assembly with earnestness. For three-quarters of an hour or more, but without divisions, coughing, expectoration, or nose-blowing [*sans division*, *tousserie*, *cracherie*, *ni moucherie*], he extemporizes, recites, or reads a discourse on the gospel and its morality, often very fine and very justly put, and often, also, quite as fanatical as some of ours."

At the close of the sermon, our traveler tells us, the minister "makes a sign apparently agreed upon between one of the auditors and himself." A man comes forward holding a long rod "at the end of which, almost as on a fishing line, is suspended"— probably a bag or box for the collection, but our innocent foreigner calls it "*the square hat of the preacher*." This the man who has been called out "presents in recommending the speaker to the liberality of all," which closing with the collection recalls a very different method of taking it in the New England churches in the seventeenth century. One of the deacons at the close of the service was wont to remind the assembly that there was "time left for the contribution." Whereupon, in the order of dignity, magistrates and chief gentlemen first, then the elders and all the men in the congregation each in his turn, and the single women and widows and women whose husbands were absent, went forward or came down from the gallery marching two abreast, up one aisle and down the other. Each as he passed the deacons' seat put money into a wooden box held in the hands of one of the deacons. The gifts were generally liberal for the time; some gave a shilling, some two, some half a crown, and some as high as five shillings. Lacking money they might put into the box written promises to pay which were to be redeemed within a month, or deposit alongside the box some article of value to be used or disposed of for the benefit of the ministers or the poor.

And so, the collection having been decently taken, we close this sketch of some of the chief external features of worship among our ancestors, leaving for subsequent papers the treatment of more essential traits of that religious life which is the key to so much in their history.

Edward Eggleston.

THE VEDA.

THE name Veda has grown to be a familiar one in the ears of this generation. Every educated person among us knows it as the title of a literary work, belonging to far-off India, that is held to be of quite exceptional importance by men who are studying some of the subjects that most interest ourselves. Yet there are doubtless many to whose minds the word brings but a hazy and uncertain meaning. For their sake, then, it may be well to take a general view of the Veda, to define its place in the sum of men's literary productions, and to show how and why it has the especial value claimed for it by its students.

The Veda is the Bible of the inhabitants of India, ancient and modern; the Sacred Book of one great division of the human race. Now, leaving aside our own Bible, the first part of which was in like manner the ancient Sacred Book of one division of mankind, the Hebrew, there are many such Scriptures in the world. There is the Koran of the Arabs, of which we know perfectly well the period and author; the Avesta of the Persian "fire-worshipers," or followers of Zoroaster; the records of ancient China, collected and arranged by Confucius; and others less conspicuous. All are of high interest, important for the history of their respective peoples and for the general history of religions; yet they lack that breadth and depth of consequence that belongs to the Hindu Veda. This is what we have to explain.

The (Sanskrit) word *veda* signifies literally "knowledge"; it comes by regular derivation from a root *vid*, meaning "see," and so "know." Here is found a first intimation of the relation of the Veda to us; for this root *vid* is the same that lies at the basis of the Latin *video*, "I see" (whence our *evident*, *vision*, etc.), of the Greek οἶδα, "I know," and of our own Germanic words, *wit*, *wot*, *witness*, and so on. It is a sign of that community of language which binds together into one family most of the peoples of Europe and a part of those of Asia, showing their several histories to be, in a more peculiar and intimate sense, branches of one common history. In the following table is given a little specimen of the evidence that proves this:

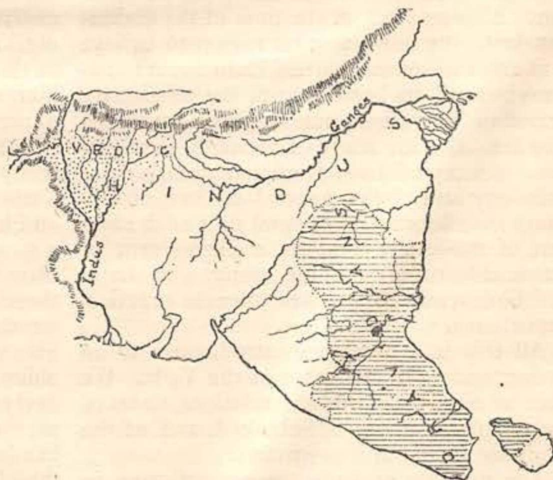
English	two	three	mother	brother
German	zwei	drei	mutter	bruder
Slavic	dwa	tri	mater	brat
Celtic	dau	tri	mathair	brathair
Latin	duo	tres	mater	frater
Greek	duo	treis	meter	phrater
Persian	dwa	thri	matar	
Sanskrit	dwa	tri	matar	bhratar

We know enough about the history of human speech to be certain that such correspondences as these — and their like are scattered through the whole vocabulary and grammar of the languages in question — are only explainable on one supposition, that the tongues which contain them are the common descendants of one original tongue; that is to say, the dialects of German, Slavonian, Celt, Roman, Greek, Persian, and Hindu are the later representatives of a single language, spoken by a single limited community, somewhere on the earth's wide surface, somewhere in the immeasurable past — where and when, we should like very much to know, and mean to find out if we can; but as yet we do not know anything whatever that is definite about it. We call this great body of related languages — carrying with it by inference a relationship also, at least in good degree, of the peoples speaking them — the Indo-European or Aryan family; and we acknowledge something of kinship with every member of the family. It is not, perhaps, a very lively feeling; cousinship loses much of its charm when expressed in high numbers; yet, as we have a certain warmth of sentiment in foreign lands toward even an unrelated countryman, so, in wandering up and down the wastes of human history, we cannot but feel drawn toward those who really speak our own speech.

One great division of this family of ours we find in Asia, occupying Iran (Persia, etc.) and India: the Aryan division, according to the best use of this name, since the ancient peoples of both these countries, and no others, called themselves *ârya*. Their oldest dialects of which we have any record, those of the Avesta and the Veda, are hardly more unlike one another than are English and Netherlandish; and as in the latter case the narrow North Sea separates the two parts of an only recently divided people, so in the former case the highlands and passes of the Hindu-kush do the same. As the English crossed the sea from Low Germany, dispossessing the Celts, so the Indian branch of our kindred stole into India (doubtless more than two thousand years before Christ) through the same gorges that now connect and hold apart India and Afghanistan, and began the conquest of the great and rich peninsula. There we see them still; occupying with their own dialects only the northern part of the country, while the aboriginal "Dravidians" still hold the south; but permeating it all with their influence and institutions; grown to number many scores of millions; possessed of a civilization of native growth and high grade; with literatures and arts and religions that have overrun a great part of Asia — in short, a leading factor in universal human history.

All this, and how it came about, is a matter of only recent knowledge. By a strange fate, this easternmost branch of our family has fallen, within the last century or two, under the dominion of one of the westernmost members, the English. The story of its subjection is well known, and need not be more than alluded to here. The wisdom and the wealth of India had always been the admiration of the world; it was not, however, curiosity as to the wisdom that brought knowledge: rather, greed for the wealth. Almost everywhere in human history the lower motives are immediately efficient; and a band of adventurous traders, seeking material profit, threw open also the intellectual treasure-house of India. The wars and intrigues by which an English commercial company became masters of the destinies of the country, turning their charge over later to the British crown, form a striking chapter of modern history. For near nine hundred years India has been the prey of foreign conquerors and oppressors. The English are merely the last, and by far the best, of their long series.

They found in this immense and highly civilized country a host of varying languages, dialects of more than one great family, with abundant literatures. They also found one language, the Sanskrit, reputed of immemorial antiquity, held sacred by the real Hindu every-



SKETCH-MAP OF INDIA.

This sketch-map shows (shaded) the part of the peninsula still possessed by the Dravidian dialects, after some four thousand years of encroachment on the part of the Sanskrit and its descendants. The entrance of the Aryans was on the extreme north-west, through the valley of the Cabul river. The region probably occupied by them in the early Vedic period is distinguished by being dotted.

where, read by the educated, and even spoken and written by the leading class, the priestly caste of the Brahmans. Precisely so might the Mongols, had they completely ravaged Europe in the Middle Ages, have reported to their countrymen concerning the diverse tongues and literatures of that region, and the Latin as common dialect of the learned, especially of the Romish hierarchy: the analogy is a close and instructive one. This was a sufficiently notable condition of things; but the interest of the world was greatly heightened when it was discovered that this learned and sacred idiom of India, the Sanskrit, is related with nearly all the languages now spoken in Europe, and with the ancient ones that we most value (as Greek and Latin), and that it is in many respects entitled to the leading place among them; that it casts more light than any other upon their common history and origin. In the excitement of such a discovery, many scholars lost their heads, and extolled the Sanskrit and its literature far beyond their deserts, even holding that this was the original tongue of our division of mankind, and the source of literary culture for the rest of the world; and the echoes of these errors may be heard dimly reverberating here and there among the nooks and corners of literature even of our own day. But — thanks in no small measure to what the Sanskrit itself has taught us — such matters are much better understood now. Every language is all the time changing; and hence we could never find the original Indo-European tongue except in documents coming down from the very period of Indo-European unity; and that lies perhaps thousands of years back of the time of the earliest Sanskrit. We have, too, no reason to believe that any culture was carried from India to nations beyond its borders until the missionary period of Buddhism, not far from the Christian era. But the study of Sanskrit, chiefly as the mainstay of Indo-European comparative philology and of the general science of language, has become an integral part of the system of modern education, a department of classical learning standing along with Latin and Greek, and coming next them in practical importance.

All this is a necessary introduction to an understanding of the value of the Veda. We need to note what are the relations to us of the people to whom it belonged, and of the language in which it is written.

The opening of India, as we see, gave us the ancient Sanskrit language as an instrument of linguistic research, and laid before us the immense Sanskrit literature, as a part of the archives of our division of the human race, to be studied and comprehended. A task, this, of no small difficulty; and the more, since the element of history is wanting in the literature. The Hindu is great in constructing systems of absolute truth, but he despises a record of facts; he has a scheme of astronomical cycles reaching back almost into infinity, and can tell precisely how many days ago the creation of the universe was completed;* but he cannot give the real, prosaic date of any event, civil or literary, back of our Middle Ages. We are left in the main to work out by internal evidence the order of succession of the parts of this literature, and then, with help of the chance notices of foreign visitors, to determine what we can as to their absolute date; and the problem is yet far enough from being solved. At what time were composed those two tremendous epics, the Râmâyana and Mahâbhârata, in comparison with which the Iliad or the Odyssey is but a ballad? No one can tell; at any rate, a good while ago. How old are the laws of Manu, from which certain people stoutly maintain that Moses must have derived his legislation for the Hebrews? That is equally unknown. Of the latest and best authorities, some set them a little before Christ, others a little after. And the period of the leading dramatic poet, the author of Çakuntalâ, has been reduced from 100 B. C., as claimed by early students of India, to 5–600 A. D.

But it is at any rate possible in this literature, as in every other, to lay out in a broad and general way the history of growth, divide it into successive periods, and determine what is oldest in it. Everywhere throughout it the Veda is acknowledged as its beginning, is regarded as a revelation on whose authority everything else reposes. The sacred literature of Christianity does not point any more clearly to the Bible as its foundation than the sacred literature of Brahmanism to the Veda. It was a considerable time, however, before European research had cleared the way for dealing directly with the Hindu revelation. The name Veda to the Hindu signifies a very extensive and heterogeneous mass of writings, covering a space of time and of growth like that from Moses to Christ; and the later parts of it are those which the modern Hindu best understands and most values, as being nearest to his own age and thought. Manuscripts of its older parts were comparatively rare, and less freely furnished to the curiosity of the stranger; yet they gradually gathered in European hands, and in 1805, some thirty years after the opening of Indian literature to the knowledge of the world, the illustrious English scholar Colebrooke, in an essay since become famous, was able to give a comprehensive and

* Namely, if any one cares to know, 714,404,118,434 days before January 1, 1887.

fairly correct survey of the whole vast field — without, however, at all fully comprehending the relation of its parts, or realizing the supreme importance of some among them. Yet a generation passed before anything further of consequence was done; then the work fell into the hands of the great German scholars whose names will be always associated with it — Rosen, Roth, Benfey, Weber, Aufrecht, Müller — and a new era was inaugurated, in the study of Indian antiquity, and in that of the antiquities and religion of the whole Indo-European race.

As a matter of course, the Hindus have all sorts of absurd stories to tell about their sacred literature. That it is of divine origin, revealed from all eternity, miraculously preserved and re-revealed at each new destruction and re-creation of the universe, "goes without saying"; few Oriental peoples have failed to claim as much as that for their Scriptures. Then they tell of a certain holy *rishi* or sage named Vyâsa, by whom the mass was collected and put in order. *Vyâsa* means "arranger"; so it is as if people were to hold that a saint named Editor brought into shape the two Testaments and the Fathers for the after use of the Christian church. But the Hindus have done their full share by handing down to us, with a reverential and painstaking care that has not its equal anywhere else in the history of literature, their sacred books, not at all comprehending their historical relations, and only in part understanding their contents: ours is the task to bring true order and intelligence into the chaos.

We find the whole body of inspired writings divided into four parts, each of which is called a Veda: the Rig-Veda, Sâma-Veda, Yajur-Veda, and Atharva-Veda. Each division has its schools of more special votaries, by whom it is handed down; each has its assortment of works, in prose and verse, devotional, ceremonial, expository, and theosophic. But at the head of each stands a collection of sacred utterances, chiefly poetic, which we have no difficulty in recognizing as their oldest part, the nucleus about which everything else has gradually gathered; all the rest presupposes these, as plainly as the Talmud the Old Testament, or the writings of the Fathers the New. They are in a language in many respects peculiar and evidently older, a more primitive dialect of the primitive Sanskrit. Among these four collections, the superior interest of one is seen on the briefest examination; it is the Rig-Veda, an immense body of hymns to the gods, of sacred lyrics, with which the remote ancestors of the present Hindus praised the divinities in whom they believed, accompanied their sacrifices, and besought blessings. We cannot compare them with our hymns, because these imply so much that is earlier, out of which they have proceeded; the Vedic songs are more like the Psalms of David. There are more than a thousand of these songs, and they contain over ten thousand two-line stanzas — a body of text about equal to the two Homeric poems taken together, or twice as much as the great German epic of the Nibelungen. The collection is an orderly one, arranged in ten books, chiefly according to a tradition of authorship that appears to be genuine; hymns of the same author, or clan, or school of authors are put together. But the last book is a kind of appendix to the rest, containing in part material of a peculiar character, later, more superstitious, and with some miscellanies of quite exceptional interest. Inside the divisions, the hymns are arranged chiefly in the order of the divinities addressed. The two gods most often worshiped — their praises together fill almost the majority of hymns — are Agni and Indra: Agni (Lat. *ignis*), the fire, the medium of sacrifice, the divinity on earth, in bodily presence before the eyes of his worshipers, the messenger between earth and heaven, who bears the oblations aloft to the other gods, or about whose flame the gods gather to receive their share of the offering; and Indra, the Thunderer, god of the storm, who drives his noisy chariot across the sky, and hurls his missile lightning at the demons that are keeping the refreshing and fertilizing waters imprisoned in the hollow of the clouds. Hymns to Agni, then, come first; those to Indra follow; and after them, those to other gods. As specimens, accordingly, of the general content of the Rig-Veda, we cannot do better than to take first a hymn to each of these two divinities. Such are given below, in a version that is very literal, neither adding nor omitting anything, and in meters closely imitated after the original.

The hymn to Agni, an ordinary and undistinguished one, is the first of the whole collection; its stanzas are composed each of three eight-syllabled sections, with iambic cadence: in all the Vedic meters, the first part of each section is of very free construction as regards quantity.

TO AGNI — Rig-Veda I. 1.

1. Agni I praise, the household priest,
 the heavenly lord of sacrifice,
The offerer most bounteous.

2. Agni by bards of olden time
 and bards of our day should be praised;
He shall bring hither all the gods.

3. By Agni treasure may we win,
 and welfare, too, from day to day,
In honor rich and num'rous sons.

4. Agni! what sacred off'ring thou
   dost shield from harm on every side,
That surely cometh to the gods.

5. May Agni, priest, with insight filled,
   faithful, of fame most glorious,
Come hither with the other gods.

6. What favor on thy worshiper,
   Agni, thou willest to bestow,
That faileth not, O Angiras!

7. Unto thee, Agni, day by day,
   at morn and eve, with worship we
Approach and our obeisance bring.

8. Presiding o'er the sacrifice,
   the shining guardian of the right,
Increasing in thine own abode.

9. As father to his son do thou,
   Agni, be gracious unto us;
And for our welfare cleave to us.

The selected hymn to Indra is a more than usually vigorous one, and the jealousy of a rival worshiper intimated in the concluding verse is rather interestingly naïve. The verse-sections are of twelve syllables, also with iambic cadence.

To INDRA — Rig-Veda X. 38.

1. To us, O Indra, in this conflict glorious,
   The toilful din of war, be helpful, that we win;
Where in the foray, mid bold warriors ring-adorned,
   The arrows fly hither and thither in the strife.

2. And open to us, Indra, in our own abode,
   Wealth rich in food, flowing with kine, and full of fame.
Be we thine allies when thou conqu'rest, mighty one!
   Just what we wish do thou, our friend, perform for us.

3. The godless man, of Aryan or of barb'rous race,
   O much praised Indra, that is plotting war with us —
Thy foes shall be easy for us to overcome;
   Along with thee may we subdue them in the fight.

4. Him who must be by handful or by host invoked,
   Him who makes room when the ranks close in deadly strife,
That famous hero, Indra, who in battle wins,
   Will we to-day bring for our succor hitherward.

5. Sure I have heard them call thee, Indra, full of might,
   And never yielding, urging on the faint, thou bull!
Now rid thyself of Kutsa, hither come to us!
   Should one like thee sit as if fast bound by the loins?

A further example of the staple invocations to the gods is the following to the Dawn. To this goddess are addressed a number of hymns, some of which are among the finest and most poetical in the Veda (the best of them are too long to give here). The meter of the hymn is a double stanza, made up of eight-syllabled and twelve-syllabled sections.

TO THE DAWN — Rig-Veda VII. 81.

1. We gaze upon her as she comes,
   the shining daughter of the sky;
The mighty darkness she uncovers, that we see;
   And light she makes, the pleasant one.

2. Along with her, the sun is pouring down his rays,
   rising, the planet glorious;
At thy forth-shining, beauteous Dawn, and at the sun's,
   May we enjoy whate'er is ours.

3. To greet thee, daughter of the sky,
   have we, O Dawn, awaked betimes;
Who bringest full and longed-for pleasure, lovely one,
   As treasure for the worshiper.

4. Who shining, great and lovely one, with lib'ral rays
   makest the sky appear to sight —
Of thee thus sharers in the treasure would we be;
   Be thou our mother, we thy sons.

5. Bring us that wonderful success,
   O Dawn, that is most famed abroad;
What food for men thou hast, O daughter of the sky,
   That give to us, that we enjoy.

6. Undying fame and welfare give the offerers;
   to us, possessions rich in kine;
Inciter of the gen'rous, full of pleasantness,
   The Dawn shall gleam away our foes.

The next hymn to be quoted is of a very different character. It is one of those (perhaps a dozen in number in the Veda) that show the earliest signs of a dramatic faculty in the Hindu mind, and give no uncertain promise of that dramatic literature which later becomes one of its most notable products. There is a historical legend that the saint Viçvâmitra, as chief priest of the Bharatas, assured the success of a warlike expedition on the part of the latter, by propitiating with his songs and praises two of the great branches of the Indus, the modern Beas and Sutlej, near their junction, and thus securing for his friends a safe and speedy passage. The poet conceives the incident in the form of a dialogue between the saint and the two rivers. The meter is in eleven-syllabled sections, with trochaic cadence — the favorite Rig-Veda stanza.

VIÇVÂMITRA AND THE RIVERS — Rig-Veda III. 33.

VIÇVÂMITRA.

1. Eager, from out the bosom of the mountains,
   A pair of coursers like, let loose and running,
Like two bright mother-kine their offspring fondling,
   Vipâç and Çutudrî haste with their waters.

2. By Indra sent, longing for rapid movement,
   Like chariot wheels ye roll toward the ocean;
And piling, as ye meet, your waves together,
   Each one of you the other joins, ye bright ones.

3. I've come to this most mother-like of rivers;
   We stand beside the broad, auspicious Vipâç;
Like mother-kine fondling their calves together,
   Unto a common home they're moving onward.

THE RIVERS.

4. Thus move we onward, swelling with our waters,
 To find a home that's by the gods appointed;
Our headlong forward rush no man can hinder;
 What seeks the sage, calling upon us rivers?

VIÇVÂMITRA.

5. Rest, sacred ones, a moment in your courses,
 And list the pleasant words that I address you!
I, son of Kuçika, your favor seeking,
 Have called upon your stream in deep devotion.

THE RIVERS.

6. Indra dug out our bed, the lightning-bearer;
 Vritra he slew, the hind'rer of the rivers;
God Savitar, of beauteous hands, us guided;
 Impelled by him we move along so broadly.

VIÇVÂMITRA.

7. Praised be for evermore that deed heroic—
 Indra's achievement, that he crushed the dragon;
He with his thunderbolt smote the obstructers;
 And forth, an exit seeking, gushed the waters.

THE RIVERS.

8. Do not forget this praise of thine, O singer!
 Let thy words echo on to after ages!
And compliment us, poet, in thy verses;
 Degrade us not, hail to thee, mongst the nations.

VIÇVÂMITRA.

9. Now listen to the poet's words, ye sisters!
 He comes from far, with chariot and with wagon;
Bow down yourselves! be easy to pass over!
 And with your waves, O streams, touch not our axles!

THE RIVERS.

10. Unto thy words, O poet, will we listen;
 Thou com'st from far with chariot and with wagon;
I'll bow to thee, ev'n as a buxom woman;
 As maid to lover, I'll be gracious to thee.

VIÇVÂMITRA.

11. When once the Bharatas have passed across thee,
 The raiding troop, sent forth and helped by Indra,
Then shall begin again thine onward torrent;
 I crave the favor of the sacred rivers.

12. The raiding Bharatas have all gone over;
 The sage hath won the favor of the rivers.
Now swell aloft your fertilizing waters!
 Make all your courses full; flow on with swiftness!

The only hymn which will be further given here is yet more exceptional in its character; in fact, there is nothing else like it in the collection: it is rather in the tone and spirit of the Upanishads than of the Veda. Its author sets aside the old simple faith of his race, rejects the gods as after all but a part of the existent order of things, and questions his own intuitions as to how the universe came into being; with not more than the usual success. The hymn must be a comparatively late one; it has been oftener translated than almost any other, being a special favorite with those who have a predilection for the mode of interrogating nature which it illustrates. The measure is as in the preceding hymn.

COSMOGONIC HYMN — Rig-Veda X. 129.

1. Th' existent was not, nor the non-existent,
 Nor space of air, nor firmament beyond it.
What covered? where? and under whose protection?
 What were the ocean's fathomless abysses?

2. Not death, nor what is deathless, then existed;
 Between the night and day was no distinction;
Breathed, without wind, by inner power, It only;
 Other than it was nothing else in being.

3. At first was darkness, hidden all by darkness;
 This universe an undistinguished ocean;
The void that with the emptiness was covered,
 That alone came to life by might of fervor.

4. In the beginning came desire upon it,
 Which was of mind the earliest seed. The sages,
Seeking it, found within the heart, by wisdom,
 The bond of being in the non-existent.

5. And crosswise was the ray of them extended;
 Was it, forsooth, below? or was it upward?
Impregnators and greatnesses existed;
 Below, oblation; offering beyond it.

6. Who truly knoweth? who can here proclaim it?
 Whence hither born, whence cometh this creation?
Hitherward are the gods from its creating;
 Who knoweth, then, from whence it came to being?

7. This creation — from whence it came to being,
 Whether it made itself, or whether not —
Who is its overseer in highest heaven,
 He surely knoweth: or if he does not know?

The history of the great collection thus instanced we are left to find out by inference from its character. In a general way, it seems clear enough. These sacred songs are a product of the joint devotional and poetic feeling of a certain early period in the history of India; after an interval of oral tradition at large among the people, they were assembled and arranged by pious hands, at what time and under what circumstances we can only conjecture, and were committed in their completeness and order to the further care of tradition — whether already with the help of writing is an obscure and disputed point. It was plainly a historical collection, made for the due preservation of a valued treasure; not a liturgical one, for use in the ceremonial of the sacrifice; the motives that led to it were literary rather than priestly. This distinction will be made clearer by noticing the character of some of the other Vedas. The Sâma-Veda consists of a limited number (less than one thousand six hundred) of selected stanzas, single or in (usually) triplets, arranged for chanting at the Soma-sacrifices, at which the

preparation and enjoyment of an intoxicating drink called *soma* was the principal feature — like a set of selections made from our own Scriptures for similar musical use in the services of the church. There are but few verses in the Sâma-Veda which do not also appear, in their proper connection, among the hymns of the Rig-Veda. The Yajur-Veda, again, is still more obviously liturgical; it is simply a record of whatever is uttered by the chief class of priests in connection with the ceremonies of the various sacrifices, set down in its order as uttered; hence made up of single words, phrases, paragraphs, in prose; and single verses, extracts, and whole hymns, in verse; disjointed and in great measure wholly unintelligible till we know the ceremonial act which they were intended to accompany. It will illustrate this, and at the same time show the immense and closely defined detail into which the sacrificial ceremony was carried at the period of the Yajur-Veda, if we notice its first sentences and their use.

An important material of offering in ancient India was milk, or the various products of milk, especially clarified butter. He that has a sacrifice in prospect, then, must provide for it by milking cows, expressly for the purpose. Accordingly he is directed to go out and cut a switch from a tree of a certain prescribed kind, saying to it, "Thee for food, thee for strength." With this switch he is to drive away the calves from his milch cows, with the words, "Winds are ye," and then to address to the cows themselves this verse:

"Fill up, ye sacred ones, the draught for Indra,
  Rich in increase, safe against harm and trouble;
Let no thief master you, and no ill-wisher;
  Stay fast by this your owner, and be num'rous."

Next he puts the switch away in hiding, and enjoins upon it, as a sacred weapon, "Protect thou the cattle of the sacrificer!" And what he has thus said, in mingled prose and verse, to the switch, the calves, and their mothers, constitutes the first paragraph of the Yajur-Veda. There are, as might be expected, varying versions of this Veda, according to the different usages in the ceremonial of different localities and priestly schools; and half a dozen such versions, with their attendant literatures, have come down to us.

Now a verse put in order for chanting at the Soma-sacrifice is called a *sâman;* and a verse or other utterance used by the officiating priest at a sacrifice is called a *yajus;* hence the texts in which those are respectively gathered are called Sâma-Veda and Yajur-Veda, and they are liturgical collections; while a verse pure and simple is styled a *ric*, and the comprehensive and orderly collection in which these verses are assembled, without reference to their sacrificial use, is the Rig-Veda — a name that is fully intelligible only in its antithesis to the other two. It is clear, then, why the Rig-Veda is of an importance to us that throws the others quite into the shade; it offers in mass and in order what they give in part and in fragments. Not all the verses, to be sure, of the other two are found also in the Rig-Veda; nor are the versions of the same verse always alike in all the three. Hence we infer with confidence that the Rig-Veda was not collected first and the others extracted from it, but that all alike proceeded from a common stock of traditionary material; the two made for a practical purpose, the other for one that may in comparison be called a literary purpose. The fourth Veda, the Atharvan, is a historical collection, like the Rig-Veda; it is about two-thirds as extensive, and contains only in small part corresponding material, and that akin especially with the tenth or supplementary book of the other: one more selection out of the traditionary material, but composed of hymns of later date and lower character, more popular and superstitious.

It is not worth while to attempt to describe in detail the means by which this great mass of literature has been handed down to our time. But it has been mainly by living tradition, from the mouth of the teacher to the ear of the scholar. The schools of the Brahman priesthood, though long decadent, are not yet extinct. There is not one of the Vedic texts which has not still in India its personal representatives, men who, without ever having seen a manuscript of it, can repeat it from beginning to end, with all its tones and accents, and not losing a syllable, with the mechanical accuracy of the impressed foil of a phonograph — sometimes also with an intelligence not much greater. The old books are full of prescriptions as to the schooling of the young Brahman, by which he in his turn is made a link in the never-ending chain of personal tradition. To write the Veda, or to acquire it otherwise than by reverent listening to the living teacher, is everywhere denounced as sacrilege. There are, nevertheless, manuscripts, and we who cannot spend a dozen years of memorizing at the feet of a Hindu sage are obliged to depend upon them; but where in the line of tradition written record comes in, or what part it has played in the work, we cannot tell: it is utterly ignored in theory. There are no manuscripts in India that compare for antiquity with our oldest classical and biblical codices; the hot, damp climate and the all-devouring insects prevent that; and Hindu scribes are even more ignorant and careless than those of other na-

tions, and quite deficient in reverence for the integrity of a text or the individuality of an author; so that, if written record and personal memory did not supplement one another, our chance for receiving a faithful version of those old hymns would have been of the smallest. As things are, however, the accuracy of their transmission is unparaleled; we have the best reason to believe that of the leading texts not a word has been lost nor a syllable changed since some time before the Christian era, at any rate. The ingenuity of the means adopted, and their successful result, constitute one of the marvels of universal literary history. Circumstances have strangely worked together to bring it about that this least historical of all peoples has saved the historical records of its earliest period with a fullness and accuracy unrivaled even in annal-loving China or all-preserving Egypt. It is to the belief in their absolute verbal inspiration, and their efficacy, when rightly applied, as the means of salvation, and then to their custody by a priestly caste, the Brahmans, whose importance depended on their possession and use, that their transmission to us is due.

We must not think of the Veda as occupying for the Hindu a place at all analogous with that taken by the Bible in a Protestant community — as familiarly known, in whole or by extracts, to the mass of believers in its sanctity; as used to reveal to them the dealings of the gods with men; as a scripture to be resorted to when enlightenment of conscience was sought and expansion of religious sentiment yearned after. The Veda has long had its value in India in connection with the ceremonies of sacrifice, which are inefficacious without it. An illustration has already been given of the infinite and absurd detail into which, in the hands of the Brahman priests, the Vedic ceremonial was carried: a detail contrasting strangely with the simplicity of worship of the original hymn-makers. While the hymns have been saved, and are still intoned in the Brahman schools in the style of two or three thousand years ago, and while the religious services they accompany are faithful copies from the same period, a great revolution in real belief, in the outward circumstances of the people and in the organization of their society, has taken place. And it is this great cleft between later Hindu faiths and institutions and those reflected in the Vedic hymns that gives the latter their supreme interest. They seem to belong as much to our own ancestors as to those of the modern inhabitant of India. This is the point that we have especially to dwell upon.

Our ideal Hindu, when we call up his image before our mind's eye, is a member of a strictly defined caste, dreading pollution from even the shadow of a man of lower caste falling on him. We see him strolling along the banks of the holy Ganges, or perhaps riding there upon an equally contemplative elephant, meditating on the ineffable perfections of Brahma and the nothingness of all things sublunary; contemning the bonds of finite and personal existence that oppress him, dreading the round of successive births, from man to animal and back again, to which he regards himself as condemned, and devising how by self-inflicted torments or by the attainment of better insight he can escape this condemnation, cast off his individuality, and merge himself like a drop in the ocean of the universal World-soul. But the Hindu of the Veda is not in the least like this languishing and hair-splitting dreamer. He is instead an immigrant, laying about him lustily amid the difficulties of a new country, and trying to win a comfortable subsistence in it. He is just across the threshold of India, in the country of the Indus and its tributaries (in the map given above, this region is pointed out by being dotted); these are his holy rivers; the Ganges he hardly knows as yet; it is mentioned only once in the Rig-Veda, being called upon to join with other rivers in doing homage to the great Indus. The elephant he has seen; he calls it "the beast with a hand," and celebrates its devastating might, which he has not thought of subduing to his own service. He is a member of a homogeneous community, and has had no special duties assigned him in any caste-division of labor. He is a cultivator, and does, with the help of stout sons and retainers, his own plowing and reaping; but he is also a man of war, and does his own fighting; and he can offer his own praise and worship to his gods, without the help of a priest. A god Brahma is wholly unknown to him, and Çiva no less; and Vishnu is merely one of the names under which he pays his adoration to the sun. The word *brahman*, the cardinal one in both the religious and the civil development of later India, is indeed Vedic; but it simply means on the one hand "worship, an act of worship," and on the other hand (with a difference of accent and gender) "one who pays worship, a worshiper." The gods of the Veda are the personified powers of Nature; beings to whom — with that anthropomorphism which is the informing principle of all primitive religions, and cannot be cast out even from the latest, so deep-wrought is it in the very structure of the human mind — the ancient Hindu attributed the acts and effects which he saw in the world about him. They are the shining sun, the radiant dawn, the encompassing heaven, the fruitful earth, the storm-blasts and gentle breezes, the wielder of the thunderbolt, and

the devouring yet kindly fire,—these and their like. To them (as we have seen in the examples given) he addresses his praises, partly in simple admiration of their greatness, but chiefly because he would fain win their favor and aid in his struggle for existence. Instead of the morbid introspection and pessimism of his successors, he is animated by a healthy and vigorous worldly-mindedness; he loves life and the good things of life; he prays for length of days, from exemption from all disease save old age—"let me live a hundred autumns" is the constant burden of his supplication; he prays for numerous sons, for countless flocks and herds, for abundant food, for wide domains, for superiority over his fellows; he prays for victory in his strife with the aboriginal tribes whom he is trying to rob of their inheritance in the land—the black-skinned godless races, the *çûdras*, whom later we find taken into his social system as the fourth and lowest or menial caste; for victory, also, in his contention with his fellow-Aryans, in his plundering raids after cattle, the special sign of wealth. About what shall happen to him after death, he thinks and says little; but that little is enough to show what his faith is. He does not believe that life ends with the death of the body; still less has he the remotest notion of an existence renewed by further births, either as human being or as lower animal; no preparatory hint, even, of the doctrine of transmigration is to be found in the Veda. He holds that the departed will be assembled again, in a world beyond the grave, under the dominion of the divinely born progenitor of the race, to be forever happy there with him; and he piously offers to his ancestors a monthly oblation, which he thinks will accrue to their benefit in that other world.

Such are the salient traits of the Vedic Hindu; and it is at once seen what a marked contrast he presents to the Hindu of the later period, what an air of comparative freshness and primitiveness he wears. It can easily be imagined, too, with what astonished interest the discovery was made. This, then, was what the Vedas after all contained: not treasures of primeval wisdom, not profound speculations as to the nature and relations of divinity and humanity, not reconciliations of fate and free will, or solutions of the problem of evil, but the lyric records of a congeries of free tribes, fighting, winning property, enjoying life, and calling on their gods to help them in it all! Yet out of this state of things have grown by a process of natural development under the guidance of circumstances (not by any influence from without) all the conditions of more modern India. The steps of transition are to be seen in part in the later portions of the Vedic literature that have attached themselves to the hymns; but they are far less completely depicted than is the Vedic period itself. We see there the priestly class consolidating itself into a hereditary Brahmanic caste, grasping all power in sacred things and the leading influence in things secular, working the sacrifice out into a ceremonial of inane intricacy, and at the same time beginning those speculations which became later the systems of theosophy and philosophy, and by degrees shoved the ceremonial aside into a secondary position, apart from the real religious and intellectual life even of the learned. The interminable disquisition of the Brâhmanas (the second class of Vedic texts) leads over to the Sûtras or rules of sacrifice, the Law-books, or rules of conduct in life, and the Upanishads, or treatises of speculative theosophy. These are the chief lines of connection between the secondary Vedic literature and the later or classical Sanskrit literature; but the real spirit of the earliest Veda is alike wanting in both divisions.

Herein lies a part of the value of the Veda. Everywhere in the world the authentic materials of ancient history are so lamentably scanty! We know, except by (perhaps mistaken) inference, so little of the primitive conditions lying behind the great civilizations that the world has produced! Races in general are what they always have been, or else (like our own) they have gotten a civilization at second or third or fourth hand, mere continuers and perhaps improvers of a culture elsewhere developed; and of the communities that have generated civilizations, hardly any let us see its beginnings. The Egyptians, oldest of all, are at the furthest limit of their traceable history already a made community, their arts and knowledge virtually the same as through after ages. The Chinese, at the dawn of their national life (2000 B. C. or earlier), are an empire, and the same odd, sensible, matter-of-fact, wise, ingenious, industrious, ceremonious, stiff people that they have ever since been. It is only in India that we can trace in contemporary documents not a little of the growth of great empires, highly specialized institutions, great literatures, systems of religious belief that have affected half the population of the globe, out of the conditions of a band of pastoral immigrants into a new country. That the institutions of earliest India as seen in the Veda should have developed into those of the India of ordinary history is a fact that has profoundly impressed all investigations into the history of mankind; and it involves problems which will continue to furnish occupation for generations of special scholars.

What period in actual chronologic time is represented by the Vedic hymns is a question

of considerable, though after all only of secondary, interest; and it cannot be answered otherwise than in a rudely approximative way. This is nothing unusual. There are centuries of possibilities involved, for example, in the question as to the age of the poems of Homer —much more, of the Zoroastrian writings. Even of the books of the Bible, which we have long comfortably thought datable almost to a year, the age, and the order of succession in age, have now become subjects of the liveliest controversy; and in India, where the historic sense has always been conspicuously wanting, the case could not but be the worst of all. We have only the most general grounds to build our conclusions upon. Let us briefly review the more important of them. There is in the first place the language. Here the most notable fixed datum from which we have to reason back is the age of certain Buddhist inscriptions found in various parts of India, the work of one pious monarch, who chose this way to inculcate the teachings of the religion he professed. It happens by great good fortune that the period of this monarch is pretty precisely known, by information from western kingdoms with which India came in contact; it was about 250 B. C. But the inscriptions are not Sanskrit; they are in a later dialect, related to Sanskrit much as Italian is related to Latin. Hence we know that Sanskrit was extinct as a vernacular at least three centuries before our era. And the language of the Veda is an older and more primitive dialect, whose period must have long preceded that protracted period during which the Sanskrit itself held sway. More distinct are the yet more external historical circumstances. When Alexander attacked the western border of the country, its interior, the basin of the Ganges, was the seat of great kingdoms; and in his battles with Darius he had been opposed by Indian elephants trained to do warlike service; while, as has been already pointed out, the Vedic Hindus kept their herds in the valley of the Indus and its tributaries, and knew the elephant only as a formidable wild beast. Again, Buddhism is believed to have originated in the fifth century B. C. (the date being liable to its own degree of uncertainty); but Buddhism involved a reaction against the excessive burdens of sacrificial ceremony and of caste which resulted from the complete development of Brahmanic religion and polity out of the early freedom of the Veda; and it implies as its necessary basis the universal belief in transmigration, all intimation of which is so wanting in the Veda that the student of India can hardly see how it arose and where it came in. Then there is the succession of the Vedic writings themselves, with the time necessarily assumable for the development of each class; but this kind of evidence is even more indefinite than the rest. Astronomy has been sometimes appealed to, but with an entire absence of valuable result. The probable conclusion from all this is, that the epoch of the Veda must be fixed at considerably more than a thousand years before Christ; indeed, it does not seem as if much less than two thousand would satisfy the conditions of the problem: more than this no moderate scholar would at present claim. It is, of course, not altogether impossible that future researches may bring us to a date somewhat less indefinite.

But the time thus provisionally reached is a whole thousand years older than the most ancient literature found elsewhere among the races of our kindred: namely, the Greek epics of Homer. This is one of the leading claims of the Veda to our attention; it contains by far the oldest records of the thought and speech of our division of mankind; coming, too, from that lyric period which has always been assumed to have preceded the epic, but is nowhere else demonstrated by examples. It may be added that in the Brâhmanas, the extensive expository texts next following the hymns, we have the earliest specimens of Indo-European prose; and they have been made to illustrate interestingly the laws of that primitive homely talk out of which grew in after times the graceful or stately periodic style of a Plato or a Cicero. Along with antiquity of the records, too, goes antiquity of the tongue in which they are written. As the age and primitiveness of the Sanskrit give it the first rank in all inquiries into the earliest history of our languages, so the Vedic dialect of the Sanskrit has something of the same superiority over the classical, as an aid to historic philology.

More conspicuous, however, at the present time, and, if possible, even of a wider interest, is the contribution made by the Veda to the comparative history of Indo-European institutions, and especially of religious institutions, of beliefs and myths and modes of worship. We have seen how un-Indian the Veda is in all these respects; and we find it to be in the same degree Indo-European. The *rationale* of this is simple, and statable in brief form. Every community of mankind, of whatever degree of culture, has its philosophy of the universe, its own view, the outcome of experience and unconscious deduction from observation, of how things are carried on in the world. This may be very scanty, very indefinite, very naïve, or even worse than that; but it is always there; and each new generation learns and holds the views of its predecessor, adding

to them, for the worse or for the better, out of its own experience and insight. The religions of the world in general are outgrowths of these philosophies, propitiatory praise and worship and offering and prayer addressed to those extra-human (for one can hardly call them always superhuman) beings who are believed to direct with unseen hands the course of Nature, determining the welfare or ill-fare of men by means that men cannot wield. There is no such thing as a race without some kind of a philosophy and a religion. Now if we find in language (which is itself but another institution, formed and handed down in the same way) evidence that the ancestors of certain races once lived together as a single community, speaking a common dialect, we know that they must have had also a common faith and worship. It follows, then, that the ancestors of all those races in Europe and Asia which we call Indo-European once had the same myths, and worshiped the same gods by the same rites. And just as we look into and compare their dialects, ancient and modern, and try to reconstruct the original speech out of which they all sprang, so we strive, by a comparison of their oldest traceable beliefs, to find what was the original form of these in the day of their unity. The search is a difficult one, and full of risks of error; for doctrines are elusive things as compared even with words, much harder to deal with objectively and without perversion; and also because religions are more mutable institutions than languages, more liable to mixtures and revolutions and transfers from one race to another. The conversion of Vedic Hinduism to the later Brahmanism wiped out or buried beyond recovery all that was primitive in Indian beliefs; and on Iranian ground, perhaps not much later than the Vedic period, the reformation of Zoroaster swept away the old Indo-European polytheism, and put an almost pure monotheism in its place. There is, it may be remarked, no known monotheism that has not thus grown out of a preceding polytheism; nor is it in sound theory conceivable that there should be one not having such a predecessor and foundation. But no wholesale and effacing change had passed upon the creed of our division of mankind in its gradual transition to that of the Vedic Hindus; in the latter there is more that is in common with the fundamental features of earliest Greek and Roman and Germanic faiths than with its own successor in India. Hence, precisely as the Vedic language, used as additional and leading term in the comparison, casts light on the origin and relations of Greek and Latin and German, so the Vedic divinities, the Vedic myths, the Vedic religious practices, cast invaluable light upon all the religions which preceded the introduction of Christianity into Europe. As the study of Sanskrit effectively inaugurated the science of comparative philology, so the study of Vedism inaugurated the science (if we may call it so) of the world's religions.

To show in any satisfactory manner by examples how this is so would require a whole article to itself. There has been and is in the discussion of the subject (as always in such cases) a plenty of exaggeration, of groundless identification, overweening inference, airy speculation, gratuitous system-making; but the main fact stands fast, that if we would understand the language and the religion of our own earliest traceable ancestors, we must study the Hindu Veda. As a historical document, spreading light amid the darkness of antiquity, it stands well-nigh unrivaled.

This, then, is the position of the Veda, and these are its claims to attention from us. We are not called upon to admire it for its contributions directly to the stores of human thought, but rather to the material for us to think upon; nor is it to be ranked as a literary production among the masterpieces of the race, to be dwelt upon and enjoyed with that sort of admiration that we pay, for example, to the Iliad. The Veda is rather a book for scholars to dig in. There are things in it that are absolutely fine; but they need much selecting, and setting in the proper light, and explaining. And the great mass is very tedious. The endless repetition of the commonplaces of praise to the gods palls upon one. It takes more imagination and genius than belonged to that sturdy race of fighters and singers to spread the adoration of Agni, for example, through some hundreds of hymns and not make it seem very thin. Add to this that hymn-making appears to have become the fashion in that period, and that there is in the Rig-Veda (much less in the Atharvan) a considerable amount of what may fairly be styled machine-poetry, industriously pieced together out of stock epithets and phrases, or running off into labored obscurity and artificial conceits. No complete version of the Veda will ever become an accepted book in our general libraries; but a selection of a hundred hymns or two, with fit comment, might not fail to find an interested public.

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