When he leaves his body on the ground, his kindred retire with averted faces, but his virtue accompanies his soul.

"Let him gather this, therefore, to secure an inseparable companion through the gloom, how hard to be traversed!"[4]

"The only firm friend who follows man after death is justice."[5]

In order to discover what is the *substance* of this Brahmanic ideal, let us note first some of the humanities of the Code. Humanities.

"The care and pain of parents in behalf of their children cannot be repaid in a hundred years."[6]

"Reverence for age is to the young, life, knowledge, and fame."[7]

"The old, the blind, the maimed, the sick, the poor, the heavy laden, are to be treated with marked respect, even by the king."[8]

"Knowledge, virtue, age, even in a Sudra, should have respect."[9]

The diseased and deformed were avoided in sacrificial acts,[10] which concerned only what was physi-

[1] *Manu*, IV. 178.
[2] Ibid., VII. 53.
[3] Ibid., II. 99.
[4] Ibid., IV. 239-242.
[5] Ibid., VIII. 17.
[6] Ibid., II. 227.
[7] Ibid., II. 121.
[8] Ibid., II. 138; VIII. 395; *Yâjn.*, I. 117.
[9] *Yâjn.*, I. 116.
[10] *Manu*, III. 161.

cally as well as spiritually unblemished. Yet they were "in no wise to be insulted."[1] As Homer pictures the gods going about disguised as beggars and outcasts, to try men's hearts, so, according to Manu, children, poor dependants, and the sick are to be regarded as "rulers of the ether."[2] The blind, crippled, old, and helpless are not to be taxed;[3] the deaf and dumb, the idiotic and insane, the maimed, and those who have lost the use of a limb, are indeed excluded from inheriting, but must be supported by the heir, without stint, to the best of his power.[4] On the father's death, the oldest son must support the family, and the brothers must endow their sisters.[5] The authority of the householder over his family is almost absolute; yet he must "regard his wife and son as his own body, his dependants as his shadow, his daughter with the utmost tenderness."[6] His prescribed prayer is, "that generous givers may abound in his house, that faith and study may never depart from it, and that he may have much to bestow on the needy."[7]

"A guest must not be sent away at evening: he is sent by the retiring sun; and, whether he have come in season or out of season, he must not sojourn in the house without entertainment."[8]

The sense of solidarity in social ethics is well worth noticing, as shown in passages like the following: —

"The soldier who flees and is slain shall take on himself all the sins of his commander; and the commander receive all the fruit of good conduct stored up by the other for the future life."

"A sixth of the reward for virtuous actions, due the whole people, belongs to the king who protects them: if he protects them not, a sixth of their iniquity falls on him."[9]

[1] *Manu*, IV. 141. [2] Ibid., IV. 184. [3] Ibid., VIII. 394.
[4] Ibid., IX. 202. [5] Ibid., IX. 104–118. [6] Ibid., IV. 185.
[7] Ibid., III. 259. [8] Ibid., III. 105. [9] Ibid., VII. 94; VIII. 304.

The Brahman's decalogue not only commands content, veracity, purification, coercion of the senses, resistance to appetites, knowledge of scripture and of the Supreme Spirit, but abstinence from illicit gain, avoidance of wrath, and the return of good for evil.[1] Forced contracts are declared void.[2] Transfer of property must be made in writing.[3] Royal gifts are to be recorded on permanent tablets.[4] There are laws against slander, peculation, intemperance, and dealing in ardent spirits; laws punishing iniquitous judgments, false witness, and unjust imprisonment; laws providing for the annulment and revision of unrighteous decrees; enforcing the sacredness of pledges and the fulfilment of trusts; justly dividing the responsibilities of partners; dealing severely with conspiracies to raise prices to the injury of laborers; laws which either forbid gambling altogether, or discourage it by regulative drawbacks; laws declaring persons reduced to slavery by violence free, as well as the slave who has saved his master's life, or who purchases his own freedom.[5] Penalty becomes merciless in dealing with crimes which involve the greatest mischief, such as arson, counterfeiting coin, and selling poisonous meat.[6] Ethics.

The king shall "never transgress justice." "It is the essence of majesty, protector of all created things, and eradicates his whole race," if he swerves from duty.[7] "He shall forgive those who abuse him in their pain: if through pride he will not excuse them, he shall go to his torment."[8]

[1] *Manu*, VI. 91. [2] Ibid., VIII. 168; *Yâjn.*, II. 89.
[3] *Yâjn.*, II. 84. [4] Ibid., I. 317, 318.
[5] Ibid., III 285; II. 270; *Manu*, IX. 221; *Yâjn.*, II. 4, 82, 243; 31, 305; 58, 164, 249, 259; *Manu*, VIII. 211, 230–233; *Yâjn.*, II. 199, 182.
[6] *Yâjn*, II. 282, 297. [7] *Manu*, VII. 13, 14, 28. [8] Ibid., VIII. 313.

"A king," says Yâjnavalkya, "should be very patient, experienced, generous, mindful of services rendered, respectful to the old, modest, firm, truthful, acquainted with the laws, not censorious, nor of loose habits, nor low inclination, able to hide his weak points, wise in reasoning and in criminal law, in the art of procuring a livelihood, and in the three Vedas."

"Higher than all gifts is the protection of his subjects."

"The fire that ascends from the people's sufferings is not extinguished till it has consumed their king, his fortune, family, life."[1]

"What he has not, let a king seek to attain honestly; what he has, to guard with care; what he guards, to increase; and what is increase let him give to those who deserve it."[1]

He shall be "a father of his people."[2] He should make war only for the protection of his dominions; must respect the religion, laws, and even the fears, of the conquered.[3] Punishment by military force must be his last resort.[4]

The warrior, "remembering what is due to honor," shall not shoot with poisoned arrows, nor strike the weary, the suppliant, the non-combatant, the sleeping, the severely wounded, the fugitive, the disarmed, nor one already engaged with an opponent, nor one who yields himself captive.[5] Civilization has added nothing to these humanities of military chivalry. To sum all, "let not injustice be done in deed or in thought, nor a word be uttered that shall cause a fellow-creature pain: it will bar one's progress to final bliss."[6] "He who has caused no fear to the smallest creature shall have no cause for fear when he dies."[7]

Moral sanctions.

It may not be easy to comprehend the idea of justice which mingled with such precepts as these the cruelties of caste legislation. Yet do not such incompatibilities proceed side by side in the

[1] *Yâjn.*, I. 308–310, 334, 340, 316
[2] *Manu*, VII. 80; *Yâjn.*, I 333.
[3] *Manu*, VII. 168, 170, 201, 203.
[4] Ibid., VII. 108; *Yâjn.*, I. 345.
[5] *Manu*, VII 90–93; *Yâjn.*, I. 325.
[6] *Manu*, II. 161
[7] *Manu*, VI. 40.

laws, theologies, and bibles of all races? For the State as such, the reconciliation of law with love, of government with noble instinct, as yet lies in the future. — We notice that self-interest is suggested as motive for benevolence. This sanction is constantly appealed to in the New Testament also, and even in the Beatitudes of Jesus. But it would be irrational to make this a ground for ascribing such delicacy of affection as appears in both Hindu and Hebrew ethics to any other primary cause than noble and humane feeling. Laws may suggest interested motives, and they *must* appeal to sanctions. But *Law itself* springs from the natural instincts of love and care, as well as from social dangers. And so the eternal piety of the heart had its large share in the oldest legislation.

Self-respect.

With what decision a natural self-respect breaks forth through the slavery of abnegation, the despotism of custom and law, in such precepts of an older stoicism as these: —

"One must not despise himself for previous failures: let him pursue fortune till death, nor ever think it hard to be attained." [1]

"Success depends on destiny and on conduct: the wise expect it from the union of these; as a car goes not on a single wheel, so without one's own action the fated is not brought to pass." [2]

"All that depends on one's self gives pleasure: all that depends on another, pain." [3]

"The habit of taking gifts causes the divine light to fade." [4]

"A believer may receive pure knowledge even from a sudra, and a lesson in the highest virtue even from a chandala; and a woman bright as a gem even from the basest family. Even from poison may nectar be taken; from a child, gentleness of speech; even from a foe, prudent counsel; even from an impure substance, gold." [5]

[1] *Manu*, IV. 137. [2] *Yâjn.*, I. 348–350.
[3] *Manu*, IV. 160. [4] Ibid., IV. 186. [5] Ibid., II. 238, 239.

It may be asked how much of all this preaching was reduced to practice? It is doubtless true, as we have said, that Oriental Codes express rather the aspirations and convictions of the classes from which they spring, than actual rules of civil and political conduct. They are vast repositories of national life, of individual ideals, philosophical systems, customs and traditions more or less sacred, laws more or less recognized and carried out. They have also an imaginative form, deal in the superlative and boundless, and must not be too literally interpreted. These considerations apply alike to their good and evil; and we must guard alike against over-censure and over-praise. But this much may be said. The Greeks who travelled in India centuries before the Christian era were enthusiastic in their admiration of Hindu morals. They told of kings spending the whole day in the administration of justice, of the honesty of traders, and the general dislike of litigation; of the infrequency of theft, though houses were left open without bolts or bars; and of the custom of loaning money without seals or witnesses. They praised the truthfulness of the men and the chastity of the women.[1] Whatever deduction must be made from these testimonies for exaggeration and mistakes, they are not without their value.

Nature of Oriental codes: their right interpretation.

But for us the main import of such precepts is that the human soul recognized the nobility of truth, justice, and love through its own resources, and bore witness to the universality of its own inspiration. There they stand written in their old Sanskrit, or "beautiful speech" as the Hindu called it, pointing back to how much older times than such

The substance of the testimony.

[1] Arrian, Strabo. See also Duncker, II. 283–287.

writing we cannot tell. And to affirm, in the exclusive interest of the Christian, or any other "dispensation," that they were not deeply felt and bravely lived by men and women even then, were indeed

> "To sound God's sea with earthly plummet,
> To find a bottom still of worthless clay."

The barbarities of this legislation — and they are many and dark — do not disprove our conclusions. In all times and civilizations, verities stand side by side with falsities; and barbarous laws and customs contradict the best theoretic claims of states. The better moments of a people's life record their natural capacities for good; and of these their unjust or cruel traditions of law must not be taken as the measure. Would it be fair in some future historian to assert that the American conscience had no better ideal of freedom down to the year 1865 than a slavery basis of representation and a Fugitive Slave Law? It would certainly be more just to say that American history had been throughout, the struggle of the two opposing ideas, Liberty and Slavery, each existing potentially in the consciousness of the age and people, and more or less apprehended by individuals; and that the laws, so far from showing the stage at which this personal light or darkness had arrived, as a definite point, gave merely the general resultants of the strife with long established and instituted wrong. If then the barbarities of the Hindu Codes were even crimes like those of mature civilization, instead of being, as they to a great extent are, results of childish fears and superstitions, they would still prove nothing against other evidences that a high sense of ethical truth stood side by side with them in the Hindu mind.

The darker side.

How interpreted and explained.

In fairness we must note that the beginnings, even of customs which the advance of practical intelligence stamps as enormities, are to be found in half-conscious instincts, by no means discreditable to human nature. And the legislation we condemn was perhaps the effort actually to modify and control their mis-growth. Whoever the earlier legislators may have been, they were obliged to make the best of existing institutions. What to us are defects in their codes may have been timely reforms and remedial restraints. Solon's laws gave political functions according to wealth; thus continuing, to a degree, the old exclusion of the people as a whole from office. But he was thereby enabled to lift them from a yet more abject position, and to procure them, in compensation for such defects, their archons and general assembly, — powerful checks on the aristocratic party. Another arbitrary decree of this great Athenian cancelled just debts, and debased the currency. Yet it delivered the poor from burdens which they could no longer bear, freed them from personal seizure for debt, and produced an abiding respect for the force of contracts.[1] "I made the land and the people free," he said; and Aristotle reaffirms this claim on his behalf. Portions of the Mosaic legislation concerning the Canaanite races, that seem to the last degree cruel and barbarian, were really a limitation to the treatment of certain most dangerous enemies alone, of usages previously applied to enemies as such.[2] Traces of similar efforts at mitigation are observable in many severities of the Hindu Code.

The better impulses in which many persistent forms of law, now seen to be inhuman, originated in rude

[1] Grote, III. 105.

[2] Deut. xx. 10–18.

ages, have seldom been recognized by historical inquirers, and scarcely enter into the estimate of heathenism by the Christian world in general.

The elder races, for example, were fully and intensely convinced of the nature of moral evil and the certainty of moral retributions. They were, on the other hand, ignorant of the invariableness of natural laws. These two conditions led inevitably to the use of the *Ordeal*, as a means of testing guilt by an appeal to divine interposition. It was simply an effort to find decisions of justice in the ill-understood operations of physical nature; to prove that the elements were under moral sovereignty. The Sanskrit words for ordeal signify "faith" and "divine test." "The fire singed not a hair of the sage Vatsa, by reason of his perfect veracity."[1] Nature is pledged, in other words, to deal justly, when appealed to. Can Christians tell us why a miracle should not be wrought to save a truthful Vatsa, as well as to punish a lying Ananias; or why fire and water should not discriminate between the saint and the sinner in the old Hindu courts as well as in the cases of modern reprobates recorded in the "manuals" as drowned or struck by lightning for violating the Christian Sabbath? But there *is* in fact a great difference. For while it may have indicated not a little faith and courage, in races ignorant of physical laws, to believe that Nature was subordinate to justice, and to trust its cause to her defence, it seems to imply something very unlike either of these qualities to renounce the light of a scientific age in the name of religion, and persistently to cling to the superstitions of an ignorant one.

The Ordeal.

Manu knows only ordeals by fire and water, or by

[1] *Manu*, VIII. 116.

touching the heads of one's wife and children with invocations thereon. Other codes add tests by poison and by various processes, — for example, by being weighed twice in scales, drinking consecrated water, touching hot iron with the tongue. In the trial by carrying a red-hot bar for seven paces, however, leaves were to be wrapped round the hand; in that by remaining a certain time under water, the legs of another could be clasped. The seasons of the year for employing the different forms of ordeal were determined with a certain regard to the interests of those who were to undergo them. Women, children, the old, the sick, and the weak were not to be subjected to ordeals by fire, water, or poison, but by the scales only.[1] Yâjnavalkya implies that they were not to be used except in cases of great moment.[2]

The ordeal cannot be called the special barbarism of any one race or religion, though it appears never to have existed in China. The Arab, the Japanese, the wild African, alike defer to its authority.[3] The Hebrew husband had his "bitter water of jealousy." And the historian of the Christian Church tells us that she "took the ordeal under her especial sanction," sprinkled its red-hot iron with her holy water, and enacted its cruelties with solemn rituals within her temples.[4] Down to the twelfth century, it "afforded the means of awing the laity, by rendering the priest a special instrument of Divine justice, into whose hands every man felt that he was liable at any moment to fall."[5] And its final abolition was due

[1] For a summary of these laws, see Stenzler, in *Zeitsch. d D. M. G.*, IX. 661-682; *Manu*, VIII. 115; *Asiat. Res.*, I. 389.

[2] *Yâjn.*, II. 95. See Stenzler's *Introduction*, p. vii.

[3] See Pictet, II. 457, 458.

[4] Milman, *Lat. Christianity*, III. v.

[5] Lea's *Superstition and Force*, p. 271.

quite as much to the revival of the old Roman law and the rise of the free communes as to the repentance of the Church.

Personal deformities and diseases are regarded in Manu as the consequences of sin in the present or in a previous life. And the law classifies them according to the sins from which they proceed. In one passage it declares that the victims are to be despised;[1] excluding some of them too from the Śrâddha, or feast in honor of the dead.[2] And this superstition is as wide-spread as the ordeal; it has, like that, infected the Jew and the Christian, and had a similar origin in the effort to comprehend the mystery of physical evil under a moral law. — The instinctive presumption that it becomes the material world to show allegiance to the moral, is of course, while growing up among ignorant races, the source of a superstitious expectation of miracles. But we must not forget that it is this very instinct to whose development by science we owe the abolition of every ground for believing or demanding miracles; its ultimate form being the conviction that natural laws are themselves the desired expressions of universal good.

Treatment of physical defects.

The contempt which Hindu law prescribes towards the physically deformed and diseased is limited within strictly defined lines of conduct; and this legislation is evidently an endeavor to modify and restrain, as well as to respect, the crude instinct that physical evil is a punishment for sin. The unfortunate were not to be despised as such. They were to be treated kindly and even with respect.[3] They were exempted from public burdens; and although avoided in the act of sacrifice as being

Attitude towards deformity and disease.

[1] *Manu*, XI. 48, 53. [2] Ibid., III. 150. [3] *Yâjn.*, II. 204.

blemished, and in the choice of partners for life, probably for physiological reasons, yet they were not to be expelled from society; and, after prescribed rites, could freely associate with other people.

Eye for eye.

There are also sanguinary punishments on the principle of "eye for eye and tooth for tooth." And these are made most repulsive by their connection with the enormous inequalities of caste. This principle, cruel as it seems, forms the basis of all first essays at abstract and ideal justice in the requital of crime. Some of the severest penalties are left to the criminal's own execution, as if falling back on a supposed spontaneous recognition of their rightfulness in his own mind.[1] And their barbarity cannot be explained on any theory that leaves out of view the fact that their makers had at least an intense abhorrence of the crimes they punished. Adulterers must burn on a bed of red-hot iron. Thieves were to lose the limbs with which they effected the theft.[2] "Wherewithal a man hath sinned, with the same let him be punished," recommended itself to these unflinching judges as the maxim of natural right. It was but following out the stern hint of nature in its retributions of sensual excesses.

Sympathies of the law.

But the law knew how to provide compensations for all endurance of its barbarities. As if dissatisfied with them, and looking upwards for a way out of these bonds of judgment, it says: "Men who have committed offences, and received from kings the punishment due them, go pure to heaven, and become as clear as those who have done well."[3] A similar reaction against the severity of statutes was

[1] *Manu*, XI. 100, 104. Suicide is one of the commonest forms of penalty in the East.
[2] Ibid., VIII. 372, 334. [3] Ibid., VIII. 318.

naturally to be expected in the case of false witness, in view of the tremendous penalties which were attached to this crime, both for the present and the future life. And this presumption may help explain the exceptional fact that falsehood is expressly allowed, wherever the death of a person of any caste, who has sinned inadvertently, would be caused by giving true evidence in the courts.[1] It would seem as if the affections sought to assert their precedence, in such extreme cases of the conflict of duties, to the demands of literal fact. In the same way we may account for the singular scale of fines and forfeits in commutation of penalties, based, by a crude sense of natural justice, on the principle of eye for eye and life for life. They are not a mere money measure of crime, but the modification of a harsh *lex talionis* under the influence of the humane sentiments.

This relenting indicates the natural character of the Hindus better than the barbarism of the legislation in detail. It is not to be believed that the punishments by branding and mutilation, the expiations by self-torture and suicide, even for minor crimes, were carried out with any thing like the precision of our western conformity to written law.[2] There is so much contradiction between different texts, both in spirit and in letter, so much manifest exaggeration, such frequent confusion of law with ethics, and such difficulty of distinguishing between dogmatic statement and positive command, that this natural inference from the general

[1] *Manu*, VIII. 104; *Yâjn*, II 83.

[2] The very great disregard of legal prohibition concerning the use of animal food and the destruction of animal life, by the Brahmans, is described in Heber's *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 379.

character of the race is not set aside by the text of the Law Book itself.[1]

Infanticide and Suttee.

Even the history of infanticide and of sati bears witness to this natural gentleness of Hindu character. No traces of these customs are found in the Rig Veda, in Manu, or in Yâjnavalkya. They are a later growth, partly of tropical enervation, partly of social misery. But nobler elements[2] also were involved in the widow's desire to follow her lost husband; and female infanticide was due to the marriage custom of giving a costly dowry with the bride.[3] Both these barbarities were abandoned at the earliest opportunity afforded by European influence.[4] Their rapid extinction in British India was mainly the work of the native chiefs themselves, under the persuasion of men like Ludlow, Macpherson, and Campbell.[4] Even before British interference, many of these chiefs had endeavored to control them by their own unaided efforts. The natives now generally regard the river sacrifices of children as disgraceful; and sati, since its abolition, is seldom spoken of but with condemnation.[5]

Free treatment of the laws in later times.

Later pandits have not hesitated to rule out such regulations from the old laws as did not seem suitable to their times, upon the ground that they were established for a less advanced age of the world. In the progress of the Hindus came

[1] It has been acutely observed (*La Cité Antique*, chap. xi.) that "the principle of the divine origin of laws in the older codes made it impossible for their subjects definitely to abrogate them." And so the old statutes remained side by side with later ones of a different and often humaner tenor. In this way we may partially explain the contradictions with which these codes abound; though, as we shall see, the rule was not without its exceptions, even in the remote East.

[2] See chapter on Rig Veda, p. 140.

[3] Elliott's *N. W. India*, I. 250.

[4] Ludlow's *British India*, II. 138, 149, 151.

[5] Ludlow, II. 149; Buyers's *Recoll. of N. India*, 132, 235; Allen, p. 418.

denunciation of many ancient customs. "Among these," says Mr. Wheeler, "may be mentioned the sacrifice of a bull, a horse, or a man; the appointment of a man to become the father of a son by the widow of a deceased brother or kinsman: the slaughter of cattle at the entertainment of a guest; and the use of flesh meat at the celebrated feasts of the dead, still performed under the name of srâddhas."

Superstitious self-abnegation. Its lesson.

It is not so much a spirit of cruelty that darkens the pages of this Code as an insatiate self-abnegation, which in many respects is a kind of suicide. And, for full answer to all justification of human nature under these aspects, it may seem sufficient to point to their consequences. "Here," it may be said, "is the end of Hindu virtue; here, in Jagannâth and his car of human slaughter, in Kâli with her sword of human sacrifice, in Mahâdeva with his collar of sculls." These deities have been greatly belied.[1] The Hindus certainly became sensualized, — from causes easy to trace. If, however, we should accept the facts as condemnatory of human nature, we must admit that Christianity does not reinstate it, since this religion fell into similar degeneracy, and since its theology still retains this dreadful destructiveness in an ideal form. The records of Christian superstition are more dismal than those of Brahmanical. The fanaticism of the Donatist and the human sacrifice of the Hindu are of kindred nature. It has been well said, that "England and France have pages in their religious history that ought to cause them to be silent, or else to

[1] "Instances of victims throwing themselves under the wheels of Jagannâth have always been rare, and are now unknown. Nothing could be more opposed to the spirit of Vishnu-worship than self-immolation." (Hunter's *Orissa*, p. 134.) The great mortality among the pilgrims to this shrine is in fact due to neglect of sanitary conditions. The symbols of destruction in figures of the other deities referred to have more relation to spirits of evil, or to death as such, than to human sacrifice, which has always been infrequent.

bring their charges of cruelty against Hindu rites with some humility." It has been computed that several millions of persons have been burnt as heretics, sorcerers, and witches, in Europe, during the period of Christianity. In Cadiz and Seville alone the Inquisitors burned two thousand Jews in a single year (1481).[1] It is not desirable to dwell much on this aspect of the subject. But why should all these dark pictures combined make us sceptical concerning the spiritual faculties of man? The self-tortures and the dismal fanaticisms that reach through the long history of his beliefs are not there to prove his moral incapacity: they even teach the very opposite. They are birth-throes, blind and bitter indeed, but none the less genuine, of his divinity. Let us face the worst. There is the Yogi, crawling in agonizing postures from one end of India to the other, or sitting whole days between scorching fires and gazing at the sun with seared eyeballs and bursting brain. There is the Shaman cutting himself with knives, the Moloch worshipper passing his children through flames, the Aztec piercing himself with aloe thorns and tearing out the hearts of his kinsmen on the reeking teocalli. There are Stylites on their columns, Flagellants beating themselves through the streets of Christian Europe, and all the mad penances and savage suicides of the Desert Monks. And there is Jesuit Loyola with girdle of briers and merciless iron whip; his followers giving themselves "as a corpse" into the hands of "Grand Masters," to be used at their absolute will; — dismal and dreadful incentives to a contempt of human nature, that almost start the doubt whether its origin be not from some demoniacal Power, doomed to self-annihilation. But

[1] Jost, *Gesch. d. Judenthums*, III. 110.

other scenes are at command, and to these you hasten that you may recover your respect for life. You turn to Christian saints dying serenely on the rack and at the stake; to the great martyrs of the world's later day, witnesses for truth, liberty, and love; and stand at last reverently on Calvary before the consummate sacrifice to which you ascribe all this majesty of the soul. You seem to have passed from death to life. "There," you say, "man was on the brute's level: here he becomes a God. A new nature has surely descended on him." But that is impossible, and as needless as it is impossible. You have done injustice to the soul. Can we not read between these dark lines, and discern that the endurance for errors, however dismal and demoniacal, and the endurance for truths, however benignant and divine, have one point in common, and that of utmost significance? Do they not at least assure us that *man will suffer* all things for what he believes true and sacred? It is not mere superstitious terror that makes martyrs even to superstitions. Fear does not explain these extremities of self-sacrifice, these mournful self-crucifixions, — but something that masters fear. They hint of aspiration, they cry for light, they assure progress. They are impossible without a sentiment of awe before duty, and a vision of triumph beyond pain. They are signs, even they, that man has in his very substance, assurance of those spiritual dignities which he has been believed to owe to some supernatural change, or some all-creative element, introduced by Christian and Jewish revelation alone.

VI.

WOMAN.

WOMAN.

THE Dharmaśâstras are unquestionably no wiser on the nature of woman than the Law of Moses, or the mythologists of Adam's Fall. Manu is as positive as the Christian Apostle was, and as the Christian world in general has been hitherto, that man is her appointed head, and that her prerogative is to obey. This theory of the sexes, in spite of age and Scripture, is rapidly vanishing, with all analogous pretensions that "might makes right." And it is of less import now to discuss its evils in this or that form of society than it is to note the remedial forces in human nature which mitigated those evils, even in times when the relative "might" of man was in most respects much greater than it is now.

Spirit of Hindu legislation.

The general status of woman in the East is given in the declarations of the Law books, that she is "unfit by nature for independence," and "must never seek it;" that "she is never to do any thing for her own pleasure alone;" that "a wife assumes the very qualities of her husband, as a river is lost in the sea."[1] This is our precious modern principle of "feme covert" in its purest essence! — The widow must give herself up to austerities and remain unmarried,

[1] *Manu*, V. 147, 148; IX. 3, 22; *Yâjn.*, I. 85. The old Roman Law was similar. See Thierry, *Tableau de l'Empire Romain*, p. 279.

preparing for reunion in the next life;[1] while the husband could, and should, marry again.[2] As the Hebrew law allowed husbands to put away their wives on the plea of mere "uncleanness," so the Hindu made mere "unkindness," as well as barrenness or disease, sufficient ground for supersedure; while it exhorted the woman on her part, on pain of bestial transmigrations, to revere even the basest husband as a god.[3] The Brahman in later times, like the Hebrew patriarch, might by law have several wives, though of different castes, having claims to preference according to the order of their classes; and neither his wife, child, nor slave, could hold any thing as absolute property. He could take every thing from either of them or from all.[4] This was an incident, affecting them all alike, of the old system of patriarchal authority. The custom of polyandry, or possession of one wife by several husbands, was also prevalent during the Middle Ages of Hindu history; originating partly in the necessity of male offspring, as ground of religious hopes as well as source of physical support.[5]

This was the theory, — easily matched, we may remark, in Western ideas and institutions, even of recent time. But let us observe the counteractions provided by human nature to its worst effects.

[1] *Manu*, V. 157–162. [2] Ibid, V. 167–169; *Yâjn.*, I. 89.

[3] *Deut.* xxiv. 1; *Manu*, IX. 81; V. 154; *Yâjn.*, I. 77.

[4] *Manu*, IX. 85; VIII. 416. "A woman's property taken by her husband in distress, or for performance of a duty, he need not restore her." (*Yâjn.*, II. 147.) Yet this does not involve the right to violate other laws, which are very stringent in protection of the property rights of woman. (*Manu*, III. 52. Macnaghten, p. 43.) The language in the text is perhaps too strong. Wilson tells us (*Essays on Sanskrit Literature*, III. 17, 28) that a widow in India was, by the older laws, free to do as she would with her property; but in later times efforts were made to deprive her of this right. "At present, in Bengal," he adds, "a woman is acknowledged by all to be mistress of her own wealth."

[5] The same necessity explains the custom universal among savage tribes, and even practised by more advanced ones, like the Hebrew tribe of Benjamin, of capturing wives, and dividing them among the captors; a custom which tended of course to ensure other qualities of bondage, in the permanent status of woman under ancient laws.

Woman was secured against total enslavement in rude times by the operation of two causes. She was involuntarily recognized by man as bringing his spiritual deliverance, and as appealing to his physical power for protection. Natural defences of woman.

Of these recognitions, the former was due to her procreative function. In early times a man depended for safety, for help, and for honor, on the number of his children. The patriarch's sons were his strength. "The estimation of an Egyptian," says Herodotus, "was, next to valor in the field, in proportion to the number of his offspring." [1] To this day, the prayer of the laborer in the Nile Valley is for many children, to aid him in his toil. They were men's hold on the life beyond death. "Children," says the Greek poet, Religious furtherance.

> "Are for the dead the saviors of fame;
> Even as corks buoy up the net on the sea,
> Upholding its twisted cord from the abyss beneath." [2]

The mysterious principle of life, as transmitted by the seed of man, is the earliest object of veneration by tribes that have risen above the condition of Fetichism. As essence of the family bond, it is the centre of patriarchal religion, and embodied in that demand for male offspring, which determined the early institutions of the principal races of Europe and Asia. Greek and Roman law watched for ages over the preservation of the family lines through male offspring, as the ground-work of religious rite and tradition. It is easy to explain the fact that interests of this nature were so excessively developed among the Hindus. In the first male child centred the religious relations with

[1] *Herod.*, I. 136. [2] Æschyl., *Choëphori*, 497.

past and future. A male child has always been the primal necessity for the Oriental man. Through a son he pays his progenitors the debt for the gift of his own life, which is held the most sacred of all dues, and assures himself of the like payment from posterity.[1] The happiness of his ancestors was believed by the Hindu to depend on the performance of memorial rites in their honor by an uninterrupted line of male descendants. For was it not through a son that his own existence became a part of that continuous line of generations, which was probably the first and simplest sign to man of his own immortality? The laws declare that "by a son one obtains victory, by a son's son immortality, by a great-grandson reaches the solar heaven."[2] "By a son he overcomes the great darkness (of death): this the ship to bear him across. There is no life to him who has no son."[3] Kâlidâsa pictures the joy of a king in the birth of a male child, as resembling that which is felt by the Supreme, at the thought that Vishnu, as manifesting His own substance, is a guarantee of the stability of His Universe.[4] The Upanishads record the tender forms by which a father at the point of death transfers his whole being to his son.[5] The very word for son (*putra*) means deliverer from the hell called *pūt*. In the Mahâbhârata, a saint has a vision, in which he sees his ancestors descending into this limbo, heads downwards, in consequence of the extinction of their male line of descendants in him. The laws of the Greeks and Romans prescribed adoption to the father who had no son, as his sacred duty to his own line.[6]

[1] *Manu*, IX. 106, 107.
[2] *Manu*, IX. 137.
[3] *Aitereya Brâhmana*. Roth, in Weber's *Ind. Stud.*, I. 458.
[4] *Raghuvansa*, III.
[5] Kaushitaki Upan. (Weber, I. 409).
[6] See references in *La Cité Antique*, I. ch. iv.

Here then was man exalting his stronger sex to heaven, finding therein, as Christianity did afterwards, in the "well-beloved Son," the ground of his salvation. But even to this end the wife and mother was by nature, after all, the sole and sacred path. The gods said to man concerning woman: "In her you shall be born again." "The husband," as Manu expresses it, "becomes himself an embryo, and is born a second time."[1] And so marriage became of necessity a sacrament, invested with the sanctions of conscience and piety. Nature enforced, in behalf of woman, the respect that seemed likely to be refused. "Since immortality and heaven come through descendants," says Yâjnavalkya, "therefore preserve and honor woman."[2]

So Manu:—

"A man is perfect when he consists of three, his wife, himself, and his son."[3]

"A wife secures bliss to the manes of his ancestors and to himself."

"She is as the goddess of abundance, and irradiates his dwelling."[4]

Hence the great simplicity and purity of marriage in the Vedic times, — a more equal and just relation by far than in those of Manu; though nothing in the recorded marriage rites of later times indicates other than mutual respect and unity of interests.[5] Through this religious motive, it must have been that polyandry was got rid of;[6] and even the polygamy of still more

[1] *Manu*, IX. 8; *Yâjn.*, I. 56.
[2] *Yâjn.*, I. 78.
[3] *Manu*, IX. 45.
[4] Ibid., IX. 28, 26.

[5] See full accounts of the marriage rites of the Hindus according to the later Vedas, in Weber's *Indische Studien*, vol. v.

[6] This custom still exists in some parts of India, as among the Nairs, and is ascribed by Mr. Justice Campbell to the modification of that widely spread custom among the Hindus, of a wife passing on the death of her husband to his brother: "This successive

recent ages was much modified by it, being made rather a last resort where the religious end of marriage could not otherwise be attained, than a means of gratifying loose and lawless desires. Polygamy came in fact to be prohibited except for such causes as are expressly declared just grounds for dissolving the marriage contract, among which long continued barrenness naturally was the chief.[1] Again, as with the Hebrews, the necessity of securing male offspring led to the transference of the wife by her husband to a near relative, or *sapinda*, for the purpose; but the religious motive of the act led also to the most solemn precautions lest this infringement should be abused for sensual purposes.[2]

These are a few of the legal defences that inured to woman as the recognized way of immortality to him whose mere brute strength, uncontrolled by such motives, would have made her his slave. But they give only a faint idea of that fine compensation which nature must have lent her weakness, through her hold upon man's dearest hopes.

Physical dependence.

And as her procreative function enlisted on her behalf his religious aspirations, so her physical inferiority appealed in rude times to his generosity and tenderness. The laws of Manu had the grace to put that lifelong dependence to which they consigned her on the ground of protection.[3]

holding being here transformed into a *joint contemporaneous* holding," where the great object, that of obtaining children, could not otherwise be secured. — *Ethnology of India*, p. 135. As to the influence of this belief on marriage relations, see Ditandy, *Poésie Indienne*, p. 137.

[1] Macnaghten, 60.

[2] *Manu*, IX. 59, 60; *Yâjn.*, I. 67, 68.

[3] *Manu*, I., IX. 3. In rude and ill-governed states of society, even polygamy was plainly in many respects a safeguard, assigning female captives, for example, to a recognized status, under the care of a husband, and in the partial management of a household. Manu's sedulous instructions to the husband, in the art of protecting his wife by employing her "in the collection and expenditure of wealth, in purifications and female duty, in the prepara-

And a regard to her helplessness runs through the special provisions on those matters in which she was liable to be oppressed. On certain grounds, even "for bearing only female children,"[1] a wife might be superseded; but "not a beloved and virtuous wife," who must never be set aside without her consent.[2] A superseded wife is entitled to a sufficient maintenance in all cases whatever. "It is a crime to leave her without support."[3] Unmarried daughters inherit their mother's estate equally with sons.[4] So in general, though the wife's *peculium*, or special property, made up of six different kinds of gifts, and pronounced positively hers, could nevertheless be used by the husband in case of distress;[5] yet a special provision consigns to torment male relations who take unjust possession of a woman's property.[6] A wife could not be held liable for the debts of a husband or a son.[7] A good wife is to be faithfully supported by her husband, *though married against his inclination*, from religious duty.[8] A father is forbidden to tacitly sell his daughter by taking a gratuity for giving her in marriage;[9] and the son is charged to protect his mother after the death of her husband.[10] Insanity in a husband, impotence, and extreme vice, are held

tion of daily food and the superintendence of household utensils" (ix 11), are evidently dictated by the fear of trusting her to her own dispositions, which are regarded as her most dangerous enemies. This diligent protection and preservation of the wife from vice, which is made so essential a part of his own salvation, savors of a complacency which might have been rebuked, had woman had the making of the laws. Yet, as things were, it must have proceeded from his judgment as to her special needs, and doubtless expressed a real sense of her physical weakness and exposure to rude assaults. For instance, the law commands him, "if he have business abroad, to assure a fit maintenance to his wife while away; for even if a wife be virtuous, she may be tempted to act amiss, if distressed for want of subsistence" (ix. 74).

[1] *Yâjn.*, I. 73. [2] *Manu*, IX. 81, 82. [3] *Yâjn.*, I. 74.
[4] Macnaghten, 61; *Yâjn.*, II. 117; *Manu*, IX. 192. [5] Macnaghten, 44.
[6] *Manu*, III. 52. [7] *Yâjn.*, II. 46. [8] *Manu*, IX. 95.
[9] Ibid., IX. 100. [10] Ibid., IX. 4.

sufficient excuse for aversion on the part of the wife; which must not be punished by desertion nor deprivation of her property.[1]

And this regard for the weakness of woman could not fail to lead to a certain appreciation of her true strength. Thus, as we have just noted, it is upon her need of protection that Manu bases not only a perpetual wardship, but a most vigilant system of restrictions and occupations, to preserve her from the perils to which her "natural frailty" was presumed to expose her. But the injunctions to these end in what for this presumption is decidedly a fatal admission; namely, that those women only are truly secure "who are protected by their own good inclinations."[2] So Râma says, "No enclosing walls can screen a woman. Only her virtue protects her."[3]

Domestic oppress.on overstated.

In fact, a far greater amount of domestic tyranny has been presumed, by those who regard only the letter of the law, than the facts will warrant. The seclusion of females which prevails in India, for example, has been regarded as forming part of a despotic system. But it is probably due to other causes, in the main, than marital jealousy and distrust. The Brahmans maintain that it is of Mohammedan origin, and was adopted by the Hindus merely in self-defence against foreign brutality.[4] With both Moslem and Hindu, it may have had its origin in modest reserve; in that instinctive reverence which penetrates the whole life of Eastern races, and passing in the course of ages, like every thing Oriental, into a rigid etiquette.[5] The use of the veil by

[1] *Manu*, IX. 79. [2] Ibid., IX. 12. [3] *Râmâyana.*
[4] Wilson, *Theatre of the Hindus*, Introd., xliii.; Buyers, *Recollect. of India*, p. 401.
[5] De Vere, *Pictur. Sketches of Greece and Turkey*, p. 270.

Persian females seems to have been derived from times when it was regarded as a sign of dignity and social elevation.[1] A Buddhist legend illustrates the relation of this religion to democratic reform on the subject. The wife of Buddha, it is said, rejected the veil, against the wishes of the court, immediately after her marriage, saying: "Good women need veiling no more than the sun and moon. The gods know my thoughts, my manners, my qualities, my modesty. Why then should I veil my face?"[2] It would appear, too, that, in spite of their seclusion, the women of the upper classes exercise as much influence in family affairs as among Europeans.[3] In the Hindu epics, women are described as entirely independent in their intercourse and movement, travelling where they will, and showing themselves freely in public, and unveiled.[4] Married women, especially, were perfectly free in India in their social intercourse with the other sex;[5] and Śakuntalâ, in the drama, pleads her own cause at the court of King Dushyanta, and even boldly rebukes him.

But these hints of the compensative forces of nature in behalf of woman lead us still farther. Here were circumstances scarcely suited to demonstrate her finer spiritual gifts. Yet Hindu law and literature abound in proofs that woman did then, as she now does, compel recognition of these gifts; although it may have been shown then, as it has since been, more by the service of the lips than by the conduct of life. Recognition of woman.

The ages we are now studying are not those of the

[1] Gobineau, *Relig. et Phil. d. l'Asia Centrale*, p. 348.
[2] St. Hilaire.
[3] Prichard, *Admin. of India*, II. 89.
[4] See Williams, *Indian Epic Poetry*, p. 57.
[5] Wilson, *ut supra*.

simple Aryan household, where husband and wife, equals in age, in rights, in serviceable industries, hand in hand ministered to the holy fires on their altars and hearths.[1] They are ages of southern polygamy and caste; when woman, betrothed in childhood, was in law for ever a child, superseded at her husband's pleasure, forbidden to read the Vedas or to take part in religious rites. In these times, too, the epics reveal the semi-barbarous custom of polyandry, although this possession of one wife by several husbands must certainly, even in the stormy social conditions which the Mahâbhârata describes, have been exceptional.[2]

The Râmâyana, indeed, somewhat later, shows profound respect for the marriage relation. But even this poem, abounding in manly sentiments towards women, frequently falls into the tone of contempt which their perpetual minority suggested; as where Râma admonishes Bhârata of the duty of a ruler always to treat them with courtesy, while he should disregard their counsel, and withhold from them all important secrets.

Yet, under such circumstances as these, observe what the law itself confessed. Not only did it declare "mutual fidelity till death the supreme duty between husband and wife,[3] and "virtue, riches, love, the three objects of human desire," to be "the reward of their mutual friendship,"[4] and pronounce the woman the highest beatitude of the man."[5] It admonished

[1] See *Manu*, IX. 96.

[2] In Manu indeed it is not mentioned, and Brahmanism had little toleration for it. The Himâlaya mountaineers explain the custom as necessary for the protection of women during the long absence of their husbands on distant expeditions for trading purposes. Lloyd's *Himalayas*, I. 255.

[3] *Manu*, IX. 101. [4] *Yâjn.*, I. 74. [5] *Manu*, IX. 28.

him that "where females are honored the deities are pleased, and where they are dishonored, or made miserable, all religious rites are vain;" while "their imprecation brings utter destruction on the house."[1] The inference that women must therefore be constantly supplied with ornaments and gay attire shows that Eastern and Western logic on these matters stands in common need of reconstruction at the hands of woman herself. But the law went deeper than manners. In an outburst of Oriental reverence it proclaims a mother to be greater than a thousand fathers.[2] In a calmer, didactic mood, it defines the sum of all duty to consist in assiduous service of one's father, mother, and spiritual teacher, as long as they live, holding them "equal to the three worlds and the three Vedas;" and even commands that the wife of the teacher, if of the same class, shall be treated with the respect shown to himself.[3] In the Śrâddha, or memorial rite in honor of the pitris, or ancestors, those on the female side must not be forgotten.[4] The Swayamvara form of marriage, *after free choice of a husband by the maiden*, is celebrated by the later poets as well as in the Vedas.[5] And Burnouf has gone so far as to affirm that marriage in India was never a state of servitude for woman.[6] It is certain that, of the four forms of marriage recognized as valid by Manu, neither necessarily involved such subjection; while, in the Prajâpatya form, bride and bridegroom are distinctly enjoined "to perform together their civil and religious duties."[7]

We have here, it is true, no such testimonies as

[1] *Manu*, III. 55-62.
[2] Ibid., II. 145.
[3] Ibid., II. 210.
[4] *Yâjn.*, I. 242; III. 4.
[5] *R. V.*, I. 116; *Raghuvanśa*, VI.
[6] *Essay on the Veda*, p. 213.
[7] *Manu*, III. 27-30.

those of Herodotus and Diodorus concerning Egypt, who inform us that in that country it was customary for the husband to obey the wife, and for women to manage business affairs while the men plied the loom at home.[1] Yet Yâjnavalkya specifies certain classes of women whose debts their husbands were bound to pay, because dependent on their labor for support.[2] And Wilson tells us that all the contempt shown by the Hindus for women was learned by them of their Mohammedan masters.[3] The Râmâyana shows us King Dasarâtha prostrate at the feet of his wicked wife, entreating her to release him from his promise to grant her any boon she might ask. In fact, Hindu literature abounds in amusing illustrations of submissiveness in husbands to wives as well as in wives to husbands.[4]

Influence on public affairs.

The gentleness of Hindu character was favorable to the sway of these subtler forces. This has been shown on a great scale in political, mercantile, and domestic life. Women have ruled empires in India, as in Egypt and Assyria, and had their full share in bringing about the frequent wars and revolutions of the petty Hindu States. The Indian epic, like the Greek and the Teutonic, celebrates feminine control over the military destinies of states, and Kâlidâsa describes the admirable government of Ayodhya by a mythic queen.[5]

Among the native rulers who have heroically resisted foreign invaders, none have shown stronger qualities than Lakshmi Baee, the Rani, or queen, of Jhansi; whose wonderful generalship held the British

[1] *Diod.*, I. 27; *Herod.*, II. 35.
[2] *Yâjn.*, II. 48.
[3] *Essays on Sanskrit Literature*, III. 17.
[4] See Wheeler's *India*, II. 569-572.
[5] *Raghuvaṁśa*, XIX.

army in check; and who headed her troops in person, dressed as a cavalry officer, and was killed on the field. Sir Hugh Rose declared that the best man on the enemy's side was the Rani of Jhansi.[1] Another Rani, Aus Kour, being elevated by the British to the disputed throne of Pattiala in the Panjâb, an utterly disorganized and revolted state, "as the only person competent to govern it," is recorded by the historian to have changed its whole condition in less than a year, reducing rebellious villages, bringing up the revenues, and establishing order and security everywhere.[2]

Malika Kischwar, queen dowager of Oude, educated her son, who was dispossessed in 1866, to a knowledge of ancient and modern literature, resulting in his becoming an author of high repute, and surrounding her and himself with persons of literary distinction.

Aliah Bae, the Mahratta queen of Malwa, for twenty years preserved peace in her dominions, devoting herself to the rights, happiness, and culture of her people. It was said of her that it would have been regarded as the height of wickedness to become her enemy, or, if need were, not to die in her defence. Hindus and Mohammedans united in prayers that her life might be lengthened. And of so rare a modesty was this great queen, that she ordered a book, which sounded her praises, to be destroyed, and took no notice of the author.

Notwithstanding certain precepts, the law has practically allowed women a larger share in the management of property than the statutes of most Christian nations; and they have shown abundant shrewdness

[1] Arnold's *Dalhousie*, II. 153. [2] Griffin's *Râjahs of the Panjâb*, p. 138.

and tact in trade. "In family affairs, secular or religious, their influence is very great, and almost supreme. Seldom can a man complete any important business transaction, without having settled the matter with his privy council, in the female apartments."[1] "As the law in Ceylon," says Tennent, "recognizes the absolute control of the lady over the property conveyed to her use, the custom of large marriage portions to woman has thrown an extraordinary extent of the landed property of the country into the hands of the females, and invested them with corresponding proportion of authority in its management."[2] A recent very careful work on India tells us that "in the family circle, and daily rounds of domestic duties, interests, and enjoyments, the Hindu woman has a field for her sympathies which puts her quite on a level with her sisters of the West."[3]

Intellectual recognition.

Nor have the intellectual capacities of women failed of respect. There are hymns in the Rig Veda by female rishis.[4] Malabar boasts seven ancient sages, and four of them were women. The moral sentences of Avyar are taught in the schools, as golden rules of life; and they certainly deserve the name. Here are a few specimens: —

"Honor thy father and mother. Forget not the favors thou hast received. Learn while thou art young. Seek the society of the good. Live in harmony with others. Remain in thy own place. Speak ill of none. Ridicule not bodily infirmities. Pursue not a vanquished foe. Deceive not even thy enemy. Forgiveness is sweeter than revenge. The sweetest bread is that earned by labor. Knowledge is riches. What one learns in his youth is as lasting as if engraven on stone. The wise is he who knows himself. Speak kindly to the poor. Discord and gambling lead to

[1] Buyers, p. 399.
[2] *Christianity in Ceylon*, p. 157.
[3] Prichard, *Administr. of India*, II. 89.
[4] Weber, *Vorlesungen*, 37, 38.

misery. He misconceives his interest who violates his promise. There is no tranquil sleep without a good conscience, nor any virtue without religion. To honor thy mother is the most acceptable worship. Of woman the fairest ornament is modesty."[1]

A little Hindu work on "Deccan Poets," by a pandit, Rameswamie (Calcutta, 1829), tells us that Avyar, supposed by some to have been a foundling, was venerated as the daughter of Brahmâ and Sarasvati. She was the child of a Brahman by a low-caste woman, like Vyâsa and other great Hindu personages, and, though brought up by a singer of the servile class, excelled all her brothers and sisters in learning, and wrote, besides poetry, on astronomy, medicine, chemistry, and geography. The same work mentions many other female poets, among them the daughter of a potter.

Though the law prohibited women from teaching the Vedas, we know that priestesses were teachers of princes. We know that there were Brahmanical schools, not unlike the famous Saracen Colleges of the Middle Ages, at which kings, priests, and women united in the enthusiastic study of metaphysical and moral science; and of the women it is reported that some astonished the masters by the depth and sublimity of their thought, and that others delivered responses from a state of trance.[2]

In the Dramas, women always speak in the Prâkrit or common dialects, while men use the Sanskrit or "holy" speech. These softer popular dialects derived by decomposition from the Sanskrit are believed by Renan to be special consequences of the female organization, and to prove its independent activity in the

[1] From Schoberl's *Hindustan in Miniature.*

[2] Megasthenes, *Nearchus in Strabo*, XV.; Weber, 21.

structure of the language.[1] More significant is the fact that the Prâkrit, thus proper to woman, and by her means introduced into literature, has gradually supplanted the Sanskrit, and forms the basis of the present spoken languages of India. So that the stamp of female influence is in fact conspicuous in the historical development of Hindu speech, as an informing and determining force.

Literary appreciation of woman.

It would require a separate volume to render justice to the fine appreciation of womanly qualities in what we already know of Hindu literature. It has been noticed that, in recognizing these, the poets abandon exaggeration and draw from nature.[2] Nothing could be more tender and noble than these ideal pictures, covering, too, so wide a range of destiny and desire: the chaste love of Râma and Sitâ, — her courage, fortitude, and womanly dignity under his unjust suspicions, her mastery of all forms of evil by moral purity and spiritual insight; the fidelity of Damayanti to her unhappy Nala, tempted by an evil spirit first to play away his crown, and then to flee from her for shame at his beggary, but followed and redeemed at last by that loyalty of love, which thought only of the misery he must endure in offending against his nobler nature; the piety of Savitri, controlling fate, charming the god of death himself, by her wisdom and love, into giving back life to her dead husband, and sight to his blind father, with his lost crown, and the glory of his fallen race.[3] Equally intuitive is the sense of woman's power to inspire a noble manhood with absolute devotion. The Mahâbhârata describes

[1] *De l'Origine du Langage*, Pref. p. 28.
[2] Monier Williams, *Indian Epic Poetry*, p. 54.
[3] Savitri and Satyavan, Episode of the *Mahâbhârata*.

the passionate love of Rurus, imploring the gods to restore his Pramadvara, and offering to yield up his own lifetime to be added to hers.

> "I give thee half my future days, beloved,
> Light to renew thy life be drawn from mine." [1]

And Kâlidâsa gives us the tale, wrought out in Eastern traits, of the wasting grief of good prince Adja for his young wife, whom the fall of celestial flowers on her bosom has called away from earth; pursuing his Indumati through all sweet perfumes and sounds and forms, refusing to turn away his mind or to be comforted, the mighty grief slowly dividing his soul, as a bough will rend the wall into which it grows, until after "wearing through eight years of pain, patiently and faithfully for his young son's sake, living on pictures and images of his beloved, and on fleeting transports of reunion, in his dreams," he freely lays aside the ruined body for an immortal life, with the lost one, and among the gods.[2] In Hindu poetic justice the fickleness, unfaithfulness, or harsh suspicion towards true womanly love, which so often recurs in Eastern story, is always visited by remorse, distraction, or despair; and even where changes of heart are ascribed to the malevolence of evil powers or the maledictions of offended saints, they are in no wise freed from these penalties, which teach humility and truth, while they honor outraged virtue by proving it befriended by the eternal laws.[3] What European poet knows better than Kâlidâsa how gracious a soul is born in nature at the touch of woman? Śakuntalâ, cherishing her plants like a sister,

[1] *Mahâbh.*, I. [2] *Raghuvanśa*, VIII.
[3] See especially *Śakuntalâ* and the *Râmâyana*.

"Never moistening in the stream
Her own parched lips, till she had fondly poured
Its purest water on their thirsty roots,
And oft, when she would fain have decked her hair
With their thick clustering blossoms, in her love
Robbing them not e'en of a single flower," [1]

infuses into them her own affections: the woods, the flowers, the forest creatures, feel her coming and going like the breath of life and the blast of death.

"In sorrow for her loss the herd of deer
Forget to browse; the peacock on the lawn
Ceases its dance; the very trees around
Shed their pale leaves like tears, — while they dismiss
Their dear Śakuntalâ with loving wishes." [2]

"He who would wish her to endure the hardships of penance would attempt to sever the hard wood with the blue leaf of the lotus." She is "the mellowed fruit of virtuous actions in some former birth." — Wild beasts respect the holiness of Damayanti, wandering in the deserts; the noisy caravan halts, and the rough men beseech for her benediction.[3] The poet of the Mahâbhârata sings the praise of woman like an earlier Schiller. The wife is "man's other half, his inmost friend, source of his bliss, root of his salvation; friend of the solitary one, consoling him with sweet words, in his duties like a father, in his sorrows like a mother." She reproves his neglect of manly duties, and admonishes him of the forgotten God within him, the witness and judge of human deeds. Deserted by her husband, who refuses to recognize her, the Śakuntalâ of the epic says with dignity: "Thou, who knowest what is true and what is false, O King!

[1] Williams's translation. [2] Ibid.
[3] Nala and Damayanti, Episode of the *Mahâbhârata*.

scorning this child of our love, bringest shame on thyself. Thinking, 'I am alone,' thou hast forgotten that beholder from of old, who is in the heart. Doing wickedly, thou imaginest, 'No one knows it is I.' But the gods know, and the witness within thee: sun and moon, day and night, their own hearts, and the justice of God, behold the deeds of men. The spirit that dwells within us judges us hereafter."

Sitâ, the ideal wife in the Râmâyana, is Râma's "primeval love," not less tenderly human for being divine. She compels him, by her devotion, to take her with him into his exile in the wilderness, overpowering his reason and will alike by the higher wisdom of love. She rebukes him for his anger against even the Râkshasas, demon foes of gods and men, as unbecoming one who had assumed the consecration of a religious life; and warns him to subdue the first risings of evil desire, since even a great mind may contract guilt through neglecting almost imperceptible moral distinctions: with which frankness Râma is delighted, and replies, "O Sitâ, one who is not admonished is not beloved. You have spoken becomingly, and you are my companion in virtue, and dearer to me than life."[1] Fully to appreciate this recognition of womanhood, we must remember that Râma is nothing less than incarnated deity.

Even the wife of the demon Râvana, the Satan of the epic, warns him against gratifying his sensual passions on the person of his beautiful captive; "for he who forces the inclination of a woman shall die an early death, or become the prey of endless disease." The Râmâyana likens "the wind that drives away the white lotus from the too thirsty bees" to "the modesty

[1] *Râmâyana*, B. II.

that drives the coy bride from her husband." Sitâ, on her part, can forgive her cruelest enemies. Saved from their hands, she says, "Why should I revenge myself on the servants of Râvana, whom harsh commands drove to injure me? What I have suffered pays the penalty for a former life. I would not punish others who are also enforced to evil." What exquisite sense of the fine divination of womanly love is in the picture of Damayanti, surrounded by the gods, who, to deceive her, have all taken the form of her chosen Nala, and mingle in the crowd of suitors, in her father's hall!

"And Damayanti trembled with fear, and folded her hands in reverence before the gods, praying them to resume their immortal shapes, and reveal Nala, that she might choose him for her lord in presence of all. Then the gods wondered at her truth and love, and revealed straightway the tokens of their godhead. And Damayanti saw the four bright gods, and knew they were not mortal heroes; for there was no sweat on their brows, nor dust on their garments, and their garlands were fresh as if the flowers were just gathered, and their feet touched not the earth. And she saw also the true Nala; for he stood before her with shadow falling to the ground, and twinkling eyes and drooping garland, and moisture was on his brow, and dust on his raiment. And she went and took the hem of his garment, and threw a wreath of radiant flowers around his neck, and thus chose him for her lord. And a sound of wild sorrow burst from all the Rajahs; but the gods and sages cried aloud, 'Well done!' And Nala said, 'Since, O maiden! you have chosen me for your husband, in presence of the gods, know that I will be your faithful consort, ever delighting in your words, and so long as my soul shall inhabit this body I solemnly vow to be thine, and thine alone.'"[1]

The lamentation of Târa, the wife of Bâli, over the dead body of her husband, is as touching and noble as any thing in poetry.

[1] Wheeler's *History of India*, I. 484.

"Why lookest thou so dull on thy child, thou, to whom thy children were so dear?

"Thy face seems to smile on me in the bosom of death, as if thou wert alive.

"I see thy glory still like sunset on a mountain's head."[1]

As the moral interest of the Iliad centres in the nemesis that follows crime against the sanctities of wedded life, so that of the Râmâyana centres in the public and private calamities naturally incident to polygamy. It is the attempt of one of the king's wives to set aside the rights of the son of another, in the interest of her own offspring, that brings about the exile of Râma, the misery of the people, the death of the unwise, uxorious king himself, the capture of Sitâ, and the war for her recovery; and this last portion of the epic is but a Hindu counterpart of the Trojan war in punishment of the rape of Helen. But while the Greek heroine shares the criminality of her captor, the Hindu Sitâ is the ideal of the faithful wife.

Woman the inspiration of the Epos.

The crime which leads on the woes depicted in that other great Hindu epic, the Mâhâbhârata, is a gambling match, in which a monarch, made desperate by continual losses, finally plays away his own wife, — an atrocity which is rebuked on the spot by a Brahman, who represents the eternal ethical law; protesting that Judhishthira "lost *himself* before he staked his wife, and having first become a slave could no longer have the power to stake Draupadi."

Without entering into definite criticism of all these ideals, I cannot forbear quoting the excellent remarks of Monier Williams in his sketch of Indian Epic Poetry.

[1] *Râmâyana*. B. IV.

"Sitâ, Draupadi, and Damayanti," he says, "engage our affections and interest far more than Helen or even Penelope. It cannot be doubted that in these delightful portraits we have true representations of the purity and simplicity of Hindu domestic manners in early times. Children are dutiful to their parents and submissive to their superiors; younger brothers are respectful to their elder brothers; parents are fondly attached to their children, and ready to sacrifice themselves for their welfare; wives are loyal, devoted, obedient to husbands, yet show much independence of character, and do not hesitate to express their own opinions; husbands are tenderly affectionate towards their wives, and treat them with respect and courtesy; daughters and women generally are virtuous and modest, yet spirited, and when occasion requires courageous: love and harmony reign throughout the family circle. It is in depicting scenes of domestic affection, and expressing these feelings that belong to human nature in all times and places, that Sanskrit epic poetry is unrivalled."

Reverence for *motherhood* is here carried beyond all other forms of respect for natural ties. The divine sons of Daśarâtha, all gods, all bow at the feet of their human mothers. Râma, obliged to go into exile that his father may not break his vow, is indeed unmoved by his mother's unmeasured distress, and cannot concede the claims she founds on the Śâstras themselves, to greater respect and obedience than is due even to a father; yet from his exile he sends messages of profound affection to her, and even to that other wife of his father whose criminal ambition was the cause of his own disinheritance, and bids his

brother Bhârata pay every form of pious attention to both.

The inspiration of these two great epics is indeed nothing else than the *Worth of Woman*. They celebrate her not only as imparting a divine dignity to every sacrifice for her sake, but as conquering all moral evil through her constancy and faith. In this whole cycle of mythology, it is always woman who destroys the dreaded powers, and revives the energy of good. In the natural symbolism of the Rig Veda, "the divine Night arrives, an immortal goddess, shining with innumerable eyes, scattering darkness with their splendors; and men come to her as birds to their nests. She drives away the wolf and the thief, and bears them safely through the gloom."[1] And the Dawn arrives, "a daughter of the sky, shining on them like a young wife, arousing every living being to his work, bringing light and striking down darkness; leader of the days; lengthener of life; fortunate, the love of all, who brings the eye of the god."[2] Woman prepares the holy fire. "The great sacred mothers of the sacrifice have uttered praise, and decorate the child of the sky."[3] And of mythology in general.

It is remarkable, in view of the reverence of Hindu life for male offspring, that the later theogonies combine male and female elements, and treat both sexes as *equally necessary to the conception of deity*. Creation, in Manu as well as in the Upanishads, proceeds from the divine Love or Desire, becoming twain, male and female.[4] This co-essentiality of the two, for all manifestation of the absolute, is common to the Hindu,

[1] *R. V.*, X. 127. [2] *R. V.*, VII 77.
[3] *R. V.*, IX 33, 5. Perhaps symbolical expressions, yet not the less significant.
[4] *Manu*, I. 32; *Brihad Up.* I. 43; Wilson's *Essays on Hindu Religion*, I. 241, 245.

Egyptian, and Phœnician religions. The deities are androgynous, whether Brahma-Maya, Osiris-Isis, or Baal-Baut; or they flow in series of twofold emanations through all pantheistic cosmogonies, Oriental, Gnostic, Neo-Platonic, under names not so familiar as even these, — names which it is needless to enumerate. In most cases the divine equality of sex is still further represented by the fact that these wives of the deities are also their sisters, and thus co-eternal. It is a striking illustration of that greater breadth of sympathy we have already noted in polytheistic and pantheistic forms of religion, as compared with intensely monarchical, that this cosmogonic recognition of the equality in the sexes was confined to the former class. Thus it is quite unknown to the old monotheistic severity of the Hebrew faith, as well as to the distinctively Christian, in its original form, which prefers the masculine alike in its name of God and its choice of Saviour. Only with latest heresy does God, *as God*, come to stand as "Our Mother."[1] Honor to deity as mother was indeed, both in Hindu and Egyptian worship, carried to a point beyond what was rendered to any male function or authority. To Isis, greatest of Egyptian divinities, whose myriad names were woven into this one, the most tender of all, answers the Vedic Aditi, "Mother of all the gods."[2]

The Word feminine.

And not less significant is the fact that in all the older Eastern religions "*the Word*" *is feminine*. Thought, in its purest symbol, is thus awarded

[1] So it is only in the later Kabbalistic theology of the Hebrews, subsequent to Greek and Oriental influences on their faith, that we find the first emanation of Deity conceived as "the great Mother." (Sohar. See Berthold's *Christologia*, § 23.) And the Book of the "Wisdom of Solomon," under similar influences, praises its female "σοφία," as the mirror of the power of God.

[2] *Herodotus*, II. 40; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*.

to the physically weaker sex. In India, as Sarasvati, woman is the genius of art, literature, eloquence, — is, in short, "the Word;" ever the holiest symbol to the Hindu mind. She is thus properly the wife of Brahmâ. At her festivals, as goddess of learning, all books, pens, and other implements of study, are gathered in the school-houses in India, and strewn with white flowers and barley-blades; and in the prayer her name is coupled with the Vedas and all the sacred writings, and her love invoked, as one with that of Brahmâ, "the great Father of all."[1] "Sarasvati," says the Rig Veda, "enlightens all intellects." "The gods made Ila the instructress of men." Vâch, or Speech, is "the melodious Queen of the gods," who says: —

"I myself declare this, which is desired by gods and men."

"Every man whom I love, I make him terrible. I make him a priest, a seer."

"I make him wise."[2]

Here is Indra's praise of Lakshmi: —

"Thou art mystic and spiritual knowledge. Thou art the philosophy of reasoning, — the three Vedas.

"Thou art the arts and sciences, thou moral and political wisdom.

"The worlds have been preserved and reanimated by thee."[3]

"Every book of knowledge," says the Hitopadeśa, "which is known to Usanas or Vrihaspati, is by nature implanted in the understanding of women." As Durgâ, it is woman who slays the Satan of the later popular belief, and delivers mankind from the fear of evil, for which service this goddess is adored by all

[1] Wilson's *Essays*, II 190.

[2] *Rig Veda*, I. 3, 12; I. 31, 11; VIII. 89, 10; X. 125, 5.

[3] *Vishnu Purâna*, I. ch. ix.

deities and saints.[1] In the myth of the Kena Upanishad, it is a woman, Umâ, who represents divine knowledge. She is a shining mediator between Brahma and the gods: none but she is able to reveal to Indra "who it was that had appeared to them, enforcing their adoration, and vanished when they sought to approach too near." The epics also describe Umâ as one of the three divine daughters of the great mountain king, Himavat, all of them renowned in the three worlds for force of contemplation, for chastity, and for power in expounding divine wisdom.[2] And as in the Rig Veda, at the beginning of Hindu religious development, we have Aditi, "mother of the gods," so in the mystical Purânas, at the end, we have Durgâ, or Mahâmâyâ, defined as "the eternal substance of the world, soul of all forms, whom none has power to praise; by whom the universe is created, upheld, preserved, into whom it is absorbed at last."[3]

Christianity and Heathenism.

After eighteen centuries of Christianity, the task of emancipating woman from legal incapacities yet remains to be accomplished. Such progress as has actually been made in this direction cannot be laid to the sole account of any distinctive religion. Physical and social science, intellectual culture, and practical necessity have had more to do with it than either Christian belief or that spirit of brotherhood which Christianity has held to be its own peculiar grace. The history of its churches as a whole affords no ground for according them superiority, in this form of justice, to the heathen world. The Hindu law forbade woman to read the Vedas, or to officiate at holy rites. Christian councils and Popes, echoing the

[1] *Purânas*, quoted in Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, IV. 371.
[2] See texts in Muir, IV. 367.
[3] Ibid., 371; Wilson's *Essays*, I. 247.

great Apostle to the Gentiles, have interdicted her not only from assumption of the priesthood, but from speaking in religious assemblies, or administering the rite of baptism.[1] Christian legislation has been in many points even more unjust to her than Manu. A law of Justinian concerning deaconesses makes death the penalty for their marrying. What is there in the Hindu code harsher towards females than their exclusion by English common law from "benefit of clergy," so that they were put to death for crimes which a clergyman could commit with impunity, and for which a man was simply branded?[2] Have Hindu laws prescribed the self-burning of widows? Eighteen centuries of Christianity elapsed before it ceased burning women at the stake for heresy. Is the absolute authority of husband and father the oldest despotism? It survives still in the law of England, which "vests parental rights in the father alone, to the entire exclusion of the mother;" giving him power not only to remove the children from her during his life, but to appoint a guardian with similar power over them after his death.[3] What could be worse than the European principle of "feme covert," the absorption of her legal existence during marriage into that of her husband, still described in the very language of the Hindu Law? Or what shall we say of the facts that the Ecclesiastical or Canon Law has been the source of woman's severest disabilities; and that it is only in so far as the secular principle has prevailed over the ecclesiastical that any progress has been made in re-

[1] Laodicea; Carthage; Autun (670 A.C.); Aix-la-Chapelle (816); Paris (824). The Synod of Orange (441) forbids the ordination of deaconesses. See Ludlow, *Woman's Work in the Church*, p 65.

[2] Wendell's *Blackstone*, I. 445, n.

[3] *Westminster Review* for Jan. 1872, p. 30.

moving them?[1] The persecution of witches in modern Europe has no parallel in Hindu or any other barbarism. Many of the legal disqualifications of woman, which have descended from feudalism, make her perpetual wardship among the heathen appear almost respectable in comparison.

Treatment of Woman by different religions.

And on the other hand, as we have seen, an instinctive respect for the sex was not wanting to the pre-Christian world. It was the commandment of nature. Its roots were in religion, in moral appreciation, in generosity and in love. Judaism and Christianity helped it onward, by their stern protest against polygamy and sensuality, and by sublime ideals of purity and beneficence. But the Church, it must be remembered, was anticipated by a noble movement of Roman law, which steadily transformed the status of woman from almost total bondage into freedom and equality in respect of conjugal, marital, and proprietary rights. It has been said with truth that Roman jurisprudence gave her "a place far more elevated than that since assigned to her by Christian governments."[2] The culmination of liberal tendencies under Christian emperors, as especially shown in the laws of Constantine in her favor, was the issue of a *secular* movement, which had been penetrating for centuries through the whole mass of Roman legislation. Under Christianity itself, the progress was slow: later emperors undid the work of earlier ones; and it is admitted even by Troplong that this religion "did not take full possession of civil society till after the older races had been rejuvenated

[1] See *Blackstone*, I. 445; also Maine's *Ancient Law*, p. 153.
[2] *Westm. Rev.* for Oct. 1856.

by fresh life infused from new sources.[1] Without disparaging the services of the Church, we must render justice to that far greater help towards the emancipation of woman which came from a different quarter. I mean those Teutonic tribes, to whom a queen was as good as a king, and who gave Rome an empress.[2] I mean those free "barbarians," who brought with them a perfect equality of sex in all the domestic and social relations; with whom the wife was accustomed not to yield up a dowry, but to receive one from the husband, while each formally endowed the other with spear, and steed, and sword, in token of common public duties and claims; whose women were "fenced with chastity," and "guardians of their own children;" who held that "somewhat of sanctity and prescience was inherent in the female sex;"[3] who entered neither on peace nor on war without consulting the priestess as an oracle; whose mythology conceived destiny in female forms, whether as Valkyriur or Nornir, at the tree of life or on the field of death; and whose oldest poem, the Voluspa, was ascribed to a woman, represented as a divinity who unveils the past and future to gods and men.

But behind Roman, Christian, and Teutonic helpers, rise the grand Greek ideals of Wisdom and Maternity, Athêna and Demêter, with their consecration not of thought only, but of earth and air. The inviolability of the family was enthroned in Hêrâ. The awe of all deities beheld Hestia, the earth, as their common mother, and the witness of their most sacred vows. And even behind these stands Egyp- Greece and Egypt.

[1] Troplong, *Influence du Christianisme*, p. 218.
[2] Victoria, "Mother of Camps." See Thierry, *Tableau de l'Empire Romain*, p. 189.
[3] See Tacitus, *De Mor. Germ.*, c. 18, 19, 8; *Hist.*, IV. 61.

tian Isis, Goddess Mother, crowned with her thrones, shielding Osiris with her outspread wings, co-equal ruler of the land during his calamity, and its saviour through her own distress; tender seeker of the lost divinity of love and truth; his deliverer from bonds, and his avenger on the powers of evil; commending even the brute creatures to human gratitude for their sympathy and help in her beneficent work. How beautiful the myth![1] Diodorus gives us an inscription in which she says what she well might say, "What I have decreed, none can annul." And Apuleius calls her "Nature, beginning of ages, parent of all."[2]

India.

These natural instincts spoke clearly in the Far East also. There was faith in maternity as the root of redemption, long before men bowed at the shrine of a Catholic "Mother of God." When Dante and Dominic beheld the mysteries of hell and heaven through faith in the sanctity of Womanhood, they but made fresh confession of a spiritual need, which in other forms is as surely represented in the old Hindu Epic, Drama, and Sacred Hymn. And when free opportunity and becoming culture shall have been at last achieved for women, and the old contempt for their intellectual capacities shall have everywhere gone to its place, it will be better understood that the recognition has been but clearer vision of what could not anywhere have been wholly hid. Recent movements in India for the better education of women, and the recent mission (1870) of the leader of Hindu Theism to England, in the interest of their deliverance from the marital, social, and ecclesiastical

[1] See Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris.*

[2] Diod., I. 27; Apuleius, *Metamorph.*

oppressions of ages, are but the springing of these ancient waters afresh with renewed power. Native Hindu women are being educated for the medical profession, without distinction of caste. Some have already entered on regular practice.[1] "In north-western India," we are told, "the pandits are always ready to do their very best to promote the cause of female education."[2] Miss Carpenter, in her recent noble mission for this purpose, found the intelligent Hindus so earnest and so wise in their interest in it, that she was fain, as she tells us, to follow their leading, convinced that the best way for them was to emancipate themselves.[3]

And our hopes are strengthened, when we remember that this contemplative race would naturally be disposed to regard intelligence, by whomsoever manifested, as worthy of respect; and that even the despotism of caste could not wholly exclude the special gifts of woman from hospitality and honor, with a people whom it is but just to call the Brain of the East.[4]

[1] At the school of Dr. Corbyn in Bareilly, where twenty-eight native girls are now studying. See *Victoria Magazine*, April, 1871.

[2] Prichard, *Administr. of India*, II. 73.

[3] *Six Months in India*, I. 78, 80.

[4] The position of Woman in Buddhism will be noticed in the sections relating to that religion

VII.

SOCIAL FORMS AND FORCES.

SOCIAL FORMS AND FORCES.

IT has been usual to ascribe the social system of the Hindus to the deliberate artifices of a priesthood. But the germs of caste are in the instinctive, not in the self-conscious age of man. Nor can we now accept Niebuhr's sweeping statement that "castes are in all cases the consequence of foreign conquests." Neither theory meets the all-important question: Of what social needs and aspirations is a system so general in the early history of nations the natural expression? Origin of castes.

The religious instincts are as old as the social. The savage makes a fetich of the wooden sticks out of which he churns his fire; and the medicine-man listens with awe to the din of his own rattle or drum. The sorcerer makes an image of a diseased person out of earth or grass, and, confounding his own processes with the life of the individual represented, ascribes to this work of his own hands a magical power over the disease. This is the rude beginning of religious mysticism; and it is but a more refined form of the same "superstition," when the crucifix is believed to possess a divine efficacy in removing the crosses of life and the anguish of death from the human being in whose likeness it is made. But in The priestly caste.

neither case does the word "superstition" express the whole truth. To the primitive tribes nature is not merely hunting-ground and pasture, but mysterious living Presence of invisible powers. Endless motion and endless rest, brooding stillness, inexplicable sounds, stir strange yearning and awe in these children of the open eye and ear. Who shall solve these mysteries, and draw the secret runes of life and death out of the night and the day? He whose organization is most sensitive to the contact of these subtle forces shall be holy and dear to men. The natural seer is the first recognized ruler. The grateful people will live to honor, die to appease him. They will stand afar off, while he talks with gods and spirits for their sake. Moses shall go in among the clouds and lightnings for us. Vaśishtha shall pray for us to Indra, the storm-ruler, to annihilate our foes. This interpreter of Nature fulfils all ideal functions, except that of military chief or king. He is magician, astrologer, physician, philosopher, poet, moral leader. And he is eminently sincere. It is his faith and feeling that make him what he is, and give him his power over the people. He is meeting their deepest needs as well as his own; being more plainly impressible than others by those powers which all confess. As yet there is no priestcraft here. And as nature is felt but as a chaos of undistinguished powers, so society has reached nothing like a hierarchy of classes. A division of labor is in fact just beginning in this instinctive respect for the inspired, or possessed person.

Such is the Aryan *purohita;* such the Hebrew *nâbi* or *roëh*.[1] Both are properly natural seers. The name purohita, meaning *one who has charge*,[2] shows how

[1] 1 Sam. ix. 9; Judges xvii. [2] Lassen, I. 795.

closely the sentiment we have described allied itself with the performance of religious rites. As social relations are developed, this class become not only psalmists and singers, but teachers and counsellors of the king.[1] They direct his policy, simply because they are his wisest men. "That king withstands his enemies," says the Rig Veda, "who honors a purohita; and the people bow before him of their own accord."[2] The seer teaches his wisdom to his children, who follow in his honored paths. They come to have esoteric mysteries; but it is simply because their religious disciplines as well as natural susceptibilities have put them in possession of physical or psychological knowledge which the multitude can receive only in parables.

By and by the seers become an organization. These hereditary disciplines draw them into closer combination for such purposes as grow naturally out of their public functions; and we have Levites, Magi, Brahmans. The Hindu purohitas, thus transformed, are bound into *charanas* and *parishads*, schools and associations for definite objects, such as the guardianship of formulas and rites, or the study of Vedic hymns. They are divided into forty-nine *gotras*, or families, who trace their descent from the "seven holy rishis," and the mythical or other saints who figure in their traditions; and these gotras are governed by strict religious and social regulations. Gradually the text becomes more precious than the soul which created it; and at last its guardian is holier even than itself. The freedom and ardor of the Veda hymn are supplanted by formulas of doctrine, the oracles of Nature

The Brahmans.

[1] 2 Sam. xxiv. 11.

[2] *R. V.*, IV. 5, 7, 10. See Roth, in *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, I. 80.

by ritual law. A corporate authority grows up, by force of intellectual supremacy and in the name of religion, which favorable circumstances develop into the Brahman caste.

The heroic life of the Greek cantons in the older Aryan spirit forbade this distinct separation of a religious class from the rest of the community.[1] But the contemplative Hindus, passive, fatalistic, yearning in the lassitude of tropical life for self-surrender to ideal powers, gave full sweep to the caste tendency, and became its typical representatives.

The priesthood.

Such, substantially, is the history of priesthood in all times. It begins in the natural gravitation of power to the wisest and friendliest men. In the Middle Ages, a Martin, an Ambrose, or a Gregory, standing for the weak and oppressed in the name of God, made iron knees and fierce unshorn heads bow down, and do penance for every act of injustice. But where the prophet stood in the morning of a religion, by and by stands the priest, its functionary, inheriting his honors, but not his spirit. It is the destiny of every organized religion. In the Eastern races the degeneration was not arrested by science or political liberty. But, on the other hand, it escaped that sort of ecclesiastical jesuitism which follows the deliberate refusal to recognize what these teachers bring. For the impulses of nature wrought *through* the religion, not against it: a real faith, both in priests and people, made devotees and martyrs after its own kind.

The other castes likewise begin in certain rude

[1] The priest and king were there one and the same person; and, both in Hellenic and Roman civilization, the political element gradually absorbed the religious into its own current, shaping it to practical and general uses.

forms of social need. A portion of the tribe becomes agricultural. It must be defended from sudden incursions, in its quiet settlement along the Ganges or Nile. The Soldier, as more independent, and as holding more firmly to the traditions of the free roving life, will stand higher in the social scale than the Husbandman. His function is an indispensable one: he assumes, with this social pre-eminence, the special burden of public defence. He rules not by the might of the strongest, so much as by the *need* of the strongest. Contempt of labor in the ancient communities was *comparative*, not absolute. In all of them there are recognitions of its worth, such as Hesiod's "Works and Days," or the lives of early Romans, like Cincinnatus and Cato. But the labors of the priest and soldier are more prized than those of artisans or tillers of the earth. The pursuits of settled life begin to exist, on mere sufferance by the armed nomad; and they endure only so far as protected by the military class. Again, the handicrafts, as they arise, are subservient to the wants of the agriculturist; and so we have the natural order of the castes. Veneration for parental disciplines and example, and the need of an exact transmission of methods, render all employments hereditary. Force of fellowship, tradition, custom, accomplish the rest. Thus society becomes organized by the laws of precedence in public service. In its origin the baleful caste system, which is not confined to Egypt and India, but in some form has appeared in most races at a certain stage of development, was simply an instinctive effort for the Organization of Labor.[1]

The other castes.

[1] Quinet (*Génie des Religions*) has traced a striking parallel between Hindu castes and the European classes in the Middle Ages, another epoch of social reconstruction.

Plato himself, in his ideal Republic, supposes classes to have originated in a natural division of labor, and justice to be that adherence of each to its own function which the general good requires. I cannot doubt that Plato's "justice" is the philosophical statement of a natural ideal, which had much to do with constructing the earlier forms of society.

Hindu ideas of the origin of castes.

An old Hindu myth gives the following solution of our question. Brahmâ created a son, and, calling him Brahman, bade him study and teach the Veda. But, fearing the attacks of wild beasts, he prayed for help; and a second son was created, named Kshatriya, or warrior, to protect him. But, employed as he was in defence, he could not provide the necessaries of life; and so a third son, Vaiśya, was sent to till the soil; and as, once more, he could not make the tools, and do the other needful service, a youth called Sudra succeeded, and all dwelt together, serving Brahmâ.[1] The Brihad Upanishad says that "Brahmâ is in all the castes, in the form of each." The law books and the older mythologists deprecate the idea of a violent origin of the system, and affirm that all the castes descend from One God; the priest proceeding from Brahmâ's head, the soldier from his arm, the husbandman from his leg, the śudra from his foot. Buddhist accounts, which describe castes as the consequence of social degeneracy, none the less represent them as having been spontaneous and elective. A discourse attributed to Buddha himself contains a legend of the following purport: —

[1] Creuzer, *Relig. de l'Antiquité*, I. 227.

[2] *Manu*, I. 31; *Yâjnavalkya*, III. 126 A passage to similar effect in the *Rig Veda* (X. 90, 6, 7) is believed to be of later origin than the rest. Müller's *Chips*, II. 308.

When outrages on society began, a ruler was elected to preserve order, who received for such service a portion of the produce. He was called Khattiyo, or *Kshatrya*, as owner of lands, and afterwards *Raja*, as rendering mankind happy. But his race was originally of the same stock with the people, and of perfect equality with them. Then, by reason of the increase of crimes, the people appointed from among themselves Bahmanas, or suppressors of vice and awarders of punishment, — a class which afterwards became fond of living in huts in the wilderness; and these were the ancestors of the *Brahmans*, who also were therefore originally of the common stock. Other persons, who distinguished themselves as artificers, were called wessa, or *Vaiśya*, while others, addicted to hunting (ludda), became *śudras*; but all these classes were at first equal with the rest of mankind. Finally, from out of all these classes came persons who despised their own castes, left their habitations, and led wandering lives, saying, "I will become *samana*, ascetic, or priest." Thus the sacerdotal class, being formed from all the rest, does not properly constitute a caste.[1]

Finally, the Bhagavadgitâ, giving the philosophy of Brahmanism on the subject, refers these subordinations to differences of natural disposition (*guna*) among men; in other words, to moral gravitation.[2] This resembles the defences of slavery offered by the later Greeks and modern Americans; and serves, like these, to demonstrate that the worst institutions are compelled to do homage to a natural sense of right, and must defend themselves by the pretence of justice. But the common idea which all these Hindu authorities suggest — the intimation of mythologist, lawgiver, and theorist alike — is that castes were, in their origin, spontaneities of social growth, pursuing, both by divine order and human consent, the common good of society. Nor did the common sense and humanity of the people fail to recognize that the separation of

[1] This legend, as translated by Turnour, is given in full in Colonel Sykes's *Notes on Ancient India* (*Journal of Roy. As. Soc*, vol vi.).

[2] So the Vishnu and Vâyu Purânas.

the classes by absolute difference of origin was itself a delusion, and refuse it place in their ideal of history.[1]

The lowest castes.

As far as regards the three upper castes in India, the explanation now given seems adequate. But it is to be noted that the lowest caste was black; that its name Śudra is not Sanskrit, but designated an indigenous tribe; and that its caste degradation would thus appear to be the result of conquest by the invading Aryans.[2]

There are many outcast classes, even lower than the Śudra. These are the product of "mixed marriages," from which, as confusion of the castes, according to the law, all possible evils proceed.[3] Doubtless Michelet's opinion, that the whole relation of the caste system to the aborigines was but an indispensable policy of self-protection on the part of the Aryan tribes against absorption into degraded races, is entitled to some regard in explaining this intense hatred of mixed marriages, which we find throughout the Brahmanical legislation.[4] Yet there are also ignoble sources of low-caste miseries, and it is plain that priestcraft has had its share in elaborating a system which began in simple instincts of mutual help.

[1] Muir has fully established the truth of his statement (*Sansk. Texts*, I. 160) that "the *separate origination* of the four castes is far from being an article of belief universally received by Indian antiquity." Abundant passages in the Râmâyana describe the earliest or Krita age of man, in which "righteousness was supreme," when "the soul of all beings was white;" when "men were alike in trust, knowledge, and observance;" when "the castes were devoted to one deity, used one formula, rule, and rite, and practised one duty." And the Bhâgavata Purâna says (IX. 14, 18) there was formerly but one Veda, essence of speech, one God, and one caste, the triple Veda entering in the Tretâ, or later and degenerate age.

[2] Unless the Aryan occupation was, as Maine believes, a colonization rather than a conquest. The *Rig Veda* calls the black skin the "hated of India" (IX. 73, 5). *Varna*, or caste, may mean color, and the Mahâbhârata carries out the idea, representing Brahmâ as having created the Brahman white, the Kshatriya red, the Vaiśya yellow, and the Śudra black. Weber *Vorlesungen*, p. 18, Duncker, II. 12, 55; Lassen, I 799.

[3] *Manu*, VIII. 353; X. 45.

[4] *Bible de l' Humanité*, p. 40.

The Brahmans must have owed their supremacy to other sources than physical force. In modern Kashmir and the Mahratta country they still rule by the brain and the pen.[1] The Hindu has always believed that his chief power lay in blessing and cursing. According to Manu, "Speech is the weapon by which they destroy their foes."[2] The Râmâyana makes the priest Vaśishtha overcome the Kshatriya Viśvâmitra by the miraculous power of his staff. In the Rig Veda, both these saints, who became for later times representatives of rival castes, are alike *purohitas;* and the whole third book is ascribed to Viśvâmitra. No contest of classes had then arisen, and the poet's inspiration was honored without regard to the question whether he was soldier or priest.[3] Even were it probable that any such internecine conflict between the two orders as that described by the poets in the myth of Paraśurâma, which ends in the "extermination" of the Kshatriyas, ever really occurred, it is plain that nothing of the kind was possible until the caste system had become fully organized. In no case could it have been the primary source of priestly supremacy.

Origin of Brahmanical authority.

Paraśurâma himself, in the legend, is a Kshatriya, and destroys his own caste, not merely in the interest of Brahmanical revenge for the murdered priestly tribe of Brighu, but also from motives of a personal character, the Kshatriyas having slain his father. It would seem from this that the reference is to a civil war inside the soldier caste.[4]

Lassen and Roth, upon the whole, regard the con-

[1] Campbell on *Indian Ethnology, Journal Bengal Society*, 1866.
[2] *Manu*, XI. 33. [3] Burnouf, *Essai sur le Veda.*
[4] Wuttke, *Gesch. d. Heidenth*, II. 321; Mun, *Sansk Texts*, I. ch iii.; *Mahâbh.*, III.

flict of Vaśishtha and Viśvâmitra as a symbolic expression for the victory of Brahmanical organization over the simpler life of Vedic times. Viśvâmitra, as his name indicates, has always represented the democratic or popular element in Indian faith. And the outcast races have generally been associated with his family.[1]

When this organization of castes was effected, or how far its development ever proceeded, is not easy to determine. A rationalistic and democratic element, of which distinctive Buddhism was but a single expression, seems to have existed in every epoch of Hindu thought; and this must have constantly hindered the growth of Brahmanical authority. The progress of the system must therefore have been slow. A civil war of so barbarous and destructive a character as the tale of Paraśurâma implies becomes extremely improbable.

If, as has been conjectured, the conflict occurred in later Buddhist times,[2] it must still have been of a very different character from that described in the legend; for the history of Buddhism gives no record of such a conflict in any form. Nor, as matter of fact, were the Kshatriyas "exterminated;" either "three times," as the poet puts it, or even once. Their descendants abound in Râjputana and the Panjâb, amidst the oldest seats of Hindu civilization. In the epics there are still signs of superiority in the soldier class: the chieftains often treat Brahmans with contempt, as mercenary sacrificers. At the marriage of Draupadi,[3] the

[1] The word *viś* means probably to occupy or hold (Greek, οἶκος; Latin, *vicus*; English, *wick*), and indicates the settled household'ng class; hence Vaiśyas, the agricultural caste, and probably Vishnu, the preserving One.

[2] Wheeler's *History of India*, II. 64, Campbell, *ut supra*.

[3] *Mahâbh.*, I.

Râjahs are indignant at being humbled by a Brahman, whom the maiden chooses for her husband in preference to all her Kshatriya suitors.

Manu, indeed, believed to have been himself a Kshatriya, records the names of kings, who perished by reason of not submitting to Brahmanical *divine right*. But this means only that the spiritual arm claimed and secured mastery over the temporal, in the maturity of both, as it afterwards did in Christendom.

Like every thing Hindu, this worship of a priesthood was hewn out of an abstract conception. With whatever base elements mingled, to whatever ends exploited, the *theory* was that justice could be administered only by just men, and that punishment belonged only to the pure.[1] As the Egyptian priesthood represented the national idea of absolute duty, and exhorted the king on solemn occasions to the use of his power for the public good,[2] so the Brahman was held to be an "incarnation of Dharma, or *Sovereign Right*; born to promote justice and guard the treasure of duties."[3] The king must appoint a Brahman as chief of his ministers.[4] The Brihad declares justice created to rule force (Kshatriya). "Through it the weak shall overcome the strong." Therefore the Brahman was inviolable, world-maker, world-preserver, venerable even to the gods. Horrible transmigrations are the penalty for assaulting him, even with a blade of grass, and barbarous punishments for slaying or mutilating him. The grains of dust wet by his blood are counted as years in the atonement of the murderer.[5] Down at his feet, and

Hindu priesthood ship an ideal.

[1] *Manu*, VII. 30, *Yâjn*, I. 354.
[2] *Diod. Sicul.*
[3] *Manu.*, I. 98, 99
[4] Ibid, VII 58, 59.
[5] Ibid., IX. 314, 316; XI. 84, IV 166, 168, *Yâjn.*, II 215.

ask forgiveness, if you have confuted him in logic. Let him suffer, and the nation perishes. The sea fails, the fire goes out, the moon dwindles, if his prayers and offerings for the people cease. He is the producer, the healer, the deliverer: the world is but the outcome of the virtue of which he is the visible sign. He may violate every rule of caste without sin, to relieve himself from extremity of distress: though the king die of hunger, the Brahman shall not be taxed, his contribution being already infinite. He is venerable from his birth; though a Brahman be but ten years old, and a Kshatriya a hundred, the former is the father, and all things are his.[1]

Its meaning.

To invest individuals or classes with an exclusive divinity belongs to all forms of organized religion hitherto prevalent in the world. And it is easy to show, in this worship of the Brahman which is its typical form, of what folly, superstition, and despotism it is capable. But such criticism, however just, does not explain the facts of history. We would recognize that sentiment, in itself eternally valid, which found crude and blind expression in this old absolutism, so as to give it currency with human nature. What it aspired to, in its imperfect way, is in fact achieved only through the mutual stimulation of free, vigorous, practical races. The question which Brahman worship properly suggests is whether he, whom the progress of civilization has shown to be the *real goal* of that imperfect groping and striving, whether the *true* preserver of states and sustainer of worlds, he whose conscience outraged, whose service stayed or suppressed, is indeed the people's shame

[1] *Manu*, XI. 206; IX. 316; X. 103, II. 135; I. 100.

and loss, — whether the just citizen, the laborer for universal ideas and uses, has at last adequate recognition and respect. Meantime it is well to note how strong an impulse to this natural veneration underlies the most unpromising features of Hindu life.

Brahmanical absolutism could not have been the mere device of a body of priests, imposed from without on the religious sentiment. Priest and people were alike swayed by a sense of the indispensableness of spiritual help. They comprehend that to bring this is to sustain the world; that social order, custom, inspiration, are derived from this; that the first of duties is to recognize him who has this to give; and that to stay this product is to deal destruction to the people. Here, in the crude ore, is the fine gold of an eternal idea, which these latest ages are still engaged in working out. Here is at least a sincere effort to divinize spiritual help; and the Brahman himself was substantially a believing servant of the impulse, even while he more or less selfishly directed it to effect his own supremacy.

Responsibility of the Brahman.

He wrought out the laws, under a sense of inspiration. He bowed his own neck under the yoke which he laid on the lower castes. This is certainly true, whatever the alloy of priestcraft in his legislation. The theory being that primitive power belonged only to the just, its organ must first master himself.[1] As far as the wretched Chandâla lay beneath this incarnate god, so far the god himself was beneath the law. Let him violate its precepts or disciplines, he shall be turned into a demon whose food is filth, and whose mouth a firebrand.[2] To

[1] *Manu*, VII. 30; *Yâjn*, I. 354.

[2] *Manu*, XII. 71.

neglect them is to make way for his own destruction. Dante's Christian Inferno is prefigured in these penalties of Brahmanical sin. "If, as judge, the Brahman shall overturn justice, it shall overturn him: if he extracts not the dart of iniquity from its wounds, he shall himself be wounded thereby."[1] If he begs gifts for a sacrifice, and uses them otherwise than for sacrifice, he shall become a kite or a crow;[2] if he begs from a low-caste man, he shall become an outcast in the next existence; and if he marries a low-caste woman, he degrades his family to her caste, and loses his own.[3] For his marrying a Śudra woman, the law declares there is no expiation.[4] Crimes are specified which will change his nature into that of a Śudra in three days.[5] The law forbids the king to slay him, even though convicted of all possible crimes.[6] Yet it also prescribes his banishment for capital offences, and even declares it permissible to kill him, if he attempts to kill.[7] If he steals, his fine is eight times that of a Śudra; and, if he accepts stolen property, he is punished as the thief.[8] Care is taken indeed that he shall be able to compound for the severest penalties, by milder penance; but the recognition of a higher law than his own will is none the less real, nor are his expiations an easy burden. The Brahmanical bed was not made of roses. The demands of asceticism rose in proportion to one's elevation in caste life, and the Śudra is a freeman by comparison, in the matter of ceremonial bonds.[9] Whatever rights the Brahman possessed over the lives and property of others, the

[1] *Manu*, VIII. 15, 12. [2] Ibid, XI 24, 25. [3] Ibid, III. 16, 17.
[4] Ibid, III. 19. [5] Ibid, X. 92 [6] Ibid., VIII. 380.
[7] Ibid., VIII. 350 [8] Ibid., VIII. 337, 340.
[9] For some curious effects of this fact on the relations of the castes, see Ludlow's *British India*, I. 57.

law insisted with energy that he should subdue his passions, be just and merciful, and return good for evil, on penalty of losing all the prerogatives of his birth. He must not gamble, nor sell spirituous liquors, nor indulge any sensual desires. Nor must we estimate lightly the practical power of these saving provisions, and of the religious beliefs from which they sprung. Alexander and his followers found the Indian Gymnosophists "blameless, patient, wise, and just."[1] And the Egyptian priesthood, under analogous disciplines to the Hindu, seem to have won a like reputation in the ancient world. A very interesting little tract was sent to Hodgson, and communicated by him to the Royal Asiatic Society, in which the Buddhist author confutes the doctrine of the castes *out of the mouth of Brahmans themselves;* proving, by a great number of examples drawn from their sacred writings, that Brahmanism cannot be a matter of birth nor race, nor wisdom, nor observance of rites. He shows that many leading Brahmanical authorities were from low-caste mothers, that many Śudras have become Brahmans by their austerities; quotes Manu to the effect that "bad actions will change a Brahman into a Śudra, that virtue is better than lineage, and that royalty without goodness is contemptible and worthless;" also the Mahâbhârata, as saying that the signs of a true Brahman are the possession of truth, mercy, self-command, universal benevolence; and that origi-

[1] Megasthenes, for example (*De Situ Orbis*, ch. xv.), describes the Brahmans as frugal in living; avoiding animal food or sensual pleasure, intent on serious conversation with such as are willing to hear. And Scholasticus, in the fifth century, says of them: "They worship God; never question Providence; always in prayer turning towards the light, wherever it may be; live on what the earth spontaneously brings forth; delight in the sky and woods, and sweet song of the birds; sing hymns to God, and desire a future life." These philosophers were in fact the highest ideals of the Greeks in morality and religion. See Marco Polo, and the Arabian writers on India, also Wuttke, 463, 464.

nally there was but one caste, the four arising from diversity of rites and vocations. "All men born of woman have the same organs, and are subject to the same wants."[1]

Condition of the Sudra.

These considerations may show the injustice we should do the Hindu caste-system in placing it on a moral level with modern slavery. The Śudras were indeed at the mercy of a fearful system of oppression. Legal penalties for enslaved races were neither more nor less barbarous in the Code of Manu than in the written and unwritten codes of the old Slave States of America. Slitting of tongues, pouring hot oil into mouths and ears, cutting off lips and branding foreheads, are necessary adjuncts of any system which undertakes to make any form of slavery its corner-stone, in old time or new. The thraldom of the Śudra was very distinctly stated. "Though emancipated, he does not become free, since none can divest him of a state which is natural to him."[2] He can possess no property as against a Brahman;[3] and must not accumulate wealth, lest he give trouble to the superior race![4] And a kind of colorphobia, too, certainly underlay the old bondage as it did the later. Whether the Sanskrit word for caste (varna) really points to the color of the skin or not, at present a doubtful question,[5] it is certain that the lowest caste was black, or nearly so. The indigenous races of India, according to good authority, are negrito.[6] As the Dasyas in the Veda are called "black skins," so the Aryas are the "white friends of Indra." It is

[1] *Transac of Roy. As. Soc.*, III. p. 160

[2] *Manu*, VIII 414 [3] Ibid., VIII 417. [4] Ibid., X. 129.

[5] Muir, II. 374–413; Lassen, I. 407–409; Duncker, II. 55. In the *Rig Veda*, *varna* has the sense of race, tribe, says Schoebel (*Researches*, p. 11).

[6] Campbell on *Indian Ethnology*, in *Jour Beng. Soc.*, 1866.

an old sin, this preying of the fair skin on the dark; and, in the overbearing oligarchy of British rule in India, its penalties are falling on the native posterity of those Aryan oppressors.

But there is this difference. The Brahman recognized a higher law than his own gain. The modern slaveholder made his power his law. Caste, in its general outlines, was an outgrowth of the social and religious faith of the East: slaveholding denied and affronted the conscience of the West. Caste rested on a belief in reciprocal duties that held every member of the system under rigid responsibilities and restraints: slaveholding rested on mere force and fraud, and the belief in a reciprocity of duties was exceptional and incidental. Man escapes from both systems not by miraculous intervention of Christianity, but by the deeper forces of his own moral and spiritual nature. As these have driven American slavery to self-destruction, so they have in past times counteracted, and continue to counteract, the worst tendencies of Hindu caste.

Difference of Eastern caste and Western slavery.

The military and mercantile classes intervened between the Brahman and the Śudra; and a series of mutual checks pervaded the system, which graduated its tyrannies, and mitigated their force. "The king is formed," says Manu, "out of the essence of the eight guardian deities, and exercises their functions. He is ordained protector of all classes in the discharge of their several duties."[1] In the Râmâyana, the king of that model Brahmanical city, Ayodhya, "takes tribute of his subjects, not for his own use, but to return it to them with greater

Checks to oppression in the caste system. Royalty.

[1] *Manu*, V. 96; VII. 80, 35.

beneficence; as the Sun drinks up the ocean, to return it to the earth in vivifying rain."[1] "O Bhârata," says Râma to his brother, "the tears which fall from those who are unjustly condemned will destroy the children and the herds of him who governs with partiality."[2] By the law of Manu, the king is under a responsibility equivalent to his power. The burden of innocent blood shed by the courts falls in large measure on him.[3] He is commanded to proceed mildly in dealing with offences: first by gentle admonition, then by severe reproof, then by fines, then by infliction of corporeal pain; and to use severest methods only as a last resort.[4]

All persons are obliged[5] to adjust their controversies according to the particular laws of their own order, and by reference to those who are familiar with the interests under question: kindred, fellow-artisans, cohabitants of villages, may decide lawsuits, and meetings for the purpose are entitled judicatories. There are judges appointed by the king also in these courts; and an appeal lies from these to higher ones, and finally to the king himself.

He is exhorted to mild and conciliatory discourse towards litigants. The law codes abound in injunctions upon him to adhere to justice by conscientious investigation of the cases brought before his tribunal. He is to appoint a counsellor from the priesthood, who shall check him if he act "unjustly, partially, or perversely." And the judicial assemblies are subject to the same rules. We are reminded of the official oath of the Egyptian judges not to obey the king if he

[1] *Râmâyana*, B. I. [2] Ibid., B II.
[3] *Manu*, VIII 18. [4] Ibid, VII. 104; VIII. 129.
[5] These rules for the administration of justice are taken from Colebrooke's elaborate Digest of Hindu Law. See *Trans. of Roy. As. Soc.*, vol. II. pp 174–194.

should command them to act unjustly. By Hindu law, the judge who sits silent and does not deliver his real opinion is deemed guilty of deliberate falsehood. The unjust judge is to be fined twice the penalty involved in the suit, and shall make good the loss to the injured party. The king shall appoint for the trial of causes only persons who are "gentle and tender rather than austere, and who are wise, cheerful, and disinterested."

The *poetic* ideal of Hindu royalty is found in Kâlidâsa's King Atithi, who, "even when young on the throne, was invincible through the love of his people; who spoke no vain words, nor recalled what he had given, inconsistent only in this, that, having overturned enemies, he lifted them again from the earth; seeking only what was practicable, as fire attacks not water, though the wind is its servant to consume the forest; amassing riches, only because gold gives power to help the unhappy; loving honest ways even in war; making travellers as safe as in their own homes; sending the poorest from his presence enabled to be generous to others, as the clouds come back from their voyages over the sea; making enemies feel the infection of his virtue."[1]

The severest caste-laws must have been inoperative, as the numberless contradictions and absurdities of the code amply manifest. It is certain that the cruelties made legal in Manu could never have been inflicted by any physical power which the priesthood could have possessed; and, as we have seen, it is matter of serious doubt whether this legislation ever had very extended recognition in India. To learn the actual condition of things, we must resort to other wit-

Looseness of the laws.

[1] *Raghuvanśa*, XVII.

nesses. I have already alluded to the testimony of Greeks who visited India before the Christian era, tc the excellence of royal and judicial administration. They report further that the courts judged without reference to any written code whatever; and such is to a great extent the case at the present time, local usages taking the place of positive written statutes.[1]

Interchangeableness of the castes.

Practically, the lines of caste were always ill-defined, shifting like waves of sand blown by the winds of the desert; a constant satire on its pretensions to immobility. Inter-marriage has always been permitted, and some of the mixed classes have been treated with respect. Colebrooke, in a valuable paper on the subject, has described the disintegration of fixed orders in Hindu society, and the breaking down of its "impassable walls" of caste by this subdivision into mixed classes. They were "multiplied to endless variety" at a very early epoch; so that it seems hardly possible that the division into four distinct classes could have really prevailed in India for any great length of time.

The higher castes could, in case of necessity, assume the occupations of the lower; and the Śudra could not only engage in trades belonging to the class above him, but even "gain exaltation in this world and the next, by performing certain lawful acts of the twice born men."[2] "In fact almost every occupation, though regularly the profession of a particular class, is open to most other classes. The only limitation is in the exclusive right of the Brahmans to teach the Vedas, and perform religious ceremonies."[3]

[1] Maine, *Village Communities*, p. 52.
[2] *Manu*, X 81, 96–99, 128; *Yâjn*, III. 35.
[3] Colebrooke, in *Asiatic Researches*, vol. v.

One may often, we are told,[1] see carpenters of five or six different low castes employed on the same building; and the same diversity may be observed among the craftsmen in dockyards, and on all other great works. Manu's caste laws are perpetually violated, even those to which the severest penalties are attached. It is well known that the Bengal army has been composed of high-caste Hindus, mostly Brahmans, as the Madras army is composed of low-caste men, and a Brahman may even be a private under a low-caste officer; an assertion of natural democracy as little likely to be relished in India as the authority of a negro general by scions of first families in America, yet equally inevitable in both cases. Men of low castes have been princes and had Brahmans in their service.[2] "The President of the Dharmasabhâ at Calcutta is a Sudra, while the secretary is a Brahman. Three-quarters the Brahmans in Bengal are servants."[3] High-caste cooks are said to be in great demand in the army, and in native families. The rules of Brahmanical purity make it far easier for the high-caste man to become servant to the low, than the reverse.[4] And this intermixture of caste functions has gone on from very early times, leading to an elaborate chapter of regulations in Manu.

Every thing in climate and ethnic constitution tended to favor this system in India; yet even there the force of justice in human nature has been too strong for it, and shown a transforming energy that is marvellous. Such testimonies suggest that the resort to supernaturalism, either to explain man's past or guarantee his future progress out of the barbarism of caste in

[1] Rickards, *India*, I. 32.
[2] Allen's *India*, p. 472.
[3] Müller's *Chips*, II. 350.
[4] Ludlow, I. 57.

any form, is wholly gratuitous. They have thus a bearing on the adequacy of Natural Religion to the explanation of history, which makes them of great interest in the present state of inquiry on that subject.

Democratic reactions.

Strong centrifugal and disintegrative tendencies have revealed themselves in the very structure of the system, affording ample proof that the free impulses of nature in which its first foundations were laid refused to yield either to priestcraft or social pride. "Manu's classification never passed in its integrity," says Mr. Hunter, "beyond the middle land of India. On the east where Lower Bengal begins, caste, as a fourfold classification, ceases. It never crossed the Indus on the west. Beyond this the tribes held all men equal."[1] In Northern India, at the present day, all castes mix socially together, even where separated by religious distinctions, or diversity of functions.[2] In the South, Śudras rank next to Brahmans; and their name has never had the degrading sense which is given it in Manu's Laws.[3] In truth the old doctrine of four distinct castes has no longer a semblance of validity anywhere. The ancient Śudras and Vaiśyas are absorbed into the infinite diversity of mixed castes, now no longer treated with contempt.[4] So are the old Dasyus of the Veda. Brahman cultivators are numerous in Western India, and in Oude outnumber all others; and the chief traders, civil officers, and writers in the Panjâb[4] are descendants of the Kshatriya, or soldier class. "The Vaiśya caste," says Ludlow, "has almost wholly disappeared. The Kshatriya (as soldier) exists perhaps

[1] *Annals of Rural Bengal*, pp. 102, 104. [2] Campbell, p. 136.
[3] See Monier Williams's *Lecture on the Study of Sanskrit*.
[4] Campbell on *Indian Ethnology*.

only among the Râjputs of the north-western frontier; the Śudra, scarcely anywhere but among the Yâts and Mahrattas. Only the Brahman holds his ground; and beneath him a chain of castes, varying almost infinitely in number according to locality, seldom less than seventy, and averaging a hundred. In Malabar are enumerated three hundred."[1] And of the Brahmans Wilson tells us that "they have universally deviated from their original duties and habits;" that "as a hierarchy they are null; as a literary body, few, and meet with slender countenance from their countrymen;" that "they have ceased to be the advisers of the people;" and that "various sects have arisen which denounce them as impostors."[2] The gosains and fakeers have succeeded to the old Brahmanical sway, and generally contemn these subordinations of the ancient system, which one reformer after another has assailed, from Gotama Buddha to the present day. The most national religious festival in India, that of Jagannâth in Orissa, has always rejected caste. "No one in India," says Max Müller, "is ashamed of his caste; and the lowest Pariah is as proud and anxious to preserve his own as the highest Brahman. Sudras throw away their cooking vessels as defiled, if a Brahman enters the house."[3] Sir H. Elliott, in his valuable work upon the races of North-Western India, supplies conclusive evidence on the failure of caste to maintain its principle of immobility in that region. "The attempt of early lawgivers to divide society into classes, which should hold no communion with each other, was one which broke down at an early period. Even in India 'love will be lord of all.' The plan of

[1] *British India*, I. 48; Elliott, *Races of N. W. India*, I. p. 166.
[2] *Religious Sects of the Hindus*, 1862. [3] *Chips*, II. 347.

degrading the issue of mixed castes has been highly beneficial. It is like the disintegration of granite till it forms fertile soil. In practice, a man who had a Brahman or Râjput for father was not likely to be ashamed of it, or to be looked down on by his fellow-men; and the barriers of caste once overstepped, that mixture and fusion of the people began which has gone on to our day, and promises to continue till there shall be no remnant of caste left. A laconic modern proverb in North Behar says, 'Caste is rice;' *i.e.*, matter of eating or not eating with others, only. It is a hopeful sign, presaging, like the Brahmô Somaj, a new and better order of things in India."[1] One or two more witnesses will suffice.

Says the author of "Rural Annals of Bengal:" "That the time foretold in the Sanskrit Book of the Future, when the Indian people shall be of one caste and form one nation, is not far off, no one who is acquainted with the Bengalis of the present day can doubt. They have about them the capabilities of a noble nation." Finally, Maine does not hesitate to say that caste is now "merely a name for trade or occupation;"[2] and Monier Williams asserts that "however theoretically strict, it practically resolves itself into a question of rupees."[3] Caste, in Ceylon as well as in India, is now in fact a purely social distinction, and disconnected from any sanction derived from religious belief.[4]

The *Drama* has given expression to the democratic

[1] Elliott, I. p. 167. [2] *Village Communities*, p. 57.

[3] *Lecture on the Study of Sanskrit* (1861). He mentions the fact that, a few years before, it was decided at a meeting of Old and New School Hindus in Calcutta that certain young Brahmans, who had lost caste, should be readmitted on paying a large fine and performing purification.

[4] Tennent, *Christianity in India*, p. 91.

spirit in India, — as it did to the opening of modern liberties in Europe, — by protest against the pride of caste, which is in fact but the *feudalism of the East*. The Mrichchikâti,[1] for instance, describes the social contempt that befalls poverty, in indignant language, as suitable to the Western as to the Eastern world: — Shown in literature.

"This is the curse of slavery, to be disbelieved when you speak the truth.

"The poor man's truth is scorned: the wealthy guests look at him with disdain; he sneaks into a corner.

"Believe me, he who incurs the crime of poverty adds a sixth sin to those we term most hideous.

"Disgrace is in misconduct: a worthless rich man is contemptible."

The same play brings out a Brahman thief who uses his *sacred thread*, "that useful appendage to a Brahman," to measure the walls he would scale, and to open the doors he would force. It ridicules a Brahman pandit, "stuffed with curds and rice, chanting a Veda-Hymn; a pampered parrot." A king is, in another passage, represented as commanding the impalement of a priest. Again, the brother of a slain king, dragged about by a mob, is set free by the forgiveness of the subject he would have put to death unjustly. A slave is shown as a model of integrity, and made to say, "Kill me, if you will: I cannot do what ought not to be done." A chandâla, the lowest of all outcasts, when ordered to execute a supposed criminal, replies: —

"My father, when about to depart to heaven, said to me: 'Son, whenever you have a culprit to execute, proceed slowly; for perhaps some good man may buy the criminal's liberation; perhaps

[1] Translated by Wilson.

a son may be born to the king, and a general pardon be proclaimed; perhaps an elephant may break loose, and the prisoner escape in the confusion; or perhaps a change of rulers may take place, and every one in bondage may be set free.'"[1]

The lower castes have established claims to respect in other ways. In Ceylon they have been the only astronomers, and amidst their astrological fancies attained a certain amount of scientific knowledge, calculating eclipses and noting the periods of the stars.[2]

Influence of the native tribes.

It is probable that the intercourse of the Aryans with native tribes has helped to weaken and disintegrate the caste system. The very ancient popular rites in honor of serpents, doubtless of agricultural origin, and celebrated throughout India, in which all classes unite, amidst holiday pleasures, prove that a democratic influence has proceeded from the aboriginal races. Most of these tribes have always been free from caste; many have bravely resisted the invader among their rocky fastnesses, maintaining a heroic independence. And, with all their barbarism, many of them have shown primitive virtues which ignore conventional distinctions among men. The Bheels are described as "more honest than the Aryan Hindus," and their women as having a higher position than those of the latter race, and taking part actively in all reforms in behalf of order and industry.[3] The Khonds believe that to break an oath, or repudiate a debt, or refuse hospitality, is to invite the wrath of the gods.[4] Another writer speaks of "the kindly spirit of the Kols towards each other." "The Kol girl is never abusive: her vocabulary is as

[1] Wilson's *Hindu Theatre*, vol. i.
[2] See Upham's *Sacred Books of Ceylon*, Introd. xiv.
[3] Mrs. Spier's *India*. [4] Lassen, I. 377, 378.

free from bad language of this kind as a Bengali's is full of it."[1] "The whole Santhal village," says Hunter, "has joys and sorrows in common. It works together, hunts together, worships together, eats together. No man is allowed to make money out of a stranger."[2] In the interesting work here quoted, the democratic "village-system," which extends over a large portion of India, is traced back to the aboriginal tribes. They must, at all events, have shared it from the earliest period with the Aryan immigrants. Ludlow[3] depicts them in general terms as "savages, with scarcely a rag to cover them, yet honest and truthful, as all free races are." "A tithe of the care and benevolence expended on the Hindus," says a still more recent writer,[4] "would make the hill races a noble and enlightened people." However strong some of these expressions may seem, the unanimity of the best observers points at least to a strong democratic force as working from this direction on the Hindu social system.

Such the force of democratic reaction within this oldest system of social wrongs, — a system which has generally been taken as type of their unchangeableness under heathen influences. Such the protest that began with its beginning, and steadily smote against its iron joints till it broke them in pieces; not indeed introducing liberty, but preparing the way for it by dividing the bondage to an indefinite extent, atomizing the elements as it were for better affinities. And this old Brahmanical code, wrecked and stranded by the sacred instinct of freedom, bears witness that

[1] *Bengal Journal*, 1866. [2] *Annals of Rural Bengal*, pp. 202, 208, 216.
[3] *British India*, I. 19.
[4] Lewins, *Races of S. E. India*, 349; also *Journal Bengal Society* (1866), II. 151.

man was always greater than his own theocracies, oligarchies, or despotisms, of whatever kind, and will never abide in them as in his home.

Positive rights of lower castes.

But further, so far as was possible amidst a series of changes like these, each caste has always really stood by itself in political matters, managing its affairs by its own suffrage; and even the lowest have always had, notwithstanding the *theory* of the law, certain well-understood and well-defined civil rights, such as that of acquiring and bestowing property, learning to read, and performing certain sacrifices.[1] Caste usages have even been found to resemble in some respects the ancient popular institutions of the European Teutonic tribes. Slavery itself, in many parts of India, has helped to equalize caste, since men of all castes could become slaves, and a Brahman might serve a Śudra; while, in Malabar, slaves, in their turn, have had higher social consideration than some of the free castes.[2]

Slavery.

Slavery in India must be distinguished from caste. It stands on a wholly different basis and originates in causes of a more superficial nature. According to the Mohammedan law, there is but *one* justifiable ground of enslavement: namely, punishment of infidels fighting against the true faith. According to the Hindus, *fifteen* causes are enumerated, among which voluntary or involuntary *self-sale* is the substance of several, and punishment that of others.[3] The strong language of the law concerning a slave's natural destitution of rights received in fact many important qualifications. He could be manumitted; if he saved his master's life, he could demand his free-

[1] Buyers's *Northern India*, 314, 457; Allen, *India*, 471.

[2] Adam, *Slavery in India*, 131–133.

[3] Adam, Macnaghten's *Hindu and Mohammedan Law*.

dom and the portion of a son; if the only son of his master, both his slave mother and himself became free by virtue of that condition alone; when enslaved for special causes, voluntarily or otherwise, his bondage ceased with the cessation of its grounds.[1] Contracts made by slaves in the name of an absent master, for the behoof of the family, could not be rescinded by him; nor was there any bar to the institution of judicial proceedings by a slave against his master; nor, in practice, to the reception of his testimony thereon.[2] We must observe, too, that slavery in India has not been as in the West an incident of race, but attached alike to *all races*, and even to all classes in society. It was therefore impossible that the relation as such should be held, as in Christian countries, to be something organic and essential in its victim.

Distinction of Eastern from Western slavery.

Notwithstanding Hindu laws speak of slaves as mere cattle, though they could be transferred with the soil, or sold from hand to hand, and though their condition, especially in Southern India, has been past description miserable and degraded,[3] yet it may fairly be said that slavery, in the sense in which we have been used to understand the word, has not existed in India.[4] It does not claim in that country to rest on religious foundations.[5] Chief Justice Harrington distinctly declared that "the law and usage of slavery had no immediate connection with religion," and that its abolition would not shock the religious prejudices of the people. Manumission

[1] Colebrooke, in Macnaghten, p. 130.

[2] *Manu*, VIII. 167; Adam, p. 17.

[3] See the accounts given by Adam; and in a valuable pamphlet on *Slavery in India* (printed in London by Thomas Ward & Co., 1841), full of statistics drawn from official documents, originally prepared for the *Morning Chronicle*.

[4] Buyers, 314, 315.

[5] Macnaghten, p. 128.

itself, on the other hand, is regarded as an act of piety expiative of offences; and by the Mohammedan law it is expressly commended as a religious merit. The form in which slavery appeared in ancient India was so mild that the Greeks refused it the name; Megasthenes declaring definitely that "there are no slaves in India," and Arrian that "all Hindus are free." And even in later times and in regions of which these writers had no knowledge, it is not easy to find among the Hindus the abstract idea of chattelhood, as Western ingenuity has wrought it out. Everywhere, for example, are traces of the right of the slave to inheritance; while the "Law of Nature," as the Romans called those ancient ethnic customs which had a universal scope, was always favorable to his claims.[1] I venture to affirm that nothing of the exact nature of Western slavery *as an idea* existed in the older East, either among the Hebrews, the Persians, the Chinese, or the Hindus. The systematic reduction of men to things could hardly have been conceived by these instinctive races. It belongs to socially self-conscious generations, who know enough of ideal freedom to comprehend what the negation of it implies. It is a satanic fall made possible only by a mature sense of personal rights. The earliest approach to it, so far as I know, was by polished ethical philosophers of Greece.[2]

Appeal of caste to ontology.

But there is a family likeness in the forms of slavery in all races and times. And that theoretic basis which could not quite reach the absolutism of Western bondage was, within the limits of caste, developed with extreme precision. The idea

[1] Maine's *Ancient Law*, 158–160.

[2] Aristotle's *Politics*, B. 1. ch. 4–6.

of caste everywhere rests upon an abstract postulate of organic differences among men.[1] Thus, in Manu, it is the "nature" of a Brahman to read Vedas, to pray, to be adored. It is the "nature" of a Kschatriya to fight, of a Vaiśya to labor, of a Śudra to serve. This belief grew up insensibly, as the system became fixed, and its distinctions hereditary. Then the Brahmanical priesthood went further, by a necessary law of development. With those subtle brains of theirs, they spun out an *ontology of caste*. The laboring class represented the physical world of *action*, in their philosophy an unreality, a kingdom of obscurity and delusion. The soldier caste represented the *will*, which struggles up out of this lower region, and maintains itself in contradistinction therefrom. The Brahmans themselves represented the purely *spiritual realm*, the only real life, absorbed in deity. As for the lowest caste, it lay outside the world of ideas, an opposite pole of negation; though even here it would seem that *no absolute evil* was affirmed, since from the lowest caste one might rise into the highest through transmigration. Thus it was attempted to justify a colossal servitude by the structure of the soul and the constitution of the universe. To us the chief value of this attempt is in its illustration of the necessity which compels every form of injustice to render account to the natural sense of justice in mankind. Mere power never sufficed to vindicate any despotic system in the sight of man. And in this fact lay guaranteed from the first an ultimate real perception and appreciation of social ethics. The ceaseless en-

[1] See Grote, on Plato's "guardians," or "golden and silver men," and on the way in which they would necessarily regard the "brass and iron" natures, ordained to lower functions and destinies. Grote's *Plato*, III. 214.

forcement of all institutions to plead their cause at the ideal bar of conscience leads at last, without need of miracle, to a true commonwealth.

It was inevitable that caste should be driven in India, as slavery has been in America, to justify its falsity upon abstract grounds of nature and right. To this theoretic test it has to come, whether a thousand years before Christ or two thousand years after him. And the appeal to ontological defences was its refutation, just as we have since seen it to be the suicide of American slavery.

For a deeper dialectic came to rebut them. And Brahmanism was driven, on its own logical ground, to the utter denial of its own social principle. This result came to pass in the Buddhist reaction. For Buddhism was the abolition *upon recognized* metaphysical as well as moral principles, of all distinctions founded on caste, and the consequent affirmation of universal brotherhood. And from this Brahmanical caste has never fully recovered. So close lay truth to honest error, so inevitable was the appeal to pure reason three thousand years ago. The history of this reaction will claim our attention at a subsequent stage of these studies.

Democratic tendencies in the Hindu mind.

But we may go behind the spirit of caste, to far nobler tendencies in the Hindu mind. The old Vedic Hymns do not recognize it at all. The names afterwards given the three upper castes are found in these hymns, but not as indicative of social distinctions. Brahmana is appellative of prayer; Kshatriya, of force; and Viś, whence Vaiśya, of the people in a general sense. Indeed the old pastoral Aryans, as we have seen, were a very democratic community. They seem to have known no dis-

tinctions resembling those defined in Manu. The householder had his chosen seer, like the Hebrew, or might himself offer sacrifices as the head of his family.[1] The epics speak not only of Brahmans who descended from soldiers, and of Vaiśyas taking part in government, but of times when the whole population assembled to ratify the nomination of a King.[2] In the Mahâbhârata,[3] King Judhishthira is inaugurated by the united action of all the castes. So the Râmâyana tells us that Daśaratha called a great council of all his ministers and chieftains to discuss the appointment of a son to share the government; and that all the people were gathered together in like manner to express their preference, and give their advice. The divine Râma is the ideal of a democratic prince. His sanctity in the epic is itself a transference of the ideal of religion from the Brahman to the Kshatriya; an affirmation of liberty on this soil of caste. The chiefs praise him for continually "inquiring after the welfare of the citizens, as if they were his own children, afflicted at their distresses and rejoicing in their joy, upholding the law by protecting the innocent and punishing the guilty; so that all the people, whether they be servants or bearers of burdens, citizens or ryots, young or old, petition the monarch to install Râma as coadjutor in the administration of the Ráj."[4] Râma's brother Bhârata, seeking to move him from his determination to yield the crown, in obedience to his father's vow, as a last resort appeals to the people. "Why, O people! do you not lay your injunction on Râma?" And the

[1] Weber, *Vorlesungen*, p. 37; Lassen, I. 795.
[2] Lassen, I. 811.
[3] Mahâbhârata, B. II.
[4] Râmâyana, B. II.

people reply that they find reason on both sides, and cannot judge the matter in haste.

The people were from the first divided into little clans under independent chiefs. Down to this day the tribes of the Panjâb, that oldest homestead of the Hindu Aryans, remain free from consolidated monarchy and caste.[1]

A quarter of the population of India, about fifty millions, are governed by about two hundred native chiefs. Such is the force of the centrifugal principle of local independence.[2] Small, self-governed communities, adhering to local customs and traditions, and organized in guilds and corporations, exist all over India, even under the shadow of royalty and caste, persistent protests in many ways against the authority of these institutions.[3] The type of this free spirit is the Sikh, whose Bible says: —

"They tell us there are four races; but all are of the seed of Brahm.

"The four races shall be one, and all shall call on the Teacher.

"Think not of caste, but abase thyself, and attend to thy own soul."

Title to the land.

Originally the full title of the laborer to the soil was religiously conceded. "The old sages declare that cultivated land is the property of him who first cut away the wood or cleared and tilled it, just as an antelope belongs to the first hunter by whom it is mortally wounded.[4] Even the feudalism of the Râjput princes still acknowledges the ryot's ownership in the land.[5] This natural hold upon the soil and the right of self-government consequent thereon have been

[1] See Weber, p. 3.
[2] *Westm Rev.*, July, 1859.
[3] Duncker, II. 105; Müller, *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 52.
[4] *Manu*, IX. 44.
[5] *Asiatic Journal*, New Series, V. 41.

embodied by the Hindus from remote times in what are called the "Village Communities."[1]

By this system the land is held by the village commune as an organized whole, having complete arrangements for distributing the produce among the laborers, after the payment of a certain small fraction, differing at different times, to the king and the local chiefs. The village has its arable land cultivated by all, and its waste land used by all as pasture. It has its judge or head-man, appointed by the râja in the old time, but now a hereditary officer. He is the agent of the village in all transactions with the government, the assessor of taxes according to property, and the manager of the common lands. Yet all matters of moment are determined by "free consultation with the villagers, and disputes decided with the assistance of arbitrators."[2] Village communities.

The organization of the little commonwealth is complete; having its judge, its collector, its superintendent of boundaries, its notary public, its weigher and gauger; its guide for travellers, its priest, schoolmaster, astrologer; its watch and police; its barber, carpenter, smith, potter, tailor, spice-seller; its letter-carrier, irrigator, and burner of the dead; all functions being hereditary in most villages, and all work paid for out of the common fund.[3] Within the limits of Oriental instincts this little community is an independent unit; a "petty republic;" containing within itself all the elements of stability and mutual satisfaction; organ-

[1] "The right of the sovereign extended only to the tax. Theoretically, he was owner of every thing acquired by his subjects; but practically they had their rights, as fully secured as his own." Ritchie, *British World in the East*, I. 179

[2] See Wheeler, *History of British India*, II. 597. Hunter's *Orissa*, (1872) vol. ii.

[3] Mill, *British India*, I. 217; Heeren, *Asiatic Nations*, II. 259; *Westm. Review* for July, 1859; Ludlow, *Brit. India*, I. 61.

ized for the security and profit of each family in the position hereditarily or otherwise assigned it, and according to the recognized measure of its contribution to the public service. And these villages, it may be added, have from very ancient times been, not infrequently, bound together into larger organizations, containing generally eighty-four members.[1] They are an admirable illustration of the principle of *Mutual Help*, and of its controlling influence over mankind in the early organization of social life. The members of such primeval republics, of which India itself has been styled "one vast congeries," have no other traditions of political duty than what this form of government has transmitted from immemorial antiquity. "They trouble themselves very little about the dismemberment of empires; and, provided the township remain intact, it is matter of perfect indifference to them who becomes sovereign of the country, the internal administration continuing the same."[2] The system in fact rests on principles that may not only be called congenital with actual Hindu tribes, but go back to more primitive social relations. The tie which unites the members of these village communities involves, as Maine has shown in his remarkable work on Ancient Law, the assumption of a common family descent, suggesting unmistakably their origin in Patriarchalism, the earliest constructive principle of social life. The same profound student, in a more recent volume of equal interest, has added to his previous parallel between the Indian communities and the Russian and Slavonian village-brotherhoods, a

[1] Elliott, *N. W. India*, II. p. 4.

[2] Wilkes's *Historical Sketches of the South of India.* See Heeren, *Asiatic Nations*, II. 260.

description of the very close resemblance of the first-named organizations to the old Teutonic townships, — a resemblance "much too strong to be accidental," — and especially in their presenting "the same double aspect of a group of families united by common kinship, and a company of persons exercising joint ownership of land."[1] These Indo-European affinities will of course suggest to the reader a common origin in the primeval life of the race previous to its dispersion into different nationalities.

Their liberties.

Mr. Maine infers from the character of village communities, as well as from other data, that the oldest discoverable forms of property in land are collective rather than individual ownerships;[2] though he finds a periodical redistribution of the land among *families* to have been universal among Aryan races.[3] The Hindu villager's idea of freedom is certainly associated with the rights of the corporate body of which he is a member, rather than with personal independence, and the notion of his own individuality as a limitation of these traditional corporate rights is substantially new to him. The idea is doubtless profoundly alterative of this whole system, now subjected to the influence of European ideas and institutions. Yet the defect of personal freedom is by no means so great as might be inferred; since these corporate rights constitute the natural body of political consciousness, assuming the form of organic guaranties and sacred trusts. The Family, moreover, has its sphere, within which the commune does not penetrate, protected in part by patriarchal traditions of very great sanctity. Personal property is by no means

[1] *Village Communities in the East and the West*, pp. 12, 107, 127.
[2] Ibid., p. 76.
[3] Ibid., p. 82.

excluded from the system; and even the arable land, though owned by all, is marked off to different cultivators, by more or less permanent arrangements.

It is to be observed, too, that the absorption of proprietary rights in land by the commune is by no means universal in the Hindu villages. Whole races, like the Jâts, spread over Northern and Central India, are described[1] as thoroughly democratic; as having an "excessive craving for fixed ownership in the land," of which every one has his separate share, while the government is not patriarchal, but to a very great degree representative. On the Western coast, and in the broken hilly regions especially, the land is largely held by private ownership.[2] And the isolated homestead so natural to the Teutonic races is in fact very common in India, notwithstanding the strong tendency of an agricultural population like the Hindu, to seek the advantages of a communal system of cultivation.[3] Seventy years ago, Sir Thomas Munro found the lands in Kanara owned by individuals subject to government assessments, who inherited their estates; and "who understood property rights as well as Englishmen."[4]

Râmaswami Naidu, a native official, of reputation in the British service, prepared a careful memoir of the tenures of those ancient States which came to be included in the Madras Presidency.[5] It contains full evidence that, under the native sovereigns of India, a portion of the cultivators possessed full proprietary rights in the soil, while another portion merely paid a tribute to the kings in return for protection, according

[1] See Campbell's elaborate account of *Indian Ethnology*, in the *Journal of the Bengal Society* for 1866.

[2] Campbell, p. 83, 134.

[3] Maine, *Village Communities*, p. 114.

[4] See *Westm. Rev.*, Jan. 1868.

[5] *Journal R. A. S.*, vol. i. 292–306.

to a fixed proportion of their products. It gives us also a full description of the constitution of a village community, and of the eighteen salaried officers hereditarily attached to it; of their appointment by the king in newly conquered territories, and of the distribution of free proprietorships among the clearers of the land. "This ownership," says the author, "the cultivators enjoy to this day, because hereditary right to the soil is vested in them."[1]

Absolute equality is no part of the ideal of a Hindu commune. There are "parallel social strata;" and in many parts of India outcast classes are attached to the villages, probably belonging to indigenous conquered races. Yet even these outsiders are held authoritative on the subject of boundaries; and the letter-carrier and burner of the dead, who usually belongs to the lowest class, is, like the other functionaries, a free proprietor, with official fees.[2] The people freely discuss laws and customs; nor can the constant intermixture of races of more or less democratic tendency, which has been going on for ages all over India, have failed to supply elements of individuality to Hindu life. It has already been observed that the village system is by no means an exclusively Aryan institution in India, but indigenous also;[3] and, even where it is predominantly Aryan, the native tribes have been quite freely incorporated into its membership, and shared its elements of political equality. This hospitality is so characteristic, that the natural working of the system is probably preferable in such respects to the changes introduced by foreign interference, which,

[1] Wilson (*Hist. India*, I 418) declares distinctly that "the proprietary right of the sovereign derives no warrant from the ancient laws or institutions of the Hindus."

[2] Râmasw. Naidu. [3] Hunter's *Orissa*, vol i.

in Maine's view, has induced a more jealous corporate exclusiveness, clinging to vested rights, than had previously existed.[1] Looking at the history of the institution as a whole, we may discern hints and openings, which promise to throw much light on the subject of *individual freedom*, as an element of Hindu civilization. The breaking up of the old caste-system on the one hand, and the persistence of these local liberties and unities of the agricultural communes on the other, are facts of great historical significance, in estimating the degree in which the idea of personal rights and duties is probably already developed among the races of India. The extent to which the communes have absorbed Brahmans and Kshatriyas into the class of cultivators opens the further question, how much this permanent devotion to agricultural industry may have done towards counteracting the exclusiveness of caste.

The village community is now affirmed to have been the primitive political unit in all Aryan tribes. These little Indian republics have been truly characterized as "the indestructible atoms out of which empires were formed." Many of the largest cities of India were originally collections of these villages. Every successive master of the soil has been compelled to respect them, as the real "proprietary units" with which his authority must deal. Wherever the English have abolished them, the people have returned to them at the earliest opportunity. Their extension, not only over all India, Aryan and native, but even beyond Java,[2] makes them the ground fact of Oriental history, and especially interpretative of Hindu character. And,

[1] *Village Communities*, p. 167.
[2] Raffles, quoted by Heeren, II. 260.

after trying all their own bungling and barbarous forms of political surgery, the latest experimenters in governing India find the main features of this ancient polity best suited to the genius of the race, and most consistent with social order. It has been an admirable preparation for that system of full personal proprietorship, which should long ere now have been accorded to the Hindu people.[1]

The school-master is an essential member of this system; and by virtue of his function enjoys a lot of tax-free land by gift of the commune. Education.

"In every Hindu village which has retained its old form, I am assured," says Ludlow, "that the children generally are able to read, write, and cipher; but where we have swept away the village system, as in Bengal, there the village school also has disappeared."[2]

Trial by jury (*panchâyet*), alike for the determination of law and fact, is generally a part of this system of self-government; as is also a special service for the discovery of criminals, and the escorting of travellers. Mr. Reynolds, who was employed for many years in suppressing Thuggery, testified in the highest praise to the vigilance of the village police, and to the aid afforded him in tracking offenders sometimes for hundreds of miles. He went so far as to call the village system of India "the best in the world."[3] Juries.

[1] For a full account of the village land-tenures, see Mackay's *Reports on Western India.*

[2] *British India*, I. 62. In Bengal alone there were once no less than eighty thousand native schools; though, doubtless, for the most part, of a poor quality. According to a government Report in 1835, there was a village school for every four hundred persons *Missionary Intelligencer*, IX. 133, 193.

[3] Ludlow, I. 66, II. 344.

The *panchâyet* juries vary in their composition, and in the number of their members. Originally each party named two, and the judge one. It is a common saying in India, "In the *panchâyet* is God." And, though not always incorrupt, its administration is, according to good authority, on the whole "singularly just." The influence of the elders of the village often induces contending parties to yield points of difference, or even to forgive the injury.[1]

In Nepâl, both civil and criminal cases are referred to the panchâyets, at the discretion of the court, or the wish of the parties; the members being always appointed by the judge, each party having the right of challenge in case of every man nominated. The parties, in other cases, name each five members, and the court adds five to their ten. The verdict must be unanimous, to effect a decision of the case. These jurors are never paid any compensation for travelling expenses or loss of time. The prisoner can always confront his accuser, and cross-examine the witnesses against him. The witness is commonly sworn on the *Harivansa*, which is placed on his head with a solemn reminder of the sanctity of truth. If a Buddhist, he is sworn on the Pancharaksha; if a Moslem, on the Koran. If parties are dissatisfied with the judgment of the courts at law, they can appeal to the ministers assembled in the palace at Kathmandu; applying first to the premier, and, if failing to obtain satisfaction from him, proceeding to the palace gate and calling out, "Justice! Justice!" Upon which fourteen officers are assembled to hear the case, and give final judgment.[2]

[1] Elliott, *N. W. India*, I. 282. [2] Hodgson, in *Journal R. As. Soc.*, vol. i.

The Hindu mind, then, retained the natural bias towards republicanism which was so distinctly shown in the Aryans of Vedic times, and which reached such energetic growth in the Teutonic races of the same stem. Neither the hot sky of Central India, nor the caste system, which it stimulated to such rankness, could eradicate this germ. Its fires constantly broke forth in organized efforts to expel the Mussulman invader from the soil. The formidable Mahratta confederacy, which came near overthrowing first the Mogul, and then the British empires in India, was a military republic of independent chiefs, loosely related to a central authority. The Sikhs, or *disciples*, at first peaceful religious puritans, became, when roused by Moslem persecution, ardent apostles of political liberty. Even after the long and bloody struggle which ended in the subjugation of the peninsula by England, there still remained the energy to combine in one immense revolt against a foreign despotism that had been peeling the land and demoralizing the race for more than a century; and to compel the government to deprive the colossal East India Company of autocratic power. A brief notice of some of the most important features of British rule in India, which, it must be remembered, have been succeeded by much better methods, will be here introduced, not in a censorious spirit towards the people of England, for whom I cherish a most cordial respect, but because such a review will enable the reader to do something like justice to the natural qualities of the Hindus, and to judge whether their degeneracy, so much harped on, is, as we are constantly told, owing to viciousness specially inherent in the heathen heart.

Republican tendencies.

Foreign misgovernment; land system.

The English systems of land tenure and taxation have been more prejudicial to the rights of the village communes than the Mahommedan which they superseded. Under the latter, the zemindars, or farmers of revenue, took from a fourth to a half the produce of the ryot, in the government's name, paying themselves out of the revenue thus exacted. The English transformed the zemindars into positive owners, who paid quit-rent to the Company, and were armed with powers of summary distraint on the tenants; a system involving the utter extinction of native rights, which had still lingered, favored by the general irregularity of the Mussulman administration.[1] The presidencies of Bengal and Madras becoming impoverished by this policy, the Ryotwaree system was tried, in which the zemindars were supplanted by the government tax-gatherers, levying directly on the villagers; and this proved as fruitful of corruption, extortion, and outrage as the other.[2] The bribe which would often deliver the ryot from the clutch of the Mussulman collector would not assuage the rapacity of his Christian successor. The one was generally content with payment in kind, but the other insisted on having money; thus not only throwing the peasant into the grasp of usurers, so that he was at last obliged to alienate his land, but also draining the country of precious metals, to enrich a foreign company.[3] The older taxation took a portion of the *actual* crop; but the English "fixed an *assumed* capacity of each field for produce, and an assumed price for this, and then from 35 to 40 per cent of this fixed

[1] See *Westm. Rev.*, Jan. 1858.
[2] Ludlow, Lect. IX.
[3] Ibid., McCulloch's *East Indies*.

sum as its share for ever." [1] The effect was to absorb the larger part of the ryot's actual income, and in general to sweep away the whole. From the time of Clive,[2] the material exhaustion and social misery went on steadily increasing, until, as in the Putteedaree plan, which was adopted in the Panjâb, isolated efforts were made towards a partial return to the native village polity.

British India Society.

In 1838, by the exertions of many leading reformers, conspicuous among whom were George Thompson and Daniel O'Connell, the "British India Society" was organized, — a natural offshoot from the great movement against Western slavery, — for the purpose of emancipating the masses in Hindustan, and at the same time, through the development of the culture of cotton in that country by free labor, to abolish slavery in America by destroying the English market for the slave-grown article. The apostles of this movement made the land ring with eloquent denunciation and appeal. They brought a flood of light to bear on the wretched condition of the Hindu laborer. Their speeches assailed the pretence that the Government was owner of the soil of India, "with the right to take what suited it from every man's field." They proved that its extortion of rent made private property in land impossible, and that cultivation had decreased in consequence in the ratio of two-thirds, while the tax assessed continued nearly the same. They denounced it for laying high taxes on the cultivation of waste lands, for the express purpose of preventing the impoverished ryots from resorting to these. They pointed to a long series of appalling

[1] Gen. Briggs's *Speech at Glasgow*, Aug. 1, 1839

[2] Macaulay's *Essay on Clive*.

famines; in one of which five hundred thousand persons perished in a single year, while grain enough was being exported from Bengal to feed the whole number with a pound of rice a day; and another of which swept off three millions in Bengal alone. They described the ruin of Hindu manufacturing industry, and the fall of British imports down to sixpence a head on the population. They warned the rulers of the detestation in which they were held throughout India, of the elements of desperate revolt that were gathering. The horrors of Hindu slavery were spread out before the eyes of the British people, who were just then striking off the chains from their West India bondsmen.[1] Yet twenty years of corporative despotism were yet to elapse, finding their natural result in the terrible scenes of 1857–58, before the worst features of the old land system in India began to yield to the civilization of the age.[2]

Police.

The police of the East India Company was as mischievous as its revenue system. It was described as "not only powerless to repress crime, but a great engine of oppression and corruption." The venality and arbitrariness of the courts became intolerable, and were among the leading causes of the rebellion.[3]

Opium trade.

The monopoly of opium and its compulsory culture were sources of enormous evil. At one time a fifth of the revenues of the Company were

[1] Of pre-eminent value were the labors of George Thompson, both in advocating the abolition of slavery and in defending oppressed and defrauded native rulers, with a thoroughness and eloquence which entitle him to be called the apostle of East Indian emancipation, as he was one of the bravest helpers of the American slave.

[2] See the speeches of Thompson, O'Connell, and Briggs, before the British India Societies during 1839 and 1840, for abundant and startling statistics on these points.

[3] Ludlow, ch. xix.; Macaulay's *Essay on Warren Hastings.*

derived from this pernicious interest. The loss of productive industry effected was as nothing compared with the moral ruin it entailed.[1] It was the decisive testimony of Hastings that the Hindus were a remarkably temperate people before evil communication with the Europeans had corrupted them.[2] The use of intoxicating drugs is prohibited to the Brahmans by the native law, and is still disreputable among the higher classes. In the rural districts intemperance is still rare; but wherever English rule is established, and foreign influence active, it has greatly increased. It is admitted on all hands that in these localities the character of the people has changed, and that both Mohammedans and Hindus are rapidly degenerating, under the effects of alcohol and opium.[3]

The Mohammedan government is nowise responsible for the terrible results of the opium trade. It repressed the cultivation of the poppy as long as it was able. Ninety years ago no regular trade in opium existed. The East India Company's officers began it by smuggling a thousand chests into China. Thenceforward the "fostering care" of the Company developed it till it "enticed all India, native and foreign, Christian and Buddhist." In 1840 the Chinese government destroyed twenty thousand chests of opium, being not more than half the importation for a single year. In 1858 the production in India, of which England held the monopoly, for exportation into China, amounted to seventy thousand chests.

[1] *Westm. Rev.*, July, 1859. "Half the crime in the opium districts," said Mr. Sym (Ludlow, II. 300), "is due to opium. One cultivator will demoralize a whole village." Dr. Allen (*India*, p. 304) declares that he knew nothing in modern commerce, except the slave-trade, more reprehensible than the manner in which this business was carried on.

[2] Ludlow, II. 302.

[3] Allen, pp. 478, 479, 497. See testimonies collected in Thompson's *Address at Friends' Yearly Meeting in London*, 1839.

Government, down to the rebellion of 1857, not only never made the slightest effort to repress, but steadily encouraged it, urging the legalization of it upon the Chinese rulers, who as strenuously strove to resist a scourge that was desolating their dominions. England, in fact, "found India and China comparatively free from intemperance through the positive restraints of Buddhism and Mohammedanism. She has established in these countries the most extensive and deeply rooted debauchery the world has known."[1]

"The intemperance of the British soldiery in India," wrote Dr. Jeffreys in 1858, "appears to be bounded only by the opportunities they can command. It is to a lamentable extent associated with Christianity in the minds of the natives. Once, on my making inquiries into the creeds of certain black descendants of Europeans in the Upper Provinces, a well-informed Mussulman informed me they were Christians, that he knew it (speaking not disrespectfully, but in all simplicity) from their being nearly all of them drunkards. The example of Christians, and the efforts of government to multiply spirit-shops for the sake of revenue, are changing the habits of the natives. Drunkenness is becoming prevalent, whereas formerly there were few who touched alcohol in any form."[2]

Salt monopoly.

The salt monopoly afforded another fifth of the revenue of the Company. The peasants were forbidden the very salt-mud of the river mouths, their main reliance for agricultural purposes. "Not a grain of the sun-evaporated salt left by nature at his own door could be placed by a native on his tongue, or

[1] These last facts and affirmations are taken from a work by Dr. Jeffreys on *The British Army in India* (London, 1858). See, also, Ludlow, II. 302.

[2] Jeffreys, p. 19

removed into his hut;" and the trade in salted fish was destroyed. At one time the price of this necessary article was raised to thirteen hundred per cent above the cost of production.[1]

The supersedure of native manufactures by English machinery created an amount of suffering among numerous classes in India scarcely to be paralleled in the history of labor.[2] The slave-grown cotton of America, manufactured in England, was forced on a people who once had woven for their own use the finest fabrics in the world. The native looms that not long before produced annually eight millions of pieces of cotton goods were stopped altogether. Once flourishing cities and villages, the seats of a busy and thriving population, were ruined. Dacca, for instance, once a city of three hundred thousand inhabitants, has been reduced to sixty thousand; and its transparent muslin, a "woven wind," a whole dress of which will pass through a finger-ring, is "almost a thing of the past."[3] Ruin of manufactures.

The older governments were careful to build roads and secure communication across the country. In 1857, the "Friend of India" confessed that "for one good road we have made we have suffered twenty to disappear."[4] Four or five thousand miles of railroad have since been projected and in great part constructed, as well as several thousand miles of canal; but the native industry can hardly have begun to recover from the terrible discouragement created by the long-continued neglect of internal communication, on the part of the invaders, and the Internal communication.

[1] Ludlow, Thompson, &c.
[2] Allen, 449.
[3] Ludlow, I. 10.
[4] See, also, Allen, p. 327.

incessant shocks of conquest and civil strife which they helped to introduce.

Agriculture. The Skanda Purâna describes the descent of Gangâ, the sacred stream, through the tresses of Vishnu, which broke her fall and scattered her waves, bearing fertility to the land. She followed the steps of Bhagiratha, to whom she was granted, — a drop of the waters of heaven, as reward of his all-conquering devotion. Such the consecration in mythic lore of the popular enthusiasm and love for fertilizing streams. Nothing in the Râmâyana is more eloquent with genuine national feeling than the episode in which the descent of the waters is identified with the beneficence of all the gods. It represents them as sent to revive the ashes of the seventy thousand sons of Sagara, reduced to dust by Vishnu, "spouse of the all-nourishing earth, in his avatâra of Fire," because they reproached him with carrying away the sacred horse of their father's sacrifice, which they had sought in vain through the worlds. These are the symbols of an agricultural people; and the whole is manifestly like the Greek myth of Ceres and Proserpine, significant of the death and re-birth of vegetation.

Serpents, in the popular mythology of India, seem to represent this oldest interest of the community. The festivals in honor of these first owners and occupants of the ground are celebrated by young and old, rich and poor, throughout Western India. The children have holiday, and the serpent figures are crowned with flowers. In the Sutras, Purânas, and Epics, these animals are always mentioned with respect, and incarnations in serpent form abound. The popular faith ascribes this veneration to gratitude for the

forgiveness shown by the queen of serpents to the husbandman who killed her little ones by the stroke of his plough.

The prodigious monuments of this agricultural ardor, so intimately related to the old Hindu religious faith, have been treated by later invaders very much as similar achievements by the ancient Peruvians were treated by the Spanish conquerors of South America. Of the innumerable canals, reservoirs and tanks for irrigation, built by native and Mussulman governments, great numbers were suffered to decay, and the contributions paid in by the people for their repair, in accordance with ancient custom, were appropriated to other purposes.[1] Wherever the opportunity has been afforded, as especially in the Panjâb of late years, the natives have entered with vigor on the improvement of these long-neglected works, and their extension upon a suitable scale.

To such demoralizing forces the Hindus have been subject for centuries. When we read therefore of the filthy condition of villages, the destitute and despondent state of the agricultural population, we shall not need to resort for explanation either to caste or to religion. We shall appreciate McCulloch's abundant proofs that this poverty and misery are largely owing to that misgovernment of which we have here given but the merest outline.[2] We shall appreciate the force of such testimony as that of the "Bombay Times," in 1849, that the boundaries of the dominions of the East India Company could be discovered by the superior condition of the country people who had not become subject to their sway;

Inferences.

[1] Ludlow, II. 317; Arnold's *Dalhousie*, II. 282.
[2] *Commerc. Dict.*, article on East Indies.

or as Campbell's, who affirms, in his work on India, that "the longer we possess a province, the more common and grave does perjury become;" or as Sir Thomas Munro's, half a century since, that the inhabitants of the British Provinces were "the most abject race in all India." We shall appreciate the energy with which Burke declared in the House of Commons that, "if the English had been driven from India, they would have left no better traces of their dominion than hyenas and tigers."

Ill-treatment.

Systematic contempt and outrage by British officials was so much a matter of course, that for an Englishman to treat natives with common civility was looked upon as a prodigy; and the government servants had a general impression that it would bring one into bad odor with the Company.[1] Impressment, plundering of houses, and burning of villages, the kick, the buffet, the curse, mal-treatment in every form, such as made men like Metcalfe, Napier, and Shore "wonder that we hold India for a year," brought the ryots to the conviction at last, as the missionaries confessed in their conference of 1855, that "the Christian religion consisted in having no caste, eating beef, drinking freely, and trampling on the rights of niggers."[2] The gross immoralities of Europeans in the early period of British rule in India in fact led to the use of the term Christian as a by-word, having nearly the sense of "bastard;" and, "had the name been altogether laid aside, it would have been a great blessing for those parts of India most frequented by Europeans."[3] It can therefore hardly

[1] Hon F. J. Shore. See, also, *Speeches at Friends' Meeting in London*, 1839

[2] Ludlow, II. 365.

[3] Buyers's *Northern India*, p. 107; Sanger, *History of Prostitution*, p. 423; *Westm. Rev.* for July, 1808.

be held suggestive of special hardness in the natural heathen heart, when we find, after more than a century of British sway, that there are less than a hundred thousand Christian converts in India out of a population of nearly two hundred millions; and less than twenty thousand out of the forty-five millions of Bengal.

Slavery.

It remains to add one more item to this sad detail of Christian influence in India. Not only did the Company gratuitously sanction existent Hindu and Mohammedan slavery by interpreting law in its interest, needlessly placing it under the shield of "respect for the religious institutions of the natives;" not only did it everywhere permit and justify the sale of this kind of property among them; not only encourage an external slave-trade, for a long period carried on for the supply of India by Arab traders with the coast of Africa and the Red Sea; not only sell slaves itself, to secure arrears of revenue. It steadily resisted numerous endeavors to obtain the abolition of Hindu slavery on the part of such men as Harrington and Baber, from 1798 to 1833.[1] Not till 1811, was legislation directed against the slave-trade; and the law then made prohibited the sale of such persons only as should be brought from abroad *for this express purpose*, — a limitation which rendered it of no effect. Every extension of British territory increased the traffic, opening the whole domain to importation of fresh victims.[2] In 1833, a bill introduced by Earl Grey, for abolishing slavery in five years, was so emasculated in its passage through Parliament by the opposition of the Duke of Welling-

[1] See the case fully stated in Adam's *Slavery in India.*

[2] Judge Leycester, in *Parliamentary Documents for* 1839, No. 138, p. 315.

ton and others, as to come out finally but a timid recommendation to the Company to mitigate the evil as far as should be found convenient; serving only to encourage and confirm it. The earnest agitation of the subject by the British India Society in 1838 aroused fresh interest; but the East Indies and Ceylon were excepted from the great Colonial Emancipation of that year. Nor can I learn that any complete Act of Abolition has been passed, down to the present hour. What we are here especially to observe is the fact that this continuance of so barbarous a system has not had the excuse of a necessary regard for the prejudices and interests of the people. Judge Vibart, after an investigation made by desire of government in 1825, reported that the respectable classes of the Hindus were strongly in favor of abolition, and that the Mohammedans had no very great objection. Macaulay, as Secretary of the Board, was assured by the ablest of the Company's civil servants that there would be no danger in the attempt. In 1833, four thousand Hindus, Parsees, and Mohammedans memorialized Parliament, thanking it for its exertions to abolish the slave-trade.[1] It was the opinion of able lawyers that the Mohammedan law itself, if rightly executed, would free almost all the slaves in India; nor has that of the Hindus any immediate connection with their religion or their system of caste.

Traits of Hindu character.

But we hasten from this criticism to an estimate which could not be fairly presented without such reference to an oft-told history, otherwise needing no fresh recital. Charges of gross depravity are constantly brought against the Hindus

[1] Pamphlet on *Slavery in India*, compiled largely from official documents; printed by Ward & Co., London, 1841.

as a people. Such writers as Mill and Ward seem to be incapable of finding any good in them. Of these sweeping accusations, falsehood, vindictiveness, and sensuality have been the most frequent. The best authorities agree in refuting them.[1] Dr. Jeffreys allows himself the extravagant statements that "every child is educated carefully to avoid speaking the truth, except as a matter of interest or necessity," and "that they will compass each other's ruin or death for the smallest object." Colonel Sleeman, on the contrary, tells us he has had hundreds of cases before him in which a man's property, liberty, or life depended on his telling a lie; and he has refused to tell it, to save either. Mr. Elphinstone, whose opportunities were those of thirty years in the highest positions in Indian service, describes the Râjputs as remarkable "for courage and self-devotion, combined with gentleness of manners and softness of heart, a boyish playfulness and an almost infantine simplicity." "No set of people among the Hindus," he continues, "are so depraved as the dregs of our own great towns. The villagers are everywhere amiable, affectionate to their families, kind to their neighbors, and towards all but the government honest and sincere. The townspeople are different, but quiet and orderly. Including the Thugs and Decoits, the mass of crime is less in India than in England. The Thugs are almost a separate nation, and the Decoits are desperate ruffians in gangs. The Hindus are a mild and gentle people, more merciful to prisoners than any other Asiatics. Their freedom from gross debauchery is the point in which they appear to most advantage; and their superiority in

[1] See especially Montgomery Martin's admirable *Report on the Condition of India* (1838).

purity of manners is not flattering to our self-esteem."[1] "Domestic slaves are treated exactly like servants, except that they are regarded as belonging to the family. I doubt if they are ever sold."[2] It is highly creditable to the Hindus that Śiva-worship through the symbol of reproduction, the lingâm, once widely spread in India, is now found to have "no hold on the popular feeling, and to suggest no offensive ideas." "It is but justice to state," says Wilson, "that it is unattended in Northern India by any indecent or indelicate ceremonies; and it requires a lively imagination to trace any resemblance in its symbols to the objects they are supposed to represent. The general absence of indecency from public worship and religious establishments in the Gangetic provinces was fully established by the late General Stuart, and in every thing relating to actual practice better authority cannot be desired."[3] The licentious customs attributed to the sakti-worshippers the same authorities state to be seldom practised, and then in secrecy; and to be held illicit even by their supporters, if instituted merely for sensual gratification.[4] Statistics show that the profligacy of the large cities of British India hardly exceeds that of European communities of similar extent. And to the amount actually existing the habits of Europeans have largely contributed; while the efforts of the government to diminish this form of immorality have done much to counterbalance these bad influences, as well as to suppress the older religious ceremonies which involved it.[5]

[1] *History of British India*, pp. 375-381. See Ritchie, *British World in the East*, I 186.

[2] Elphinstone, I. 350.

[3] Wilson, *Essays on Religion of Hindus*, II. 64; I. 219.

[4] Ibid., I. 261.

[5] Sanger, *History of Prostitution*, p. 423.

Morality.

The great diversity of opinion as to the practical morals of the Hindus is doubtless due in part to the great varieties of moral type that must exist in so immense and complex a population as that of India, subjected to such variety of foreign influence for thousands of years. It does not appear, however, that the Hindus have been more inclined to sensuality than other races. This is true of them even as sharing the almost universal cultus of the productive principle in nature, whose symbols seem to have represented the sacred duty of man to propagate his kind. They have always had sufficient sense of propriety to carve the statues of their gods in a way not to give offence to modesty.[1] Yet their vices must on the whole have been such as belong to the impressible temperament of tropical races, the passive yielding fibre that obeys the luxury of illusion and reverie. The truth must be somewhere between the unbounded praises lavished by Greek writers on the ancient Hindus and the excessive censure of their descendants by Christian criticism.

It is in no unmindfulness of these probabilities in the case that I add a few more good words for this non-Christian people from competent witnesses. Malcom "could not think of the Bengal sepoys in his day without admiration." Hastings said of the Hindus in general that they were "gentle and benevolent, more susceptible of gratitude for kindness shown them and less prompted to vengeance for wrongs inflicted than any people on the face of the earth; faithful, affectionate, submissive to legal authority." Heber, whose detestation of the religions of India was intense, yet records similar impressions. "The Hindus are brave, cour-

[1] Stevenson, in *Jour. Roy. As. Soc.*, 1842, p. 5

teous, intelligent, most eager for knowledge and improvement; sober, industrious, dutiful to parents, affectionate to their children, uniformly gentle and patient, and more easily affected by kindness and attention to their wants and feelings than any people I ever met with."[1] Doubtless these statements, like those on the other side, are highly colored; but they have great value in view of the character and opportunities of their authors. "The Hindus," says Harrison,[2] "are a mild, peaceable people, fulfil the relations of life with tolerable exactness, naturally kind to each other, and always ready to be hospitable, even where poverty might exempt them: they are never deficient in filial affection. It is a common thing to find people in humble walks of life bestowing a third or even half their scanty income on aged and destitute parents." I will only add the somewhat ardent tribute of the Mohammedan Abul Faz'l, vizier of the great Sultan Akbar in the seventeenth century, a thoroughly competent witness. "The Hindus," he says, in his *Ayin Akbari*, "are religious, affable, cheerful, lovers of justice, given to retirement, able in business, admirers of truth, grateful, and of unbounded fidelity. And their soldiers know not what it is to fly from the field of battle."

What inhumanity must have been needed to rouse such a race to the barbarities of Delhi and Cawnpore!

Cruelties of the war.

It must be remembered that these barbarities were not the work of the people as a whole, and that they were quite paralleled by cruelties on the part of the Christian invaders both before and afterwards. The horrors of Cawnpore were the work

[1] Heber's *Journal*, II. 369, 409. [2] *English Colonies*, p 64, 66.

of Nana Sahib and his body guard of savage adherents, his own soldiers "refusing to massacre the women and children, which was accomplished by the vilest of the city," while his own officers sought in vain to dissuade him from his monstrous purpose.[1] Dr. McLeod invokes his countrymen to public confession, with shame and sorrow, "of indiscriminate slaughter perpetrated in cool blood by Christian gentlemen, in a spirit which sunk them below the level of their enemies."[1] The atrocities of this war, on the part of the Hindus, were in fact the natural excesses of an excitable people, driven to madness, not merely by such crimes as the causeless massacre of the loyal thirty-seventh Sepoy regiment, at Benarès, such treacheries as the broken promise of higher pay to the army of Oude, such outrages on the religious convictions of the native soldiers as the compulsory use of cartridges greased with pork, but by a long-continued series of enormities that had become habitual. As illustrative of these, the fact will suffice that, a year or two before the revolt of 1857, investigations by the government brought to light a regular system of torture of the most revolting description even upon women, which for years had been applied in many parts of India by native officers of the Company, in the collection of its revenues and for extorting evidence This insurrection was but the last of a series growing out of similar causes, and upon the greatest scale of all. It was the common cause of dispossessed kings and beggared chieftains starting up and springing to arms all over India; the issue of a policy of annexation and "subsidiary alliances," pushed for half a century by bribery, fraud, and force; of the industries of millions

[1] McLeod, *Days in Northern India*, p. 68.

drained, and the hoarded wealth of ages swept off, to fill the coffers of rapacious foreign masters; of systematic outrage and contempt as of the lower animals, practised upon a race whose literature is magnificent, and whose civilization runs beyond historic record; of a system of exclusion, which shut out the native of India from office and opportunity, whether civil or military: the issue, in short, of monstrous misgovernment, which the noblest men had labored ineffectually to reform, and which had made the coming of just such an earthquake as this, for every thoughtful mind in India, merely a question of a few years more or less of time. It could not be said that the East India Company had attempted to suppress the religion of the Hindus: it would give little countenance to missionary efforts, and it even derived revenues from the superstitious rites of the most ignorant classes; yet it had not succeeded in the slightest degree in calming the nervous fears of the Sepoy army, which knew its character by closest contact, that the native beliefs and traditions would be recklessly trampled out by its mere military and secular interests.

Justice to both sides.

It is by no means my purpose to throw the responsibility of the terrible scenes of 1857–58 upon the East India Company alone. I have no desire to hide either the difficulties of the position with which they had to deal, or the previous semi-barbarized condition of the Hindu States, upon which in many respects certainly their rule was an improvement. The brutality, corruption, and weakness of the later Mogul princes of India, had disorganized these communities; and robber tribes and robber chieftains were spreading desolation through portions of the peninsula when the French and English began their

struggle for its possession. Still more important is it to recognize the improvement in Indian affairs after their administration — withdrawn from the East India Company in consequence of the revolt — was assumed by the British people. New civil and criminal codes have been introduced, more wisely regardful of the interests of the native tribes; municipal and other offices have been transferred in some degree to native talent; and the extortion of rents has been measurably guarded against. The results of these changes, it is claimed, are already apparent in improved cultivation, purer administration, and happier social life; though such terrible facts as the Orissa famine in 1865, with its record of governmental neglect, become all the more discreditable, in view of such claims. While we render all due credit to those who have labored to bring about these measures, and are laboring for still more important ones equally consistent with the spirit of the age; and while the noble record of individual officers and scholars, like Bentinck, Elphinstone, Briggs, Crawford, Jones, Lawrence, through the long history of British India, should receive the lasting gratitude of science and humanity,[1] — we would not fail to note also the bearing of the happy results so speedily claimed for a juster policy, on the question of Hindu capacity and character. That Mogul oppression should have brought about the degenerate social condition of the natives at the commencement of British rule, is nowise to their discredit. That such amelioration as is now described should follow at once in the track of the earliest

[1] The reader will find this record, which I would gladly pause here to review, in the pages of Kaye's *Lives of Indian Statesmen*, Arnold's *Dalhousie*, and other like works, familiar to the public in England and America.

fair opportunity afforded them, after more than a century of this rule, is surely a strong argument in their favor.

Nemesis.

And, after all, the conclusion we draw from this painful history must differ widely from that of writers whose view springs from their natural sympathy with the victory of a higher civilization over a lower, *and from that only*. This crowning insurrection, in the view of history, reflects more credit on the conquered than on the conquerors. If Macaulay's logic be admitted as fair, when, in his brilliant essay on the life of Clive, he affirmed that "the event of our history in India is a proof that sincerity and uprightness are wisdom, that all we could have gained by imitating the duplicity around us is as nothing when compared with what we have gained by being the only power in India on whose word reliance can be placed," — what inference could be drawn when his premise was reversed by unanswerable facts, and the event proved an utter *absence* of confidence in the government of India from end to end of the land? What a piece of irony does the complacent self-eulogy, echoed by so many less respectable voices, become! The *event* of European government in India yields a very different lesson. When the râjâs of Oude marched in procession to give in their adhesion to the British Government, after the conquest of that kingdom, "all," says McLeod, "were thankful for their restored lands, and the hope of British protection. But there was not one who loved us for our own sakes; not one who would not have preferred a native rule to ours, even with tolerable protection of life and property; not one who did not regret the unrighteous destruction

of the Kingdom of Oude."[1] So, in the war of 1857, almost the whole Bengal army was in sympathy with the rebellion.[2] It was universally recognized at that time that the long-continued rule of England in India had in no degree reconciled the masses of that vast empire to the authority of their masters. "If the Russians should march an army into Scinde," said the "Westminster Review," so late as in 1868, "a spirit of disaffection and desire of change would agitate the whole country." This persistent refusal to accept or to trust selfish and despotic rulers, with whatever uncivilized impulses it may be connected, gives hints of higher loyalties. And humanity finds its real interest in the impressive fact that, after centuries of wars and tyrannies, Persian, Afghan, Mongol, Mohammedan and Christian, there should yet have survived enough of the old Aryan fire to turn on the latest invader in determined and desperate revolt. Such wrath indeed smoulders in the most gentle and laborious races, and in them is most terrible when its frenzy comes at last. In the East and in the West alike, a Nemesis has awaited proud and selfish nations for exploiting races weaker than themselves. The passion of the Hindu and the patience of the American Negro are dissimilar qualities; but the wrongs of both are avenged.

Promise.

The Hindus do not deserve contempt on any ground. They are made for noble achievement in philosophy, in æsthetics, in science, and even, with Western help, in social and practical activities. Their full day has not yet come. Their vitality is far from spent: they are not in their senescence, but in

[1] *Days in Northern India*, p. 88. [2] Ibid., p 166.

their prime. Their chiefs, often ferocious and crafty, are as often heroic and magnanimous. Sivaji, Hyder Ali, Tippoo Saib, Holkar, and others, were brilliant soldiers, and fought valiantly for their cause to the death. India has no lack of subtle thinkers, learned scholars, able administrators, shrewd merchants, nor yet of generous helpers in the improvement of the people. An estimate made by British officials in 1829 represents the works of public utility constructed by individuals, without view to personal profit, in a single district of half a million people, as amounting in value to nearly a million pounds sterling, besides plantations of trees enclosing two-thirds of the villages.[1] Hindustan has native scholars of eminence both in Sanskrit and European letters, whose editorship of Sanskrit works as well as contributions to the philosophical and ethnological journals are at this time especially of great value. Deva Śastri mastered the Eastern and Western systems of Astronomy. Râjendralâl Mitra was entrusted with the task of expounding the ancient coins discovered in 1863, and has brought out important Brahmanical and Buddhist works. The lamented Râdhâkânta Deva Bahadur, the author of an immense Sanskrit encyclopædia, was an honorary member of numerous learned European Societies. Fresh editions of the national epos, and other great works of antiquity, with valuable commentaries, paraphrases, and learned revisions, have within a few years appeared under the auspices of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, which owe very much of their excellence as well as their elegance to the personal industry, ability and munificence, of native

[1] See *Westm. Rev.*, July, 1868.

scholars.[1] There is ample ground for predicting that, as further friction with Western thought shall elicit the special genius of the Hindus, it will be found capable of supplying many desiderata in our Western civilization, contributing in ways as yet unimagined by us to the breadth and fulness both of our religious and social ideals.

Power and defect.

The effect of a sensuous, enervating climate on the Aryan has, however, been in many ways prodigious. His very idealism became a persuasion of the nothingness of the individual. The lack of practical stimulus inclined his intellect to contemplation, and turned his first endeavor at the organization of Labor into what looks to us more like an organization of Idleness: the drone priest at the head, the drudging menial at the foot, the lazy soldier, a blight on industry, between the two. Hindu life, in its twofold aspect, grew more and more like the great rivers it dwelt by, in their alternate flood and failure, overflow and return. In Thought, a great, broad, still, dreamy sea, its bare, motionless face upturned to the sky; in Action, a cooped and stinted stream, however stirred here and there, girt with broad strips of thirsty desert and even treacherous slime. Surely it is refreshing to find, under these dead-weights of physical nature, the earnest endeavor for co-operative work, the love of agriculture, the unconquerable germs of liberty. The degeneracy itself has its hopeful side. It does not prove that the physical must inevitably overmaster the spiritual everywhere,

[1] Many of these are mentioned in a synopsis of the recent publications of the *Asiatic Society of Bengal*, in *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, XXV (1871), p. 656. Their contributions to the *Bibliotheca Indica* have been of especial value. Gildemeister (*Bibl. Sanskr.*, 1847) mentions more than 60 Hindu scholars of our time, besides 100 earlier ones.

except under specifically Christian disciplines. It illustrates the universal law, that the life that spends itself in thinking or dreaming, and fails to put its brain into its hand, under whatever disciplines or "dispensations," unmans itself, and becomes impotent even to think and dream.

II.

RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY.

I.

VEDÂNTA.

VEDÂNTA.

THE theme now before me recalls a profound impression of the naturalness of theism, left on my mind many years since by the wonderful circles of Stonehenge. The circle is the integer of Form. Repeated in the apparent courses of the stars, in the seasons, in vegetation, in alternations of life and death, crowning all natural forces with recurrence and consent, it held sway in the soul of the rude worshipper also; and there on the round plain, where only the sweep of self-re-entering lines meets the eye, whether above or around, he had built his colossal altar in its image, even out of the natural stones, without cement, almost without art. The half-conscious child of Nature had laid his hand on her central truth, — "Greater than the many is the One."

The Circle as symbol.

It is a fact of psychological interest that similar megalithic structures in circular form and of prehistoric origin have been found in Ireland, Scandinavia, Germany, Arabia, and India.[1] The oldest monuments in Southern Asia are probably of this character.[2] The history of religious art shows us a very early and wide-spread use of this natural symbol of wholeness, or all-embracing unity.

[1] *Ethnogénie Gauloise* (Paris, 1868), p 520; Lubbock's *Prehistoric Man*.

[2] See Meadows Taylor, in *Journal of Bombay Branch of Roy. As. Soc.* (IV. 380). Ferguson (*Rude Stone Monuments*) thinks these cromlechs are of more recent origin.

Universality of the idea of Unity.

It is nearly two hundred years since Cudworth's learned demonstration that the polytheism of the ancient world was but the cover of a deeper faith in One Supreme God.[1] The argument was confined to certain great philosophical and mythological systems, and marred by a strong dogmatic bias towards deriving the wisdom of the ancients from Hebrew sources. It did not deal with the natural laws of religious belief, which show us a theistic germ unfolding in the earliest stages of social growth. Illustrations of these laws are now, however, quite abundant; and the grounds of this all-pervading aspiration of mankind should be recognized by every thoughtful mind.

Unity is the sublime conclusion of science; but religion does not wait for science. The soul is clearer-sighted than the understanding. It blends poet, philosopher, and saint in the wonder and awe of the child at what he simply sees and feels.

Its grounds in natural intuition.

The most unreflecting savage cannot quite escape the impression that he is the one cause of the multiplicity of acts which make up his life. He at least unconsciously follows this thread of inward unity in dealing with the varied phenomena of outward nature. Just as he shapes an ideal in the image of every passion and propensity within him, so he is always more or less haunted by the intimation of some highest all-containing presence, in the image of that *personal identity* which all these passions and propensities represent. In all his worship of elementary forces, there is the play of this guiding instinct,

[1] *Intellectual System* (Harrison's ed., London, 1845). See, especially, I. 435; II. 226, 246, 300.

this law of his inner being. As mental growth advances, higher forms of the intuition are attained.

Either the gods are referred back to a first God, to somewhat in the dim Unknown whence they all emerge, or to a constant central force of living deity, — and in these ways have been shaped certain Greek and Semitic theogonies, — or else, if that point is not yet reached, all the gods are made implicitly one; as we have seen in the Vedic hymns, where worship is always *essentially the same*, an effort for supreme devotion to each and every name in turn. Self-consciousness may be ever so rudimentary, it suffices for this implicit unity in the movements of the religious instinct. All worship, even in the lowest tribes, has at least this in common, — that it is an upward look: the names of primitive deities are found to be curiously associated with terms that mean *overhead*, *above*, or with root-sounds that signify *upward motion*. The subjective attitude of these simple minds in worship is always a more or less similar resultant of blended hopes and fears. And, on the other hand, the *objects* of these emotions are always more or less consciously referred to the all-surrounding and enfolding Whole; which contains in its mysterious depths all their minor capabilities of help and harm, and which the orbed eye finds constantly present, whether it looks upward into the infinite spaces, or traces the paths of all-pervading light, or searches the horizon line. Its diverse forms.

The rude cromlech speaks to the universal religious sentiment. The belief in an all-embracing and all-controlling One, however diverse in form, is not special to tribe or religion. It is human. In the

sense I have noted, it is no exaggeration to say with Maximus Tyrius, "All mankind are agreed that there is one God and Father, and that the many gods are his children."[1] Even from the rude races of America and Africa, the latest researches already referred to bring ample testimony to this tendency of belief, in names of supreme meaning, more or less perfectly *expressive* of unity, even if not clearly conceived as involving it.[2] What, to a more advanced stage of reflection, are deities but *forms of deity?* The gods are but "co-rulers with God," this one name expressing the *essence of sway*, on which the special force of each depends. Neither in Plato nor Maximus Tyrius, neither in Hebrew Psalmists nor Christian Fathers, does the term *gods*, so often used, imply the denial of One as Supreme. On the contrary, the sovereign unity receives thereby a greater fulness of life and relation. "His manifold powers, diffused through his works," says Maximus, "we heathen invoke by different names. Of the gods, there are many names, but one nature." "Let us worship Him," says Proclus, "as unfolding the whole race of deities, as the God of all gods, the unity of all unities, as holy among the holy ones, and concealed in the intelligible gods." "Owing to the greatness of the Deity," says the Hindu Nirukta, "the One Soul is lauded in many ways. The different gods are members of the One Soul."[3]

[1] *Dissert* XVII. 5. See, especially, Lamennais, *Essai sur l'Indifférence en Matière de Religion*, ch. xxvi. De Belloguet, in a learned word on Druidism (*Ethnogénie Gauloise*, has carefully traced this belief through the various branches of the Aryan family, especially the Celtic. On the theistic elements in the religion of the Babylonians, Chaldæans, and Phœnicians, see Furst, *Gesch. d. Bibl. Lit.*, I. 45-49.

[2] Brinton's *Myths of New World*, ch. ii.; Livingstone's *Africa;* Baring Gould's *Origin and Development of Religious Belief*, I. 274.

[3] Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, IV. 134.

These poles of unity and variety coexist in strictly *theistic* religions also. We call the Hebrews monotheists; but Jehovah was "God above all gods," and Elohim was a plural noun. If a Hindu synthesis reconciles Brahmâ, Vishnu, Siva, in a form of theism, so Christianity has its triperson-ality of God. Even its liberal sects are, in substance, adorers both of a Christ and a God. The Gnostics were believers in a Divine Unity, yet with hypostases and æons they made God thirty-fold. The ruder Romanist adores saints and pictures, holy coats and handkerchiefs. He would probably find it difficult to separate these, in his sense of personal reliance, from deity itself, which he nevertheless knows to be one and only one. Practically, the idols of the Christian world are numberless. They are not personified, like their analogues in the ancient world; so that we do not apply to this form of worship the term *polytheism*. And yet it would probably be hard to prove that the sense of Supreme Unity was intercepted by swarming divinities in the average Greek mind more effectually than it is by these materialistic and traditional idolatries, the fetichism of modern society and trade. The idea of the Infinite and Eternal, in its distinction as spiritual reality from the vague cravings of unlimited special desires, has to be continually renewed by thinker and prophet, as of old.

Polarity of Theistic faith.

As this idea of infinite Mind, one in itself, and containing all things, has never been lost by man, so it has not anywhere been wholly absent. It is organic and vital; and its flame has at times burned low only to startle some Moses, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, into making fresh appeal to the simple sense of reality, and recalling man to him-

Intuition of the One indestructible.

self. The Greek Mysteries, brought, it is probable, from the East by the Dorians, were specially effective for two thousand years, in this direction as well as in maintaining faith in moral sanctions and spiritual destinies beyond death; and almost all the great men of ancient times seem to have been initiated into them.[1] To the philosophers indeed the "large utterance" of those ancient gods spoke of a transcendent One; while the popular faith beheld all its deities gathered at the common hearth of Hestia, at the world's centre, and around the Father Jove. Even the monstrous figures of popular Eastern mythology were vestiges of this inevitable instinct. Brahmâ with his foot in his mouth, and Vishnu on his coiled serpent, or with his necklace of worlds, are but mythic sport with the ideal Circle, that sacred line which returns into itself; the natural symbol of the One. The three-headed, hundred-armed, thousand-eyed divinities of the Greeks and the Hindus did but multiply numbers, in order to embrace the more in unity. It was the play of a Pythagorean instinct in the rude imagination of childish races.

The Hindu Pleroma.

To find this sense of a Supreme Unity or wholeness on which all religion rests, in its most absolute form, we must appreciate the philosophical capacity of the Aryan Hindu. Here was the very field for his vast generalizations upon a few observed data, for his measureless abstraction, his passion for

[1] "Go on in the right path; and contemplate the one ruler of the world.
He is one, and self-proceeding. From Him only are all things born;
He works in all, unseen by mortal eyes, yet seeing all."

(*Orphic Hymn of the Mysteries*, quoted by Clem. Alex., *Exhort. to the Heathen*, VII.)

"When you pray, go with a prepared purity of mind, such as is required of you when you approach the rites and mysteries" (Epictetus, III. 21). "The Eleusinian mysteries are called *Initia*, both because they are indeed the beginnings of a life of true principles, and as teaching us to realize a better hope in death" (Cic., *De Legibus*, II. 14). "Of them stands human nature most in need" (Isocrates, *Panegyr.*).

pure thought in its ultimates. All forms of the conception of unity, from the simplest to the most subtle, were involved in the nebulous fulness of his idea. It was indeed a *Pleroma* (to use Neo-Platonic terms of speech), from which the various theological systems of the world may be drawn forth, as *æons*, at least by *speculative* construction; though of course but as ideal foretypes of what was to be unfolded in the solidity of science and practical use, by other times and more energetic races. In the Hindu mind, it stood simply as the free play of pure idea; the unity of all essence and all existence; the sweep of an Infinite Circle; deity as inclusion and evolution of all forms. This is the central sun of Hindu philosophy; the key to its religious mysteries, and its philosophical reactions. "Who so worships this or that special and separate being," says the Brihad Upanishad, "worships determination, not totality, — worship thou Soul, in which all the differences become one." [1]

Development of ideal unity in Hindu thought.

It is interesting to note how this aspiration haunted and swayed the Hindu mind, from infancy to the most abstract introversion of its later systems. Students like Pictet and Müller believe that they find signs of "an original monotheism," positive or implicit, in the primitive faith of the pre-Vedic times.[2] *Cosmic theism* would, as it seems to me, be a better expression for what was not, in any sense, opposed to polytheism, nor yet in any sense a distinct primitive revelation, from which men afterwards fell away. A step further down, in the earlier Hymns of the Veda, we find *Varuna*, rounding the universe with order, maker of the sun's paths and

[1] *Brihad.* I. iv.

[2] Muller, *Sansk. Lit.*, pp. 528, 559; Pictet, *Les Aryas Primitifs*, II. 704–714

preserver of all sacred limits, alike in the worlds of sense and soul; absorbing into one the primitive instinctive notions of moral sequence and spiritual authority, of justice, providence, and fate.[1] It is believed by some that this name Varuna, identical with Ouranos of the Greeks, whom Hesiod makes the father of the gods, was itself the oldest in Aryan mythology.[2] It must, however, have required a long time to mature so distinct and positive a conception of Moral Order as is contained in the Vedic Hymns to Varuna. If in a *more primitive* meaning his name was really the oldest, it must have given way to that of *Indra*, as the next name of the Supreme in this development of religious sentiment, or sense of wholeness. Like Varuna, Indra concentrated all powers: not at the far off limits of thought, but in the sense of a closer presence, felt in the ethereal expanse, into which the stars fade and the moon wanes and the clouds melt, and shifting light and shadow resolve their mystic play. The vast abyss of creative light absorbed all phenomena, and deity shone in the symbol of Fire, through man and beast, through star and sod. Then, as introversion grew, came more definite concentration of the religious idea around light as a nearer image of the conscious soul, at once self-centred and radiating through all; whereof *the Sun* was the natural symbol, and so became under many names the next emphasis, or phase, of unity for the spiritual process we are tracing. Then all the verses of the Veda are concentrated in *the Gâyatri:* "we meditate on the adorable light of the divine Savitri." All its deities are resolved into gods of the earth, the air, the

[1] See Roth, in *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morg. Gesells h.*, vol. vi. p. 77.
[2] Koeppen, *Religion des Buddha*, I. p. 3

sky, "whose names differ according to their works; but there is only one godhead, the Sun, life of all beings, of motion and of rest."[1] All these are further gathered into one "lord of creatures" (Prajâpati) or "deity of them all;"[2] and, again, their whole meaning is absorbed into the sacred monosyllable *AUM*, and even drawn into inward concentration in the triple suppression of the breath, with mind fixed on the Supreme."[3] Or all symbolism is dropped, as the depths of consciousness are explored; and that questioning about the how, the whence, and the whither of life, which had been stirring thoughtful minds through all these ages, is solved in "*One Eternal Soul*," invested with every appellative of Infinite Power, Wisdom, Goodness. Brahmâ, Adhyâtma, Purusha, had one meaning. "Spirit alone is this All." "Him know ye as the One Soul alone: dismiss all other words."[4]

Such the aspiration to Unity in pantheistic instincts, which nothing but absorption therein could satisfy.

Let us recognize the nature of this change from the world of action to the world of contemplation. Nature of the process. Probably it was not to any great extent shared by the mass of the Aryan community, whose epic traditions indicate intense susceptibility to sensuous

[1] Old Vedic commentary: see Lassen, I. 768 [2] Colebrooke, Essays, I.

[3] Manu, II. 83. The mystic syllable OM (*aum*) is the constant sign of that worship of unity, which pervades Hindu thought. Burnouf (*Sansk. Dict.*) refers it to *avam*, as from the Zend c *ava* (*this one*), marking existence, — "*He that is to be.*" But, more probably, it was a combination of the initials of the three main elements of Vedic deity, — Agni, Varuna, and the Maruts. The *Mândukya Upanishad* refers the three letters to Brahma, as waking, dreaming, and sleeping; in other words, as manifested outwardly, as manifested to himself, and as unmanifested, in the unity of his essence; while the whole word, abolishing the distinctions of the letters, represents his absolute nature The formula of the Bhagavadgitâ is *Om tat sat*, or "God is *that* [i e., the universal] reality." Later still, the same syllable unites Brahmâ, Vishnu, and Siva in a trinity. It expresses the Buddhist oneness of "Saint, Law, and Congregation." It is the prelude to all Buddhist formulas of prayer. To the Brahmanic *Om tat sat* corresponds the Thibetan *Om mani padme hôm* In sum, this sacred word, adored throughout eastern Asia, fully represents the continuity of Hindu religious sentiment, and its devotion to ideal unity, through all phases, epochs, and results.

[4] *Mundaka Upanishad*, II. i. 10; ii 5.

enjoyment and a stormy physical energy. The simple vigorous impulses of Vedic life were developed into physical passions which it required all the finer moral and spiritual elements of the race to check, and which indeed very gradually yielded, even to the enervating influences of climate and social organization. Yet it is reasonable to believe that a tendency to mystical contemplation, so spontaneous and profound as is shown in all the religious compositions of the post-Vedic age, implies a deep root in national character, and must have been in affinity with the instinctive religious temperament of the people. We have already noted its germs in the hymns. In these there is already a ground of diverse tendency; many of them being of a thoughtful and peaceful, others of a warlike and even revengeful, nature.

The change in the religious sentiment which we are now considering certainly involved a loss of that energetic, healthful sense of the real world and the present life, which belonged to the Vedic age. It was, however, effected by intenser concentration on the inward life of ideas and principles. And the compensations thus secured make the process an important one in the history of religion.

Spirituality involved in the worship of Unity.

The spirituality of the result need not surprise us. This religion was primarily the worship of Unity. A thirst to find the One in the manifold is intellectual inspiration. We must remember how mysterious a step in itself is the genesis of the idea of unity or wholeness. It is a step of the personality, beyond observation of facts, beyond experience; an intuitive affirmation, for which no data of the senses account. And the direction of the mind towards it is the passage from the senses to the spirit.

We have seen how manifest it is in the Vedic hymns. The gods are universal, their functions interchangeable. Each absorbs the rest, and might readily stand for the whole. "Agni is light; light is Indra; the Sun is light."[1] "Aditi is heaven; is the firmament; is father, mother, son; is all the gods; is the five orders of men; is generation and birth."[2] As Indra "contains all things in himself, as the felloe of a wheel the spokes,"[3] so these oldest hymns hold the later pantheism itself in germ. Sacrifice itself is here but the circulation of one divine life through the round of god, nature, man. It is said of the sacrificial plant that it contains all the worlds and is father of the gods.[4] So the sacrificial horse assumes the names of the gods.[5] And the secret sense of oneness in all life is uttered in other hymns that pour forth thoughtful yearnings to solve the mystery which enfolds all things within and without in its shadow, the mystery of being itself. For these yearnings the universe is a mystic whole. And not less profound and universal the answer: —

"In the beginning the One breathed by itself, yet without breath. Other than It there nothing since has been."[6]

But the Rig Veda holds to Theism also. Aspiration for the One is in fact the worship of Thought itself, and could leave out of sight no function of Mind. Thus the gods are all creators. There are, as we have seen, hymns in which deity appears in all

Worship of thought.

[1] *Rig Veda* So, in the later Greek inscriptions, we read of Zeus Bacchus, Zeus Æsculapius, &c. Similar compounds are formed with the Egyptian *Ra*, as Ammon Ra, Osiris Ra, &c.

[2] Ibid., I. 89, 10; I. 164.

[3] Ibid., I. 32, 15.

[4] Ibid., IX. 86, 10; 109, 4.

[5] Ibid., I. 163, 3.

[6] *Rig Veda*, X. 129.

the personality and energy of the Hebrew Jehovah;[1] hymns in which creative Mind is adored as "God above all gods."[2] Rude as they were, these psalmists had a profound veneration for the power of Thought. Their constant prayer was for intelligence; their praise, a distinct recognition of the creation of all things by mind. The very name they gave to prayer (mantra) had the same meaning. And as, in later times, the gods were believed subject to the powers wielded by intense mental concentration, so prayer, the earliest form of such concentration, was held in Vedic times to possess a similar mastery.[3] The word Brahma, probably derived from the root *brih*, meaning upward movement or endeavor, was first used to designate this intelligent energy of prayer;[4] and it was this very word that grew to be the highest name for deity, thus identifying God with conscious, efficient Mind. First, there was a Lord of Prayer, Brahmanaspati, perhaps as bearing upward the devotion of the worshipper; then the power of devotion considered as the might of the gods; and finally Brahmâ, the prayer-deity, absorbs them all. And so this Name above all their names meant the divinization of devout thought, meant intelligence in the unity of its essence and the fulness of its life.

But even Brahmâ was held amenable to all deeper "devotion" than his own. For the worship of intelligence involved from the first the right and power of

[1] See hymns quoted by Maury, *Croyances et Légendes*, p. 120.

[2] *Rig Veda*, X. 121, translated by Muller.

[3] *Rig Veda* I. 67, 3, "Prayers uphold the sky." See Roth, *Brahma und die Brahmanen*, in *Zeitsch. d. D. M. Gesellsch.*, I 66–86.

[4] Roth, as above. Brahma (neuter) becoming Brahmâ (masc.), which meant, first, the pronouncer of the prayer; whence, later, Brahmanas, the priesthood. Haug (*Brahma und die Brahmanen*, 1871) derives the word from *vrih*, meaning "to grow." The combination of these two ideas, "to aspire" and "to grow," is the noblest basis of the religious sentiment.

man to change his ideals, and supply his faith, not with new symbolic forms only, but with fresh conceptions and names of deity.

Through the mystical depths of their own thought, following its intuitions of being and cause, and yearning to find those ultimate truths in which it could rest, the later speculative students of the Veda, many of whom were poets also,[1] pursued their way. The typical form of philosophy to which their studies gave rise is the Vedânta, "end, or scope, of the Veda." The search for essential being.

They saw that behind all forms of existence there was pure substance, not to be qualified nor defined, — unconditional Being, whereof we can only say, *It alone truly and perfectly is*. "Of all mysteries, I am silence," says the divine One in the Bhagavadgitâ. But there was a closer mystery than silence: a solution of all questions, speaking in all beings and worlds, yet escaping every limitation, whether by name or by thought, and comprehended only in the breathings of inward aspiration. And, that they might not seem to limit this "Soul of All" by terms that suggested human distinctions and conditions, they were apt reverently to speak of God, or Brahma, in the neuter; saying, as we also do, "It" and "That," whenever moved by deeper awe; or "This" rather,

[1] I speak here of the writers of the Upanishads (*lit.* Sittings): philosophical poems, belonging, according to Muller, Lassen, and other high authorities, to the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries before Christ. A list of these poems, 149 in number, is given by Muller in the *Journal of the German Oriental Society* for 1865, and an analysis of the more important in Weber's *Indische Studien*. In preparing these chapters on Hindu philosophy, I have used translations of the principal Upanishads by Röer and Weber; the Sutras of Kapila, by Ballantyne; and the Bhagavadgitâ, by Lassen, Wilkins, and Thomson. For the Vedânta, or Uttara Mimânsâ philosophy, the authorities are the Brahma-Sutras, ascribed to Vyâsa, of which an account is given by Colebrooke, *Essays*, vol. i., and the Upanishads

when the awe deepened into a recognition of natural intimacy or even inseparable union; plainly meaning therefore by the neuter not an emptiness, but a fulness; not neuter as by death, but as by life; not as lowest gender, but as making gender trivial through that which *transcends* generation, the essential ground of personality itself. "The truth of truth;"[1] "The Unmanifested One;"[2] "Greater than what is great;"[3] "Higher than thought;"[4] "Different from what is known, beyond what is not known;"[5] "More distant than what is distant, yet near, in the very heart;"[6] "Unknown to those who think to know, though verily ear of the ear, eye of the eye, mind of the mind, speech of speech, life of life,"[7]—such the negation of every possible limit, by which they sought to express the necessity of Absolute Being, as condition of all believing and all thinking. Nor did they fail to put this negation strongly, at some points, as later philosophy has done, and to declare that "Not-being" (*asat*) was the ground of Being (*sat*);[8] a formula which then meant, as it now means, simply the eternal need of a deeper foundation for thought than any definite specific forms of thinking; and for being, than the limited modes under which we conceive it. The neuter Brahma meant reality itself, that which makes all existences contain more than comes and goes. It must be interpreted by such sentences as these: "The highest Brâhmana of the wise is the *Right*, the *True*. Through Truth the wind blows, the sun shines. Truth is the support of speech. By it the universe is

[1] *Brihad Upanishad*, II. ii 20.
[2] *Manu*, XII. 50.
[3] *Mundaka Up.*, II. i. 2.
[4] *Mitri Up* (in Weber's *Ind. Stud*, I. 273).
[5] *Kena Up.*, I. 3.
[6] *Mundaka Up*, III. i. 7.
[7] *Kena Up.*, II. 3; I 2.
[8] *Châudogya Up.*, VI. 1. So *Rig Veda*, X. 72, 2.

upheld. It is highest of all."[1] "Falsehood is encompassed by Truth. It harms not him who knoweth this."[2] "The eternal world is theirs, in whom is no crookedness, no delusion, no lie."[2]

One Absolute Reality; unchangeableness of Truth; imperishableness of Substance, — this was what these mystical half-poets, half-philosophers, would affirm; this was what they breathed silently in the sacred syllable Om; whereof they said that "it contained all the gods,"[3] and that "as the palâśa leaf is supported by a single pedicel, so the universe by Om."[4] This was what they spoke aloud in the neuter "Tad," or *That*. "Into *That* (One) all This (Universe) enters, out of *That* it beams. *That* is what was and shall be."[5] It was what they meant by saying, "The indestructible One is verily without form, or life, or mind, or origin, self-existent spirit."[6] "There is another name, different from the definition, 'He is not this, He is not that,' — namely, the truth of Truth."[7]

"I am that I am." This was the highest Hebrew affirmation of deity. "I am that which is: no mortal hath lifted my veil," — this was the Egyptian. "Essence, *Tὸ ὄν*," — this the Greek. "The way of Nature and Reason," — this the Chinese. "Substance; the Real; the Absolute," — this the ultimate of our Western religious thought. And all these alike reach behind individual forms of deity, to the ground of being itself. Thus the neuter Brahma has lived on, repeated under different forms through the ages; for without a basis in that which *must be*, and which no special will can change nor

The absolute in different faiths.

[1] *Mahânârâyana Up.* (Weber, II. 80–95).
[2] *Brihad Up.*, V. v.; *Praśna Up.*, I. 16
[3] *Yâjnavalkya*: cited by Colebrooke, (I. 130).
[4] *Mund. Up.*, II. i 2.
[5] *Nirukta.*
[6] *Katha Up*, IV. 9.
[7] *Brihad.*, II iii. 6.

control, there is not only no ethical sanction nor conviction, but no proper sense of life itself as real.

The Vedantist concentrated his thought on this idea of pure substance, to some detriment of the rights of human personality. A tendency to this is apparent even in the interchangeableness of the Vedic deities; their lack of individuality; their flow into each other, like waves of a sea. It is matured in the pantheism of the Upanishads, where the individual fades into the One; and in the doctrine of Transmigration, which floats him away on tides of manifold unremembered lives and overmastering retributions. This failure of the right of personality, with all its melancholy consequences in the later institutions of the Hindus, was due not to the idea of one absolute substance, but to the lack of qualities requisite to balance their devotion to it, and bring adequate respect for persistence in definite forms of being and action. Nor must we fail to note that these contemplative men were moved by a profound sense of the necessity of freeing their conception of the divine substance of truth and right from all contingency on human passions and desires, from the limits which beset all individualities, from the very possibility of its sinking into a creature of caprice. Did they in this wholly forget the truth of personality? Did they not pursue that on which personality most depends? What is the meaning of the word as applied to God or to man? Here our Hindu mystics deserve attention.

Personal and impersonal.

All *special* forms under which deity is ordinarily conceived as "personal" are so many expressions of individualism, and so of exclusion and limit. Even for the moment they content us only because subtly identified by us with the real in-

definable Infinite beyond them, which involves personality indeed, but *in an unlimited sense of the word*, transcending all specific forms of perception and volition. In other words, such *limitary* personal, or rather individual, deity is endurable to thought, only through tacit reference of it to unconditional Being, as a deeper ground. As of divine men we know that it is by partaking of the essential nature of truth, goodness, and right, that they are divine, and that their personality stands in these, — so of all we may ascribe to God, it is to be remembered that this or that divine manifestation is not right and true because God wills it, but that God wills it, — or, rather, it is in and of God, because it is right and true. "Even deity is divine," says Plato, "by the contemplation of truth."[1]

It is this final appeal to the Absolute that must offset a certain intense idolatry of specific volition and purpose which seems inherent in Christianity, and is mainly derived from its Semitic origin. The gods of Greece were themselves subject to the Oath: if they broke into its sanctuary of truth, they ceased to be gods. And so our reverence for deity demands that what is personal rest on what is *impersonal;* not in the sense of unintelligent, or *non*-personal, but of *universal* and *substantial;* being held divine, only as identified with principle and with essence. It will escape the illusion of imagining that the Absolute is empty, is nothing; and going behind such specific forms of individuated being and will as may, traditionally or directly, be set before it *as God*, affirm what transcends them all, that Truth, Right, Intelligence, in their substance, are God; recognizing also that every

[1] *Phædrus*, c. 62.

one's real personality, his vital, enduring reality, rests on his participation in these.

Failure on the finite side.

Our contemplative Hindus, it is easy to see, were so fascinated by the idea of the infinite, that they failed of justice to the rights of the finite. Their introversion lacked the balancing force of scientific and social interests which other races and climes were to supply. Both Semitic and Aryan religions, on the other hand, have emphasized conscious self-assertion in limited forms of forethought and plan, as the very life of God; while the practical relations and aims of these energetic races have brought out the corresponding element in the life of man; so that they have now intense faith in an exact opposite to the Oriental ideal.

East and West.

This intense will-worship and work-worship is, however, as one-sided as the extravagance of the Hindu in the other direction. His Mimânsâs and Upanishads will at least admonish us that, under conditions most unfavorable to energetic moral life, men have thoroughly believed in an inherent right of truth as truth, as the substance of the world, to claim unlimited devotion; that they have believed in a reality beyond phenomena, a meaning for the conscience and the heart in what we cannot trace or define, compared to which rites, dogmas, traditions, expediencies, interests, will of masses, personal profit or personal idolatries, even life and all the worlds, were held shadowy and transient; and that they committed themselves to this as the substance of their own being. Our modern practical ideal is yet to be debtor to this Oriental dream. We do not disparage our civilization when

we point out its actual defects. Palpable signs of its extreme need of the contemplative element appear, practically, in the dissipation of mind and morals by our vast material interests and competitions, and theologically in that utter dependence on the efficacy of a single body of ideal personal traditions and symbols, which has passed for the substance of saving faith. The remedy for both of these is in larger experience of the universalities of abstract thought. Eastern philosophy cannot teach us special ethics; but it brings into our view an unbounded faith in the reality of the absolute and eternal as perceived by thought. To forsake all dread of "abstractions," to cease regarding ideals as empty words, to become *realists* for these instead of nominalists, is as essential for the recognition of principles — truth, justice, humanity — in their clearness and power, as the spirit of love is to their application; a truth which the popular religion, in our day, stands greatly in need of embodying in its doctrine. That our practical resources are so vast, calls for all the greater clearness of conviction, breadth of idea, liberty and self-respect, in order to the discovery of their real uses. And the first condition is that the abstract become intensely real; the impersonal, sacred; truth, its own authority. This is our guarantee of intellectual and spiritual progress.

"Nowhere," says Quinet, "has there been made such lofty and solemn affirmation of the rights of essential being as in India." [1] Brahma as soul.

The faith of these dreamers was in no unreality, in no mere dead substratum of formulas and words; the very opposite. The ultimate of their thought was "Soul." This is their sacred, central, ever-recurring,

[1] *Génie des Religions*, p. 133.

final word. The same terms, *âtman*, *purusha*, which expressed the spiritual essence in man, were carried up to the deeps of Infinite Being, to affirm there also what we mean by life, in the fullest sense of Mind.[1] The Brahma Sutras, or special Vedânta aphorisms, are careful to prove, against the supposed negations of the Sânkhya, that deity is mind, "the omnipotent, omniscient, sentient cause."[2] The Bhagavadgitâ speaks of the "eternal person;"[3] the Upanishads, of the "light which shines everywhere, seen within the solar orb and the human eye, in heaven and throughout the world, intelligent, immortal, and for ever blest."[2]

The whole aim of the Brihad Upanishad is to teach that Life is the substance of all things and master of death: —

"Life is verily oldest and best."

"The sun rises out of life and sets into life; this the sacred law; it sways to-day and will sway to-morrow."

"Life is the Immortal One, names and forms but conceal this."

"Unseen, He sees; unheard, He hears; unknown, He knows."

"Life is preserver of all forms; by life the universe is sustained."

"Life is the soul of the whole, is *all* the gods; so that it is not fit to say, 'sacrifice to *this*, to the *other*, god.'"

"As by footprints one finds cattle, so by soul one knows all things."

"Soul is the lord and king of all; as the spokes in the nave, so all worlds and souls are fastened in the One Soul."[4]

"Life (Prajâpati) has sway over all in earth and heaven. As a mother her children, protect us, grant us prosperity and wisdom."[5]

[1] "Atman" — probably derived from *ah*, "to breathe" (German, *athem*), or else "to think" — meant *life*, and was used to designate Soul, both individual and universal: it was the Self, the Ego, being even familiarly used as the first person. See Müller, *Sansk. Lit.*, p 21 Fick's *Wörterb.*, p. 690. Eichhoff derives it from *at*, "to move:"

[2] Colebrooke's Analysis of these Sutras, *Essays*, I. 338.

[3] Schlegel translates it *numen*. Other designations of deity are "Oversoul" and "Overworld." See, also, Thomson's *Bhagavadgitâ*, ch. viii. n. 1, on *purusha*. The *Surya Siddhânta* (XII. 12) is to similar effect.

[4] *Brihad Upan.*, VI. 1, 1; I. v. 23; I. vi. 3; I. iii; I. iv; I. iv, 7; II. v, 15.

[5] *Praśna Upan.*, II. 13.

"He does not move, yet is swifter than thought: never have these gods, the senses, obtained him. He was gone before. In His rest He outstrips them. He is far, yet also near. He is within this All, yet beyond it."[1]

"As birds repair to a tree to dwell there, so the world repairs to the Supreme."[2]

"He is creator, and all that moves or breathes or sleeps is founded in him; and He is their goal; indestructible life and mind."[3]

The ideas of Absolute Reality and Infinite Mind, of Substance and Thought, are here reconciled. Intelligence and its unknown basis in the nature of Being are alike held fast as essential elements of deity.

Greek Plotinus said that the One could not dwell alone, but must for ever bring forth souls from himself. Not less were love and desire affirmed to be stirring these deeps of Oriental deity: the longing to go out of self, the impulse to sacrifice the absolute for the phenomenal, unity for manifold life, is there.[4] The Hindu Kâma, like the Orphic Eros, is primal impulse to creation. A Veda hymn says of the self-existent: "Then first came love upon it, the new spring of mind."[5] And one of the Upanishads puts it thus: "The supreme Soul desired, 'Let me become many,' and performing holy work created all things."[6] Another speaks of his "love" as "all-embracing."[7] "The Self-existent said within himself, 'In austerity is not infinity. Let me sacrifice myself in all created things.'"[8] The endless theme of the Vedânta philosophy is the production

Manifestation through Love and Desire.

[1] *Vâjasaneya Sanh. Upan.*, 4, 5. [2] *Praśna*, IV.
[3] *Mundaka Upan.*, II. ii. 1, 2.
[4] Ritter, *Hist. Philos.*, II. ch. 2; *Śankara's Comment. on Brihad*, I 4.
[5] *Rig Veda*. X. 129; Müller's *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 564. [6] *Taittariya*, II. 6.
[7] *Amritanâda Upan.*, Weber, II. 62. [8] *Śatapatha Brâhmana*, Muir, IV. 25

of all life, of mind, the elements, the worlds, the sexes, and the races, from the indestructible One.[1] "Prajápati causes his life to be divided, not content to be alone."[2]

But not even as products, distinctly as they were recognized as such, could phenomena be separated from that spiritual substance, whose universality was the most impressive of facts to the mystical sense.

"Immortal Brahma is before, behind; above, below; to right and left; all pervading: Brahma is this All, this infinite world."[3]

"Whoever looks for world, or gods, or beings, elsewhere than in the one divine Soul, should be abandoned by them. To know this is to know all."[4]

"The sea is one and not other than its waters, though waves, foam, spray, differ from each other."

"An effect is not other than its cause: Brahma is single without a second. He is not separate from the embodied self. He is Soul, and the soul is he."[5]

To this absorbing sense of the Unity of Life *in its essence*, forms and existences are but as mists rising from the sea, and returning in rain; like winds formed in the atmosphere and dying again into its stillness; not changing in nature, but only in form; the mists are still water, the winds are air.

The form returns into the essence.

According to Manu, "The Self-existent created the waters by a thought; and moving on the deep, as Nârâyana, the Spirit, placed therein a seed, or egg;[6] from which He is himself born as Brahmâ, who again reproduces himself as Mind, by whose devotion

[1] *Mundaka*, II. i.; *Brihad*, II. i. 20.
[2] *Brihad*, I. iv.
[3] *Mundaka*, II. ii. 11.
[4] *Brihad*, II. iv.
[5] Colebrooke's Analysis of the Brahma Sutras, *Essays*, I. 351.
[6] In the Orphic also, as in most other early cosmogenic systems, the egg is the natural symbol of production or evolution.

all things are created from the bosom of the Supreme.[1] Here is the circle: creation, or rather evolution of forms, is but an endless transmutation within it; in substance, all things are the same. "The circle of being," says Yâjnavalkya, "revolves without beginning or end."[2] Says the beautiful Katha Upanishad: —

"The world is like an eternal holy fig-tree, whose roots are above, whose branches descend. In Brahma all worlds repose. None becomes different from this, their root. The universe trembles with awe, moving within this, its supreme life."[3]

When there is no longer any sense of separation from this divine Whole, nor of difference from the common ground and substance of all forms, — in other words, when the soul loses itself in the mystery of being, one and the same for all times and persons and things that are, and knows that this unsearchable depth is life and mind, — then is reached the goal of all its striving. The wonder and joy it feels in this participation is called by the Taittariya "the song of universal unity."[4]

All in God.

"As speech is common to all names, the eye to all perception of things, and to all actions an agent, so for all souls is there identity of spiritual essence. This is their Brahma."[5]

"The same that is here is there also. The same that is there is here. He is but passing from death to death who sees difference in Brahma."

"This Soul of all *is* to-day, will be to-morrow. As water running off into valleys is scattered and lost, so do men run after differences, beholding attributes as apart from this. But the soul of the wise, who knows what is the same, is like pure water on the ground that remains in its place, alike and undispersed."[6]

[1] *Manu*, I 8–18. So the *Surya Siddhânta*, XII.
[2] *Vâjnavalkya*, III 124.
[3] *Katha*, VI. 1, 2.
[4] *Taittar.*, III. x. 5.
[5] *Brihad*, I. vi. 8.
[6] *Katha*, IV. 10, 13, 14.

"He who, dwelling in all elements and forms and knowledge, whom they do not know, whose body they are, who from within rules them, — *He* is thy soul, the inner ruler, immortal. There is none that hears or knows, but him. Whatever is apart from him comes to nought."[1]

Human individuality.

Yet it is an error to suppose that spiritual pantheism is inconsistent with belief in individual existences. It simply regards them as one in spiritual essence, the ultimate common nature of human and divine; and holds that they have no real being independent of Infinite Spirit, which must for ever be One. The Vedânta abolishes distinctions in *deity* only, as the ideal of devout aspiration, and as that ground of reality which must be one and the same for all.

Divine transcendence.

Nor does deity, thus conceived, become the mere *totality* of these distinctions, nor yet their mere *identity*. Brahma transcends all definite factors that can be summed up, as finite addition can never reach infinity, nor even approach it. He absorbs all, yet transcends all; and this not only as the infinite, but as the One.

If we observe our own mental processes, we shall find that we do not conceive *unity* as a mere sum of component parts. Always it appears as a different and higher fact. The orchestral chord is more than the sum of those tones which blend in it; the roar of the sea than the wave-plashes it gathers into one; the articulate word of history than the mere successive syllables of the ages or races. The very spark is more than flint added to steel; the salt than acid mixed with base. So Brahma as the Whole must mean *more* than the aggregate. The One has not the limitations

[1] *Brihad*, III. vii. "Soul is uncreate and immortal" (Plato, *Phædr* c. 53).

of the parts. It absorbs them, but it rules them and lifts them into higher meaning. And this is as fully recognized by the Vedantists as the non-difference of the soul from the Supreme.

Again let us hear the Katha Upanishad: —

"Upon Him all the worlds are founded; none becomes different from him. Yet as the one sun, eye of the world, is not sullied by the defects of the eye or the world, so the Soul of all beings is not sullied by the evils of the world, because it is also without it. Being of every nature to every nature, the One Soul is also without them, in its own." [1]

"Make known to me the Being different from this whole of causes and effects, past, present, and future." [2]

"They who know Brahma in this universe as different from it become free." [3]

"The soul, immersed in things, is wretched in its helplessness: when it sees the supreme Soul as different from these, and His glory, its grief ceases." [4]

Both aspects are blended in the "divine wisdom" of the Bhagavadgitâ: —

"The Supreme Soul is without beginning; not to be called existent or non-existent; possessing every sense, yet separate from them all; apart from, and yet within all; both far and near; not divided among beings, yet *as if it were*." [5]

"Behold this my kingly mystery. All things exist in me. My spirit which has caused them sustains them, yet does not dwell (confined) in them. Everywhere I am present in manifold forms, by reason of being single and separable from them."

"I am the sacrifice, the fire, the incense. I am the father, the mother of this universe; the mystic doctrine, the syllable Om, the Vedas; the path, the support, the master, the witness, the habitation, the refuge, the friend; origin, and dissolution, and inexhaustible seed. I am ambrosia, and death; what exists and what exists not; the soul, in the heart of all beings; beginning, middle, and end." [6]

[1] *Katha*, V. 8–11. [2] Ibid., II. 14. [3] *Svetâsvatara Up.*, I. 7. [4] Ibid., IV. 7.

[5] *Bhag. Gitâ*, ch. xiii. This poem is not a Upanishad, nor purely Vedantic; yet it follows our present line of thought.

[6] Ibid., IX. X.

What is here meant is not the mere indifference of all things, but their *ideal;* since the "Holy One" also declares himself to be the *Best* in each form and kind.

"Among lights, I am the sun; among mountains, Meru; among waters, the ocean; among words, the monosyllable Om; among forms of worship, silent worship; among letters, A; among seasons, the spring; splendor itself among things that shine; silence, among mysteries; the goodness of the good, the knowledge of the wise."

He continues:—

"I have made and still uphold this universe by one portion of myself."[1]

So in the "Hymn of Purusha," where the Supreme is described as sacrificing himself for the creation and support of all worlds, it is said:—

"But Purusha (the spirit), who is all that was, is, or shall be, is above this all. The creation is but the quarter of his being: the other three parts are eternal in the heavens. Ascending with these three parts, He is above and beyond the world: the fourth part remains below to be born and die by turns."[2]

A later treatise, not Vedantic, shows how the divine could be conceived as one with the world, and yet above it:—

"As sound in tunes, as fruit in its flavors, as oil in sesame-seed, so God exists in the world, yet in such wise that He may be separated from it. He remains unchanged in all his works, just as the sun does, while flowers open and shut in its presence."[3]

Such is the transcendence to all forms and worlds here affirmed of immanent Mind. In this oneness *with* the conceivable universe, it is not forgotten that there must also be exaltation *above* it, unfathomed life beyond.

[1] *Bhag Gitâ*, ch. x

[2] Burnouf's translation, in *Introd. to Bhâgavata Purâna.*

[3] *Śiva Gnân Potham*, in *Amer. Oriental Journal*, vol. iv.

For such absorbed contemplation of the Absolute and One, all sense of limit ceased; the finite self was felt no more; the infinite of thought extinguished its claims. There was still âtma, *a* self; but not the private, individual interest that bore the name. Relative, conditional existence was merged in the spiritual essence, felt as All in all, the one inclusive constitutive principle, by and through which the sense of being was possible. "I distinguish not myself," says the disciple of unity, "from this whole." To soul all has become soul; mind has recognized its identity with the universal force, the primal, pervasive, and ultimate reason of all existence. How should it speak of any form of mind as apart from this, which is the substance of Mind? "How," asks the Brihad, "should one know [as an intrinsically separate object] Him by whom he knows?"[1] "The eye cannot see itself. How can we see the soul which enables us to see?"[2]

The sense of absorption.

It lies in the direct line of present scientific tendency that we should come to recognize the unity of mind, by observing that all phenomena are differing expressions of one Force, which can be no other than Thought. The correlation of physical forces is pushed forward and upward, in the hope of including that which in fact contains and conditions them all; but the result can only be demonstration, even to the understanding, that molecule and protoplasm cannot dispense with intelligence, and that all cosmical forces are identical with mind.

The unity of mind.

Meanwhile, as we are now indicating in Oriental thought, intuition and contemplation are beforehand with science, and reach the result from a side which

[1] *Brihad*, II. iv. 14. [2] *Śiva Gnân Potham.*

precludes materialism. Speculation and sentiment have thus foreshown the steps of experience throughout human history. Man is divinely prescient of his infinity as mind, as soon as he begins to meditate and aspire.

Let us do justice to this dream that drew the Hindu seers upward through their morning twilight, before the day of science and free intercourse of nations could rise upon the East. That twilight was cheered by rays which are somewhat intercepted in our Western spectrum thus far, and which they may help us to bring out.

The gift of the East.

"I distinguish not myself from the whole." This is not analysis; it is not science. Quite as little is it Hebrew fear, or Christian prayer, or Greek self-assertion, or modern self-dissection. It is not philosophy as the clear, cold understanding defines the term; nor piety in the sense of a worship of definite will, which knows a present deity only as one who *may* be absent. But it is the eternal poet, child, saint, lover, in man. It is the loss of self in the infinite of aspiration and faith. It is the free flow of our life into the grander life it sees and loves. The voice of the Eternal, alone heard, takes up the human into itself, and the poet's tongue can but echo its words: —

> "I am what is and is not. I am, — if thou dost know it,
> Say it, O Jellaleddin, — I am the Soul in all."

Knowing and being.

Is not man of one nature with what he worships? Where his faith reposes, *there* and *that* is he. So these Eastern mystics do not hesitate to say: "Whoso worships God under the thought, 'He *is* the foundation,' becomes founded; under the

thought, 'He is great,' becomes great; or under the thought, 'He is mind,' becomes wise."[1] "Whoever thus knows the supreme Brahma becomes even Brahma."[2] It is only the prevalent habit of associating self-assertion with whatsoever is said or done, that makes language like this, in any religion, shock and repel. It is perfectly natural to the poetic sense, to the spiritual imagination, to the spontaneity of faith and the self-surrender of love. It is not "self-deification," but that very spirit by which alone, in any age or people, the vice of self-worship is to be escaped.

Not yet have we heard any better statement of the relation of individual to universal life than this: —

"Round and round, within a wheel, roams the vagrant soul, so long as it fancies itself different and apart from the Supreme. It becomes truly immortal, when upheld by him."[3]

"As oil in sesame seed is found by pressure, as water by digging the earth, as fire in the two pieces of wood by rubbing them together, so is that absolute Soul found by one within his own soul, through truth and discipline alone."[4]

"The soul must churn the truth patiently out of every thing."[5]

The poet does not forget that this is the end, not the beginning, of human endeavor; and must come by paying the price.

To know truth is to become truth.

The earnestness of this aspiration appears in the stress everywhere laid upon the sufficiency of really *knowing* and *seeing* truth. The modern or Western mind, concentrated on action, taught by its theology to distrust intellectual intuition in religious belief, finds it hard to do justice to the ancient principle, "Whoso knows or sees

[1] *Taittariya*, III. x. 3.
[2] *Mundaka*, III. ii. 9
[3] *Śvetâśvatara*, I. 6.
[4] Ibid., I. 15.
[5] *Amritanâda Upan.*, Weber, II. 62.

truth *becomes* truth." But if this principle was not moral power, how came it to be, as it certainly was, the resort of thoughtful men who sought to comprehend and master the ills of life? What must *they* have meant by "knowing," who said, "Whatever nature one meditates on, to that nature he goes: he who meditates on God attains God"?[1] The Semitic myth of the Fall of Man separates, even to antagonism, the tree of knowledge from the tree of immortal life. Here is a deeper synthesis, that makes the two to be one and the same.

There is a worship of knowledge which is not pride of understanding, but sincerity of mind, — the longing to escape falsities, the sway of the will by a supreme necessity of living by truth. "Truth alone, and not falsehood, conquers: by truth is opened the path on which the blest proceed."[2] "No purifier in the world like knowledge."[3] In the simplest and purest form of conviction, to *know* is not divorced from *to be;* in other words, the life goes into the thought, and is one with it. And this sacred unity of Thought and Being attends the highest philosophy as well. Plato distinguishes "true science" from "opinion," affirming that in this way to know truth is to become truth. Of like purport is his great ethical postulate, that vice is but ignorance; none who see the beauty of virtue being capable of violating her laws. "Wisdom," in the Hebrew Apocrypha, shines with the same adequacy, reflected in large measure from the Hellenic mind. "She is the brightness of the Everlasting Light; and, being but one, she can do all things; and in all ages, entering into holy souls, she maketh them

[1] *Bhag. Gîtâ*, ch. viii. [2] *Mundaka*, III. 6.
[3] *Bhag. Gîtâ*, ch iv.

friends of God and prophets." "Bondage," says Kapila, "is from delusion."[1] "Whoso knows is emancipated, and thirsts no more."[2] Spinoza answers across the ages that the knowledge of God is one with loving Him. And the Christian mystic, of whose genius the fourth Gospel is the product, puts into the lips of his ideal "Word" this truth of universal religion: "Ye shall know the truth, and truth shall make you free."

"The truth of being and the truth of knowing," says Bacon, "is all one. A man is but what he knoweth. For truth prints goodness; and they be the clouds of error that descend in storms of passions and perturbations."[3]

To be what one knows to be real is for ever the goal of noble effort, simply because it is implied in the unity and integrity of thought. Nothing is really known so long as it stands aloof, as mere distinction from the thinker, an external object only. Mind can know only by *finding itself* in the thing known. Nothing is really *thought* by us, whose being is not made mystically one with our thought, through the common element which makes knowledge possible. Nothing is really *spoken* or *named*, unless the word or name is in some sense merged in the reality it would express. Hence, for Vedantic piety, the name needed not to be spoken, but breathed only. "The best worship is the silent."[4] Hence, too, the significance of names and even syllables for Oriental contemplation, as carrying with them something far deeper and more real than an arbitrary symbolism for social convenience. Thinking, naming, knowing, are the ideals

[1] Kapila, *Sânkhya Aphorisms*, III. 24.
[2] Ibid., II. Introduction.
[3] *Essay in Praise of Knowledge.*
[4] *Bhag. Gitâ*, ch. x.

of contemplative life. To identify them with *being* was to prove them earnest and devout.

Is not all intense faith, will, love, identified with its ideal purpose? Does it not make thought one with thing, knowledge with what it knows, and the name with what it means?

We know truth by participation, not by observation. To be *absorbed into* our idea or principle, so that it is the life of our life, to find it the substance of our path and opportunity, — this, not the mere perception of it as an object, is to know it. Of God what else can we know, save what we have found as life, ideal or actual, in ourselves?

Indispensable to universal religion is the unfailing faith of all mystics, that to know and to be are one.

Search for truth.

Veda, Upanishad, Sutra, — poetry, philosophy, prayer, — are possessed by the infinite desire for spiritual knowledge. With incessant questioning they beset the mystery of being. The Śvetâśvatara opens thus: "The seekers converse together. What form of cause is Brahma? Whence are we? By whom do we live and where at last abide? By whom are we governed? Do we walk after a law, in joy and pain, O ye knowers of God?" And the Kena thus: "By whom decreed and appointed, does the mind speed to its work?" The Mitri asks: "How can the soul forget its origin? How, leaving its selfhood, be again united thereto?" In Yâjnavalkya's Code, the munis inquire of their chief: "How has this world come into being, with gods, spirits, and men; and how the soul itself? Our minds are dark: enlighten us on these things."[1]

[1] *Yâjn.*, III. 118.

In the Vedânta poems, wise men and women propound questions, and are answered by wiser ones, or ask in vain. Experience is revealed, foolishness confounded. "Answer truly, or thy head shall fall down," say these saints to each other, let us hope symbolically. The problems that all generations must meet are stated, solved, or left reverently in the care of the Unknown. "How shall death be escaped, and what are the fetters of life? What is the light of this soul, when the sun and moon have set? On what are the worlds woven and rewoven? What is this witness, ever present, the soul within each? If, O venerable one! this whole world were mine, could I become immortal thereby?"[1]

The wise answer wisely, and the questioner is dumb.

"The king of the Videhas sat on his throne. Then came Yâjnavalkya. 'Why hast thou come, O Yâjnavalkya? Is it seeking cattle, or with subtle questions?'—'Even both, O king of kings!'—'*Let us hear what any has taught thee.*'"[2]

The boon the king asks of his seers is that he may question them at his pleasure. "O sages, whoever is best knower of Brahma, shall have a thousand cattle, their horns overlaid with gold." "As a warrior rises with arrows, and binds the string to his bow, so will I rise before thee with two questions," says Gargi, the daughter of Vachacknu; "do thou make answer." "Ask on, O Gargi!" And questions and answers lead on through the circle of being, resting at last in the "imperishable One, who unseen sees, unheard hears, unknown knows, beside whom there is none that sees, or hears, or knows."[3]

[1] *Brihad*, III. IV. VI. [2] Ibid., IV. I. [3] Ibid., III. viii.

"The wise does not speak of any thing else but the Supreme, his delight is in the soul; his love and action also."[1]

The earliest writers about the Hindus inform us that this people spent their time conversing on life and death. These lively Greeks were profoundly impressed by the absorption of the Brahmans in the thought of immortality. Megasthenes noted their frequent discourse of death as the birth of the soul into blessed life. And Porphyry marvelled at their passion for yielding life, even when no evils pressed on them, and their efforts to separate the soul from the senses, esteeming those who died to be happiest, as receiving immortal life.

Nachikétas questions death.

Nachikétas, having earned the promise of a boon from Yama, or Death, demands to know if the soul is immortal. And Death replies:[2]—

"It is a hard question: the gods asked it of old. Choose another boon, O Nachikétas! do not compel me to this: release me from this."

N. "The gods indeed asked it of old, O Death! And as for what thou sayest, that 'it is not easy to understand it,' there is no other speaker to be found like thee, O Death! there is no other boon like this."

Y. "Choose, O Nachikétas! sons and daughters who may live a hundred years; choose herds of cattle, elephants, gold, horses, celestial maidens; choose the wide-expanded earth, and live as many years as thou wilt. Be a king, O Nachikétas! on the wide earth; I will make thee enjoyer of all desires; but do not ask what the soul shall be after death.

N. "All those enjoyments are of yesterday: perishes, O thou end of man! the glory of all the senses; and more, the life of all is short. With thee remain thy horses and the like, with thee dance and song.

"Man rests not satisfied with wealth. If we should obtain wealth and behold thee, we should live only so long as thou shalt sway. The boon I choose is what I said.

[1] *Mundaka*, III. i. 4. [2] *Katha Upan.*, I.-III.

"What man living in this lower world, who knows that he decays and dies, — while going to the undecaying immortals he shall obtain exceeding bliss, — who knows the real nature of such as rejoice in beauty and love, can be content with a long life?

"Answer, O Death! the great question, which men ask, of the coming world. Nachikétas asks no other boon but that, whereof the knowledge is hid."

V. "One thing is good: another thing is pleasure. Both with different objects enchain man. Blessed is he who between these chooses the good alone. Thou, O Nachikétas! considering the objects of desire, hast not chosen the way of riches, on which so many perish.

"Ignorance and knowledge are far asunder, and lead to different goals. I think thou lovest knowledge, because the objects of desire did not attract thee.

"They who are ignorant, but fancy themselves wise, go round and round with erring step, as blind led by the blind. He who believes this world exists, and not the other, is again and again subject to my sway.

"Of the soul, — not gained by many, because they do not hear of it, and which many do not know, though hearing, — of the soul, wonderful is the teacher, wonderful the receiver, wonderful the knower. The knowledge, O dearest! for which thou hast asked, is not to be gained by argument; but it is easy to understand it when declared by a teacher who beholds no difference in soul. Thou art persevering as to the truth. May there be for us another inquirer like thee, O Nachikétas! Thee I believe a house with open door.

"The wise, by meditation on the unfathomable One, who is in the heart, leaves both grief and joy: having distinguished the soul from the body, the mortal rejoices, obtaining it in its subtle essence."

Nor is the questioner yet content. "Make known to me this being which thou beholdest, as different from this whole of times, of causes, and effects." Then follows the praise of essential being; of spirit, as of one nature with deity: —

"It is not born, nor does it die: it was not produced from any one, nor was any produced from it. Eternal and without decay, it is not slain, though the body is slain.

"If the slayer think, 'I slay,' or if the slain thinks, 'I am slain, then both of them do not know well. It does not slay, nor is it slain. Subtler than what is subtle, greater than what is great, it abides in the heart of the living.

"He who is free from desire and grief beholds, through tranquillity of his senses, that majesty of the soul.

"Sitting, it goes afar; sleeping, it goes everywhere.

"Thinking the soul as bodiless among bodies, as firm among fleeting things, as great and all-pervading, the wise casts off all grief.

"The soul cannot be gained by knowledge of rites and texts, not by understanding of these, not by manifold science. It can be obtained by the soul by which it is desired. *His soul reveals its own truth.*[1]

"Whoever has not ceased from evil ways, has not subdued his senses, and concentrated his mind, does not obtain it, not even by knowledge."

"Know the soul as the rider, the body as the car; know intellect as the charioteer, and mind, again, as the reins. The senses are the horses, their objects the roads.[2]

"Whoso is unwise has the senses unsubdued, like wicked horses of the charioteer. But whoso is wise has the senses subdued like good horses of the charioteer.

"Whoso is unwise, unmindful, always impure, does not gain the goal, but descends to the world again. But whosoever is wise, mindful, always pure, gains the goal from whence he is not born again, the highest place of the all-pervading One.

"Higher than the senses are their objects, higher than their objects is the mind; intellect higher than mind; higher than intellect the great soul.[3]

"Higher than this great one the Unmanifested; higher than the unmanifested the Spirit;[4] higher than this is nought; it is the last limit and highest goal.

"Let the wise subdue his speech by mind, his mind by knowledge, his knowledge in the great soul; subdue this also in the placid Soul [peace of the soul].

[1] This is Śankara's understanding of the text; but Röer thinks, in common with Müller and Muir, that a more literal version would be: "It is attainable by him whom it chooses. The Soul chooses this man's body as its own." In view of the context, however, the meaning is substantially the same, — that the wise seeker finds God within, and not through outward revelations.

[2] Compare Plato in *Phædrus*, § 74. [3] The "rider." [4] *Purusha.*

"Awake, arise, get to the great teachers, and attend. The wise say that the road to Him is as difficult to tread as a razor's edge."

"The wise who tells and hears the eternal tale, which Death related and Nachikétas received, is adored in the world of Brahma."

"It is evident," says Dr. Röer, the translator of this wonderful Upanishad, "that the Katha derives the knowledge of Brahma from philosophy, and denies the possibility of a revelation."[1] We should say rather it grandly identifies *knowledge* with revelation. Its God is revealed to the wise by their own nature.

"One's soul reveals its own truth; not to be gained by mere knowledge of Vedas, by understanding nor by science;" "not by word, mind, nor eye, but by the soul by which it is desired;" nor by intellect alone, but by "union of intellect with soul."[2]

There is nothing of which we read so much in this Hindu thought and worship as *Immortality*. It is the word for final beatitude, for the end of all human aspiration. "Whoso is one with the Supreme obtains immortality," is the burden of precept, philosophy, and prayer. "Immortal become those who know."[3] What meaning did they attach to the term? The sense of immortality.

Certainly the idea of *self-conscious individuality* beyond death did not stand so definitely before these dreaming souls as it does before the sharper intelligence and the intenser individualism of the modern mind.[4] But this was simply because self-consciousness was not so definitely conceived as a *present fact;*

[1] *Katha, Introd.* [2] Ibid., II. 23, VI. 12, II. 12.

[3] Ibid., VI. 9.

[4] It is denied in the *Brihad* (IV. v. 13) that after death there is any self-consciousness; but it is explained as referring to such as are become *pure soul*, — one with Brahma.

because it is never definite to the contemplative imagination, which tends to escape it, rather than seeks to hold it fast.

On the other hand that anxious dependence on it which comes with the growth of the understanding, and the complexity and refinement of personal relation to men and things, did not trouble them with the doubts and fears which beset it in view of the mystery of physical death.

Difference of Eastern and Western consciousness.

It is here that the feeling of *personal liberty*, so much stronger in the Western than in the Eastern races, shows at once its value and its defect. Their belief in definite creation as an act of divine Will, for instance, so cherished by them, has this advantage over the Oriental belief in Emanation, that it expresses and develops the *human sense* of *free intelligent purpose;* and thus strengthens the hold of the individual soul on its own conscious existence, and its faith in its own continuance as a productive force. At the same time, this strong individuality, nurtured not only by the belief just mentioned, but in so many other ways, brings a certain sense of isolation. Self-consciousness becomes a treasure that demands profoundest care. It is besieged by anxieties and fears, arising from mysteries which the understanding, thus roused to full faith in itself, and in itself alone, is yet incompetent to fathom. But a larger liberty succeeds, which drops the burden. It comes of fresh self-absorption in ideas and principles, in the life of the whole, as the unity of God and Man.

The absence of this jealous watch over personal consciousness would naturally cause the Hindus to feel comparatively little interest in continued existence

after death. Yet so strong is the desire of these dreamers for *real* being, so entire their faith that they are made for it, that they perpetually recur to the idea of *immortality;* haunted by the sense of a life beyond death or change. And it is not merely another name for the joy of losing conscious being in the life of Brahma.

For they followed the spirit through future lives; traced it back to past ones; believed in reminiscence of actions done in former states of being; shrank from future bonds of penalty for present deeds, as if they fully recognized that personality was somehow continuous through these manifold births. It was in fact associated with transmigration, if only as a doom to be escaped. But it would seem impossible that the goal which they yearned to attain beyond that, and which seemed to them worth the sacrifice of all positive special desires, could be other than a form of conscious being. It is certainly the longing of all mystical love and faith, to rest in no other object of thought, to be conscious of no lower form of being, than the One and Eternal. Yet they do not disconnect this rest, *even in conception*, from personal experience and the sense of *communion* with God. One of the Upanishads, for instance, describes poetically the soul of the just man as ascending to Brahmâ's world: there it is questioned by Him about its faith and knowledge, and, being wisely answered, is welcomed thus: "This my world is thine." [1]

Individual immortality.

As the old Hymns of the Rig Veda pray for distinct, conscious immortality in the "world of imperishable light, whither the fathers had gone before, and where all desires shall be fulfilled," — so even the abstrac-

[1] *Kaushitaki Upan.*, Weber, I. 395–403.

tions of later philosophy glow with assurance, however ill-defined and mystical, of essential life as the crown of sacrifice and devotion. "On whatever nature thou meditatest at thy last hour, with desire, to that shalt thou go."[1] "The heavens are Light;"[2] "the highest thought is a drop of Light;"[3] and the departing spirit has a sunbeam for its guide.[4] "As a serpent casts its slough, so this body is left by the soul. Its immortal life is Brahma, even Light."[5]

Of the desire to keep track of the individual soul on a definite path beyond death, we shall speak elsewhere. But, after all, surely the vaguer sentiment of a natural confidence *in life itself* is nobler; leaving this invisible future, in its form and detail, to the benignity and wisdom of immortal laws; confident that these must involve what is best for the nature whose relations they unchangeably represent.

Immortality in the knowledge of God.

The Vedânta philosophy, in its highest form, affirms that the proper definition of Immortal Life is to know God, by discernment of the soul as real being.[6]

Mere continued existence, from world to world, did not, for such aspiration, constitute the substance or root of Immortality at all. It hardly entered as a noticeable element into the conception of this fulness of knowledge and bliss. No pains were taken to prove the fact. And the very thought of lapsing times and renewed births was to be escaped, for the pure sense of inalienable and eternal being. *To know one's self as one with necessary life* was the fact of Immortality, and the evidence of the fact, at once.

[1] *Bhagavadgîtâ.* [2] *Brihad.* [3] *Tejovindu Upan.*, Weber, II 63.
[4] Thomson's *Bhag. Gîtâ*, note to p 60; *Brahma-Sutras*, in Colebrooke, I. 366.
[5] *Brihad.* IV 18, 7. [6] *Brihad*, IV. iv. 14.

Manifestly the contents of the idea here indicated are not to be supposed the same, whenever and wherever the same terms are employed to express it. But, *as Idea*, it is for ever the essence of all spiritual evidence on this subject. How can we possibly know ourselves immortal, otherwise than by experience of what is imperishable, and by knowing that we are in and of it, and inseparable from it? "To know thyself immortal," said Goethe also, "live in the whole."

Force of this evidence.

"Evidences of immortality" which do not meet these conditions of assurance are crude and imperfect: their defect of spiritual vitality and relation is fatal to them. Such are those which infer a future life for all men from traditions of a single miraculous resurrection; and those which rest on testimonies to the reappearance of many persons after their bodily death, as through some natural law; and those which proceed on the ground that we can be spiritually fed by the reflection of our curiosity or desire, or even by the echoes of our gossip, from beyond the veil. Of such physical evidences of mere continued existence, the Vedânta philosophy knows nothing. It does not seek its data on this external plane.

But of those higher forms of evidence, whose method, still the best we know, has the most intimate relation to essential truth and life, that older piety, like the best of every later faith, has full measure; though their practical contents in Hindu experience cannot of course compare with those of a larger civilization. The Sânkhya philosophy proves immortality from the effort we make to liberate ourselves from the senses; the Vedânta, from the reality of all spirit; Brâhmanas and Upanishads alike, from

Illustrations.

the knowledge of God in the soul; and one Vedic hymn, as Müller translates it, from death itself. "There was in the beginning no death; *therefore* no immortality."[1]

Soul itself was immortality, "indestructible, ancient," "not to be dissipated, not to be seized nor touched;" *soul* itself, in its essence one with the Supreme.[2] It is one's own soul that teaches this, "if he be desirous of immortal nature." "Wise, mindful, always pure, subduing the senses, fixed on God, one finds the place where fear is not; the goal, the refuge, the serene Soul: he escapes the mouth of death."[3]

The sum was this. To know the infinite and eternal in all, makes immortal life. The Bhagavadgitâ says, "He is bright as the sun beyond darkness at the hour of death."[4] And the Mundaka, "He is the bridge to immortality."[5] "When He is known," says the Kena, "as the nature of every thought, then immortality is known."[6] It is "the death of duality in the soul: when the notion of being different (in essence) from the Supreme ceases, the soul upheld by him becomes immortal."[7]

"Cast off thy desires as the serpent his slough: break but this bondage of the heart, thou art immortal here."[8]

"That Supreme Soul, whose work is the universe, always dwelling in the hearts of all beings, is revealed by the heart. Those who know Him become immortal. None can comprehend Him in space above or space below or space between. For Him whose name is the glory of the universe, there is no likeness."

"Not in the sight abides his form, none beholds Him with the eye. Those who know Him as dwelling within become immortal."[9]

[1] *Sansk. Lit*, 560. [2] *Upanishads, passim; Bhagav. Gitâ.* [3] *Katha*, III. IV.
[4] *Bh. G.*, VIII. [5] *Mundaka*, II. ii. 5. [6] *Kena*, II. 4
[7] *Brih.*, II. iv.; *Śvetâśvatara.*
[8] *Katha*, VI. 15. [9] *Śvetâśv.*, IV. 17–20.

In that interior sense in which the eternal only is real, the transient is phantasmal. Conceived as manifold, transitional, not as one in essence, but as ever-flowing form, the world to the Vedântist was but a shadow. Its phenomena referred him to somewhat beyond, which they could but hint, which their changefulness suggested by contrast only. Every passing fact or form in its vanishing said: "Not in me thy goal, thy rest. I am but masking and disguise." We recall the cry of Job out of the depths of this sense of the perishable: —

Mâyâ, the phenomenal.

"Where is wisdom, and where the place of understanding? It cannot be found in the land of the living.

"The deep saith, 'It is not in me;' and the sea saith, 'Not in me.' Destruction and death say, 'We have heard of its fame with our ears.' God only knoweth the way to it, He only its dwelling-place.

"Behold the fear of the Lord, that is thy wisdom; and to depart from evil, thy understanding."

The "wisdom" which the Aryan mystic, on his part also, could not find in the land of the living, nor in the sky nor sea, nor in destruction and death, was to him also a *reality;* and it turned the perishable to a shadow, only as knowing the unchangeable to be a reality. His "fear" was the fear of being swept from that foothold by the tide of fleeting forms. His "forsaking of evil" was in casting off delusion, and knowing truth as the one and imperishable refuge. The shifting play of forms in time and space, in that they were *not* truth in this sense, was illusion. Did they not change with the eye itself that beheld them? Of what could their flowing and flitting give assurance? This evanescence mocked the infinite thirst of man, and piqued it to negation. This was their

mâyâ. It was coextensive with the universe of change. It was *unreality;* yet not in the sense in which one who had learned to associate great human interests with the visible world would use the word in contradistinction to *their* reality. It will be better understood in the sense in which it would be applied to the world in contrasting such reality with *its evanescence*, which in this point of view would become its *un*reality.

Its permanent meaning.

Mâyâ was not a declaration of nonentity, not a pure negation. It was part of the mystic's solution of his problem of aspiration *versus* imperfection, of ideal and actual, of the moral choice between a higher and a lower aim. Mâyâ was his explanation of that flicker of the senses which disturbed his contemplation, and mocked his effort to fix thought and heart on Being alone. His mastery of wandering desires, and sorrow, and evil, and of all that bitterness in the actual, which smote on his ideal hope, was in that word *Illusion*. It solved the mystery. It overcame the world. For it meant; — These things are not really as they seem. It is only that I see them so for the moment. Their sense is in what my soul shall make them mean through its oneness with the real; which I shall know even as it is when I am master of self and sense, and in knowing become.

Give us, what we are now attaining so fast, full understanding of material and social uses; turn the current of faith and work from the transcendental dream of the East into the positive and clear actualism of the West; yet this substance of the necessity which the believer in *mâyâ* felt, none the less truly stands fast for us also. And its uses remain; though

what Goethe calls the "tenacious persistence of whatever has once arrived at actual being," the exactly opposite pole to that Oriental sense of instability and transience, has now become the all-controlling spring of thought and conduct.

Mâyâ, in its root, *ma*, meant at first *manifestation* or *creation*, marking these *as real;* then this reality considered in its *mystery*, the riddle which finite existence is to the sense of the infinite in man; and so, generally, the mystery of all subtle untraceable powers, — and from this meaning of the word come *magic* and *mage;* and last, in this completed mystic devotion, it meant the *illusion* that besets all finite things. Such the power of the spirit to take up the visible universe into its dream, to turn its concrete substance into shadow, its positive *real* into unreal, and dissolve the solid earth in the fervent heat of faith. Meaning of the word.

Some have referred the complete conception of *mâyâ* to an advanced stage of Hindu philosophy. In the earlier Upanishads there is a certain realism in the idea of the world and of life; and they present these as *consubstantial* with God, rather than illusory in any absolute sense.[1] It has even been supposed — I cannot see with what reason — that *mâyâ* originated in the negations of Buddhism. But its substance seems to be inherent in the structure of the Aryan mind, after all; whose habit, even in its most practical phases, is to treat its present conception of a truth or a thing as partial Function of Mâyâ in the Aryan mind.

[1] See Banerjea, *Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy*, p. 386. Colebrooke (*Essays*, I. 377) says that *mâyâ* does not belong to the original Vedânta Sutras. It is very fully developed, however, in some of the later Upanishads, such as the Śvetâśvatara.

and imperfect; in other words, as (so far) illusion in view of a better future one. On this habit of holding the facts of experience as provisional depends the power of progress which distinguishes it. This is no fanciful analogy. To the courage and energy of the Aryan race, as well as to its contemplative faculty, in the West as in the East, the actual is always plastic and convertible. It flits like dreams in the waking moment, before the higher possibility that beckons beyond. All is *mâyâ*, as contrasted with the permanence of productive Mind. Neither in speculation nor practice is any special form of being held to be independent of this all-revising, reconstituting force. The more it discerns of the world, the more intensely does it transfer reality from the conceptions that are behind to those that are before, and sweep these in turn into the same transforming flood. Mind makes, unmakes, and makes again.

Yet the true *limitation* of *mâyâ* comes through this very faith in mind as the only substantial reality and power; a fact which appears pre-eminently in the consciousness of the Indo-European. I refer to the claim of the individual soul to persistence, by virtue of holding in itself full *recognition* of this validity of mind. Consciousness of being, in other words, involves participation in being. No Eastern dream of universal metamorphosis, or of the unreality of definite forms or the evanescence of experience, is likely to shake the sense which culture is enforcing, of somewhat permanent in the subjective source of one's changing thought and growth, memory and desire. With us, as well as with these mystic dreamers, such words as "consciousness," "self," "identity," hover in a dim atmosphere of past changes and future possibilities. But the

indefiniteness of these ideas is passing more and more surely into a sense of permanent relation to the whole; and *this sense* comes to be the real self-consciousness, giving sublimer meaning and validity to life as life. To have once arrived at personality, to generate the perception of being, and to have consciousness of it as real, is to partake of that reality. And whatever is achieved by this personality participates in like manner in *its* validity. So that even the fleeting detail of life and conduct assumes eternal meaning. The use of illusion is to deepen, not to destroy, this meaning; being genially interpreted as friendly to the soul, and the natural index of its perpetual growth. We may well believe that it had its helpful and hopeful aspects to the more contemplative Oriental mind also, seeking in its way to lose individual self-consciousness in the life of the whole.

Mâyâ was the fine sense of transition, of the flow of form into form, that makes each intangible and elusive; the sign of evanescence. In the delicate mythology of the Greek, it appears as mother of Hermes, who is messenger of the gods, and their deceiver also; the cheat of expectation, the thief of trusts; whose brisk and versatile genius can nevertheless draw music from the laggard tortoise of time. Analogues of Mâyâ.

It is *mâyâ*, too, that we trace in the keen dialectics of the Eleatic School, chasing time and space and all forms of perception through the vanishing points of transition, to end in the same sense of the phantasmal everywhere save in "the One."

And modern science comes back to *mâyâ* in its protean dance of forces; its metamorphoses and correlations, that prove the manifold to be illusory, and all phases of force to be in essence one.

Its indispensableness.

The common sense of civilization is not at war with this ancient wisdom of Illusion. It needs no mystic to see that *mâyâ* is not to be escaped, is indeed the most practical of realities. Does not our so palpable and solid world change with the eye that looks on it? Does it not mock our fixed ideas and our stable definitions? Not even does gold mean gold. The boy's coppers are gold to him; but what are eagles to the miser? Are dollars wealth, tied round a drowning man's waist for preservation, and so dragging him down to loss of all? Are the shrewd shrewd? How the financial storm sweeps down the business colossus beneath petty men who trembled in his shadow! Room yet for thee, great Mâyâ, with the wisest of the children of this world!

Is not all our knowledge relative? Who of us sees the facts as they are? An owl's eyes peering into darkness detects what we cannot. Molecular immobility is an illusion. Every atom vibrates with cosmic and local movements, imperceptible to eye or ear. "The human organism reaches but a little way along the scale of sensibility." And the universe is aflame and vocal with subtler light and sound that it perceives not. What comes with the touch of the insect's antennæ, or the cilia of the rotifer? Our chemist knows what nature is made of, for his crucibles; but let him tell us what she is to the monad in the water-drop, and show the relations of that image to the world, as it stands in the thought that combines galaxies and æons as we do stars and hours. What is nature to deity, to the Soul that sees all as an Eternal Now? And beneficent Mâyâ still helps us to solve the problems of evil. For if sorrow and loss mean exactly what they seem, then what sense is there in our hope to find

that in them which we see not? If inscrutable wrongs and vices are not to be newly read from a higher point of vision, then what are providence and growth, and how shall we justify existence itself? There is no solution of these mysteries till we take to heart the laws of illusion. Plutarch finely says, "Alter the nature of your misfortunes by putting a different construction on them." Always it is man's wisdom as well as relief to expect metamorphoses, and to deny stability of the hard solid facts that resist us. To read between these lines; to see loss as gain in the making, fate as freedom, failure as success, death as life, — thus still and ever to recognize illusion, — is the path to reality.

Very solid is granite, very rigid is fact; and you shall take men and things as they are. Undeniable indeed; but *how are* they? "Where the spider sucks poison, the bee finds honey," says the proverb. What we are, that we see; and, sooner or later, we find that the first step to knowledge is to doubt if things are what they seem. Under the thought of the Hindu mystic, that all below God is illusion, hides a secret that masters pain and loss, and turns hindrance to help. He saw that the permanent only was to be trusted; and his *mâyâ* meant that he knew whatsoever did not yield him this to be delusion and dream. Natural illusions have their protective uses, their fine adaptations and delights; recognized more and more, the larger the sense of practical capabilities in life. They gird it with delicate talismans and charms; soften rough contacts; hide sterner fates. All the more need, then, that, when we learn how they play with our credulity, we do not react to universal doubt, but pluck divine certainties even from the heart of our dreams. And

in the rush and whirl of social machinery, the phantasmagoria of *things*, we want all the more of the transcendental conviction that there is pure reality in the best and highest *only*. It is better to believe the world and the senses to be illusory than to believe the eternal, the immutable, the ground of law and duty and faith, to be a dream.

The world inseparable from Brahma.

Hindu philosophy did not fail on this side. Creation indeed was illusion; yet it had its substance in a divine intent; and at least was not separated therefrom. It was Brahma's *own* mâyâ, his "breathing," his "sport," his "magic," and so within him still;[1] not the outside ball, made of nothing, and flung out of his hand to spin of itself. In the Hindu myth that God created the world "*by a thought*," there is even a deeper hold on the immanence of Spirit than in the Hebrew, that it was called into being by a "*word*,"—something sent out and away from the mouth, as it were. "God *said*, and it was," is the one: "God *thought*, and it was," is the other.

Semitic and Aryan ideals.

Hebrew religion, fervent and spiritual as it was, emphasized *separation* between God and the world, especially the world of man. It was the shrinking of the soul before its own ideal, in a deep sense of short-coming; and these seeds of fear and alienation in the religious sentiment grew into debasing theologies which no imperfect bridge-work of mediation or atonement can permanently redeem. Hindu belief emphasized *oneness* of God

[1] "He who is only One, possessed of mâyâ, united with mâyâ, creates the whole." *Śvetâśvatara*, III. 1; IV. 9. "The Mâyâ of the Vedantists," says the Dabistân, "is the 'magic of God,' because the universe is 'his playful deceit.' He gives it apparent existence, himself the unity of reality; like an actor, passing every moment from form into form." *Dab.*, ch. ii. 4

with the world; even in the play of illusions seeking fearlessly for the reality they disguised. It lacked the awe the Semite felt in presence of his own conception of the Infinite. It was not a goad of self-condemnation like his stern moral law. And it could degenerate, though in different ways, into mythology and rite as superstitious as the Semitic. But its ground was faith, not fear; and now that religion, mature enough to dispense with schemes for "reconciling God and man," affirms, as its starting-point, the immanence of deity, it is simply resuming on a higher plane, and with practical insight, the truth which early Aryan philosophy instinctively divined.

I do not forget that idolatry of the Veda, which might seem to disprove these claims of devotion to the Spirit alone. In the wide freedom of discussion open to the Hindu schools, through endless subtleties of speculation on the primal questions of being and thought, the authority of this common bible, twisted and accommodated, like the Christian, in every way that teachers or times might demand, is for the most part accepted without question. The Vedânta commentators, especially, labor to prove that it is infallible and without human author, identical with "the eternity of sound;" and that the rishis, who are called makers of the hymns, really *saw* them only. How far this last theory implied that the human faculties of these inspired men were supplanted by supernatural vision, may not be easy to say. These are questions which bibliolatry raises in all religions. But the mystical worship of soul rose easily out of such conventionalism into the assertion of its own higher inspiration. Scarcely one of the Upanishads fails to urge the superiority of the science

Veda worship.

of soul to the study of scripture, or else to imply this by the whole tenor of its thought. "Of what use," they say, "are the hymns of the Rig to one who does not know Him in whom all the gods abide?"[1] To one who said, "I know only the hymns, while I am ignorant of soul," a sage replies, "What thou hast studied is *name*. But there is something which is more than name."[2] "There are two sciences: the lesser comprehends the rituals, astronomy, the study of words, and the Vedas; the higher is the science by which the Eternal One is known."[3]

It may be of use to hear the testimony of the author of the Dabistân, who wrote two or three centuries ago, as to the spirit of the later Vedantists. He records a visit made to one of their schools with an eminent Hindu poet, who was filled with admiration at what he heard there, and said, "My whole life is passed in the company of devotees; but my eyes never beheld such independence, and my ears never heard any thing comparable to the speeches of these emancipated men."

A few passages brought together from the literature of this Spiritual Pantheism will show the meaning it gave to Soul, Duty, Deity, Life: —

The supreme soul.

"Whatever exists in this world is to be enveloped in the thought of the supreme Soul. Whoever beholds all beings in this soul alone, and the soul in all beings, cannot look down on any creature. When one knows that all is soul, when he beholds its unity, then is there no delusion, no grief."

"He is all-pervading, bodiless, pure, untainted by sin, all-wise, ruler of mind, above all beings, and self-existent. He distributed things according to their nature for everlasting years."[4]

"Adore Him, ye gods, after whom the year with its rolling days

[1] *Svetâsvatara.* [2] *Chhandogya.* [3] *Mundaka*, I. i. 5. [4] *Vâyasaneya Upan.*

is completed, the Light of lights, the Immortal Life. He is the Ruler and Preserver of all, the Bridge, the Upholder of worlds lest they fall."[1]

"The great, the Lord in truth, the Perfect One, the Mover of all that is, the Ruler of purest bliss, He is Light and He is everlasting. He, the Infinite Spirit, is like the sun after darkness. He is to be adored by the deity of the sun: from Him alone has arisen the ancient knowledge."

"By the Perfect Soul is all this universe pervaded. None can comprehend Him in the space above, the space below, or the space between. For Him whose name is infinite glory there is no likeness. Not in the sight abides his form. None beholds Him by the eye: they who know Him dwelling in the heart and mind become immortal."

"Without hands or feet He speeds, He takes. Without eye He sees, without ear hears. He is all-knowing, yet known by none; undecaying, omnipresent, unborn; revealed by meditation; whoso knows Him, the all-blessed, dwelling in the heart of all beings, has everlasting peace."[2]

"He is not apprehended by the eye, not by devotions nor by rites; but he whose mind is purified by the light of knowledge beholds the undivided One, who knows the soul. Inconceivable by thought, more distant than all distant things, and also near, dwelling here in the heart for him who can behold."[3]

"The wise who behold this Soul as the eternal among transient things; as the intelligent among those that know; as that which, though one, grants the prayers of many, — the wise, who behold the one ruler and inner soul of all, as dwelling within themselves, obtain eternal bliss; they, not others."[4]

"This is dearer than a son, than wealth, than all things; for this is deeper within. Whoever worships the soul as dear, to him what is dear is not perishable.[5] It is for the soul's sake that all are dear.[6]

"The soul is to be perceived only by its own true idea; and only by him who declares that it is real."[7]

"Truth alone, not falsehood, conquers. By truth is opened the road which the rishis trod, whose desires are satisfied, the supreme abode."[8]

[1] *Brihad*, IV. iv. 22.
[2] *Śvetâśvatara*, III. IV. VI.
[3] *Mundaka*, III. i. 7, 8.
[4] *Katha*, V. 12, 13.
[5] *Brihad*, I. iv 8.
[6] *Brihad*, II. iv. 5.
[7] *Katha*, VI. 12, 13.
[8] *Mundaka*, III. 6.

"Let one worship the Soul as his place, and his work shall not perish. Whatsoever he desires from the Soul, the same shall he obtain."[1]

"He gains that world and those desires which he imagines in his mind. Therefore let one who desires prosperity worship Him who knows the soul."[2]

"The wise who has studied the scriptures casts them by, as he who seeks grain the chaff."[3]

Soul is free-dom.

"Yâjnavalkya, when asked how a Brahman can do without the sacrificial girdle, answered, 'The soul itself is his girdle.'"[4]

"They who fancy that oblations and rites are the highest end of man know not any thing good. The foolish ones go round and round, coming back to decay and death, oppressed by misery, as blind led by the blind."[5]

"There is a higher and a lower science: the lower is that of the Vedas, the higher that of the Eternal One."[6]

"Worshipping deities as if these were apart from themselves, the ignorant maintain their gods, as beasts support a man. It is not pleasant to such gods that men should know Brahma,"—and be free.[7]

"To behold the soul in itself alone is to subdue sin, not to be subdued by it."[8]

Soul is moral discipline.

"By holy acts shall one become holy, by evil ones evil. As his desire, so his resolve; as his resolve, so his work; as his work, so his reward."[9]

"Whoso has not ceased from evil ways shall not obtain true soul"[10]

Soul is prayer.

If prayer is aspiration to become one with ideal life, then this Vedantic pantheism is itself essentially a prayer. And its religious earnestness lifts up the old eternal cry for guidance, help, and rest. There is an old hymn perhaps relating to the last hours of life, which is often quoted in the Upanishads.

[1] *Brihad*, I. iv. 15.
[2] *Amritanâda Up.*, V. 18.
[3] *Mundaka*, III. 10.
[4] *Jabala*, Weber, *Indische Studien*, II 75.
[5] *Mundaka Up.*, I. ii 7, 8, 10.
[6] *Mundaka Up.*, I. i. 5.
[7] *Brihad*, I. iv 10.
[8] *Brihad*, IV. iv. 23.
[9] Ibid., IV. iv. 5.
[10] *Katha Up.*, II. 24.

It appeals to deity as dwelling in the Sun, whose outward light is invoked to give way to its spiritual meaning:—

"To me, whose duty is truth, open, O Sun! upholder of the world, the entrance to truth, hidden by thy vase of dazzling light. Withhold thy splendors that I may behold thy true being. For I am immortal. The same soul that is in thee am I. Let my spirit obtain immortality, then let my body be consumed. Remember thy actions, remember, O my mind! Guide, O Agni! to bliss. O God, all-knowing! deliver from the crooked path of sin."[1]

"As the birds repair, O beloved! to a tree to dwell there, so all this universe to the Supreme."[2]

"From the unreal, lead me to the real; from darkness to light, from death to immortality. This uttered overcomes the world."[3]

"There is no end to misery, save in knowledge of God."[4]

"'Thrice,' let the saint say, 'I have renounced all.'"[5] What was this absolute renunciation? It did not mean surrender of self-indulgence for the sake of practical uses. It meant rejection of the senses and the world altogether. His problem was to deliver his soul from all that was conditional, dependent, transient. And since he tracked these forms of experience through every phase of his being, it would seem at first sight as if he deliberately sought self-annihilation. But this could not be true in any recognized sense of the word. For he called the highest goal for which he strove beatitude, and its path emancipation. Its bliss was "knowing God," its end "immortal life." Renunciation.

"A hundred fold the bliss of those who are gods by birth, is one joy of him who reaches the world of Prajâpati. But the world of Brahma is the highest bliss of all."[6]

[1] *Brihad*, V. xiv; *Vâyasaneya Sanh. Up.*, 15–18.
[2] *Brihad*, I. iii. 28. *Yajur Veda Mantras.*
[3] *Arunika Up.* (Weber, II. 178).
[4] *Praśna Up.*, IV.
[5] *Śvetâśvatara*, VI. 20.
[6] *Brihad*, IV. iii. 33.

I find no evidence that earnest men have ever made a religion out of the desire of nonentity. Mystics have always yearned to lose the sense of separate and limited selfhood in the depths of eternal and absolute being; and they have, as invariably, been charged with desiring to abolish personality. And the charge has usually come from those to whom the Absolute and Eternal was, as nearly as could well be, non-existent.

Not self-annihilation.

To me it is quite incredible that a religious philosophy, so absorbed in the idea of Infinite Life as this is, should aim at destroying, in any absolute sense, that very consciousness which revealed it. And can we suppose any one to be longing for nothing with his whole heart and soul? Great efforts have been made to prove the Buddhist Nirvâna such an irrationality as this.[1] But they are far from satisfactory, and do not prove any thing but the extreme difficulty of making the mystical consciousness of the Oriental mind stand in the clear definite moulds of Western thought.

It should be fully recognized that this ardent devotion sought not death, but life; not unreality, but reality; to escape error, perturbation, change; conceit of the understanding, idolatry of self, absorption in sense, and slavery to things. "Our fire is piety, and in it I burn the wood of duality; instead of a sheep, I sacrifice egotism. This is my *Hom*." [2]

Life in God.

The Alexandrian school of Greek thought was pervaded by this Oriental thirst for the One and Eter-

[1] Burnouf, Koeppen, St. Hilaire. But Duncker, Mohl, and Müller have fully shown the weakness of their interpretation.

[2] A Vedântist sage; quoted in *Dabistân*, ch. ii. 4. Hom is the sacrificial butter.

nal. It pursued this "ecstasy," or identity of the soul with its ideal object as the only reality, with an earnestness of faith of which the Enneads of Plotinus remain a marvellous monument for all time. And the same spirit gave religious fervor to the noblest minds of Christian ages; to the freest of those whom the Church has refused to recognize, from age to age; a mystic passion for the Infinite that, however unacknowledged, has been the fountain of the ideal life in man.

The same in substance, however remote the practical Western mind from the life of the East, is Augustine's ejaculation: "Thou hast made us, O Lord! for thyself; and our souls are restless till they return to Thee." Mysteriously involved in the sense of immortality is a secret reminiscence of the "immortal sea which brought us hither." It haunts all religious imagination from the Vedic hymns down to Tauler and the Theologia Germanica; to Wordsworth and Emerson, and the devout sonnets of Henry Vaughan and Jones Very. Say the Upanishads: —

"He who has found God has ceased from all wisdom of his own; as one puts out a torch and lays it down, when the place he sought in the darkness is found." [1]

"As the flowing rivers come to their end in the sea, losing name and form, so, liberated from name and form, proceeds the wise to the Divine Soul." [2]

"By him who thinks Brahma is beyond comprehension is Brahma known. He who thinks Him comprehended does not know Him. Known as the one nature in every thought. He is truly known. By this knowledge comes immortal life." [3]

So sings the Sufi poet: —

"O Thou of whom all is the manifestation,
Thou, independent of 'thou and we,' Thyself 'thou and we,' —

[1] *Amritanâda.* [2] *Mundaka.* [3] *Kena.*

Thy nature is the spring of thy being: whatever is, is Thou;
We all are billows in the ocean of thy being;
We are a small compass of thy manifested nature."[1]

And so the Christian mystic: —

"God is a mighty sea, unfathomed and unbound:
Oh, in this blessed deep may all my soul be drowned!"[2]

Here to abide, in the Spirit "that is without strife, without decay, without death, and without fear,"[3] was the goal of that old ceaseless yearning to escape what was called the "return to births," as involved in the "bonds of actions." In a similar light I would interpret a little devotee song, written by a late missionary at Benarès, embodying this Oriental piety. Its appeal to the religious sentiment shows the universality of the idea better than any philosophical statement could do: —

"The snowflake that glistens at morn on Kailâsa,
Dissolved by the sunbeams, descends to the plain:
Then, mingling with Gunga, it flows to the ocean,
And lost in its waters returns not again.

On the rose-leaf at sunrise bright glistens the dewdrop,
That in vapor exhaled falls in nourishing rain:
Then in rills back to Gunga through green fields meanders,
Till onward it flows to the ocean again.

A snowflake still whitens the peak of Kailâsa,
But the snowflake of yesterday flows to the main;
At dawning a dewdrop still hangs on the rose-leaf,
But the dewdrop of yesterday comes not again.

The soul that is freed from the bondage of nature,
Escapes from illusions of joy and of pain;
And, pure as the flame that is lost in the sunbeams,
Ascends into God, and returns not again.
It comes not and goes not; it comes not again."[4]

[1] *Dabistân.* [2] *Angelus Silesius.* [3] *Praśna*, V. 7.
[4] Buyers's *Recollections of Northern India.*

I have indicated some of the realities the Vedânta philosophy was capable of seeing: I must note, also, what it failed to see. And here may be recalled an expressive myth which betrays the defect of self-conscious purpose and active will in Hindu character. Defect of purpose.

All manifestation is Brahma's "play," returning into his essence when the sport fatigues. In this childlike mythology, he must have alternation of waking and sleep. The life of the worlds, though it last for ages of ages, is but "Brahma's day:" a night must come when he must repose. That life fades when he slumbers, expands when he awakes; as when a torch is alternately kindled and extinguished, the light alternately radiates from the centre and is recalled. In the Hebrew myth of creation, the need of rest is ascribed to Jehovah also. But what we specially note in the Brahmanic conception is the absence of any idea of *purpose* in this universal Life. It proclaims no law of growth. It stirs no hope of human advancement. The spirit wakes, the spirit sleeps. That is all. Nowhere struggle or endeavor; nowhere work; nowhere progress recognized as the endless fact, the meaning of the world. On the contrary, there is involved in this movement a gradual degeneracy. And we find indeed the definite belief that man loses successively, in each of four consecutive ages, a quarter of the duration of his life: crime gradually increases, and the prevailing virtue is of a lower grade. In the first age, this virtue is devotion; in the second, knowledge; in the third, sacrifice; in the fourth, only almsgiving, as an external form. And so the only possible counteraction to this tendency, for the few who can escape it, is reverence for

the immemorial customs of that first, happier age. Have we not here a philosophy of despair?

Yet a way of release from this apparent absence of all motive and purpose was really found in the ardent aspiration to union with deity, which has been described. Nor does confidence in the power of spiritual achievement seem to have been wanting, notwithstanding the theory that placed the ideal of such achievement in the past. For Brahmanical faith, however, the sphere of effort was not the visible world.

Sources of modern freedom from asceticism.

That all its earnestness and spirituality could not save this piety from ascetic extravagance was owing to the fact that it could not be directed to practical aims and social achievement. But our own interest in the visible and transient world is not a legacy that we have derived from any Oriental religion. We owe it neither to Judaism nor to Christianity; for the one did comparatively little to bring out the uses of the outward order of nature; and the other, in the person of its founder, pronounced the world to be under doom of speedy destruction. Judaism indeed has given an impulse to man's active powers by its idea of creation as an instant result of divine purpose and will. Hebrew belief in the personal energy and authority of God has doubtless helped develop corresponding qualities in the Western mind; and the humane motives for action, emphasized by Christianity, have seconded the practical tendencies of modern times. But, on the whole, we owe our faith in this visible world to Greek liberty and Roman law, to modern science and art, and to the opportunities of social good involved in the circulation of thought and intercourse of vigorous nations. It is mainly the gift of energetic *races*, and depends less on religious than on ethnological causes.

In the circumstances of the Hindu, it was his special glory, as well as his peril, that every thing flowed to abstract ideas, to pure thought. As far back as the Greek invasion, Megasthenes found the Hindus spending their time in talking about life and death.[1] They are still, in their degeneracy, natural metaphysicians. Dogma is their staff of life. They draw water out of invisible wells, as we do out of visible ones, for daily drink. The deserts swarm with anchorets, practising strange rites and muttering spells. The city streets are perambulated by painted mendicants, rubbed down with ashes, and carrying skulls for drinking vessels. Ragged gósains sit by the waysides and under the trees, unfolding supersensual ideas to rustic academies,[2] and visionary fakirs ply them with fables and dreams. The very children learn theological and philosophical sutras mechanically, as we do alphabet and multiplication-table.[3] They are still demonized by abstraction; despising practical limitations, ignoring tangible facts.

Of the opposite Hindu tendency.

Of course this national temperament has its higher and its lower forms. And as the passion for invisible mysteries degenerated into jugglery and magic, so it rose into the mystical aspirations of these poet philosophers and seers. There is indeed no form of religion thus far which has not had analogous results, if not in these extreme forms. Christianity, for example, has borne supernaturalism and ecclesiasticism as well as aspiration and sacrifice and love, having sown germs of bondage as well as of freedom.

[1] *Strabo*, XV. 59. [2] See Allen's *India*, p. 404; Buyers's *Northern India*.
[3] Müller, *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 74.

Causes of asceticism.

The effort of Hindu devotees to escape the senses and the world of action has already been in part explained as a protest against the charms and temptations of a torrid zone. These ascetic disciplines were commensurate with the forces they sought to overcome. The very word for their austerity was *tapas*, or *heat*. They did not need to carry the imagination into other worlds, in order to locate their purgatories of fire. They recognized this world of sensuous nature as the thing they had to master. Their valor and faith lay in pronouncing the ever-present foe of freedom and purity an illusion, destined to vanish after all in the sole reality of spirit.

If in those times and in such a climate, there was wanting practical force to make nature *represent* moral and intellectual purpose, it was certainly much to believe so utterly as these ascetics did in the power of the ideal to *overcome* the world, to disenchant the soul from subjection to its masteries and spells. At the heart of Hindu religious consciousness was faith in the *omnipotence of thought*. Let us note the significance of this faith.

The primacy of thought.

The meaning of the world for each of us lies in his own thought concerning it. What the mind is to itself, such is the universe to the mind. The inward makes the outward. "We receive but what we give." In the child, "that best philosopher, who yet doth keep his heritage," the truth we here emphasize exists as unconscious instinct, and implicit wisdom. He is, in his own sphere, the "mighty prophet, seer blest." But it finds manlier play in the conscious use of materials for ideal ends. To this primacy of the inward forces, to this their

power of creating the world in their own likeness, even the clearest practical perception and the largest social experience must hold fast, or else the "yoke" comes with the task; a weight, "heavy as frost, and deep as life." The secret of power is to refer circumstance and surrounding to the *consciousness*, as central and determinative force, and to provide that this light by which we see, this all-shaping, all-constructing genius of life within us, maintain itself at its best.

Now, since this inherent creative function of thought must needs make the outward world in some form confess its sway, in what can its dignity consist in a state of society where there are no practical materials to which it can be applied? *Plainly, in concentrating on itself, and in affirming itself to be the sole reality.* In other words, the ascetic maintains self-respect, through annihilating the senses, or the perception of them, *by his mental effort.* He keeps thought sovereign by proving its sufficiency for itself, where *outward* material is wanting. Yet as actual details, elements, and forces, however strenuously denied, are inevitable, as is also the need of some kind of mastery over them, so their reactions on such unbalanced idealism turned it into a claim to the possession of their secret springs *through concentration of thought alone.* Thaumaturgy, the preternatural gift of wonder-working with elements and forms, has simply meant *that thought shall master things*, if not through knowledge of their practical uses, then through its own inherent *right* to master them. Thought, it says, is primal, creative: things are its shadow, its echo, its plastic material, and should obey.

In thaumaturgy.

This is the divine element that shines through the fantastic disciplines of Hindu Yogis and Christian pillar saints; behind the absurdity, the spiritual pride, the insanity even, of superstition, that are of course no less evident. The ascetic has chosen his realm, and to his own thought he is master of it. Wherever he concentrates his thought, there, for himself and to his own consciousness, he shall control phenomena. Thinking devoutly on the sun, it shall yield him universal sight; on the pole-star, it shall concede him all star powers. Carry mind to the bottom of the throat, and hunger shall cease; to the space between his eyebrows, and external contact is reduced to a minimum. Let it desire freedom from the body, and he shall be free of all elements and forms. *Mind*, in concentration and essence, is here the sovereign power. Now if here instead of mind, you put the word *faith*, you have the *Hebrew* claim of miraculous power; whether to change stones into bread, or water into wine.

So with the fate that tied souls to transmigration. Was it not the consequence of interested motives; of *thought*, wandering from its centre, fettered to things? "Think on freedom then, on the life beyond self," says the ascetic, "and the bonds are broken, the very wheel of birth and fate and form is dissolved." Do we smile at the ignorance? That we may easily enough do. But there is more than we have noted, behind it. There is intuition of the rights of thought, of will, of soul. It is the childhood of a gigantic energy; the germ of liberty and progress; none the less so because crude and ignorant, and for ages not finding conditions of higher development. And the materialism that can only ridicule it has left out of its own phil-

osophy the element that philosophy can least afford to spare.

Asceticism has its unheroic side, not peculiar to the Hindu. The Vedânta text has been virtually the burden of world-weariness and listlessness in all times. "What relish for enjoyment in this unsound body, assailed by desire and passion, avarice and illusion, sorrow and fear, absence from the loved, presence of the hated, disease, leanness, old age, and death."[1] Or hear the old Hebrew preacher: "The thoughts of mortal man are miserable, and his devices uncertain: for the earthly body weigheth down the soul." How large a proportion of Christian preaching, from first to last, has whined over the vanity of the world and the flesh! The practical genius of the West, its opportunity of culture and construction, at last makes this Christian other-worldliness quite intolerable; though there are still creeds that, like the old Egyptian monks, are watering its dry sticks in the sand. Asceticism.

But we are to remember that a religion that should dare to claim the state, market, scientific progress, and social reform, as free fields of natural human development, could not possibly have existed till this present time of secular interests and largest ethnic intercourse. The Oriental world had neither gift nor place for this hope in visible things. From India to Palestine, from the Veda to the Gospels, why should they *not* have lacked substance, to the watching soul, like a vapor that was soon to pass away? Social aspiration and moral enterprise could not find play, even "on midnight's sky of rain to paint a golden

[1] See also *Vâjnav.*, III. 8, 106. "He who seeks substance in human life, which is pithless as the Kadali stem, and hollow as a bubble, is without reason."

morrow." And as the Hebrew Christ fastened his hope on a speedy "coming of the end," so the Hindu saint put his "golden morrow" into that Absolute Life in which all worlds should sink like a dream. And to reach that Life, what absolute surrender his disciplines made of mind and body and will to an ideal good! Asceticism was, there at least, a brave and believing religion.

Germs of Indo-European thought.

This faith in the rights of mind over matter, which in its lower forms becomes asceticism and magic, is the germ of that intellectual grasp and subtlety which has lifted the Indo-European race above the rest of mankind in what depends on the brain alone. Hindu speculation holds not only germs, but even types, and in many respects very noble ones, of the deepest philosophical systems of the West. It has been said, doubtless in this sense, to have "exhausted all the forms which other times and peoples appropriate severally to themselves."[1] Liberty of thought was, for Hindu purposes, perfect, in the sacerdotal class in India.[2] The contentions of the schools afford ample proof of this. There was nothing to limit their speculative genius. They believed the Infinite ever accessible to the seeker; and the traditions and holy books were but helps on the way, to be set aside for a nobler goal.

Scope of Hindu systems.

So in this teeming brain, haunted by a sense of the eternal and unseen, there rose an earlier, or perhaps we should say rather an Oriental, Platonism, Stoicism, Mysticism, Cynicism, Pietism. Forms of thought and faith kindred to these Western systems have been fermenting in the Hindu

[1] Wagner, *Allgemeine Mythol*, p. 88.

[2] See *Muir*, III. 57.

mind from the times of the later Rig Veda hymns down to the present day. Its Brahma holds in solution, *more or less vaguely defined*, the Orphic hymn and the Eleatic philosophy. Here, in Eastern form indeed, and without Hellenic energy of will, is the mystical Orphic "Zeus, first, midst, and last; Zeus, element and ruler; Zeus, essence and father; Zeus, one and all." Here the "Kosmos" of Xenophanes, "that sees, hears, and thinks;" his "all-ruling, spheric Unity of Mind, incomprehensible, without beginning, end, or change;" and the "Ens unum" of Parmenides, whereinto all differences dissolved. Here the Anaxagorean "Noûs," or Mind, "ruler of all." Here negation of the manifold; Heraclitean sense of universal flux; Zenonic dialectics, proving that there could be no substantial being in this perpetual evanescence. Here the Western Cynic is foreshadowed in the Eastern Gymnosophist.[1] Here Philo's Logos (ἐνδιάθετος καὶ προφορικὸς), essential and manifest, embracing all. Here Seneca's "All, one only, and deity."[2] Here Marcus Aurelius's "One God, one substance, one law, one common reason, and one truth."[3] Here the "ecstasy" of Plotinus; here Persian Sufism, mystic Jelalleddin and Sadi; here Berkeley's idealism, and Malebranche's vision of "all in God." Here, without its scientific basis or its intense practical vitality, Goethe's sense of a universal cosmic Soul.

And here Hegel's identity of Thought and Being, of subject and object. The Vedânta must have influenced Plotinus: it anticipates Spinoza. The Sânkhya foreshadows at once the skeptics, the posi-

[1] On this point see Grote's *Plato*, ch. xxxviii.
[2] *Epistles*, 92.
[3] *Meditations*, VII. 9.

tivists, the rationalists, the quietists, of later times. An earlier Kantian criticism, as elaborate too in its way, denies the certitude of the understanding, yet holds fast to the rock of moral sanctions. An earlier Fichtean intuition affirms selfishness to be the false an unreal, and pursues the liberty of spiritual obedien as "the blessed life." All these are of course in forms peculiar to Hindu genius.

Here also is the substance of all great philosophies of evil, — holding that it is the condition of finiteness, or comes of things taken in fragments, seen in part; that the world must not be conceived apart from God, if we would know it as it is.

And here are unmistakable forms of spiritual courage and trust, and all-controlling aspirations to the highest thought, as the soul's native place; to absolute good, as rounding the universe and leaving out no life that is or can be; aspirations which foreshadow Christian ideals of the divine, and yield, as do the best of these also, hints of a purer worship yet to come, that shall supplant defects which are constantly characteristic of Christian thought; and especially that imperfect sense of the essential unity of all life, and that lack of intellectual liberty which must ever result from all exclusive claims of personal or historical authority over the religious nature of man.

II.

SÂNKHYA.

SÂNKHYA.

OUR sketch of Religious Philosophy thus far, while illustrative of the general features of Hindu thought, has represented in the main what is called the Vedânta or Orthodox school of belief. This is founded on the Vedas, as well as most congenial with the national mind. Yet we have already seen that it was capable of emancipating itself from idolatry of scripture, and affirming the intimacy of man with God through his own essential nature. We have now to examine a different path to the affirmation of spiritual being and sovereignty; one in which these elements of freedom are still more prominent, the Sânkhya system of Kapila.

Little is known of Kapila; whose name, a synonym of Fire, hovers, like the names of other founders of Hindu schools, between mythology and history. He is held by some to have been an incarnation of Agni; by others, of Vishnu. The origin of his system cannot be definitely assigned to any special date. More important than any such historical determination is the fact that its persistence and productivity show it to be a natural and spontaneous growth of the Aryan mind. Kapila and the Sânkhya.

Like all other systems of Oriental philosophy, it is

comprised in a series of aphorisms, or *Sutras*, adapted for retention in the memory, and as texts for instruction. And these aphorisms, though already carefully studied and expounded by scholars like Colebrooke, Wilson, Weber, Müller, and Ballantyne, are still much obscured by an exceedingly compact and elliptical style, and by the difficulty of translating and even of comprehending modes of thought and speech peculiar to the Oriental mind.[1]

The earnestness with which Oriental studies are now pursued, both in Europe and the East, justify the hope that we shall soon possess ample data for appreciating the vast store of philosophical germs and developments contained in the six great Hindu systems, or *darśanas*, of which the Sânkhya is the most practical, scientific, and consequent, and, as some think, the oldest.[2] It is for these reasons, as well as from its apparent attitude as the opposite pole to the religious philosophy of the Vedânta, that I have selected it from among these different schools for special presentment, according to my apprehension of its meaning.

Unity of aim in Hindu philosophy.

Nothing we know of the whole body of Hindu philosophy is more impressive than the unity of its aim. Covering the whole field of speculative thought, seeking to unfold the mystery of the universe from every point of view, these schools

[1] The purpose of the present work is satisfied by presenting such general idea of the substance of the Sânkhya as can be derived from the results of these labors; and especially from the translation and commentary of Dr. Ballantyne in the *Bibliotheca Indica*, printed at Calcutta in 1862–65. Of great value also for the comprehension of these Sutras is the *Sânkhya Kârikâ*, (seventy *Memorial Sentences*, definitive of the system), which has been translated with commentaries, native and other, by Professor Wilson. *Sutra* is probably from siv, to *sew*, and refers to the string with which the leaves containing the aphorisms are bound together.

[2] Weber, *Vorles.* p. 212; Thomson's *Bhag. Gitâ*, *Introd.*, ch. iii. The *darśanas* are the two Sânkhyas, the two Mimânsâs, the Nyâya, and the Vaiśeshika.

are yet penetrated by one and the same motive, — to reach *mukti*, or *moksha*, deliverance from bonds. They are tributes of the intellect to demands of the moral and spiritual being. They are at once, on the one hand, an involuntary confession of the heavy conditions imposed on human existence by the absence of social science, and practical and political liberty, as well as by manifold forms of moral weakness and enslavement to desire, growing out of constitutional and climatic disadvantages; and, on the other, in decisive reaction upon these bonds, asserting full capacity to ascend into a sphere of freedom, reality, and true vision.

All these schools are possessed by the sense of *moral sequence*, of the inevitable fruitage of every action after its own kind, embodied in their conception of *karma*. On this proceeds the belief, also common to them all, in *transmigration*, or the "bonds of birth;" and in the *spiritual body*, which attends the soul, as the ultimation of its past life, and determines the new form it is to assume at death. And to escape that bondage to renewed births, by *transcending* the power of actions to necessitate them, was a grand common purpose of all Hindu systems.

Kapila's first aphorism, "The end of man is the complete cessation of the threefold pain," has a negative aspect, impressed on it by intense consciousness of the force of human limitations, which does little justice to the serenity and joy of his unfolding process of emancipation, and to the positive assurance of good that beckons him onward like a sun in the heavens of thought. Beyond all endeavors at rejection, beyond the ceaseless and radical "nay, nay," with which it met all definite

Negation and affirmation.

forms of life or action that claimed to satisfy its ideal of freedom, there was a clearly positive faith, a definite and unswerving aim. And Kapila's *negation* does not essentially differ from the mystical *promise* of the Vedânta, which emphasizes the "enjoyment of Brahma" as the end of man.

Emancipation of the spiritual essence is the all-embracing inspiration of the Hindu Word, whether the *emphasis* be placed on the process or the fulfilment. Of all its forms of speculation, this moral aspiration, this ascent from pain to peace, from darkness to light, from bonds to liberty, as the one imperative and the one practicable thing, is the vital substance. This is the "life more than meat" of Hindu faith. This common purpose is, in fact, the form under which the grand instinct of unity, which we have found to be characteristic of the race, made itself master of their philosophical capacities.

The other systems.

The *Nyáya* of Gotama was a method of Logic; yet it aimed at no less than to discover whatsoever could be known, and how to attain the assurance of reality. Röer characterizes its idea of God as coming "nearest to the Christian conception of an Infinite and Personal Spirit." However this may be, it pursues all objects of thought; and with such fulness and definiteness in its forms of cognition as to "allow a place for the treatment of every modern science;" and this purely in order to the "deliverance of man from evil."[1] The *Vaiśeshika* of Kanâda is a similar search for universal certitude, through an exhaustive analysis of categories in many respects more

[1] See the careful analysis of Hindu Systems by Müller, in *Zeitschr d. D. M. G.*, VI. pp. 1–34 and 219–242, and VII. pp. 287–313; Madhusadana's *Review of Hindu Literature* in Weber's *Indische Studien*, I. 1–12; Duncker's *Geschichte d. Alterthums*, II. 163–173.

searching and complete than those of Aristotle; and not without many striking divinations of physical laws and phenomena, — such as an atomic system, the perception of four primary elements, and of a finer ether as vehicle of sound.[1] But this also was a baptism of the whole field of human faculty and resource to the same purpose of spiritual emancipation. Kanâda opens his Sutras with the words: "Let us unfold the way of duty" (*dharma*). "Duty is that which leads to wisdom and the highest good."[2] To the same end the Vedânta, or speculative portion of the *Mimânsâ*, expounds the meaning of revelation and the unity of the human soul with the divine. The *Yoga* of *Patanjali* describes the disciplines by which that union is to be achieved. Finally, the *Karma Yoga* of the Bhagavadgitâ resumes the substance of all systems in philosophical synthesis, and crowns them with a poetic vision and a moral enthusiasm, that seem the triumphal song of deliverance by Thought. Such the earnestness of this old persistent study of the laws and processes of mind.[3]

[1] Röer's *Transl. of the Vaiśeshika Philos. in Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, XXI. XXII.

[2] Or, "which through exaltation leads to emancipation" (Ballantyne). — Banerjea (*Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy*) pronounces *dharma* to be only "class (or caste) duty." But can any word, used as the generic expression of obligation, the synonym of *ought*, and this in all systems and relations, mean nothing else than the performance of a given set of observances? The same word is used by Buddhists, who reject caste, to denote their *moral* law. It is used wherever we should use the word *ought*. But Mr. Banerjea thinks also (p. 280) that all the schools are atheistic, because they are more or less pantheistic (*sic*), and because they do not teach "a Creator, separate from the world" (*Pref.*, ix). And his true sage, the Christian Satyakama, is as credulous about Bible miracles and mysteries as the philosophers he is refuting are towards the Vedic ones. "Duty," in Mr. Banerjea's philosophy, "can only receive sanction from the will of a personal God." If this only means that the principle of right doing implies intelligence as the root of being, and fountain of law, it is of course admitted. But when, in illustration of the real meaning, we are told that "all idea of duty is repudiated in the Vedânta, because the human soul and deity are there identical" (p. 83), we begin to comprehend how very much this author's notions of a 'personal God" have unfitted him to apprehend mystical piety and the unity of being with its manifestations.

[3] The subtleties of Hindu dialectics turn upon formulas and words, and are probably

"This philosophy," says Gaudapâda, in his commentary on the Sânkhya Kârikâ, "was imparted to Kapila as a boat for crossing the ocean of ignorance in which the world was immersed." "Revelation," says the Kârikâ itself, "is ineffectual; for it is defective in some respects and excessive in others. To know how to discriminate perceptible principles from the One that cannot be perceived, and from the thinking soul, is better."[1]

Rationalism of the Sânkhya.

The Sânkhya, therefore, is rationalistic. It is careful to define the principles of a true dialectic for the discovery of truth. And its grounds of proof are three: perception, inference, and right affirmation, which it further designates as a form of *Sruti*, or "revelation."[2] This last is declared by the commentators to mean the Vedas; but both Kapila and the Kârikâ mention it last in order of importance. "The Sânkhya," says Röer,[3] "was frequently in opposition to the doctrine of the Vedas, and sometimes openly declared so. Although it referred to them, it did so only when they accorded with its own doctrines; and it rejected their authority in case of discrepancy."

Kapila, *after a Hindu way*, was a positivist. He did not trouble his mind with seeking a first Cause or Source of all. That were but "regressus in infinitum." He did not demand how

The root principle.

carried to a degree of refinement never equalled elsewhere. Yet there is a Spartan, or rather Stoic, simplicity about the plain rude huts (*toles*), where hosts of pupils, generation after generation, have plied these mental gymnastics under countless masters of the great systems of philosophy, which profoundly impresses the European philosopher. Not less striking is the rule of these dialectics that every one shall present the view of his opponent, and exhaust all that can be said in its behalf, before refuting it and maintaining his own E. B. Cowell in *Proceedings of Bengal Society*, June, 1867.

[1] *Sânkhya Kârikâ*, II. [2] *Kârikâ*, V. [3] *Introd. to Śvetâśvatara.*

things came to be here, but *what* they are, and *to what end* they are here. He took the realities he felt and saw, referred them to certain root principles as primary and substantial, and made these his starting-point for the discriminations which should teach the truth of being.[1] And these primary substances or "roots"[2] he found to be two in number, and essentially distinct; the one representing the *material* of which the complex experience of actual consciousness is shaped; and the other, its constant and inviolable beholder, representing *the ideal essence* for which it all exists, and by virtue of whose higher presence it becomes of value. This latter substance he did not very clearly define, except by contrast with the other: how was it possible to define the ineffable freedom and bliss of that life of which all experience but serves to teach the transcendence? But the point of moment and the path of life was in knowing that such an ideal personality really is and abides; that the world exists and experience is developed, for its sake; and that one can be delivered out of all the perturbations and errors and blind subserviences which he finds in his experience, into its pure freedom, light, and peace.

This, as I understand it, is the substance of Kapila's distinction between Prakriti, or "nature," and Purusha, or "soul." It was at once speculative and moral, it affirmed that each individual's action, passion, perception, had its value in and through its relation to an ideal personality above and beyond it, for whose purposes it was working, and whose purity and freedom were constant and secure.

It has been usual to translate Prakriti by the terms

[1] *Aphorisms of Kapila*, I. 68. [2] Ibid., I. 67.

"nature" and "matter." But it certainly does not signify either nature or matter, in the senses now given by us to those terms. Prakriti[1] means a primary principle, a self-subsistent original essence; and in this sense "*Mula* (the root) *Prakriti*" is taken by Kapila to represent the substratum of all experience, except Purusha, or *Soul*, which is the other, and the *ideal*, root-principle *for* which it exists. Prakriti "is not crude, visible, or divisible matter," but that "first principle which was taught in Greece also by Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle," and which in fact "has no property of body."[2] It is all-pervading, immutable, one, without cause or end. It enfolds and evolves[2] senses, without *being* sense as distinct from spirit. It contains and evolves *mind* also; and this not in a materialistic sense, as a mere outside *product* of its creative power, — because the great positive principle of Kapila is that, as there *is no production of something out of nothing*, the effect already pre-exists in the cause, and like comes from like only, just as "the act of the sculptor can only produce the manifestation of the image that was already [ideally] in the stone."[3] Mind, therefore, *pre-exists in the essence of Prakriti*, which consequently cannot be mere "matter" as distinct from mind. But Prakriti evolves both senses and mind, *only* through the presence and purpose of "*Soul*," which again must not be confounded with mind, as thus evolved in a secondary, instrumental, and sense-entangled form.

Superiority of mind even in Prakriti.

[1] From pra, *before*, and kri, *to make* (procreo), indicating pre-existent, productive force.

[2] Wilson's *Kârikâ*, p. 82.

[3] Vijnâna Bikhshu's commentary on the Sânkhya. *Aphorisms*, I. 78, 120.

Prakriti is also the equipoise, or essential substratum, of the three *gunas* [or qualities] of "goodness, foulness [or rather, appetence], and darkness,"—elements which in a mixed, consorted, and confused manner, are, as bonds (guna), involved in all experience, moral and intellectual; but which must pass away, with all their blind gravitations, in the serene light and liberty of "Soul." These *gunas* certainly cannot have been regarded as merely physical, however related to the organs of sense, and the bodily investment of mind. They correspond, probably, as nearly as we can express them, to physical and moral temperaments.[1] Thus goodness is described as "enlightening," foulness as "urgent, or passionate," and darkness as "heavy and enveloping."[2] The guna of "goodness" is, it would seem, a temperamental, undiscerning *instinct* for what is right and good. The guna of "foulness" (or appetence) is that perturbation of the passions, that blind headiness of desire, that vehement grasp and cling upon things as if they could not be spared, which blurs the sight, and stains the motive, and enslaves the will. The guna of "darkness" is the gloom of downward gravitation to a sensual and brutish state. These products of Prakriti are said to consort with each other, as resulting, in different degrees and different aspects and directions, from one and the same action.[3] And these are in equipoise and perpetual possibility, in Prakriti, as the three streams are united in the Ganges.[4]

The three qualities.

From this first principle or "primary root," this un-

[1] The Gnostics, in like manner, recognized three kinds of men, the *pneumatical*, or spiritual; the *psychical*, attracted both to sense and spirit; and the *hylical*, or material.

[2] *Kârikâ*, XIII. [3] Ibid, XII.

[4] *Comment. of Gaudapâda on Kârikâ*, XVI.

changing essence of all things "mutable, discrete, mergent in their causes again,"[1] come what Kapila calls the seven "produced and productive principles." They are called *vikriti* (from *vi*, differently, and *kri*, to make), indicating that they are not external products made of nothing, but modifications rather of the root itself.

The seven principles.

These are (1) "Mahat," the Great one, called also buddhi, or *understanding*, meaning doubtless Mind in its active relations and consequent limitations; whence, (2) "Ahankâra," self-consciousness, or *egoism;* whence, (3) five "subtile rudiments," which are the grounds of our cognition of sound, touch, smell, form, and taste. And these seven powers potentiate for us — or, as Kapila says, "produce" — the five organs of sensation, the five organs of action, and the five gross elements, or lowest form of matter, to which is added "manas," or *mind* as the percipient and sensitive element, that refers them to a single consciousness.[2] These last are "products, but unproductive." And the outward organs of sense are called the *gates* or doors, while the higher internal forces that make these their means of communication — namely, understanding, self-consciousness, and sensibility — are called the *warders*.[3]

The twenty-five.

"He who knows these twenty-five principles," says Kapila, "is liberated, whatever order of [social] life he may have entered."[4]

Further definitions.

Now, of the seven productive principles that flow from Prakriti, Mahat is further defined by its faculties of "virtue, knowledge, and power:"

[1] Aristotle says (*Metaph*., I. 3), that "there must be a certain permanent *Nature*, or primary matter, from which other entities are produced, and which remains in a state of conservation"

[2] *Kârikâ*. Also, *Aphorisms*, I. 61; II. 17, 18.

[3] *Kârikâ*, XXXV.

[4] Gaudapâda on *Kâr*., I.

virtue (or dharma) being the fulfilment of the duties of humanity, and power being the "subjugation of nature."[1] Ahankâra is egoism, or consciousness, considered as involving the pride (abhimâna) that, for Hindu conscience, always vitiates the feeling of individuality; and the "self-sufficiency that says there is no other supreme but me."[2] Both "understanding" and "egoism" are of course imperfect: the one as affected by mental incompetency, error, and manifold circumstance; the other as the illusion of self-complacency. And their use is in subserving the spiritual ideal, by pointing to somewhat beyond, and in contrast with themselves. What Kapila meant by the "subtile rudiments" is not so easy to determine, — perhaps some finer elementary substance, from which the grosser organs were supposed to emanate; but, more probably, the subjective, intelligent ground involved in sensation; the perceptivity required for the act of receiving outward impressions; and this taken as generator of the special senses themselves, — one subtile form for each sense.

Precedence of intelligence to matter.

Concerning all this, we must observe that, as is usual with Hindu thinking, so here, intelligence generates gross matter, not the reverse; and if Prakriti, the root of these seven intelligent principles, is called "unconscious," this is meant in no absolute sense, and in none that invalidates the precedence of intelligence; since, however unconscious, it is still active; and active, moreover, in serving a higher intelligence still; "fulfilling the purposes of soul, spontaneously and by an innate property; its instruments performing their functions by mutual in-

[1] Gaudapâda on *Kâr.*, XXIII.

[2] Vâchespati's Comment on *Kâr.*, XXIV.; *Aph.*, II. 16.

vitation, the soul's purpose being the motive."[1] "For this alone does Prakriti act, to fulfil the soul's desire."[2]

Among the errors about the nature of soul which constitute bondage, that of confounding it with matter,[3] or any of the products of Prakriti, is pronounced by all Sânkhyan authorities to be the most radical. "Soul," says Kapila, "is something other than body; since what is combined, and so discerptible, is for the sake of some other that is indiscerptible." "Soul is not material, because it is the experiencer; and because of its superintendence over nature."[4]

Soul distinct and sovereign.

Further: the principle of intelligent perceptive power (mahat) is capable of discriminating between Purusha and Prakriti;[5] and in so doing, recognizes soul as superior to both "nature" and itself, in consequence of its being *intelligence* in a higher sense than itself. For soul, according to Kapila, must not be confounded with mind as such;[6] having a higher form of knowledge; pure, independent, undisturbed vision. "Soul is the seer, the spectator, bystander."[7] Have we not here a hint of *intuition*, in its distinction from *opinion;* of the higher reason in contrast with the limits of the understanding?

Positivism in the Sânkhya.

I have said that Kapila, after a Hindu way, was a positivist. But he certainly was not a materialist. The Sânkhya has plainly in many respects a transcendental method and faith.

But what is the meaning of that "spontaneity and innate property" of unconscious Prakriti, that independent force by which it acts, even in "service of

[1] *Kârikâ*, XXXI.
[2] Ibid, XLII.; *Aph.*, II. 36, 37.
[3] Wilson's *Comment. on Kâr.*, XLV.
[4] *Aphorisms*, I. 139, 142, 143.
[5] *Kârikâ*, XXXVII
[6] *Aph.*, I 129, 130.
[7] *Aph*, II 29, *Kârikâ*, XIX.

soul" ? Have we not here a germ of positive science ? Is it any thing else than an instinctive presentiment of natural law, and of the development of the world thereby? And is not the remanding of soul to the position of a "witness and seer," not interfering with those innate properties of spontaneous development, an imperfect recognition of the invariability of natural law, and its independence of all external volition or arbitrary intervention ? I cannot find a better explanation than this of his meaning, when, as if fascinated by the self-adequacy of nature, he refers the orderly processes of experience to modifications of an active but unconscious principle. Yet the unconsciousness of Prakriti is, as we have just seen, only relative to itself as process, as mode, or as law. It stands in the closest relation to conscious *intelligence*, or soul, which, if not its cause, is allowed to be the motive from which it acts and the force which "superintends" it.[1] These are hints that soul, in the Sânkhya, really means spirit guiding the course of nature, though Kapila does not seem to have followed them out. So the strictest modern positivist must recognize in natural law that unity, beauty, order, mystery, which are in fact representative of whatever intelligence holds most worthy of itself.

What does Kapila mean here by "soul" and its "desire"? *How* does Prakriti point to that for whose service it exists ? In other words, how does the actual enforce faith in the ideal ? Here is the compact answer to the last questions: —

"Since sensible objects are for use of another [than themselves]; since the opposite of that which has the three qualities must exist; since there must be superintendence; since there must

[1] *Kârikâ*, XVII.; *Aphorisms*, I. 142.

be one to enjoy; and since there is a drawing to abstraction, — that is, since every one desires release, — *therefore* [know we that] *Soul is.*"[1]

What is soul?

What then *is* Soul? It is affirmed to be free from all qualities which produce the imperfections of experience, — free, therefore, from their activity or pursuit of special objects, which in experience produces dependence, bondage, loss, and grief. As steadfast, imperturbable, perfectly self-subsistent, it must be related to the world of imperfect conditions as a witness and a bystander only, not a participant in these defects.

In other words, — as we should say, and as the Hindu, in his fashion, says here, I think, quite clearly, — an *ideal capability* stands fast in us, as the real substance of ourselves, untouched by the errors and stains of life, unabated by its discouragements, with serenity beholding them, as it were, in their real outwardness to its own essence.

Soul not really bound.

Yet this ideal essence, like the Hellenic-Hebrew "Wisdom," though "remaining in itself, makes all things new." It is constantly united with Prakriti in the individual consciousness, and so *appears* to share in its infirmities, to be bound in all the fetters of experience. But the appearance is illusory. The soul is not really bound. In all this confused activity, this unsatisfactory doing, it is "the qualities" that are active, while the "stranger" [soul] but *appears* the agent.[2] It is like our confounding fire and iron in a heated bar, or sun and water in reflections from a stream; like the color of glass when a rose is near it. It is illusion: "verbal; resides in the mind, not in the soul itself."[3] The soul

[1] *Kârikâ*, XVII. [2] Ibid., XX. [3] *Aph.*, I. 58.

cannot be bound. "Verily not any soul is bound, or released, or transmigrates; but nature (Prakriti) alone is so, in relation to the variety of beings."[1] In other words, the bondage men feel is not essential bondage;[2] and thoroughly to know this by faith in the soul as absolute, imperishable, and free,[3] is liberation. Plotinus, also, asserts the soul to be an essence which miseries and changes cannot touch; that these reach only to the shadow of it, not the substance; that its bliss is in pure seeing, free of the blindness of material desires and pursuits. How the soul comes to be united with "nature," or the defects of experience, Kapila does not ask. He accepts the fact. Whence comes our ideal vision, is not the first, nor the main question, nor soluble for the scientific understanding at any time. *For what end* it is always with us, is the point of moment. And Kapila's answer is that, practically, "union is for the sake of liberation." Till true discrimination is attained, till the validity and independence of this higher personality is appreciated, there remains the illusion which is bondage and pain. The lame and the blind are journeying, and agree to help each other: the blind carries the lame on his shoulders, and the journey is accomplished, since the one can walk and the other show the way. So "soul" conjoined with "nature," if it cannot move, can see; and "nature," if it cannot see, can advance under guidance. Thus liberation is effected, and the journey ends.[4] The Sânkhya loves to describe the essential good-will that resides in the process, arduous as it is; the real harmony of ideal and actual, the friendly purpose that animates this necessary illusion and

[1] *Kârikâ*, LXII.; *Aph.*, I. 160, 162.
[2] *Aph*, I. 7.
[3] *Aph.*, I. 12, 15, 19.
[4] *Kârikâ*, XXI.

defect; the effort, as it were, of Prakriti herself to deliver man from his pain. That man shall know and discern her truth, — not that she hold him bound in ignorance, — is her purport. Unconscious nature lives and loves, in *his* desire. "As people engage in acts to relieve desires, so nature to liberate soul; generous, seeking no benefit, nature accomplishes the wish of ungrateful Soul." [1] Her evolution goes on "for deliverance of each soul:" it is "done for another's sake as for self." [2] Here is unity of spirit plucked even from the abysses of speculative analysis, of essential distinction! "Nothing," says Gaudapâda, "is, in my opinion, more gentle than Prakriti: once aware of having been seen, she does not expose herself again to the gaze of soul." [3] How delicate and genial is this sense of illusion, which makes error vanish from the eyes of truth, as one who knows she should not be seen!

Similar ideas are found in the Gnostic systems. And the fundamental principle of both philosophies is the same. "Bondage is from misconception." [4] It consists in errors about the nature of soul. If this seems to ignore the moral element, we have seen that the intellectual and the moral are closely associated in the old philosophies of the Aryan race; that "knowledge" involves entering into the nature of what is known, becoming one with the ideal, through abandonment of all selfish and sensual interests.

Moral relations of this idea.

All Oriental wisdom assumes to a greater or less degree the truth of the Platonic maxim, that to know virtue is to love it, and that whoso *really sees* vices *must* shun them. That moral evil

[1] *Kârikâ*, LVIII. LX.
[2] Ibid, LVI.
[3] Ibid., LXI.
[4] *Aph.*, III. 24.

is from misconception, and is to be cured by the pure vision of truth, is at least a principle tending to purify the conscience, and urge it to the pursuit of the real, to surrender of the shadow and the surface to win the substance of virtue. In the absence of that light which science lends to the conscience, the moral effect of this absolute faith in right knowing must have been relatively greater than that of distinctively intellectual motives at the present day.

Ethical value of the Sânkhya.

The Sânkhya is philosophy rather than ethics; and its aphorisms do not enter definitely into the special disciplines by which pure "soul" was to be reached. Yet the very substance of its "discrimination" is the preference of higher to lower principles; of the eternal to the transient; of ideal personality to self-centred individuality; of spirit to sense; of duty to desire. And the sum of those "defects of the understanding" which cause "delay of liberation" is distinctly defined to be "acquiescence;"[1] the self-complacency that causes it to stop short of that perfect sacrifice by which truth is fully known.

Of the forms of such "acquiescence," four are *internal*. The first relates to *nature*, and consists in merely recognizing principles *as* of nature, without going further; the second, to *means*, a mere dependance on observance; the third, to *time*, a mere waiting, as if liberation would come in good season; the fourth, to *luck*, expecting it to turn up by chance. The other, or *external*, kinds of acquiescence, are forms of abstinence from objects, merely because of the trouble and anxiety they bring.[2]

The practical philosophy of the Sânkhya, as far as

[1] *Kârikâ*, I

[2] Gaudapâda on *Kâr.*, L.

it can be seen in the Aphorisms, in fact, reminds us of the manly precepts of the later Stoic and the breadth of the Eclectic schools.

"Not in a perturbed mind does wisdom spring."

"The lotus is according to the soil it grows in."

"Success is slow; and not even, though instruction be heard, is the end gained without reflection."

"Not by enjoyment is desire appeased."

"Go not, of thine own will, near to one driven by strong desire."

"He who is without hopes is happy."

"Though one devote himself to many teachers, he must take the essence, as the bee from flowers."[1]

Limits of self-abnegation.

How far the sacrifice must be carried may be learned from the following decisive aphorism of the Kârikâ: —

"Liberation obtained through knowledge of the twenty-five principles teaches the one only knowledge, — that neither I am, nor is aught mine, nor do I exist."[2]

Such is Wilson's translation, which doubtless a little periphrasis would make more intelligible to the Teutonic mind.

How are we to understand such a statement as this? If it were the language of sentiment, instead of being, as it is, a positive aphorism of philosophy, it might find its equivalents in the mystical piety of every age. That it should here mean either nihilism, or the "desire of annihilation," is plainly impossible. We have seen that even the Vedânta, in resolving all existence into illusion, except the life of the soul in the absolute and eternal, taught no such purpose of self-destruction. Can we then imagine this to be, in any sense, compatible with the intense realism of Kapila, who firmly insists not only that nature is a positive principle and

[1] *Aph.*, IV. [2] *Kârikâ*, LXIV.

entity,[1] but that soul is not one, but many; and that each of these souls is a unit, or monad, real and imperishable?[2] The whole aim of the Sânkhya is liberation "*for the sake of this*," which is the *proper personality*, and nowise to be lost, nor merged, nor marred. Kapila indeed takes special pains to declare that "the soul's aim is *not* annihilation."[3] And the commentators on the verse above quoted explain it to mean that the one true wisdom is "difference from egotism," and "exemption from being the seat of pain;" *i.e.*, from the errors and bonds of the understanding in its consciousness of agency.[4] "By these expressions, —'neither I am, nor is aught mine, nor do I exist,'—we are not to understand negation of soul. This would be direct contradiction to the Sânkhya categories. It is intended merely as negation of the soul's having any active participation, individual interest, or property, in human pains and human feelings. The verse does not amount, therefore, as Cousin has supposed, to "le nihilisme absolu, dernier fruit du skepticisme."[5]

It should seem that the term "*human*," in Wilson's explanation, as indicating what is to be dismissed from the life in liberation, covers too large a ground; since the soul, as Kapila conceives it, is properly the very *essence* of our humanity, and all human experience is for its sake.[6]

Yet, inasmuch as in Hindu thought knowledge of soul can be attained only by *becoming* soul, it would follow that the interests of the body, Disparagement of the outward.

[1] *Aph.*, I. 79; VI. 53.

[2] *Aph.*, I. 144, 149–151. "As the elements are real so is the soul real." *Yâjnav.*, III. 149.

[3] *Aph.*, I. 47.

[4] *Chandrikâ*, quoted by Wilson, p. 180.

[5] Wilson, p. 181.

[6] *Aph.*, II. 46.

and properly the body itself, must pass away before liberation, in the pure and perfect sense, can be achieved. Disparagement of man's physical and practical relations is of course the weak point in this as in all Oriental philosophy. Kapila's insistence on the "isolation" of soul, and its distinction from "nature," involves a constant endeavor to separate the two in the interest of the former, which even his realistic view of "nature," and his perception of her essential sympathy with the "aim of soul," cannot counteract. Thus while he affirms that liberation is possible in this life, and without the dissolution of the body, he is careful to explain that, when this is attained, soul remains invested with body only as the potter's wheel continues to whirl, after the potter has left it, by the impetus previously given.[1] The aspiration after purely spiritual existence in the present life has produced similar disparagement of outward relations in Christianity also, from the New Testament down to the renaissance-epoch in modern Europe, and even till the recent growth of physical science. Its asceticism could only be counterbalanced by social interests and practical aims; and these have but followed up the "necessary discriminations" insisted on by the Kapilas and other rationalists of old, with a higher synthesis of soul and sense.

Linga, or spiritual body.

But, liberation *not* being accomplished in this life, body was, according to the Sânkhya, *not* escaped at death. It accompanied the soul still, in its subtile form, the *linga Śarira*,[2] or "spiritual body," which consisted of all those principles and rudimental elements which flow from Prak-

[1] *Kârikâ*, LXVII

[2] *Linga* signifies a *characteristic*, or *mark*. *Śarira* is *the body*.

riti, with the exception of the enveloping gross organs and bodily frame; these, and only these, perishing at death. The *linga*, with all its component parts, — understanding, egoism, and the subtile organs that serve them, — is subject to transmigration, requires the support of a special vehicle or body, and ceases only with the process of liberation, and the full realization of soul.[1]

Here Kapila stops. He does not tell us what he holds this life of realized soul to be, save in its difference from all present experiences through the understanding, from all our self-conscious feeling and action. Not his to describe the end, but to state the distinctions that condition it, and to hint the way to it. But the implication seems to be, that with the fulfilment of man's highest ideal comes the ineffable reality, which we can neither understand nor conceive; but to which all that we see, and know, and feel, and dream ourselves the doers and possessors of, is but the imperfect and transient means; the deaf, dumb, and blind servant of a secret which its finiteness helps, by very contrast, to reveal. Kapila's limit.

The substance is this. *There is a reality*, abiding eternally, to know which is life, and before which all other intelligence, as Paul says of "tongues and prophecies and knowledge," shall "vanish away." And as the apostle's reason for the evanescence of these is that "we know in part, and prophesy in part, and when that which is perfect is come that which is in part must be done away," Kapila would probably ask why the *specially Christian faith, hope, and love*, which Paul thought sure to His affirmation.

[1] The *Bhagav. Gîtâ* says that, "when spirit abandons a body, it migrates, taking with it its senses, as the wind wafts along with itself the perfume of the flowers."

abide when knowledge shall have been proved a vain thing, must not also, as being in like wise imperfect and partial, pass away when that which is perfect is come. And shall we not hear Kapila and Socrates as well as Jesus and Paul? Are ideals of pure knowledge essentially less adequate than ideals of faith and love, if these disparage knowledge? Will not the future insist on the necessity of independent seeing, in order to right believing and true helping, — on the unity of science and love?

The Aphorisms.

For fuller understanding of this interesting system, let us review its leading characteristics, with special illustration from the aphorisms ascribed to Kapila himself.

Differences of Vedânta and Sânkhya.

The Sânkhya proves the capacity of Hindu genius for a very different form of thought from that which we have been tracing through the mystical unities of the Vedânta. There is no passive receptivity of mind, no dissolving of distinctions in the infinite as the only real. Precisely the opposite. The word Sânkhya refers us to *numbers* as definite entities: it means to distinguish, to weigh, to judge. "Learn to discriminate, and be free," was the precept of this philosophy; and that it was needed in Indian thought has already become sufficiently plain.

Both Vedânta and Sânkhya aim at spiritual emancipation. But the one assumes absolute unity, and seeks freedom by solving all distinctions therein; the other assumes essential distinction, as between "soul" and blind "natural" forces, and seeks freedom by dissolving the bondage which consists in confounding them.

The Vedânta affirms all spirit to be absolutely one:

the Sânkhya recognizes the diversity of persons as real. So that while the Vedantist escapes bondage when he sees himself to be one with Brahma, the Sânkhyan is free when he knows himself as really separate from all blind and confused conceptions, all crude, intractable material in the natural order of experience. "To know that one was *not* bound when one seemed to be so, — this," says Kapila, "is liberation." So the Vedantist could say, but hardly in the interest of individual being. For him the real soul was free, in that its substance was not in the individual self, but in God. For the other it was free, in that it was itself substance, *as* individual, which bondage could not really touch. The Nyâya, also, affirms individual souls to be real, eternal, and even infinite.[1]

For the Vedantist, bondage was unreal, because the *ego* that was bound and the phenomenal world which bound it were alike void of essential life.

For the Sânkhyan, bondage was unreal, because while the world that *seemed* to bind it was granted real, the true *ego*, also real, for ever stood beyond its power. Definite forms of existence were mâyâ (illusion) for the one: bondage itself, bondage alone, was mâyâ for the other.

The Sânkhya is analytic, as the Vedânta is synthetic. It reacts against the very idea of unity; and, so far as is possible, avoids it; being, in fact, not a system of theology at all, but a system of analytic philosophy in the interest of individual (speculative and moral) freedom. Without denying an ulterior synthesis, it affirms its two primary principles, Purusha (the soul) and Prakriti ("nature"), which again are divis-

[1] Colebrooke's Analysis, *Essays*, I. 268.

ible; since of souls there is multiplicity, and of Prakriti there is a primal and also a developed, "phenomenal," form.

Meaning of Prakriti.

Prakriti, "rootless (or primary) root," is not, let us once more note, material nature in any absolute sense; since, as developed through contact with "soul," it appears in a series of evolutions, of which the first member is *apprehension*, and the second *self-consciousness*, or self-will, the egoistic element; out of which, as Hindu thought is wont to make mind precedent and body derivative, are generated the subtile organs and gross body of sensation and action.[1] To explain the real meaning of the conception, we have the further fact that Prakriti is also the original equipoise or latent potentiality of three psychological qualities, evolved in man through its union with mind,[2] — the ascending quality (*sattva*, or goodness), allied to essence and light; the impulsive, ungoverned rotating quality (*rajas*, or passion); and last, the downward-tending quality of weight and darkness (*tamas*, or irrationality). Of this triplicity of qualities, which runs through the whole of Hindu thought, and which has formed substantially the basis of psychological conceptions in other races also, Prakriti was the mere potential ground, or indifference, generating them in definite forms, *only through union with soul*, itself unconscious; "energizing spontaneously, not by thought," yet really existing *as* Prakriti, in these qualities, the phenomena of *mind*.

From all which, we can perhaps divine the meaning of the word in this subtle system of analytics. Prakriti cannot be dead matter; nor is it independent mind. It indicates simply, in my judgment, an effort to ex-

[1] *Aph.*, I. 71, 73; II. 16, 18. [2] *Aph.*, III. 48–50.

press that mysterious interweaving of unconscious and active powers, which obscures the relation of mind with body, not to Hindu vision only, but to all human insight hitherto attained.

Over against this, Kapila posits essential man, seeking to lift the conception as far as possible above these sources of error, confusion, and consequent bondage, with which man is phenomenally connected, and to affirm his inalienable ideal sovereignty. "Soul (purusha) is;"[1] and it is substantial and valid in every individual soul; not competent merely to liberate itself from this blind Prakriti and its bondage of illusions, but in and of itself vitally and for ever free. the ultimate force "for whose service this exists and energizes." Hence it is seen only when felt as throned serene behind the warfare of life, inviolate; a witness and seer in itself, "neither agent nor patient," though taking the tinge of qualities by reflection merely, so as to appear both the one and the other, just as glass reflects the color of the object near it; and moving the organs "by proximity only," through some subtle authority lying behind contact, and of a higher quality than that; as the loadstone moves the iron, or a king his army through orders and not by engaging in the fight.[2] A grand conception, or divination by pure intellect, *of the authority of mind over circumstance, and of the impossibility of final moral and spiritual failure.* This is to lay a noble basis for psychology and theology in the dignities of personal being; and for that inward union with imperishable principles which lifts it above transiency and loss. It is the affirmation of *ideal personality*, in a very high form.

Meaning of Purusha.

[1] *Aph.*, VI. 1. [2] *Aph.*, I. 106; II. 29; I. 96.

Here then the two principles; not absolute duality, since Prakriti is said to generate *for the sake of the soul*, and thus soul alone is declared really and absolutely *to be*. Yet the Sânkhya makes no systematic effort to reduce the two to one, nor even to urge the unity of either with itself. It is too much absorbed in the endeavor to distinguish the proper personality from temporary illusions, overmastering passions, and special solicitudes, and too thoroughly possessed by its glad vision of the soul as divine repose, as free beholding, as pure transcendence. So the substance of its insight is freedom; its watch-word, "the separateness (or detachment) of soul."[1]

Not pure dualism.

So profoundly was the Hindu mind prepossessed by the synthetic tendency, that an analytic process was but natural reaction, sundering the elements, and drawing forth their respective validities. Thus the Sânkhya takes special pains to prove, against Vedantic absorption of the many into the One, that there is a *real multiplicity of souls*.[2] And it explains the Vedic texts which affirm the oneness of soul, as referring simply to the comprehensiveness of "genus."[3]

Rationalism of the Sânkhya.

The Sânkhya is rationalistic, as the Vedânta is pietistic. It is sceptical, as the other is believing. It is active criticism, as the other is unquestioning faith. It appeals to common sense and realistic perception against the unbalanced mysticism that merely absorbed all things into one. It is an effort to escape from this into the true sense of spiritual being, by concentration on perception, inference, testimony, and the exclusion of all causes of false notions.[4]

[1] *Aph.*, V. 65; VI. 1, 70.
[2] Ibid., I. 154.
[3] Ibid., I. 149–151.
[4] Ibid., I. 87, 89 100.

The Vedânta in its best form recognizes that the highest truth cannot be reached by the study of the Vedas, and that the wise may "throw them by, as one who seeks grains the chaff." Its piety left paths open out of the bibliolatry that beset its schools. Liberties.

But the Sânkhya made a more radical protest; for it starts from postulates of reason, not of faith. The worship of the letter, the authority of a book, must cease. Kapila declares plainly, The Veda is not eternal: it is not supernatural nor superhuman; its meaning does not transcend the common intuition. He who understands the secular meanings of words can understand their sense in the Veda. There is no special bible sense; there is no authority of scriptures apart from their self-evidence and the fruit of their teaching. They do not proceed from a supreme Person (Iśwara); for since one liberated could not desire to make them, and one unliberated could not have power, no such supreme Man or Lord can have been their author. They are *there;* a breath of self-existence; *a fact in other words*, traceable to no special mind. That is all that can be said.[1] Kapila, it is true, on the other hand, did not dispute the Vedas. But he called them "self-evident conveyers of right knowledge, through the patentness of their power to instruct rightly."[2] In other words, he rested his respect for them on their appeal to his own reason, and judged them by their tendencies. What he found contrary to his intuition and his judgment, he ascribed to such and such a motive, and quietly set it aside.[3] Their central idea of unity, for instance, he disposes Treatment of the Veda

[1] *Aph.*, V 40–51.
[2] *Aph.*, V. 51.
[3] Röer, *Introd. to Śvetâśvatara Upan.*, p. 36.

of thus: "Such texts as, 'all is soul alone,' are there 'for the sake of the undiscriminating,' 'to help the weak to meditation.'" [1] In view of all this, it can hardly be supposed that Kapila allowed absolute authority to the Vedas. Decidedly, criticism of the "holy text" has here begun. Its later development forms a striking feature of the Buddhist and Purânic systems, which, in the main, follow the Sânkhya.[2]

Of ritualism.

"Scriptural rites and forms are but works: they are not the chief end of man." [3]

"Pain to victims must bring pain to the sacrificer of them." [4]

How indeed, with his intense conviction of the freedom of the soul, could Kapila believe that any outward conformities would satisfy its desire? To know itself is its wisdom and its rest. Here is what he says of it: —

Of spiritual liberties.

"Soul is other than body; not material, because overseeing physical nature, and because, while this is the thing experienced, the soul it is that experiences." [5]

"Atoms are not the cause of it, for atoms have neither pleasure nor pain." [6]

"Light does not pertain to the unintelligent, and the soul is essential light." [7]

"Mind, as product of undiscerning activity (Prakriti) and as made of parts, is perishable, but *not soul*." [8] It is an error to mistake even mind, as such, for soul.[9]

"Only soul can be liberated; because only that can be isolated, in which blind, changeful qualities are but reflected, and do not constitute its essence." [10] Simply,

[1] *Aph.*, V. 63, 64.
[2] Wilson's *Essays*.
[3] *Aph.*, I. 82.
[4] Ibid, I. 84.
[5] Ibid., I. 139–142.
[6] Ibid., I. 113.
[7] Ibid, I. 145.
[8] Ibid, I. 136; V. 70–73.
[9] Ibid, I. 129.
[10] Ibid., I. 144.

as we have seen, a form of expressing that pure independence which this system claims for spiritual substance, or rather for spiritual integrity.

"The soul is solitary, uncompanioned: it is constant freedom, a witness, a seer." [1]

"Liberation is not through works, which are transient; nor through the worship of the All, which must be mingled with fancies about the world;" [2] "nor through the desire of heaven, for that desire is to be shunned." [3] "It is not the excision of any special qualities; not possessions, nor magic powers; not going away to any world, since soul is immovable, and does not go away; not conjunction with the rank of gods, which is perishable; not absorption of the part into the whole; not destruction of all; not the void, — nor yet joy:" [4] but more and better than all these, to know the difference which separates the undiscerning movement of qualities, or tendencies to goodness, passion, and darkness in the senses and the mind, from free spiritual being, and so "to thirst no more;" [5] "a work not of a moment, but of that complete concentration and devotion, which has many obstacles." [6] What liberation is.

How finely affirmative through all this negation is Kapila's appeal to pure reason to prove that bondage is not essential to the soul; [7] that forever, within man, whether he knows it or not, and lifted above the possibility of subjection to evil, witness and seer, watching and waiting its hour, indefeasible and inviolate, is the principle of purity and freedom! [8] "To know the difference, and that one *was not bound* Appeal to reason.

[1] *Aph*, V. 65; I. 162; II. 29.
[2] *Aph*., III. 26, 27.
[3] Ibid., III 52.
[4] Ibid, V. 74-83.
[5] Ibid., II., Vijnâna Bhikshu's *Introd.*, so *Śvetâśvatara*, III. 10; IV. 7-17.
[6] Ibid., II. 3.
[7] *Aph*, I. 7, &c.
[8] *Aph*., I. 162.

when one seemed to be so,"[1] — is Kapila's idea of "liberation;" and he knew it was not to be reached without paying the price in all that surrender of lower desires on which he insists.

To take all this on the authority of pure Reason; to believe it because it seemed most rational and becoming, and so to stake the issues of life upon it, — is surely an achievement for all ages and religions to respect.

All is for man's ideal life.

For this great work of liberation, Prakriti is but an instrument. She, the really bound, "binds herself seven ways, but becomes liberated in *one* form only," which is "knowledge" of the truth of things.[2] All is thus for the ideal life of man. "The soul is the seer, the organs are its instruments."[3] "Creation is for the soul's sake, from Brahma down to a post; till there be liberation thereof."[4] "Nature serves soul like a born slave;" "creates for its sake, as the cart carries saffron for its master."[5] And "sense" itself becomes "supersensuous" through this necessity for mind as the explanation of its phenomena. "It is a mistake to suppose that sense is identical with that in which it is seated."[6]

Is the Sânkhya atheistic?

That all this inherent sovereignty is ascribed to every individual soul, and the "multiplicity of souls" insisted on, has been thought to involve unbelief in unity of essence *above* this multiplicity of individuals; and hence the division into "Theistic" and "Atheistic" Sânkhya; Kapila being regarded as representative of the latter, and Patanjali of the former.

It is true that Kapila's jealousy for the freedom

[1] *Aph.*, I. 155. [2] *Aph.*, III 73. [3] *Aph.*, II. 29.
[4] Ibid, III. 47. [5] Ibid, III 51, VI 40. [6] Ibid, II. 23.

and self-subsistence of spirit carried him to the furthest possible isolation of its essence, *in each and every individual being*, from finite conditions. But the Sânkhya cannot, even in his logic, be called atheistic. On the contrary, as Bunsen has noticed, "God, regarded as the undivided Unity, therefore the eternal essence of minds when perfected, is an assumption, or *postulate*, running through the whole system, like that of the existence of light in a treatise on colors;" and fairly inferrible, as a "Divine Order of the Universe," from the "recognition of reason, knowledge, righteousness, as common attributes of these individual minds."[1] And the latest translator of the Bhagavadgitâ, in an elaborate review of Hindu philosophy, asserts, from a point of view quite different from Bunsen's, that the Sânkhya "not only does not deny the existence of a Supreme Being, but even hints at it in referring the emanation of individual souls to a spiritual essence gifted with volition."[2] The idea of a multiplicity of souls, real, endless, and eternally distinct from body, is not inconsistent with theism; since the Nyâya, which follows the Sânkhya in this belief, also declares the Supreme Soul (Paramâtmâ) to be "one, eternally wise, and the source of all things."[3]

It is curious to note how similar, in many respects, is Patanjali's description, in his theistic Yoga[4] system, of an "*Iśwara*," or Lord, to that which Kapila gives of "*Soul*,"—"untouched by troubles, works, fruits, or deserts." Were not both seeking, each in his own way, the spiritual ideal in its independence of limit or change? Kapila could not have admitted

[1] *God in History*, I. 336.

[2] Thomson's *Bhag. Gitâ, Introd.*, p. lviii. Such definite reference to emanation I have not been able to find in Kapila.

[3] Colebrooke's *Essays*, I. 268.

[4] "Yoga" means *conjunction* (with deity).

an Iśwara, like that of the Yoga, who is in one sense distinct from all actual souls; yet his conception of soul itself afforded ample basis for the idea of infinite Mind. Theistic scholiasts on Kapila's aphorisms affirm that his denial of an Iśwara is but hypothetical, not absolute. It would have been more correct to say that it did not deny *central and immanent deity*.

In truth it was Kapila's function to apply a disintegrating analysis to the *monarchical supernaturalistic*, as well as to the *blindly pantheistic*, conceptions of his time.

He simply shows that there is no evidence of an *Iśwara*, or Lord, — that is, of a "governor of nature," in such a sense as the separation of soul from nature and its isolation as witness forbade; one, namely, whose action would involve imperfection; the sway of some "passion" or desire; a certain needy "working for his own benefit or glory, like a worldly lord;"[1] one whose interference should be necessary to the retributions of conduct, — an inadmissible condition, in his view; since works produced their consequences by having their law for ever in themselves. Christian theology also has its Iśwara. The interfering, self-interested Providence, the "deus ex machinâ" of the supernaturalist, is found in all religions, whether in early or late stages, wherever there is an unreasoning faith. It was this idea of a *mechanical* Deity that Kapila seems to have rejected so positively in the name of an inherent virtue in the constant course of things; the adequacy of those laws of being which he sought to unfold. And the like protest of rationalism returns to-day, at the culmination of a *Semitic* faith also, with similar sanctions and justifications. The

[1] *Aph.*, V. 3, 4, 6.

selfishness of a God who could create man "for his own glory," and interfere capriciously with the laws he has made, renders denial of *such* Iśwara a duty still.

All this is not positive piety, not heartfelt theism. But neither is it atheism. It does not deny *deity* to spirit. It denies creation and interference *ab extra*, *by* spirit; and this, in order to exalt it above all that is conditional, and to isolate it so that it may affirm its own highest ideal of freedom and self-subsistence. And, with all its emphasis on the multiplicity of souls, it constantly describes soul *as such*, — not souls, but soul, — as if it were indeed but one in essence, after all: one of those unconscious confessions, by which all reasoning assumes the necessity of primal unity; in other words, of God. Love indeed does not move in these depths of logic. But the intellect also has its work to do, and we have here a legitimate form of this work.

If Kapila is not distinctly ethical and theistic, it is, we repeat, because he is not teaching a religion, but a system of analytic philosophy; because the Sânkhya is a criticism, not a confession of faith. If it is incomplete; if it does not fuse its own elements and reconcile its own poles of thought, it is yet a protest against the one-sided mysticism and supernaturalism, which do not sufficiently guard the dignity and serenity of spirit, in the form under which they conceive its relation to the world.

Fruits of the Sânkhya.

It was in fact found easy to develop out of the Sânkhya those very elements of universal religion which it failed of positively affirming. Its intellectual criticism was the condition and germ at once of the purest theism and the most practical

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Had those contemplative philosophies been so paralyzing to the heart and will as they would at first seem, they could not have afforded groundwork for even a *reaction* to this great impulse, Oriental in its scale and ardor, to emancipate the world through love.

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Our review of Hinduism already justifies us in affirming that the profound intuition of Unity traversed the whole field of desire and belief, and that in this one branch of the Aryan race it found scope for revealing those great typical moulds in which its aspirations are elsewhere found to grow.

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