



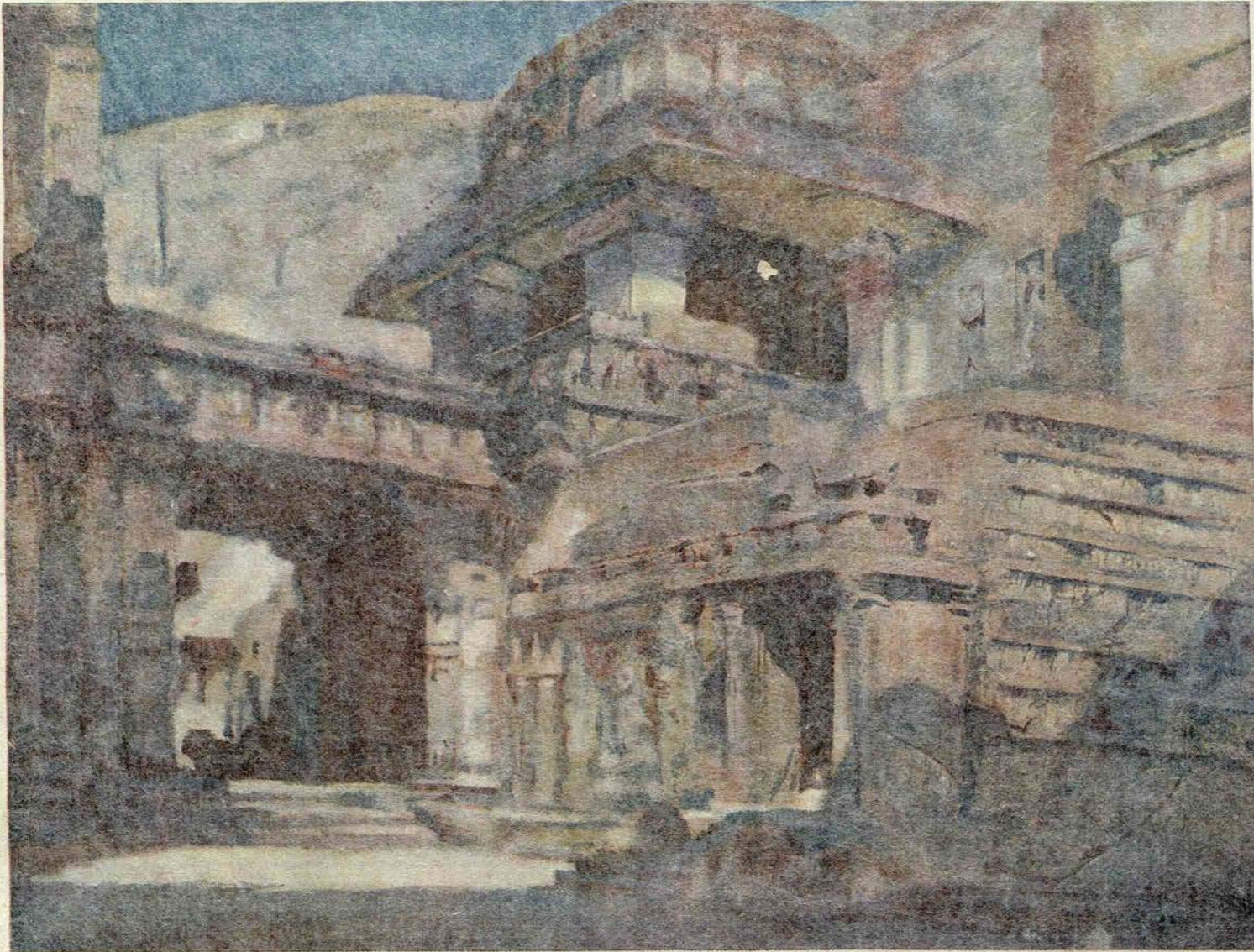
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THE
CYCLOPEDIA OF INDIA.



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THE
CYCLOPEDIA OF INDIA

Biographical — Historical — Administrative —
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Vol. I

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FOREWORD.

IN ISSUING the first volume of the "CYCLOPEDIA OF INDIA," the Publishers feel that a word of explanation is necessary to define the scope of the work.

This, in the main, is frankly Biographical—for while a number of articles have been contributed by specialists, dealing with the history, the government, the institutions, the trade and commerce of India, it is not practicable, even if it were useful, for a private publication to endeavour to rival the completeness of the series of papers on these subjects which will appear in the many volumes of the new edition of the Imperial Gazetteer of India.

Biography again has been interpreted in its most liberal sense, and the volumes will include the record of the firms and institutions which play so large a part in the trading life of the Indian Empire.

In the first section, the present volume includes the first part of a History of India from the pen of a well-known authority on the subject, and a valuable essay on the history and organization of the Army in India by a Staff Officer, which is of special interest at a time when bold schemes of reform are being carried through. The work and growth of the great technical departments of the Telegraphs, and the Forest Service, are dealt with by officers of special experience and knowledge, while the Arts and Architecture of India have also been sympathetically treated. The great part which has been played by trading institutions in the development of India, is indicated by the articles on the history of the Chambers of Commerce of Bengal, Bombay, and Karachi. This section will be amplified and continued in succeeding volumes.

The Biographical section has been grouped under four main heads, for facility of reference,—Official, Professional, Educational, Commercial and Industrial; and the Biographies under each appear in alphabetical order. Having regard to the proverbially fleeting memory of the East for those who labour there,—in whatever circle their lot may be cast—the Publishers hope that these volumes, which have been put together with much labour and cost, will prove of both interest and value.

February, 1907.



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The History of India.

INTRODUCTION.

The history of India is not only important from the point of view of comparative civilization, but from its length and the variety of its vicissitudes, it may well lay claim to the appreciation of all intelligent readers for its own sake. Although India must yield to China, Egypt and Assyria in the antiquity of its historical data, yet its records extend back to a period of more than three thousand years, and its early literature is both more full and more valuable to humanity than that of any other ancient people. The early history of most peoples is a confused and broken account of wars and dynasties. Though some chronological sequence may exist, yet the greater number of those Kings whose conquests and glories are extolled in stone are little more than names, and the internal conditions of their kingdoms are still more obscure. No connected history, for instance, of ancient Egyptian civilization and thought is deducible from the monuments in the valley of the Nile. Egyptologists may decipher texts proving the political continuity of four thousand years and more, but the completed literary works from which alone continuity of thought and its gradual transitions from age to age may be established, are sadly deficient in quantity. But Indian history is of a different and a rarer kind. Inscriptions of the earlier periods are practically non-existent, and no connected chronological history is possible for at least the first thousand years of Aryan civilization in

India. But, as a compensation, we have records of a far more valuable character. There exist literary remains which carry us back at least fifteen centuries before the Christian era. From this early date, and from each succeeding period, an abundance of literary works survive, at first handed down by oral tradition, later committed to writing, all bearing the stamp of the age in which they were composed, all therefore of supreme interest and importance as the reflection of the thoughts and feelings of early man. Amongst the Aryans of India alone can we trace clearly the gradual progress of the human mind from its first rude but spontaneous effusions to the artificial compositions of a highly organised civilization. Thus the story of Hindu civilization, religion and thought is longer and more instructive than any other human story. "It is matchless in its continuity, its fullness and its philosophic truth." It is a complete history in itself, but it is not the whole of Indian history. About the same time that the Normans conquered England the Ancient Hindu civilization began to come under the rule of Mohammedan invaders. Finally, the Mohammedan Empire, after a period of settlement by various European powers, gave place to the British rule which endures to-day. Each of these periods, the Mohammedan and the British, has its own particular characteristics and its own complete history.

PART I.

ANCIENT HINDU CIVILIZATION.

CHAPTER I. THE VEDIC AGE.

About 2000-1400 B.C.

I.—The Aryans and the Aborigines.

Our earliest glimpse of India reveals two races struggling for the soil. The one was a fair-skinned people, who had recently entered India from the North-West, and who were a branch of the great Aryan race, that Indo-European family from which the majority of the European peoples claim descent. The other

Arrival of Aryans
in India.

race was of inferior type, indigenous and dark-skinned, held in the greatest contempt by the conquering

Aryans. Still, no sooner had the invaders extended their conquests over Northern India than they began to mix with the primitive holders of the soil. From this fusion the great mass of the modern Hindu population is derived. Pure Aryans on the one side are now few in number, while the pure non-Aryan portion of the population is also comparatively small.

A few words are here necessary by way of reference to the Aborigines of India. Some belong to the Dravidian race, others to the Mongolian, while the remainder are

The aboriginal
population.

generally ranked together under the name of Kolarian. The Dravidians who now chiefly inhabit the South of India, were at the time of the Aryan immigration not only more numerous than the other aboriginals, but considerably in advance of them in point of civilization.

They were not yet confined to the southern portion of the peninsula, but largely inhabited the plains and valleys of the north, where they lived in organized communities under fixed laws and government. The Kolarian and Mongolian elements inhabited rather the jungles and forests, and lived in a state of savagedom or semi-savagedom. The primitive state of the latter peoples at the time of the Aryan invasions can be imagined from a glimpse of the present condition of their descendants. Some of the existing hill-tribes, such as the Santals of Bengal and the Kandhs of Orissa, have only recently abandoned human sacrifices, while their system of rule is still essentially patriarchal. The Vedic hymns contain many references to the dark-skinned population which was in occupation of the soil. They are named Dasyus or 'enemies' and Dasas or 'slaves,' and are reviled as 'godless,' 'raw-eaters,' 'monsters' and 'demons.' The most savage of these peoples were probably driven back to the mountains, and it must have been the more advanced portion of the Aborigines, that is, chiefly the Dravidian element, which settled down under the new régime and at length became incorporated into the social organism of their conquerors.

The early history of India is concerned with the advance of the conquering Aryans, their gradual extension to the southernmost point of the Peninsula, and the foundation by them of a number of separate kingdoms. But the exact movements and their chronology are hard to trace, and we know more

about the social and religious character of this early people than of their political history. The earliest period of Hindu history is called the Vedic Period, because it deals with the condition of the people as described in the Rig Veda, the most ancient religious book of the Aryan races. The Rig Veda is a collection of 1,017 short poems, chiefly addressed to the gods.* The whole is divided into ten Mandalas or Books, each of which, except the first and last, were composed by a particular Rishi or a particular school of Rishis.† In all probability the Rig Veda was finally compiled in the 14th century B.C., but the great majority of the hymns must have been composed earlier, and it is generally agreed that the period of history to which they belong cannot have begun later than 2000 B.C. In this, the first period of Indian history, the Aryans are revealed as new-comers, descending from Central Asia, the earliest home of the Indo-European race, marching through the passes of the north-west, and then gradually spreading themselves over the Punjab. Five or six centuries at least are necessary for the expansion of the Aryans along the Indus and its tributaries, so that the Vedic Age may roughly be dated from 2000 to 1400 B.C.‡

Some few facts may be gathered about the progress of this early conquest. The Aryans

Their Organization. were divided into a number of tribes, mostly organized on a monarchical basis and ruled by hereditary chieftains in conformity with the will of the people as expressed in the tribal assembly. These tribes were without cohesion, and were often arrayed in war against each other. Sometimes, however, a temporary confederation was formed for the special purpose of subduing the black-skinned holders of the soil. The Aborigines did not yield without a struggle,

Character of the
early conquests.

but when beaten in the open field by the more disciplined valour of the invaders, they clung to hill fortresses and forests whence they issued forth to wage a harassing guerilla warfare against the Aryans. But in spite of every resistance, the more civilized races with their war horses and chariots, their armour and the greater variety of their weapons, pushed back the hated foe, cultivated the jungle tracts and extended their kingdoms over the whole Punjab. The barbarians, like the Britons at the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasions, were either exterminated or retreated into those hills and fastnesses which their descendants still inhabit. The wide-spread fusion of race which we have already mentioned, took place, not in the Vedic Age, but in subsequent stages of the Aryan conquests, during what are called the Epic and the Rationalist Periods.

* They have been translated by Max Müller in his monumental *Sacred Books of the East*. The greatest Orientalists of the present generation have contributed to this series. Most of the remaining Vedas, the *Brahmanas*, *Sutras*, etc., to which we shall refer, can also be found in this series in an English garb. The introductions to the various volumes are extremely valuable.

† See page 3.

‡ Some recent writers would put it much further back. B. G. Tilak in his *Arctic Home in the Vedas* maintains that on grounds chiefly of astronomy many of the hymns must have been composed as early as 4500 B.C. Moreover, he discovers in them traces of a still more primitive civilization, the pre-Vedic, which, he asserts, flourished in the Arctic Region during the Post-glacial Period; i.e., from 8000 B.C. onwards. But this bold theory, except in subordinate points, has not yet obtained acceptance.

II.—Social Life in the Vedic Age.

The picture of early Hindu civilization, as painted by the Vedic hymns, is full of interest. Agriculture, which philology proves to have been known to the early fathers of the Indo-European race in Central Asia, was the main industry of the ancient Hindus. The hymns contain numerous allusions to agriculture, and one remarkable hymn is directly dedicated to the God of Agriculture. But agriculture in the Punjab was not practicable without irrigation: hence we have references to canals and wells. Shepherds and pasture are mentioned less freely than agriculture, whilst trade and commerce, though necessarily rare in

the early stages of civilization, are distinctly alluded to in the Rig Veda. The arts of peace included weaving, carpentry and working in metals such as gold, iron and copper. Warriors, perhaps the greater chieftains, wore golden helmets and breastplates; women carried bracelets, necklaces and anklets. The customs of the people are marked by strong common sense, and a pleasing absence of unhealthy restriction.

The caste system did not exist and every head of a household was his own family priest. Although the exigencies of sacrifice and the special faculties of composition required for the sacrificial hymns, gradually led to the formation of a class of Rishis, holy priests and poets, the forerunners of the Brahmans, yet in the primitive age of the Rig Veda this class was separated by no barrier of caste from the rest of the population. The Rishis were men of the world, owned herds of cattle, fought against the common enemy, and inter-married freely with the people. It is only in the concluding portions of the Rig Veda that we find evidence of the growing superstition of the people and a beginning of that dependence upon the priestly class which was destined to work such irretrievable harm in the later stages of Hindu civilization. That the Rishis did not form a separate priestly caste may be gathered from such hymns as the following:—

“Behold, I am a composer of hymns, my father is a physician, my mother grinds corn on stone. We are all engaged in different occupations. As cows wander (in various directions) in the pasture-fields (for food), so we (in various occupations), worship thee, O Soma! for wealth. Flow thou for Indra!” Further, there were no temples or idols in these early days. The sacred fire was lighted on every hearth by the head of the family, and there is abundant evidence to prove that wives joined their husbands in celebrating these domestic sacrifices.

Women, it is clear, were regarded in a totally different manner from their sisters of a later time. They were not secluded, debarred from education and religion, or disposed of like chattels in marriage. They were treated rather as man's equal, the sharer of his sacrifices, joint composer of the sacred hymns—sometimes women even became Rishis—and were allowed to exercise their due influence in society. They were not married at an age when their education should just begin, but often remained unmarried in the homes of their fathers, or if they

chose wedlock, as doubtless the majority did, they would seem to have possessed some voice in the selection of their husbands. “The woman who is of gentle nature, and of graceful form selects, among many, her own loved one as her husband.” Polygamy was allowed among the great and rich, but the people for the most part remained contented, then as now, with one wife. The re-marriage of widows was distinctly sanctioned by the Rig Veda, and the prevalence of this custom is borne out by a variety of other proofs. Finally, the obnoxious practice of *Sati*, by which a widow ascended her husband's funeral pyre, was unknown in these primitive days. When in aftertimes the practice became popular, the priesthood attempted to give it sanction from the Vedas, and a harmless passage referring to a funeral procession was distorted and mistranslated with this end in view.

Other practices, now generally condemned by orthodox Hinduism, were the consumption of flesh and of intoxicating liquor. Cows were the chief source of wealth to the primitive cultivators on the Indus, and one of their uses was to provide food. Slaughter-houses are spoken of in the Vedas, and there are allusions to the sacrifice of bulls and rams. The intoxicating juice of the Soma plant was regularly drunk by all classes, and as we shall see below, it formed a predominant element in sacrificial rites. So highly was it regarded, that it came itself to be worshipped as a deity, and we find an entire book of the Rig Veda dedicated to the Divine juice of the Soma.

A few other points connected with the social life of the early Hindus deserve notice. The dead were disposed of, as to-day, by burning, although burial without cremation seems to have been also practised. Some of the most beautiful of the hymns were composed for the funeral ceremony. Transmigration was as yet unknown and the primitive Hindu believed in a state of blessedness in the heaven of Yama, to which the righteous attained immediately after death. Other hymns seem to contain the germ of adoption, and of the later Hindu Law of Inheritance which allows property to go to the daughter's son, only in the absence of male issue.

III.—Religion of the Vedic Age.

We are now in a position to examine the religion of the primitive Hindus. The Rig Veda is immensely valuable as a human document, because it is the only record possessed by any Aryan nation,—indeed any nation at all—in which we can study that intensely interesting chapter in the history of mankind, the transition from a natural to an artificial religion. The Rig Veda may, therefore, be regarded as the earliest recorded chapter in the history of the human intellect. In the oldest books of the Greeks and Romans religion is almost totally artificial. Groups of gods and goddesses people an artificial heaven, and largely share human attributes, vices as well as virtues. “Names which in Homer

Value of the Rig Veda in the history of religious belief.

Position of Women.

THE CYCLOPEDIA OF INDIA.

4

have become petrified and mythological, are to be found in the Veda, as it were, in a still fluid state." In the Veda natural phenomena are represented as assuming the character of divine beings, whereas in Homer this process is already complete. Hence, we may, apart from all considerations of actual date, call the Vedic hymns more ancient than the Homeric poems, because they represent an earlier phase of human thought and feeling. Though the religion of the Vedic Age is the worship of Nature, in her loftiest aspects of sky, dawn, sun and storm, yet towards the end of the Rig Veda, "we often come across hymns sung to the One Being. The landmarks between Nature-worship and Monotheism had been passed, and the great Rishis of the Rig Veda have passed from Nature up to Nature's God. This is the characteristic beauty of the Rig Veda as compared with other religious works of other nations. We do not find in the Veda any well-defined system of religion or any one particular stage of thought or civilization. On the contrary we watch with interest how the human mind travels from an almost childlike but sincere invocation of the rising sun or the beneficent sky to the sublimer idea that neither the sun nor the sky is the Deity—that the Deity is greater and higher than these, and has created these objects. We know of no other work in any language which possesses such interest for the philosophic enquirer into the progress of the human mind or which shows as the Rig Veda does how human intelligence travels step by step, higher and higher, until from the created objects it grasps the sublime idea of the Creator."*

Most prominent amongst the aspects of Nature which received the homage and worship of the early Hindus was the sky. But the sky has several aspects. It was first adored as Dyu, or Dyaushpitar, the 'Shining One,' earliest god of the great Aryan race, Zeus in Greece, Jupiter or Diespiter in Rome. Varuna, the sky which covers, the encompassing sky, the Ouranos of Greece, the Uranus of Rome, was another aspect of the heavens addressed as a deity in the Vedic hymns. Varuna was probably the dark sky of night, and in contradistinction to him there was

Mitra, the bright sky of day. Of these three Varuna is the recipient of most adoration in the hymns: indeed, his sanctity in the Rig Veda is pre-eminent over that of every other god. Yet a further aspect of the sky remains to be noticed,—Indra, the Rain-god, literally the sky regarded as aqueous rain-bearing vapour. Though he yields to Varuna in sanctity, all the gods of the Vedas must give place to him in point of prominence. No god is addressed so frequently or so forcibly. He is peculiarly Indian, and his popularity can only be understood by those who know the life-giving power of the Indian rain-clouds after a time of heat and drought. Indra is not merely the giver of refreshing rain, but the champion of the Aryan people against the dark-skinned aborigines, the God of Battles, the Ares of the Vedic people. Next in popularity, perhaps, to Indra, is Agni, the God of Fire, the youngest

Indra, the most prominent.

of the gods, the Lord and Giver of Wealth. Fire was essential to sacrifices—hence Agni is called the Invoker of the gods. The worship of fire is one of the many points of kinship between the Aryans of the Punjab and those of Iran, the framers of the Zend Avesta. Other gods less prominently brought before us in the Veda are (1) Those which bear a solar character, *Sūrya* (= Helios and Sol) and *Savitri*, *Pushan*, and lastly *Vishnu*, so far purely a Sun-god and a deity of quite inferior note. (2) *Vāyu*, the air; (3) the *Maruts*, or Storm-gods, inspirers of terror, beneath whose thunder and lightning the earth trembles and the forest is torn in pieces; (4) *Rudra*, father of the Maruts, a third-rate deity but elevated in Puranic times to a position of the first rank under the name of Siva. (5) *Yama*, afterwards the dread King of Hell, but as yet the beneficent ruler of the blessed world where the departed live in endless felicity. (6) The twin *Aswins*, 'Lords of Lustre,' fleet horsemen of the dawn, physicians and healers, succourers of men in their distress. (7) *Ushas*, the Greek Eos and Latin Aurora, the smiling dawn, "who like a busy housewife wakes men from slumber and sends them to their work." *Ushas*, be it noticed, is a goddess. Only two female divinities are known to the Veda, the other being (8) *Saraswati*, goddess of the river of that name. Though all trace of the river and its course has long since disappeared, *Saraswati* survives as the Goddess of Speech. She is the oldest goddess of the Hindus: others such as *Parvati* and *Lakshmi* are creations of a later day.

Other deities there were, bringing the total up to thirty-three, "who are eleven in heaven, eleven on earth, and eleven in glory in mid air." And yet it is sometimes difficult to decide whether the composers of the hymns were polytheists or monotheists. One god was worshipped at a time and for the moment was regarded as supreme. There are verses declaring each of the greater deities to be supreme, particularly *Indra* and *Agni*. For the time being the worshipper is practically a monotheist. More than this, some verses actually declare the existence of but One Divine Being, and recent scholarship is in favour of their antiquity. Such hymns must have been composed by the more spiritual of the singers, in whom there dwelt an instinctive Monotheism. The 121st hymn of the tenth book is the most notable instance in point. "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 to whom we shall offer sacrifice? . . . He who through his power is the only king of the breathing and awakening world. He who governs all, man and beast; Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? . . . He the creator of the earth; He the righteous, who created the heavens . . . He who is god above all Gods." The monotheism of this hymn is as plainly asserted as by the Hebrew prophets of the Jewish dispensation. This tradition of belief was established in the Vedic Age, and found later expression in the priestly attitude

Conflicting tendencies towards monotheism and polytheism.

* Dutt,—"Civilization in Ancient India," Vol. I, Ch. VI.

of Brahmins, a monotheistic attitude, not however shared by the nation as a whole, which became more frankly polytheistic as time went on.

But whether the Aryan settlers be addressing one of their Nature gods, or hymning some ecstatic praise to the 'Lord of all that is,' the tone of the songs is elevated and forceful, and their character genuinely spontaneous. The presence of lofty moral and spiritual fervour in this ancient religion is incontrovertible; there is more faith and devotion, more genuine enthusiasm for the heavenly powers, than in any of the recorded works of the Greeks and the Romans. The 'shining ones' are believed to protect men, not only from disease and suffering, but also from the temptations of sin. Indra also is invoked as a god who may pardon sin. Besides moral truths, there are to be found, in certain hymns, philosophical and metaphysical conceptions worthy of the most highly civilized communities. In a famous song of the tenth book the poet makes a series of profound inquiries about the mysteries of creation, such as would have done credit to the age of the Upanishads. Accordingly we must not regard the Upanishads as the starting point of Hindu philosophy any more than the Brahmanas mark the beginnings of theology; the source of the philosophical, as of the theological, and indeed the scientific, currents of succeeding periods can be traced right back to the Rig Veda itself.

CHAPTER II. THE BRAHMANIC OR EPIC AGE. About 1400—800 B.C.

I.—History of the Period.

We have seen how that during the first or Vedic Age the Aryans gradually wrested the Punjab from its primitive inhabitants and occupied the whole tract of country watered by the Indus and its tributaries. In the second or Brahmanic period the conquerors crossed the Sutlej, settled in the Jumna and Ganges valleys, and within four or five centuries had founded powerful kingdoms as far east as Behar. Such are the conditions pictured in the Brahmanas and in the oldest parts of the national epics: hence the period is known as Brahmanic or Epic. That the conquests of the Hindus in this period did not extend beyond Behar nor south of the Vindya Hills is made plain by the total absence of reference to those parts in the literature of the time. But to conquer, settle and organize into kingdoms the whole Gangetic valley, the great plain of Northern India, the 'Middle Land' of the old books, was no inconsiderable achievement. The immediate cause of this extension of the Aryan race beyond the boundaries attained in the Vedic Age seems to have been a second irruption of Aryans from beyond the Hindu Kush. Entering the Punjab through the passes of the north, the new-comers pushed their settled kinsmen eastwards, along the valleys of the Jumna and the Ganges. Many of the aboriginal people who had come to live peaceably side by side with the earlier Aryan settlers

lent them assistance against the new-comers, and the partnership resulted no doubt in some slight fusion between the races. Ultimately also the newer Aryan immigrants coalesced with their forerunners, so that from the fusion of those three elements there arose a new Indo-Aryan race with a new and peculiar civilization, the Brahmanic. It was, however, only when the conquering Aryans had pushed eastward beyond Oudh and Allahabad that they seem to have incorporated non-Aryans in their own communities to any great extent, and even then the Aryan physical features, along with their language and religion, remained predominant. As they passed down the valleys of the Ganges and its tributaries, they encountered hordes of aborigines in various stages of barbarism or civilization. It was impossible to drive off these inhabitants in the way that the majority of the Punjab aborigines had been driven away. Since, moreover, the services of those despised people were useful, quantities of them were allowed to remain under the protection of their conquerors. They were given menial tasks to perform and as the social system of the Hindus developed, the indigenous population was absorbed into it, forming, as we shall shortly see, the great bulk of the lowest or Sudra caste.

This evolution of this new Indo-Aryan people was accompanied by a growth in political organization. The small tribal communities of the Vedic Aryans in the Punjab were replaced by larger territorial states, some taking the form of republics, but the majority being ruled by great kings who resided in regular capitals. For the most part the popular assemblies of the Vedic Age had passed away, and Hindu monarchs arose who governed autocratically, their government being beneficial or otherwise according as their characters were good or bad, strong or weak. The first of the new kingdoms to be organized were those of the Kurus and Panchalas.

The first people settled in the rich and fertile Doab between the Jumna and the Ganges, and the second group founded a confederate kingdom in the west of what are now the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Hastinapura was the capital of the first kingdom, Kanouj the chief capital of the second. Of the origin of both tribes, and from what part of the Punjab, if from any, they came, we must be content to remain in ignorance, nor is it possible to obtain a historical account of either kingdom. All that we know is that at some time, presumably towards the end of the Brahmanic period, the two nations engaged in an internecine war for the possession of a particular strip of country. This war forms the subject of the Iliad of India, the Mahabharata, the first great Hindu epic. The poem is of heterogeneous growth, contains much material of a later age, and was put together in its present state centuries after the earliest events which it describes. Not only were lengthy additions made to the poem in Puranic times, but even the geography of the country and the names of the heroes have been changed. Still the groundwork of the poem is genuinely ancient, and a discerning scholarship is able to discriminate between the original layer and the strata which were super-imposed in historic times.

Besides the testimony which it affords of the existence of the kingdoms of the Kurus and Panchalas, and their bloody struggle, it is valuable historically for the sidelights it throws upon the state of Hindu society at the time. It reveals a more polished state of society, a more highly organized civilization, than any which existed in the previous age. Monarchy was more powerful and states were larger. The rules of social life were more highly developed, yet the caste system had barely taken root. The science of war was better organized, but the descendants of the fierce Aryan conquerors of the Punjab still retained the unconquerable valour and stern determination of their ancestors. The poem also illustrates an interesting point about the daily life and customs of those early days. The position of women had not yet become degraded to the subjection of later times; chivalrous instincts were to the fore, but such vices as gambling were indulged in to excess. Thus, although no accurate historical narrative can be deduced from the poem, the light it throws upon the character of the times is by no means to be despised.

In due course a series of powerful kingdoms were established further to the East. Chief of these were the kingdom of the Kosalas in Oudh, that of the Kasis round Benares, and that of the Videhas in North Behar. Of the struggles which led to the establishment of these kingdoms we know little, but a few facts about their internal condition may be gleaned from different sources. The kingdom of the Kasis achieved fame at a later time, but the sister kingdoms blossomed into greatness before the conclusion of the Epic Age. The country of the Kosalas with its historic capital of Ayodhya is brought into prominence by the second great Hindu Epic, the Ramayana, which celebrates the doings of a certain King of Kosala, that Rama who afterwards came to be worshipped as an incarnation of the God Vishnu.

The Ramayana makes no mention of Aryan civilization south of the Vindhya, therefore it must have taken its original shape at a period anterior to the Aryan conquest of the peninsula proper, *i.e.*, before the beginning of the next or Rationalist period. In all probability it was originally composed about 1000 B. C., a period later than that to which we should assign the Mahabharata in its earliest form. But such countless changes and interpolations were made in a later age that the Ramayana is almost as valueless for direct historical purposes as the Mahabharata. Though, however, the heroes are myths, and many events are described which never took place, or which took place at a later time (*e.g.*, the Conquest of Ceylon), yet this poem also throws a certain amount of interesting sidelight upon the people and civilization of the Brahmanic, particularly the later Brahmanic age. The people had become more polished and law-abiding, but less sturdy and heroic. Priestly assumption was growing apace and a persistent rivalry between the claims of the priests and warriors was proceeding. The people, being less vigorous than those painted in the earlier Epic, were resigning themselves more completely

to priestly domination; the simplicity of the old Vedic faith was being buried beneath a mass of rites and ceremonies, and religion was slowly becoming the monopoly of Brahmans.

The third of the group of kingdoms mentioned above, that of the Videhas, in its turn came to the front, and became the most prominent kingdom in Northern India. Janaka, its most famous king, has a high claim to the respect and the admiration of the historian. The father-in-law of Rama, his fame does not rest upon the somewhat shadowy allusions of the Ramayana, but he is a well authenticated character, who, according to the unimpeachable evidence of other records, became the patron of speculative and philosophic thought. The Vikramaditya of his time, he gathered round him the most learned men of contemporary Hindu civilization, encouraged those theological studies which resulted in the White Yajur Veda and the Satapatha Brahmana, the most important of all the Brahmanas, and himself originated those earnest speculations of the Upanishads which mark the close of the Epic Age. A reaction seems to have been already arising against religious pedantry and dogmatism. Healthy speculations about the nature of the soul and the Supreme Being were beginning to take the place of those arid and verbose commentaries on the minutiae of religious rites, which had characterized the period now coming to an end, and King Janaka must receive all credit for being one of the originators of the emancipatory movement. It was in its essence an attempt to destroy the monopoly of priestly learning, and to loosen thereby the bonds of priestly domination.

Any other kingdoms that were founded in the Epic Period are little more than names. North Behar seems to have been the limit of Hindu civilization in the East, and the Vindya Mountains were throughout this period the southern limit. The rest of India was, if not absolutely unexplored, at least unconquered by the growing Indo-Aryan people. The literature of the time admittedly presupposes the limits we have assigned, and expansion beyond the area belongs to the ensuing or Rationalist Period.

II.—Literature of the Period.

As the civilization of the primitive or Vedic Age is known to us solely through the early Vedic hymns, so is the civilization of our second period revealed solely by contemporary literature. Without the works whose original compilation can be credibly assigned to the Epic or Brahmanic Age, the historian would be in total ignorance as to even the main features of the period. First of the literary productions of the time come the Vedas. The Rig Veda Sanhita, the collection of hymns composed mostly in the previous age, was only compiled, as we have already seen, about the beginning of this period (circ. 1400 B. C.), and even then was not put into writing, but handed down by oral tradition for another thousand years or so. Following upon the Rig Veda three other Vedas were compiled, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda (White and Black), and the Atharva Veda. As four different classes of priests combined to perform the

Final compilation
of the Rig Veda.

sacrificial ceremonies, the simple hymns of the Rig Veda were soon found to be insufficient, and separate manuals had to be compiled for the assistance of the

The Sama Veda. priests. Thus the Sama Veda is a collection of sacrificial chants extracted from the Rig Veda and set to music for that class of priests called Udgatris, whose main duty it was to accompany the sacrifices by singing. The compiler of the work is unknown to history.

The Yajur Veda was a collection of sacrificial formulas, compiled for the assistance of the priests called Adhvaryus, who were entrusted with the material performance of the sacrifices. The other two classes of priests, whose presence was also necessary at every sacrifice, needed no manual. The Hotris simply had to recite hymns, and for this a knowledge of the Rig Veda was sufficient, while the Brahman needed no manual of his own, his function being to act as president, and superintend the whole ceremonial. Of the Yajur Veda there are two editions, known

The Yajur Veda. respectively as the Black and White. The Black Yajur Veda is unquestionably the oldest, but little accurate information is to hand about its compilation. Of the White Yajur Veda, however, more is known. It is ascribed to Yajnavalkya, a learned priest who worked under the patronage of King Janaka. The compilation is not, however, the work of one man, or even of one age; and all that can be said with certainty is that the first and more important part of it, eighteen chapters of formulas, was promulgated from the court of King Janaka towards the end of the Epic Period, or about the ninth century B.C.

Last comes the Atharva Veda. Although it includes a few hymns chosen from the Rig Veda,—chiefly the later ones—it principally consists of formulas intended to protect men from baneful influences, whether divine or human. It is full of spells for warding off evil, incantations against disease and imprecations against demons, sorcerers and enemies, and of charms

The Atharva Veda. to secure harmony and prosperity. Such spells bear the name of Mantras, and their inclusion in a sacred book is a proof of the decline of religion. The simplicity and manliness of the early Vedic creed must have long since passed away when such a compilation was in daily use. But there is good reason to suppose that the Atharva Veda, despite its claim to antiquity, was not compiled until long after the Epic Age. For centuries to come only three Vedas are recognised, and although fragments of incantations may have existed in this period, it is not likely that they were put together in their present form until a later time.

The next series of works to be noticed are the Brahmanas. The change of locality and political conditions which we have noticed in the first section of this chapter were accompanied by considerable changes in language and modes of thought. Hence the Vedic hymns were rapidly becoming unintelligible. The Brahmanas therefore devoted themselves to a careful explanation of the text and wrote long prose commentaries, in which a number of passages illustrative of social and political conditions are mixed up with dry theological discussions and descriptions of ceremonial.

Commentaries of this kind were written for each of the Vedas in turn, and at length each Veda was explained by two or three separate Brahmanas, compiled for the most part during this period, but not entirely free from

The Brahmanas. later interpolations. The Brahmanas are generally regarded as dull and dreary, but they contain much curious information. Though their professed object is to teach the sacrifice (which can be better studied in the Sutras of the ensuing age) they devote a much larger space to dogmatical, exegetical, mystical and philosophical speculations than to the ceremonial itself. The fact of so many authors being quoted by name in these works shows that the Brahmanas exhibit the accumulated thoughts of a long succession of early theologians and philosophers. "But the very earliest of these sages follow a train of thought which gives clear evidence of a decaying religion. The Brahmanas presuppose a complete break in the primitive tradition of the Aryan settlers in India. At the time when the law was laid down about the employment of certain hymns at certain parts of the sacrifice, the original meaning of these hymns and the true conception of the gods to whom they were addressed had been lost. The meaning also of the old and sacred customs by which their forefathers had hallowed the most critical epochs of life and the principal divisions of the year, had faded away from the memory of those whose lucubrations on the purport of the sacrifices have been elaborated in the Brahmanas." In other words, the transition from a natural worship to an artificial worship, which process forms the chief interest of the Vedic Period, had already been completed. But the pre-Buddhistic Hinduism which was now taking shape was accompanied by so much pedantry, well exemplified in the Brahmanas, that the change to the bold speculations and the more healthy scepticism of the Rationalist Age cannot have been but beneficial. The age of reason was, however, prefigured by certain works compiled in the Epic Age itself. These are the Aranyakas and the Upanishads. The Aranyakas or 'forest lectures,' were intended to be read by

The Aranyakas and their Upanishads. Brahmanas when undergoing their period of asceticism as forest hermits—one of the four periods into

which the life of a Brahman was now divided. Many of the Aranyakas form part of particular Brahmanas, and in all cases they presuppose the existence of the Brahmanas. The Upanishads are religious speculations contained in the Aranyakas, and any interest the latter have is derived from these Upanishads. The subject-matter of the Upanishads concerns the destiny of the soul and the nature of the Supreme Being, subjects that arose very naturally from the speculations of the Brahmanas, although they paved the way for teaching of a character repugnant to the priesthood. The words of the great Vedic scholar, Max Müller, are worth quoting in this connection. "The philosophical chapters, well known under the name of Upanishads, are almost the only portion of Vedic literature which is extensively read to this day. They contain, or are supposed to contain, the highest authority on

which the various systems of philosophy in India rest. Not only the Vedanta philosopher, who, by his very name, professes his faith in the ends and objects of the Veda, but the Sankhya, the Vaisesika, the Nyaya, and Yoga philosophers, all pretend to find in the Upanishads some warranty for their tenets, however antagonistic in their bearing. The same applies to the numerous sects that have existed, and still exist in India. Their founders, if they have any pretension to orthodoxy, invariably appeal to some passage in the Upanishads in order to substantiate their own reasonings. Now, it is true that in the Upanishads themselves there is so much freedom and breadth of thought that it is not difficult to find in them some authority for almost any shade of philosophical opinion. The Old Upanishads did not pretend to give more than 'guesses at truth,' and when, in course of time, they became invested with an inspired character, they allowed great latitude to those who professed to believe in them as revelation. Yet this was not sufficient for the rank growth of philosophical doctrines during the latter ages of Indian history; and when none of the ancient Upanishads could be found to suit the purpose, the founders of new sects had no scruple and no difficulty in composing new Upanishads of their own." The genuinely original Upanishads numbered ten, but new compositions were gradually added until the total has reached an aggregate of 200 or more. Although it is probable that the Upanishads were largely the work of Kshatriya writers who chafed under the pedantic scholasticism of the Brahmins, the names of their authors are unknown. This absence of accredited authorship was much in favour of their being regarded as Revelation, 'Sruti,' (things) 'heard from God,' and not merely 'Smriti,' (things) 'remembered.' The Vedas, the Brahmanas, with the Aranyakas and Upanishads, are all regarded by Hindus as revealed Scriptures, while the Sutras and the Puranas, which belong to the Rationalist and the Puranic ages respectively, are not ordinarily held to be divinely inspired. Such a division is in conformity with the practice observed in almost all religions. The earliest sacred books are invariably supposed to be in some way or another of superhuman origin, or at least to have been framed by divine inspiration. They are anterior to clearly recorded history, and the mystery incidental to their age invests them with the halo of divinity. Those of a later and a more historical period have, however, the character of more purely human documents. The time and circumstances of their origin are more clearly known, and they are accordingly not enveloped in that odour of sanctity which is the privilege of the mysterious and the antique. We are speaking, be it noticed, of purely religious books; such epics as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, while equally, if not more, hazy in their origin than the early sacred books of the Hindus, yet on the whole appertain to secular literature, and have therefore no claim to be regarded as Revelation. The light they throw upon religion is great indeed, but in their original form at least, they were not primarily didactic or religious.

Sruti and Smriti:
 revelation and tradition.

III.—Caste.

The rise of the caste-system must be ascribed to the period we are now describing. Even in the Vedic Age the priesthood tended to become a special profession, although priestly families contained members of other professions, and although the priests themselves—the Rishis of the Rig Veda—often served in their own persons as warriors, and lived freely in the world amongst their kinsmen. This tendency to specialization became an accomplished fact in the Epic Age, as with the elaboration of religious ceremonial,

the priesthood became more and more a special class, separated from the bulk of the people by their superior knowledge and sanctity. The knowledge required to adequately perform the now complicated ceremonial of the sacrifice rendered necessary the study of a life-time, particularly as in the absence of writing, the whole mass of religious lore had to be laboriously committed to memory. The priests themselves could be the only teachers, and whom would they be so likely to instruct as their own sons? Hence a growth of the hereditary principle amongst the priesthood, and the idea, gradually developed, that the Brahmins—who being the superior class of priests gave their name to the priesthood as a whole—were a distinct and a superior race. At the same time there appears in the newly formed territorial states of the Gangetic valley a new warlike nobility, the cream of the fighting Aryan race, who assumed the name of Kshatriyas. The priesthood and the warrior class for a long time formed together the great ruling class. The King was a Kshatriya and the priest and nobles served him in their different capacities. As this class-formation became more rigid, the name Vaisya (settler), at one time applied to the whole Aryan race, was appropriated by the great body of the Aryan people, chiefly free peasants and merchants. A fourth class was then formed to include all non-Aryans and the descendants of mixed marriages between members of the Aryan and non-Aryan races. This fourth division of the people was known as the Sudra caste. The Sudras were mostly artisans and labourers, performing menial services, and they occupied the lowest scale of the social ladder. The gulf between the three Aryan castes and the Sudras was the greatest gulf of all: in fact, in some districts—such as Lower Bengal after its conquest and settlement in the next Age—the great division between the Aryan classes and the detested aborigines was practically the only division for quite a long period of history. This gulf between the races was expressed by giving to the three Aryan castes the appellation of 'Twice-Born' and to the Sudras the opprobrious term of 'Once-born.'

Growth of a
 Priestly caste.

And of a separate
 Warrior caste.

The Vaisyas form
 the remainder of the
 Aryan Community.

The Sudras chiefly of
 non-Aryan race.

The fourfold divi-
 sion limited in its
 application.

land, that tract of Northern India where flourished



the Gangetic kingdoms of the Epic Age. By the time that the Hindu civilization spread southwards, a variety of new castes had been added and the old four-fold division was soon forgotten, even where it had formerly existed. Enough has been said to show that the basis of caste division was mainly racial and professional. The first three castes were distinguished from each other by profession, and all three were at first distinguished from the lowest caste by race. With the progress of Hinduism, the principle of caste division as a method of social organization became more rigid; birth became the supreme test, and the multiplication of professions resulted in a multiplication of castes, the members of

The pernicious caste system of later times as yet unknown.

each being sternly prohibited from changing either the one or the other. But this pernicious system was the growth of future times: at present caste was a new principle and as yet hardly an evil principle. What marked the Epic Age was simply a division of the people into a few main groups according to their prevailing occupations. The same mild class division existed in most of the kingdoms of mediæval Europe. "In the Epic Period the body of the people (except the priests and soldiers) still formed one united Vaisya caste, and had not been disunited into miserably divided communities as at the present day. The body of the people were still entitled to religious knowledge and learning, and to perform religious rites for themselves, just like Brahmans and Kshatriyas. And even intermarriage between Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas was allowed under certain restrictions. However much, therefore, we may deplore the commencement of the caste system, we should never forget that the worst results of that system, *the priestly monopoly of learning, the disunion in the body of the people, and the absolute social separation among castes*, were unknown in India until the Puranic times." Much interesting information bearing on this matter may be gleaned from the literature of the period. Thus the White Yajur Veda enumerates a number of professions followed by the body of the people, Vaisyas and Sudras; but as yet these professions did not form distinct castes, and the members of each were not separated from each other by rigid caste barriers. The upper classes, priests and warriors, enjoyed some special caste privileges, such as exemption from taxation, but they were

In the Epic Age caste barriers were often ignored in practice.

not yet separated from the main body of their fellow citizens by an insurmountable wall of caste superiority. Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas ate and drank together, intermarried, and received the same religious instruction, all possessed the right of sacrifice and all alike wore the Yajnopavita or sacred thread, which came into use during the Epic Period. A passage in one of the Brahmanas shows that persons born in one caste or community might enter into another. Another shows that men not born Brahmans might become Brahmans by their reputation and their learning. And although the Sudra does not seem to have been admitted to sacrifice, yet in one of the Upanishads we find a Brahman imparting knowledge to a Sudra, accepting presents

from him, and taking his daughter to wife. Such a tolerant interpretation of caste privileges would have been absolutely impossible a few centuries later, when the hereditary principle had once become inexorable.

IV.—Social Life, &c.

Socially, the chief difference between the Vedic and the Epic Periods is the greater refinement and culture which characterises the latter. The rough warrior settlers of the Punjab had changed into the cultured

Growth of Refinement.

citizens of prosperous kingdoms. The royal courts were thriving centres of learning and the kings themselves its patrons. Such a king as Janaka encouraged public discussions on religion and philosophy, and gathered round him the wise men of all the neighbouring kingdoms. The reign of law and order had begun; executive and judicial officers maintained order and administered the law. Walled towns were springing up on all sides, and wealth was rapidly increasing. "The wealth of rich men consisted in gold and silver, and jewels, in cars, horses, cows, mules, and slaves, in houses and fertile fields, and even in elephants." Gold, silver and other metals were in constant use.

What, however, is of the greatest interest in a study of early Hindu civilization, is social organization and the points in which the men of ancient time differed from their descendants of later centuries. The chief social feature of this age is of course the rise of caste, a subject of such importance that it has claimed a special section for itself. Hardly a less interesting subject is the position of women.

Position of Women.

Here the customs of the Epic Period show but slight change from those which marked the Vedic Age. The absolute seclusion of women was still unknown. The Brahmanas contain many passages showing the high esteem in which women were still held. They were considered as the intellectual companions of their husbands, as their helpers in the journey of life and the partners of their religious duties. They moved freely in society, frequented public festivities and sights, inherited and possessed property, and often distinguished themselves in science and in learning. The status of woman in these early times does not compare badly with that of her sisters in early Greece and Rome, and it was not until the religion of the Hindus became debased in form, until their society lost its freedom and elasticity in Puranic and Mohammedan times, that the position of women was degraded to a lower level. Conformably with the high esteem in which women were held, marriage was not regarded from such a one-sided point of view as it afterwards came to be, child marriage was unknown, women in the upper classes at least had some share in the choice of husbands, and widow remarriage had the distinct sanction of the sacred books.

When speaking of the social constitution of the Vedic Age, we remarked upon the prevalence of flesh-

Flesh Eating. eating. This custom still continued in the Epic Period, when animal

food, along with various kinds of grains, formed the staple diet of the people. In view of the claims of modern vegetarianism, it would be interesting,

although of course fruitless, to enquire whether man for man the Hindus of to-day are physically as strong as their flesh-eating ancestors.

We conclude this section with a striking picture, given by Dutt, in his "Civilization in Ancient India," of life such as it was lived by the citizen of Hastinapura or Ayodhya three thousand years ago. The account is of course based upon contemporary literature. "The towns were surrounded by walls, beautified by edifices, and laid out in spacious streets—which would not bear comparison with the structures and roads of modern days—but were probably the finest of their kind in ancient times. The

A Picture of Society
in the Epic Period.

King's palace was always the centre of the town, and was frequented by boisterous barons and a rude soldiery as well as by holy saints and learned priests. The people flocked to the palace on every great occasion, loved, respected, and worshipped the king, and had no higher faith than loyalty to the king. Householders and citizens had their possessions and wealth in gold, silver and jewels, in cars, horses, mules, and slaves, and in the fields surrounding the town. They kept the sacred fire in every respectable household, honoured guests lived according to the law of the land, offered sacrifices with the help of the Brahmans, and honoured knowledge. Every Aryan boy was sent to his school at an early age. Brahmans and Kshatriyas and Vaisyas were educated together, learnt the same lessons and the same religion, returned home, married and settled down as householders. Priests and soldiers were a portion of the people, intermarried with the people, and ate and drank with the people. Various classes of manufacturers supplied the various wants of a civilized society, and followed their ancestral professions from generation to generation, but were not cut up into separate castes. Agriculturists lived with their herds and their ploughs around each town: while holy saints and men of learning sometimes lived away in forests to add, day by day, to that knowledge which was the most cherished heritage of the Aryans."

V.—Religion and Learning.

By the close of the Brahmanic Period a new religion had completely replaced the old. The central feature of the change was the vast additional importance given to sacrifice and purification. In the Vedic Age sacrifice was a natural and spontaneous mode of expressing pious worship and adoration. But in the period to which the Brahmanas belong sacrifice is elaborated for its own sake: the sacrificial ceremonies assume an abnormal importance and become absurdly complex. The vanities of sacrifice were now numbered by hundreds and yet the most rigid adherence to set forms of word and movement was required from the priests. "Every sacrifice, every act, every movement is laid down and described in the Brahmanas, and no departure is allowed." It is plain that superstition was increasing and veneration of the sacrificial ceremonies themselves was replacing veneration of the gods.

Meanwhile the alteration in the conditions of national life, together with the growth of the priest-

hood, was responsible for changes of belief. The

Changes of belief.
(i) Evolution by the priesthood of more spiritual conceptions of the deity.
(ii) Growth of popular theology.

Brahmans found in Brahmanaspati, "the Lord of Prayer," a special god for their order. Then, by a further step Brahma, the Sacred Being, was evolved and became the highest divine power. Thus we have a deity whose basis is no longer one of the phenomena of nature, but a Being of a more spiritual character than any of the original Vedic gods. And yet, despite the growing reverence for Brahma, monotheism did not for the people at large take the place of polytheism. The old Vedic gods survived, although with inferior prestige and power, and as time went on, the popular religion embraced quantities of new gods, many of them derived from the aboriginal population, until in the Puranic Age the Hindu gods came to be numbered by millions!

The position the old gods held in the new system was practically that of satellites to Brahma. Invocation and sacrifice to them was retained, but their character and attributes had undergone change. The doctrine of transmigration was coming into prominence, and the heaven of Indra was substituted for that of Yama. But souls were only regarded as abiding for a short period previous to regeneration in this heavenly abode. It is difficult to reconcile the emphasis laid by the Brahmans upon the minutiae of ceremonial with progress in higher theology. The evolution of the conceptions of Brahman and Atman, the world-soul, seems wholly incompatible with the growing crudities of the popular faith and the endless and trivial ritual by which it was being supported. We must, however, suppose that the Brahmanic priesthood recognized the lower ideals of the people and distinctly catered for them without purposely seeking to raise their own

The Brahmans, by merit and position, the natural leaders of the people.

position and prestige thereby; the imputation of interested motives to actors on the stage 3,000 years ago is always perilous. Nor is there reason to doubt the sanctity and honourable intentions of the priesthood as early as the Epic Age. They had achieved their position by superior merit, and being the brain-power of the people were entitled to leadership in matters intellectual and spiritual. This position involved abnegation of earthly pomp. The Brahmans, in order to retain spiritual pre-eminence, gave up all claim to sovereignty. No Brahman could be a king, nor for the present did they rise above a position of equality with the great Kshatriya caste. Again, there is no doubt that the Brahmans at this time practised temperance and self-denial in their lives. Asceticism was gaining ground, and the four-fold division of a Brahman's life, now beginning to be observed, included a period of total severance from the world, during which the desires of the body could be completely curbed and the soul left free to attain perfection by intense contemplation.

Besides setting an example of unworldliness and religious sanctity, the Brahmanic priesthood deserved due praise for the services it rendered to the cause of learning. Learning in ancient India was invariably connected with religion. Literary culture naturally grew up first among the Brahmans, as it was their duty



to preserve and hand down the sacred books which formed the chief literature of primitive Hindu civilization. Thus it naturally fell to the

Progress of learning.

Brahmans to collect and arrange the early Vedic hymns. Next, the development of ceremonial, as has been noticed above, led to the compilation of further Vedas. Finally, the change from the old religion to the new was responsible for the copious commentaries, called Brahmanas, which the priests of the Epic Age composed to explain the old, and to harmonise the old with the new. Though the Kshatriyas deserve commendation for their share in the bold speculations of the Upanishads, it must have been the Brahman speculations on the nature of the Deity which made these studies possible. In the case of the two great epics also, just as they were completed in after years by Brahman intellects, so their origin may probably be attributed to Brahman art in the Epic Age. Respect for Brahman is, for instance, inculcated in the Mahabharata, and instances can be quoted from the poem, of warriors being punished for not showing proper respect to priests. To this age also belongs the beginning of astronomy as a regular study. The Rig Veda contains traces of only the most elementary astronomical observations, but the literature of the Epic Period indicates a considerable progress in this science. The Lunar Zodiac was arranged about this time, and must have been the work of the Brahman, inasmuch as astronomy was studied, not for its own sake, but for its importance in regulating sacrifices and religious rites. The sciences of Logic, Etymology, Numbers, and Prosody, amongst others, are mentioned by a writer of the period, and it is not too much to believe that a beginning was already being made in all those branches of learning which were destined to reach such a high level in the civilization of ensuing centuries. Of all this learning the Brahman was the head and soul; and whether they wrote and taught at the courts of kings, at the regular Brahmanic settlements for higher education—the Parishads, or in the sylvan retreats where learned priests gathered eager students round them, equally in all cases they justified by results the high position they had obtained in the social system. The value of classes, and of institutions, must not be judged by their feebleness when in decline, and just as the mediæval priesthood performed invaluable services in Europe before other classes became enlightened, so the Brahman served ancient Hindu civilization well by performing functions which no other class was yet capable of performing. Above all, they must be credited with having lit the lamp of learning in India at a time when the West was still in barbarism and darkness, ages before the birth of Greek civilization or the foundation of Imperial Rome.

CHAPTER III. THE SUTRA OR RATIONALIST AGE, 800-327 B.C.

That epoch of Hindu History which succeeded the Epic or Brahmanic Period is generally known as the Sutra Period or the Rationalist Age. While there can be little doubt that the special characteristics which

mark it off from its predecessor became prominent about 800 B.C., there is less consensus of opinion about the later limit of the period. Buddhism arose in the 6th century B.C., but did not become the supreme religion in India until the reign of Asoka in the 3rd century. The Buddhist Period proper may then with reason be dated from the 3rd century B.C. and not before. But while the characteristics of the Rationalist

Limits of the period.

Age no doubt survived until the great 3rd century expansion of Buddhism, another important consideration intervenes to demand a break in the 4th century B.C. This consideration is the fact that what may be called the Historical Period proper begins with the growth of Magadha and the invasion of Alexander in the 4th century. Isolated dates may no doubt be ascribed with certainty to an earlier period, but it is only from about the time of Alexander that a historical narrative of any community becomes possible. Hence it will be most convenient to conclude our account of the Sutra Period on the eve of Alexander's invasion, and afterwards to preface the history of the Buddhist Age by a brief narrative of Alexander's meteoric descent on India.

I.—Characteristics of the Sutra Period.

The most striking characteristics of the period are expansion and enterprise, together with the assiduous cultivation of reason and utility. The Aryan colonists now penetrated into the remotest parts of India, and carried Hindu civilization to the very south of the peninsula. The enterprise which prompted this expansion showed itself also in the more enduring conquest of literature. The verbose and pedantic works of the last epoch were now condensed into serviceable manuals, and the Sutras thus composed testify to the practical sense, the utilitarian bias, of the age. A number of sciences, old and new, were eagerly studied and works written to elucidate them. Grammar was raised to the position of an independent science. Systems of philosophy were elaborated which had the greatest influence upon Indian religion and thought. Finally there arose on the soil of India that noble faith of Gautama Buddha, which, though of slow and insignificant growth at first, was yet destined a few centuries later to be eagerly welcomed throughout the East, until it became the religion of a third of the human race. Colonization and conquest, the extension of Aryan civilization in India together with great literary enterprise and far-reaching religious changes; these are the keynotes of the period, and they mark it out as one of the most brilliant in the long roll of Hindu history.

II.—Political Features of the Period, Hindu Expansion.

Before the end of the Epic Period the Hindus had, as we have seen, conquered and settled the expanse of country stretching from about Delhi to North Behar. While there can be found in the Brahmanas and other literature of the time stray notices of more remote lands, Southern Behar, Malwa and Gujerat, yet the number of Hindu adventurers and colonists who penetrated to these non-Aryan districts can have been but small, and Hindu civilization in the Epic Age was practically confined to the great Aryavarta of the North, that tract extending from the Doab to

Behar, conquered, and in the main peopled, by the Aryan invaders. But in the Sutra Period, the Hindu

Expansion of Hindus
towards the south.

conquests rolled on and spread the circle of Aryan civilization wider and wider, until by the beginning of the Buddhist Period the greater part of India proper had come under Aryan rule or influence. A complete and connected account of these events is, of course, impossible, owing to deficiency of records, but contemporary literature and the observation of foreigners supply us from time to time with interesting pieces of information. Thus in a 6th century work of Baudhayana, India is divided into three portions—(1) Aryavarta, the true home of the Aryans and the most highly esteemed part of India. (2) Most of the Punjab,* Sindh, Gujerat, Malwa and the Deccan, with South and East Behar. The people of these districts were of mixed origin by the fusion of Aryans with aborigines. (3) The least esteemed part of India, comprising Orissa, part of Bengal, some of the Punjab, and most of Southern India. These three grades probably denote three different stages of the Hinduizing processes. The passage affords striking testimony to the rapid expansion of Aryan civilization which had taken place after the close of the Epic Period. Coming to the fifth century we find a powerful Andhra kingdom occupying the Deccan as far south as the River Krishna. It was about this time that Herodotus wrote his monumental history, in the third book of which he testifies to the greatness of the Hindu peoples, and their flourishing condition. From other sources it seems certain that the whole of Southern India had been Hinduized by the 4th century at least, and the three kingdoms of the Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas already founded. The conquest of Ceylon, although its authentic date is hidden beneath a mass of legend, cannot have taken place much later

Character of their
expansion.

than this. Thus before the conclusion of the Rationalist Age a complete chain of Hindu or Hinduized States was spread over the Peninsula from its northern to its southern limits. It must not, however, be supposed that this expansion took the same form as the conquest of the Gangetic basin several hundreds of years before. The present process was not so much a conquest by the sword or a ubiquitous settlement of Aryans, as a gradual and peaceful Hinduizing of the tribes that peopled the Peninsula. "It was a social rather than an ethnical revolution. The aborigines were not hunted down and slaughtered wholesale, or even dispossessed of their land, but, coming under the influence of a stronger race, they learned to adopt its civilization and religion." Particularly was this so in the south and centre of India. The Dravidian races who inhabited these parts had attained a considerable civilization of their own, and were living in towns according to a settled form of government. What happened then was a conflict of civilization, and the triumph of the Aryan, the stronger civilization of the two. But in many parts the population remained

almost entirely Dravidian, and retained their own special languages (as they still do in Southern India) along with much of their own religious belief. Sanskrit never took the place of the Dravidian languages of the south, nor did the Hindu religious system take a really firm hold of Southern India until after Buddhist times. And it is easy to see that before this was accomplished the contact of the Hindu with the aboriginal faith had resulted in the adoption by Hinduism of many non-Aryan deities, superstitions, and forms of ritual.

While the processes at work in the newly Hinduized countries south of the Vindhyas can only be thus

Political condition
of Aryavarta.

roughly outlined, we are fortunately able to picture more accurately the political condition of the Hindu peoples in Aryavarta, particularly in the later years of the period. Little can be learnt about the more important kingdoms during the early Sutra Period, but when the curtain rises in the 7th century, considerable changes in the States-system are found to have taken place since the close of the Epic Age. The northern plain and the north-west of India from Gandhara (near Peshawar) to Ujjain in Malwa was occupied by sixteen great countries, either monarchies or tribal republics.

The chief monarchies were :—

- (1) Magadha, the modern Behar, a country only slightly colonized in the Epic Age, but now gradually obtaining paramount power. Rajagriha was the early, Pataliputra the later, capital of this kingdom.
- (2) Kosala, with which we have already become acquainted in the last period.
- (3) The kingdom of the Vamsas or Vatsas, south of Kosala. Its capital was Kosambi on the Jumna.
- (4) Avanti, still further to the south, in the modern Rajputana, with Ujjain as its capital.

Among the twelve other States which complete the list, there figure certain names with which we are already familiar—the Kasis, soon about to lose their power and independence, the Kurus and Panchalas, sadly diminished in importance since the Epic Days, and the Videhas, now one of the eight confederate clans of the Vajjians, but formerly the important kingdom of Janaka, the scholar and philosopher. This Vajjian confederation is important because it included the powerful Lichchavi clan, whose chiefs, now about to be related in marriage to the kings of Magadha, were destined to be ancestors of the kings of Nepal, of the Mauryas and of the great Gupta dynasty. Its capital, Vesali, situated somewhere in Tirhut, was at this time a great and flourishing place.

From about the year 600 B.C. a considerable amount of information about Magadha, Anga, Kosala, Kasi, and Vesali is supplied by the Jain, Buddhist and Brahmanical books combined, while the rest of the country is left in almost total darkness. Kosala had now incorporated the ancient kingdom of the Kasis, and was regarded as the premier State of India, a position which, however, it soon yielded to Magadha. The early lists

* The Punjab should properly belong to Aryavarta, but the earliest home of the Aryans in India seems to have fallen so behindhand in the national development, that it came to be lowly esteemed by orthodox Hindus.

of kings in the case of Magadha alone can claim any historical reality. The first Magadhan monarch of whom anything important is known is Bimbasara, the fifth of the Saisunaga line. He is credited with the annexation of Anga, a small kingdom on the eastern frontier of Magadha, and he may with reason be regarded as the founder of the Magadhan Imperial power.

Bimbasara
circ. 519-491 B.C.

During his reign Gautama Buddha seems to have preached in Magadha, but the saint must have died shortly after the accession of Ajatasatru, Bimbasara's son and successor. Ajatasatru has been handed down to history as a parricide, whose impatience to occupy the throne prompted the murder of his father. This may or may not be true, but certain notable events stand out clearly from a mass of legend to give his reign a considerable importance. A long war took place with Kosala, and the probability is that the ancient kingdom of Rama was shortly afterwards incorporated in the growing Magadhan Empire. Vesali, the country of the Lichchavi clan, was also conquered, and the whole region between the Ganges and the Himalayas seems to have become subject to Magadha. The victorious king then erected at Patali on the Ganges a fortress, which in the time of his descendants became the capital of a great Indian Empire under the name of Pataliputra. It was during the reign of Ajatasatru and his father that Darius Hystaspes extended the Persian Empire into India, and made of the Punjab and Sindh a separate satrapy. He was, after the original Aryan immigrants, the first of that series of invaders who descended upon the plains of India from the mountainous passes of the North-West. Whether the Persian Empire of Darius extended at all beyond the Indus we do not know; but in the absence of notice to that effect it is reasonable to conclude that the great river of the Punjab was now—as it nominally was when Alexander invaded the country—the boundary between the Persian Empire and the Native States of India. Ajatasatru's successors of the Saisunaga dynasty are nothing more than names. They held the throne for about a hundred years from his death, until the kingdom was usurped by the Nanda dynasty. From amid the unintelligible and conflicting accounts of this dynasty, two facts stand out fairly prominently, namely, that the new ruling family was of base origin, and that it retained the throne for two generations only, or about forty years. Thus, when Alexander invaded India in 327 B.C., a Nanda king must have been reigning at Magadha, and the unpopularity of his house accounts for the accession of the Maurya dynasty in 321 B.C., the first really reliable date in the political history of these Hindu kingdoms. But the invasion of Alexander and the rise of Chandra Gupta Maurya to a position of Imperial power belong to the following period. Henceforth Indian history ceases for a while to turn upon a few stray and unreliable names and dates, so that it is possible for the first time to write a connected narrative of events.

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circ. 491-459 B.C.

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III. Administration and Law. Social and Economic Conditions.

Although the system of administration pursued in the Rationalist Period is not known to us with the same minuteness as the highly-organized government of Chandra Gupta, so well described by Megasthenes, yet the Sutras are not barren of information on the subject. It must be premised that the passages refer to the States of Northern India only, those representing the typical civilization of the age. The main duty of a king, in one passage, is said to be to protect his subjects against thieves. In another, "the particular duty of a king is to protect all beings: by fulfilling it he obtains success." He is to punish evil-doers, to protect cultivation, and to secure his subjects against falsification of weights and measures. The king is required not to confiscate the people's property for his own use beyond a sixth part of their income by way of taxation. Gautama, among the earliest of the Sutra writers, gives a list of the taxes customary in a Hindu State of the time. The land paid from $\frac{1}{10}$ th to $\frac{1}{5}$ th part of the produce, a property tax was levied on cattle and gold, one of less value on roots, fruits, flowers, herbs, honey, meat, grass and fire-wood, and an excise duty of 20% *ad valorem* on the sale of merchandise. A parallel to the most common of European feudal obligations can be found in the kingly privilege of exacting one day's work a month from all citizens, while the exemption of Brahmans from taxation calls to mind one of the most invidious prerogatives of mediæval feudalism.

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In spite of the apparently high rate of taxation, the royal hand does not seem to have lain heavily upon the people. It is distinctly stated by Vasishtha and Baudhayana that the king must exempt from taxation any classes who are unable to pay. Again the flourishing condition of India in the following period, as painted by Megasthenes, must have been of gradual growth through the Rationalist Period, and not the result of any sudden amelioration under the Maurya kings. The Buddhist sacred books allude to a great number of different professions, and speak of the more important trades as protecting themselves by guilds. There seems to have been a considerable demand for costly and delicate art work, in metals, ivory and leather, and merchants carried on a brisk trade through the medium of the current copper coins and also of promissory notes. Although few men besides the kings were really wealthy, yet there is no evidence of want amongst the people. A free man who had to work for hire is regarded as exceptionally unfortunate, and there was always plenty of fresh land to be had, at the mere labour of clearing it.

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The most striking point about the criminal law of the time, as revealed in the Sutra literature, is the invidious distinction observed between castes as regards punishment for crimes. "There was one law for the Brahman, another for the Sudra; the former was treated with undue leniency; the latter with excessive and cruel severity." Both in major and minor offences this distinction held true. Amongst the most heinous crimes were adultery, murder (except when a

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Sudra was murdered by a Brahman), theft, especially theft of land, false evidence, more especially false evidence in respect of land, and suicide. Punishments for criminal offences varied with the status of the criminal, from the fine of a few cows to death. Fines and banishment were the commonest forms of punishment, but the king could exercise in his own person the prerogative of mercy. The Civil Law, especially that relating to property, is very full and just, but it can hardly claim treatment in a brief survey of this nature. It is interesting, however, to notice that the rate of interest is now being legally fixed for the first time. In the case of a loan given on security, the interest works out at about 15% and the principal could only be doubled; but articles such as animals, wool and the produce of a field, apparently lent without security, often mounted up to fivefold the value of the object lent. The most important part of the Hindu Civil Law in ancient as in modern times was that relating to Inheritance, and here the writings of Gautama and his successors are very explicit. The custom of appointing a childless widow or an unmarried daughter to raise issue in the absence of male heirs is sanctioned in a majority of passages. The necessity of having a son to keep the fire alight on the domestic hearth was responsible for a number of other modes of acquiring heirs—e.g., adoption and the purchase of a son. The whole treatment of the intricate subject of inheritance is most practical and methodical. The Rationalist Age is the period of fixed rules and carefully codified bodies of law, which compare most favourably with the verbose and discursive treatises of the Brahmanic Age.

This love of method and system which marked the period resulted along with unquestionable advantages in the unfortunate tightening of caste bands. Caste became less pliable and more rigid than in the Epic Period. It was no longer possible for Kshatriyas and Vaisiyas to enter the priestly caste: birth was henceforward the only key to unlock the portals of the priesthood. Still the lines of demarcation were not so fast drawn as in the late Hindu period, for the supremacy of the Brahmanic priesthood was not yet so unquestioned.

The Jataka Book* of which the subject-matter is in the main pre-Buddhist, contains instances of Kshatriyas, even princes, turning traders or artisans, of Brahmins eating with Kshatriyas, and unions between men and women of all degrees of social importance. None the less it is certain that this was the exception rather than the rule. Stringent regulations were in practice to enforce the hereditary principle, and the offspring of mixed marriages sank to the level of a lower caste. Particularly was this the case when a woman of an upper caste stooped to marry a Sudra. The Sudras were still cut off from the religious privileges of Hinduism, but on the other hand some credit must be allowed the Rationalist Age because the religious rights of the two lower Aryan castes were not yet so curtailed as in after times.

Along with the tightening of caste rules and the growing exclusiveness of the Brahmins must be noticed the multiplication of lower castes. These

Increase of lower castes.

were not as a rule organized on a profession basis,—indeed the great body of professions which have been subsequently divided into separate castes were still embraced by the great undivided Vaisya caste,—but according to locality or race. The bulk of the new castes mentioned in the Sutras are by origin separate aboriginal tribes or immigrants, who, since the formation of rigid social regulations, had been precluded from joining the existing castes and had to form fresh ones of their own. As however the method of their origin is not dissimilar from that of the great Sudra caste, it is easy to understand how they have come to be ranked as offshoots of the Sudras.

A social unit far older in India than caste was the village. The patriarchal village system, with its headman and its joint land tenure, has in many parts remained unchanged from the earliest times up to the present day. In the period we are considering, the village held an even more important position than now, as towns were few and inconsiderable in size. Probably 80 per cent. of the population lived in villages. These silent toilers on the land, however, are not the ones who make history; hence, although their existence must not be forgotten, it is

The towns.

to the large centres of civilization that we must turn to observe at their best the characteristics of the times. Priests, kings, and warriors abode chiefly in the towns; there learning and science flourished, and the free and lively discussions which there took place contributed to the formation of those systems of philosophy which reflect such glory upon ancient India. The social life inside the towns was certainly a brisk one. Constant meetings were held for business and pleasure, more particularly in the royal palace. Gambling was almost universally indulged in, and a gambling hall ordinarily formed a part of the king's palace. In fact, one of the Sutra authors declares that it was the king's duty to provide such a place.

In relation to social life, the most interesting point is again the position of woman. A nation, as history shows, generally stands or falls in accordance with the treatment meted out to its women: hence we are not surprised to find that great respect for women was one of the prominent tenets of Hinduism in the most

Position of women.

flourishing periods of Indian history. As in the Epic Age, so in the Rationalist, ladies were not prohibited from devoting themselves to philosophy and learning, and attaining fame thereby. Polygamy was still rare, and was discouraged by the teachers of authority. But child-marriage was beginning to be practised and restrictions were being already placed upon widow re-marriage. Although nothing comparable to the abuses of later times had yet infected the social organism, yet it is clear that the position of woman was declining. The passion for rule and order was beginning to hedge round the freedom of women by unhealthy restrictions, and the leavening influence of free social intercourse between

* See p. 19 below.



the sexes was already in danger of being lost.

Amongst the matters more fully treated of in the Sūtras are the various kinds of marriage ceremonies, funeral rites, the different stages of a student's life, and the domestic sacraments of householders. In all

Miscellaneous. these matters we find a multiplication of rules and observances, such as must eventually be destructive of mental independence and of spiritual religion. The elaboration of ceremonial together with the over-growing power of the priesthood, both characteristics of the Epic and the earlier Sūtra Period, were largely responsible for the birth and growth of Buddhism. It was necessary that elaborate rules and formularies should be replaced by a religion of the heart.

In conclusion, a few words must be said on the question of food. The Sūtras carefully distinguish between the animals and birds which may be used for consumption and those which may not be so used. Beef was still allowed as an article of food, but in deference to the growing objections against the taking of animal life, an objection formulated as a fundamental tenet in Buddhism, animal food together with animal sacrifices had become the exception rather than the rule by the 4th century B.C. Spirituous liquor was even more abhorred than flesh food: it was rigidly prohibited throughout the period, and total abstinence was enforced by the most cruel punishments.

IV.—Language, Literature, and Learning.

The ancient languages of India have been the subject of much confusion and mystification, nor is the relation of the various vernaculars to each other and to the various literary languages completely settled yet. The language of the Vedic hymns is generally known as Vedic Sanskrit, or Ancient High Indian.

The ancient Indian languages. The language of the Brahmanas and Upanishads had undergone considerable change since the Vedic period, and may be conveniently described as Brahmanic Sanskrit, or Second High Indian. It lies midway between the Vedic and the later, or classical, Sanskrit. Besides the works of the Brahmanic age, the Sūtras were compiled in this language. But a knowledge of it was by no means universal: indeed by the 7th century it seems to have been confined to the Brahmanic schools. The people spoke a variety of dialects, and the most widely known of these, or at least a semi-literary language modelled on the chief vernacular, was Pali, the language of the royal offices, and of the Jain and Buddhist sacred books. Buddha deliberately used the vernacular. Sanskrit died out of public use completely for several centuries, being only dimly kept alight by the Brahmanic priesthood. The religious revival of Hinduism, and the glorious period of classical Sanskrit, which the decay of Buddhism made possible, belongs to the early centuries of the Christian Era, particularly the fourth and fifth. For a considerable time after that Sanskrit occupied the position held by Latin in mediæval Europe, and then gave way to Prakrit, or rather "the Prakrits," the literary form of the vernaculars spoken amongst the people.

The literary languages of the Rationalist Period then were Sanskrit, and in a less degree Pali. The earliest Jain and Buddhist books can with safety be ascribed to a date anterior to Alexander's invasion, and the Sūtras of the Brahmanas are of various dates, between about the 8th and the 5th century B.C.

Sūtras, or brief methodical treatises,* were written as handbooks to all subjects. Sūtra schools were founded on all sides, and each school seems to have compiled its own Sūtras. Thus, each Veda was soon illustrated by, and digested into, a number of separate Sūtras, some of which have come down to us along with the names of their authors. The most important series

Compilation of the Sūtras. Their classification. of Sūtras which have survived can be placed under three heads. First are the *Srauta Sūtras*, manuals of sacrificial ceremonial. Baudhayana and Apastamba are the most authoritative writers in this series. Second are the *Dharma Sūtras*, which epitomize the customs, manners, and laws of the time. These Sūtras are the most important to the historian, while they derive additional authority from the fact that the Codes of Manu, a work of a later age, were based upon them. Gautama and Vasishta are the most important authors in this series. Third are the *Grihya Sūtras*, which give rules for domestic rites. These three bodies of Sūtras are collectively called the Kalpa Sūtra, which is only one of the six Vedangas, or limbs, of Vedic science. The other five limbs are Phonetics, Metre, Grammar, Etymology, and Astronomy. The Sūtras of these Vedangas are less important and valuable historically than those of the

Sciences, Grammar. Kalpa, and have been less completely preserved. In the science of Grammar, however, much good work was done. Panini, perhaps the greatest grammarian of the world, probably lived in the 4th century B.C. He resolved the Sanskrit language into its primitive roots, and thus antedated the philological discoveries of German scholars by more than 2000 years. What astronomical progress was made in the Rationalist Age is unknown to us, as no Sūtra work of the kind has been preserved. In any case the greatest discoveries of Hindu astronomers belong to later times. Certain other sciences, however, which were not treated as separate Vedangas, but included in the Kalpa Sūtra, made startling progress during this period. Geometry was developed in India from the rules for the construction of altars, and thus, like grammar, astronomy, and in fact every other science of the time, owed its inspiration to religion. Geometrical propositions, undreamt of as yet elsewhere, were elaborated by Hindus in the 8th century B.C. The Greeks, notably Pythagoras, owed much to ancient Hindu civilization in this subject, as in the realms of pure philosophy. But geometry was soon eclipsed by arithmetic. The Greeks were ultimately able to surpass the Hindus in geometry, but never rivalled them in the science of num-

Astronomy. Geometry.

Arithmetic.

* Weber in his *History of Sanskrit Literature* inclines to interpret the word Sūtra as a 'clue,' but 'thread' is its more ordinary meaning. The two words, however, may be taken as synonymous: cf. Macdonell's *History of Sanskrit Literature*, Ch. II.

bers. It was in India that the decimal notation was invented, without which Arithmetic as a practical science would have been impossible.

But the most glorious product of learning in the Rationalist Age lies in the dominion of philosophy.

Philosophy.

The six schools of Hindu philosophy will be dealt with in connection with religion in the course of the following section. One note in conclusion. All the literature of the Vedic and Brahmanic Periods, as well as everything in the Rationalist Age until we come to the Buddhist sacred books, was handed down by rote, and not committed to writing. The alphabet does not seem to have been invented before the 7th century. It

The invention of writing.

was most probably of Akkadian, that is, of Semitic, origin, but of course underwent modifications on

Indian soil after its probable introduction by Dravidian traders in the 7th century. It served at first for short notes and letters, official documents and the

At first confined to secular and non-literary purposes.

like, but as yet no materials existed for writing down lengthy treatises. Moreover, the established methods of preserving the national literature, by memory alone, had been long since carried to a high pitch of excellence, and finally, the priesthood probably feared lest their religious lore would become vulgarized by committal to writing. Whatever the causes, writing was not employed for literary purposes until the very end of our period, and the Buddhists were the first to make use of it in this direction.

V.—Religion and Philosophy: Buddhism and Jainism.

During the Rationalist Period the mass of sacrificial ceremonial which had grown up in the Brahmanic Period was systematized and codified. But the introduction of method and system did not have as a result the wholesome reduction of form and

The period marked by revolt against religious formalism.

ceremony: it rather tended to make definite much that had before been hazy and to render obligatory much that had before been a matter of

free choice. While there were as yet no temples, no idols, and no monstrous pantheon such as degraded the Puranic faith, yet the simplicity of the old Vedic religion had been so marred by formalism and by the introduction of many superstitions borrowed from the non-Aryan races, that new forms of philosophy and religion arose to satisfy men's needs. The reaction against the formalism and rigidity of Hinduism and against the growing pretensions of the priests found its expression in the agnostic philosophy of Kapila and in Buddha's religion of charity and love.

The systems of philosophy which were developed in the Rationalist Age form its chief title to the gratitude of Posterity. The earliest

The six systems of philosophy.

probably of these in point of time was the Sankhya system of Kapila. He lived about the 7th century and, like other philosophers of the day, tried to give a systematic answer to the inquiries of the Upanishads. The Upanishads, as we have seen, were largely the work of bold Kshatriya

scholars who chafed under the pedanticism of the priests and their Brahmanas. But the teaching of the Upanishads is not contrary to Hinduism, whereas that of Kapila is. He is frankly agnostic. Anxious,

(1) Sankhya.

like Buddha after him, to afford humanity a relief from sin and suffering, he taught that this end could only be gained by attaining to perfect knowledge. Vedic rites, with their slaughter of innocent animals for sacrifice, he rejects as useless: knowledge, meditation, and pious acts alone, he asserts, lead to salvation. While he acknowledges the existence of the soul, and the truth of transmigration, he finds the existence of a Supreme Deity to be incompatible with the Laws of Evidence. He asserts that each soul is separate, whereas orthodoxy taught that all were portions of the Universal Soul. Thus his philosophy was slightly less materialistic than that of modern philosophers of the type of Schopenhauer, but it was equally opposed to the orthodox creeds of his day. Kapila's agnosticism prevented his system from being adopted as the creed of the people.

The Yoga system of philosophy, attributed to Patanjali,* and therefore of later date than the Rationalist Age, sought to supplement Kapila's system by introducing a belief in a Supreme Deity as well as

(2) Yoga.

some mystic practices by which, it was believed, beatitude could be obtained. Intense meditation and asceticism were the essentials of the Yoga creed: by these means chiefly was perfect knowledge to be acquired. Given perfect knowledge, the soul acquires emancipation from future births, and is free for evermore. But the system was overburdened by a mass of occultism, and never gained the allegiance of any but the superstitious. Eventually it lost its philosophical side and degenerated into a system of excessive physical mortification.

The third system is that of Nyaya, or Logic.

(3) Nyaya, or Logic.

Its founder was Gautama, a well-known Sutra writer, who lived a hundred years or two after Kapila. The objects of knowledge, such as soul and transmigration, are proved by the most subtle ratiocination. But beyond the development of the syllogism Nyaya contains little that is original: its conclusions, though not always its methods, are largely based upon other systems of philosophy, and especially that of Kapila.

The next system to be noticed is the Vaisesika or

(4) Vaisesika, or Atomic philosophy.

Atomic philosophy of Kanāda. It is "supplementary to Gautama's Logic, just as the Yoga philosophy is supplementary to Sankhya." According to this system all material substances are aggregates of atoms, and the atoms are eternal, the aggregates only being perishable by disintegration. Matter is thus eternal, but is distinct from soul. But Kanāda's categories cannot be fitly discussed in the present place: his atomic system belongs rather to the domain of physics than of philosophy.

The fifth and sixth systems are closely allied together, and were both elaborated as supports of orthodoxy in response to the growing agnosticism

* See p. 34 below.

of the time. They are the Purva Mimāṃsā of Jaimini and the Uttara Mimāṃsā, commonly known as the Vedānta, of Vyāsa.* The first is

(5) and (6) The Purva Mimāṃsā, and the Uttara Mimāṃsā. little else than a philosophy of Vedic rites. Jaimini's main object

is to teach men their duty, and the main duty is asserted to be sacrifice. Little is said about belief, and "God is not deducible from this philosophy." The Vedānta therefore was written to supply this want. The Purva Mimāṃsā is the outcome of the Brahmanas, but the Vedānta is the outcome of the Upanishads and treats of the Supreme Spirit and the Universal Soul. The first cause must be God—Brahma—a sentient rational being, and the universe cannot have been evolved from a material cause. The soul is active, is a portion of the Supreme Being, and undergoes numerous transmigrations, eventually after purgation being re-united to Brahma. In fact the whole universe is a portion of Brahma, emanates from Him and is at last resolved into Him. Such were the orthodox philosophical systems which attempted to combat Buddhism and Jainism. But it was useless to oppose the movements of the day and it was not until the revival of Hinduism in the Gupta Period that orthodoxy prevailed. The triumph of the two Mimāṃsā schools was marked by the championship of the two great commentators, Kumarila and Sankarācharya, who lived in the 7th and 9th centuries A.D. respectively.

The religion which now came as a rival to Hinduism, and held the chief place in India for more than a thousand years, was founded by a royal prince, who typified the Kshatriya revolt against formalism and priestly supremacy. Gautama,

Buddhism.

afterwards known as Buddha, the Enlightened, was the eldest son of Suddhodana, Raja of the Sakya clan, who inhabited a territory east of the Kosala kingdom with Kapilavastu as its capital. The birth of Buddha, which afterwards became the subject of numerous legends, took place about the middle of the 6th century in the garden of Lumbini, and is commemorated by a stone pillar erected by Asoka, whose piety dictated a pilgrimage to the spot. Little is known of Buddha's early life, except that he was thoughtful and meditative beyond his years and preferred silent soliloquy to social amusement. He was married at an early age to a cousin of his own, but his yearning for seclusion and meditation grew upon him daily. Impressed more and more by the sight of sickness and sorrow, and eager

Buddha's birth and early life.

to discover a means of combating evil, he seized the occasion of the birth of a son—an event which he feared might bind him too closely to the things of earth—and left his luxurious home in favour of a lonely jungle. He renounced his wife, his babe, his home and the prospect of a throne at one and the same time. After vainly seeking satisfaction in the teaching of successive Brahman ascetics in Magadha, he abandoned himself to nearly seven years of the severest penances in the jungle of Gaya. Fasting and mortification, however, while they reduced him to death's

door, failed to bring the peace of mind he sought. Convinced of their inefficacy he returned to a reason-

The Renunciation.

able mode of life. He was now thirty-six years of age, and yet had achieved nothing. But suddenly the revelation came. As, shortly after the cessation of his penances, Buddha was seated in contemplation under the famous Bo-tree, wondering whether or not he should

The Revelation.

abjure the search which seemed so vain, and return to his wife and beloved home, suddenly the truth flashed upon him in all its significance. Not contemplation, not mortification, it appeared, would avail him to rid the world of sin and suffering, but to preach a higher life and universal love to his fellowmen, that must be his mission. The rest of his life, forty-four years, he spent in preaching these truths amongst the people. Eight months of each year were devoted to itinerant preaching, and during the four months of the rainy season the saint gathered round him in one fixed place all who were eager to be taught. Early in this period of his life the Society or Order of Monks was founded. It grew apace, and people of all classes, men and women, kings, husbandmen and Brahmans, enrolled themselves under the banner of the reformer. Buddha had firmly established his religion in Magadha and the land of his birth before he died at the age of eighty, about 487 B.C. The saint's remains were cremated with great pomp, and his relics distributed amongst his adherents.

To understand the vast expansion of the new religion a few centuries after its birth, some knowledge of the chief doctrines and characteristics of Buddhism is essential. In Chapter II above we have explained how formalism, priestly assumption, and caste restrictions had replaced the old simplicity of the Vedic faith and the social equality of the primitive Hindus. The reaction against these evils had resulted on the one hand in the agnostic philosophy of Kapila, and on the other in the increase of those bodies of ascetics who sought happiness and salvation through

The essential position of Buddha.

penance and self-mortification rather than in sacrifice and ritual. To Buddha, however, such penances were as vain and fruitless as the interminable ceremonial of the priests, nor was the rigidly intellectual system of Kapila sufficient for the intensely human and sympathetic mind of the great reformer. Therefore, while adopting in the main the Sankhya philosophy as the basis of his metaphysical position, Buddha originated his own system of ethics. Brotherly love, self-culture and holy living, were the essentials of Buddhism, and the inculcation of these tenets, acting upon a ground already prepared for some fresh seed, was rewarded by a rich harvest of devoted followers. But Buddha's own character, gentle, holy, sympathetic, was the strongest recommendation of his creed. He preached that salvation was open to all men, Sudras as well as Brahmans, and was to be attained by right conduct rather than by sacrifices. In his personality and teaching Buddha strikingly resembles Christ, but unlike the Christian Church he abstains from theology. He accepts no deity, and no ritual: his creed is not dogmatic, but ethical and moral.

* A mythical person. The name signifies "the arranger."

A short summary of his doctrines will be appropriate. First come the four truths, the noble truth of

His doctrines examined,

suffering, of the cause of suffering, of the cessation of suffering, and of the path which leads to that cessation.

This path is the famous eightfold path and consists of right belief, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right means of livelihood, right exertion, right mindfulness, and right meditation. "The substance of this teaching is that life is suffering, the thirst for life and its pleasures is the cause of suffering, the extinction of that thirst is the cessation of suffering, and such extinction can be brought about by a holy life. It is impossible to convey in a few words all that is implied by the eight maxims into which a holy life has been analysed, but to Buddhists, trained in the traditions of the law, these maxims speak volumes. Correct views and beliefs must be learnt and entertained; high aims and aspirations must always remain present before the mind's eye; truthfulness and gentleness must characterize every word that is uttered; uprightness and absolute integrity must mark the conduct. A livelihood must be sought and adhered to which does no harm to living and sentient things (e. g., the killing of animals for any purpose whatsoever is to be reprehended); there must be a lifelong perseverance in doing good; in acts of gentleness, kindness, and beneficence; the mind, the intellect, must be active and watchful; a calm and tranquil meditation shall fill the life with peace. This is the eightfold path for conquering desires and passions and thirst for life. A more beautiful picture of life was never conceived by poet or visionary; and a more perfect system of self-culture was never proclaimed by philosopher or saint." By prolonged self-culture one can at last attain Nirvana, not final extinction or death, but the extinction of that sinful condition of the mind, which brings about new births. This peace in life, this freedom from desires and passions, Buddha exemplified in his own person. As to the possibility

Nirvana and Karma. of a future heaven for those who attained Nirvana, Buddha replied that 'he did not know.' But though he could not look beyond an earthly Nirvana, yet the prospect of peace and perfection in this life was more than any previous teacher had promised to the masses of suffering humanity. Buddha then does not believe in an immortal soul, yet he teaches rebirths for those who do not attain Nirvana. Those who fail to conquer their sinful passions must face a series of reincarnations, and continue to suffer the pains and ills of life on earth until they have become thoroughly purged. Buddha was unable to eradicate the now firmly planted doctrine of transmigration and his inconsistency in teaching it at the same time as he denied the existence of soul is explained by *Karma*. Karma, or the 'doing' of a man, cannot die but must necessarily lead to its legitimate result. "And when a living being dies, a new being is produced according to the Karma of the being that is dead." What a man sows, that must he reap. Whatever the logical defects of this teaching, it was a powerful incentive to holiness and good conduct, which are infinitely superior to formal acts. To avoid Karma and attain

Nirvana, the higher nature of mankind is called upon to purge itself from the lower pleasures and desires. This could be done by effort and it was open to every man to gain salvation for himself.

Although so largely divergent from the current creeds and practices, Buddhism was not in its origin a new religion, for Buddha believed that he was merely proclaiming an ancient and purer form of Hinduism than then obtained. He maintained the doctrine of transmigration, and his followers allowed the existence of the Hindu Pantheon, although in a modified form. The ancient gods, Brahma included, were recognised,

Relation of Buddhism to Hinduism.

but they held inferior rank to the Buddhas, those who by holy life had attained Nirvana. In practice, however, Buddhism was hopelessly in opposition to Hinduism, for it failed to recognise caste distinctions. Buddha himself emphatically ignored caste, and held that a man's distinguishing mark was his work and not his birth. "The man who deserves praise for his learning and his sanctity alone earns the name of Brahman." All castes lost their distinctions when admitted to the Order, and even a despised barber became one of the most respected of Buddhist monks. The virtuous life of a Sudra was of more potency and obtained in Buddha's eyes more honour than the most severe penances or the most elaborate sacrifices of a Brahman. This contempt for the invidious caste distinctions of the time was what

Its rejection of Caste.

helped more than any other feature to popularise Buddhism and to establish it as the predominant religion of India. At first, however, the expansion of Buddhism was slow, and when at last it had gained pre-eminence, a number of new practices had crept in, first pilgrimages and relic worship, then veneration of idols. Statues of Gautama and the other Buddhas, holy men amongst his followers, were multiplied and venerated. Some such development was inevitable, for all men craved a Deity to worship, and a purely ethical creed can never permanently satisfy the needs of the multitude.

One of the most impressive institutions of Buddhism is its monastic life. While Buddha recommended the life of a Bhikkhu or monk as the most efficacious means of conquering passion and desire, he did not enforce monasticism on all his followers, nor did he establish

Monasticism.

any line of demarcation between monks and laity. Any person might become a Bhikkhu, and any Bhikkhu might return to his previous life in the world. Thus the evil of sacerdotalism was avoided. A notable feature in Buddhism is the admission of nuns to the Order. Buddha yielded in this matter to the importunities of his friends, but the nuns or Bhikkunis were hedged round by a number of conditions, and had to bow down before all Bhikkhus.

The growth of the Order resulted in the construction of numerous viharas or monasteries, examples of which can be seen to this day at Ellora and Ajanta. But this was a later development. At first the Brethren dwelt together in gardens and groves whence they issued to beg their daily bread in the neighbouring towns, for mendicancy was a prominent characteristic of the Order from the very beginning. In course

of time there were drawn up for the regulation of the monks and nuns elaborate rules founded upon the precepts which Buddha had enunciated during his lifetime, and which were handed down intact by the devotion of his followers. Great Church Councils were held from time to time in the early Buddhist Period, viz., in 477 B.C. at Rajagriha, in 377 B.C. at Vesali, and in 242 B.C. under Asoka at Pataliputra. Questions of im-

Buddhist Councils
and Sacred Books.

portance were discussed at all these meetings, and at the last the canon of the Buddhist sacred books was finally settled. Of these sacred books all trace was subsequently lost in Northern India, but the Pali texts carefully preserved in Ceylon can most certainly claim a date anterior to the great Council of 242 B.C. The whole of their framework is Indian and the local colouring is that of Kosala and Magadha. The sacred books of the Southern Buddhists, so-called to distinguish them from the Thibetan and Chinese Buddhists, are known as the three Pitakas, or Baskets. Though not reduced to writing until centuries after their compilation, they underwent but little change in their Ceylonese home, and must in great part be ascribed to the centuries immediately succeeding Buddha's death, viz., the 5th and 4th B.C. Hence they are important as illustrating the manners and customs of the early Hindus in their chief centres of civilization during the later Rationalist Period. In these books minute rules are laid down for monks and nuns, and philosophical disquisitions are indulged in, but the sayings and doings of Buddha occupy by far the greater part of the whole. Each Pitaka comprises a great number of sub-divisions, to catalogue which would be foreign to the purpose of this summary. Perhaps the most interesting of all are the series of Jatakas or stories included under the first or Sutta Pitaka. They contain material of even pre-Buddhistic origin and "form the most ancient collection of folk-lore now extant in any literature of the world." They are 550 in number and have fortunately found an excellent English translator.*

About the time that Gautama Buddha was entering upon his missionary labours, Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, passed away (circ. 527 B.C.). Mahavira, like Buddha, founded a monastic community and spent more than half a lifetime in itinerant preaching. The followers he had gathered together in North and South Behar were known after his death as Jains, since Mahavira claimed to be a 'Jaina' or 'spiritual conqueror.' Jainism was long considered to be an off-

Jainism.

shoot of Buddhism, but its independent origin is now acknowledged. Still it greatly resembled Buddhism in denying the authority of the Vedas, in its regard for animal life, and in its rejection of sacrifice and caste. The Jains and Buddhists existed side by side for several centuries, but while Buddhism has declined and almost disappeared in India, Jainism has still a considerable following in various parts of Western India.

The sacred books and other records of the Jains are less known than those of the Buddhists, and now only exist in fragments. The eleven Angas which form the most important group of the seven divisions of Jain Scriptures, purport to belong to the 4th century B.C. The objectors to the early date have hitherto failed to prove their contention, and the details about the life of Mahavira, together with the allusions to the political and social conditions of India just before the invasion of Alexander, may be regarded as in the main authentic. Fresh light may be confidently expected to be thrown upon the period when the scattered Jain manuscripts have been fully collated and explained. The evidence of the Jain and Buddhist records in combination should do much to check the errors which have crept into the writings of orthodox Hinduism.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BUDDHIST PERIOD.

1.—The Invasion of Alexander.

FROM the time of the first Greek invasion of India, that of Alexander, the materials for Indian history are supplemented by a number of accounts written by foreign travellers and historians. These external sources are a useful addition and correction to native contemporary literature, and to native tradition.*

Alexander, the greatest conqueror of antiquity, and the greatest military genius of all times, determined to enlarge the Persian Empire he had subjugated by extending its boundaries beyond the Indus. He arrived with his army on the confines of India in the summer of 327 B.C., and having completely established his communications, devoted himself to the task of obtaining the submission of the numerous local tribes west of the Indus, most of whom had been nominally brought under the Persian Empire of Darius.† Internal wars and jealousies led many chiefs to willingly place their forces at Alexander's disposal, and even the King of Taxila, an important monarch beyond the Indus, lent his assistance to the invader. Operations, however, had to be conducted against the Aspasiens, a warlike tribe in Kunar Valley, and the Assakenoi, entrenched in their mighty citadel of Massaga (Manglawar in Suwat), for long held the conqueror at bay. Next, the almost impregnable stronghold of Mt. Aornos (Mahaban) near the Indus, gave opportunity for Alexander to display those powers of supreme generalship which, always most remarkable, in the time of difficulty inspired his men with unbounded confidence, and served to intimidate the foe. In the face of a determined enemy a Macedonian garrison was successfully posted upon this peak, 5,000 feet above the Indus, strongly defended by nature and by art, and accessible but by a single path. Having now completely subjugated the surrounding country, Alexander bridged the Indus at a spot somewhat north of Attock, and before the summer of 326 had

Alexander's descent into
India, and earlier opera-
tions.

326 B.C.
He crosses the Indus

* Professor Rhys Davids. Cf. also Chapter XI in his *Buddhist India*, a work which is extremely valuable on the social, economic, and linguistic side. Most of the Buddhist sacred books have been edited in the original by the Pali Text Society (50 Volumes), but only a few have been translated.

* The accounts of Alexander's invasion by the Greek and Roman Historians have been edited in one volume, with a useful introduction, maps, etc., by J. W. McCrindle.
† Cf. p. 13 above.

begun, his army safely set foot upon the soil of India proper "which no European traveller or invader had ever trodden before." Liberally provided with supplies by the friendly King of Taxila, the army proceeded to the Hydaspes (Jhelum). Here, however, Alexander encountered his first formidable antagonist. Porus, king of the country between the Jhelum and the Chenab, determined to resist the invasion, and took up his

position on the further bank of the Jhelum with a superior force.

But Alexander, undaunted by any difficulties, prepared a great flotilla of boats, and by a skilful night march crossed the river at a spot where he was least expected. The battle which followed is vividly described by Greek writers from the materials of eye-witnesses. The

Battle with Porus,
 July, 326 B.C.

squadron of elephants, on which the Indian king relied, broke through the Macedonian Phalanx by their massive weight, but the very existence of the elephants prevented rapid movements amongst the Indian cavalry and infantry. Charged in front and in rear by the dashing horsemen of Alexander, the forces of Porus were completely broken: his elephants, maddened by wounds, turned indiscriminately upon friend and foe, and the battle ended amid murderous confusion in the total defeat of the Indian army and the capture of their leader. The stricken giant—Porus was 6½ feet in height—craved "only to be treated as a king"—a request that was magnanimously granted, as Alexander not only confirmed him in his lands, but placed fresh territories beneath his sceptre. This act of wisdom secured a faithful and a useful ally.

Moving along under the foot of the hills, Alexander crossed the Akesines (Chenab) and having passed through a tract of friendly country, reached the Hydraotes or Ravi.

326 B.C.

On the further bank of the river there dwelt a confederation of independent tribes headed by the Kathaioi, a warlike race. Their main stronghold, the town of Sangala, was stormed by the Macedonians and all opposition came speedily to an end. Alexander had now crossed four rivers, and approached the fifth, the Hyphasis, or modern Bias. Hitherto he

Gradual advance to the
 Bias.

had come into contact with peoples who are known little, if at all, to Indian history, and beyond the resistance of Porus and of the tribesmen on Mount Aornos, no opposition worthy of Alexander's generalship had been encountered. The Punjab had dropped behindhand in the development of Hindu civilization, and during the Epic and Rationalist Periods it figures but little in the national literature. But had Alexander penetrated into the great Middle-land, or beyond that into Magadha, where the Nanda dynasty were then enjoying

Reasons for not proceeding further.

an acknowledged leadership in Northern India, the resistance he would have met with must have been on a very different scale. The ever-victorious army was, however, weary of perpetual marching and despondent of continuous success. Their numbers were depleted by disease, wars, and death. The King, himself anxious to advance, no sooner marked the despondent feelings of his men, than he sought to rouse their enthusiasm by an eloquent address. His

trustworthy general, Koinos, in replying for the army, urged moderation in conquest, and emphasized the danger of advancing into the heart of an unknown and hostile country with a force so small, weary, and despondent. The loud applause of the men showed that Koinos voiced the general feeling, and Alexander, after three days' solitary and mortified contemplation in his tent, consented to forego his cherished

Sept., 326 B.C.

plans, and gave orders for the retreat. Twelve giant altars were erected on the further bank of the river (Hyphasis) to mark the limit of his conquests, and those witnesses of Alexander's power stood for centuries, a source of veneration to natives and foreigners alike.

But though Alexander was unable at this time to give completeness to his Indian conquests, he undoubtedly intended to return at a future date. Meanwhile, the conquests already made were

Organization of
 conquests.

regarded as a permanent addition to his vast empire. Towns were founded in convenient spots, and garrisons left in charge of them. Native kings in some districts, Macedonian generals in others, were appointed as satraps to govern the country. Porus was elevated to the position of supreme king under Alexander, over all the territory beyond the Hydaspes, while the King of Taxila was confirmed in his sovereignty between the Indus and the Hydaspes.

The retreat was conducted in the most masterly manner and was well combined with exploration and fresh conquests. The army first withdrew to the banks of the Hydaspes. There a gigantic fleet of warships and transports was constructed, and in

The Retreat,
 326-5 B.C.

the autumn of 326 B.C. a portion of the army under the king himself, together with the horses and supplies, embarked upon their memorable voyage to the sea. An army of 120,000 men marched along the banks to escort and protect the fleet in its progress through the unknown country. Great difficulty was experienced at the confluences of the rivers. At the spot—now lost trace of owing to changes in the river-beds—where the Hydaspes joined the Akesines, the channel was so narrow and the rapids so dangerous, that two warships were sunk, and the vessel which carried Alexander himself was in imminent danger of shipwreck. In a safe anchorage beyond a halt was made, and an expedition prepared to subdue the neighbouring tribes. A people named the Agalassoi who ventured to resist, met with a terrible fate; and when their last stronghold could hold out no longer, the inhabitants set fire to the town and perished with their wives and children in the flames. After this diversion, the voyage was resumed to the second confluence, where the waters of the Hydraotes discharged themselves into the united streams of the Hydaspes and the Akesines. Here again identification is impossible, owing to the unrecorded geographical changes of subsequent centuries. At this point Alexander met with a most desperate resistance.

Operations against the
 Malloi and other tribes.

A body of allied tribes under the leadership of the Malloi co-operated against the invaders. But the delay occasioned by personal and inter-tribal jealousies, so common in Indian history, frustrated

THE CYCLOPEDIA OF INDIA.

21

their endeavours. Alexander's rapidity of movement and unerring strategy combined to take them unprepared. They were cut down and dispersed, their towns captured, and the remnant, after a desperate struggle in an unknown citadel, submitted and bought their conqueror's clemency by lavish gifts. The storming of the unidentified citadel—situated somewhere on the border of the Jhang and Montgomery Districts—was the scene of one of the most memorable incidents in Alexander's adventurous career. The king had mounted the citadel wall in advance of his followers. In swarming after him they broke the ladder, so that Alexander was left standing alone upon the parapet, confronted by a host of foes. Instead of leaping back from out the wall "he did an act of daring past all belief and unheard of—an act notable as adding far more to his reputation for rashness than to his true glory. For with a headlong spring he flung himself into the city filled with his enemies . . . But, as luck would have it, he had flung his body with such nice poise that he alighted on his feet, which gave him the advantage of an erect attitude when he began fighting. Fortune had also provided that he could not possibly be surrounded, for an aged tree which grew not far from the wall had thrown out branches thickly covered with leaves as if for the very purpose of sheltering the King."* Here Alexander stood at bay and slew a great number of assailants, some with the sword, others with stones. But at length his breast was pierced by a barbed dart, and had not his friends arrived to support him at this moment he must have fallen in the hands of the enemy. The wound was cured with difficulty and the army were under the greatest anxiety about their king's recovery. Though the heroism of such a scene has an almost epic glamour, Alexander certainly deserved the reproaches of his followers for his unexampled rashness.

The voyage was then continued past the third confluence (that with the Hyphasis) to the fourth and last, where the united streams poured their waters into the Indus. Here, in the country of Sindh, warlike operations were conducted against several kings and chiefs. Alexander finally arrived at Patala in Lower Sindh, the then capital

Alexander's conquest
of Sindh,
325 B.C.

of the Delta. After devoting some months to a personal exploration of the Delta, Alexander made his final preparations for leaving India. He himself, with the bulk of his army, marched amidst great sufferings across the arid wastes of Gedrosia, in Baluchistan, and thence to Susa in Persia, where he arrived in May 324 B.C. The fleet under the resourceful Admiral Nearchos sailed round the coast into the Persian Gulf, up to the mouth of the Euphrates. The romantic episodes of this voyage, and the startling peculiarities of the savage races who were encountered at the various landing places on the way, are recorded in the "Indika" of the Greek historian, Arrian.

The Indian expedition had lasted from start to finish three years, of which about nineteen months were spent beyond the Indus. From a military point of view the achievements of that

period were extraordinary; the genius of Alexander triumphed over all odds, and his organisation both in the advance and the retreat attained almost to human perfection. Had he advanced beyond the Hyphasis, his forces might have become isolated from their base, and failure might conceivably have resulted. But as it was, his success was unqualified, and the superiority of his disciplined troops to the best Asiatic levies was startlingly demonstrated. Had Alexander lived, it is quite probable that he would have maintained his conquest of the Punjab and Sindh, but his premature death (June 323 B.C.) reduced his Indian expedition to the level of a quickly forgotten raid. The generals among whom Alexander's great empire was divided had enough to do

But a political
failure.

to settle their mutual differences, and when the Indian tribes revolted, it was found impossible to assist the Macedonian Garrison. At the second partition of the empire, in 321 B.C., Antipater, the inheritor of Alexander's Asiatic dominions, practically recognized the independence of India, and the last Macedonian officers quitted the Punjab in the year 317 B.C. Politically, then, the Indian expedition was a failure; it led to no permanent annexation, and India remained unchanged. The

It exerted small influence
on India.

foreign conqueror was soon forgotten, and the influence of Greek civilization and culture beyond the Indus was practically nil. To assert that India was Hellenized by Alexander is historically unsound, and if in ancient time any Greek ideas filtered through to India, such influence must be ascribed solely to those Græco-Bactrian kingdoms, which, as we shall notice hereafter, were subsequently established on the Indian Borderland.

II.—The First Indian Empire. *The Mauryas and their Successors.*

About the time of Alexander's invasion there occurred an event small in itself, but fraught with the most important consequences. Chandragupta, a young kinsman—by his father's side at least—of the Nanda dynasty, was banished from Magadha. The unpopularity of the reigning monarch suggested to the ambitious exile a bold policy of usurpation. He collected,

Chandragupta founds the
Maurya dynasty in
Magadha,
321 B.C.

therefore, a formidable army of predatory warriors, whom he first led in the revolt against alien rule after Alexander's death. Having conquered the Punjab, and thereby tested the power of his arms, he attacked, dethroned, and slew the Nanda monarch of Magadha, whose vacant throne he occupied by the aid of an intriguing Brahman, Chanakya. His own private forces augmented the already large army of the Nandas, and Chandragupta, once firmly seated on the throne as the founder of the Maurya dynasty, embarked on a career of conquest hitherto unparalleled in India. Seleukos Nikator, ultimately the

Invasion of Seleukos
Nikator,
305 B.C.

successful competitor for the Asiatic realms of Alexander, imitated his master by invading India, in order to recover the Macedonian conquests beyond the Indus. But he was completely defeated by the great Indian king; and not merely abandoned all claim to the Punjab and Sindh,

* Q. Curtius, Bk. IX, Ch. V.

but ceded by treaty four further satrapies corresponding to Eastern Afghanistan and Beluchistan. Thus the North-West Frontier of India was extended to the Hindukush, and embraced regions which neither the

Chandragupta's conquests.

Mogul Emperors nor the British were ever able to include in their vast dominions. Nor was this all.

Either previous to the invasion of Seleukos, or after its defeat, Chandragupta marched victoriously over all the Northern States and subdued the country South to the Narbada, if not beyond. By ruthless severity Chandragupta governed and consolidated the vast provinces he had gathered under his sway, and his son, Bindusara, inherited in 297 B.C., an empire greater than any which India had yet known.

We are fortunately supplied with much detailed information about the countries of Northern Hindus-

Megasthenes and his account of India.

tan in this stirring time, and about the administration of Chandragupta's empire. Seleukos, on abandoning his Eastern schemes, sent as envoy to the Court of Magadha, an observant Greek and competent writer, the famous Megasthenes. The account compiled by Megasthenes of the geography, products and institutions of India, is of the greatest use to the historian of ancient India, although fragments only of it are preserved and the author seems occasionally to have been misled.* He is mistaken in affirming that slavery did not exist, and falls hopelessly into error when he attempts to divide the people into their several classes. But there is no reason to doubt his trustworthiness in matters such as the capital, the court, the army and the administration. Pataliputra, the capital of Chandragupta, is

Magadha, Its Capital and Court.

described as an immense city ten miles by two, encompassed by a wall with 570 towers and

60 gates, and by a moat 600 feet in breadth, and 30 cubits in depth. The extent of these fortifications has been hardly excelled by the greatest cities of the modern world, but Indian towns always tended to cover a vast area. Within the walls stood the gorgeous royal palace surrounded by an extensive park and ornamental gardens. The appointments of the palace could show all that gorgeousness and ostentation which are associated with the East, and the king excelled all contemporary princes in the magnificence of his jewels and attire. Amongst the most interesting particulars about the Court is the mention of an Amazonian bodyguard which protected the king in his palace and when he indulged in a royal hunt. The predilection of the monarch for *massage*, is also a point worthy of notice.

The Army and the War Office.

Megasthenes' account of the army is incompletely preserved, but what he says conclusively estab-

lishes the great military power of the Maurya kings. "The king has in his pay a standing army of 600,000 foot soldiers, 30,000 cavalry, and 8,000 elephants, whence may be formed some conjecture as to the vastness of his resources. The noticeable superiority

in cavalry and elephants over the proportion usually observed in Indian States was a great source of strength to Magadha. The management of Chandragupta's army was of a most highly organized description. The Maurya War Office consisted of a commission of thirty members divided into six co-ordinated departments, each with definitely assigned duties.

The account of civil administration is not so full as we could wish, but we learn that the land tax was estimated at one-fourth of the gross-produce, that irriga-

Civil administration.

tion was entrusted to a separate department of state, that roads were kept in order by special officers who erected signposts and milestones at regular intervals, that artisans were subject to special supervision, and that the administration of the criminal law was both efficient and severe. More detailed information is given regarding the municipal administration of the capital, and it is not unlikely that the other great cities of the empire were governed by similar methods. Megasthenes tells us that "those who have charge of the city are divided into six bodies of five each. The members of the first look after everything related to the industrial arts. Those of the second look after the entertainment of foreigners. To these they assign lodgings; and they keep watch over their modes of life by means of those persons whom they give to them as servants. They escort them on their way when they leave the country; or in the event of their dying, they forward their property to their relatives. They take care of them when they are sick, and, if they die, bury them." From these elaborate regulations we gather that great numbers of strangers visited the capital on business. The Maurya Empire must have been in constant intercourse with foreign states. Probably the treaty with Seleukos was largely responsible for this.

"The third body consists of those who enquire when and how births and deaths occur, with a view not only of levying a tax, but also in order that births and deaths among high and low may not escape the cognisance of Government.

"The fourth class superintends trade and commerce. Its members have charge of weights and measures and see that the products in their season are sold by public notice. No one is allowed to deal in more than one kind of commodity unless he pays a double tax.

"The fifth class supervises manufactured articles, which they sell by public notice. What is new, is sold separately from what is old; there is a fine for mixing the two together.

"The sixth and last class consists of those who collect the tenths of the prices of the articles sold. Fraud in the payment of this tax is punished with death."

It is noticeable that the authorities for Chandragupta's reign make little mention of religion. The usurping monarch seated himself upon the throne through the assistance of a Brahman, and he probably

Buddhism not yet the State religion.

followed the Brahmanical religion himself. It was left to his great-grandson to take up the cause of Buddhism and to make it the paramount religion of India.

* The fragments of Megasthenes' *Indika* are translated in McCrindle's admirable *Ancient India*. See also Rhys David's *Buddhist India*, Ch. XIV.

In 297 B.C., the Emperor died after a reign of twenty-four successful years. Of his successor, Bindusara, but little is known. He maintained a friendly policy with Seleukos and his successor, and Greek writers pretend even to record the details of the correspondence which passed between the Indian king and his Western ally. During the twenty-five years of his reign Bindusara probably rounded off the conquests of his father by the subjugation of the Deccan. The extension of the Maurya Empire to the neighbourhood of Madras was certainly completed before the reign of Asoka, and our knowledge of Chandragupta's reign is detailed enough to warrant the assumption that had he carried his arms victoriously to the South, some record would have been left of the achievement. This task may be assigned provisionally to the shadowy career of Bindusara, and Asoka therefore succeeded to an empire hardly less extensive than the British Indian power of to-day.

Bindusara,
297-272 B.C.

Although a young man when called to sit upon the imperial throne, Asoka had already served as Viceroy, both in Western India and in the North-West Provinces. Ujjain, one of the seven sacred cities of the Hindus, was the capital of the Western Indian viceroyalty, and Taxila in the Punjab, then the head-quarters of Hindu learning, was the capital of the North-West viceroyalty, which probably included Kashmir, the Punjab and the satrapies west of the Indus.

Asoka,
272-231 B.C.

A doubtful tradition asserts that Asoka waded through bloodshed to the throne. But whether or not the succession was disputed, records for the earlier decade of his reign are non-existent. The first event which can be fixed with certainty is a war with Kalinga, a powerful kingdom stretching from the Bay of Bengal to the Godaveri, and as yet unsubdued by the Maurya kings. The war seems to have been stubbornly contested, but resulted in the complete conquest of Kalinga. The misery caused by the war, as Asoka relates in his thirteenth Edict, induced him to foreswear war for the future and led him to the conclusion that the only true conquest was the conquest of religion, that won by the Law of Piety, *i.e.*, the Dharma, the whole duty of man, according to the Buddhist faith. Asoka was a zealous Buddhist, and not only made an extended pilgrimage to all the sacred spots of the Buddhists, but towards the end of his reign actually entered the Order, and donned the yellow robe of a monk, while retaining the responsibilities of his royal office. His zeal for the faith brought about the great Church Council at Pataliputra, at which the Canon of the Buddhist scriptures was finally settled. But his religious enthusiasm went still further. He made it his special business to spread Buddhism throughout his vast empire and to send missionaries abroad. The popularisation of the lofty ethical code known as the Dharma was accomplished by a series of Imperial Edicts, engraved on rocks and pillars, and

War with Kalinga,
261 B.C.

enforced by all the administrative machinery of an autocratic state.

Religious acts of
Asoka.

On seven rocks in different parts of India, Asoka caused to be inscribed the same series of fourteen Edicts, containing the essentials of his Ethical System. They are all written in various forms of the vernacular, and were first translated by the indefatigable archæologist James Prinsep, about 70 years ago. The Edicts are promulgated in the name of King Piyadasi, 'beloved of the gods,' and it was only through the help of the Ceylon sacred books that this hitherto unknown king was identified with the historical Asoka.

The Dharma, and the
Imperial Edicts.

(1) In the first Edict Asoka prohibited the slaughter of animals. He had previously abandoned the royal chase and ceased to partake of animal food.

The Fourteen Rock
Edicts.

(2) In the second he provided medical aid for men and animals. Not only was ordinary provision made for travellers, but human and animal hospitals were established in all parts of the empire. "Wherever plants useful either for men or for animals were wanting, they have been imported and planted. Wherever roots and fruits were wanting, they have been imported and planted. And along public roads, wells have been dug for the use of animals and men."

(3) The third Edict enjoins a quinquennial religious celebration.

(4) The fourth Edict emphasizes the importance of the practice of religion and of respect for relations, Brahmans, etc. Asoka here asserts that he has made the practice of religion to prevail throughout his dominions.

(5) The fifth announces the appointment of ministers of religion and missionaries who mix with all sects and all nations.

(6) In the sixth Edict, Asoka asserts that he is constantly busied with superintending the social and domestic life of the people.

(7) The seventh proclaims universal toleration, one of the fundamental tenets of Buddhism.

(8) The eighth recommends as more fitting occupations for kings than the chase, piety, distribution of alms, the religious instruction of the people, and consultations on religious subjects.

(9) The ninth defines the 'meritorious practice of religion,' as regard for slaves and servants, and respect for relations and teachers, tenderness towards living beings, and alms to 'Brahmans and Sramāns.'

(10) In the tenth the king says that he seeks only that true glory which is founded on spreading true religion.

(11) The eleventh almost repeats the sentiment of the ninth Edict, and asserts that no gift is comparable to the gift of religion, *i.e.*, the imparting of religious instruction.

(12) The twelfth reasserts the importance of toleration and at the same time proclaims the king's intention of extending his own faith by moral persuasion.

(13) The thirteenth mentions the conquest of Kalinga, and regrets the slaughter and sorrow entailed by it. It continues "The beloved of the gods

ardently desires security for all creatures, respect for life, peace and kindness in behaviour. This is what the beloved of the gods considers as the conquests of religion. It is in these conquests of religion that the beloved of the gods takes pleasure, both in his empire and in all its frontiers." Then follow the names of five Greek kings, including Ptolemy of Egypt, to whose kingdoms, as well as to the extremities of India, missionaries had been sent.

(14) The fourteenth concludes this series of edicts and announces that the king will cause still more to be engraved.

This series of edicts are an excellent exposition of Asoka's principles of government and ethical system. Some precepts are repeated, because particular importance was attached to them.

Other Edicts and inscriptions of Asoka.

Besides this body of laws or rules separate edicts, many of which have come down to us, were published by Asoka from time to time, and inscribed on rocks, or caves, or pillars. Thus we have the special edicts relating to the administration of Kalinga, and the three cave inscriptions at Barabar, in which Asoka dedicates certain cave dwellings to a peculiar mendicant sect, thereby carrying out into practice his principles of toleration. Most important of the remaining inscriptions are those on pillars. On six separate pillars, notably the Lats at Delhi and Allahabad, a series of edicts were inscribed in the later years of the great king's reign. They reiterate and amplify the instructions of the earlier rock edicts, to which they may be justly considered an appendix. We have briefly mentioned the most important of the inscriptions which have been traced to King Asoka. They extend over a period of thirty years, between about 260—230 B.C., and are "the only safe foundation on which to build a history of his momentous reign." They are, however, supplemented by a mass of Buddhist legend, which includes much genuine historical tradition, so that the materials for the history of Asoka are more complete than those of any other reign in Hindu history prior to the Mohammedan conquest.*

The record of the reign is one of which any monarch might well be proud. Asoka worked indefatigably for his people and his religion. "Work I must"

Asoka's greatness.

He said, "for the public benefit." He was unwearied in business, and received reports at any hour and place. He governed an empire which extended from the Himalayas to the neighbourhood of Madras, from Beluchistan and Eastern Afghanistan in the West to the mouths of the Ganges in the East. Much of this vast empire was governed directly by the king from his capital of Pataliputra: the rest—the outlying provinces—were administered by four viceroys, generally members of the royal family. The greater part of his long reign was devoted to administration and the inculcation of religion: only one war—that against Kalinga—broke its peaceful course. Much attention was devoted to building. A royal palace of unparalleled magnificence was built at Pataliputra, vast monasteries, countless

stupas or sacred cupolas, and massive monolithic pillars were erected throughout the length and breadth of the land. Excepting the pillars, some of which, so valuable for their inscriptions, remain intact, the only buildings of the Asoka period which have escaped destruction are the group of celebrated stupas around Sanchi in Bhopal. The excavations at Sanchi have been fruitful in results of the greatest importance for the history of the early Buddhist period, and it is quite possible that some at least of these stupas were erected by the order of Asoka himself. But undoubtedly Asoka's greatest claim to fame reposes in the measures taken by him to spread the teaching of Buddhism. He neither attempted to destroy Brahmanism or Jainism,

Buddhism becomes a world-religion.

but by his active propaganda and the vast ecclesiastical machinery he evolved and controlled, he raised Buddhism to a position far above all rival systems. At Asoka's accession Buddhism was little more than one of several religions in Magadha and Kosala; before his death it had become predominant throughout India and Ceylon. Nay more, it had been carried by zealous missionaries to the confines of Western Asia and even into the territories of European kings. Through the zeal and industry of Asoka, Buddhism had become one of the great world-religions. It had received an impetus which bore it triumphantly forward, and although a Hindu revival was destined to wipe out Buddhism in India itself, the teaching of Gautama penetrated to the Far East, and occupies to-day a position of predominance in the vast and populous Chinese Empire as also in the countries of Burmah, Siam, and Thibet.

But a philosopher-king of the type of Asoka or Marcus Aurelius is not always distinguished by that practical statesmanship so necessary to the consolidation of a mighty empire. Whether Asoka's religious zeal was incompatible with strong administration, or whether he was unfortunate in his descendants, certain it is that the empire broke up shortly after his death, and his descendants retained only Magadha and the neighbouring provinces. Dasaratha, Asoka's grandson, seems to have been his immediate successor.

Break up of the Maurya Empire.
230—184 B.C.

He is known to us from certain inscriptions, but his reign was a short one. The remaining kings of the Maurya dynasty are mere names, and can be found in the Vishnu Purana.* The imperial line continued to occupy the throne of Pataliputra until about 184 B.C., but with gradually diminishing power. After the accession of the Sunga dynasty in 184 B.C., the descendants of Asoka only survived as petty local rajas in Magadha. Meanwhile new states were formed; peoples conquered by the earlier Mauryas reasserted their independence, and the Andhras, who formed one of the protected states of Asoka's Empire, built up a powerful kingdom between the Krishna and the Godavari.

Still the Empire founded by Chandragupta, curtailed as it was, remained the greatest of Indian states, and continued for a while to form the pivot of Indian history. The last Maurya ruler was

The Sungas,
184—72 B.C.

* On the subject of Asoka we are much indebted to the writings of V. A. Smith ('Early India,' 'Asoka' in the Rulers of India Series, and articles in the Royal Asiatic Journal). He has made this period his own. Dutt has also paid very special attention in his work to the great Hindu Emperor.

* See p. 34 below.



treacherously murdered by his Commander-in-Chief Pushyamitra, who founded the Sunga dynasty. Pataliputra remained the capital, and the empire ruled over

Pushyamitra,

by the Sungas probably embraced most of the old Aryavarta east of the Punjab, but certainly did not extend further South than the Narbada river. The reign of Pushyamitra is memorable for three things: First, an invasion by the King of Kalinga, now again independent, was beaten back. Second, a more formidable invasion on the part of the Greek Menander, King of Kabul and the Punjab, was repelled after a severe struggle, and a possible loss of territory in the West. Third, Pushyamitra, who was an orthodox Hindu, marked the beginning of the Brahmanical reaction by celebrating with great pomp the *Asvamedha* or horse-sacrifice. This was an ancient rite which only a paramount sovereign could celebrate, nor could it be carried out until after a successful challenge had been given to all rival claimants of supreme power. The defeat of Menander and the King of Kalinga doubtless justified Pushyamitra in performing this solemn rite. The old king, who died in 148 B.C., is the only great figure of the dynasty; his successors enjoyed but the shortest of reigns and accomplished too little for their deeds to be handed down to history. The period was probably one of confusion, and the last king of the ten who composed the Sunga dynasty lost his life in a discreditable intrigue.

A family of powerful Brahmins, the Kanvas, who seem to have governed latterly as "Mayors of the Palace," now seized the throne.

The Kanvas,
72-27 B.C.

Vasudeva had contrived to slay his master, the last Sunga king, but beyond his crime and the time of his accession he is unknown to history. Similarly, nothing is known about the reigns of his three descendants, and we may assume that the time was a time of violence. The last of the Kanvas was slain by a king of the Andhra dynasty* who had for some time past been growing in importance, and who may even have been for some generations before the paramount sovereigns of Magadha.

The Andhra kingdom, which now came to the front, had been in existence prior to the time of Chandragupta. Either in his time or in that of his successor, the Andhras were compelled to recognise the supremacy of Magadha.

Early history of the
Andhras.

They, however, as mentioned above, reasserted their independence upon the disruption of Asoka's Empire, and rapidly built up a dominion which extended right across the centre of India from the Godaveri to Nasik in the Western Ghats. The dynasty

The Andhras succeeded
the Kanvas. Period of
their paramountcy.
27 B.C. to 236 A.D.

which extinguished the Kanvas and inherited their territory was then no new one, but had already provided the Andhras with at least a dozen kings. About thirty kings reigned altogether, and of these nearly twenty occupied the position of paramount sovereign after the conquest of Magadha. The dynasty endured until about 236 A.D., and the fall of the Andhras curiously coincides with the

end of the Kushana dynasty of Northern India, as well as with the rise of the Sassanian dynasty of Persia. No continuous account of the Andhras either before or after their conquest of Magadha can be written, but some few of their kings have found a place in history and deserve consideration. Thus, King Hala, the seventeenth king, who lived in the 1st century A.D., encouraged the adoption of the Prakrits or vernaculars for literary composition. Early in the second century Viliyayakura II waged a successful war against the Sakas, Pahlavas and Yavanas, who had invaded India shortly before the Christian era, and had carved out for themselves a series of kingdoms in the west of the peninsula.* "The greatest of the foreign princes were the Saka satraps of Surashtra (Kathiawar) who fought so successfully against Viliyayakura's successors that Surashtra, and the whole of Malwa, Cutch, Sindh, and the Konkan, were at last, under the great Rudradaman, definitely detached from the Andhra dominions. The Andhra King at the time was Pulumayi II. Of the later Andhra kings Yajna Sri was the most important and the most powerful.

145 A.D.

A multitude of coins struck by him have been preserved, and it is probable that he recovered some of the lost provinces of the West. His successors, the last three kings of the dynasty, are mere names, and the causes accountable for the downfall of a dynasty which had endured with hardly diminished prestige for so long, are at present totally unknown. The Andhra kings seem to have been generally orthodox Hindus, although they probably refrained from persecuting Buddhism, an act of wisdom when it is remembered that the majority of the people still professed the faith of Buddha. Different cities acted as the capitals of the Andhras at different times, but Pataliputra seems to have sunk into a position of inferiority from which it only arose for a short period at the beginning of the Gupta Era. During the remainder of the Hindu period the tendency is for the centre of power to be shifted further West.

End of the Andhra
dynasty,
236 A.D.

Thus before the end of the Buddhist age, Ujjain, an old and sacred but hitherto hardly a pre-eminent city, will be found to have attained that position of unquestioned supremacy among Indian cities which Pataliputra had formerly enjoyed.

III.—The Indo-Greek, Pahlava and Saka Dynasties.

Contemporary with the dynasties treated of in the last section, there sprang up on the Indian Borderland and in the West of the peninsula a number of kingdoms of varying size, and generally short duration, ruled for the most part by foreigners. The empire of Asoka had extended Northward to the Hindu Kush, but after the death of that great monarch, the decline of the Maurya dynasty tempted a number of adventurers to enter upon the regions of the North-West Frontier, which accordingly became the scene of war and constant change of rulers for some hundreds of years. The vast Asiatic dominions of Seleukos Nikator had marched with those of Chandragupta, but about the middle of the third century the Bactrians and the Parthians rebelled against his descendants and

* Andhra is a racial name, but is conventionally applied to the great dynasty with which that race provided India.

* See pp. 26, 27, below.

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established two independent kingdoms, that of the Græco-Bactrian kings, and that of the Parthian Arsakidae. The Parthian monarchy was destined to eclipse in greatness that of the Seleukidae themselves, and ultimately became a source of constant annoyance to the growing power of Rome.

Formation of Bactrian and Parthian Kingdoms, Circ. 250 B.C.

The Bactrian monarchy, whose independence was not recognised until 208 B.C., was fated to have a shorter and a stormier existence. The founder of the Græco-Bactrian monarchy was Diodotus. He was followed by Euthedemos, the king who extracted an acknowledgment of Bactrian independence from Antiochus the Great. Demetrius, the son of Euthydemus, succeeded him and even in the life time of his father carried his arms to India and conquered some territory. He figures as 'King of the Indians,' and probably conquered Kabul, the Punjab and Sindh. A rival, Eukratides, had meanwhile wrested Bactria from the lawful sovereign, and ultimately made himself master of a province of India. The two princes seem to have reigned simultaneously, and the sons of both seem from the evidence of coins to have succeeded them. But at least eighteen princes figure on the coins which have recently come to light, and of these most, if not all, must have reigned in the second century B.C. It seems then that the Indian Border-land was parcelled out among a crowd of Greek princelings, whose chronology and mutual relations are by no means clear. Possibly they were related for the most part to the families of Demetrius and Eukratides, but as their names are with few exceptions known only from coins, nothing certain can be predicated of them. The only conspicuous prince among them was Menander, whose invasion of India, so successfully frustrated by Pushyamitra, was mentioned in the last section. He seems to have been of the family of Eukratides, and to have had his capital at Kabul.

Græco-Bactrian Kings in India.

Demetrius and Eukratides, Circ. 190 B.C.

Menander, 155 B.C.

During the life-time of Menander there occurred one of those periodic tribal movements peculiar to Central Asia, and it greatly upset the political conditions in the North-West. The Sakas, a section of the great Turki or Scythian race, driven from their homes by the Yueh-chi,* migrated South-Westward and about 130 B.C. penetrated into Bactria, where they overthrew the Græco-Bactrian Kingdom, and destroyed for ever Greek rule to the North of the Hindu Kush. Pouring onwards, the Saka hordes occupied Seistan (Western Afghanistan) and passing into India, displaced the majority of the Indo-Greek princes who had established themselves on the North-West Frontier. A few Greek princelings, however, survived in the regions to the North of Peshawar as late as 50 A.D., but they must have acknowledged the supremacy of Saka or Parthian overlords. The Sakas rapidly extended themselves over North-West India. As early as 100 B.C., Saka Satraps were established at

The Saka invasion, 130—100 B.C.

Saka Monarchy and Satraps, 100—57 B.C.

Taxila in the Punjab and Mathura on the Jumna. Others occupied Surashtra (Kathiawar) and there ultimately founded a kingdom which extended to Ujjain in Malwa, and endured for about three hundred years.*

Even the Mahratta country was for some time under a Saka Satrap, but the Andhra kings prevented any permanent occupation of the Deccan by a foreign race. The titles of these Saka princes as revealed by the coins were generally Kshatrapa (Satrap) or Mahakshatrapa (Great Satrap). These titles alone indicate their foreign origin. One series of Saka princes use the imperial title 'king of kings,' and they were powerful enough to found an era which has lasted to the present day. These, of whom Vonones and Maues are the best known, were doubtless the kings paramount, while the Satraps of Taxila and Mathura, of Surashtra-Malwa and the Deccan, were in origin inferior kings, owing allegiance to these sovereign lords, but ultimately gaining an independence, and, in the case of the Surashtra dynasty at least, a position of overlordship which justified the title of Mahakshatrapa.

The Saka Emperors and the Satraps of the North soon lost their power, and were succeeded by the Indo-Parthian or Pahlava kings, who were connected with the Arsacide royal family of the Parthian empire, and possibly with the Pallavas of South India, of whom mention will be made hereafter.† It was in the middle of the 1st century B.C., when the Sakas had been settled in India for less than a hundred years, that Arsaces Theos "The Divine," a scion of the Arsacide dynasty of Parthia, invaded the Saka territory. The Warlike Malwa clans seized the opportunity to rebel against their masters, so that the Sakas, attacked on both sides, were totally defeated, and their empire broken up. The Indo-Parthian kingdom, which now superseded the Saka empire, and so ultimately the Indo-Bactrian principalities, was itself of as short duration as its predecessors. It reached the zenith of its power under Gondophares, whose reign, it is practically certain, began in 21 A.D. He is principally interesting in that ancient Christian tradition associates him with the name of St. Thomas, the Apostle of the Parthians and of South India. St. Thomas was believed to have converted 'multitudes of the people' and then to have suffered martyrdom at the hands of a neighbouring king. But the story is probably a piece of pure mythology, and is only valuable by the evidence it provides as to the existence and greatness of King Gondophares. While this monarch seems to have ruled over Kandahar, Seistan, the Punjab and Sindh, his successors were gradually pushed southwards by the advancing Yueh-chi hordes‡ and eventually sank to the position of petty princes in the Indus delta. There they held sway for a time, just as the Indo-Greek princelings retained a limited sovereignty in some of the valleys of the North-West. Although the Sakas had given place to

The Pahlavas and the Indo-Parthian Kingdom, 57 B.C.—Circ. 60 A.D.

Defeat of Sakas, B.C. 57.

Gondophares.

Decline of Indo-Parthian Monarchy.

* See p. 27 below.

† See p. 40 below.

‡ See p. 28 below.

* See p. 27 below.

the Indo-Parthian kings, one branch survived in Gujerat in the position of dependent Satraps. It was this branch which finally established the great dynasty of the Western Satraps—those Mahakshatrapas who ruled for three hundred years over Kathiawar-Malwa, and gave such trouble to the Andhra kings.* The downfall of the Indo-Parthian empire, brought about by the Kushana invaders, before the end of the 1st century A.D., provided these Sakas with the opportunity they sought. About 78 A.D., they re-established their independence, and Chasthana, who re-subjected the Mallavas, was the real founder of the Western Satrapy. It extended its power as the Andhra kingdom became weaker and endured until in its turn it was overthrown by the Gupta Emperors.† There were in all twenty-seven kings of this dynasty; they all, after Chasthana, bear Indian names, and seem to have forgotten their foreign origin, becoming thoroughly Indianized and thus more acceptable to the Hindu population over whom they ruled.

Succeeded by the Kushanas, Circ. 60 A.D.

The Western Saka Satrapy, 78—409 A.D.

Thus for several hundreds of years the North-West of India had been the prize of rival invaders and rulers of foreign race, who although sometimes contemporaneous, roughly succeeded each other in three distinct periods, which we have described as the Indo-Bactrian, the Saka or Scythian, and the Indo-Parthian. There now arrives upon the scene a fresh horde of invaders, the Yueh-chi, who established an empire and a dynasty—the Kushana—greater than any of the preceding, and whose importance demands a separate narrative. First let us pause and inquire to what extent, if any, the series of invasions just described affected the civilization of India. What did the contact of Greek, Scythian, and Parthian contribute to Hindu thought, manners, and institutions? The Parthian princes ruled in India too short a time to make much impression in the country, and during that short time it is reasonable to conclude that they learnt more than they taught. Hindu civilization was the more highly developed of the two, and the conquering races throughout this period of Indian history assimilated themselves to the people over whom they ruled and became Indianized in feeling, in language, and often in religion. The Sakas of the North were also too short-lived to leave any lasting impression;‡ moreover, their condition compared to that of the Indian peoples was one of barbarism. Where the Saka rule endured for any length of time, e.g., in Surashtra-Malwa, its character became purely Indian. The Western Satraps adopted Indian religions, some Buddhism and others Brahmanism. But though little impression was left upon Hindu civilization by Parthi-

Effect of these invasions on India.

Hindu civilization little affected by the Parthian, Saka or even Græco-Bactrian rule.

ans or Sakas, it is reasonable to expect that the Græco-Bactrian princes who ruled for so long in the Punjab (we hear of one Hermaios, a Greek king on the Indian Frontier, so late as the eve of the Kushana invasion) should have left some more lasting traces of themselves. Hellenism had such an individualism of its own and Greek civilization so rarely failed to take deep root where its seed fell, that the Punjab at least might be thought to have been thoroughly Hellenized. But such was not the case. So far from having influenced India as a whole, the traces of Greek influence even in the Punjab are surprisingly slight and trivial. The coins are mainly Greek in type, but no Greek inscriptions have been discovered. There is no evidence even that Greek architecture was ever introduced into India. To some slight extent Indian pictorial and plastic art, e.g., Buddhist sculpture—may have received a Greek stamp, but even here what was borrowed “has been so cleverly disguised in native trappings that the originality of the Indian imitators is stoutly maintained even by acute and learned critics.” “The conclusion of the matter is that the invasions of Alexander, Antiochus the Great, Demetrios, Eukratides, and Menander, were in fact, whatever their authors may have intended, merely military incursions, which left no appreciable mark upon the institutions of India. The prolonged occupation of the Punjab and neighbouring regions by Greek rulers had extremely little effect in Hellenizing the country. Greek political institutions and architecture were rejected, although to a small extent Hellenic example was accepted in the decorative arts, and the Greek language must have been familiar to officials at the kings’ courts. The literature of Greece was probably known more or less to some of the native officers, who were obliged to learn their masters’ language for business purposes, but that language was not widely diffused, and the impression made by Greek authors upon Indian literature and science is not traceable until after the close of the period under discussion.*

Hellenism took little root in India.

plastic art, e.g., Buddhist sculpture—may have received a Greek stamp, but even here what was

IV.—The Kushana Empire.

The Kushana Empire was not strictly an Indian empire, but as it included for a time within its boundaries a large portion of India, it requires some mention in these pages. We have seen that the Sakas were displaced from their original settlements in Central Asia by the Yueh-chi, a race of nomads, but Mongolian like themselves. The Yueh-chi came from North-West China, whence they had been expelled by a rival horde of the same stock. Having usurped the territory of the Sakas and driven them south towards India, the Yueh-chi remained undisturbed for about twenty years between the Jaxartes and the Chu rivers. At the end of that time they were expelled in their turn by a rival tribe, the Wu-sun,

Circ. 160 B.C.

Circ. 140 B.C.

* V. A. Smith: *Early History of India*. Such closer contact must have taken place after the Hellenization of Western Asia, probably in the period of the Kushana kings, whose dominions embraced both Hindu and Hellenized areas. Even then the mutual influence of Greek and Hindu literature is difficult to measure, and is by some denied altogether. But in certain branches of Science, at any rate, the contact between the two civilizations produced marked effect. The Hindus certainly learnt some astronomy from the Greeks, and probably taught them mathematics.

* See p. 25 above.

† See p. 29 below.

‡ It is probable, however, that the Jats, a considerable body in the North-West, are of Saka or Scythian ancestry. Even so, however, the Sakas need not have exercised any influence on Hindu civilization as a whole. Their influence was purely local.

and had perforce to resume their march. They moved to the valley of the Oxus, and settled upon the lands on its north side (Sogdiana), while they overran and dominated Bactria to the south. Here they lost their nomad habits, and became a territorial nation, divided into five principalities. Nothing is further known about the fortunes of the tribe for a considerable time, and the next landmark is that unification of the Yueh-chi under Kadphises I, the chief of the Kushana section of the horde. He became sole monarch of a united Yueh-chi nation about 45 A.D. At this time the growth of population caused the tribe to take up again its lengthy wanderings: it crossed the Hindu Kush, and began to subjugate the provinces on the Southern side. Kashmir and Afghanistan seem to have been conquered by Kadphises I, and he probably also made a beginning of those Indian conquests which were completed by his successors. Thus the suppression of the Indo-Greek and the Indo-Parthian chiefs was begun, but it was Kadphises II who finally extinguished the Indo-Parthian power in the Punjab and the Indus valley. This ambitious monarch, while he measured swords in vain with the powerful Chinese Empire, carried his arms victoriously over the North-West of India, and extended the Yueh-chi dominion almost to the borders of Bengal. The coins of this emperor have been found scattered all over Northern India from Benares to Kabul. Of these coins many are based upon Roman models, and we know from Dion Cassius, the Roman historian, that an Indian embassy came to Rome in 99 A.D., and congratulated Trajan on his succession to the empire.

Circ. 70 B.C.

Kadphises I,
 Circ. 45 A.D.

Kadphises II,
 Circ. 85 A.D.

Kadphises II was almost certainly succeeded by Kanishka, the greatest monarch of the Kushana dynasty.

Kanishka,
 Circ. 125-150 A.D.

This king is mentioned in not a few inscriptions, and his memory has been perpetuated by the legends of the Northern Buddhists. But the fixture of his date has been the subject of much controversy, and it is only fair to say that the date of 125 for his accession, as also the assumption that he immediately succeeded Kadphises II is strenuously disputed by certain scholars of note.* Still the numismatic evidence is so much in favour of an early date, that the majority of orientalists are agreed to accept 125 A.D. as provisionally correct.

His Conquests.

In spite of the favourable length of Kanishka's reign, his achievements are remarkable. He warred successfully against the Parthians, conquered Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan, all dependencies of China, and in India he carried his empire to the mouth of the Indus, completed the subjugation of Kashmir, and is credited with an attack upon Pataliputra in Magadha. Kanishka's capital was Purushapura, the modern Peshawar, and there he erected a vast Buddhist monastery and a magnificent tower. The famous Gandhara sculptures may partly be attributed to this reign, and show that Kanishka like most oriental conquerors, was a devoted builder. In the history of Buddhism Kanishka occupies an

important place. Converted apparently late in life after he had successively served the devil, the Greek and Persian gods, he devoted himself to the task of imposing Buddhism upon his subjects and to extending the faith abroad. The Buddhism of his day was more adapted to foreign propagation than the purer faith of Asoka. "This newer Buddhism, designated as the *Mayanana*, or 'Great Vehicle' (as contrasted with the *Hinayana*, or 'Little Vehicle'*) was largely of foreign origin, and developed as the result of the complex interaction of Indian, Zoroastrian, Christian, Gnostic and Hellenic elements, which was made possible by the conquests of Alexander, the formation of the Maurya Empire in India, and above all by the unification of the Roman creed under the sway of the Earlier Emperors. In this newer Buddhism the sage Gautama became in practice, if not in theory, a god, with his ears open to the prayers of the faithful, and served by a hierarchy of Bodhisattvas and other beings acting as mediators between him and sinful men. Such a Buddha rightly took a place among the gods of the nations comprised in Kanishka's widespread empire, and the monarch, even after his conversion, probably continued to honour both the old and the new gods, as in a later age Harsha did alternate reverence to Siva and Buddha."† Kanishka was certainly instrumental in making Buddhism known to China, where it took deep root in the second century, and his zeal for the religion was also shown by the holding of a Great Church Council, which seems to have met in Kashmir, and to have stamped with its approval certain Buddhist commentaries. Kanishka met his death, apparently by violence, about 150 A.D., and like Asoka and Akbar was unfortunate in his successors. Although Huvishka, about whom little is known, seems to have preserved the Empire undiminished, it began to break up in the reign of Vasudeva, for after his death there is no trace of the existence of a paramount power in Northern India. Anarchy prevailed upon the North-West Frontier, but there is evidence that kings of Kushana race held their own in Kabul until they were overthrown by the White Huns in the fifth century. The third century is a period of darkness as regards the history of India proper. The Andhra dynasty came to an end approximately at the same time as the Empire of Kanishka, and beyond the records of the Saka Satraps in the West we have no guiding light to steer by until the imperial Gupta dynasty emerges at the beginning of the fourth century A.D.

Conversion to Buddhism, and zeal for the faith.

Kanishka's successors.

Break-up of the Kushana power.

The 3rd Century a blank in India.

V.—The Second Indian Empire : The Guptas.

The Kushana Empire was not an Indian Empire in the sense of extending over the greater part of India. But the Empire founded by the Mauryas was peculiarly Indian, and that founded about six hundred years later

* Cf. *A Peep into Early Indian History*, by Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar, J.R.A.S., Bombay, Vol. XX.

† See p. 33 below.

† V. A. Smith, *Ancient India*, p. 233.