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THE GOLDEN LEGEND OF INDIA

1898

Revised July, 1902;
Again revised, 1906;
Again revised, April, 1909

THE
GOLDEN LEGEND OF INDIA

Or, Story of India's God-given Cynosure

(ŚUNAḤŚEPHA-DEVARĀTA):

A Vedic theme of human life and divine wisdom

Ordained to be rehearsed at coronations of Indian kings.

A faithful paraphrase in English verse
Side by side with
A literal translation:

Illustrated by copious Notes.

By
WILLIAM HENRY ROBINSON.

"*Vidimus enim stellam ejus in Oriente.*"—MATT. ii. 2.

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Editors' Note

It is a matter for regret that, while the "Golden Legend of India" was passing through the press, its author, Mr. W. H. Robinson, died at the age of eighty-one.

He was born in Westminster in 1824: his parents, though poor, did what they could to develop the keen intellect of their delicate son, and at the age of fourteen he was appointed pupil teacher at the National Schools, Hampstead. Marrying at nineteen, he was compelled to seek more remunerative employment. At the Tax Collector's Office, Hampstead, as secretary of the old Royal Polytechnic Institution, and in other positions, he never failed to win respect by his ability and devotion to his work.

It was in middle age that he fell under the spell of Eastern literature. He became a well-known figure at the British Museum, studying Sanskrit and delving into the wonderful literature and philosophy of India. Dr. Richard Garnett was a friend who encouraged him to continue, and promised help and influence when the "Golden Legend" should be ready for publication.

His wife's death in 1889 was a severe blow to him, and in 1897 he met with a serious accident, being knocked down in the street by a cart; his fractured arm healed in time, but the nervous shock left lasting effects. For the last few years of his life he was compelled to keep his bed, and it was as he lay on his back that he revised and revised his "Golden Legend," adding to it constantly out of the stores of his most varied knowledge. His keen mind never flagged; his interest in all literary, philanthropic, and religious movements continued unabated: but his great solace in later, as in earlier, years was the thought and philosophy of India, foreshadowing, as he held, the revelation of Divine truth.

The work, as regards its character and object, is fully described in the Preface. The editors may be allowed to add that it has been shown to several authorities, who are of opinion that, apart from its literary aims, it has a value as a contribution to the understanding of the very ancient and beautiful Indian

story to which it relates. Whether Mr. Robinson is right in connecting the name and history of Śunaḥśepha with the Cynosure or Pole-star may be more fitly debated elsewhere. The suggestion is certainly a striking one, and it might be supported by some facts and analogies. But the importance of the legend, as the "state myth" of India from the earliest ages, is beyond all question. Accordingly it fully deserved to be set forth, as is here done, in its full context and with a wealth of illustration.

It is hoped that the transliteration of Indian words, rather more precise in the notes than in the verse rendering, has been judiciously arranged. The Editors are indebted to Mrs. Bode for kindness in verifying the references.

S.
T.

Preface

THE work, herein styled GOLDEN LEGEND OF INDIA, is entirely based upon an ancient narrative of human life, contained in the very oldest—and therefore purest—sacred writings of Indian Antiquity. It is therein called "THE STORY OF ŚUNAḤ-ŚEPHA," a Sanskrit name corresponding exactly to the Greek word "Cynosure," which, passing through most of the Western Aryan family of languages into English, denotes the northern Polar Star. From that star's use as a guide by sea and land in the early migrations of mankind, the name has acquired in daily speech and metaphor the secondary meaning of a safe *Celestial Guide*. In both these senses it was evidently used in this story. The personage who bore it acquired the added name DEVARĀTA, i.e., "God-given"; under which, slightly modified, he is commemorated to this day as an ancestor, at family gatherings of the highest Brāhman Castes of India. Hence the sub-title in English, STORY OF INDIA'S GOD-GIVEN CYNOSURE; and this title, as will be seen, represents the ancient scope and inner spirit of the whole Legend.

The Story (save for a brief poetic variant in Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa), was first published in modern languages, through separate prose translations, by English (H. H. Wilson) and German (Roth) professors, in the year 1850 A.D. It has been very much admired by all ever since, for its great literary merits; being "full of genuine thought and feeling," according to Max Müller, "and most valuable as a picture of life." All this is perfectly true, and is represented to the best of the present writer's ability herein.

But no one, until the present publication, has treated of the Legend *as a whole*, i.e., including the text of its "Hundred verses from the sacred Rig-veda" with the succession of hours and ritual forms which they necessarily involve; although the original authors refer to them as prime factors of the legend's efficiency.

Neither have previous writers considered—though cursorily mentioning as a fact—the *Recitation of the legend, as an Ordained*

Rite at the grand Coronation Ceremonials, called RĀJASŪYAS, or "King-makings." These were always deemed necessary and very important, to inaugurate the successive kings who exercised suzerainty over ancient India's varied and differing nationalities. They are minutely described in the Sanskrit books; and events at their recurrence form turning points in India's two famous epic poems, and in the long subsequent periods of her written history.

The whole story, indeed, is framed upon the achievement, under divine guidance, of such a *Rājasūya Celebration* by Hariśchandra, a hero-king in the semi-mythic ages, whose name and fame in various aspects form inexhaustible themes for both classic and popular Indian stories, from ancient times to the present day.

The great sages of antiquity, who formulated the still enduring civil and religious laws of India—and were thus *the real founders of Indian civilization*—took the old traditions of Hariśchandra's Rājasūya, and grouped around them a series of associated incidents. These were selected and specially adapted briefly to illustrate all, or nearly all, the fundamental principles whereon the peculiar customs, laws, and institutions that regulate the daily life of India's princes and peoples were then based, and which still remain immovable. Chief among them are the germ principles of Family Kinship, Laws of Adoption, Caste Rules, Training of Brāhmans and Princes, Righteous Civil Laws and Governments, with Rites and Ceremonies—all being founded on the early spiritual religion of India, before polytheism, image-worship, and general debasement prevailed in later ages.

These ideas and more, with many beautiful touches of human pathos, may be studied together in a genuine ancient original by English readers of the East or West who desire to understand and win the heart of India, centred as it is round the "STORY OF ŚUNAḤŚEPHA," the Cynosure. He submitted himself to be bound as a human sacrifice in atonement for faults of the king and his son Rohita. Being liberated, "for his patient endurance," he gained like liberation for those in whose behalf he was bound, and was himself also exalted to high dignity as a royal priest, to regulate future rites, and to celebrate those of Hariśchandra's famous coronation. The whole story was ordained to be repeated as part of the grand religious rites at each subsequent *Crowning of Indian Suzerain Kings*, AT THE PRECISE RITUAL POINT WHERE A COPY OF THE HOLY BIBLE IS PRESENTED BY BISHOPS TO BRITISH SOVEREIGNS when crowned at Westminster.

In the hundred Rig-veda verses those to Varuṇa probably had a pre-Indian origin, in that far-away North, where the great Aryan family of nations long dwelt as one before dispersion into the various countries of Europe and Asia. This is partly indicated by their retention of a Divine Name (*Asura*) repudiated generally in the Veda, as denoting an evil being, but highly revered under various archaic forms by kindred and other peoples elsewhere—(e.g., as *Ahura* by Zendic Iranians, *Æsir* by Celts and Teutons—and *Æsar* by remote Etruscans). These hymns also first plainly express the main sacrificial theme of the series of verses and of the whole legend; which theme was also extant among pre-Indian Āryans, as testified by northern traces of it remaining—even of its recitation in "the king's hall"—in the Elder Edda of Scandinavia, the Kalevala of Finland, and a fuller Teutonic variant, christianized in old German by Von Aue, an ancient Minnesinger, upon which Longfellow moulded his English "Golden Legend," which has striking coincidences with this of antique India.

All the verses are orderly arranged to represent the same sacrificial theme, by language and ritual of worship, as developed from time to time in Vedic India itself,—and also (it may be added) the origin and progress of devout feeling in the mind of an individual worshipper. The very precise Sanskrit rituals place their commencement while the inspired victim was bound to the sacrificial post, just after noontide, as at an ordinary spring season's animal offering, and their continuance through daylight, evening dusk, darkness, midnight, and dawn, till the sunrise of a third day, when the delivered victim is called to officiate at a morning Soma festival, and perform the other rites of Hariśchandra's Crowning at noon of that day.

The varied natural appearances at that season during these hours—their respective relations to terrestrial and celestial phenomena and to worship in India—which, though under various phases and names, was then addressed to ONE infinite in goodness and power (as shown in the Viśvedeva verse at midnight)—are all reflected in the minutely exact terms of the verses. They are herein rendered with the literal accuracy due to what their believers hold to be words of divine revelation; but for modern readers their inner meaning is also elicited by explanations, conjoined, but separate from their actual text. Otherwise the writer—who seeks only to be a true rhymester, not a creative poet—might be thought to have introduced some Western notions, or bias, into the genuine ancient work. Its remarkable literary skill and vein of true poetry, belong, how-

ever, to those old FATHERS OF INDIA, and are such as to evoke high appreciation in the West, and national pride among their present day descendants in India. By placing it among the sacred Coronation Rites, its authors made it in effect an ANCIENT INDIAN STATE DOCUMENT of perpetual importance. In the vicissitudes of ages, it has ceased to be recited as of old. But its spirit has never passed away.

But neither, in spite of long centuries of misconstruction, has its letter. That too remains, reverenced and admired, though only as an old poet's dream-story, beautiful indeed, but without coherence and inconsistent with itself. Such, indeed, was the view of Sāyaṇa, the Hindu commentator on the Rig-veda. He wrote in the fourteenth century A.D., i.e., some 3,000 years, more or less, after the era of the old story, during which India had passed through revolution after revolution, each having some modifying influence upon its successors. The old Vedic system had then passed away, but had been professedly revived in the pseudo-Vedic, but idolatrous, Purāṇas, and Sāyaṇa, commenting on the story, said, " the hymns have no apparent connection with the Legend, and are not appropriate to the condition of a person in danger of death," using also other depreciatory terms.

The *ipse dixit* of Sāyaṇa has been too implicitly received by modern writers, both Eastern and Western, but without critical examination. This was excusable before complete accounts of old India's coronation rites and ceremonies contained in the ancient ritual books were available to modern students. Its results have been, however, to discourage any recognition of the story and hymns, and by reducing them to the level of mere bardic songs at a convivial feast, *after*, not *during* the sacred religious rites, to miss their true relation to each other, and to the welfare of India ancient and modern.

The whole Legend and its accessories are herein faithfully and amply discussed with the aid of translated notes from rituals and nearly coeval Sanskrit authorities. The work combines in one view a representation of the true poetry in the Sanskrit original, a literal interpretation of the story, and the commentary necessary for modern readers, to whom the ancient Vedas have become obscured somewhat by age. Its language is modern English, its ideas are all Indian. No phrases, and no similes, are consciously admitted which are not exact counterparts of the old Sanskrit; nor any ideas which might not have occurred to the acutely intellectual Brāhman compilers. Even in passages reminiscent of Western theology (e.g., those with the word

" ransom " and its associated ideas) the Indian reader may convince himself that he has a true equivalent both in letter and in spirit of the Sanskrit used by his great forefathers. Even in the " Epodes " interpolated after each Canto, and the " Odes " etc., of the later Cantos, distinguished by paragraph marks ([ ]), the same rule of adherence to Indian ideas is observed.

" England," says Sir W. W. Hunter, " can do India no greater injustice than *not to understand her.*" And Max Müller, in presence of King Edward VII (then Prince of Wales, January 11, 1890) said that the true conquerors of the heart and affections of India, who are still to come, will be those who acquire insight into her ancient religion, her ancient laws, and her ancient literature, which are still the best key to present day convictions. These subjects, in their true germ principles, are all epitomized and exemplified in this remarkable story, prepared for that express purpose, during the early ages of India's making.

It is hoped that by the dispersion of its comparatively modern obscuration, through the genuine ancient light herein thrown upon the legend, English readers at home may be induced to regard Indian matters generally with a more sympathetic interest than hitherto, and it may also lead them to understand how so long an ancestral origin accounts for the tenacity wherewith India still clings to her old ideals and peculiar customs, and thus to treat them with the respect which is their due. At the same time Young India, which is gradually adopting Western modes of thought, perceiving the purity and righteousness pervading this old story of their own, as well as its omission of modern debasements, may draw a distinction between what is really old and what has no true claim to be considered so; and thus learn to refuse the evil and choose the good among Indian writings. If such, in any degree, be the results of this work its object will be so far obtained.

The efficient rendering of such an ancient work depends in the first instance on the labours of profound linguists, without whom no accuracy could be attained; and their various translations have been fully and gratefully made use of in this work. But the task is not exclusively theirs. Says Max Müller, the foremost of his time among them, in his monumental first publication of the Rig-veda (vol. 3, p. viii) :—

> " We must translate our feelings and ideas into their language at the same time that we translate their poems and prayers into our own. . . . What seems at first childish

may at a happier moment disclose a sublime simplicity, and in helpless expressions we may recognize aspirations after some high and noble idea. When the scholar has done his work, the poet and the philosopher must take it up and finish it."

These rules are adhered to without any attempt to introduce extraneous poetry or philosophy. The whole is cast into a metrical form simply because no other seemed fit to express its many combined topics tersely and attractively in English. Every allusion and simile of the original is retained; and paraphrastic amplification is admitted only so far as supported by ancient authorities and where necessary to place the modern reader on the same level of understanding with its primitive Sanskrit-speaking audience.

Study of the whole Legend, in its threefold aspect as a story and sacred hymns combined with a stately ritual, in the light of its use as a Royal Instruction, has revealed an unexpected harmony. Alleged inconsistencies and discrepancies have disappeared. Each element of it illustrates the others, and even in minutiæ of phrases and allusions the coincidences are too numerous to have been accidental, and prove the high intelligence and title to veneration of the Rishi Fathers of India who composed it, and ordained its high place among the most important of all state functions in ancient India.

Much more might be said; but, when it is added that the whole end and aim of the story was to induce Indian rulers to govern their lands in the fear of God, to submit themselves to His law, to respect the family institutions and civil customs of their varied peoples, and to train their successors to do the same, enough has been said to show that the Legend, hitherto undeservedly undervalued, or admired only as a beautiful, but meaningless, tale, is really of practical value and worthy of attention both by Britain and by modern India.

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THE GOLDEN LEGEND OF INDIA

Prologue

I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE LEGEND

1.

Its main purpose.

With stately sacred rites, of glorious gold,
This epic tale Ind's poet-sages told,
To show their kings from age to age, when crowned,
How kings by heaven's all-righteous laws are bound.[1]

Its principal theme.

They sang a patient victim youth, prepared
For sacrifice, that others might be spared;
Who, freed and freeing, lived and lives, god-given,
Ind's "Lord of Men," and "Cynosure" in heaven.[2]

Its authors.

For, like that guide-star fixed, his fame controls
By threads of light, life, love the worlds of souls,
Whereof, enmeshed with skill supreme,
Ind's Fathers wove the golden theme,

[1] The recitation of the tale was an important feature in the Coronation ceremonies of India, from the earliest period when such ceremonies were recorded.

[2] Its main story is of the projected sacrifice, deliverance, and exaltation of Śunaḥśepha, whose name is etymologically allied to the Greek κυνόσουρα (Cynosure), applied to the Northern Polar-star, the fixed centre of the revolving heavens and guide of travellers.

Faithfully here rehearsed, that this late age may view,
What primal Ind deemed holy, glorious, just, and true.[3]

2.

Illustration of the inner meaning (soul) of the Veda. This obscured by Upanishad speculations.

Its rite-shrined soul the Veda-soul revealed,
Till pantheistic dreams Ind's vision sealed ;[4]

Leading epochs of Indian history.

And still, when Ind's old Mahābhārat sprang,
And when Vālmīki his Rāmāyan sang,
When Buddha taught Nirvāna's rest to seek,
When Alexander brought the warrior Greek,
When Manu—when Asoka—statutes taught,
When Kālidāsa graced King Vikram's court,
And when Purānic modern cults arose,

Perpetual ceremonial recitation of the legend.

It lived ; and shall, although their day may close ;
For through each age one ritual ran,
From king to king, from man to man,[5]
From Yudhishthir, who first joined Bharat's jarring states,
To Jaichand, crowned while Afghans marched on Delhi's gates.[6]

[3] The seats of the reciters of the legend were placed in front of the King's throne, on the sacred ground, where the yearly cycle of ancient sacrifices had just been completed. The Veda says :—

"The web of sacrifice, which is stretched on every side with threads,
Which is extended with one hundred (threads),
The work of the gods, these fathers who have arrived weave it,
They sit where it is extended, (saying) 'weave forwards, weave back.'"
(*Rig-veda* x. 130 ; 1.)

[4] The main *purpose* of the legend was to epitomize, and illustrate the inner spiritual teachings of the "inspired" Vedic hymns and ritual. These, however, became obscured as the Vedic age shaded off into that of the Upanishads, which slighted both revelation and rites, and set up a pantheistic philosophy in their place.

[5] The eras of the origin of the Epic poems, of the rise of Buddhism, of the advent of Alexander, (when India first came within the purview of European history) and the other eras here mentioned, succeeded that of the Upanishads in the order stated, covering a period roughly estimated about two thousand years. The prevalence of Vedic ritual, even to modern times, admits of no doubt that the legend was chanted as prescribed, during all this period.

[6] Such independent history as the Hindus possess commences with

3.

Its pathos and perennial interest.

For, though myth-twined, its human pathos true
Preserves the tale so old, yet young and new ;[7]

Subsidiary topics.

Since, chanting first the bond 'twixt sire and son,
Whence kinship springs, and life and death are one,[8]
It shows heaven's lord himself conformed to law,
And chastening kings who hold it not in awe,[9]
Yet, gracious, guiding contrite souls to rest :[10]
It shows guilt cursed, and patient virtue blest :[11]
Its close-linked hymns reveal Ind's Devas old
As names of ONE by one great will controlled.[12]

Convergence of all on the central theme of sacrifice.

And all these themes, with more, combine,
As Ind's "Seven Rishis," star-set, shine,

an account of the grand coronation of Yudhishthir, at which occurred the turning incidents of the original Mahābhārata story. It closes with the account of events connected with the coronation of Jaichand, King of Kanouj, at the very time of Shahab-ud-dīn's successful invasion (A.D. 1190–1192) which led to the overthrow of Rājpūt government, and the establishment of the Mohammedan dynasties of India.

[7] Max Müller refers to this Legend as—"full of genuine thought and feeling . . . and most valuable as a picture of life, and record of early struggles." (*Hist. Sans. Lit.* p. 408.) It is probably the earliest Indian story which is not purely mythological.

[8] Nārada's verses in Canto I., Śunaḥśepha's sale, and his adoption by Viśvāmitra ; the subsequent pleadings of his father and mother, etc.

[9] Varuṇa and Hariśchandra in Canto II.

[10] Rohita in the forest ; Indra's verses, and the narrative in Canto III.

[11] The condemnation of Ajīgarta, and of Viśvāmitra's sons, contrasted with the restoration of Hariśchandra and the exaltation of Śunaḥśepha. (Cantos IV. V. VI. VII.)

[12] The Vedic verses are connected in a continuous chain by the narrative. Each "Deva" derives authority from his predecessor (the first being Prajāpati, "Lord of [all] Creatures,"), and they all manifest an absolute unity of purpose.

And point to one,—the cynosure,[13]—the Yūpa-tied,[14]—
Nave of all worlds,—the sacrifice,—HEAVEN'S LIGHT OUR GUIDE.[15]

4.

Epoch of composition.

'Twas fashioned thus, when Indo-Ārya spread
From Panjāb streams to Gangā's watershed,
And science, more than arms, first forged the bonds
Of rival Āryans, Dasyus, Dravids, Gonds,
As tribes whom race, clime, mountains, floods, divide
Became through Sanskrit speech, thought, faith allied,

Early and still enduring influence.

Nay, made—this epos aiding,—union[16]

[13] The whole legend turns upon the sacrifice of Śunaḥśepha. In like manner, the later Hindu astronomy identifies the "Seven Great Rishis" of India with the seven stars of the constellation "Ursa Major," which circle round, and point to the Cynosure (i.e., in Sanskrit Śunaḥśepha), their centre and guide.

[14] The Yūpa was the "three-forked" sacrificial post to which Śunaḥśepha was tied. (See Notes 113, 114, *inf.*)

[15] यज्ञो भुवनस्य नाभिः *Yajño bhuvanasya nābhiḥ* (*Ṛg-v.* i. 164; 35) "Sacrifice is the navel" [nest, birthplace, home] "of the universe." This Vedic expression illustrates the inner spiritual meaning of the legend; which not only makes sacrifice its central subject but represents Śunaḥśepha as destined to be rewarded for his sacrificial hymns (himself being the sacrifice) with a golden chariot.

In accordance with the ordinary Indian concept that "the stars are the souls of the righteous who go to heaven," (see *Śat. Brāh.* vi. 5, 4, 8 and *Mahāb.* iii. 174, 5 etc.), this is an evident reference to his future exaltation in the Cynosure constellation, a second name of which in ancient Āryan astronomy (see that of Ptolemy), was "The Little Chariot."

His allegorical position there, at the very nave (axle) of the revolving visible universe, and as the leader and guide of the most exalted men known to the authors of the legend, is expressed in the concluding stanza attributed to Viśvāmitra (see *inf.* Canto VII. 16.) "This Devarāta," (i.e., the god-given) "is your master man. Follow him, ye Kuśikas."

[16] The story was compiled out of long pre-existent traditions, and incorporated into the coronation ritual, with the object of spreading such a knowledge of the religion of the Vedic Āryans, as might form a religious and political bond of union, between themselves and the stranger tribes among whom they settled in the Gangetic countries, at the Brāhmaṇa period, when they began to migrate from the region of the Five Rivers—the Panjab.

And that of Sanskrit literature in general.

So firm, that, though millenniums since have run
Their course, through creeds' and empires' rise and fall,
Immortal Sanskrit lore has moulded all:
And now, when India owns a race,
Whose English lore extends apace,
Th'apparent slumbering Sanskrit themes her heart-strings thrill
And teeming, variant, Ind is one through Sanskrit still.[17]

5.

Its translation, and true elucidation, important in view of the spread of English speech and influence in India.

Then, could we wake this dormant Sanskrit strain
Through English speech to glowing life again,
Its long-sealed Veda-vision we might see
Unveiled of age-borne clouded mystery;
And thence to justice-loving Britain show,
What Rishis wished Ind's rulers all to know,
While modern Ind, that claims to think to-day
As thought her Rishi fathers, passed away,[18]
May see a pristine wisdom, more profound
Than Śāstras since the Veda age propound,
And Ind, and Britain's wakened eyes,
May view, with mutual glad surprise,
Pre-Christian truth in India's first recorded page:

Britain may more highly appreciate the primitive Veda.

India may see how far modern Hinduism has diverged from it.

Foregleams of Christianity in the Veda.

[17] "India, though it has at least twenty distinct dialects, has but one sacred and learned language, and one literature, accepted and revered by all adherents of Hindūism alike . . . the one guide to the intricacies and contradictions of Hindūism, the one bond of sympathy which, like an electric chain, connects Hindús of opposite characters in every district of India." (Sir M. Williams, *Ind. Wis.* Int. p. xxvii.)

[18] "The ancient traditions of the people of India are household words in every quarter of the peninsula. They have not passed from the land in the same way that those of Stonehenge and Druidism, the worship of Thor and Odin, and the wars of the Heptarchy have passed away

Antiquity and unity of truth.

For truth is old, and one, in every land and age.[19]

II. ITS RECITAL, AS EPOS OF THE CROWN OF INDIA

6.

Ancient Indian Coronations (Rājasūyas) described in the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata.

Though faint the records of past regal days
And doubtful read in dim tradition's haze,
Yet Vyāsa's and Vālmīki's songs sublime,
Albeit in colours grey and sere with time,
Some fadeless pictures of the scene enshrine,
And writ in "Brāhmaṇas" the rites divine,[20]
When India, through her years of making, hung

The ritual prescribed and explained in the Brāhmaṇas.

from the people of England; but they are to the Hindú all that the Bible, the library, and the newspaper are to the European." (J. T. Wheeler, *Hist. of India*, Vol. I, Preface).

[19] As the "story" turns on the offering of Śunaḥśepha in sacrifice, so must its inner teaching—its soul, so to speak—turn on the causes and results of that transaction.

These are—(1) that by direction and ordinance of the supreme lawgiver himself, an innocent person Śunaḥśepha stood in place of actual offenders.

(2) That his conduct in that position was accepted as an equivalent for the punishment due to those whose place he took; and also as the meritorious cause of his own liberation and exaltation.

Supreme justice and supreme benevolence are thus represented in combined operation without impeachment of either; and the rite of sacrifice is exhibited as a means for the remission of suffering and death, both to the victim and those whose place he took.

Among the Indian non-Āryans, and other contemporary peoples, it was a cruel rite, intended to appease vindictive deities, and one in which human victims were sometimes actually slain. Unhappily this perverted view is still by some popular religious teachers taught as true.

The real teaching of the sacred Vedas was nevertheless faithfully epitomized by the Vedic writers themselves in this gentle story. Wonderful to relate, they beautifully foreshadow the teachings of all Christian churches (the small body of Unitarians only excepted) in their scriptures, their ritual and their liturgies.

[20] Vyās (or Vyāsa) is the reputed author of the Mahābhārata, and Vālmīki of the Rāmāyana, India's great epic poems.

These works describe the state and pageantry of the great coronation (Rājasūya) ceremonies of Yudhishthira and Rāma respectively. They are still consulted as precedents for like ceremonies among native princes.

The special religious rites are prescribed in the Aitareya and Śatapatha Brāhmaṇas and other liturgical works.

Analogy of recitation of this legend to presentation of the Bible at British Coronations.

On this perennial tale, mid grandeur sung,
And India's kings with reverence learned its themes
Of right and life; nor deemed them idle dreams,
But worthy well of all the sheen,
Ordained to light the golden scene
Of Ind's old coronations, where this epic took
Like place and use, as Britain's Holiest Book.[21]

7.

Objects of the ancient Rājasūya, political, social, and religious.

Those "Rājasūya" feasts the sages planned,
To calm and weld in one Ind's strife-torn land;[22]
That feast and worship, through a peaceful year
Bringing the white and dark-skinned races near,
By mutual sacrifice and civil rite[23]

[21] At the coronation of British sovereigns at Westminster immediately after the crowning ceremony, the Holy Bible is brought from off the altar by the Dean of Westminster, and handed to the Archbishop, who—"with the rest of the bishops going along with him, shall present it to the Queen, saying these words to her—'Our gracious Queen . . . we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords; Here is wisdom; This is the Royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this book, that keep and do the things contained in it, etc. (*Order of Service for Queen Victoria's Coronation.*)

It is one among many curious coincidences between the Sanskrit ceremonial and those of Christian nations, that this story was recited at a precisely corresponding stage.

The inference that it had a corresponding symbolical import is almost irresistible.

[22] The Rājasūya (king-making), ceremony was specially used for the inauguration of a king, who by conquest or through influence had attained supremacy over other kings. It was partly a repetition of the "*Abhisheka*," or "sprinkling," ceremony, with which every king was crowned at his accession; and lasted at least one whole year, sometimes for several years. It included many rites, civil and religious, peculiar to the various peoples of India, whose representatives lived together during its celebration. Cf. Canto IV. 2, and Hastings' 'Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics' *s.v.* Abhiseka.

[23] When the fair-complexioned Āryans arrived in India, they found it already peopled by various dark-skinned races whom they called Dasyus, who opposed them, and interrupted their worship. Against them they

Might Āryans, Dasyus, hostile once, unite,
While Indra, Hindu-Ārya's heavenly Lord,
Who once fought Dasyus, they thenceforth adored.
Of him 'twas told, he won heaven's throne by force
Of offering oft the Dasyu-challenge horse ; [24]
And heaven for him then framed those rites ;
From whence,—as Vyāsa's lay recites,—
Since with such rites the hosts of gods had Indra crowned,
All peoples therewithal to crown their kings are bound.[25]

8.

Assembly of all India at the ceremonies.

Then picture we some Āryan monarch, named
Chief Lord, who Rājasūya had proclaimed
With Āryan chiefs' and Dasyu tribes' consent ; [26]

sought the protection of Indra. The Āryans, however, came to be the leading race, and in the Rājasūya rites the chief religious ceremonies were those of the Soma, specially associated with the worship of Indra. Cf. Canto IV. 2.

[24] The oft repeated legend is that Indra attained supremacy over all the gods through his successful performance of a hundred "*Aśvamedhas*," or horse-sacrifices, which originally were peculiar to the Dasyus, or non-Āryans, though afterwards adopted by the Āryans, and even sanctioned by the *Ṛig-veda*. Hence, Indra is frequently addressed in the Veda as "*Śatakratu*," the king of "a hundred sacrifices."

A reasonable explanation of this legend is, that the Āryan adoption of the Aśvamedha, in which the submission of surrounding nations was challenged by sending the horse to them, previous to its sacrifice at the challengers' inauguration, led to the triumph of Indra worship.

[25] The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (Book VIII) describes India's heavenly coronation ceremonies as the model upon which those of earthly kings are to be framed ; and the Mahābhārata (*Śānti Parva* V. 2496) says that inaugurating a king is a chief duty of the people of a country, because the Vedas (i.e., the *Ait. Brāh.* as above) declare that the Devas performed a like ceremony when they chose Indra for their king.

[26] Every king in India, even conquerors, was legally supposed to reign with the consent of those whom he governed, and the Rājasūya ceremony was the formal expression of such consent. Even India, the celestial type of earthly sovereignty, was said (as in the preceding note) to have been "chosen" by the Devas, for their king.

Then joyous throngs, of every colour,[27] went
From all the realms of mid embosomed Ind,
Himālaya, and Dekhan, Maithil, Sindh
To Delhi, or Ayodhyā's royal town,[28]
Him suzerain king o'er all wide Ind to crown.

Their long duration.

In splendour there, at least full twelve-months through,
They lived, while festivals more ardent grew,

Their culmination.

And rose to rapture's glowing height,
When, at the final Sprinkling Rite,
The varied hosts in one grand concourse met, to shed
Their urns of lustral blessings on his new-crowned head.[29]

9.

Grand scene of the closing day.

A spacious plain they fill with living sheen ;
Green earth their floor, blue heaven their dome serene ;
(Nought less, 'twas deemed, the Highest could contain ;
No idols Āryans framed, nor temple fane.[30]).

[27] The Sanskrit word now rendered "caste" is *varṇa*, literally, *a colour* ; showing that caste distinctions were at first largely dependent on "race," and colour.

[28] Old Delhi (Hastināpur), a little distance from the modern city, was the capital of the Bharata kings of the Lunar race. Ayodhyā, not far from the modern Oudh, was the capital of the Ikshvāku kings of the Solar race, and the scene of the principal transactions in this legend.

[29] The aspersion of the crown with water from various sacred rivers was considered very important ; and from it the whole ceremony was called "*Abhisheka*," or sprinkling, and its repetition later in a king's reign, or at the crowning of a supreme king or emperor, "*Punar-abhisheka*," or repetition of the sprinkling.

The water was previously collected from the rivers, and stored in separate vessels of gold for Brāhmans, silver for Kshatriyas, copper for Vaiśyas, and earthenware for Śūdras.

[30] According to Vedic ritual, sacrifices and worship took place in the open air. Fixed erections, such as altars and open sheds, at the great sacrifices were temporary, and were demolished at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Fergusson, in his *Hist. of Indian Architecture* (ii. 449 [1867]) truly says that the "Aryans, the superior races of India, wrote books, but built no buildings" ; and in a later edition, "All that was written in India that is worth reading was written by Aryans ; all that was built was built by the Turanians, who wrote practically nothing" (1876, p. 38).

When idol-worship came in, temples were built to contain the images,

At dawn the guests and princes first proceed
With Kshatra hosts,—with elephant and steed,
On foot, and chariot-borne,—with gleaming blade,
And banner, targe, and lance, in pomp displayed.
Then, like vast rushing tides, with shouts and songs,
The Brāhmans, Vaiśyas, Śūdras come in throngs,
While India's daughters' kindling eyes
From latticed towers, that skirting rise,[31]
Survey with patriot joy the great, majestic sight
Of India's gathered splendour, wisdom, wealth, and might.

10.

Its supreme sacredness.

But more than eyes can see, or words can tell,
O'er all the scene there breathes a hallowed spell;
For presences divine, unimaged, there

but were only just large enough for the purpose, and could not contain an assembly of worshippers. Meanwhile, as Max Müller says (*Chips* i. 38) "The religion of the Veda knows of no idols. The worship of idols in India is a secondary formation, a degradation." Dr. Bollensen traverses this view, and quotes in support a verse (*R-v.* i. 25, 13) contained in this legend. (*Jour. Germ. Or. Soc.* xxii. 587.) But a reference to that verse and its context, within, will show that it could not possibly have any such meaning. (Cf. *inf.* Note 146.)

Idols and temples are said to be first mentioned in the Sūtra literature, long subsequent to the Vedic period. The passages referred to are *Śāṅkh. Gṛih. Sūtr.* ii. 12, iv. 12; *Pāras. Gṛih. Sūtr.* iii. 14; *Kauśika Sūtr.* xiii. 105.

Manu (iii. 152) directs that an attendant upon an idol should be shunned.

[31] The interest with which Indian ladies watched public proceedings from the latticed windows of storied buildings is frequently alluded to. The history of Nala mentions a lofty balcony from which men were seen at a great distance. In the Rāmāyaṇa the mischief-making Mantharā observes the preparations for installation of Rāma as Yuvarāja from an upper window, and at his final installation the women are referred to as watching the ceremonies from the upper windows of overlooking mansions.

Pervade the mystic "Earth," and "Sky," and "Air"; [32]
Whence sacrifice has risen, a full year round,
From altars still in place—where priests abound—
And midst them, shrined within a splendent hall,
Kings, Brāhmans, Rishis, sit like Devas all; [33]
There, throned 'twixt Heaven and Earth, the King is seen, [34]
And, throned, like Sītā, near her spouse, the Queen. [35]

[32] The general arrangements of the coronation ground were the same as for the Agnishthoma sacrifice, a plan of which is given in Dr. Haug's *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (Vol. 1) and in Dr. Eggeling's *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (Vol. ii *S.B.E.* Vol. 26). The *Aitareya* (Book i. 23, p. 51 of trans.) explains the symbolism of plan, by comparing its three divisions to Earth (*sadas*, a sitting room), Air (*Agnīdhrīya*, a fire-place), and Sky (*havirdhāna*, two repositories for food). With reference to this last word it is further said (ch. i. p. 65), "Heaven and Earth are the two *havirdhāna's* of the gods . . . for every offering is made between them."

There would, however, be some modifications, including the erection of a "sacrificial hall," covering, or near, the part called *Prāchīna Vaṃśa*, to accommodate the vast crowds, and display the coronation pageants, just as Westminster Abbey is handed over on state occasions to be fitted up by the royal officials.

[33] "And that sacrificial mansion, crowded with kings and Brāhmanas and great Rishis, looked, O king, as handsome as heaven itself, crowded with the gods."

[34] The throne was placed fronting eastwards, so that two of its feet stood within the Vedi, or sacrificial ground, and two without. The place thus occupied was covered with sacred Kuśa grass and called "*Śrī*", as a type of blessedness to be attained both in earth and heaven.

The throne-seat was made of Udumbara wood (*ficus glomerata*). It rested on four legs, a span high, with boards placed on them; it had side-boards of the dimensions of a cubit, or two spans; and the whole was well fastened together with cords of Munja grass (*saccharum munja*).

A tiger-skin was placed on the seat, with the hairs upward, and the neck to the east, typical of royal, or military, power, the tiger being the hero of Indian beasts.

The king ascended it on his knees, praying the gods to ascend it with him, and they were believed, though unseen, to do so.

[35] According to the ordinary Vedic ritual, every sacrificer must be accompanied by his wife. The queen-consort, therefore, necessarily took part in the coronation ceremony, and hence it is said that at Rāma's coronation:—

"Vasishtha, chief for reverend age,
High on a throne, with jewels graced,
King Rāma, and his Sītā placed." *Rāmāyaṇa* vi. 130.

'Mid sacred pomp and earthly state
Celestial rites they emulate,
And perfect every sacrifice through twelve months done
By this great morning rite, that sums them all in one.[36]

11.

The king crowned.

As mounts the sun to heaven's meridian height,
So mounts the King in soul by Soma rite;
And when the height is gained,* no rites remain
But those that symbolize his earthly reign.
Therefore at noon [37] a Dumbar branch, the crown
That symbols India's riches, growth, renown,
In circled gold they place upon his head; [38]

The crown sprinkled (*Abhisheka*).

And then by turns the castes are forward led,
With urns of water, stored from many streams,

Golden accessories.

That from each fitting sacred vessel teems †
Through golden strainers o'er the crown,
Like golden life from heaven show'r'd down
Round him who also stands on gold, that all may see
Him sphered complete in golden immortality.[39]

[36] "At the morning Soma-feast they completely established "the entire Sacrifice." (*Śat. Brāh.* iv. 1, 1, 7. Cf. also Note 192.)

* See *R.-v.* ix. 7, 8, quoted in Note 195, also Note 202.

[37] "He consecrates him at the mid-day Soma feast." (*Śat. Brāh.* v. 3, 5.)

[38] The crown was a small branch of the Udumbara tree (*ficus glomerata*), set in a circlet (*pavitra*) of gold.

If such a branch were placed among the ornaments of the modern Imperial Crown of India, it would better symbolize British respect for the most truly ancient traditions of India than the lotus, which became a sacred national symbol in post-Vedic times.

† See Note 29.

[39] "He then prepares two strainers (*pavitra*). . . . He weaves gold (threads) into them. With them he purifies these consecration waters. . . . Gold is immortal life. That immortal life he lays into these (waters)." (*Śat. Brāh.* v. 3, 5, 15.)

"Below the king's foot he throws a (small) gold plate with 'Save (him) from death!' Gold is immortal life; he thus takes his stand on immortal life.

"Then there is (another) gold plate, perforated either with a hundred, or with nine holes. . . . That (gold plate) he lays upon his head. . . . He thus lays immortal life into him. . . . As to why there are gold plates on both sides, ... he thus encloses him on both sides with immortal life." (*Śat. Brāh.*, v. 4, 12–14.)

12.

Then bursts to echoing heaven a loud acclaim,
And voices, cymbals, trumpets sound his fame.

Preparation for the recital.

A space retiring till the clamours bate,
He reappears arrayed in grandest state.

Dignity of the reciters.

Then two who crowned him, robed in priestly white,
From seats of gold, before his throne, recite

Mode of recitation.

With chant and choral hymns the ritual theme,
That shows the soul of sacrifice supreme,[40]
Of royal law and wisdom, past all price;*
Which, duly heard, is deemed a sacrifice;

Antiquity and world-wide diffusion of its main theme.

The tale, in all essentials, told
Throughout the world from days of old;
For Europe, Asia, Afric's rites and legends shrine
Like themes of mingled justice, ransom, grace divine.

[40] At great celebrations there was always a choir of chanters; and it is here assumed that the recital of this legend somewhat resembled the modern cantata, or oratorio, having the two chief celebrants as leaders, in white officiating robes. (Cf. Note 185.)

The signal to the Chorus through the response to a verse chanted by the chief reciter, of the sacred syllable AUM (or OM) to a Vedic verse, and of EVAM TATHĀ, ("So it is"), the exact equivalent of the modern "Amen," to a non-Vedic verse.

The poetical passages, especially those of the *Rig-veda*, would be rendered with strict literalness. But the prose text, which now exists in very clipped and concise phrases, like that of the Sūtras, so adapted for mnemonic purposes, would doubtless be "rhapsodized," or modified, in recital, according to the skill or pleasure of the reciter, and the usual custom of Indian and Oriental bards, ancient and modern.

Sanskrit was called the "perfect" language.

* Cf. Note 21.

Reverent attention of the audience.

13.

King, princes, queen recline on thrones of state;
Ind's hosts, in shining cohorts, round them wait;
Sweet antiphon the chanters interchange;
Their tones from awe sublime to pathos range;
And mystic AUM, AMEN, responsive rings,
As verse divine, or man's, the minstrel sings.

Time occupied by the recital.

From moon's first wane the perfect language flows
To eve; all India lists, in rapt repose;
Hushed reverence holds the throngs enthralled around;
Charmed earth and air in stillness list the sound;
Its course heaven floods with sunshine white,
Its close with radiant ruddier light;
Rich gems and purest gold gleam round, like mirrored suns;
More rich, more glorious thus the tale relumined runs.

Canto I

SONSHIP

Note.—Dr. Martin Haug's literal translation of the Sanskrit original is placed in this margin for comparison with the paraphrased version.—See the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. Trans. by Dr. Martin Haug. Book vii. ch. 3. Bombay, 1863. (Vol. 2, p. 460, etc.)

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 13.

"Hariśchandra, the son of Vedhas,

1.

KING HARIŚCHANDRA was, in India's prime,[41]
Of old Ikshvāku's brave and righteous race,[42]
On grand Ayodhyā's Sūrya throne sublime,
Successor in his father, Vedhas', place,
And reigned supreme o'er India's realms around,
But long with Rājasūya rites uncrowned.

For, though he had a hundred consorts, none
To the exalted Rishi-king[43] had borne
That great desire of all, a living son;
Wherefore 'mid state and fame he grieved forlorn,

[41] Hariśchandra is the subject of many Indian legends. He may have been a real historical personage, though belonging to a semi-mythical age. In genealogical tables his name appears—with the unusual title "King of India"—as the twenty-eighth king of the Solar Dynasty, so called as claiming descent from the Sun. The first king in this line was Ikshvāku, who is traditionally said to have lived in the Tretā, or silver age of the world.

Sir Wm. Jones calculated his date to be 3500 B.C., and Colonel Tod 2200 B.C.

Many of the present rulers of Indian states claim descent from this dynasty, chief among them being the Mahārānā of Udaipur. Their ancient capital was Ayodhyā, near the modern town of Oudh.

[42] "Ikshvāku's sons, from days of old,
Were ever brave, and mighty souled,
The land their arms had made their own,
Was bounded by the sea alone.
Their holy works have won their praise,
Through countless years, from Manu's days."
Rāmāyana i. 5 (Griffith's trans.).

[43] The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa calls Hariśchandra a "*Rājarshi*," or Royal Rishi, a Rishi among kings.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 13. of the Ikshâvaku line, was a king who had no son.

" Though he had a hundred wives, they did not give birth to a son.

Since quenched appeared his great ancestors' line,
By sonlessness debarred from rites divine.[44]

2.

'Twas then the silvern Tretā age, when men
Had not yet ceased with gods to speak; when vice
Had but begun to spoil the world; and when
Man's grateful praise and fragrant sacrifice,
With homely rites, were still heartfelt and true,
Ere vain corruptions simple faith o'ergrew.

Then wisdom still flowed near its fount; then speech
Was measured verse; and Rishis from the sky[45]
Oft came to earth, eternal truth to teach
In primal Vedic strains that ne'er can die.
O happy, happy, happy, long-lost days,
That visioned float before our raptured gaze![46]

3.

" In his house there lived the Rishis Parvata and Nârada.

In Hariśchandra's dwelling sojourned then
Two godlike sages, through the ages famed,
Immortal Rishis, sent from heaven to men,
Who Parvata and Nārada were named.[47]

[44] Proclamation of the name of his son was a necessary feature of his Rājasūya (*Conf. Cant.* vi. 18 *inf.*)

[45] " Rishis " = literally " seers." The sages and poets, by whom the *Veda* (or " Wisdom ") was taught in the earliest ages. It was held that the Veda, being eternally existent, did not originate with them, although they were the first to " see," or " perceive," it, and to make it known to mankind. Hence their name.

[46] The Indian sacred books speak of four ages of the world (Yugas) corresponding generally with those of the Greeks; viz.: (1) The KRITA, or golden age; (2) the TRETĀ, or silver age; (3) the DVĀPARA, or bronze age; (4) the KALI, or iron age, in which we are now living. But this is to be succeeded by a restoration of the KRITA, or golden, age.

Cf. Notes 79 and 80.

[47] Nārada, a solver of difficulties, a giver of good counsel. He is said to have invented the " *vīṇā*," or Indian lute; and in the *Ṛig-veda*—several hymns of which are attributed to him—he is distinguished as a *Devarshi*, or Deva-ṛishi, i.e., a Ṛishi of the gods. He is often associated with Parvata as messenger of the gods.

Parvata (literally " a mountain," or " mountain-range ") is mentioned

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 13.

Whose music sweet and wisdom most profound
Ind's lute and holy Vedas ever sound.

" Once the king addressed to Nârada the (following stanza),—

To Nārada the king his trouble brought
And humbly thus divine instruction sought;—

HARIŚCHANDRA

" All living creatures crave a son,
Mankind with reason, brutes with none;
What fruit from sons do creatures gain?
This prithee, Nārada, explain." [48]

" Since all beings, those endowed with reason (men), as well as those who are without it (beasts), wish for a son, what is the fruit to be obtained by having a son? This tell me, O Nârada."

4.

" Nârada thus addressed in one stanza, replied in (the following) ten.

The king, in one short verse instruction prayed,
But Nārada in ten his answer made;
And showed how nature prompts what Śāstras teach,
That sacrifice is due from each for each;
And how the ages all are joined in one
Through Śrāddha sacrifice by sire and son.
Such primal germs of Indian laws and thought
The sage divine to India's king thus taught.[49]

in several books of the Mahābhārata. He was Nārada's constant companion, and also a Ṛishi of the *Ṛig-veda* (cf. Note 60).

[48] " Since the son (trāyate) delivers his father from the hell named '*Put*,' he was therefore called Puttra by Brahma himself " (*Manu*, ix. 138).

Sonship is indispensable to the spiritual necessities of a Hindu. " His marriage is mainly directed to that object, with a view to the procreation of a fitting person to perform exequial rites, and discharge his ancestral debts or spiritual obligations; and so important are these held to be by Hindoos, that, if marriage should fail in its object, they must have recourse to the expedient of adoption." (Grady's *Hindoo Law of Inheritance*, p. 17).

[49] These ten stanzas form a compressed statement of the religious ideas, from which both civil law and the various schools of philosophy were afterwards developed in India. They are, therefore, fitly introduced at the beginning of a story primarily intended for the instruction of Indian rulers.

The same ideas are, in like manner, discussed at the beginning of all modern practical treatises on the constitution of society and on Indian law. For example, Sir Henry Maine (*Early Hist. Insts.*, p. 64) speaks of " *Kinship* " as the fundamental idea from which all the various forms

NĀRADA

Ait. Brāh., vii, 3, 13.

I. "A father's holy debt is paid
To every past ancestor's shade;
And life immortal he has won,
When he beholds a living son;
Who, born for Śrāddha's funeral rite,
His course through darksome death will light,
And fix in bliss, while ages last,
The sires of generations past.[50]

"1. The father pays a debt in his son, and gains immortality, when he beholds the face of a son living, who was born to him.

II. "Nor only so; but while he lives,
A son exalted pleasure gives;
Not seas, or streams, earth, fire, or air,
Such joys afford, such blessings bear.[51]

"2. The pleasure which a father has in his son exceeds the enjoyment of all other beings, be they on the earth, or in the fire, or in the water.

III. "Through the great darkness come the Fathers, bringing
Their dateless generations to this hour;
One self outworn in other self fresh springing,

"3. Fathers always overcome great difficulties * through a son. (In him) the Self is born out of Self.

of government have been developed; while all modern writers on Specific Indian Property Law begin by expounding the legal obligation and effect of the Śrāddha rites, founded on the religious notions of the people, and secured to them by Royal Charters and Acts of the British Parliament. See (*int. al.*) Grady's *Hindoo Law of Inheritance*, chaps. 1 and 2.

[50] Duties are spoken of as "debts." The Veda teaches that every Brāhman is born with three debts, viz., to offer sacrifices, to beget a son for Śrāddha, and to repeat the Veda (*Śat. Brāh.* i. 7, 2, 1, etc.). The Śrāddha (funeral) rites must be performed by a son, or one standing in his place.

All who therein offer the funeral cake together are thereby united, not only among themselves, but with the souls of past and future generations of the family.

According to Āśvalāyana (*Gṛihya Sūtras*, i, 6) a son brings purification to seven, eight, ten or twelve descendants and ancestors of both his father and his mother, in proportion to the more or less exalted nature of their marriage ceremonial.

[51] Although the preceding stanza clearly states that the mere birth of a son is sufficient to free the father—a point on which there is some conflict of authorities—yet the pleasures derived from his continued existence are here extolled; partly, perhaps, because he remains to raise up progeny in his turn, and also perhaps to explain and justify the practice of adopting another son, in case of his death, to keep up the family line. (See Strange's *Manual of Hindu Law*, § 51.)

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 13.

They held aloof the dread, mysterious power;[52]
For, like a boat well fraught with stores,
A son o'er death's dark ocean fares,
And safe across his father bears,
To life and light on heavenly shores.[53]

The son is like a well-provisioned boat, which carries him over.

IV. "'Of what avail the austere rites?
The life unwashed, the unshorn hair,
The goatskin garb, the painful nights,
The toilsome days, the years of care?
O Brahmans! rather seek a son;
Then should no blot of blame,
Unsanctify your fame,
Nor man deny your duty done.'—
Thus does the popular voice upbraid,
The self-bound grim ascetic tribe, who fly
The household life and social marriage tie
And debt of ancestry unpaid.[54]

*Or ["Always have the fathers overcome the great darkness." — *Max Müller.*]

"4. 'What is the use of living unwashed, wearing the goatskin, and beard? What is the use of performing austerities? You should wish for a son, O Brahmans!'" Thus people talk of them (who forego the married life on account of religious devotion).

V. "By food a man his life sustains;
By clothes from cold protection gains;
By gold adorned his beauty shows;
By marriage rich in kine he grows;[55]

"5. Food preserves life, clothes protect from cold, gold (golden ornaments) gives beauty, marriages

[52] The fundamental concept of Indian philosophy is that there can be no "Self" (*ātman, Ego*) existing separately from the One, self-existing, supreme "Self"; and that the end and aim of every individual man should be to attain complete re-union with that one eternal Self. Combined with this is the doctrine of an endless filiation, and yet absolute One-ness, of all sentient beings. This led to the recondite systems of the Upanishads, and to the Nyāya, Sāṅkhya and Vedānta systems, as well as to the Nirvāṇa of Buddhism.

[53] The "boat" is the Śrāddha sacrifice. A similar expression occurs in the *Ṛig-veda* (viii. 42, 3). "Divine Varuṇa, animate the sacred acts of me, engaging in this thy worship; may we ascend the safe-bearing vessel, by which we may cross over all difficulties." The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (i. 3, 13) explains this verse thus—"The ship is the sacrifice, the ship is of good passage. . . . The sacrificer . . . sails in it up to the celestial world."

[54] That to fulfil the householder state of life and beget a son is a duty superior to asceticism, is enforced in the opening of the Mahābhārata (*Ādi-Parva.*, 13), by what it calls the "*sin-destroying story of Jaratkāru.*"

[55] Gold and kine are here contrasted. The former is treated simply

His wife a faithful friend will prove;
His daughter's birth will pity move; [56]
But in a son his light is given,
That shining guides to highest heaven.

VI. "The man in his wife was conceived anew;
Her child he became while in her he grew;
In her his renewal of life was done;
Himself, in the tenth month, she bore, her son.[57]

VII. "The wifehood, indeed, is this of a wife,
That through her survive the ancestors past;
Of fathers to come she beareth the life,
Concealing a germ that ever shall last;
Connecting the worlds by a chain never ending,
Past, present, and future in mystery blending.[58]

VIII. "Thus willed the gods of heaven and saints of old,

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 13.
produce wealth in cattle; the wife is the friend, the daughter object of compassion,* but the son shines as his light in the highest heaven.

* *Or* ["His daughter is a pity." —*Max Müller.*]

"[6. As husband he embraces a wife, who becomes his mother, when he becomes her child. Having been renewed in her, he is born in the tenth month." —*Max Müller.*]

Or "[The husband after conception by his wife, becomes an embryo and is born again of her, for that is the wifehood of a wife (*jāyā*, that he is born (*jāyate*) again of her."—*Dr. Bühler.*]

"[7. A wife is a wife (jâyâ) because man is born (jāyate) again in her. She is a mother (âbhûti) because she brings forth (âbhûti); A germ is hidden in her." — *Max Müller.*]

"8. The gods and the rishis endowed her with great beauty. The gods then told to men, 'this being is destined to produce you again.'"

"9. He who has no child, has no place (no firm footing). This even know the beasts. . .

"10. This is the broad well trodden path on which those who have sons walk free from sorrows. Birds and beasts know it. . .

"Thus he told."

as ornament, not having become currency, or a measure of wealth, at the epoch of these verses. True wealth then consisted of cattle, which were often acquired by a man as dowry with his wife. Cf. Note 91.

[56] Many reasons have been alleged for the special Indian prejudice against female infants, such as the difficulty of finding a suitable dowry, etc. But the chief seems to be that a daughter cannot perform Śrāddha. It is hopeful, however, to observe that the "ancestral crime" of female infanticide has died, or is dying, out.

[57] "Then only is a man a perfect man when he is three, himself, his wife, his son. For thus have learned men the law declared, 'A husband is one person with his wife' (*Manu*, ix. 45). This subject is treated at some length in the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* (or *Aitareya Upanishad*) translated by H. T. Colebrooke.

The doctrines of this, and the four succeeding stanzas, including the necessity of sons to animals as well as to men, are illustrations and developments of the Pantheistic notion of one eternal *ātman*, or "Self," involved in Stanza 3.

[58] Hence the preference of a wife who is the mother of sons, and the legal permission to "supersede" one who is not, which are remarkable features of Oriental, and Indian, family life. (Cf. Strange's *Manual of Hindu Law*, sec. 12.)

Who beauty granted her of highest worth;
The gods to men in ancient ages told,
'This being is ordained for your new birth.' [59]

IX. "A sonless man is insecure;
No firm foothold of life hath he;
Of this the very beasts are sure,
And mate promiscuous, blameless, free.

X. "The broad, well-trodden, path to bliss,
Pursued by men with sons, is this;
A path from whence all sorrows flee,
Which birds and beasts instinctive see.
Therefore, to rest secure from pain,
All creatures seek a son to gain."

5. EPODE

[As thus he told and ceased, blank darkness fell
On grief-struck, sonless Hariśchandra there:
Heart-wrung he stood, and found no words, to tell
His mournful thoughts, his anguished, deep despair.

Without a son to pay his ransom price,
Without a boat death's flood to waft him o'er,
Unpaid his filial debt of sacrifice,
Outcast from bliss he must be evermore.

[59] The "seed of the woman" is appointed for the salvation of mankind in Genesis iii. 16, 20. Here woman is said to be ordained for the new birth (regeneration) of man.

Ind's people this perceived, and waited round;
Awe-struck, none moved, none spoke, all held their breath;
They shared his grief, but yet no comfort found;
The silent stillness was as very death.]

Canto II

RIGHTEOUSNESS

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 14.
"Nârada then told him, 'Go and beg of Varuṇa, the King, that he might favour you with the birth of a son (promising him at the same time) to sacrifice this son to him when born.'"

1.

BUT NĀRAD'S voice, in accents sweet and smooth,
Like heavenly music, soon the silence broke,[60]
And sage advice, the monarch's grief to soothe,
He softly thus to Hariśchandra spoke.

NĀRADA

"Seek Varuna, the ever-living King;[61]
Request of him a son from thee to spring;
And asking, vow a gift beyond all price,
Thy son himself, when born, in sacrifice."

2.

"He went to Varuṇa the king, praying, 'Let a son be born to me; I will sacrifice him to thee.'"

Hard, hard in act of asking to resign
So dear a bliss; yet such the word divine.
Not Hariśchand's to reason, but obey
His will who made the sun's unswerving way,
And rules in righteousness the worlds he made:

[60] In the Brahma Purāṇa, Nārada is called "smooth-speaking Nārada." His general character somewhat resembles that of the Greek Orpheus (cf. Note 47); and like him he is said to have descended from heaven to visit Pātāla, the infernal regions.

[61] Varuṇa (literally, the "All-Encompasser") was an object of supreme worship in the early Vedic period. As King of all Gods, and Ruler of the Heavens, the concept corresponded to the Greek Οὐρανός, and the Latin Jupiter. In modern Hindu mythology, he appears most frequently with the attributes of Neptune, as Ruler of the Waters; but the primitive concepts of him were supremely spiritual, the principal being his essential righteousness.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 14.

So thus the king his King, unshrinking, prayed.

HARIŚCHANDRA

"Lord Varuna, to thee I bow;
O grant a son, my life to share,
And then, in sacrifice, I vow
To give the son vouchsafed to prayer."

3.

"Then a son, Rohita by name, was born to him.

Kind Varuna received his prayer,
And gave a son his life to share;
And Rohita the babe was named,
From Indra's lightning bow inflamed,[62]
That spreads red radiance through the world,
And thence the ancient darkness hurled.

4.

Thus dark despair from Hariśchandra fled,
And radiant hope around the infant spread;
In life's fresh stream, red mantling in his face,
The father lived again, and all his race.

Well might he now rejoice at bright relief
From ominous fears. Alas! his joy was brief,
Nor stayed the will of Varuna to crave
Instant surrender of the boy he gave.

VARUNA

"Varuṇa said to him, 'A son is born to thee, sacrifice him to me.'

"Thy son is born: perform thy vow,
And sacrifice him to me now."

[62] The name Rohita is thus defined:—"red, of a red colour, a red horse, a fox, a form of fire, a kind of rainbow appearing in a straight form, Indra's bow unbent and visible to mortals." The dispersal of the powers of darkness by Indra is further alluded to subsequently (cf. Note 173).

In the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* (iv. 3) Rohita is called Rohitāśva (having red horses); but in the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, and elsewhere, he is called Rohita.

"Traces of his name appear in the strongholds of Rotas in Behar, and in the Panjab." "The Harivaṁśa states that he founded Rohitapura" (*Vishṇu Purāṇa* (Wilson's Works) iii. p. 288). Hamilton, in his *Genealogies of the Hindus* (p. 32) says,—"Hariśchandra was a very great conqueror; and his son Rohita, or Rohitāśva, founded, and is said to have resided at, the fortress, which from him is called Rohitas, corrupted in our maps to Rotas."

5.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 14.

"Hariśchandra said, 'An animal is fit for being sacrificed, when it is more than ten days old. Let him reach this age, then I will sacrifice him to thee.'

The quick demand revived his old despair;
Yet he to claim a short respite would dare.
Full well he knew, the righteous King of Heaven
Could never break the law himself had given:
So pleaded thus, with boldly reverent awe,
That Varuṇa himself should own the law.[63]

HARIŚCHANDRA

"The laws unmeet for offering hold
A beast, or it be ten days old;
O ten days let him live, I pray,
And then the sacrifice I'll pay."[64]

6.

"After Rohita had passed the age of ten days, Varuṇa said to him, 'He is now past ten days, sacrifice him to me.'

The righteous Lord of Laws agreed to give
What Laws prescribe, and Rohita let live.
But more than ten days passed in rapid flight,
And Hariśchandra still delayed the rite;
Then urged Varuna the reluctant king
To wait no longer, but his offering bring.

VARUNA

"Ten days have passed; perform thy vow,
And sacrifice him to me now."

[63] It is particularly noticeable that all Hariśchandra's pleas are founded on some regulation respecting sacrifices; and that Varuṇa, the heavenly king, by frequent postponement of his claim, in compliance with permissions granted by law, not only exemplifies his own graciousness, but gives a practical example to earthly kings, that they also should rule according to both law and mercy.

[64] The milk of animals, whose offspring is not ten days old, was classed among forbidden food (*Manu*, v. 8, *Gaut. Dharm.*, xvii. 22–3.)

The tenth or twelfth day after birth was ordained for the Nāmadheya, or ceremony of naming the child (*Manu*, ii. 30).

According to Levitical law, no beast was to be sacrificed till it was *eight* days old (Lev. xxii. 7).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 14.

"Hariśchandra answered,—

7.

But he again pleaded the sacred Laws,
And confidently begged a further pause.

HARIŠCHANDRA

"An offered beast no laws disown,
Albeit the creature's teeth be grown;
Allow his teeth to grow, I pray,
And then the sacrifice I'll pay." [65]

"'An animal is fit for being sacrificed when its teeth come. Let his teeth come, then I will sacrifice him to thee.'

"After his teeth had come, Varuṇa said to Hariśchandra, 'His teeth are now come, sacrifice him to me.'

8.

King Varuna, indulgent, heard the plea,
And till his teeth should grow, the boy left free;
Yet, when they all had grown, the father's heart
Remained reluctant from his son to part,
And so delayed his promised offering still;
When Varuna again declared his will.

VARUNA

"His teeth have grown; perform thy vow,
And sacrifice him to me now."

"He answered, 'An animal is fit for being sacrificed when its teeth fall out. Let his teeth fall out, then I will sacrifice him to thee.'

9.

Again the father, though distraught with care,
From the law's letter drew a further prayer;—

HARIŠCHANDRA

"A beast whose young milk-teeth are shed
May yet to sacrifice be led;
O let his teeth fall out, I pray,
And then the sacrifice I'll pay." [66]

"His teeth fell out. He then said, 'His teeth are falling out, sacrifice him to me.'"

[65] Possibly the growing of the infant's teeth coincided with the ceremonies of *Nishkramaṇa* (first leaving the house), and the *Annasprāśana* (first feeding with rice), in the fourth and sixth months of his age (*Manu*, ii. 34).

[66] The commencement of shedding his milk teeth might in India coincide with the *Chūḍākarman* (tonsure) performed upon all twice-born men children in the first or third year (*Manu*, ii. 35).

The flesh of animals whose milk teeth have not fallen out was classed among foods forbidden to Brahmans (*Gaut. Inst.*, xvii. 31). As such it would also be unsuitable as a sacrificial offering.

[67] Āśvalāyana prescribes that the spit ox for sacrifice, with the formula, "Grow up agreeable to Rudra, the great god," should be allowed to grow

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 14.

10.

Kind Varuna again the father heard,
And, till the teeth should fall, his claim deferred;
Then though through years they fell all, one by one,
The promised sacrifice remained undone:
But Varuna, all-wise, knew they were shed,
And thus again to Hariśchandra said:—

VARUNA

"His teeth are shed; perform thy vow,
And sacrifice him to me now."

"He said, 'An animal is fit for being sacrificed when its teeth have come again. Let his teeth come again, then I will sacrifice him to thee.'

11.

But studious Hariśchandra yet could plead
The law's permission still to stay the deed.

HARIŠCHANDRA

"A beast in offering may be slain,
Although its teeth have grown again;
O grant him second teeth, I pray,
And then the sacrifice I'll pay." [67]

"His teeth came again. Varuṇa said, 'His teeth have now come again, sacrifice him to me.'

12.

Still Varuna, all-gracious, heard the prayer,
Consenting once again the lad to spare;
But, when his second teeth at length were grown,
Too fast, it seemed, his childish days had flown,
And all too soon his dawning manhood came;
As Varuna, insistent, urged his claim.

VARUṆA

"Lo! second teeth; perform thy vow,
And sacrifice him to me now."

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 14.

"He answered, 'A man of the warrior caste is fit for being sacrificed only after having received his full armour. Let him receive his full armour, then I will sacrifice him to thee.'

"He then was invested with the armour. Varuṇa then said, 'He has now received the armour, sacrifice him to me.'

["The king replied, 'Be it so.'—*Wilson's trans.*]

13.

But Hariśchandra yet could further pray,
And plead a fond excuse for more delay,—

HARIŚCHANDRA

"A Kshatra's son may only be
A fitting sacrifice to thee,
When, girt with armour, spear, and sword,
He's worthy of his valiant lord."

14.

The heavenly Kshatra heard the Kshatra's prayer,
And spared the Kshatra youth, till arms he bear;[68]
But when in glorious arms the young prince shone,
The father found his heart more fond had grown;
Rejoicing to behold the bright array,
More he reluctant was his vow to pay.
This Varuna discerned; and changeless still
He thus declared his final, righteous will;—

VARUNA

"In arms he's clad; perform thy vow;
In sacrifice I claim him now."

15.

At last the stricken king fresh plea found none;
Th' evaded sacrifice must now be done;
And briefly, brokenly, he answer made.

up until it has cut its teeth, or become a bull, and then be sacrificed (*Āśv. Gṛih. Sūtr.*, iv. 8).

[68] The sons of Kshatriyas were solemnly invested with armour in their eleventh year, and were then spoken of as being born a second time. This probably was the age of Rohita when he went to the forest. At the subsequent time when he returned with Śunaḥśepha, he would have been 16 or 17 years old. And—allowing for the earlier initiation of Brāhmans, and the probability that, for sacrificial purposes, the substituted victim would be of corresponding ritual status—Śunaḥśepha would then have been three years younger than Rohita, say between 13 and 14 years of age.

The Rāmāyaṇa speaks of him as a youth, but the Aitareya says nothing about his age. Hence this elucidation is not unnecessary.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 14.

"After having thus spoken, he called his son, and told him,—

"'Well, my dear, to him who gave thee unto me, I will sacrifice thee now.'

"But the son said, 'No, no,' took his bow and absconded to the wilderness, where he was roaming about for a year."

HARIŚCHANDRA

"So be it now; his price be paid."

16.

With heavy heart he called the lad,
And thus with tender words and sad;—

HARIŚCHANDRA

"Thou'rt Varuna's, not mine, dear son!
His will supreme must now be done;
He gave thee to my prayer and vow,
And claims thee as his offering now;
He bids me pay thy promised price,
And yield my boy for sacrifice."

17.

The lad this truth no sooner knew,
Than "Nay!" he said, and turned, and flew;
Then, taking bow and forest gear,
He roamed among the woods a year.[69]

18. EPODE

[Kind mercy, thus with righteousness combined,
Heaven's king evinced. He gave a son,—and, kind
To human weakness, oft his claim postponed,
Yet broke no law, nor breach by man condoned.

Sure India's king should still have kept his trust,
Though e'en to death, in Him so good, so just;
But no! the human father's qualms prevailed;
His word was broken, and his offering failed.

[69] The great and mysterious jungle laid mighty hold upon the imagination of India's ancient poets. The Mahābhārata turns on the exile of the Pāṇḍavas to the forest of Kāmyaka, and the Rāmāyaṇa upon the exile of Rāma and Sītā to the forest of Daṇḍaka.

In this story Rohita spends six years in the forest, and in the story of Śakuntalā, it was while wandering in the forest that Dushyanta met and married Śakuntalā. Many other examples might be cited.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 14.

'Twas his to smite his son. Then, though unslain,
His vow he would have kept. For laws ordain,
That,—"Kings who smite offenders, sacrifice
Indeed with offerings deemed of richest price"[70]

19.

And Manu saith,—"Creation's Lord hath made[71]
His own son, Chastisement, to be king's aid;
He, Brahma's glory, is incarnate law,
Who holds these fixed and moving worlds in awe.

"Through fear of Him all ranks of beings keep
Their several bounds, and safely wake and sleep.
Thus they subsist, enjoying and enjoyed,
In mutual duty swervelessly employed.

[70] This doctrine might be fairly inferred from the sequel of this story, as well as from the somewhat parallel ancient stories of Iphigenia (Ovid, *Met.*, xii. 31), and of Isaac in Holy Scripture (Gen. xxii. 9, 14). It is, however, categorically stated in the principal law code of ancient India thus,—"A king who corrects the created beings in accordance with the sacred law, and smites those worthy of corporal punishment, daily offers, as it were, sacrifices at which hundreds of thousands (are given as) fees. . . . For, by punishing the wicked and by favouring the virtuous, kings are constantly sanctified just as twice-born men by sacrifice. (*Manu*, viii. 306, 311.)

[71] These lines closely render the sense of another passage in *Manu* (vii. 14–22) wherein the fundamental principles of divine and human government are stated, the latter being considered a reflex of the former.

Its moral grandeur is wonderfully lofty and far-reaching. It contemplates Punishment (or *Chastisement*, as we prefer to render it, because it includes the notion of correction as well as penalty), as a Divine Energy, employed and delegated to human rulers for the protection of all creatures, and therefore, in fact, a mode of the Divine Benevolence, not a mere act of vengeance.

All are subject to it, including those earthly rulers to whom its administration is delegated, who for neglect to use it, or for its improper use, are themselves liable to its Divine infliction.

The whole of this legend is an example of the practical operation of these principles, and hence a categorical statement of them from so ancient and authoritative a book as *Manu's Law Code* is thought an appropriate interpolation.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 14.

"By Him—the man, the King indeed!—controlled,
The four Estates their social order hold;[72]
Secured by Him, Eternal Law abides,
And all that men design, or do, He guides.

"Well reasoned, Chastisement makes glad the world;
Ill reasoned, 'tis Destruction blindly whirled;
To mete it rightly needs a well-fraught mind;
For one quite guiltless man is hard to find.

"Patiently kings must those who need it seek;
Or strength would roast, like fish on spits, the weak;
The offerings dogs would lick, crows filch, and fly,
Possession cease, and low things oust the high.

"And Chastisement will reach, in fiery light,
That king, and all his kin, who fails to smite;
His forts, lands, fixed and moving goods, 'twill rend,
And saints and gods departing heavenward wend."

20.

Both Grace and Justice thus in Law unite;
For Law's sake, Grace itself bids Justice smite.
And though the son from Grace and Justice hide,
The Law Supreme must yet be sanctified.]

[72] The four castes or orders of mankind peculiar to Indian society.

Canto III

GUIDANCE

1.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15.
"Varuṇa now seized Hariśchandra, and his belly swelled (i.e., he was attacked by dropsy).
Or ["afflicted the descendant of Ikshwāku with dropsy."—*Wilson.*]

Then Varuna on great Ikshvāku laid [73]
The hand of chastisement for right delayed;
He sent o'erflooding waters through his veins,
Till his swoln body racked him sore with pains.

Though dire the chastisement, 'twas not malign;
For calmly just, and wise, is wrath divine;—
Designed to work amendment, not destroy,—
It grieved, but healed, both king and errant boy.

2.

"When Rohita heard of it, he left the forest,

And Rohita, when closed the year, had learned
His father's suffering state, and straight he turned,
With contrite heart, King Varuna to appease,
And yield himself, his dear-loved sire to ease.
But pain's hard discipline had yet to run
Its destined years. And till its work was done
The gracious power, from whom he'd sought to hide,
Vouchsafed, unseen, to be his friend and guide.

3.

"And went to a village where Indra in human disguise met him."

For, as he left the woods and neared a town,
Not entered, Indra, king of gods, came down

[73] The Sanskrit text is, "atha ha Ikshvākuṃ Varuṇo jagrāha," i.e., *Then the Ikshvāku Varuṇa* seized; and the point of the expression is, that even a king so illustrious as a descendant of the Ikshvāku race is not exempt from Divine punishment when merited.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15.
Or ["Indra, in the form of a man, went round him."—*Max Müller.*]

In human form, and circled round him thrice,
As Brahman priests encircle sacrifice; [74]
Then straightway sent him wandering back again
To meditate on this persuasive strain.[75]

INDRA (1)

(Hermit Life)

"O Rohita! thus are we told,
The wisdom taught by sages old;—
'No happiness can man untravelled win;
Often companions lure the good to sin;
Temptations best are shunned by travelling far
To regions where no towns or dwellings are.'
Indra travellers befriends;
Travel! He thy way attends."

"Rohita, thinking, 'A Brahman told me to wander,' wandered for a second year in the forest.

4.

ROHITA (Solus)

He ceased; and Rohita, deep musing, thought,
In lone amaze,—"Surely a Brāhman taught
That I must far from human tempters flee,
To keep myself from sin's pollution free;
His inspiration I'll obey,
And longer in the jungle stray,
With none but forest creatures rude,
In self-communing solitude."

So turning back, he practised rites austere,
A hermit in the woods a second year.

"And said to him, 'There is no happiness for him who does not travel, Rohita! thus we have heard. Living in the society of men, the best man (often) becomes a sinner (by seduction, which is best avoided by wandering to places void of human dwellings);' for Indra is surely the friend of the traveller. Therefore, wander."

[74] "Indra as a man went round him." This was a common form of salutation, to divinities and persons of distinction, imitative of the sun's southern daily course in the heavens, hence called *Pra-dakshiṇa*. It was especially performed at the sacrifices, when priests bore the sacred fire (Agni) round the victim. (See Canto IV, and Note 122.)

[75] Rohita's employment during the first year is not precisely stated, though we may infer that he used his bow for hunting, like Rāma in the Rāmāyaṇa. But his voluntary return, upon hearing of his father's distress, must have involved his own surrender; and that act was at once accepted by Indra, who was, indeed, mystically, another manifestation of Varuṇa himself. (See Notes 149, 161, 181.)

He, however, sent him back repeatedly to the forest, to work out his own purification, before indicating the sacrificial means of full redemption for all parties, as shown in the sequel.

5.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15. "When he was entering a village after having left the forest, Indra met him in human disguise, and said to him,—

And when that holy solitude was o'er,
He sought to render up himself once more;
Again he left the woods and neared a town;
But paused, for Indra, king of gods, came down,
In human form; and circling round him thrice,
As Brāhman priests encircle sacrifice,
He sent him back again, with counsel sage,
Discoursing thus of blessed Pilgrimage.[76]

INDRA (II)

(Pilgrimage)

"'The feet of the wanderer are like the flower, his soul is growing and reaping the fruit; and all his sins are destroyed by his fatigues in wandering. Therefore, wander!

"A pilgrim's feet are like the budding flowers,
That swell with promise of the speedy fruit;
For as they swell, so grows his soul. His hours
Fly fast on this good road. As hastes his foot
So fade his sins. They sleep, no more to wake,
Void and extinguished for his labour's sake.
Travel therefore yet a year
Through sacred roads, thy soul to clear."

6.

ROHITA (SOLUS)

"Rohita thinking, 'A Brahman told me to wander,' wandered a third year in the forest.

Again he thought,—"A Brāhman sage
Declared that blessed Pilgrimage
Will purge the soul from sinful stain,
And bade me wander back again.
His admonition to obey,
I'll tread the pilgrim's toilsome way,
And spend a third year journeying wide
To sacred streams, haunts sanctified."

[76] Having taught the negative safety of the hermit's life in his first stanza, Indra teaches, in his second, the positive sanctification accruing from pilgrimages. Both of these conditions hold an important place in the religious practices of India to this day.

7.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15. "When he was entering a village, after having left the forest, Indra met him in human disguise, and said to him,—

His pilgrimage was done, his faults were purged;
But still to yield himself his conscience urged;
Therefore he left the woods, drew near a town,
And paused,—for Indra, king of gods, came down
In human form, and circling round him thrice,
As Brāhman priests encircle sacrifice,
Thus sent him back, by labour now to gain
The prosperous fortune idlers wish in vain.

INDRA (III)

(Prosperity)

"'The fortune of him who is sitting, sits; it rises when he rises; it sleeps when he sleeps; it moves when he moves. Therefore wander.'

"For him who sits, his fortune sits also,[77]
And when he rises, fortune rises too;
For him who sleeps, to sleep doth fortune go,
But when he moves, it moves, and gains ensue;
Therefore travel! Back return,
Still be active! Riches earn."

8.

ROHITA (SOLUS)

"Rohita thinking, a 'Brahman told me to wander,' wandered for a fourth year in the forest.

Again he thought—"A Brāhman well has taught,
That fortune must by strenuous toil be sought,
And bade me travel still to win mine own;
Therefore I'll yet the sacrifice postpone,
And win both heavenly grace and earthly goods,

[77] The Sanskrit word "*bhaga*," here rendered both by Max Müller and Martin Haug, "fortune," is more frequently rendered "wealth, riches, affluence," or as Hayman Wilson gives it in this place, "prosperity."

The word "fortune" is, however, perfectly admissible, so long as it is understood *not* to apply to the fickle, uncertain, wheel-bearing personification of Greek and Latin writers.

This distinction is not without importance, because the evident intention of this, and the succeeding, stanzas of Indra is to inculcate the duty and necessity of human exertion, as opposed to dependence upon Chance or blind Fate.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15.

By toiling through a fourth year in the woods.
'Tis written, "Righteous labour wealth to win,
Does more than penance rites to purge from sin." [78]

"While he was entering a village after having left the forest, Indra said to him,—

"'The Kali is lying on the ground; the Dvâpara is hovering there; the Tretâ is getting up; but the Krita happens to walk (hither and thither). Therefore wander! wander!'

Or ["A man who sleeps is like the Kali age; a man who awakes is like the Dvâpara age; a man who rises is like the Tretâ age; a man who travels is like the Krita age. Travel."—*Max Müller.*]

9.

The toilsome fourth year past, again he turned
To yield himself. This time with wealth well earned
He left the woods, again drew near a town,
And paused; for Indra, king of gods, came down
In human form, and circling round him thrice,
As Brāhman priests encircle sacrifice,
He sent him back, to con this mystic lore
Of chance, of moods diverse, and eras four.

INDRA (IV)

(Chance and Time)

"The Kali slumbers on the ground;
The Dvāpara wakes, but hovers bound;
The Tretā, rising, fails to go;
But Krita travels to and fro.[79]
Then wander still! Of glory sure!
With travelling Krita evermore!"

[78] "Among all modes of purification, purity in (the acquisition of) wealth is declared to be the best; for he is pure who gains wealth with clean hands, not he who purifies himself with earth and water." (*Manu*, v. 106.) Cf. also Canto I, 4 (4) *infra*, and the notes thereon.

[79] Max Müller observes that this is one of the earliest allusions to the Hindu notion of the Four Ages of the World, and translates the passage accordingly, as in the margin. (Cf. Notes 46 and *inf.*)

The same names are given to the throws of gambling dice, *Kṛita*, the throw of four, being reckoned best, *Tretā*, the throw of three, second best, *Dvāpara*, the throw of two, worse, and worst of all, *Kali*, the throw of one. This was the view of Dr. Martin Haug, who translates accordingly, and adds in a note,—"The meaning of this Gāthā is,—'There is every success to be hoped; for the unluckiest die, the Kali, is lying; two others are slowly moving, and half-fallen, but the luckiest, the Krita, is in full motion.'" (p. 464).

These translations are not really inconsistent, but the true inner wisdom of the passage, otherwise very obscure, is only ascertained by combining them.

10.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15.

"Rohita thinking, 'A Brahman told me to wander,' wandered for a fifth year in the forest.

ROHITA (SOLUS)

He deeply mused,—"This Brāhman's wise discourse
Connotes vague Chance with Fate's persistent force;
The sages, who have made like names suffice
For fate-fixed eras and for chance-thrown dice,
Imply that seeming chance is latent plan,
And seeming fate amenable to man;
Even so my mind the inner soul divines
Of the mysterious Brāhman's pregnant lines." [80]

1. "'That he who lies in sleep profound
Like Kali's age, terrestrial bound,
And Kali's dice, of grovelling throw,
Successful gains can never know.

[80] Manu—evidently citing this passage—interprets the names as referring to the Four Ages (yugas) of the World, and applies them to the instruction of a king, saying, "The various ways in which a king behaves (resemble) the Krita, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali ages; hence the king is identified with the Ages (of the World). Sleeping he represents the Kali (or iron) age, waking, the Dvāpara (or brazen) age, ready to act the Tretā (or silver) age, but moving (actively) the Krita (or golden) age" (*Manu*, ix. 301, 302).

But the ritual of the Śatapatha Brāhmana connects both meanings of the names, by a remarkable *Ceremonial Game at Dice*, publicly played by a king towards the close of his Coronation Rite; which game, by its pre-arranged symbolical result, was said to typify the *Triumph of the Kali Age*. He was placed on a specially appointed throne-seat for the purpose, while the following words were pronounced—"He hath sat down, the upholder of the sacred law;—Varuṇa in the homesteads . . . 'among the peasants.' . . . He, the wise!" The dice were then placed in his hand, and several significant ceremonies followed, expressive of the king's sacred character. Towards the end he was hailed as, "Much worker, more worker, better worker!" and soon after, the game was solemnly played (*Śat. Brāh.*, v. 4, 4; vol. 3, p. 106).

The main concept underlying this curious ceremony seems to be, that the course of the universe, and the apparently casual throws of dice, are alike controlled by pre-ordained supreme Law, the operation of which, however, may be modified by human action.

A like concept is apparent in the philological facts, that the names of eras and dice are the same, and that Indra's verse does not specify either signification, but leaves the learner to apply one or the other, or to combine both, as is here attempted to be done.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15.

II. "'So he who wakes, but couching stays,
Like Dvāpara's worthless, brazen days,
And Dvāpara's meanly hovering cast,
Is surely doomed to fail at last.

III. "'And he who rises, yet not moves,
Like Tretā's age, of silver proves;
He nears the prize, yet comes to nought,
As Tretā's throw, though high, falls short.

IV. "'But he whom active toils engage,
Like Krita's glorious, golden age,
And Krita's throw, that nimbly flies,
Wins fortune's great, victorious prize.'

"Thus chance and fate, both swayed by man, ensure
True bliss to those who patient toils endure.
He therefore bids me still to persevere,
And travel in the woods another year;
His word I trust! Success gleams full in view!
True wealth and wisdom I will still pursue,
And resolute in labour strive and wait,
To chance not trusting nor dismayed by fate."

11.

"When he was entering a village after having left the forest, Indra said to him,—

So laboured Rohita the fifth year through,
And when 'twas past, to yield the offering due,
Again he left the woods, drew near a town,
And paused; for Indra, king of gods, came down,
In human form, and circling round him thrice,
As Brāhman priests encircle sacrifice,
Thus told what fruits and glory might be won,
By travelling still, like yon unresting sun.

INDRA (v)

(Glory.)

"'The wanderer finds honey and the sweet Udumbara fruit; behold the beauty of the Sun, who is not wearied by his wanderings. Therefore, wander, wander!'

"The traveller sure refreshment finds;
For him the bee her honey stores,

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15.

And Dumbar figs of sweetest kinds[81]
For him profusely nature pours.

"Behold thy brilliant sire, the sun,[82]
Who travelling never rests nor tires;
See, through these worlds how ceaseless run
His glorious beams, his living fires.
Glory thus from travel springs:
Travel! Seek it! Son of kings!"

12.

"Rohita then wandered for a sixth year in the forest.

Inspired by this high theme, he backward went
To toil a sixth laborious year content;[83]
Unresting like the sun, from day to day,
He swerveless kept the king-appointed way
Within the woods. There, as the year came round,
A starving Rishi eremite he found.[84]

"He met (this time) the Rishi *Ajīgarṭa*, "the son of *Suyavasa*, who was starving, in the forest.

He, Ajīgarta, sprung from Fire divine,
And heir of Suyavas, in Bhrigu's line,
Vowed in the woods to lead the hermit life,
Had with him, dwelling there, three sons and wife;

---

[81] The Dumbar fig was the fruit of the Dumbar tree (Sans. *Udumbara*; Lat. *Ficus glomerata*), a native of India.

In Sanskrit rituals this tree was particularly associated with the royal dignity. The framework and seat of the king's throne were formed by bars and planks of its wood, tied together with Munja grass (*Saccharum munja*); the ladle from which he was anointed was fashioned of it; and so, in the earliest rites, was the vase, containing the sacred water to be sprinkled over his crown, by members of his own military (Kshatriya) caste (*Śat. Brāh.*, v. 3, 5); while the crown itself consisted of a branch of it, set in a golden circlet.

[82] Rohita was heir of the line of Sūrya kings, who claimed descent from the Sun.

[83] Rohita's six years of toil may be interestingly compared with the six days of the week, and with the command, "Six days shalt thou labour." The Śāṅkhāyana version, however, sends him back for a seventh year.

[84] Ajīgarta = literally, "one that has nothing to swallow." His family connexions and position are described in the *Harivaṃśa*, and will be discussed in subsequent notes.

The Āṅgirasas, or priests of Agni, were held in most exalted reverence, their fathers being raised to the highest heaven, and becoming objects of worship (*Rig-veda*, x. 14, 6.) Cf. Note 210.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15.

But now this Āngirasa household stood
At point of death for very want of food.

"He had three sons, *Śunaḥpuchha Śunaḥśepa* and *Śunolangúla.*

One meaning mythos those sons' three names show;
As Śunaḥpuccha, Śunaḥśepha so,
So hight Śunolāngūla, "*Tail canine!*",
The name all Ārya used, to note the sign
Of three, or one fixt mid star, near'st the pole,
Heaven's guide of earthly travellers tow'rds their goal.[85]
For through long ages, ere the Āryans turned
Tow'rds lands diverse, wise-watching seers discerned
This sign, slow ousting Draco, take his place,
A faithful "Dog," to guard and guide the race;
Wherefore, though speech has changed, its name will dure,
Ind's Śunaḥśepha, Ārya's Cynosure.[86]

[85] There is no further allusion to Śunaḥśepha's two brothers, either in this legend, or elsewhere, that we have been able to trace; unless, as highly probable, Jamadagni, the Adhvaryu at his projected sacrifice, were his elder brother under another name (see Note 100, etc.).

It was necessary, from a legal aspect, to mention them, because had he been an only son, his subsequent adoption by Viśvāmitra would have been unlawful (see the ancient authorities, quoted by H. T. Colebrooke in the *Digest of Hindu Law*. Bombay, 1836. Book v. 283).

The mention of three brothers with one virtual name, each name being of the same significance, viz., "*Cynosure*," or "*Dog's-Tail*," adds cogency to the conjecture of intended allusion to the constellation of that name, which really consists of *three* visible stars, although the name is frequently applied only to the "mid," or polar, star of the heavens.

The whole constellation of *seven* visible stars, is now called "*Ursa Minor*," but must anciently have been (*Sans.* Śvan, śun; *Gr.* κυων, κυν; *Lat.*, can, canis) "*The Dog.*" How otherwise could its tail have been *Cynosure*?—to say nothing of the fact that a bear's tail is pendulous, *never upright*, as this must be represented by the configuration of the constellation.

[86] These astronomical allusions will be understood, from the preceding note, and the following quotation, viz.—

"The bright star of the Lesser Bear, which we call the pole-star, has not always been, nor will always continue to be, our Cynosure. At the time of the construction of the earliest catalogues, it was 12° from the pole, it is now only 1° 24′, and will approach yet nearer, to within half a degree, after which it will again recede, and slowly give place to others which will succeed it in its companionship to the pole." . . . "At the epoch of the building of the great pyramid, the bright star, *a* Draconis was the pole-star" (Herschell's *Astr.*, pars. 318, 319).

Strabo, commenting on the silence of Homer respecting the Cynosure, says, "It is probable it was not considered a constellation, until the Phœnicians specially designating it, and employing it in navigation, it became known to the Hellenes." Hence it was called *Phoniké* (Hyginus, *Poet. Astr.*, ii. 2) and Thales, himself a sage of Phœnician (or Oriental) descent, is said to have taught his countrymen to steer by it, instead of by Ursa Major.

Ait Brāh, vii. 3, 15.

13.

'Twas Rohita's prime duty now to try
Some means to stay those Brāhmans' deaths, so nigh;
But, when their heaven-descended rank he learned,
And mystic names, the traveller-prince discerned
His guide celestial, hitherto unknown,
Who now the means of ransom made his own.

For quick he saw, by inspiration fired,
Their numbers, rank, and desperate plight conspired
To make it fit that he, now wealthy grown,
"He told him, 'Rishi, Should pay a price to make one lad his own.
Where all agreed, no law would any break; *
So Rohita before the household spake—

ROHITA

"O Rishi-priest of saving sacrifice,[87]
To save thy dying household, take the price
"'I give thee a hundred cows; for I will ransom myself I freely offer thee, a hundred kine,
That one of these, thy starving sons, be mine;

* See Notes 85, 100 and 211.

[87] "*Saving Sacrifice.*" This concept of sacrifice is abundantly illustrated by the incidents of this legend; and in the appended Notes and Dissertations, *passim.*

But the following brief expressions, in Vedic works, may be quoted here, as bearing directly on the point, which is more fully treated of elsewhere.

"Those who sacrifice remove sin."
[*Yajamānāḥ pāpmānaṃ ghnate.*] (*Ait. Brāh.*, v. 25.)

"Which, O Death, are thy thousand, and ten thousand ropes for killing mortals? By the power of sacrifice we destroy them all."
[*Ye te sahasram ayutam pāśāḥ Mṛityo martyāya hantave Tān yajñasya māyayā sarvān avayajāmahe.*] (*Taitt. Brāh.*, i. 10, 8, 2.)

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15. (from being sacrificed) with one of these thy sons.'

Who, bound for me upon the Yūpa tree,
From sacrifice may free my sire and me.
One thou may'st spare, and all be saved by one,
And Varuna's all-righteous will be done." [88]

14.

" Ajīgarta then excepted the eldest, saying, 'Do not take him,' and the mother excepted the youngest, saying, 'Do not take him.'

Such offered means to spare the household life
'Twixt love and duty raised a painful strife.
If they must part with one, which should they choose?
To save the rest, how could they one refuse?
Hard pressed to make the dread alternate choice,
Parental nature wrung each parent's voice.

AJĪGARTA

The father said,—" Though hard, it must be done;
Yet must a father keep his eldest son."

AJĪGARTA'S WIFE (ŚATYAVATĪ)

The mother wept,—" Though one must hence be torn,
Yet must a mother keep her youngest born." [89]

[88] The view that Ajīgarta, or any of the parties to this transaction, originally contemplated Śunaḥśepha's actual butchery in sacrifice is not supported by the expressions of the legend, or by the usual Vedic sacrificial ritual.

Ajīgarta is not blamed for selling his son. He is even justified for it, by Manu, under the circumstances; and rightly so, since it only involved his transfer to a royal purchaser, in the first instance, and to another Brāhman family afterwards, as the result of his ceremonially—*and only ceremonially*—occupying the place of sacrificial victim.

According to the ritual, both men and animals were offered, but all, except such animals as were ordinarily used for food, were released after the preliminary rites had been completed (see Note 115).

This was in accordance with the whole spirit and object of the Vedic sacrificial system, as hereinafter demonstrated.

[89] Śunaḥśepha was sold by the joint consent of father and mother, the mother even exercising a right of excepting the youngest son. In like manner she is afterwards represented as joining with the father in the entreaty for him to rejoin his family.

This, doubtless, represents the legal position of a mother at the Vedic

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15. " Thus they agreed upon the middle one, Śunaḥśepa. He then gave for him a hundred cows,

15.

So in unnaming silence, they agreed [90]
To Śunaḥśepha's sale. Their day of need
Ended when in due form, " For these he's mine!"
Quoth Rohita, and gave the hundred kine.[91]

" left the forest,

16.

This gained, the prince's exile ends;
So swift his way at once he wends,
To seek his loved parental home,
No more through distant wilds to roam.

No seeming Brāhman turned him back,
To tread again the jungle track;
So leading forth the Brāhman lad,
He travelled on, secure and glad.

epoch, and contrasts favourably both with subsequent Indian law-codes, and those of Greece and Rome, which conferred the right of giving sons for adoption into other families upon the father only, during his lifetime.

[90] At this point of the legend, the Rāmāyaṇa version introduces a voluntary tender of himself by Śunaḥśepha.

But, although willingness on his part is of great importance to a right understanding of the legend, there was no need, at the Brāhmanic epoch (whatever might have been the case at the long subsequent Rāmāyaṇa epoch) for a direct statement on the subject.

The consent of the victim was then so thoroughly well understood to be essential to every sacrifice, that the very animals were theoretically supposed to be consenting parties to their own immolation.

Many texts might be quoted on the point, but the following two will suffice, viz., " The animal, when carried to the slaughter, saw death before it. Not wishing to go to the gods, the gods said to it, 'Come, we will bring thee to heaven.' *The animal consented*" (*Ait. Brāh.*, vol. ii. p. 86). " Accordingly, they (the animals) resigned themselves, and became favourably disposed to the slaughtering" (*Śat. Brāh.* iii. 7, 3, 5).

The point is further illustrated by a story in the fourteenth book of the Mahābhārata, which represents Kṛishṇa and Arjuna, disguised as Brāhmans, telling Rājā Mewaradhwaja that a tiger had carried away the son of Kṛishṇa, and could only be appeased by being given half the body of the Rājā's son; whereupon the Rājā agreed to sacrifice himself and directed his wife and son to saw him in two, but Kṛishṇa, perceiving a tear in the victim's left eye, stopped the sacrifice, *as the offering was an unwilling one*.

[91] All payments, both in this story and generally through the Vedas, are expressed in *kine*, indicating an extremely remote period, corresponding to that implied in the Latin " *pecunia*," money, derived from " *pecus, pecoris*," cattle or sheep, which were universal measures of value, before gold and silver were employed for that purpose (cf. Note 55).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15.

17.

He went forth lonely, clad in forest gear,
And lonely had he travelled many a year;
But now with ransom and a princely train
He rode triumphant to the town again.

"entered the village, and brought him before his father, saying, 'O my dear (father) by this boy I will ransom myself (from being sacrificed).'
Or ["Rejoice, father, for with this youth shall I redeem myself." — *H. H. Wilson.*]

His present joy made travel past seem light;
His dear ancestral home drew soon in sight;
And with glad tidings thus, as he drew near,
He crowned the measure of his father's cheer:—

ROHITA

"Rejoice, O father! we may now be free!
This lad I bring; in him my ransom see!"

18.

Then Hariśchandra, for his malady
Stayed not, to Varuna again came nigh;

HARIŚCHANDRA

"He then approached Varuṇa the king, (and said) 'I will sacrifice him to thee.'

"Lord Varuna, I thee implore,
My fault forgive, my health restore,
Nor bid me still my son destroy;
Accept for him this Brāhman boy."

19.

And Varuna, appeased, beheld the king
Come near with contrite heart and ransom bring;
Therefore he laid his vengeful anger by,
And thus vouchsafed a kind, yet just reply:—

VARUṆA

"He said, 'Well, let it be done; for a Brāhman is worth more than a Kshattriya.'

"More worthy is a Brāhman lad
Than thine, O Kshatra, armour-clad;[92]
With him thy promised offering make;
And then, for his exalted sake,

[92] According to this, even the gods themselves held Brahmans in higher estimation than the highest ranks of other men.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 15.

The righteous law will grant release,
Will spare thy son, thy suffering cease."

"Varuṇa then explained to the king the rites of the Râjasûya sacrifice, at which on the day appointed for the inauguration (*abhishechaniya*) he replaced the (sacrificial animal) by a man."

20.

This Rājasūya rite he then ordained,
And all its feasts and sacrifice explained,
As planned to raise earth's kings, and vest their throne
With world-wide sway, like Varuna's alone.

He changed, howe'er, the final Crowning Feast,
By ordering man as victim, not a beast;[93]
And though thus He, who governs earth and skies,
Dread Dasyu offerings seemed to legalize,—

His word was clear.—He must be good and just.—
Therefore did Hariśchand, in perfect trust,
Make ready for the rite divinely given,
That yet should him and his exalt to heaven.[94]

22. EPODE

[Thus Heaven itself had led its wayward son
Till years of discipline blest work had done.
It bade him, *hermit-like*, to live unstained,
Then taught how *pilgrimage* forgiveness gained.

[93] A close translation of the Sanskrit text would be—"He then explained the Rājasūya sacrifice, when at the Abhisheka he was to bring a man as his offering."
The Rājasūya rites were sometimes called collectively, a *varuṇasava*, i.e., according to Sāyaṇa, a consecration to the universal sway wielded by Varuṇa.
The Abhisheka was the final sprinkling (or anointing) ceremony, lasting five days; on the fourth of which it was customary to sacrifice an animal (cf. Note 103).
(See *Śat. Brāh.*, Dr. Eggeling's Pref. to vol. iii.)

[94] In the *Mahābhārata* (*Sabhā Parva*) it is said that Hariśchandra resides in the court of Indra (Svarga), to which he was elevated for his performance of the Rājasūya and for his unbounded liberality.
It is a popular belief in India, that all the people of his city were raised to heaven with him.

It showed that active *toil* good *fortune* brought,
How *wisdom* might be gained by earnest *thought*;
To *glory* then it pointed out the way,
And led him where his destined *ransom* lay.

These themes, repeated oft through ages old,
Taught kings, through toil and pains, their thrones to hold,
While heavenly ransom, shown to Ind's whole race,
Betokened, surely, HEAVEN'S ETERNAL GRACE.

Canto IV

SACRIFICE

1.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

AUSPICIOUS gladness filled the monarch's mind;
No more he tried some fond excuse to find;
But sent swift heralds forth, with zealous care,
This word to every prince of Ind to bear.[95]

HARIŚCHANDRA

"With haste your Brāhmans bring, your Kshatras speed,
Bid Vaiśyas come, respected Śūdras lead,[96]
And come yourselves, in panoply and state
My Rājasūya rites to celebrate."

2.

Invited thus, vast Indo-Āryan throngs,
In bright array, with music, dance, and songs,
Like surging waves, swept through the gay-decked roads[97]
To reach the glorious city's bright abodes;

[95] The summons here supposed to be issued by Hariśchandra, corresponds with that of Yudhishthira on a like occasion (*Mahāb. Sabh. Parva*, 33), and the throngs attending correspond with those described there and also in the accounts of Rāma's coronation (*Rām.*, vi. 130).

[96] The Śūdras, the lowest of the four great castes, were not treated so contemptuously in the most ancient times as they came to be later.

In one verse of the Mahābhārata they are coupled with the Vaiśyas, as "worthy," or "respectable" (cf. Max Müller's *Hist. Sans. Lit.*, pp. 206–8).

[97] At the inauguration of Rāma—"The high road was crowded with joyful multitudes, which moved to and fro, like the waves of the sea, whilst their noise was like the roaring of a tempest." "The sound of the multitude was like that of the rushing of the flood-tide, rolling in from the sea, at the waxing and waning of the moon" (Wheeler's *Hist. India*, vol. ii. p. 86). A modern Hindu crowd is quieter and less demonstrative.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

And Dasyu tribes brought hosts beyond recount,
Ayodhyā's king to crown Lord Paramount.

So variant peoples, drawn from far and wide,
Became as one, in friendship firm allied;
For long they lodged in richly garnished homes,
New-built, perfumed, and vast, like heavenly domes,
While high in famed Ayodhyā feasted they,
And joined in stately rites from day to day.*

No kingdom since, nor yet in India's eld,
Hath such a glorious Rājasūya held;
Nor could a prince be crowned by four such men [98]
As those whom Hariśchandra summoned then;
So great, so learned in Vedas old and new,
So skilled to work all rites in order due.

3.

"At that sacrifice, *Viśvāmitra* was his Hotar, *Jamadagni* his Adhvaryu,

For Viśvāmitra, regal Hotar-priest,
With potent voice haled gods t' attend the feast; [99]
While Jamadagni took th' Adhvaryu's part
Of manual work with all-embracing art.
(Great Viśvāmitra's mother's nephew,—he
Was brother of the victim then to be.) [100]

* Cf. Prologue, 7, 8 (*ante*).

[98] There were four principal priests at every sacrifice, viz.,—

(1) The *Hotar*, who "called" the gods, and recited the verses of the Rig-veda.

(2) The *Adhvaryu*, the actual sacrificer, who prepared and performed all the ceremonies, according to the directions of the Yajur-veda.

(3) The *Brahman*, who watched the preceding two, to detect mistakes, or omissions.

(4) The *Udgātar*, who filled up all gaps and pauses, making the service complete.

It was considered highly important that there should be no pause during the rites.

[99] Viśvāmitra was said to be so powerful, that he compelled the gods (Devas) to come to his offerings, whether they would or no.

[100] This relationship is set forth in the *Harivaṃśa* supplement to the Mahābhārata (vv. 1456, etc.) quoted in Muir's *Orig. Sans. Texts* (vol. i. p. 351, etc.).

Its interest in relation to this legend will be seen further on. (Cf. Notes 85, 186.)

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

"*Vasishṭha* his Brahmâ, and *Ayasya* his Udgâtar.

Vasishtha, Brahma-priest, with jealous eye
Sagacious, watched all casual faults to spy;
While Ayāsya, Udgātar prompt and bright,
Filled every pause, and every lapse made right.
These ancient rivals joining thus as friends,
Their great historic age of priests' feud ends.[101]

"After the preliminary ceremonies had been performed.

In perfect concord they together wrought,
In stately order all the offerings brought,
Throughout the year; and when their course was run,
All sacred Prior Rites were truly done.
Royal Insignia then they well prepared,
And crowning "Abhisheka's" rite they shared.[102]

4.

This last chief rite with Chaitra month began:

[101] These names of priests are among the greatest in the Veda.

Viśvāmitra was originally a powerful Kshatra king, who became ambitious of priestly rank. To gain it, he practised fearful austerities for enormously long periods. The Brahmans, led by Vasishṭha, and aided by the divinities themselves, opposed him with all their might. But after a most frightful contest with Vasishṭha, at which heaven and earth are represented as standing aghast, he gained his object, and became both Kshatra and Brāhman (King and Priest) of unusual power and dignity.

His nephew and friend Jamadagni assisted him throughout; and in like manner, Vasishṭha was assisted by Ayāsya. (Cf. *Mahāb.* xi. 174, 175.—*Rām.* i, 51, 65.)

There can be no doubt that this ancient myth enshrines some memories of actual contests between kings and priests, similar to those of Christendom, in later times.

This story represents the rivals as reconciled, and working together; yet still with poetic propriety, represents Vasishṭha as engaged to watch for mistakes made by his former antagonist.

[102] The preliminary ceremonies are minutely described in the *Ait. Brāh.* (Haug, vol. ii. p. 74, etc.) and the *Śatapatha Brāh.* (Eggeling, vol. 3, p. 42, etc.)

Great stress is laid on the necessity that all the insignia of royalty—the crown, the chrism, the throne and its tiger-skin covering, the urns of sacred water—and much besides, should all be ready before the beginning of the final Abhisheka.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

Through five grand days its course appointed ran.[103]
While beams the new-year sun in Mesha's height [104]
And earth is born anew in spring-tide light, [104]
So beams the king, by hope new born, as throngs
Of all Ind's castes with joyful shouts and songs
Bring each its lustral urn, in pomp and state
The heaven-bid sprinkling-rite to celebrate.

Each day the serried hosts their king surround
In golden glory on the sacred ground;
Seers, warriors, merchants, labourers, all are there;
For each by sacred law the rite must share.

On the first day, by "Dīkshā" rites ordained,[105]
The king became a priest, yet king remained;
Then from th' "Āhavan" fire, as King and Priest,
Commanded living offering at the feast.[106]

[103] "The Abhishechanīya (or Abhisheka = literally "the sprinkling") the Coronation ceremony (corresponding to the Anointment of modern times), requires for its performance five days, viz., one *Dīkshā* (initiation ceremony), three *Upasads*, and one *Sutyā*, or Soma day; the particular form of Soma sacrifice being the Ukthya.

"The Dīkshā is performed immediately after the expiration of the dark fortnight following the full moon of Phālgunī, that is to say, on the first day of Chaitra (about the middle of March)." *Śat. Brāh.*, Note by Dr. Eggeling (v. 3, 3, 1), vol. iii. p. 68. (Cf. Note 145, *inf.*)

[104] *Mesha*, the Sanskrit name of the constellation Aries, the ram; which the Sun enters at this date, when Spring begins.

In modern India it marks the time of the great Holī festival.

In Christendom it is Easter.

[105] The "*Dīkshā*" (i.e., the "consecration," or "initiation" ceremony) had to be performed at every repetition of a sacrifice. The ritual was very elaborate and mysterious, but may be summarized as symbolizing the being "born again." Hence those who have passed through it are called in India, "*Dvijas*," or "twice born" men, to this day (See *Ait. Brāh.*, i. 1, 3, etc.; *Śat. Brāh.*, v., pp. 289. foll.). This ceremony occupied the first day of the Abhisheka.

[106] The ceremonies by which the king alternately took up and laid down the attributes of priest and king are very minutely described in the

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Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

Then three successive days the hosts sat down,
Besieging Heaven, as men besiege a town;
Equipped and weaponed for the mystic fight
With prayers alone and sacrificial rite.

One day was "Iron," one was "Silver" named,
When they their loftiest holiest altar framed.
The third was called "The Golden Upasad,"
The day ordained for offering up the lad.[107]

5.

For, 'mongst the offerings deemed of precious price,
The chief was that day's living sacrifice,

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (vii. 19–25). They indicate that, as head of the state, he ought to unite both characters in his person.

[107] The "*Upasads*" (i.e., "sessions," or "sieges") were so called because the assembly was said to "sit down" before Heaven, in the manner of an army besieging a city. The following is from Dr. Eggeling's note upon them:—

"The Upasadaḥ, consisting of three offerings of *ghī* to Agni, Soma, and Vishṇu, followed by a Homa, have to be performed twice daily, for at least three days. . . .

"The first day's performance is called the *ayaḥśayâ* ('lying in iron,' 'made of iron'), the second *rajaḥśayâ* ('silvern'), and the third *harîśayâ* ('golden')" (*Śat. Brāh.*, vol. 2, p. 105, *note*).

The symbolical division of the ground (already explained in Notes 32–34 *ante*) was maintained in these spiritual "sieges."

On the second Upasad day a footing was gained in the symbolized "Heaven," by the erection of the high eastern altar therein.

This was followed up on the third Upasad day by the transfer thither of the sacred fire (Agni) with the Soma and other offerings from the part of the ground symbolically called "Earth," preparatory to the erection of the "three-pronged" *Yūpa* post, on which the animal for the offering was to be bound, in a position corresponding to the reredos of the altar in modern churches. The animal offering was then consummated, and with it the third, and last, day of the Upasads closed, being the fourth day of the Abhisheka.

The fifth, and last, day of the Abhisheka followed. It was also called a "*Sutyā*," or Soma day. Heaven was then said to be completely won by the Soma rite, and the final crowning, and "sprinkling" (Abhisheka), ceremonies immediately took place.

It will thus be seen that the events here immediately following in the legend occurred on the third Upasad day, being the fourth of the Abhisheka, and that those following Agni's reply (see Canto V, 4), which directed Śunaḥśepha to the Viśve Devās, occurred on the fifth, or Soma, day.

In subsequent ages, the legend itself was recited on this Fifth, and final, day of the whole great series of ceremonies. (Cf. Note 162.)

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3-16.

Whose offerer rises (so the Brāhmana told),
From earth to heaven, with body all of gold.[108]

And primal Vedas also plainly taught
That offered life vicarious ransom wrought,[109]
And only through such offering power was given
To pour the Soma and attain to heaven.[110]

To signalize such all-transcending worth,
They quit their altars sunk in symboled "Earth,"
And thence with hymns and triumph on the way
Their sacred "Agni, born from heaven," convey

To that high, new brick altar, plaqued with gold,
With golden hearths, three sacred flames to hold,
That rising join in one great fragrant flare
Sublime tow'rds heaven, to bear men's offerings there.[111]

[108] "(By the animal sacrifice) the sacrificer goes with a golden body to the world of heaven." *Hiraṇyasarīra ūrdhvaḥ svargaṃ lokam eti*" (*Ait. Brāh.*, ii. 14).

[109] "The sacrificer is the animal" (*Taitt. Brāh.*, ii. 8, -2). "The animal is indeed the sacrificer himself" (*Ait. Brāh.*, ii. 11). "The animal is, as it were, ransoming the man." (*Taitt. Saṃ.*, vi. 1, 11, 6.)

[110] "He seizes and sacrifices an animal for Agni and Soma. . . . Thereby having ransomed himself, and become free from debts, he offers (the Soma sacrifice)." (*Kaushītaki Br.*, x. 3; cf. *Ait. Brāh.* ii. 9.)

[111] The previous sacrifices, being of an ordinary nature, had been performed in the Western division of the sacrificial compound (*the prāchina Vaṃśa*), ritually called "Earth" (see Note 32 *sup.*), where the altars were all formed of earth, raised or sunk below the surface, simply covered with Kuśa grass. But the more important sacrifices now to follow, had to be performed in the eastern division (*the Mahā-Vedi*) ritually called "Sky," or "Heaven" (see Note 32 *sup.*), and at the more elaborate elevated altar, built of bricks on the preceding day, and planned to symbolize the "golden body" of the sacrificer. (See *Śat. Brāh.* and Eggeling's *Trans.*, vol. iii., p. 419.)

This "Golden Upasad" day therefore began with the ceremonious transfer of the scene of sacrifice to this place. The sacred fire (Agni)

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

The Soma, chariot-borne and hailed as king,
Next through the road, strewn now with gold, they bring,
And with him all the offerings, all the tools,
And sacred vessels named in ritual rules.

Anigh the golden altar they enshrine
The whole in symboled "Heaven" with rites divine;
Then reverent throngs around the precincts wait,
The Golden Sacrifice to consummate.[112]

6.

Beyond the altar, prone on earth, they view
Ind's health-restoring tree, the Catechu;
Which, pruned and shaped, they make by hymns and prayer
A "Yūpa," charged with mystic virtues rare.

Then, as they fix erect the tree divine,
With consecrating "ghī" they make it shine,
Conspicuous, lifted up, all eyes to draw,
A "Trisūl," "Trident," "Cross," a sacred "Tau."[113]

(which was obtainable only by friction of two sticks, and thus said to be "born from heaven") was first carried processionally on a car, and placed in three receptacles on the new altar. There its flames were fed with odoriferous woods, and it was said to bear thence the various offerings to the immediate presence of the gods above.

[112] After the transfer of Agni (as above) all the prepared offerings, especially the Soma liquid (which was styled and treated as a king), were also carried in procession and deposited under roofed erections, or shrines (Sans. *Havirdhānas*), specially prepared west of the high altar.

The assembly entered this holy place at the same time, and were thus said to have entered Heaven, and so far attained the object of the Three Upasads.

[113] The Yūpa was a high wooden post erected eastward of the supreme altar, with much ceremony, immediately after the transfer of the sacred fire and the offerings had been accomplished. Its object was to hold the living victims bound upon it for sacrifice. It was itself an object of adoration, being anointed with the sacred ghī.

It had three prongs or forks (see *Rig-veda*, i. 24; 13), being more or less like a trident, or cross. Possibly the Buddhist "Triśūl" is a reminiscence of its shape.

It was made of various woods, according to the object of the sacrifice. For this particular rite, the desire being to "gain heaven," it was made of

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

As reredos east of Ind's high altar placed,
With ribboned wreaths, like youthful garments, graced,
They deem it fit to hold the sacrifice;
And circling chant this Vedic chorus thrice.

VERSE TO THE YŪPA TREE

(*Rig-veda*, iii. 8; 4.—Trishtubh Metre.)

"[4. Well clad, and hung with wreaths comes the youthful (pillar); most excellent it is as soon as generated, steadfast and wise venerators of the gods, * meditating piously in their minds, raise it up."—*R.-v.*, iii. 8, 4. Wilson.]

"Well-clothed, garland-decked, lo! comes the Youth in view,
Fairest tree of all the trees that ever grew;
Poets fix him thus erect, who late reclined,
Pious, well framed thoughts rehearsing in their mind."

As Śunaḥśepha, waiting 'mid the throngs,
Had seen them shape the stem and triple prongs,
And seen it reared, and heard the crowds rejoice,
All fearless what might chance, he joined his voice.

When "like a youth" 'twas decked with colours bright,[114]
His youthful heart beat high with gay delight;
And glad he stept forth, simple, willing, free,
To stand as victim near the fatal tree.*

7.

No serving priest of human slaughter dreamed;
Such rites were strange. This they an emblem deemed,

* Sans. *Kavi*, i.e., Poets; reciters of hymns.

Khadira wood, i.e., the *Catechu acacia*, a forest tree, native to India most valuable especially for its medicinal qualities.

[114] Dr. Martin Haug says that the name "Yūpa" contains a *pun* on the Śanskrit word "Yuva" a youth. The *Ait. Br.* (ii. 1), however, derives it from "yoyūpayan," (they debarred,) and relates a curious legend of "the gods," attempting to debar mankind from a knowledge of the sacrifice by its means. There are other speculations as to the root of the word (vide *Śat. Br.*, iii. 6, 4, vol. ii., pp. 162–180). It is probable that the term "youth" was used in reference to its decoration with ribbons, corresponding to the then style of youthful dress.

* Compare Note 90.

Ait Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

Where man was bound for man with rites fulfilled,
But freed at last was, when a beast was killed.[115]

So while the faultless opening rites were done,
Unbound, inviolate stood the Brāhman's son;
The youth, as there he filled the victim's place,
Smiled innocently in his father's face.

"they could not find a person willing to bind him to the sacrificial post.

But when they brought his death-dyed robe of red,
The priests discerned his lofty rank with dread;[116]
And terror spread the vast assemblage round,
Down fell the robe, sank silent every sound.

In speechless awe priest looked on priest, dismayed;
The harassed king, of failure sore afraid,
Sought long and sought again, but none could find,
Who dared the sacrificial cords to bind.[117]

"Ajīgarta, the son of Śūyavasa, then said, 'Give me another hundred (cows) and I will bind him.'

But Ajīgarta, Suyavasa's son,
Whose home had been where Dasyu rites were done,
Whose shameful sale of offspring for a price
Debarred him not from serving sacrifice,

[115] Sāyaṇa, the ancient Hindu commentator, observes here, that, "although at a sacrifice men and wild beasts were bound to the post, yet both beasts and men were set free, immediately after the fire had been carried round them." (Cf. Note 206 *inf.*)

It is elsewhere said that after recitation of the *Purusha sūkta* (*Rig-veda*, x. 90), in which the mystic immolation of Prajāpati, the Creator himself, is described; and after fire had been carried around them, they were to be released, and an offering of melted butter (ghī) made in their stead. The references quoted are *Śat. Br.*, xiii. 6, 2, 1, etc.—*Vāj. Sam.* xxx.—*Taitt. Br.*, iii. 1, 4, etc.—*Kāty. Śr. Sūt.*, xxi. 1, 1.

[116] It is considered a crime of the most heinous nature to offer violence to a Brāhman.

[117] The thread of Munja grass, worn by all Brāhmans, might be supposed to be the means of revealing his rank to the ordinary assistant priests. The refusal of Viśvāmitra, and of Jamadagni (whose special duty it would have been in the case of an animal), may be accounted for, not only by their aversion to human slaughter, but also by their near relationship to Śunaḥśepha.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

Since else he must have died, * the silence broke,
And,—taintless yet,—the king approaching, spoke :—

AJĪGARTA

" Pay me, O king, once more a hundred kine,
And I myself will bind this son of mine."

8.

" They gave him another hundred, whereupon he bound him.

As thus a Rishi dared devise to bind
His Rishi-son, amazement filled each mind ;
But Hariśchand, by Varuna's decree,
The rite completed might not spare to see ;

So Viśvāmitra with the chanters there
To " All-Invited Devas " sang the prayer,[118]
As told the kine were, and the lad was bound,
Still smiling boyishly on all around.

" After he had been bound, the Āprī verses recited, and the fire carried round him,

With purple garland crowned, in ruddy vest,
Transfixed upon the Yūpa, ribbon-drest ;[119]
His breast, waist, feet, the triple cords confined ; [120]
Yet free and fearless still abode his mind.

They sang the " Āprī " hymns of sacrifice ; [121]

* Comp. *Manu*, x. 104, 5, with Note 211, etc., *inf.*

[118] The *Samishṭa-yajus*, hymns by which all the deities invited were " sacrificed to together," were sung during the binding to the post (*Śat. Brāh.*, I. 9, 2 ; 26, 27).

[119] " When in the sacred fetters bound
And with a purple garland crowned
At Vishnu's post thou standest tied.
* * * * *
" Clothed in red raiment he was tied,
A victim at the pillar's side."
Rāmāyan (Griffith), i. 62.

[120] These three cords are frequently alluded to as " upper, middle, and lower." They are also often called the bonds of Varuṇa. Mystically they signified the bonds of sin. (*Ṛig-veda*, i. 24 ; 12, 13, 15 ; i. 25 ; 21. Cf. also Canto V. 18, 19 *inf.*)

[121] They sing the Āprī Hymns—or verses of invitation—while preparing to consummate the act of sacrifice. There are ten different sets of them in the *Ṛig-veda*, as used by different families of Brāhmans, varying slightly from each other, but agreeing in general scope and tone (Max Müller, *Hist. Sans. Lit.*, p. 463, etc.).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

They bore the sacred fire around him thrice ; [122]
And he sang too, nor dreamed that death was near.
His father bound him there. Why should he fear !

9.

" they could not find a slaughterer.

Th' Adhvaryu told the waning noontide hour ;
The Hotar called the gods with mighty power ;
And two less priests brought implements of death.
Who now might save ! What power preserve his breath !

But, as they sought before and none could find,
Except his Rishi-sire, the cords to bind,
So now none dared receive the glittering knife,
To take, though ev'n in form, a Brāhman's life.

Again the hymns sank down, the ritual stayed ;
More painful stillness all th' assembly swayed.
Such acts,—no shows !—'mongst Dasyus might have been,
But ne'er 'mongst Āryans,—Śūdras ev'n,—were seen.[123]

" Ajīgarta then said, ' Give me another hundred and I will kill him.'

So Hariśchandra stood in fresh despair ;
His offering seemed to fail for all his care.
But Ajīgarta once again drew near,
And, half in secret, whispered in his ear :—

[122] The final ceremony, previous to the act of immolation, was to carry the sacred fire (Agni) three times round the victim. In this Agni was said to be—1. Like a horse ; 2. A charioteer conveying the sacred message to the gods ; 3. The master of food, distributing blessings in return for the sacrifice. This, in fact, was a performance of " *Pradakshiṇa*," by Agni, in honour of the victim. (Comp. Note 74.)

[123] That the non-Āryan (Dasyu) races practised sacrificial rites, which the Āryans held in abhorrence, is evident from many Vedic passages, and from the epithets applied to these peoples, such as *Apavrata* (of wrong sacrificial rites), *Anyavrata* (of other sacrificial rites), *Anindra*, (not according to Indra), *Anṛich* (not according to the Veda).

That human slaughter was abhorrent to Āryans—even of the lowest, or Śūdra, caste—is evident from Śunaḥśepha's reproach to his father. (See *inf.* Canto VII, 4, etc.)

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

AJĪGARTA

" Pay me, O king, still other hundred kine,
And I will dare to slay the youth divine."

10.

The kine again were told. He seized the knife,
For gain too ready now to take a life;
Scarce even then the twain the tool who brought
Deemed that so murderous was the Rishi's thought.

" He then whetted his knife and went to kill his son. *Or* ["he went forth to sharpen his knife." — *H. H. Wilson.* But *Max Müller* translated "and he came whetting his sword."]

Unknowing Hariśchandra's sacred pledge,
They brought the common tool with blunted edge;[124]
But he, no longer guiltless, bore it high
With dire intent, perceived by every eye;

And none who saw him flash the brandished steel
But horror of so dread a crime must feel;
However, so befell, delaying yet,
He left the spot, th' unsharpened knife to whet.

11.

" *Śunaḥśepa* then got aware that they were going to butcher him, just as if he were no man, (but a beast). Well,' said he, 'I will seek shelter with the gods.'

In that still interval, by cords confined,
Doubt flashed thus first in Śunaḥśepha's mind;

ŚUNAḤŚEPHA (Solus)

" The mantras pause. Why hushed again their sound?
Why am I lonely left? Why not unbound?

[124] The mode of immolating an animal, according to Vedic ritual, was not by means of a knife, but by suffocation, and beating of the *vrishaṇa* (*Ṛig-veda*, i. 162, 16; *Śat. Brāh.*, xiii. 2, 8, 1).

That Ajīgarta was prepared to use a knife, seems to corroborate the view that he was acting according to non-Āryan ritual.

The place of slaughter for sacrificial animals was not the Yūpa, to which they were bound, but a specified spot *outside* the sacred ground north of the high altar. This being so, it would be consistent for Ajīgarta to proceed from the vicinity of the Yūpa to this place, expecting the victim to be unbound and brought to him.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

Why should my father whet that edgeless knife?
He will not,—dare not,—surely!—take my life!
And yet,—O dreadful thought!—where, where the beast
For laughter in my stead?—How ends this feast?

The sacrificer waits!—I see it now!
The gods ordain my death to clear his vow!
'Tis their decree!—I suffer in his room!
To them I yield! Patient I meet my doom.

Yet loth I am, slain like a beast, to die;
Bound in his stead, for both I'll lift my cry.
No human power, I feel, can set us free;
For shelter to the Devas I will flee."

12.

The multitudes around in stillness gazed,
But help was none;—all stood with horror dazed,
Mute near the victim doomed, for death confined,
By parents, kin, and all on earth resigned,[125]

Devoted to the gods, and theirs alone;[126]
They, only they, could now release their own.
Yet, though accounted dead, he deathless soared,
To seek The Infinite; and life implored.

" He applied to Prajâpati, who is the first of the

For life divine he looked toward the sky,
Where unseen, timeless Devas ruled on high

[125] According to the ritual, "The mother, the father, the brother, sister, friend and companion," formally gave up the victim at the time of sacrifice. (*Ait. Brāh.*, ii. 1, 6; *Śat. Brāh.*, iii. 7, 4; 5, 6).

The Rāmāyaṇa version of the story represents Śunaḥśepha, while on his journey with Rohita, thus appealing to Viśvāmitra:—

"No sire have I, no mother dear,
No kith or kin my heart to cheer." (*Griffith*, i. 62.)

Hence his first prayer for restoration to the divine father and mother is very appropriate.

[126] "He who is ordained (*dīkshate*) falls into the very mouth of Agni and Soma" (*Kaushītaki Brāh.*, x. 3).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

gods, with the verse, '*Kasya nūnam katamasya*' (i. 24, 1).

[*Note.* — The following literal translations of the Hymns of Śunaḥśepha — except where otherwise stated — are from H. H. Wilson's *Ṛig-veda Sanhitá.*]

[*Rig-veda*, i. 24; 1.] "Of whom, or of which divinity of the immortals, shall we invoke the auspicious name? Who will give us to

And them he saw, a shining, blissful dream;
"Yet where," he sought bewildered, "that SUPREME
Prajāpati, the First, the Lord of All,[127]
On whom alone his yearning soul might call?"
And then his voice thrilled all the startled air,[128]
As, doubting whom to call, he sang this prayer;—

TO PRAJĀPATI

(*Rig-veda*, i. 24; 1.—Trishtubh Metre.)

"Whom of these immortals shall we now beseech!
Which auspicious name divine will our cry reach!
Who will render us to thee, great Aditi!
Sire supreme and mother that I yet may see"![129]

[127] The name Prajāpati (*lit.* Lord of Creatures) does not occur in the verse itself, but is supplied in the text of the legend. Sāyaṇa, the commentator, says that all hymns in which the pronoun "Who" frequently occurs belong to Prajāpati.

Profoundly mysterious qualities were ascribed to him; and his ineffable nature was expressed by the pronoun "Who," used as a proper name. This was accounted for by a remarkable myth, as follows:—

"Indra, after having killed Vritra, and remained victor in various battles, said to Prajāpati, 'I will have thy rank, that of the supreme deity. I will be great.' Prajāpati said 'Who am I?' Indra answered 'Just what thou hast told,' (i.e. *Kah, who* ?). Thence Prajāpati received the name Kah, who" (*Ait. Br.*, iii. 21).

This myth implies that the worship of One supreme, invisible God preceded that of personified natural forces and phenomena. Also, that as such personifications grew into deities, the notion of Him became obscured, until He was regarded as unknown, and unknowable, and was addressed by a title indicative of men's despair to find Him.

Thenceforward the religions of India diverged gradually more and more in various materialistic directions; and Śunaḥśepha's wonderful chain of hymns, here following, having for keynote and starting point this verse to the mysterious "Who," illustrates the stages of this divergence, during the Vedic, and Brāhmaṇa periods, before actual idolatry supervened.

[128] "With the *Ṛig-veda* and *Sāma-veda*, the performance takes place with a loud voice. With the *Yajur-veda*, the performance takes place by murmuring" (*Āpastamba Sūtras* 8, 9).

[129] "Aditi is derived from '*diti*,' bound, with the negative particle [*a*]. The unbounded world" (Max Müller).

The father and mother whom Śunaḥśepha desired to see are explained

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

the great Aditi, that I may again behold my father and my mother?" (Vol. i. p. 59).

Or ["Who will give us back to the great Aditi, that I may see father and mother?" — *Max Müller.*]

13.

The mystic stanza roused th'astounded throng;
The victim sang inspired! Priests learned the song;
And quick resumed their chanting march again
In tramping rhythm with Trishtubh's thunderous strain.[130]

At length they paused; their circling march was stayed,
Divine direction waiting, long delayed;
And paused the king, albeit with mental prayer,[131]
That gracious Varuna them both would spare.

The prayer, though wildered, yet was heard on high;
For, pitying those of soul sincere who cry,
Th' Eternal Father erring prayers receives,
Nor straitly marks the errors each conceives.[132]

He, Lord of Creatures, First of gods and men,
Was seldom worshipped, nigh forgotten, then;
To wandering man, in error's mazes led,
His very name was all but lost and dead;

by the commentator to be heaven and earth. The scope of the verse is, that Śunaḥśepha prayed for reunion with the Infinite.

[130] Max Müller suggests an explanation of the name Trishtubh, or "Three-step," by supposing that the three last syllables, which may be called its real Vṛitta, or turn, were audibly stamped at each turn or strophe (*Ṛig-veda, Sanh.* Trans. p. civ.).

This stanza is in that kind of Trishtubh which is called *Indra-vajra*, i.e., the thunderbolt of India.

There was a body of chanters present at every great sacrifice.

[131] "The sacrificer . . . is not allowed to remain inactive, but he himself has to repeat certain mantras expressive of his desires" (Haug, Int. to *Ait. Br.*, p. 80).

[132] This idea has the cordial support of no less orthodox an authority than the great and judicious Richard Hooker, who writes:—

"We have to do with a merciful God, ready to make the best of that little we hold well, and not with a captious sophister, which gathereth the worst out of everything wherein we err. . . . If it be an error to think that God may be merciful to save men even when they err, my greatest comfort is my error; were it not for the love I bear to this error, I would neither wish to speak or live."

In support of this view he quotes St. Paul's words, "I obtained mercy for I did it ignorantly" (Rd. Hooker's *Works*, Serm. ii. 35).

Ait Brāh. vii. 3, 16.

So Ind's true hearts, who sought the Lord of All,
In blindness but the question "Who" could call;
Such was His will, inscrutable to us;
Wherefore Prajāpati made answer thus;—

"Prajāpati answered, 'Agni is the nearest of the gods, go to him.'

PRAJĀPATI

"In heaven and round thee Agni see;
Seek him, most near of gods to thee." [133]

14.

"He then applied to Agni with the verse, '*Agnev vayam prathamasya amritānām* (i. 24, 2).

Directed thus, he glanced to heaven serene,
And, dazzled by the sun's resplendent sheen,
His outward sense of sight grew dark and blind;
But inward sight grew clearer, as his mind
Discerned that far beyond all cosmic sight
Immortal dwells the soul's true life and light.

The brilliant orb, that spreads through heaven its beams,
Yet round this lowly world pours vital streams,
The fire that leaps from earth with flaming glare,
The lightning flash that darts through sky and air,
The Rishi saw as bright material signs,
His emblems whom no mortal thought confines.

[133] Fire, or heat (Agni), in its latent condition perceptible only by its effects, is the physical source of life, its support, and the natural force which most nearly represents the unseen Eternal.

It is the symbol most probably implied by the words of the passage; and if so, it follows that the compiler of these hymns believed that this approximately spiritual concept preceded the more materialized concepts of the visible sun, and the sacrificial fire, under the same name of Agni, which follow later.

In accordance with this view, Agni is here addressed in language identical with that offered to the purely spiritualized Prajāpati himself.

It is well to note in this place that according to the legend this and every subsequent change of worship took place, according to express directions originating with Prajāpati (i.e., the highest) himself.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

One force concealed wrought through them, one alone;
'Twas motive-heat that flashed, that leaped, that shone.
Near, near indeed was Agni, close around,
Nay working in himself, the Rishi found;
Its secret brooding first had made his frame;
Its pauseless action kept him still the same.

Blind force itself, it yet revealed the power,
Whose will eternal kept him to that hour;
In Him man lives, moves, is. He sure would care
To keep him still in life. Therefore his prayer
Through Agni rose, in earth, air, man, and sky,
As, doubting less, he raised the same weird cry.

[*Rig-veda*, i. 24; 2.]

"2. Let us invoke the auspicious name of Agni, the first divinity of the immortals, that he may give us to the great Aditi, and that I may behold again my father and my mother," (Vol. i. p. 61).

TO AGNÍ (ALL-PERVADING)

(*Rig-veda*, i. 24; 2.—Trishtubh Metre.)

"Agni, first of these immortals, we beseech!
His auspicious name divine our cry will reach!
He will render us to thee, great Aditi!
Sire supreme and mother that I yet may see!"

15.

"Agni answered, 'Savitar rules over the creatures, go to him.'

Quick stirred the priests, the chanters tramped again,
And swelled with choral song the sacred strain;
But soon their footsteps paused, their voices failed,
And once again a waiting hush prevailed.
The heavens maintained their even course on high,
And none appeared to hear or heed the cry.

The living light pervaded all around;
But still the seer lay to the death-post bound;
In patience pondered he, by silent thought
Evolving now the answer which he sought;
Till his enkindled soul perceived a sign
Which thus he construed as response divine;—

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

AGNI

"Seek Savitar, all creatures' Lord;
His boundless wealth may help afford." [134]

16.

The broadened, westering sun now shed his beams,
Like sheaves of golden rays or spreading streams
Of blissful influence sweet, that downward pour,
To plenish earth for man from heaven's rich store.

"He then applied to Savitar, with the three verses (i. 24; 3–5) beginning by, *Abhi tvá deva Savitr.*

He gazing tow'rd the orb, its radiant glow
Absorbed his raptured soul from things below;
So, lost in ecstasy, his fears allayed,
Of help undoubting, wealth supreme he prayed,[135]

[134] The adoration of Savitar, the sun, as an embodiment of the life-giving principle, and image of the Divine Lord of Creation, was the first step in a series, which led ultimately to the adoration of many visible objects.

The celebrated Gāyatrī verse, used daily by every devout Brāhman down to the present time (see Canto VI. 1 *inf.*), represents probably the earliest and most spiritualized form of this worship. It is addressed to Savitar, the rising, or morning sun, in his capacity of divine ruler and light-giver.

The present hymn is addressed to the afternoon sun, when the burning glare of noon has passed, and he shines with a broad golden disc, appearing, in the language of the Ṛishis, with a "sheaf" of rays. He is accordingly addressed as a protector, and giver of wealth.

[135] It was said by Sāyaṇa, the Hindu commentator, that these hymns have little or no connection with the legend and Śunaḥśepha's position, because they are mainly the prayers of an ordinary worshipper.

But it must be remembered that Sāyaṇa wrote in the 14th century A.D. after the primitive Vedas—though reverentially preserved in form and letter—had been spiritually obscured for many centuries by intermingling influences of Upanishad metaphysics, of Buddhism, and of Non-Āryan religions.

Sāyaṇa, therefore, however representative of his own day, was not in a position to condemn so positively a story prepared between 2,500 and 3,000 years before his time, by founders of the Indian community, the very endurance of whose work through centuries of adverse influences shows them to have been men of no common mental ability.

Yet Sāyaṇa's depreciation of the hymns has been quoted without dissent (we must say also, apparently without examination) by eminent

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

Wealth immaterial, soul-sustaining, pure,
Sufficing, undecaying, ever sure.
And sent up Gāyatrī on pinions strong,
Soaring before high Savitar with song.[136]

TO SAVITAR

[*Ṛig-veda*, i. 24; 3.]

"Ever protecting Savitṛi, we solicit (our) portion of thee,—who art the lord of affluence.—

(*Ṛig-veda*, i. 24; 3–5.—Gāyatrī Metre.)

III. "Divine Protector, Savitar,
Thou Lord in whom all riches are,
We beg our share from heaven afar.

[*Ṛig-veda*, i. 24; 4; 5.]

"4. that wealth which has been retained in thy hands, and is entitled to commendation, as exempt from envy and reproach.

IV. "Such wealth benign, we pray, concede,
As highly praised, from evil freed,
Thy hand retains for those who plead.

"5. We are assiduous in attaining the summit of affluence, through the protection of thee, who art the possessor of wealth." (Vol. i., p. 61.)

V. "O bounteous Lord, through thee secure
That wealth supreme may we procure,
And seizing, keep it ever sure."

modern scholars; and has led to the neglect to study them in connection with the legend, and a consequent loss of their valuable help towards elucidating the earliest developments of religious thought in India.

The present work being based upon a contrary view,—the reasons for which appear *passim*—it is not necessary here to discuss the view of Sāyaṇa and his followers further than to say that the only reason which they adduce seems to be insufficient.

The framers of the legend were those very Brāhman philosophers, of whom Megasthenes, their nearest contemporary writer, says "their talk was chiefly upon death," and the most marked characteristic of whose teaching was an intense conviction of the soul's immortality.

The hymns, however, as a fact do contain many touching human appeals for deliverance; but had they represented this as the *predominant* feeling of the singer, they would have been unworthy of his race, which, not far removed from his epoch, produced a Kalanos (Kalyāṇa), who actually burnt himself to death, in presence of the wondering army of Alexander, expressly to show how the men of his race and religion held both pain and death in utter contempt.

[136] The Gāyatrī metre is often personified as a bird.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

17.

As words like these the victim-minstrel sung,
Upon the theme divine all wondering hung.
His sire no more essayed to take his life,
By heavenly music charmed, he dropped his knife.
What need, e'en though his impious hand could dare,
To slay for heaven the son self-soaring there!

But waiting silence followed once again,
As died away in cadence sweet the strain;
For, though the fateful knife was laid aside,
In sight of Heaven he still for death was tied.
At length, ere first gleamed faint the evening star,
This word he saw, from Savitar afar;—*

"Savitar answered him, 'Thou art bound for Varuṇa the king; go to him.'

SAVITAR

"For Varuna, the king, thou'rt bound;
Seek him; deliverance may be found."

18.

This word he saw, as in the reddened west
The sun beyond the mountains sank to rest;
And, watching mighty falcons try to scale
The heavens, he saw their strongest pinions fail.[137]

He heard a gale, that broke the evening hush
With roaring sounds from distant cataracts' rush;
But gradual sank the gale, calm died the sound,
And mystic twilight reigned in stillness round.

* Compare Note 45.

[137] The opening symbolism of the following hymn clearly refers to the *setting* sun, and the evening; and its relation to the two preceding hymns fully accords with a verse of the *Atharva Veda* (xiii. 3, 13).

"In the evening Agni becomes Varuṇa, he becomes Mitra when rising in the morning, having become Savitṛi he passes through the sky, having become Indra he warms the heavens in the middle."

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

His raptured mind, transcending falcon's flight,
Saw then, in heaven, the Tree of Life and Light,
With gracious roots converging downwards round
The Tree of Death on earth, where he was bound.

Could they be fixt in him! New life would grow!
And thus SAT-CHIT-ĀNANDA * he would know!
Then stars appeared, dim twinkling one by one,
Like tiny cloudlets, each his course to run.

But when the deep, o'erspreading darkness came,
They brightly blazed in myriad points of flame;
And to the Vedic seer the sights and sounds
Of nature told of One beyond its bounds.

Though tied to earth by cords of triple might,
His eager soul yet sought the Infinite;
The brilliant skies and earth's dark gloaming hour
Inspired his hymn of God's almighty power,

"He applied to Varuṇa with the following thirty-one verses (i. 24; 6–25, 25; 1–21).

Of Him, whom worlds adore with trembling awe,
Of His eternal, changeless, righteous law;
And themes transcending earth and heaven he sang,
As thus the glorious chant sublimely rang;—

TO VARUNA (FIRST HYMN)

(*Rig-veda*, i. 24; 6–15.—Trishtubh Metre.)

[*Rig - veda*, i. 24; 6–9.]

"6. These birds that are flying (through the air) have not obtained, Varuṇa, thy bodily

VI. "Volant birds reach not to thine exalted height;
Less their valour, less their vehement great might;

* These three Sanskrit words meaning respectively "life, light, love," or "being, thought, joy," are used by Brahman philosophers to name the one supreme soul, that is GOD.

Floods that ceaseless flow and gales of mighty force
Fall below thine everlasting, rapid course.

VII. " Regal Varuna by hallowed power on high
Holds erect the stem of life, in baseless sky,
Lofty, radiant, yet with roots that pierce below ;
Sunk and hid in us, may we their vigour know.[138]

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.
strength, or thy prowess, nor (are able to endure thy) wrath ; * neither do these waters, that flow unceasingly, nor (do the gales) of wind, surpass thy speed.
* *Or* [" For not even these birds that fly attain to thy power, nor to thy valour, nor to thy rage."—*Vedārthayatna.*]
" 7. The regal Varuña, of pure vigour—(abiding) in the baseless (firmament), sustains, on high, a heap of light, the rays (of which) are pointed downwards, while their base is above ; may they become concentrated in us, as the source of existence.*
* *Or* [" Varuna, king of hallowed might, sustaineth erect the tree's stem in the baseless region. Its rays, whose root is high above, stream downward. Deep may they sink within us, and be hidden." — *R. T. H. Griffith.*]

[138] Sāyaṇa says that the phrase, " *Vanasya stūpam,*" signifies " mount," or " heap of light," and Wilson follows him. Mr. Griffith, however, objects that this rendering is forced and unnatural, and translates it, " the tree's stem."
Being understood to refer to the celestial tree of life, this translation not only gives a more sublime and poetic turn to the stanza, but renders it more appropriate both to Śunaḥśepha's spiritual position, as one seeking life from heaven, and to his external surroundings, bound to the sacrificial post—an apparent tree of death—yet, while singing this hymn, having a symbolical tree of life, viz., the Udumbara post (*Ficus glomerata*) full in his view, fixed in that part of the sacred ground which symbolized heaven. (Cf. Notes 32 and 111.)

VIII. " Regal Varuna hath true in pathless skies
Made the sun's wide path, through which it daily flies ;
Make for me a path ; me, fettered now, release ;
Quell our heart's oppressors ; bid their boastings cease.[139]

IX. " King ! a hundred and a thousand balms are thine ;
May thy deep, sufficing favour on us shine ;
Keep the Evil One's unfriendly look away ;[140]

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.
" 8. The regal Varuña, verily, made wide the path of the Sun,—(by which) to travel on his daily course,—a path to traverse in pathless (space). * May he be the repeller of every afflicter of the heart !
* *Or* [" May he now release me, open for me a road, and so deprive our enemies, who know even our hearts' thoughts, of the means of boasting. —*Stevenson.*]
" 9. Thine, O king, are a hundred and a thousand medicaments. May thy favour (comprehensive and profound), be (with us). Keep afar from us Nirriti, with un-

The reference to the depth of its roots reminds one of Virgil's mythical tree :—

. . . . " quantum vertice ad auras
Ætherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.
Æn. iv. 445, 6.

As high as it shoots up with its top into the celestial airs, so deep its root stretches down towards Tartarus.
See references to the Udumbara post in *Ait. Brāh.*, v. 24 ; vii. 32 ; viii. 8 ; and *Śat. Brāh.* (trans.) Vol. 2, pp. 34, 141–5, 448, 453–4.

[139] This stanza occurs again, as part of the *Avabhṛitha* ceremony. (see Canto VI, 12 *inf.*).
It contains one of the earliest references to the *solar* Zodiac, the primitive Indian Zodiac having been lunar.
From the sun's undeviating course, the poet infers the essential righteousness, and respect for law, of Varuṇa who made it ; a constantly recurring subject in this legend.
Like spiritual inferences occur in Greek Literature :— " What did Heracleitos mean when he said, ' The sun or Helios will not overstep the bounds,' i.e., the path measured out for him ; and what if he said that the Erinys, the helpers of right, would find him out if he did. Nothing can show more clearly that he recognized a law pervading all the works of nature, a law which even Helios, be he the sun or a solar deity, must obey." (Max Müller, *Or. and Growth of Religion*, Lect. v.)

[140] " *Keep afar from us Nirṛiti,*" or according to another version, " *Chase away Nirṛiti far off.*" Sāyaṇa says Nirṛiti is the deity of sin. The word is also said to mean Death, personified as a goddess. In a

Lord, from sins committed freedom grant we pray.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

friendly looks; and liberate us from whatever sin we may have committed.

X. "Rishis constellated high and seen by night [141]
Also shed in other worlds by day their light;
Varuna these pauseless, holy actions planned;
Splendent moves the nightly moon by his command.

"10. These constellations *, placed on high, which are visible by night, and go elsewhere by day, are the undisturbed, holy, acts of Varuṇa; (and by his command) the moon moves, resplendent, by night.

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subsequent hymn (i. 29; 3, 4, Canto V. 9 *inf.*) there is also a reference to the unfriendly, or evil, looks of the female messengers of death.

The allusions in this stanza are, however, apparently associated with ancient Hindū Astronomy. The lowest, or most southward of the Asterisms (*Mūla* No. 19)—comprising certain stars in the tail of Scorpio—has Nirṛiti for its presiding divinity. Varuṇa was considered the divinity of the 25th Asterism, situated in the knee of Aquarius and the stream flowing from his jar. The name of this asterism was *Śatabhisha* = *lit.* "a hundred physicians." And this very *Śatabhisha* is the Sanskrit term applied to Varuṇa in the first line of this stanza (see, *Sūrya Siddhanta*, ed. E. Burgess, pp. 193, 194, 197).

[141] The word here rendered "*Rishis*" is in the original "Ṛikshāḥ" = *lit.* "bears," Gr. "ἄρκτος." Dr. Martin Haug says:—

It is "found only once in the hymns of the *Ṛig-veda* (i. 24, 10)." [Max Müller says it occurs twice.] "According to an account in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (ii. 1, 2, 4) this name was afterwards changed into '*Sapta ṛishayaḥ*,' the Seven Ṛishis, by which name the stars of Ursa Major are called in the later Vedic hymns (*Ṛig-veda*, x. 82, 2; *Ath. veda* vi. 40, 1) and in the classical Sanskrit writings. The sounds of *ṛiksha*, 'bear,' and, *ṛishi*, 'seer, prophet,' were so near to one another, that at the time when they commenced to deify those great founders of Brāhmanism nothing was more natural than to assign them a place in the sky, and make them one of the brightest and most beautiful constellations" (*Essays on the Parsīs*, p. 206).

There is no doubt that the same constellation is alluded to under both names—*ṛikshāḥ*, and *Sapta ṛishayaḥ*—but although the older name, *ṛikshāḥ* is used in this stanza, and not Ṛishayaḥ, we are inclined to agree with the native commentator, mentioned by Max Müller, that *Ṛishis* are really meant; and that this rendering is the best (though philologically disputable) to convey to an English reader the sense and spirit of the hymn, as shown in the next note.

Max Müller discusses the origin and relative meanings of both words, very elaborately, in his *Lectures on Language* (2nd ser., Lect. VIII).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3. 16.

* *Or* ["These bears." — *Vedārthayatna.*]

"11. Praising thee with (devout) prayer, I implore thee for that (life) which the institutor of the sacrifice solicits with oblations. Varuṇa, undisdainful, bestow a thought upon us: much lauded, take not away our existence.

"12. This (thy praise) they repeat to me by night and by day: this knowledge speaks to my heart. May he whom the fettered Śunaḥśepa has invoked, may the regal Varuṇa, set us free.

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

"14. Varuṇa, we deprecate thy wrath with pros-

XI. "In the offerer's name I plead with praise and prayer,
Life we beg. We bring oblations. Spare, oh spare!
Undisdainful, cast on us a gracious thought.
Let us not, praised Varuna, to death be brought.

XII. "This by night, and this by day, to me they teach,[142]
This the wisdom borne within my heart in speech.
O may he who heard bound Śunaḥśepha plead
Hear us; Varuna, let us also be freed.

XIII. "Śunaḥśepha seized, bound on the three-forked tree,
Prayed, thou son of great Infinitude, to thee; *
Wise King Varuna, resistless, hear him call!
Loose his bonds, and set him free from every thrall.

XIV. "Varuna, to still thy wrath, we bend prostrate;
We with sacrifice and due oblations wait;

---

[142] The great Vedic Ṛishis, who by Varuṇa's "holy act" (perhaps then conceived to be so recent as not yet to have changed the name of the constellation), had been exalted to the stars, and who shine both by night and day (as in stanza 10), have taught him "this" (Sans. "*tat*"), i.e., the preceding stanza (11). The knowledge or wisdom thereof (viz., that he is to present himself before Varuṇa with prayers, sacrifice, and praise, *on behalf of the Yajamāna*, or sacrificer) has spoken within his heart; and its inculcation by daily and nightly repetition is an allusion to the method whereby Ṛishi teachers transmitted the Vedas from generation to generation, and caused their disciples to commit the exact words to memory.

* See Note 113, *ante*.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

trations, with sacrifices, with oblations. Averter of misfortune,* wise and illustrious, be present amongst us, and mitigate the evils we have committed.

* [*Sans. Asura.*]

"15. Varuṇa, loosen, for me, the upper, the middle, the lower, band. So, son of Aditi, shall we, through faultlessness in thy worship, become freed from sin." (Vol. i., pp. 61–64.)

Wise Asura,[143] widely ruling, thee we pray,
Mitigate our ills; be present here to-day.

XV. "Loosen, Varuna, my high, mid, lower band,
Thus; O Infinite, shall we before thee stand;
We shall prosper then and us thy Law will own
Free from guilt and not from corded bonds alone."

19.

Here paused the song sublime, as night closed round;
But still the seer kept watch, though tied and bound;
And still, as dark and denser grew the night,
Out of the darkness cried aloud for light.

[143] The name ASURA is derived from "ASU," breath, and it means, "THE LIVING," "THE LIVING GOD," "THE SUPREME."

It was used both by Iranian and Indian Aryans before their separation, and can be traced back to the most remote antiquity among widely separated Aryan races, in various dialectic forms.

ÆSIR was a common name for the gods of Teutons and Scandinavians. Suetonius says ÆSAR was the Etruscan name for God. In the Zend the "*s*" became an aspirate, and AHURA is the name for the Supreme Being in the Persian sacred books. In the Veda the term ASURA is applied not only as here to Varuṇa, but also to Indra, Agni and Savitar.

Yet when theological hatred supervened, in later days, between Iranian and Indian Āryans, each of them stigmatised the divinities of the other as evil spirits and the Asurs, or Asuras, became hated names in India.

Hence Sāyaṇa was extremely puzzled and scandalized at finding this name in the Veda; and H. H. Wilson under his influence translates it "averter of misfortune," and adds in a note, "it would scarcely be decorous to call Varuṇa an "Asura." The name, however, remains (like that of *Ṛikshāh*, in stanza 10) a testimony to the archaic composition of this hymn; and it further shows that the name, and concept, of THE SUPREME was originally the same among the now widely separated families of the Āryan race. (Cf. *Origin and Growth of Rel.*, Max Müller, pp. 191, 2; Haug *On Parsis*, 268, 9; and Muir's *Or. Sans. Texts*, v. 120.)

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

For light within his soul, than night more dense,
And clouded by the mists of earthly sense.
By guilt all men like him for death were tied,
And for the pardon of them all he cried.

He pondered Varuna's deep wisdom vast,
As o'er the dark expanse his gaze was cast,
Where nothing small or great, or low or high,
Escapes th' Eternal King's all watchful eye.

Its plumbless depths he tried in vain to read;
Such vision is too great for mortal seed.—
But, as he watched and sang, the stars shone out
Like golden bosses Varuna's mail about.

And them the poet saw, as bright array
Of the god dight in armour, Ill to slay.
The cloud-like constellations were his vest,
And sons of gods sat round, enthroned at rest.

All heaven revolved as one majestic car,
That tranquil bore the ordered hosts afar;
For rest with them the Vedic singer yearned;
To gain it, hymns were framed and offerings burned,—

And he, still victim bound, still raised his cry
With sacrificial hymns and praises high;
And Gāyatrī thus, with her sprightly strain,
Sent soaring heavenwards, as he sang again.

TO VARUNA, (SECOND HYMN)

(*Rig-veda*, i. 25; 1–21.—Gāyatrī Metre.)

I. "We men from faults are never free,
God Varuṇa! so daily we
Transgress the laws ordained by thee.

II. "Yet give us not to death, we cry,
Nor let thy shafts of fury fly,
And lay thy fateful anger by.

(*Rig-veda*, i. 25; 1.]

"1. Inasmuch as all people commit errors, so do we, divine Varuña, daily disfigure thy worship by imperfections.*

* *Or* ["daily break thy ordinances." — *Vedârthayatna.*]

"2. Make us not the objects of death, through thy fatal indignation, through the wrath of thee so displeasured."

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

Or ["(Nevertheless) do not deliver us to thy deadly (and) dangerous weapon in wrath, do not (deliver us) to thy rage in anger." — *Vedārthayatna.*]

[*Rig - veda*, i. 25; 3–8.]

"3. We soothe thy mind, Varuña, by our praises, for our good; as a charioteer his weary steed.

Or ["As a charioteer (untics) (his) horse that is tied, we, Varuña, for (thy) favour, untie thy mind with (our) prayers." — *Vedārthayatna.*]

"4. My tranquil (meditations) revert to the desire of life; as birds hover round their nest.

"5. When, for our happiness, shall we bring hither Varuña, eminent in strength, the guide (of men), the regarder of many?

"6. Partake (Mitra and Varuña) of the common (oblation), being propitious to the giver and celebrator of this pious rite.

"7. He, who knows the path of the birds flying through the air,—he, abiding in the ocean, knows (also) the course of ships.

III. "As calms a charioteer his steed,
To calm thy mind, these hymns we plead;
Us, Varuna, with favour heed.

IV. "As birds that hover round their nest,
My thoughts desire a tranquil rest,
And life renewed of thee request.

V. "When shall we—blissful—bring him here,
And Varuna in power appear,
Man's watchful guide, our course to steer?

VI. "We Mitra-Varuna invite,
Partake of this our common rite,[144]
And priest and offerer both requite.

VII. "May he, the path of birds who guides,
Who in the ocean vast abides,
And knows how ships traverse its tides;—

[144] The two names do not appear in the text, but are regarded as understood by all translators.

The connection between Mitra and Varuṇa was so close that the two names frequently occur in the Veda as one. It is remarkable, however, that, though Varuṇa is frequently invoked separately, there is but one hymn in which Mitra is invoked alone.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

"8. He, who, accepting the rites (dedicated to him), knows the twelvemonths and their productions, and that which is supplementarily engendered;

Or ["He (Varuña) firm in his work, knows the twelvemonths with their offspring, and knows the month produced in addition."—*M. Müller, Hist. Sans. Lit.*, p. 212, *which see.*]

[*Rig - veda*, i. 25; 9–14.]

"9. He who knows the path of the vast, the graceful, and the excellent wind, and who knows those who reside above;

"10. He, Varuña, the acceptor of holy rites, the doer of good deeds, has sat down, among the (divine) progeny *, to exercise supreme dominion over them.

*Or** ["Inter homines."—*Rosen.*

VIII. "Who owns all rites the twelvemonths through,
Who knows their births of offerings due,
Who knows the month that's added too,—[145]

IX. "Who knows the path of winds, that fly
Vast, gracious, peerless, through the sky;
Who knows the gods that dwell on high,—

X. "He, Varuna, owns rites we bring,
From whom both laws and goodness spring,
Who sits mid sons of gods, their king,—

[145] The highest and most sublime astronomical skill of which ancient India could conceive is here attributed to Varuṇa; that is to say, he has perfect knowledge of the seasons for various kinds of sacrifices, including the recondite subject of the intercalated month.

The complexity of the subject may be partially estimated from the varieties of actual practice; for example, south of the Vindhya range the lunar month begins with the moon's *decrease*. North it begins with the moon's *increase*. A Brāhman begins his month (according to the *Nārasiṃhi Calc.* 1833) with the new moon, while a Kshattra, and a Vaiśya begin theirs with the entrance of the sun into a new sign. Again, the ordinary month is lunar; but at the end and in the middle of each cycle of five years an intercalated month is admitted by doubling one

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

"Au sein de nos demeures."—*Langlois.*

"Among his subjects."—*Roer.*

"He has sat down in (his) home, to rule over (his) empire." — *Vedārthayatna.*]

"11. Through him the sage beholds all the marvels that have been, or will be, wrought.

Or ["From thence perceiving all wondrous things, he sees what has been, and what will be done." — *Max Müller.*]

"12. May that very wise son of Aditi keep us, all our days, in the light path, and prolong our lives.

"13. Varuña clothes his well nourished (person), wearing golden armour, whence the (reflected) rays are spread around;—

XI. "Who thence all wonders views and knows,
Both what in ages past arose,
And what the future shall disclose;

XII. "May Aditis' all-knowing Son,
Prolong our life; and till 'tis done,
Make us in righteous paths to run.

XIII. "In golden mail Varuna's drest,[146]
And o'er it wears his radiant vest;
The heavenly watchers round him rest.[147]

month, so that the cycle comprises three common lunar years, and two which contain thirteen lunations each.

To comprehend the effect of these, and other, complications, so as to be able to settle the "productions," or "births," of each period, that is, what sacrificial offerings are proper to every occasion, was the highest concrete conception of intellectuality the Vedic authors could find.

Max Müller says, "The whole idea expressed by the poet is that Varuna maintains the established order of the world, and therefore knows the twelve months and also the thirteenth" (*Hist. Sans. Lit.*, p. 213).

[146] This is one of the verses cited by Dr. Bollensen (see note 30 *ante*, and Muir's *Sans. Texts*, v., p. 454) to prove that early Indian worship admitted of images; and Wilson in a note seems, though hesitatingly, to agree with him.

But this view entirely disappears as we contemplate the bound Śunaḥśepha, looking at the spangled sky as he sang, when as said above,—

the stars shone out,
Like golden bosses Varuṇa's mail about.

[147] "These spies or watchers are most likely the other Ādityas, of whom it is said (*Ṛig-veda*, ii. 27; 3) that they see into what is evil and what is good, and everything even at the greatest distance is near to them. With

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

Or ["Varuṇa wearing golden mail has put on his shining cloak, the spies sat down around him."—*Max Müller.*]

"14. A divine (being), whom enemies dare not to offend, nor the oppressors of mankind, nor the iniquitous (venture to displease).

[*Ṛig-veda*, i. 25; 15–20.]

"15. Who has distributed unlimited food to mankind, and (especially) to us.

Or ["He who gives to men glory, and not half glory, who gives it even to our own bodies."—*Max Müller.*]

"16. My thoughts ever turn back to him, who is beheld of many; as the kine return to the pastures.

"17. Let us (together) proclaim that my offering has been prepared, and that you, as if the offerer, accept the valued (oblation)." *

XIV. "A god whose ire no foe will dare,
Who men's oppressors will not spare,
Whose wrath the wicked cannot bear.

XV. "Whose glories, free dispensed, abound
In no half-measure all men round;
In our own bodies they are found.

XVI. "Still back to him my thoughts incline,
Whom hosts behold with bliss divine,
As back to pastures turn the kine.

XVII. O let it be by us declared,
That this my offering was prepared,
By thee, priest-friend, with pleasure shared.[148]

them the right is not distinguished from the left, nor the east, nor the west" (*Ṛig-veda*, ii. 27; 11; Max Müller, *Hist. Sans. Lit.* p. 536).

[148] Max Müller translates the last line (*Hoteva kshadase priyam*) "Thou eatest what thou likest, like a friend;" but adds in a note, "*Hotri* does not mean friend, but the priest who is chosen to invoke the gods. Perhaps it means poet and priest in a more general sense than in the later hymns" (*Hist. Sans. Lit.*, 537). But it seems preferable to take the words in their strict meaning, implying, "Thou eatest what thou likest—or what is agreeable to thee—like a Hotar or *priest*." This rendering gives a consistent sense to the whole stanza.

In the two first lines Varuṇa is invited to join the sacrificer in proclaiming that the offering is prepared, according to the special duty of a Hotar

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

XVIII. Lo! from the earth, behold his car,
The God whom all may see afar;
These hymns accepted surely are.

XIX. High Varuna, accept my plea;
May we be glad this day in thee;
I call in hope; O shelter me!

XX. Thou God of wisdom, shining wide
O'er heaven and earth, and all beside!
Hearkening, replying, onward ride.

XXI. Loose from me, pray, the upper cord;
Untie the mid and lower, lord;
And life renewed to us afford.

20.

World-circling Varuna still rode on high,
Car-borne, majestic, through the silent sky;

* *Or* ["thou eatest what thou likest as a friend."—*Max Müller.*]

"18. I have seen him whose appearance is grateful to all: * I have beheld his chariot upon earth: he has accepted these my praises.

* *Or* ["Now I saw the god who is to be seen by all."—*Max Müller.*]

"19. Hear, Varuña, this my invocation: make us (this day) happy. I have appealed to thee, hoping for protection.

"20. Thou, who art possessed of wisdom, shinest over heaven and earth, and all the world. Do thou hear and reply (to my prayers) with (promise of) prosperity.*

* *Or* ["Listen on thy way." — *Max Müller.*]

(*Rig-veda*, i. 25; 21.)

"21. Loose us from the upper bonds, untie the centre and the lower, that we may live" (Vol. i. pp. 64–67).

"Varuna then answered him,

in which he was sometimes joined by others (compare Note on the "*Svāhā*" formula, Canto VI. *inf.* Note 154). The Hotar also partook of the offering as a friend both of the offerer and the deity. (see Note 199 *inf.*).

The invitation to Varuna to act as priest shows, however, that the concept of Varuna was, in these latter verses of the hymn, shading off into that of the sacrificial Agni, and it forecasts the utterance attributed to him at its close.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

And rapt in meditation deep, profound,
The Rishi, who him praised, still waited bound.

The king of all, he felt, must hear his cries,
Release his bondage, own his sacrifice;
The righteous one could never, never spurn
The offerings He himself ordained to burn.

So, though in heaven appeared no outward sign,
His pensive mind evolved the will divine;
And, sure as though a voice from heaven he heard,
By inward light the seer perceived this word,—

VARUNA

'Agni is the mouth of the gods, and the most compassionate of them. Praise him now, then we shall release you.'"

"The gods appoint their mouth to be
Agni, compassionate to thee;
Behold him in the altar flame;
We set thee free. Praise now his name!"

21. EPODE

[Bound, helpless, pleading thus, the youthful sage
Appears a type of man in every age;
He voiced the born desire of all the race
To soar beyond the bounds of time and space.

Man's heaven-sprung, earth-tied spirit's constant quest
Is chief to see its maker, and to rest
In Him—the cynosure, the guide, the goal,
The one repose of every wearied soul.

As men sought Him through Nature near and far—
Through life's hid fervent force, sun, space, moon, star,
And things perceived by touch, sense, sound, and sight,
Each seemed to mirror forth the Infinite.

But though in hymns and prayers, with ritual flames,
The Vedic poets used His creature's names,
Not all men quite mistook such things for Him,
Whom they but shadowed, brightly some, some dim.

Thus Āryan seers discerned the Infinite,
In various aspects, various shades of light;
Sometimes they neared Him, sometimes went astray;
Through light, through darkness oft, they took their way;

But light or dark, as ages rolled along,
By varied names, with many a changeful song,
They sought THE ONE UNKNOWN, who lived the same,
Whate'er their song, howe'er they called His name.[149]

And He their prayers sincere, though devious, heard,
And oft, through agencies diverse, His word
Spoke gracious comfort, and revealed His will,
As thus to Śunaḥśepha. And He still

Speaks thus to us who, like him, yearning call
Upon our father-mother, all-in-all;*
And our souls, watching still, like his, may see
The word he saw, "Endure! thou shalt be free!"]

[149] The Vedic concept of the unity of the deity, under every change of name, and form of worship, is evidenced by the following passages, and many others of like tendency, viz:—

"They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni;
And he is the celestial, well-winged Garutmat;
Sages name variously that which is but One;
They call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan."

Ṛig-veda, i. 164, 46.

"The wise, in their hymns, represent under many forms the well-winged (god) who is but One" (*Ṛig-veda*, x. 114; 5).

See also Note 181 *infra*.

* *Ṛig-veda*, i. 24; 1, 2.

Canto V

LIBERATION

1.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

HE saw the sacred word, believed it sure,
And, till released, could patiently endure.
Though for a destined period still bound fast,
The bitterness of death, he felt, was past;
No more for freedom now he raised a cry,
But changed his painful prayers to praises high.

Obedient, faithful, then, till rescue came,
The fettered poet sought fresh hymns to frame;
And, as he mused before the triple pyre
Upon the rite of sacrificial fire,
He thus conceived, 'twas God Himself, who shone
In vision on the altar, as a throne.[150]

ŚUNAḤŚEPHA (SOLUS)

"Mysterious flame! Whence, where, its constant flow!
It soars towards heaven, and yet remains below;

[150] The adoration of Fire (Agni), latent or manifested, as an all-pervading cosmic symbol of unmaterialized Divinity, was a very early, and wide-spread, form of worship.

Its simplest aspect appears in the previous hymn to Agni, and some of its secondary developments in those to Savitar, and to Varuṇa.

Iranian worship, as represented in what remains of Zend writings, does not seem to have gone much beyond this simple stage.

The *sacrificial cult of fire*, as shown in the hymns now to follow, was a somewhat more materialistic development of the primitive doctrine and peculiar to India.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

It dies, yet lives; 'tis born afresh each day;
'Tis ancient, yet 'tis young without decay;
Man feeds it, man it feeds by household fires,
Yet, bearing food for gods, to heaven aspires.

" It spreads heat, light, and life, like yonder sun;
'Tis threefold on this altar, yet but One;
It bears above, and yet consumes, the feast;
At once 'tis sacrificer, victim, priest;
Thus more than earthly fire these flames appear;
A heavenly power in them is present here!" [151]

2.

" He then praised Agni with twenty-two verses (i. 26; 1–10; 27; 1–12).

So, as the flames flashed on his robe of red,
And bright his face was with the glow they shed,
That he was bound still he regarded not,
His dread of death completely he forgot,
And spiritual blessings chiefly claimed,
As Agni father and his friend he named.

Yet more; he made for Dasyu tribes a prayer;
He saw them freely mixed with Āryans there,
To crown the Āryan lord their chosen king;
And hoped the poet, they might closer cling
To chosen Agni, priest and king divine; *
And thus inspired, he sang this lofty line.—

[151] The name Agni means also the number three. On the high altar, immediately behind which Śunaḥśepha was bound to the sacrificial post, the sacred fire was placed in three receptacles (see Canto IV. 5, 6 and the notes thereto). These were called its *Nābhi*, or "nest."

The *Ṛig-veda* (x. 88; 10) says—"The gods formed Agni for a threefold existence;" and this is explained by Yāska, the commentator, to be on earth, in the air, and in the sky, as fire, lightning and the sun.

The altar fire was produced only by friction of two sticks, whence it was said that Agni was "born from heaven"; and this had to be done afresh every day.

It is not unlikely that these Indian notions coalesced and crystallised among Western Āryan nations into the multiform Myth of the Phœnix.

Pliny and Tacitus (*Nat. Hist.*, x. 2; *Ann.*, vi. 28) say that this bird burnt himself, or his father, on the altar of the City of the Sun, and sprang into new life from the ashes. Herodotus (ii. 73) says its plumage was flame coloured, and that it was an Egyptian bird. The *Physiologus*, however, the most familiar version of the myth, says it was *an Indian bird*.

* See verses 9 and 10 of the following hymn, and Note 154.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.
Ṛig-veda, i. 26.

TO AGNI (IN THE SACRIFICE. FIRST HYMN)

(*Rig-veda*, i. 26; 1–10.—Gāyatrí Metre.)

[*Note.*—Dr. Oldenberg's rendering of this and the next hymn (*Sac. B. of the East*, Vol. 46, pp. 13, etc.), is so literally exact, and is so closely followed in the present metrical version, that it is unnecessary to quote Wilson's version.]

I. " Assume thy robes of glorious light,
O sacrificial lord of might!
Accomplish then this sacred rite.

" 1. Clothe thyself with thy clothing (of light), O sacrificial (god), lord of all vigour; and then perform this worship for us.

II. " Thee, ageless Agni, we desire;
Sit here, O Priest, wise thoughts inspire,
Then bear our words to heaven in fire.

" 2. Sit down, most youthful god, as our desirable Hotṛi, through (our prayerful) thoughts, O Agni, with thy word that goes to heaven.

III. "Thou verily, our father dear,
As kin for kin art offering here,[152]
As chosen friend to friend art near.

" 3. The father verily by sacrificing procures (blessings) for the son, the companion for the companion, the elect friend for the friend.

IV. " Varuna-Mitr'-Āryaman, bright
From heaven, on our blest Kuśa light,
And sit, as erst at Manu's rite.[153]

" 4. May Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, triumphant with riches(?), * sit down on our sacrificial grass as they did on Manu's.

[152] Śunaḥśepha, as a member of the Āngirasa family (i.e., descendants of Agni), very appropriately thus addressed Agni.

This family were probably the first, or principal promoters of the cult of sacrificial fire, and they were said afterwards to be seated among the gods, in the third, or highest, heaven.

[153] Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman, were three Ādityas (sons of Aditi,

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

* [*Note.* — The Sanskrit word *riçādas*, thus doubtfully translated by Dr. Oldenberg, is rendered by Max Müller (*R.-v.* i. 64; 5) "the devourer of foes;" by the *Vedārthayatna* "destroyers of the enemy;" and in this passage, "destroyers of the wicked." Benfey's Dictionary renders it, "A destroyer of those who injure."]

V. "The primal Hotar then wert thou;
Be pleased with this our friendship now;
These prayers and sacrifice allow.

"5. O ancient Hotṛi, be pleased with this our friendship also, and hear these prayers.

VI. "Whene'er to other gods we go,
Through thee the rites perpetual flow,
And all the offerings made below.

"6. For whenever we sacrifice constantly to this or to that god, in thee alone the sacrificial food is offered.

VII. "Our nation's lord, joy-giving free,
May he love us, and love him we,
Who choose good Agni, priest to be.

"7. May he be dear to us, the lord of the clan, the joy-giving, elect Hotṛi, may we be dear (to him), possessed of a good Agni (i.e., of good fire).

VIII. "For since the gods erst owned good flame,
From them our wealth excelling came;
Our Agni good we deem the same.

"8. For the gods, when possessed of a good Agni, have given us excellent

the Infinite), so closely connected that the invocation of one included that of the others.

Mithra was a name of the sun among the Iranians, who also frequently called him the threefold.

Manu was the father of the human race, who according to well-known Hindū tradition was saved from the deluge, and obtained great blessings, in reward of his sacrifice. (Cf. Gen. viii. 20, 22.)

Translations of the Sanskrit form of this universal tradition are given by Dean Milman, Max Müller (*Hist. Sans. Lit.*) and Sir Monier Williams (*Indian Wisdom*).

At sacrifices the ground round about the altar was covered with

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

wealth, and we think ourselves possessed of a good Agni.

"9. And may there be among us mutual praises of both the mortals, O immortal one, (and the immortals).

"10. With all Agnis (i.e., with all thy fires), O Agni, accept this sacrifice, and this prayer, O young (son) of strength.

IX. "Immortal Agni, mutual praise
May we united mortals raise,
And with immortals join our lays.

X. "Thus all thy sacred fires unite;
Thus, Agni, own our prayers and rite;
O ever youthful son of might."

3.

As Agni thus, his ancient sire, he praised,
The altar flames with greater radiance blazed,
And Agni, pleased, shot through the dusky air
Ten thousand darting flames with scorching glare.

Whence scattering foes he seemed, in mystic force,
The wandering, conquering Sacrificial Horse,
Adored by new-crowned kings of Āryan race,
Ere Dasyu Aśvamedhas claimed the place.

The Rishi thus conceived him, flying high
On Rudra wings terrific toward the sky;[154]
And though the flickering flames lapt all around,
He trembled not nor shrank, though tied and bound.

sacred Kuśa grass (*Poa cynosuroides*) and was considered to be occupied by the deities.

[154] Agni is frequently referred to as a horse (cf. Note 12 *sup.*). It is probable that the allusions in this hymn have also some reference to the Aśvamedha, or Horse-sacrifice, described in *Ṛig-veda*, i. 162.

The Aśvamedha, though occupying a very prominent position at the coronations described in the Epic poems, is not even mentioned in the coronation ritual of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.

The details of that sacrifice, and the gross materialistic tone of the hymn relating to it, contrast very strongly with the spiritualized tone of most of the other Vedic sacrifices; whence it may be inferred that the ceremony belonged to the inferior races of India, and was incorporated with the Āryan coronation ceremonies, chiefly for political purposes, at a later date. (Cf. Note 24 *inf.*)

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

But charged lord Agni, priest of gods, to bear
Direct before the Great Supreme, his prayer;
And, as aloft the crimsoned brilliance broke,
It dyed with heavenly hues the volumed smoke.

So glowed his poet-soul. Through leaping fire
His new-made hymn swelled higher still and higher;
To holy Vāravantiya's tune it rose,[155]
And awe triumphant marked its raptured close.

[*Rig-veda*, i. 27.]

Translation by Dr. Oldenberg. (*Sac. Books of the East*, Vol. 46, pp. 16, etc.)

TO AGNI (IN THE SACRIFICE. SECOND HYMN.)

(*Rig-veda*, i. 27; 1–12.—Gāyatrī Metre.)

A.

I. "Worship with reverence now I bring;
Thee, like a long-tailed horse, I sing,
Agni, of all our worship king.

"1. With reverence I shall worship thee who art like a long-tailed horse, Agni, the king of worship.

II. "May he, our son of strength, indeed,
Upon his broad earth-course proceed,
Well pleased, to us his bounties lead.

"2. May he, our son of strength, proceeding on his broad way, the propitious, become bountiful to us.

III. "O full of life! still guard us so
From every mortal, harmful, foe,
Whether they near or distant go.

"3. Thus protect us always, thou who hast a full life, from the mortal who seeks to do us harm, whether near or afar.

IV. "And Agni, go the Devas near;
Pronounce the hymns we offer here,
This newest Gāyatrī let hear.

"4. And mayest thou, O Agni, announce to the gods this our newest efficient Gâyatra song.

[155] According to Dr. Eggeling, the *Sāma-veda* (i. 17) refers to the Vāravantīya tune, as having been composed for this hymn, and named after its first line—"aśvam na tvā *vāravantam*."

See his translation of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (Vol. iii. Int., p. xiv.), where he also gives other references to the *Gānas*, or books of Music of the *Rig-veda*.

The Purāṇas describe the ancient chanting of the Vedas in glowing terms. Some endeavours have been made by modern scholars to trace out the ancient musical tones.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

"5. Let us partake of all booty that is highest and that is middle (i.e., that dwells in the highest and in the middle world); help us to the wealth that is nearest.

"6. O god with bright splendour, thou art the distributor. Thou instantly flowest for the liberal giver in the wave of the river, near at hand.

B.

"7. The mortal, O Agni, whom thou protectest in battles, whom thou speedest in the races, he will command constant nourishment:

"8. Whosoever he may be, no one will overtake him, O conqueror (Agni)! His strength is glorious.

V. "Allot us goods from highest skies,
With goods that in mid-regions rise;
Help us to win earth's nearest prize.

VI. "God! all-dispensing, marvellous beam!
Instant thy gifts, like Sindhu's stream,
Around thy liberal votaries teem.[156]

VII. "The mortal Agni guards in fight,
And grants in races speedy flight,
Commands perpetual wealth of right.

VIII. "Whoe'er he be, unpassed he goes,
O Agni! Vanquisher of Foes!
His glorious strength to all he shows.

[156] The word here rendered "marvellous beam" is *Chitrabhānu*, "he who has wonderful lustre," a common name for Agni.

The river named in the original is the Sindhu (or Indus), which enters the sea by various channels, forming numerous islands; and which, at its periodical overflow, forms many additional islets of verdure, and spreads fertility throughout the region.

The general sense of this hymn so far, as well as of the preceding hymn, is that all the good things of heaven and earth are to be obtained through Agni, whose worship being the same as that of their fathers—here called "gods of old"—is said to be "chosen" by all present at the sacrifice; and his rewards are compared to the flow of the Indus, the principal river of the early Āryan immigrants into India.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

"9. May he (the man), known among all tribes, win the races with his horses; may he with the help of his priests become gainer.

C.

"10. O Garābodha! Accomplish this (task) for every house: A beautiful song of praise for worshipful Rudra.

"11. May he, the great, the immeasurable, the smoke bannered, rich in splendour, incite us to (pious) thoughts, and to strength.

IX. "May he whom all tribes signalize
With steeds of swiftness win the prize;
Let gains through priests who serve him rise.[157]

X. "Praise-wakened! this our rite complete;
Let every house bring offerings meet,
In Rudra's praise, with verses sweet.[158]

XI. "May he the great! the infinite!
Smoke-bannered! splendent! us incite
To holy thoughts, and fill with might.

[157] Dr. Oldenberg—upon grounds of Vedic metrical construction, and ordinary arrangement of the hymns—considers verses 7, 8 and 9 to have originally formed a separate hymn.

This view may be supported upon the ground of their subject-matter. They have as direct a bearing upon the *secular* aspect of the Rājasūya rite at which they were sung, as previous verses have upon its *spiritual* aspect.

In the spiritual aspect, Agni is chosen as divine priest. In the secular, the mortal—i.e., the king then chosen—is said to be favoured by Agni, who endows him with valour and swiftness, which he exhibits in the races and games that formed a part of the ceremony (compare Canto VI. 11 *inf.*), all being under the superintendence of Agni's priests. He was thus recognized by "all the tribes"; which phrase may be fairly considered a direct reference to the general *political* object of the early Rājasūyas, viz.,—the union of various communities and the building up of a united India. (Cf. also verses 9 and 10 of preceding hymn.)

[158] These three last verses seem also to have formed a separate hymn, briefly uniting the spiritual and secular aspects of those preceding.

Agni is termed *Jarābodha* = "he who is awakened by praise."

The allusion in the second line is to a part of the Rājasūya ceremonies, described in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (v. 2; 5, and 3; 1) as the *Trishamyukta* offerings, in which the king, for twelve successive days before his consecration, celebrated offerings at the respective houses of all classes of Indian society, from that of the commander-in-chief of his army, down even to that of a "discarded wife." By these he was said to "come by men."

Agni is here called Rudra, or Rudraya, which means "*the fierce, or terrible* Āgni." It is applied to him elsewhere as the lightning. It may perhaps be taken as a name, used by the non-Āryans, and to have expressed a concept which shaded off into that of the terrible Śiva, and Durgā, or Kālī in modern Hindūism.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

"12. May he hear us, like the rich lord of a clan, the banner of the gods, on behalf of our hymns, Agni with bright light.

XII. "O brilliant Agni! Light adored,
Hear like a nation's wealthy lord;
Ensign of gods! our hymns reward."[159]

4.

Then saw the poet there the mystic fire
Responsive quivering, glowing, mounting higher,
As though on burning wings to heaven 'twould soar
In glory.—But it sank, and rose no more.

Dark grew the altar then; its light was fled,
And dark the Rishi's mind with shadowy dread,
Lest death, who ambushed watched from morn to night,
Had snared the priest divine and quenched the rite.

But swifter than the shadows came they fled;
For whered eath's wiles were told, 'twas also said,
That Agni ever 'scapes death's nets and blows,
Through many various scripture texts he knows;[160]

And goes safe back to Heaven, from whence he came,
Before the bright immortals there to claim

[159] A reward is prayed from Agni, as now the wealthy lord of the united nations; and no higher earthly ideal of liberality existed than that expected of such a prince; an exemplification whereof exists in the enormous rewards allotted to the reciters of this legend, for which see Note 221.

[160] The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (iii. 1; 14) gives an account of, *How Agni, as Hotar of the gods, escaped the meshes of Death.*—Death, it is said, sitting in the various "Stotras"—or hymns of praise—"lurked" for Agni, during all the times of his sacrifice, from the morning till the evening. But Agni overcame him by various Śāstras, and at last, "having escaped all the meshes of Death, and his clubs, Agni came off in safety." (Cf. also Note 168 *inf.*)

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

In sacrificing men's behalf below,
The gifts ordained from sacrifice to flow.

Therefore the Rishi raised his wistful eyes,
To scan with hopeful gaze the star-lit skies;
And there in mind from darkling earth surveyed
The visioned Deva host, who heaven pervade.

"Agni then answered 'Praise the Viśve-Devas, then we shall release you.'

He saw immortal Agni offering there,
On heaven's own altar, sacrifice and prayer; *
And seemed to hear him, charged by those on high,
Convey to him, still fettered, this reply;—

AGNI

"Praise now the Viśve-Devas; we
Will then from fetters set thee free." [161]

5.

'Twas midnight; stars shone bright; the world reposed
In darkness but for them; and silent closed
The day ordained by law when he might die.
Yet still he lived! He watched its moments fly!

Then, as it passed, he raised the ordered prayer,
Ere which nor man, beast, bird, might stir the air;

* See verse 4 of preceding hymn.

[161] The *Viśve-Devas* (="the all-pervading," or "shining ones," "the host of gods"; from *Viś*, to pervade and *deva*, shining).

Hymns to them are very numerous in the Vēdas, some of them being in the most archaic language, and evidently of very great antiquity; showing that from the earliest periods there was an under current of yu[illegible]ght tending to polytheism, although as in the verse here following consec[illegible] admitted with hesitation and fear lest the one true god should of Indi[illegible]oked.

down ev[illegible]hase of thought is thus described by Max Müller—"*There is* by men." [illegible]*n which precedes the polytheism of the Veda;* and even in

Agni is he[illegible] of their innumerable gods, the remembrance of a God *terrible* Āgni." [illegible], breaks through the midst of an idolatrous phraseology, perhaps be taken [illegible] that is hidden by passing clouds" (*Science of Religion*, a concept which s[illegible]

Kālī in modern Hi[illegible]

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

For should a voice by chance that prayer precede,
'Twas said the Soma rites would fail indeed.[162]

6.

"He then praised the Viśve-Devas with the verse (i. 27; 13) *namo mahadbhyo namo arbhakebhyo.*

'Twas likewise said, this "earliest voice" was due
To Devas, countless as yon stars in view;
Yet while to them he rendered lawful praise,
The seer divine displeasure feared to raise;

For, far beyond this host of great and small
One greater lived, who made and ruled them all;
And seeking Him supreme, with soul sincere,
He deprecated thus His wrath with fear.

[*Ṛig-veda*, i. 27; 13.]

Dr. Oldenberg's translation (cont.).

"13. Reverence to the great ones, reverence to the lesser ones! Reverence to the young, reverence to the old. Let us sacrifice to the gods if we can. May I not, O gods, fall as a victim to the curse of my better."

TO THE VIŚVE-DEVAS

(*Ṛig-veda*, i. 27; 13.—Trishtubh Metre.)

"Let us reverence great, and let us reverence less;
Let us reverence young, with reverence old confess;
Sacrificing as we can to Devas all,
Let me not, All-Gods, the greater's victim fall."

[162] The third "Upasad" day (see Notes 103, 105 and 107 *sup.*), on which alone the living sacrifice was lawful, expired at midnight, and the final ("Sutyā") day, appropriated to a Soma festival, during which the final coronation ceremonies were to take place, then began.

The commencement of this day had to be marked by the "*Prātar anuvāka*," (="earliest uttered") prayer, belonging to this festival. It had to be uttered "in the dead of night, even before the voice of the cock is heard;" for, according to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, "we cannot utter the sacred words required at a sacrifice, should others already (animals or men) have made their voices heard." It was to be addressed to *all the gods*, i.e., to the Viśve-Devas (*Ait. Brāh.*, ii. 15, 16).

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, however, says it was to be addressed to Agni, Ushas, and the two Aśvins, and might consist of as many verses as might be recited between midnight and daybreaking. Both of these directions are observed in this legend.

The priests who were sleeping had to be awaked just before the utterance of this prayer (*Śat. Brāh.*, iii. 9, 3, 1).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

" The Viśve-Devas answered, 'Indra is the strongest, the most powerful, the most enduring, the most true of the gods, who knows best how to bring to an end anything. Praise him, then we shall release you.

7.

Thus, while the seer fulfilled the wonted rite,
And Viśve-Devas praised at dead of night,
He still, as erst, sought chief, " the Lord of all,
" On whom alone his yearning soul might call ; " *

And those immortals, though celestial throned,
Yet not supreme, such stinted homage owned ;
Since while to earthly sense they gave no word,
His raptured soul their heavenly music heard.

For all the hosts in one great chorused theme
Harmonious praised One chosen king supreme ;
And thus the sons of gods replying sung
Of high exalted Indra, strong and young.[163]

THE VIŚVE-DEVAS

" Midst the Devas Indra strongest,
Chief in power, endures the longest ;
He most truly man befriendeth,
Every work successful endeth ;
Render Indra praise and lowly
Homage : he shall free thee wholly."

" He then praised Indra,—

8.

To Indra Śunaḥśepha turned him then,
The friend divine of Āryāvarta men ; [164]

* Comp. Canto IV. 12 ; and Note 127.

[163] Max Müller remarks (*H. S. L.* 532), that *Viśve Devāḥ*, though treated as a plural, has sometimes the meaning of a *pluralis majestaticus*.

Another modern writer observes that " The Vedic poets felt, though they could not have consciously expressed, the very truth with which Aristotle closes the twelfth book of his Metaphysics, that " the world does not choose to be governed badly, for " the rule of many is not well. Let there be one lord " (*Quart. Rev.*, July, 1870, p. 207).

[164] The following are some Vedic invocations to Indra—

" Distinguish between the Āryas and those who are Dasyus " (*Ṛ.-v.* i. 51 ; 8).

" Hurl thy bolt against the Dasyu, and augment the force and glory of the Ārya." (*Ṛ.-v.*, i. 103 ; 3.)

" Indra ... protected in all battles the sacrificing Ārya ; chastising

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 164

Unrivalled Indra, son of heaven and earth,
Who drained the vigorous Soma at his birth,

Then in his grasp the bolt of heaven he took,
While both the worlds with awful wonder shook,
And hurled the storms with strong, though infant, hand
Against the foes of that new settled land.*

Though gods and rishis called him new and young,
And new his name and aspect, yet they sung
In him that ONE, whose power fixed firm the hills,
Whose thunder-cloud filled earth's ten thousand rills ;

Who plenished India's plains with robust health,
And stores of lowest, middle, highest wealth ;
And Him the Rishi praised in that dark hour ;
Names change ; but changeless lives almighty power.

9.

'Twas this Name won Prajāpati's great place ;*
Him Devas crowned ; he bore an Āryan face ;—
And Āryans looked to him for wealth and aid.
Wherefore to him this Āryan hymns essayed.

" with the hymn (i. 29). ' *Yat chid dhi satya somapā,*' and with fifteen verses of the following one (i. 30 ; 1–15).

But lo ! the poet saw in visioned haze
The furtive mutual staring, baleful gaze
Of Death's twain fateful sisters, watching still
For Agni's life and his. Their looks of ill

Disturbed his mind, and roused his fervent cries,
That everlasting sleep might close their eyes :

the lawless, he subjected the black skin to Manu," i.e., the Āryan man *Ṛig-veda*, i. 130, 8).

" Who, O God of mighty force, didst in the land of the seven rivers, turn away from the Ārya the weapon of the Dasyu " (*Ṛ.-v.*, viii. 24, 27).

* See Note 127.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

Then, as the vision paled, the night breeze bore
To his affrighted ears a savage roar.

For through long years Ind's previous dwelling race
Refused to give the Indo-Āryans place; [165]
Disturbed their prayers and marred their sacrifice
With savage noises, howls, and warlike cries.

And now with harsh dissonance, human brays
Like those of beasts, the Dasyus mocked his praise;
So prayers for wealth and cries against his foes
Were mixed, as thus his hymn to Indra rose.

TO INDRA (FIRST HYMN) [166]

(*Rig-veda*, i. 29; 1–7.—Pankti Metre.)

(*Rig-veda*, i. 29; 1–3.]

"1. Veracious drinker of the *Soma* juice, although we be unworthy, do thou, Indra, of boundless wealth, enrich us with thousands of excellent cows and horses.

1. "True drinker of the Soma, we,
A hapless race, yet pray to thee;
O Indra, boundless wealth is thine;
For our renown to us assign
In thousands matchless steeds and kine.

[165] The dominant Āryan races of India were, at some pre-historic period, immigrants who passed from Central Asia through Cabul, and across the Indus.

As they advanced eastward and southward, they drove the previous inhabitants (called Dasyus) into the hills and forests, though afterwards they partially amalgamated with them. This legend was one of the means employed to promote such amalgamation.

The period of pure contest, and the nature of Dasyu opposition to Āryan forms of worship, are thus referred to in the *Ṛig-veda*:—

"Distinguish between the Āryans and the Dasyus; chastising those who observe no sacred rites, subject them to the sacrificer" (*Ṛ.-v.*, i. 51, 8).

"Here I come," says Indra, "distinguishing between the Dāsa, and the Ārya" (*Ṛ.-v.*, x. 86, 19).

"Indra . . . has preserved in the fray, the sacrificing Ārya." (*Ṛ.-v.*, i. 130, 8.)

Similar quotations might be greatly multiplied. See Muir's *Sanskrit Texts* (Vol. ii., 2nd ed., p. 358, etc.).

[166] This hymn is apparently an early song of the Āryan settlers in India, or in some new district thereof; when they were still, as they

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 16.

Or ["although (we) are (as it were) obscure, cause us to be renowned, Indra of plentiful wealth, about thousands of cows (and) horses."—*Vedārthayatna.*]

Or ["we appear before thee in the character of unhappy men."—*Stevenson.*]

"2. Thy benevolence, handsome and mighty lord * of food, endures for ever. Therefore Indra, of boundless wealth, etc.

Or ["(Dieu) a la noble face, maitre des offrandes, compagnon de Satchî, a toi, la puissance."—*Langlois.*]

"3. Cast asleep (the two female messengers of Yama). Looking at each other, let them sleep, never waking, Indra, of boundless wealth, etc.

II. "For ever lasts thy bounteous grace,
Almighty lord of handsome face; [167]
O Indra, boundless wealth is thine;
For our renown to us assign
In thousands matchless steeds and kine.

III. "These bale-eyed sisters cast asleep;
For ever both in slumber keep; [168]
O Indra, boundless wealth is thine;
For our renown to us assign
In thousands matchless steeds and kine.

style themselves, obscure and unhappy, among the strong, barbarous, opponents of their worship.

Its tone denotes a sharp struggle for existence, both against physical difficulties and religious opposition. Its main burden is accordingly supplication for wealth in cattle to supply them with food, and for horses to assist them in battle against opponents.

An absence of the deep spirituality observable in other hymns, denotes a period of complete absorption in material necessities.

[167] We have here a beginning of that concept of divinity, which led to its representation in human shape and ultimately to the actual worship of idols in India. It was natural to conceive that so national a divinity as Indra had the same type of features as his worshippers. Invocations to him as a fellow countryman are frequent in the Vedas.

[168] According to Wilson, the text is literally—"Put to sleep the two reciprocally looking; let them sleep not being awakened."

The epithets are in the dual number and feminine gender. Sāyana says they mean "two female messengers of Death." In another Vedic hymn, Indra says, "I consume the great female goblins which regard not Indra" (Muir's translation). "Utterly destroyed they sleep in a deep pit" (*Ṛ.-v.*, i. 133; 1. Wilson.) Cf. Note 160.

[*Rig-veda*, i. 29; 4–7.]

"4. May those who are our enemies slumber, and those, O hero, who are our friends, be awake. Indra, of boundless wealth etc.

"5. Indra, destroy this ass (our adversary), praising thee with such discordant speech; and do thou, Indra, of boundless wealth, etc.

"6. Let the (adverse) breeze, with crooked course alight far off on the forest. Indra, of boundless wealth, etc.

"7. Destroy every one that reviles us; slay every one that does us an injury. Indra, of boundless wealth, etc.

IV. "May all our foes such slumber take;
But friends, O hero, keep awake;
And, Indra, boundless wealth is thine;
For our renown to us assign
In thousands matchless steeds and kine.

V. "Indra, slay thou this braying foe,
That wrecks our hymns with discord so;
And, Indra, boundless wealth is thine;
For our renown to us assign
In thousands matchless steeds and kine.

VI. "And may this adverse, devious, breeze
Be lost afar, 'mid forest trees;
O Indra, boundless wealth is thine;
For our renown to us assign
In thousands matchless steeds and kine,

VII. "Thus all our mockers drive away,
And every foe injurious slay;
O Indra, boundless wealth is thine;
For our renown to us assign
In thousands matchless steeds and kine."

10.

Now night's dark noon was past, the mockers cease;
Thenceforth he sang the Soma hymns in peace,
And rites of death were changed for rites of life,
Which over Ind had spread, albeit through strife.

For strife ceased not till power supreme was won
Through Indra's hundred offerings faultless done.[169]

[169] Although Indra (to whom Soma was the principal sacrifice) became the most popular of all Vedic divinities, he is said to have obtained the supreme position by successful performance of a hundred Aśvamedhas, or horse sacrifices, which necessarily involved many "battles" with his opponents (see the Legend in Note 126).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

He thenceforth king of powers celestial reigned,
And vitalizing Soma rites ordained.

He, granting to his votaries victory,
With kine for wealth, and steeds for chivalry,
Reigned king divine of Ind's terrestrial state,
And, favouring Indo-Āryans, made them great.

Then having quelled their foes, as wealth increased,
He shared their every joyful Soma feast.
Therefore the Ṛishi, bound and seeking light,
Sang thus of Indra's great victorious rite.

TO INDRA (Second Hymn)

(*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 1–10.—Gāyatrī Metre.)

[*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 1–3.]

"1. Let us, who are desirous of food, satisfy this your Indra, who is mighty, and of a hundred sacrifices, with drops (of *Soma* juice); as a well (is filled) (with water).

"2. May he who is (the recipient) of a hundred pure, and of a thousand distilled, (libations) come (to the rite); as water, to low (places).

"3. All which (libations), being accumulated for the gratification of the powerful Indra, are contained in his

I. "Food seeking, we with Soma sate
Your Indra; Śatakratu great,
As paths to wells we saturate.[170]

II. "A hundred pure he comes to drink;
A distilled thousand in him sink,
As waters down the valleys shrink.

III. "For mighty Indra's pleasure these
His frame, inebriate, holds with ease,
As ocean holds the copious seas.[171]

[170] This hymn implies a firmer establishment of the worship of Indra—at any rate, less opposition to it—than the preceding. This first verse occurs also in the Sāma-veda (*Pra.*, iii., *Daśati* 3, 1), where Stevenson translates, "We, thy worshippers, are anxious to drench thee, Indra, the performer of a hundred sacrifices, the lavish bestower of gifts, with rout moon-plant juice, *as men do the road to a well.*" "Alluding," Stevenson adds, "to a custom, still prevalent, of sprinkling, daily in the morning, the road to the well with cow-dung water."

The name "*Śatakratu*" signifies, "performer of a hundred sacrifices," and is frequently applied to Indra as a proper name.

[171] A distinction is here drawn between "pure" and "distilled," or

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

belly; as water, in the ocean.

Or ["that the mighty (Indra) may be intoxicated." — *Vedārthayatna.*

[*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 4–10.]

"4. This libation is (prepared) for thee. Thou approachest it; as a pigeon his pregnant (mate): for, on that account, dost thou accept our prayer.

"5. Hero, Indra, lord of affluence, accepter of praise, may genuine prosperity be (the reward of him) who offers thee laudation.

"6. Rise up, Śatakratu, for our defence in this conflict. We will talk together in other matters.

"7. On every occasion, in every engagement, we invoke, as friends, the most powerful Indra, for our defence.

"8. If he hear our invocation, let him, indeed, come to us, with numerous bounties, and with (abundant) food.

IV. "Our offerings ready thee await;
For them thou hear'st us supplicate,
Approaching like a dove his mate.

V. "O hero, Indra, wealthy king,
Accepting us who praises bring,
Let thy true blessings round us cling.

VI. "Victorious Śatakratu, rise!
Defend us in this enterprise;
In other matters we'll advise.

VII. "Ere every battle low we bend,
And call the mightiest Indra friend;
May he his strong protection send.

VIII. "If he our invocations hear,
With many gifts let him come near,
With bountiful support appear.

unfermented and fermented preparations of Soma; and Indra is said, while accepting the former to have partaken so copiously of the latter, as to be intoxicated. Hymns which mention drunken revels by him and his worshippers are not uncommon in the *Veda*.

It is probable that Indra worship was originally not unlike the Bacchanalian orgies of Greece.

It will be seen in the next Canto that Śunaḥśepha "invented" (i.e., taught for the first time) the use of unfermented Soma in great sacrifices. Hence it is not unreasonable to infer that a modification of the earlier drunken Soma rites was attempted about the epoch of this legend.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

"9. I invoke the man (Indra), who visits many worshippers, from his ancient dwelling place,—thee, Indra, whom my father formerly invoked.

"10. We implore thee, as our friend, who art preferred and invoked by all, (to be favourable) to thy worshippers, protector of dwellings.

IX. "The Man adored by many a folk,
With whom mine ancient father spoke,
From his old home I him invoke.[172]

X. "Imploring thee, our constant friend,
Thy worshippers adoring bend;
With favour still our homes defend."

II.

Straight Indra's friendly voice, in answer loud,
'Mid sudden storm, aroused the sleeping crowd;
His thunder roared, his foam-dipt arrows flew,
As when ere dawn Namuchi erst he slew;[173]
And Agni, brighter than the altar flame,
Athwart the heaven in flashing lightning came.

Above the storm the riven clouds revealed
The vast celestial sphere, that ceaseless wheeled
Its course sublime through earth's tempestuous years
And bore serenely round all lesser spheres.

[172] This verse is an evident allusion to the worship of Indra having been alleged to originate in the country from which his worshippers came. Such an allegation is, however, somewhat inconsistent with the attitude of the Zend Iranians towards Indra, whom they treated as a demon, peculiar to the Vedic Indians.

Dr. Roer considers Indra's "ancient dwelling place" in this verse to be the heavens.

[173] Allusions to Indra's contests in the sky, with the powers of darkness, immediately before dawn, are very numerous.

According to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Indra had sworn to Namuchi, "I will not slay thee by day, or by night, neither with the palm of my hand nor with my fist, neither with dry, nor with moist." And Namuchi, having drunk away Indra's strength, which, however, had become restored to him, he was at a loss how to punish Namuchi, until the thunderbolt had been dipped in the foam of the waters, when it was neither dry nor moist and with that he struck off the head of Namuchi, just when night was passing into dawn, and the sun had not yet risen; and accordingly when it was neither day nor night! (see Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. v., p. 94).

Ait. Brah., vii. 3; 16.

There bright immortals, high, majestic, reign;
There undisturbed their ordered rule maintain:
And sweet to hear their answering concord rang,
As thus, through storm and calm, the Rishi sang.

TO INDRA (SECOND HYMN *contd.*)

(*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 11–15.—Gāyatrī Metre.)

[*Rig-veda*, i, 30; 11, 12.]

XI. "Our Soma-drinking, thundering, friend,
On us who share thy draughts attend,
And wide-mouthed kine, abundant, send.

"11. Drinker of the *Soma* juice, wielder of the thunderbolt, O friend, (bestow upon) us, thy friends, and drinkers of the *Soma* juice, (abundance of cows) with projecting jaws.

"12. So be it, drinker of the *Soma* juice, wielder of the thunderbolt, our friend, that thou wilt do, through thy favour, whatever we desire.

XII. "Amen! be gracious as we bend;
Our utmost wishes thou'lt attend,
Our Soma drinking, thundering, friend.

(*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 13–15.]

XIII. "So Indra glad, be with us still;
With choicest kine our pastures fill;
Be our continual bliss thy will.

"13. So, Indra, rejoicing along with us, we may have (abundant food); and cows may be ours, robust, and rich in milk, with which we may be happy.

"14. O Dhṛishṇu, let some such divinity as thou art, self-presented,

XIV. "O Indra brave! thyself reveal,
Ready to answer our appeal,
Sure as the axle moves the wheel.[174]

[174] *Dhṛishṇu* = "the resolute, firm, high-spirited, brave."

H. H. Wilson says: "The phrase,—axle of the wheel—seems to have puzzled the translators; . . . the meaning intended is probably the hope that blessings should follow praise as the pivot on which they revolve, as the revolutions of the wheels of a car turn upon the axle."

But it seems far more probable that the reference is to the *Wheel of*

Ait. Brāh., vii, 3; 16.

promptly bestow, when solicited, (bounties) upon thy praisers; as (they whirl) the axle of the wheels (of a car.)

Or ["O brave (Indra), a (god) like thee, kind to the singers, (being) implored immediately (comes) of his own accord as (if) he rode an axle on a pair of wheels."—*Vedārthayatna.*]

"15. Such wealth, Śatakratu, as thy praisers desire, thou bestowest upon them; as the axle (revolves) with the movements (of the waggon)." Vol. i. pp. 76. 77.

XV. "Thou Śatakratu, lord most high,
Roll'st wealth to thine adorers nigh,
As round the pole revolves the sky.

12.

"Indra, who had become pleased with his praise,

And now no cloud appeared in all the heaven;
No face was darkened. Far away were driven
All fears from every soul. The diamond stars
Gleamed through translucent airy depths, like cars
Of gold, that bear the gods through glittering roads,
Or gems that stud the walls of bright abodes.

the Universe, whose mighty revolutions, sustained and guided by Indra, bring round the successive seasons of the year, and produce all the blessings which are prayed for in the hymn.

This sublime wheel is thus spoken of in the *Ṛig.-veda*: "The fellies are twelve, the wheel is one; three are the axles; but who knows it? Within it are collected 360 (spokes), which are, as it were, moveable and, immoveable" (*Rig.-veda*, i, 164; 48.)

The *Vishṇu Purāṇa* (Book ii, ch. 8) describes the chariot of the sun with its axle of 15 millions, and 700 thousand leagues long, "on which is fixed a wheel . . . consisting of the everduring year, the whole constituting the circle, or wheel of time." (Cf. Note 178 *inf.*)

This chariot and wheel are also referred to in the Bhāgavata, Matsya, and Bhavishya Purāṇas, and in the *Sūrya Siddhānta* (xii. 19; 10).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

In arms constellate shone the well pleased god,
Whose steeds the star-strewn course impetuous trod;
And Śunaḥśepha, as he heavenward glanced,
Perceived a vision bright. His face entranced
Bewrayed the sight. All looked, and saw afar
Great Indra driving high his glorious car.

"presented him with a golden carriage.

But he, more raptured there, by Indra shown
Perceived a chariot, destined for his own,[175]
Of glorious gold, with stars for jewels rare,
That, when he left this earth, him high would bear,
Eternal centred 'mid the god-like throng,
With joyful shout, and never ending song.*

"This present he accepted with the verse *śaśvad Indra* i. 30; 16).

Assured of such success, though bound he stood,
His heart beat high with fervent gratitude:
And thanks he sent to heaven, with ardour fired,
While minstrel music joined the verse inspired;
With cymbals' clang and trumpets' swelling notes,
The praise of Indra thus triumphant floats.

TO INDRA (SECOND HYMN—*contd.*)

(*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 16.—Trishtubh Metre.)

[*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 16.]

"16. Indra has ever won riches (from his foes), with his champing, neighing, and snorting (steeds): he, the abounding in acts,* the bountiful, has given to us, as a gift, a golden chariot." (*Vol.* i. p. 77.)

XVI. "Indra wealth has ever won from conquered foes;
Driving champing, neighing, snorting, steeds he goes;
He the liberal artist, full of skill, hath made,
And of grace to us this golden car conveyed."

* *Or* ["being himself the skilful worker." — *Stevenson.*]

INDRA

"Indra then told him 'Praise

And Indra said, ere scarce the verse could cease;

[175] Wilson says that Indra gave this chariot "in his mind"; i.e., he intended it for him. Max Müller translates, "in his mind."

* See Cantos VI and VII *inf.*

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

the Aśvins, then we shall release you.'

He then praised the Aśvins with the three verses which follow the above mentioned (i. 30; 17–19).

"Now praise the Aśvins; we will grant release." [176]

13.

Then, as the destined hour approached apace,
Still bound he stood with hope-illumined face,
And watched as round the pole revolved the skies,
Until he knew the Aśvin stars would rise.

They glorious moved, by dazzling coursers driven,
And precious med'cines bore to men from heaven;
Physicians they, the king's disease to stay,
And pains of all to ease, as dawned the day;

Precursors of the sun, in Aries bright,
The harbingers of freedom, life, and light;
Their near approach with radiant joy he hailed;
He led the hymn, and welcome cheer prevailed.

TO THE AŚVINS

(*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 17–19.—Gāyatrī Metre)

[*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 17–19.]

"17. Aświns, come hither, with viands borne on many steeds. Dasras, (let our dwel-

XVII. "O Aśvins come with med'cines rare,
With many steeds to us repair;
O Dasras, gold and cattle bear.[177]

[176] *The Aśvins* = "possessors of horses." They were two stars, said to appear in the sky before dawn, in a golden chariot drawn by horses or birds. They were also the physicians of the gods (*Ait. Brāh.*, i. 18).

They have some mythological correspondence with the Castor and Pollux of the Greeks. They are presiding divinities of the Zodiacal asterism named from them; and which is figured as a horse's head from their name, and not from any fancied resemblance.

Considered as a group of two stars, the asterism is composed of β and γ Arietis (*magn.*, 4, 3); as a group of three, it comprises also (α) in the same constellation.

This constellation, at the time of the vernal equinox, (which was the time for the sacrifice herein described. See Notes 103, 104, *sup.*) appears in the heavens just before the Dawn.

[177] *Dasras* = "destroying, destructive, giving marvellous aid, overcoming enemies, doing wonderful deeds, worthy to be seen, handsome, beautiful," applied to the Aśvins as being the destroyers of diseases (Williams' *Sans. Dict.*).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

ling) be filled with cattle and with gold.

" 18. Dasras, your chariot, harnessed for both alike, is imperishable: it travels, Aświns, through the air.

" 19. You have one wheel on the top of the solid (mountain), while the other revolves in the sky."

The Aśvins then answered, 'Praise Ushâs (Dawn), then we shall release you.'

" He then praised Ushâs, with the three verses which follow the Aśvin verses (i. 30; 20–22).

XVIII. " Your harnessed chariot, Dasras, bears
You both, and undecaying wears;
O Aśvins, through the sky it fares.

XIX. " One wheel is on the mountain's height,
In air the other rolls its flight,
Revolving both in constant light.[178]

14.

Yet dim must grow the Aśvins, though so bright,
And Indra's golden car be lost to sight;
For soon the first approach of dawn he hailed,
Before whose wide-spread power their glories paled;
But ere the Aśvins dwindled from the sky,
The seer thus heard the last divine reply.

THE AŚVINS

" The mighty Ushas coming see!
Praise Ushas, then shalt thou be free!" [179]

15.

Majestic, silent, filling all the sky,
The primal, holy beam appeared on high,
That shines without the sun, the living light
Of far mysterious worlds that know no night;

[178] This verse may possibly indicate the actual apparent position of the two stars (β and γ Arietis) in the north of India at the time this hymn was composed.

The *Vishnu Purāna* (ii. 8) says: " The short axle [of the chariot of the sun] is supported by the pole-star: the end of the (longer) axle, to which the wheel of the car is attached, moves on the *Mánasa Mountain*."

[179] *Ushas* was the name of the personified morning dawn, the Aurora. " A new light flashed up every morning before their eyes, and the fresh breezes of the dawn reached them, like greetings . . . from the distant lands beyond the mountains, beyond the clouds, beyond the dawn, beyond 'the immortal sea which brought us hither.' The dawn seemed to them to open golden gates for the sun to pass in triumph, and while those gates were open, their eyes and their minds strove, in their childish way, to pierce beyond the limits of this finite world. That silent aspect awakened

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

And round our moving earth, unceasing drawn,
It daily streams, one everlasting Dawn.

Before it Śunaḥśepha's soul was bowed
With wondering awe, as thus he sang aloud;—

[*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 20.]

" 20. Ushas, who art pleased by praise, what mortal enjoyeth thee, immortal? Whom, mighty one, dost thou affect?

TO USHAS (FIRST STANZA)

(*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 20.—Gāyatrī Metre.)

" Immortal Ushas, pleased by praise,
What mortal may enjoy thy days!
Who, mighty one, can reach thy blaze!" [180]

16.

The hour had come! the hour of old decreed!
His bonds must fall! his faithful soul be freed!

" As he repeated one verse after the other, the fetters (of Varuṇa) were falling off, and the belly of Hariśchandra became smaller.

Immediate, at th' exultant stanza's sound,
His upper knotted cords were loosed around,
And, raptured high as Ushas brighter grew,
Amid the dappled clouds were lost to view.

Illumed by golden glory streaming down,
His purple garland shone a heavenly crown;
While intellectual light spread through his mind,
Relieved, alert, heaven-soaring, unconfined.

In the human mind the conception of the Immortal, the Infinite, the Divine" (Max Müller, *Lects. on Lang.*, vol. ii., p. 546).

[180] The parallelism of thought is very remarkable, between the general Vedic concept of Ushas, particularly as expressed in these three verses, with the lines of our own blind poet, Milton, who looked for the same light from another world, as did the old Brāhman seers—

" Hail, holy light, offspring of Heaven first born,
Or of the eternal, co-eternal, beam,
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity, dwell thou in me,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
Or hear'st thou rather, pure ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the sun,
Before the heavens thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless infinite."

Paradise Lost, Book iii.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

The suffering king perceived his cure begun,
His sacrifice accepted, saved his son;
And they with Śunaḥśepha joined to raise
To Ushas yet another verse of praise.

[*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 21.]

" 21. Diffusive, many-tinted, brilliant (Ushas), we know not (thy limits), whether they be nigh, or remote.

TO USHAS (SECOND STANZA)

(*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 21.—Gāyatrī Metre.)

" Thou wide-spread, rich-hued, brilliant beam,
O Ushas, we can never dream,
Whence, far or near, thy glories stream.

17.

The brilliant Ushas beamed with rainbow hue,
As thus they sang; when, sudden shivered, flew
The cords that bound his waist to space around;
Dissolved, destroyed, they nevermore were found.

And, as the bonds from round his frame untied,
From sensual thrall his mind was purified;
The king's dire watery plague still more decreased,
His agony grew less, and all but ceased.

Near, nearer came the dawn, and brighter glowed,
And, as its rosy radiance earth o'erflowed,
The shining victim led a last refrain,
And music joined a soft, rejoicing, strain.

[*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 22.]

" 22. Daughter of heaven, approach, with these viands, and perpetuate our wealth." [Vol. i. p. 78.]

TO USHAS (THIRD STANZA)

(*Rig-veda*, i. 30; 22.—Gāyatrī Metre.)

" O heaven's own daughter, draw thou nigh,
With healthful blessings from on high;
Eternal wealth to us supply."

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 16.

" And after he had done repeating the last verse, (all) the fetters were taken off, and Hariśchandra restored to health again."

18.

As thus they hymned the day's eternal birth,
The last cords burst that tied his feet to earth,
And, trampled down to Pātāla profound,
Were lost, like slinking worms, below the ground.

Heaven's king had thus owned law's requirements done;
Vicarious sacrifice had ransom won;
And culprits doomed before His righteous throne
Stood freed from guilt and not from cords alone.*

Now Hariśchandra might be crowned indeed,
His plague removed, his son, his kingdom freed!
Ind rang with joy, and earth's winged voices sweet
Harmonious joined with men's the morn to greet.

Fresh flowers, and jewel drops the plains adorn;
Heaven's brightness grows! The day is newly born!
And all the Devas shine, full orbed, in One
As from the golden east glints forth the sun![181]

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* Cf. *Rig.-veda* i. 24; 15. Canto IV. 18.

[181] The monotheistic principle, underlying the whole Hindu religion, as typified in the worship of the sun, is set forth in a passage of the Rāmāyaṇa, which, though it may be an interpolation in that work, is none the less a very full and clear witness. The following is a part of the condensation of it—

" The rising sun with golden rays,
Light of the worlds, adore and praise,
The universal king, the lord,
By hosts of heaven and fiends adored.
* * * * *
" He Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, he
Each person of the glorious three,
Is every god whose praise we tell,
The king of heaven, the lord of hell."

Rāmāyan (Griffith), Book vi. 106.

Even now, in the midst of apparent polytheism, it is said: " The educated Hindū willingly recognizes that beyond and above his chosen

For He is One, whom many names we call;
Before Him earth and heaven adoring fall;
Ind's Rishis sought Him through the ancient night;
And He revealed Himself the Infinite.

19. EPODE

[Thus gradual fall the threefold cords of sin
Before the living light each soul within;
And thus are nations freed from threefold night
As dawns the morn of intellectual light.

First fly the cords of *Ignorance*, that bind
The free-pulsed breath, and clog the darkened mind;
Next all the bonds of *Sensual Passion* fall,
And last the grovelling ties of *Earthly Thrall.*

Then quite unfettered we to Heaven aspire,
Illumined, pure, and clear of gross desire
Elate we tread the upward, brightening, way,
HEAVEN'S LIGHT OUR GUIDE, to everlasting day.]

deity of the Triad, or his household *sālagram*, dwells the PARAMESWARA, the One First Cause, whom the eye has not seen, and whom the mind cannot conceive, but who may be worshipped in any one of the forms in which he manifests his power to man." (Hunter's *Gazetteer of India*, vol. vi., p. 27.)

Canto VI

CROWNING

PART I. THE MORNING'S RELIGIOUS RITES

I.

The youth, in life renewed, from death set free,
And sphered in glory, left the Yūpa tree:
But, as he faced the sun's first flaming light,
He closed his eyes upon the dazzling sight.

Nor eyes alone, but all he could of sense;
And e'en his breath he held in rapt suspense;
For not through sense nor yon material beam,
His soul was filled with INNER LIGHT SUPREME.

That light divine Ind's "twice-born" all are bound
To worship, in contemplant thought profound
Absorbed, each morn; to seek its guiding care,
With sacred AUM and this eternal prayer.[182]

[182] The Gāyatrī verse (*R.-v.*, iii. 62, 10)—so called by way of pre-eminence—has formed the morning prayer, or meditation, of every pious "twice-born" man in India, from the earliest times to the present day.

It has to be *meditated*, not uttered, in the early morning, with face directed towards the sun—wherever possible in the bath, and while scattering water—but with closed eyes, mouth, and nostrils, so as to shut out the world completely.

Volumes have been written upon its meaning, both in ancient and modern times. It is said to contain the essence of all the Vedas; i.e., of all divine knowledge.

It is considered so supremely holy that it is omitted by many copyists of the Veda, for fear of profaning it.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

["Let us meditate on the adorable light of the Divine Ruler (Savitri). May it guide our intellect."—Cf. Wilson's *Rig-veda*, Vol. iii. p. 110.]

THE HOLY GĀYATRĪ (OR DAILY MORNING MEDITATION)

(*Ṛig-veda*, iii. 62; 10.)

AUM; Tat Savitur varenyam
Bhargo Devasya dhīmahī
Dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayat.

AUM; Let us muse on that blest light,
Of God, the ruler infinite;
That it may guide our minds aright.

2.

Thus meditated he with sacred awe;
Thus him the Soma priests, re-entering, saw;[183]
When lo! transformed by morn's prismatic light,
His victim robe of red seemed priestly white.[184]

Appearance thus transformed by light divine,
The white-robed priests conceived the heavenly sign [185]
To sanction custom; whereby man released
Was holy still, and thence ordained a priest.

[183] This day was the last and greatest of the whole coronation (Rājasūya) ceremonies (cf. Notes 103, 107, 162 *sup.*). Its chief religious feature was a Soma sacrifice, whence it was called a *Sutyā* day. It was also the day of the actual crowning of the King, whence it was called *Abhishechanīya*, from the ceremony of sprinkling the crown.

[184] Such an apparent change of colour, from the bright glow of an early spring morning in India, although likely to be interpreted as supernatural, would not necessarily be so. Experienced railway engine-drivers are well aware that at sunset and at dawn the changing lights of the heavens play strange tricks with the colours of the signal lamps, often making the red appear white, and rendering great precautions necessary to avoid accidents.

[185] The great Soma sacrifices required as many as sixteen priests. At such a sacrifice as this, their numbers would be even greater.

"Rising early before the day, awakening thee, when recited at the sacrifices, *clothed in sacred white garments*, this is our prayer, *the old, the prayer of our fathers*" (*Ṛ.-v.*, iii. 39; 2).

Max Müller says: "The Viśvāmitras wore white raiment. Their colour, called *arjuna*, can hardly be distinguished, however, from the colour of the dress of the Vasishṭhas, which is called śveta" (*Hist. Sans. Lit.*, p. 483).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

"The priests now said to Śunaḥśepa, 'Thou art now only ours (thou art now a priest like us); take part in the performance of the particular ceremonies of this day' (*the abhishechanīya*).

Therefore they said,—"This day we Soma bring,
To crown the Rājasūya of our king;
His ransom thou! Be now Adhvaryu guide;
For thou, like us, as priest art sanctified."

3.

[Then round the youth the whole rejoicing throng,
With circling homage, sang the mystic song,
Now sung in changeless spirit evermore
By star-placed Rishis, round their Cynosure.

ODE TO THE DEATH-DELIVERED

I. "Death-delivered! Clad in light!
Welcome, welcome! Claim thy right!
Priest, by suffering sanctified!
Take thy place, our chief beside.

II. "Doomed for sins by others done,
Thou for them hast freedom won,
By thy suffering, prayer, and song,
Patient through the dark night long.

III. "Now that heaven hath set thee free,
From the fatal Yūpa tree,
Freed thy breast, thy waist, thy feet,
Freed thy soul from guilt complete,—

IV. "Thou shalt live no more to die,
Glorified eternally,
Raised in skies to loftiest place,
There the guide of all thy race.

V. "Indra's golden chariot see!
High in Svarga waits for thee;
Bid it wait awhile and teach
Us with thee high heaven to reach.

VI. "We, like thee, through life's long night
Patient wait for heavenly light;
We, like thee, send up our cries,
Seeking freedom from the skies.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

VII. "Thine it is to guide our feet,
Thine to make our task complete,
Thine to light our earthly way,
Thine to lead these rites to-day.

VIII. "Come then hither, shining youth!
Death-delivered! Seer of truth!
Priest, by suffering sanctified!
Take thy place, our chief beside."]

THE REFORMED SOMA-SACRIFICE

(INSTITUTION OF *Anjah-Sava* (OR "RIGHT-WAY") MODE)

4.

His elder brother, Jamadagni, best
And chief Adhvaryu priest, had joined the rest,
Admitting thus his junior rightly named;
And free resigned his place, while all acclaimed
Young Śunaḥśepha, "Lord of Men," and Guide,
As Adhvaryu by Viśvāmitra's side.[186]

"He then saw (invented) the method of direct preparation of the Soma-juice (*aṅjah-sava* without intermediate fermentation) after it is squeezed."

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 17.

He then prepared to lead that day's great feast,
And proved himself indeed a Guiding Priest;
For—knowing crowning acts at noon were due—
Whence morning-rites must shortened be, and few—
He saw, inspired, the "right," the "levelled," way
A new, brief, perfect, Soma-rite to pay.[187]

[186] The subsequent proceedings of Śunaḥśepha show that he fulfilled the duties of Adhvaryu priest, according to Vedic ritual (See Notes 98 and 101 *sup.*) That place, however, had been previously occupied by Jamadagni, who must have been with the other priests, joining in the welcome to his younger brother, and yielded his place to him. This advancement of the younger to priority over the elder, is not without parallel in many other ancient traditions (see also Notes 85, 100, 101).

[187] The final Soma rites took place in the *Havirdhāna*, a building for containing the vehicles which carried the Soma plants, with the apparatus for preparing the juice (*Śat. Brāh.*, iv. 1, 1, 19). This was the special fane, temple, or shrine, of Soma. It stood in front of the high altar (*Uttara-vedi*) to the south-west. It was anciently a mere temporary building, with walls of reed and roof of thatch, whence it has been irreverently described by translators as a "cart-shed." It, however, became a model, from which the modern form of the Bengali temple was derived (see Rajendralal Mittra's *Antiquities of Orissa*, vol. 1, p. 30).

A similar *Havirdhāna*, for other offerings, stood opposite to it, north-west of the high altar. (Cf. Note 32.)

The Soma sacrifice was considered the very holiest in the whole system of Vedic worship.

[188] "The sacred Soma juice has, according to the opinions of the ancient Hindu theologians, pre-eminently the power of uniting the sacrificer on this earth with the celestial King Soma, and making him thus one of his subjects, and consequently an associate of the gods, and an inhabitant of the celestial world" (Dr. Haug's *Ait. Brāh.*, Int., p. 80).

[189] Soma-juice was distilled from a plant of the same family as our common milk-weed, probably the *Asclepias acida*, or *Sarcostema viminalis*. Its intoxicating qualities led to its use in worship. It was the special sacrifice to Indra, and was offered in such quantities that both the deity and his worshippers became intoxicated.

There was a close resemblance between Soma rites and those of the Greek Dionysios, or Bacchus, who is said to have visited India, and who, like Indra, was styled a "new god," who "made the mad to rave of things to come" (see the speeches of Pentheus and Tiresias, in the *Bacchæ* of Euripides).

That neighbouring peoples regarded this religious intoxication as disgraceful, is testified by many passages in the Avesta; for example—

"Ye Devas have sprung out of the evil spirit, who takes possession of you by intoxication (Shoma), teaching you manifold arts to deceive and destroy mankind, for which arts you are notorious everywhere." (Haug *On the Parsīs*, p. 152.)

For Soma-rites, combined with his release,
Taught him that sacrificial death might cease;
And death-surviving Soma-wine become,
Of India's older worship, soul and sum,
The sacramental sign, divinely given,
Of life, supreme o'er human death, in Heaven.[188]

5.

INTEMPERATE WORSHIP REFORMED

He also knew, Ind's Persian kin reviled
Ind's holiest things, through Soma-rites defiled;
And true, too true, their taunt that Soma-wine,
Extolled throughout the Vedas as divine,
Drunk without stint made Ind's grand rite a rout,
Preluding rapine, brawl, and drunken shout.[189]

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

"And carried it out under the recital of the four verses, *yach chia dhi tvam grihe grihe* (i. 28; 5–8).

6.

Household Implements Consecrated

Therefore he passed by things for rites designed,
Presanctified, with ardent Soma shrined,
To wit—the press, stones, jars to pour it in,
The sieve of Kuśa-grass, the cups, the skin—
And used the tools that braise our daily food,
To make fresh Soma, thus shown true and good.[190]

TO THE HOUSEHOLD MORTAR

[*Rig-veda*, i. 28; 5, 6.]

(*Rig-veda*, i. 28; 5, 6.—Anushtubh Metre.)

"5. If, indeed, O *Mortar*, thou art present in every house; * give forth (in this rite) a lusty sound, like the drum of a victorious host.

* *Or* ["Although, O Mortar, thou art employed in every house." — *Vedārthayatna.*

* *Or* ["Though thou art used for common purposes in every house."—*Stevenson.*]

V. "Though, mortar, thou art used indeed,
In every house for common need;
By thy victorious, drum-like, sound
May this great rite also be crowned.

VI. "O Vanaspati! lord of trees,
As from thee gently blows the breeze,
So, mortar, mix the Soma wine
For Indra's beverage divine." [191]

To suit such tools the seer the ritual changed,
For, when the plants were in the mortar ranged,

[190] The implements used in preparing the Soma for great sacrifices, as well as the ceremonies, were very numerous and elaborate (see Note in Haug's *Ait. Brāh.*, vol. ii., p. 489; also *Śat. Brāh.*, part ii, pp. 226, 391).

By his preference of the pestle and mortar of daily life at a great sacrifice, and by curtailment of ceremony, Śunaḥśepha not only showed that unfermented liquor was quite as suitable for sacred use as the intoxicating Soma, but conferred dignity upon household worship, as expressed in his hymn to Indra (*Ṛig-veda*, i. 28; 1–4) which follows in this legend; but which in the Saṃhitā of the *Ṛig-veda* precedes the verses now before us.

[191] In the household, or ordinary, sacrifice, the *wooden* mortar might be used in place of the stones used at great sacrifices, with the words, "A *wooden stone* (*adri*) art thou," or "A-broad-bottomed stone (*grāvan*) art thou"; and it is explained that it may be considered as both iron and wood (*Śat. Brāh.*, i. 1, 4, 7).

"*Vanaspati*, a large tree; but in this verse put by metonymy for the mortar, and in verse 8 for the mortar and pestle" (Wilson).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

"6. Lord of the forest, as the wind gently blows before thee, so do thou, O *Mortar*, prepare the *Soma* juice, for the beverage of Indra."

[*Rig-veda*, i. 28; 7, 8.]

"7. Implements of sacrifice, bestowing food, loud sounding, sport, like the horses of Indra champing the grain.

"8. Do you two forest lords, of pleasing form, prepare, with agreeable libations,* our sweet (*Soma*) juices for Indra."

* *Or* ["with our high Soma presser." —*Vedārthayatna.*]

"Then by the verse *uchchhishṭam chamvor* (i. 28; 9), he brought it into the Droṇakaḷasa.

So quick he crushed them, quick the Soma brought,
That the "Añjah-sava" complete was wrought
At early morn; as to Gāyatrī's sound
The pestle with its rhythmic throb swung round.[192]

TO THE HOUSEHOLD PESTLE AND MORTAR

(*Rig-veda*, i. 28; 7, 8.—Gāyatrī Metre.)

VII. "Ye ritual tools, rejoice amain,
Bestowing food with sounding strain,
Like Indra's horses champing grain.

VIII. "Twain forest lords, well-formed and fair,
Libations worthy him prepare;
Sweet Soma-juice let Indra share."

7.

UNFERMENTED SOMA CONSECRATED AND OFFERED

Immediate in the chalice poured, the juice
Without ferment was fit for sacred use;
For, ere its ardent force could be distilled,
Th' appointed jars with its mild stream he filled.

[192] The *Añjaḥ-sava*, or "rapid preparation" of the Soma, is so called from the word Añjas, which means "level, straight, right." H. H. Wilson calls it the "rightway oblation."

The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa refers to a somewhat similar change in the ritual by "*the gods*"; in which connection it may be remembered that the fathers (*pitṛis*), among whom after ages would number Śunaḥśepha, were often also called gods. (Cf. *Ṛ.-v.*, i. 26; 8, and Note 156, in Canto V. 2 *inf.*)

"Even at the Morning Soma feast they then completely established the entire sacrifice. . . . The morning Soma feast belongs to the Gâyatrî" (*Śat. Brāh.*, iv. 1, 1, 7, 8).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

These through the woven holy Kuśa strained,
Libations worthy Indra were obtained;
Then on the pure cow-skin he placed the rest,
While thus in verse inspired the rite he blest.[193]

THE SOMA OFFERING

(*Rig-Veda*, i. 28; 9.—Gāyatrī Metre.)

[*Rig-veda*, i. 28; 9.]

"9. Bring the remains of the *Soma* juice upon the platters; sprinkle it upon the blades of *Kuśa* grass; and place the remainder upon the cow-hide."

Or ["Fill the remaining Soma in the two jars, pour it on the sieve and put [it] on the cow-hide." — *Vedārthayatna.*]

IX. "Two urns, with Soma filled, provide,
Through Kuśa strained and purified;
The rest set down upon the hide."

"Then, after having been touched by Hariśchandra, he sacrificed the Soma

Thus amply sanctified, the chastened cup,
By Hariśchandra touched, he offered up;
And, as the god the copious Soma quaffed,
The offerers shared with him the wondrous draught.

"under the recital of the four first verses of the hymn *yatra grâvâ prithubudhna*, i. 28; 1–4), which were accompanied by the formula *Svāhā.*

[193] The introduction of the Añjaḥ-sava mode of employing unfermented Soma was clearly an attempt to reform the debasing deification of intemperance. (Cf. Notes 171, 189 *inf.*)

There is reason to fear, however, that it obtained only a very partial prevalence, and to have been indeed that undefined "innovation in the ritual," which H. H. Wilson says, was "adopted by a part only of the Kausika family of Brahmans." It was, however, deemed sufficiently important to be commemorated in this great coronation epos.

The *Droṇakalasa* was "the large vessel used for keeping the Soma in readiness for sacrificial purposes" (Haug). Some say it was a wooden tub or trough; but we render it by "*chalice*," the exact English equivalent, phonetically, of the Sanskrit "Kalaśa."

The Soma-juice was passed into that vessel through a strainer (*pavitra*) or network, formed of blades of Kuśa grass (*Śat. Brāh.*, i. 1, 3, 1 note), "and being cleansed and pure, he became the food of the gods" (*Śat. Brāh.*, iv. 1, 2, 5).

"Pour the remainder on the cowhide." The meaning of this is very obscure. According to *Kāty.* viii. 8, 6 and x. 9, 3–15, as quoted by Kittel on Sacrifice, on an ordinary *Sutyā* day (cf. note 183) either one or eleven animals were to be sacrificed, one of which might be a cow, and in the evening, after the Avabhṛitha, a cow or an ox. But the "rapid rite" of this exceptional morning, and the after coronation ceremonies seem to preclude both of these.

Could it be that it was intended to direct a pouring of Soma over the *living* animal, which might thus be taken to be *ceremonially slain*?

In the absence of other references one cannot say that it was—although the expressions in the next note (No. 194) look in that direction. The point, therefore, must be left in obscurity for the present. It is not of vital importance.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

To ecstasy divine their souls were raised,
And high the wine of heaven and earth they praised,
Whose fount was that blest plant, which slain yet lives,
And, living, life to human spirits gives.[194]

They sang, that through it Devas vigour gained,
And mortal men immortal worlds attained,
Since those who feast with gods can never die
But share the life of gods eternally.[195]

8.

HOUSEHOLD SOMA-RITES RESTORED

With rites like these the Rishi further taught,
True offerings might by all be daily brought;
Since simple rites with household tools suffice
Midst daily toil for perfect sacrifice.

Each house might thus hold its own Soma feast,
And every household's leader be its priest;
Hence not in sacred spots with priestly prayer
Only might Heaven be sought, but everywhere.

Such were the themes that through his verses rang,
As thus to Indra yet again he sang;

[194] In a mystical sense, the Soma was said to be slain when the plants were pressed, and yet it lived in spirit. A like mystical meaning attached to all sacrifices, even to that of the animal, who when slain was said to go to the gods.

"When they press him (Soma) they slay him; and when they spread him"—i.e., perform the Soma sacrifice—"they cause him to be born." (*Śat. Brāh.*, iii. 9, 4, 23; iv. 3, 4, 1.)

[195] The following are two out of many stanzas addressed to Soma in the *Rig-veda*,—"Place me, O purified god, in that everlasting and imperishable world where there is eternal light and glory. O Indu (Soma) flow for Indra."

"Make one immortal in the world where King Vaivasvata (Yama) lives; where is the innermost sphere of the sky; where those great waters flow" (*Rig-veda*, ix. 113, 8).

In many other passages Soma is said to "confer immortality on gods and men" (*R.-v.*, i. 91; 1, 6, 18), to exhilarate Varuṇa, Mitra, Indra, Vishṇu, the Maruts, the other gods, Vāyu, Heaven and Earth" (*Rig-veda*, ix. 90; 5).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

And, though his hymn and ritual both were new,
The seers with sponsive "*Svāhās*" owned them true.[196]

TO INDRA

(*Rig-veda*, i. 28; 1–4.—Anushtubh Metre.)

[*Rig-veda*, i. 28; 1–3.]

"1. Indra,* as the broad-based stone is raised to express the *Soma* juice, recognize and partake of the effusions of the mortar.

* *Or* ["Wherever, O Indra, etc." *Stevenson.* "Where, Indra, etc," *Vedārthayatna.*]

I. "Where'er the broad-based stone we place,
To press the juice that wins thy grace;
There, Indra, recognize and take
The sacred draughts our mortars make.
Hail! Svāhā! hail!

"2. Indra, (in the rite) in which the two platters, for containing the juice,—(as broad as a woman's) hips,* recognize and partake of the effusions of the mortar.

* *Or* ["Where, Indra, the two halves of the Soma press are placed close together, like the two loins, etc." —*Vedārthayatna.*]

II. "Where grinding women take their seat,
A two-fold press is found complete;
There, Indra, recognize and take
The sacred draughts our mortars make.
Hail! Svāhā! hail!

[196] In modern India the word "Yajamāna" is universally used to signify "master," "head of a family," "chief of a tribe," "headman of a caste or community." Its literal meaning is "master of a sacrifice" (*yajña*), and it denotes that at the time it originated every master of a house kept his sacrificial fire and was priest and sacrificer in his own household.

The formula "*Svāhā*" is traced by Dr. Haug from two Sanskrit roots which mean "put in" or "into." It signifies the gift which is thrown into the fire. He says it exactly corresponds with the formula prescribed for the Levitical priests (*Lev.* i. 9, 3, 17; ii. 2, 9, 16). "an offering, a sweet savour, made by fire unto the Lord" (*Ait. Brāh.*, Int. p. 40, note).

The *Śatapatha Brāhmana* (i. 5, 3, 13, etc.) says "The Svāhā call marks the end of the sacrifice."

In Williams' *Sanskrit Dictionary* it is said to be "often used like 'Hail!'"

The special mention of this formula is an evident indication, that the priests who joined in it accepted the innovations made by Śunaḥśepha, and the doctrines thereby implied.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

[*Rig-veda*, i. 28; 4.]

Or ["Wherever the two buttocks are squatted on the ground, like two planks of wood, etc."—*Stevenson.*

Or ["Ubi duorum femorum patinæ sacrificales factæ sunt, *ibi*, etc." —*Rosen.*]

"3. Indra, (in the rite) in which the housewife repeats egress from and ingress into * (the sacrificial chamber), recognize and partake of the effusions of the mortar.

* *Or* ["Where, Indra, the woman learns to push and to pull, etc." —*Vedārthayatna.*]

III. "And where the housewife drives the mill,
Thy rite divine we true fulfil;
There Indra, recognize and take
The sacred draughts our mortars make.
Hail! Svāhā! hail!

"4. When they bind * the churning staff (with a cord), like reins to restrain (a horse), Indra, recognize and partake of the effusions of the mortar." (*Wilson's R.-veda* vol. i. pp. 71–2.)

* *Or* ["Where, Indra, etc."—*Vedārthayatna.*]

"Then he brought the implements required for making the concluding ceremonies, (*avabhritha*) of this sacrifice to the spot,

Or ["Afterward he carried out all the things belonging to the Avabhritha ceremony." — *Max Müller.*]

IV. "And when they bind the churning cord,
Thy bridled steeds they figure, lord;
There, Indra, recognize and take
The sacred draughts our mortars make.
Hail! Svāhā! hail!"

These verses marked the new-seen ritual s close;
And, as the last rejoicing "*Svāhā*" rose,
It stood completely stablished, perfect done,
A brief rite, joining many rites in one,
A temperate, not a foul inebriate rite,
Begun and closed in morning's holy light.*

9.

Old and New Religious Rites Conjoined.

That simple Soma past, and morn still young,
No more new rites, or fresh-made hymns he sung;
But, ere the day's religious ordinance end,
The older rites with those new taught must blend.

* Cf. Notes 191, 192, 193 *sup.* and *Rig-veda*, iv. 1–5 here following.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

For thus through every age Ind's fathers told,
That they who serve the new must reverence old,
That they who serve the old must reverence new,
And each to each must render honour due.

10.

Rites of the "Avabhritha (or Expiatory Bath.)

"And performed them under the recital of the two verses, '*Tvaṁ no agne Varuṇasya* (iv. 1; 4, 5).

So now fulfilling ancient ritual rules,
He brought together all the sacred tools
For one great rite, the Host of Gods to pray,
And bathe all faults for evermore away.[197]

Those from the Soma shrine aloft they bare
With chant, "I tread triumphant on the air;"
While evil spirits scared before them fly,
Until they come the highest altar nigh.

There they pour ardent Soma on the fire,
And, as its triple beams to heaven aspire
With loftier, brighter, radiant-quivering flame,
They thus to Agni-Soma all exclaim;—

TO AGNI-SOMA

(*Rig-veda*, iv. 1; 4, 5.—Trishtubh Metre.—Rishi; Vāmadeva.)

[*Rig-veda*, iv. 1; 4, 5.]

"4. Mayest thou, Agni, who art wise, avert from us the wrath of the divine Varuṇa: do thou

iv. "Agni, wise, turn from us Varuṇa's dread ire;
Priest most skilful, sacrificing here in fire,

[197] Śunaḥśepha's innovations in ritual being completed, the preceding hymn is the last attributed to his authorship; and the remaining coronation ritual is only referred to by naming its principal closing ceremony, and the first and last verses within which it was included. More detailed reference would have been unsuitable to the ancient recitation of the legend, since those who listened to it were then participating in the same ceremonies.

A sufficient description is, however, here given to show the connection and meaning of the last verses quoted in the legend, as well as to exhibit some interesting and instructive features of India's ancient coronation ceremonies to modern readers. Authorities for them are given in the footnotes.

Cf. also Note 161.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

Tireless, bear our gifts in most resplendent blaze;
Set us free from all our foes through endless days.

who art the most frequent* sacrificer, the most diligent bearer (of oblations), the most resplendent, liberate us from all animosities.†

* *Or* ["skilful,"

† *or*, "remove all haters from us."—*Vedārthayatna.*]

"5. Do thou, Agni, our preserver, be most nigh to us with thy protection at the breaking of this dawn: deprecate Varuṇa for us; and, propitiated (by our praise), feed upon the grateful (oblation), and be to us of auspicious invocation." —Wilson's *Ṛ.-veda*, vol. iii., p. 114.

Or ["Do thou therefore, O Agni, be nearest to us for protection, closest at the dawn of this Ushas. Tarrying (here), do thou pacify Varuṇa. Eat the oblation. Be easy for us to invoke."—*Vedārthayatna.*]

v. "Keeper, Agni, nearest be as dawns this day,
Deprecate the wrath of Varuna, we pray.
Take our offering. Stay with us who thee adore.
Gracious Agni, hear us now and evermore." [198]

[198] They walk out of the *Havirdhāna*, the fane, temple, or shrine, of Soma (see Note 187) chanting,—"I walk along the wide air!" (which formula, says the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, iv. 1, 1, 20, is "a slayer of the Rakshas," who "roam rootless and unfettered on both sides along the air") to the high altar, and there "they pour out Soma into Agni." In doing this the priests form a procession, with the sacrificer and his wife, each following individual touching the hem of the garment of the one preceding (*Śat. Brāh.*, iv. 2, 5, 1 and note).

No sacrifice was ever performed without the presence of the wife of the sacrificer, who had her station (see plan given by Haug at end of vol. i.) and duties assigned to her at every part of the ceremony. In the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (iii. 3, 3, 1) it is said: "The man who has no wife is not fit for sacrifice" (see Muir's *Orig. Sans. Texts*, vol. i., p. 25).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

11.

PROCESSION TO THE EXPIATORY BATH.

Then priests, the sacrificer, and his wife,
Who shared his worship as she shared his life,
In linked procession toward the bath repair,
And with them all the tools of offering bear.

THE SAMISHTA-YAJUS (OFFERINGS TO ALL THE GODS)

They pause the Viśve-Devās' firehouse round,
Half in, half out, the consecrated ground;
And where the Hosts of God their coming wait,
They render offerings due; then pass the gate.[199]

12.

SOMA IMPLEMENTS THROWN IN THE REFUSE-PIT.

Adown the refuse-pit their tools they throw,
And with them all their faults of ritual go;
In lowest depths obscure, forgot to dwell,
Like buried snakes made harmless down a well.

Thence towards the stream devoutly pace the train;
And, as they tread the outer, pathless, plain,
This wide-spread earth, this travelling sun they see,
And chant, like Śunaḥśepha on the tree.[200]

[199] Having offered the Soma into the fire, the procession proceeds northwards, in front of the high altar, until it reaches the "*Agnīdhra*" (Āgnīdhrīya), or fire-house, about the centre of the north side of the Mahāvedi, or consecrated ground, half within and half without it, and sacred to All the Gods. (*Śat. Brāh.*, iii. 6, 1, 26, 28.)

"They," the deities, "continue waiting till the Samishṭayajus are performed" (*Śat. Brāh.*, iv. 4, 4, 5) prior to the procession proceeding to the Expiatory Bath.

"Now why it is called *samishṭa-yajus* . . . for whatever deities the sacrifice is performed, all these are thereby sacrificed to together (*samishṭa*)" (*Śat. Br.*, i, 9, 2, 26).

[200] According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, only certain small articles are thrown there; but other authorities mentioned in the translator's note thereto, say that all the large articles, the throne, etc., are also carried there, and thence to the water.

As they throw them they exclaim, "Be thou nor adder nor viper!

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 17.

TO VARUNA

(*Rig-veda*, i. 24; 8.—Trishtubh Metre.)

"Regal Varuna hath true in pathless skies
Made the sun's wide path, through which he daily flies;
Make for me a path; me, fettered now, release,
Quell our heart's oppressors, bid their boastings cease." *

13.

THE AVABHRITHA (EXPIATORY BATH).

Proceeding still, they chant the Sāman high,
Whence, scared again, the evil spirits fly;
Till glad they sing upon the water's brink,
"Here Varuṇa's last bonds, down-trampled, sink!"

With offerings fit the stream is sanctified
And cleansing virtue blended with its tide;
The sacrificers enter then its waves,
Devoutly pray, and each the other laves;

Thus, as a serpent casts his outworn skin,
In that pure stream they cast away their sin,
And leave the cleansing bath all undefiled
And purer than a new-born toothless child.[201]

14.

THE RECESSIONAL CHANT.

Then bright arrayed, in raiment clean and new,
They, marching back, their former path pursue;

. . . For snakes are like rope, and snakes' haunts are like wells (pits), and there is, as it were, a feud between men and snakes" (*Śat. Brāh.*, iv. 4, 5, 2–4; and cf. Canto V. 18, *inf.*).

* Cf. Canto IV. 18 and Note 40.

[201] "He then says, 'Sing the Sâman! . . . for the Sâman is a repeller of evil spirits. . . . They proceed in whatever direction the water is. . . . While he makes him descend into the water, he bids him say, 'Homage be to Varuṇa; downtrodden is Varuṇa's snare.' Thus he delivers him from every snare of Varuṇa. . . . Thereupon both having descended bathe and wash each other's back. Having wrapped themselves in fresh garments, they step out; even as a snake casts its skin, so does he cast away all his sin,—there is not in him even as much sin as there is in a toothless child" (*Śat. Brāh.*, iv. 4; 5, 6, 9, 11–23).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

And, chanting loud and glad, they all rehearse
The great triumphant Āmahīyā verse.

THE ĀMAHĪYĀ (SOMA) VERSE

(*Rig-veda*, viii. 48; 3.—Trishtubh Metre.)

[*Rig-veda*, viii. 48, 3.]

" We by Soma draughts have life immortal gained;
We have light celestial reached, to gods attained;
What can harm us now! What foeman dare assault!
What, Immortal! now remains of mortal fault! [202]

[" We have drunk Soma, we have become immortal, We have gone to the light, we have attained to the gods: what now can the enemy do unto us, What the guile, O immortal, of the mortal?" — (*Trans. by Dr. Julius Eggeling, Śat. Brāh.* vol. ii., p. 385.)]

15.

RETURN TO THE HOUSEHOLD.

In gladness soon re-entering sacred ground,
And passing all the holy shrines around,

[202] " By the same way by which they came out (from the sacrificial ground) they return thither. While going thither they all *mutter* (?) the Āmahîyâ verse" (*Śat. Brāh.*, iv. 4, 5, 23 and Note). We venture here upon a slight difference from the learned translator. The subject matter of this verse, and Āpastamba's rule (see Note 128 *sup.*) both require a joyful and loud, not a muttered utterance.

Dr. John Muir gives the following metrical translation of this famous verse—

" We've quaffed the Soma bright,
And are immortal grown;
We've entered into light,
And all the gods have known.
What mortal now can harm,
Or foeman vex us more?
Through thee beyond alarm,
Immortal god, we soar."

He also points out a remarkable parallel in the " Cyclops " of Euripides, where Polyphemus, in a state of drunken elevation, exclaims,—" I see the throne of Jove, And all the awful glory of the gods " (*Or. Sans. Texts*, iii. 265, and v. 290).

Cf. also Note 189.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

With minds devout the radiant throng returned,
Before the place where household altars burned.

REKINDLING THE HOUSEHOLD FIRE.

There Śunaḥśepha bade the king by name,
To light th' Āhavanīya's household flame;
And king and Śunaḥśepha worshipped there
The household Agni thus with closing prayer.

TO AGNI (IN THE HOUSEHOLD FIRE).

(*Rig-veda*, v. 2; 7.—Trishtubh Metre.—Rishi Kumāra, son of Atri; or Vrisha, son of Jara, or both of them.)

" Thou the fettered Śunaḥśepha hast unbound,
Loosed the patient sufferer's thousand stakes around;
Therefore sit, lord, here, to bear our prayers on high,
O wise Hotar Agni! all our bonds untie." [203]

" Then, after this ceremony was over, Śunaḥśepa summoned Hariśchandra to the Ahavaniya fire, and recited the verse, *Śunaḥchichhepam niditam* (v. 2; 7).

[*Rig-veda*, v. 2; 7.]

" Thou hast liberated the fettered Śunaḥśepa from a thousand stakes, for he was patient in endurance: so, Agni, free us from our bonds, having sat down here (at our sacrifice), intelligent offerer of oblations." — (Wilson's *Rig-veda*, vol. iii. p. 236.)

Or [" Thou didst liberate even Śunaḥśepha from the thousand-fold victim-post, because he prayed. So sit thou down here, O thou knowing invoker Agni, and remove the bonds from us."—*Vedārthayatna.*]

[203] " They returned from the place of the Uttara-vedi, where the Ishtis were performed " (Haug).

The locality and this offering are thus described in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (iv. 4, 5, 23.) " Having returned he puts a kindling stick on the Āhavanīya (at the front hall door) with, ' Thou art the kindler of the gods.' He thereby kindles the sacrificer himself, for along with the kindling of the gods the sacrificer is kindled."

PART II. FINAL STATE CEREMONIES

CORONATION OF HARIŚCHANDRA [204]

(THE ABHISHECHANĪYA)

16.

Achieved all rites of heaven! All purified!
Accepted all! Though man nor beast had died!
There now remained alone to celebrate
With joyful pomp the final rites of state;
When India's marshalled myriads throng the plain,
And Śunaḥśepha guides the stately train.

17.

ENTHRONEMENT OF THE KING.

Between the parts, called "earth" and "heaven," placed,
The king's pavilion stands, with colours graced;
Where Hariśchandra, courtiers, guests, and queen,
Like Devas sit, enthroned in golden sheen;
He, richly robed in silk, both red and white,
And bearing darts, and bow, well strung for fight.

18.

CROWNING AND SPRINKLING (ABHISHEKA).

A Dumbar branch, with gold and jewels round—
Ind's ancient Crown—on him with prayers they bound,

[204] A full account of the exact ritual of an ancient Indian coronation would prove extremely interesting and valuable; since it would not only throw much light on primitive Āryan notions respecting the derivation of royal power, with its corresponding duties and claims to the allegiance of its subjects, but also upon the sources whence many quaint and significant ceremonies still practised in Europe were derived, and which antiquarians have hitherto failed to discover.

To be useful, however, it would require more lengthened and minute discussion than would be suitable to the present work, although a brief description of the culminating ceremonies of Hariśchandra's coronation is thought necessary.

This is founded chiefly on a valuable article by the late Professor Goldsticker, in his fragmentary *Dictionary Sanskrit and English*, S. V. अभिषेचनीय (abhishechanīya); of which an extract slightly condensed is given in—

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3, 17.

Then o'er it all the castes besprinkling poured
Their urns, with wide Ind's river-blessings stored.

(And here,—when ceased the throngs' exultant "Hail!"—
Was oft rehearsed to following kings the tale
Of him, his son, and Śunaḥśepha bound
All thus redeemed, all sanctified, all crowned.)

But he,—world-rule like Varuna's to gain,—
With three steps cleared at once the tiger slain; [205]
While Ind—proclaiming Rohita his heir,—
Cast scorn on "death," as eunuch posing there.

19.

GIFTS TO THE KING'S KINDRED.

They brought him steeds, they yoked his glittering car,
Equipped to hunt or lead successful war;
But ere to chase or battle forth he rode,
The king a liberal gift of kine bestowed
Upon his brother, standing near his throne,
Avouching thus his kindred's weal his own.

20.

THE SYMBOLIC RAID

Well-weaponed beasts to slay, or men to fight,
In boar-skin buskins clad, and armour bright,
Car-borne he led his hosts, a shining train,
In mimic chase and warfare through the plain;

[205] *Vishnu's Three-Steps.* "This universe Vishnu traverses; he puts his triple step. This universe becomes collected in his dusty triple step. Vishṇu, the undeceivable protector, traverses three steps, preserving the sacred laws wherever he goes." (*Rig-veda*, i. 22; 17, 18).

Cf. Note 93.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 17.

And loud from crowds the vast arena round
The great shikari-warrior's plaudits sound.

21.

THE KING SEATED AT HOME.—A SYMBOLIC GAME.

Returned from acted raids and bloodless frays,
He sits at home, in type of peaceful days;
The "Game of Ages" there with golden shells
His future bright triumphant fortune tells;
And mystic sport the coronation ends,
With brother, warriors, craftsmen played as friends.

22. EPODE

CONCLUSION OF THE RĀJASŪYA.

[For, save one final offering, nought remained;
Thence long in glory Hariśchandra reigned;
His race still rules, and shall to latest days,
Revered and famed in all wide India's praise.
And Śunaḥśepha, peer of kings and priests,
Still guides in spirit India's holy feasts.]

Canto VII

EXALTATION

I. THE CORONATION BANQUET.

1.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18.

"Śunaḥśepa then approached the side of Viśvâmitra, (and sat by him.)

"Ajîgarta, the son of Suyavasa, then said, 'O Rishi, return me my son.' He answered, 'No, for the gods have presented (*devâ avâsata*) him to me.'

THE CROWNING BANQUET spread, the rites complete,
With Viśvāmitra's sons he took his seat,
And Ajīgarta Sauyavasa left.
He all too late perceived himself bereft:
Though he had sold his son, pain filled his breast,
As thus before the sage he made request.

AJĪGARTA

"O Rishi, all the rites are done;
I pray thee, render back my son."

VIŚVĀMITRA

"Thy son! thou hast no son!" exclaimed the sage,
In accents stern, afire with righteous rage,—
"A son to thee was born, by thee was sold.
His price, three hundred kine, to thee were told;
When thou didst bind him on the Yūpa tree,
Thou gav'st him up to heaven, and heaven to me;
Thine impious arm held brandished high the knife,
And thou preparedst thyself to take his life;

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18.

But, freed from such a sire by power divine,
He's henceforth Devarāta, son of mine!" [206]

2.

[Thence Ind's old soulful Rishis' minds profound
Saw themes transcending earth's encyclic round,
That lived for ages,—ceased,—but live again,
With DEVARĀTA still their grand refrain.

THE DEVARĀTA ODE

I. Devarāta! Devarāta! [207]
LORD OF MEN! GOD'S GIFT OF GRACE!
Welcome to thy rightful place!
While thy days appointed run,
Reign on earth, till heaven be won.

II. Devarāta! Devarāta!
King and Priest, of heavenly line,
Here with all th' illustrious shine;
Then be thou exalted high,
Lofty, twinkling in the sky.

[206] This speech of Viśvāmitra probably formed a precedent, or indicated the recognized practice, whereby those persons who often stood in the place of animal victims at great sacrifices (but who were never actually slain, as explained in Note 115 *sup.*) acquired a right of adoption into the family either of the officiating priest, or of some one else, according to their caste; instances being mentioned of great sacrifices, where many men of different castes were thus symbolically offered.

Such subsequent adoption is the more probable, because they were always considered to be forsaken by their born relatives (see Note 125 *sup.*)

[207] The name Devarāta means literally "given by God," and is equivalent to the Greek Theodotos.

This ode is interpolated to express what is believed to be a true inner meaning of the legend—implied specially by Indra's destined gift of a golden car, and the identity of the name Śunaḥśepha with that of the polar star, round which, in Indian Astronomy, the Seven Great Ṛishis of India constantly revolve—and by other circumstances.

Though the whole subject cannot be fully discussed here, it may be remarked briefly that Śunaḥśepha is regarded as the promulgator of certain fundamental guiding, or central doctrines, which are common to

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18.

III. Devarāta! Devarāta!
Fixt in our horizon far,
There be India's guiding star,
Northwards whence Ind's Āryans came,
Never setting son of fame!

IV. Devarāta! Devarāta!
While our seven great Rishis roll,
Ever pointing out the pole,
"Star of Ind" shalt thou endure,
Śunaḥśepha! Cynosure!

V. Devarāta! Devarāta!
Many cults their course may run,
But through all God's Truth is one;
That shall all the world be taught,
Central in thine history wrought.

VI. Devarāta! Devarāta!
Then shall all the Āryan lands
Join as brethren all their hands,
Mutual learning, each from each,
Wisdom thou of old didst teach.

VII. Devarāta! Devarāta!
Ārya's central guiding star,
Mounting Indra's golden car,
Guide mankind while worlds endure!
Śunaḥśepha! Cynosure!]

"Since that time he was Devarâta, Viśvâmitra's son. From him come the *Kapileyas* and *Babhrava's*."

Or ["He became Devarâta (Theodotus) the son of Viśvâmitra, and the members of the family of Kapila

3.

From thenceforth Brāhman Kapilas divine,
Of Śunaḥśepha's Āngirasa line,
Were joined in kinship firm with Babhru's race,
Who Kshatra birth from Viśvāmitra trace.

These varied clans unite with glad accord,
To claim, in rites, a joint ancestral lord,

the Indian and every other branch of the Āryan race, ancient and modern.

This central thought of the ode (see v. 4) is thus poetically expressed in the *Ṛig-veda*—

"The seven wise and divine Ṛishis, with hymns, with metres, [with] ritual forms, according to the prescribed measures, *contemplating the path of the ancients, have followed it, like charioteers, seizing the reins* (*Ṛig-veda*, x. 130; 7, trans. by Muir).

And Viśvāmitra's son of high renown [208]
As DEVARĀTA claim the ages down.

But, as these kinsmen's acclamations ceased,
Reft Ajīgarta, mournful 'mid the feast,
Came near, where sat the son he doomed to die
And, kneeling there, he raised his piteous cry:[209]

AJĪGARTA

" To mine thy mother adds her tender plea;
O pity her, if yet thou lov'st not me;
Remember too thy great ancestral race,
And spare thy father's house this deep disgrace.

" O famous seer of Āngirasa line,
Whose sires share Agni's throne in heaven divine,

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18. and Babhṛu became his relations." —Max Müller, *Hist. Sans. Lit.*, p. 417.]

" Ajīgarta therefore said, 'Come then, we (thy mother and I myself) will call thee,' and added, 'Thou art known as the seer from Ajīgarta's family, as a descendant of Aṅgirasaḥ. Therefore, O Ṛishi, do not leave your ancestral home; return to me.'

[208] Every Brāhman family of India claims to be descended from one or other of the Seven Great Ṛishis, or Sages, who were exalted to the stars of the constellation, called *Ursa Major* (the Great Bear) in the West; but in modern India the Seven Bears, and more anciently *Sapta Ṛishayah*, the Seven Ṛishis.

Among these the Kāpileyas (Kapilas) descend from Aṅgiras, the ancestor of Śunaḥśepha. They are called Kapayas, and stand 25th in the list of *Gotras* (families or clans) quoted by Max Müller from Āśvalāyana (*Hist. Sans. Lit.*, p. 383).

The Babhravas (Babhrus) are the leading descendants of Viśvāmitra, according to those of them who now live in the Konkan; and the Kauśikas, of whom Śunaḥśepha became the head, come next to them (see Genealogical Table in Sherring's *Hindū Tribes and Castes*, vol. i. p. 89).

This passage shows, therefore, that the act of adoption affects not only the individuals immediately concerned, but brings all their collateral kinsmen into relationship with each other. And in Śunaḥśepha's person an Āṅgirasa Brāhman clan became kinsmen to a Kshatriya, or warrior, clan of Viśvāmitra.

The Brāhmans have always been careful to preserve the purity of their descent, and hence Śunaḥśepha, under the name of Devarāta, is recognized as a common ancestor by many of the most eminent Hindūs of the present day.

[209] Professor Weber gives rather a different reading of the text, rendering this passage thus,—" Ajīgarta said to *Viśvāmitra*, 'Come, let us both call him.' He thence considers the subsequent addresses to Śunaḥśepha to be those of opposing persons, who are seeking to bring over a third person to their side. In this reading he is followed by Dr. Muir (*Or. Sans. Texts*, vol. i., p. 357). But we follow Wilson, M. Müller, and Haug.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18.

" Śunaḥśepa answered, 'What is not found even in the hands of a Shûdra, one has seen in thy hand, the knife (to kill thy son). Three hundred cows thou hast preferred to me, O Aṅgiras.'

" Ajīgarta then answered, 'O my dear son, I repent of the bad deed I have committed; I blot out this stain.' One hundred of the cows shall be thine.'*

* *Or* ["May these three hundred cows belong to thee."—*Max Müller.*]

* *Or* ["Let the (three) hundred cows revert to him (who gave them)"—Muir, *Orig. Sans. Texts*, vol. i. p. 357.]

" Śunaḥśepa answered, 'Who once

Let not thine anger, ever, ever burn;
O Rishi! Son! I pray, return, return." [210]

4.

But vain he pleaded, all in vain he cried;
For thus his son—no more his son—replied,

ŚUNAḤŚEPHA

" What base-born Śūdra e'er was seen to stand
Before a son with murderous knife in hand?
Yet, Āngirasa, that was seen in thine;
To me thou hast preferred three hundred kine."

5.

Then rueful Ajīgarta prayed and wept,—
" My dear, dear son, the kine shall not be kept;
Let him who paid them take them back again,
And let my deep repentance cleanse the stain.
Or let a third of all the kine be thine;
I want not wealth. Return, be son of mine!"

6.

ŚUNAḤŚEPHA

Thus thrice he pardon sued, but found it not;
For Śunaḥśepha said,—

[210] In the *Ṛig-veda* the Āṅgirasas are mentioned among those tribes whose fathers occupy the third, or highest, heaven, and are objects of worship (x. 14; 6), being " *divas putrāḥ*," i.e., sons of gods, or of Dyaus (iii. 53; 7. iv. 2; 15).

Agni is also thus addressed,—" Thou, Agni, wast the first Āngiras Ṛishi; a divinity thou wast the auspicious friend of the deities. . . . Thou Agni, the first and chiefest Āngiras, gracest the worship of the gods (i. 31; 1, 2).

According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the Āṅgirasas and Ādityas were both descendants of Prajāpati, and they strove for priority in ascending heaven (*Śat. Brāh.*, xii. 2; 2, 9). (Comp. *Ṛ.-v.*, i. 26; 3 and Note 152.)

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18.

may commit such a sin, may commit the same another time; thou art still not free from the brutality of a Shûdra, for thou hast committed a crime for which no reconciliation exists.'

"No prayers can blot
"Such crime away. Thy soul with brutal stain
Remains defiled; and thou may'st sin again.
Hence! live degraded like the lowest race;
Lost is thy caste, and gone thy priestly place.
Such late repentance Heaven will never own;
For crime like thine atonement is not known."

7.

"'Yes, irreconcileable (is this act,") interrupted Viśvâmitra.

And Viśvāmitra promptly, brief and clear,
Pronounced his changeless sentence, thus severe,—

VIŚVĀMITRA

"Yea; such a crime is ne'er forgiven
By men below or gods in heaven." [211]

[211] All other Sanskrit versions of the legend omit reference to the punishment of Ajīgarta, for which reasons, derived from the growing sacrosanct estimation of Brāhmanhood, have been plausibly conjectured. But this, the most complete, sacred, and authentic of all versions, is unmistakably clear and precise.

And its very precision helps to explain the apparent discrepancy of Manu's statement that Ajīgarta was "not tainted by sin."

Thus—Śunaḥśepha confines his accusation to *third stage* of his father's action, viz., taking the knife to slay his son. But he makes no complaint respecting the sale to Rohita, or the binding to the post; to both of which actions, indeed, he himself was, by pious affection and ritual necessity, a consenting party (see Notes 88, 90 and 115). Viśvāmitra's sentence upon Ajīgarta was pronounced also upon the same sole ground. And this view is, in a measure, confirmed by Ajīgarta's offer to return *a third* of his fees, the other two thirds being rightly his own, for lawful ritual actions.

Manu's statement being of a *legal* nature, and therefore to be construed with legal strictness, must likewise be confined to the matter which he, as a jurist, had under consideration, viz. whether a man in danger of death might "accept food from any person whatsoever" (*Manu*, x. 104). And he instances Ajīgarta's doing so, as a case in point, since his proceedings in relation to the sale of his son—which must have involved the acceptance of food from Rohita—were not construed as a bar to his

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18.

"Viśvâmitra then said, 'Fearful was Suyavasa's son (to look at), when he was standing ready to murder, holding the knife in his hand; do not become his son again; but enter my family as my son.'

8.

Deep sank in every heart the words of doom;
Though true and just, they shed around a gloom
Of human sorrow for the wretched man,
Condemned to live in such eternal ban.

But Viśvāmitra bade his son control
The natural grief that rose within his soul;
Declaring thus the horror of the crime,
Unknown, unheard, in all precedent time.

VIŚVĀMITRA

"Fearful was Suyavasa's son,
Ready to make thy life's blood run;
Standing hereby with murderous knife,
Whetted to take thy bartered life.

"Never be thou his son again;
Son by adoption! mine remain;
Evermore then thy name shall shine,
Head of my priestly-regal line."

9.

Despairing Ajīgarta turned his face;
But all men shrunk away, and left a space—
A solitary space—through which he fled,
Of mankind outcast, thenceforth counted dead.

What words can paint the everlasting grief
Of such a wretched wanderer, past relief!
By children, kindred, friends, and all disowned,
Through all his life his crime is uncondoned.

And e'en in death his misery who can say!
No Śrāddha lights his ever darkening way;

exercise of priestly functions; or, as Manu phrases it, to his "*approaching* to slay his son."

The subsequent acts of Ajīgarta in the performance of these functions—for which alone, as above pointed out, he was condemned—being outside the subject under discussion by Manu, are very properly not referred to by him. And thus the alleged discrepancy between Manu and the legend disappears altogether.

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18.

In worlds beyond his dead forefathers' frown,
And doom him thence to sad migrations down.

Through cursed generations no repose,
No joy, no hope, the blighted being knows;
And Ajīgarta, though a Brāhman seer,
Was not exempt from such a fate severe.[212]

II. ADOPTION OF ŚUNAḤŚEPHA.

10.

"Śunaḥśepa then said, 'O prince, let us know, tell (us) how I as an Aṅgirasaḥ, can enter thy family as thy (adopted) son.'

His natural sire, thus ever outcast, gone,
He stood, God-given, the Royal-Rishi's son;
But paused awhile, as though by doubts enthralled,
And ere his new found sire in form installed
Him to that place, he said,—

ŚUNAḤŚEPHA

"I pray thee, prince,
"Declare the law, that shall the world convince,
How I this peaceful Brahman caste of mine
With thine, O warlike Kshatra, may combine." [213]

[212] The penalties resulting from loss of caste are, according to the views of devout Hindūs, the most horrible that man can incur; and the more so, because they not only affect the individual himself, but his departed ancestors, and the future generations which may spring from him.

Such views are a natural outcome of the doctrines of identical continuous existence of fathers and sons, inculcated in the opening of this legend (see Canto I. *passim*.).

[213] The legend now enters upon the legal binding force of Śunaḥśepha's adoption of Viśvāmitra, a subject of high importance from an Indian point of view; misunderstandings respecting which have, in former days, caused much trouble between the British power and Indian princes. This legend, being still an authority on such matters in Indian courts of law, is of great value.

H. T. Colebrooke, in his authoritative *Digest of Hindū Law*, thus discusses its statements respecting this adoption, from a judicial point of view,—"In what form did Śunaḥśepha become his (Viśvāmitra's) son? . . . He was a son self-given; for a boy having given himself as a son, when the right of his father and mother was annulled by their leaving him to die, or by any other means, the definition of a son self-given, is applicable to him. This brief explanation may suffice; to expatiate would be vain" (Book v., ch. 4; 300).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18.

"Viśvāmitra answered 'Thou shalt be the first born of my sons, and thy children the best. Thou shalt now enter on the possession of my divine heritage. I solemnly instal thee to it.'

11.

VIŚVĀMITRA

The sage replied;—"I first as Kshatra reigned;
"By pious actions Ṛishi priesthood gained;
And since, through sacrifice, God gave me thee,
Thy Brāhman rank included passed to me.

"As Brāhman-Kshatras hence, we both combine,
In one exalted, Heaven-appointed line;
As Ruling Brāhman Guides may it endure,
Through thee, son DEVARĀTA, evermore.*

"Before our new-crowned king I thee install,
My son! my heir! Behold him, people all!
Chief 'mongst my sons, let his descendants be
A deathless, Priestly-regal, family."

12.

ŚUNAḤŚEPHA

"Śunaḥśepa then said, 'When thy sons should agree to thy wish that I should enter thy family, O thou best of the Bharatas! then tell them for the sake of my own happiness to receive me friendly.'

But Śunaḥśepha urged a further plea;
"O best of Bharats! Father thou to me!
If I thy heir-adopted be confest,
Bid these thy sons obey thy high behest;
And more, kind love fraternal bid them show;
What peace without their friendship should I know? [214]

It is noticeable that although the legend calls him Devarāta, i.e., God-given, it plainly implies that his own consent was also necessary.

* Cf. Note 101.

[214] Bharata was the ancestor of Viśvāmitra, and from him the tribe took its name. It was among the largest and most important in ancient India, giving a name to the whole country, which was sometimes called the land of Bhārata, and also to the national epic poem, the *Mahā-bhārata* or Great Bhārata story.

A Vedic hymn represents Viśvāmitra as conducting the Bharatas

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18.

" Viśvâmitra then addressed his sons as follows,—

13.

The sire with pleasure heard the meek request,
And thus his word to all his sons addressed;

VIŚVĀMITRA

" O Madhuchand, Rishab, Renu, Ashtak,[215]
And brothers all! To greet him be not slack;
For since the first-born's rights, by heaven's decree
And mine, are his, think not they yours can be.
Obedient then, his God-given title own,
And follow him, your lawful chief, alone."

" 'Hear ye now *Madhuchandah, Rishabha, Reṇu, Ashṭaka*, and all ye brothers, do not think yourselves (entitled) to the right of primogeniture, which is his (Śunaḥśepa's).

14.

Of Rishi Viśvāmitra's hundred sons
Save Madhuchand, the fifty elder ones
Disdained their sire's adoption, thus proclaimed;
And, scorning fealty to the leader named,
Forsook their clan, and all its laws renounced;
Then Viśvāmitra thus their doom pronounced:

" This Ṛishi Viśvâmitra had a hundred sons, fifty of them were older than Madhuchhandas, and fifty were younger than he. The elder ones were not pleased (with the installation of Śunaḥśepa to the primogeniture).

VIŚVAMITRA

" A lawless taint to all your race will cling,
And tribes of lowest caste from you will spring."

" Viśvâmitra then pronounced against them the curse, 'You shall have the lowest caste for your descendants.

15.

Hence many of the abject rabblement
From lofty Viśvāmitra claim descent;

" Therefore are many of the most degraded classes of

across the Beas and Sutlej rivers, and calls the tribe the " war-loving troop," the " war-loving Bharatas " (*Ṛig-veda*, iii. 33).

[215] The first eleven hymns of the *Ṛig-veda* contain the Soma rituals of Viśvāmitra's family. Ten of them are attributed to *Madhuchhandas*, and the eleventh to his son Jeṭṛi, otherwise Ajyeti. His name occurs in the list of *Gotras*, or clans, descended from Viśvāmitra. So do the names of *Ashṭaka* and *Reṇu*. *Ṛishabha's* name occurs as Ṛishi of the Hymns (*Ṛig-veda*, iii. 13 and 14).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18.

men, the rabble for the most part, such as the *Andhras Puṇḍras, Śabaras, Pulindas*, and *Mūtibas*, descendants of Viśvâmitra.

" But Madhuchhandas, with the fifty younger sons, said, 'What our father approves of, by that we abide; we all accord to thee (Śunaḥśepa)

E'en Āndhras, Pundras, Śabaras, outcasts all
With Pulinds, Mutibs, him ancestor call.[216]

For lawless deeds to degradation tend,
And evil sons from evil sires descend;
And thus may castes of highest rank and place
Through crime produce a vile, degraded race.[217]

16.

But Madhuchand with all the younger cried,
" Our father's will is law; in that we bide.
Thou, Śunaḥśepha, first in rank shalt be,
And we will all, obedient, follow thee."

[216] Another translation calls these tribes " border tribes." " They belong principally to the South of India. . . . The *Āndhras* were the inhabitants of the province which was afterwards denominated Telingáná. The *Puṇḍras* are supposed to have occupied the Western Provinces of Bengal. The *Shabaras* are placed by Ptolemy near the (mouths of) the Ganges; and the *Pulindas* . . . along the banks of the Narmadā, to the frontiers of Larice, but in the Indian literature they occur in different positions, from the Indus to the South." They entered into alliances with Hindū princes and were treated with friendship and distinction. In the *Harivaṃśa* (lix. 3274) " even the wild *Shabaras, Barbaras* and *Pulindas* are represented as praising Áryá (the wife of Shiva)" (Dr. John Wilson, *On Caste*, vol. i. pp. 155 and 420).

The *Āndhras* are mentioned by Manu among the inferior castes, occupied in hunting animals (x. 48), and obliged to live outside the village or town (x. 36). The *Pulindas* were mountaineers or foresters, and the term is applied to any forest tribe, more particularly those in the Vindhya mountains (H. H. Wilson, *Works*, vol. iii., p. 204, note). It is difficult to trace the *Mūṭibas*.

[217] Colebrooke was of opinion that the caste system was the natural consequence of character (*Life*, by his son, p. 98). This opinion is sustained by the degradation of Viśvāmitra's sons; and by numerous passages from every part of the ancient writings of India, compiled by Dr. John Muir. Among others, the *Mahābhārata*, after describing the Castes by their colour—Brāhmans white, Kshatriyas red, Vaiśyas yellow, and Śūdras black, adds: " There is no distinction of Castes; this whole world having been at first created by Brahma entirely Brahmanic, it became separated into Castes in consequence of words." (*Śāntiparva*, 6930 sqq.). The *Vāyu Purāṇa* (vii., 30, 62) says: " Tendency or fate is itself the result of works." " In the Satya age, there were no castes, orders, varieties of condition, or mixtures of caste " (*Orig. Sans. Texts*, vol. i., pp. 89, 91, 140).

Even in Manu, where caste distinctions are most elaborately laid down, we find (xii. 43) a classification of mankind according to moral qualities, in which caste distinctions are not observed.

See also, Dr. Rajendralal Mitra, " On the Yavanas," *As. Soc. Journ.*, 1874 (vol. xliii., p. 254, etc.).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18.

This answer filled the sage with high delight,
For they, eschewing evil, chose the right;
Wherefore the sire these righteous children blest,
And verse prophetic thus to them addrest.

VIŚVĀMITRA

I. "Numerous offspring, wealthy herds in store,
Be they yours, my sons, for evermore;
Wealth in children thus on me ye pour.

II. "Gāthi's sons! blest children of our head,[218]
Ye shall thrive, by Devarāta led;
He will guide you paths of truth to tread;

III. "Follow him, God-given your master-man;
He, as head of all the Kuśik clan,
Sacred lore will pass from man to man.

The sons who thus with Devarāta stood
Were blest with plenteous wealth, and every good;

the first rank, and we will come after thee.!'

"Viśvâmitra, delighted (at this answer) then praised these sons with the following verses,—

"Ye, my sons, will have abundance of cattle and children, for you have made me rich in children by consenting to my request.

"'Ye sons of Gāthi, blessed with children, you all will be successful when headed by Devarâta; he will (always) lead you on the path of truth.

"'This Devarâta is your master-(man); follow him, ye Kuśikas! He will exercise the paternal rights over you as his heritage from me, and take possession of the sacred knowledge that we have.'

"All the true sons of Viśvâmatra, the grandsons of Gāthi, who forthwith stood with Devarâta, were blessed with wealth for their own welfare and renown.

"Devarâta is called the Ṛishi who entered on two heritages, the royal dignity of Jahnu's house, and the divine knowledge of Gāthi's stem.

This is the story of Śunaḥśepa.

[218] Gāthi, or Gādhi, the father of Viśvāmitra, is said by the *Vishṇu Purāna* (iv. 7) to have been an incarnation of Vishṇu. The Kuśikas, or Kauśikas, were the principal family of Viśvāmitra's descendants. "Indra behaved as dear to the Kuśikas when Viśvāmitra guided Sudās in the sacrifice. . . . Drink ye the Soma-juice with the gods, ye wise Ṛishis, sons of Kuśika, leaders of men" (*Ṛig.-veda*, iii.; 53; 9, 10).

Ait. Brāh., vii. 3; 18.

And India holds in honour and renown
These righteous children through the ages down.

17.

And Devarāta lives from age to age,
As Rishi of the double heritage,
Who wore the glorious dual diadem
Of regal state, though born of Jahnu's stem,
And wisdom's far excelling crown divine,
Although adopted heir of Gāthi's line.[219]

18. EPODE

[Here ends the tale, the Epos made for kings,
Whose inner wisdom peace and glory brings,
And may it foster now Ind's double crown,
Of sacred wisdom, Kshattriya renown;—
A crown of power, with righteousness allied,
And show old Ind anew, "Heaven's Light our Guide."]

[219] "This last verse, which is also attributed to Viśvâmitra, ought to be taken as a recapitulation of the whole story. *Jahnu* is one of the ancestors of Viśvâmitra belonging to the Lunar dynasty; Gāthin is considered as Viśvâmitra's father. The commentator gives Jahnu as a Ṛishi of the family of Ajîgarta, which seems better to agree with the Vedic story" (Max Müller, *Hist. Sans. Lit.*, pp. 418–9).

There is some confusion in the genealogical statements—possibly arising from Viśvāmitra being considered to have adopted Śunaḥśepha's ancestors as well as his descendants, but there can be no doubt that the idea intended to be conveyed is, that the Brāhman family of Śunaḥśepha and the Royal family of Viśvāmitra interchanged special privileges, and coalesced as one Royal race of Priests.

Epilogue

PART I. AFTER THE RECITAL

1.

Close of the Recital.

THE CHANTERS CEASE; the glorious tale is told
At golden eve they rise from seats of gold,

Rewards to the Reciters.

The "draught of kings" before the king to bear; [220]

They share the Royal Cup.

But he, upon his throne, invites them there,
That regal cup to share with him as friends;
And so in joy the coronation ends;
While glad congratulations round him rise,
That he has chosen righteous friends and wise.

Become the King's chief priests and peers.

He therefore bids them keep their seats of state,
One chief, the other peer associate,

Receive profuse wealth.

Advancing both to rank and power,
With gifts profuse, and golden dower;
Since all the wealth that all the lands of India hold
Could scarce requite the tale of wisdom they had told.[221]

[220] A special spirituous liquor was prepared to form this draught The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (viii. 8) says:—

"Now he gives into his hand a goblet of spirituous liquor, under the recital of a verse. . . . After having put the spirituous liquor in his hand, the priest repeats a propitiatory mantra. . . . After having drunk it, he should think the giver (the priest) of the goblet to be his friend, and give him the remainder of the liquor. This is the characteristic of a friend."

[221] According to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the official reward of "a thousand cows to the teller of the story, and a hundred to him who makes the responses required, and to each of them the gold-embroidered carpet on which he was sitting; to the Hotar besides, a silver decked carriage drawn by mules, was mentioned only as *a minimum fee*.

For another passage (viii. 3, 20) says that the amount of the reward is unlimited, and not restricted to this, since a king is unlimited in wealth, and thus will obtain unlimited benefit to himself. And in two succeeding

2.

Impressions of the Legend on the audience.

Changed is the scene; but still the vivid song
A pictured memory lived for ages long;
Ind shared the sonless Hariśchand's distress;
With him she learned the law of righteousness;
She saw the wandering prince; his heavenly guide,
She saw, vicarious bound, the seer, who cried
From noon, through night, to dawn, Ind's gods to claim;
And proved them one, though called by many a name:—
The spheres of heaven, high Indra's car of sheen,
Th' eternal dawn, man's sundered bonds, were seen;
And Ajīgarta's dire disgrace
Showed e'en a Rishi losing place;
Guilt's doom, the martyr's double crown that ne'er should fade;
Such scenes, such truths, and more, th' instructive tale pourtrayed.

chapters examples of much greater liberality are recorded, the last being of a prince, who: "From saying, 'I give thee a hundred only, I give thee a hundred,' he got tired; then he said, 'I give thee a thousand,' and stopped often in order to breathe, for there were too many thousands to be given."

The principal reciter (the Hotar) became the king's *Purohita*, or family priest, and the Adhvaryu remained his associate. These positions corresponded to those occupied respectively by Visvāmitra and Śunaḥśepha (Devarāta) in the Legend.

It is a curious coincidence that the custom of rewarding officials by gifts of the coronation furniture has existed in England from times so remote that its origin is untraceable. Yet such official claims are always acknowledged. Among others, the Dean and Chapter of Westminster—whose office (see Note 21 *ante*) corresponds, in a measure, to that of these reciters—claim as their fee for instructing the king in the coronation ceremonies, among other things, "the royal habits put off in the church, the several oblations, furniture of the church, canopy, staves, bells, and the *cloth on which their Majesties walk from the west door of the church*." It is not impossible that these, and many other curious customs, may be survivals from the remote historical period which preceded the separation of Āryans into Eastern and Western.

PART II. THE LEGEND'S RELATION TO MODERN INDIA

3.

Survival of the spirit of the Legend in Laws and Customs.

Its spirit lives! In "Manu's code" to-day
'Tis statute law.—Its thought, modes, customs sway
Ind's length and breadth.—Her princes proudly trace

Modern Indian princes claim descent from Hariśchandra's family.

Their lineage back to Hariśchandra's race;[222]

Leading Brahmans claim descent from Devarāta-Śunaḥśepha.

Still numerous lofty Brāhman families claim,
Amongst their fathers, Devarāta's name;[223]

Influence of ancient traditions in India.

Old legends tell of Yudhishthira's throne,
When war, oppression, discord were unknown;
Of Rāma's reign beloved, from tide to tide;
Of Jarāsandh, and many a king beside;

[222] No race of men are more proud of ancestry than the chiefs of the ruling dynasties of India. The records of their genealogies are maintained with scrupulous care, more particularly in the states of Rājputāna, by a body of hereditary bards, who are endowed with lands and pensions for the special purpose.

In Forbes' *Rās Mālā* (p. 262, etc.) there is an account of their periodical tours through the country (corresponding to our "herald's visitations") for the purpose of publicly reading from the "Wye—as the book of records kept by themselves and their fathers is called—and of entering therein further records of family events.

As to the authenticity of the claims of living princes to ancient descent, Prof. H. H. Wilson says that the *Vishnu Purāṇa* contains all that the Hindus have of their ancient history; and although many of the accounts of occurrences may be fabulous, that of the succession of persons is a genuine chronicle, characterized by inartificial simplicity and consistency.

The descent of the present rulers of Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, and many others, from the ancient solar dynasties, and, therefore, through Hariśchandra, is undoubted all over India.

Jarāsandha was founder of the Pāṇḍu dynasty of Magadha (Behar), whose capital was the ancient Rājagriha. He was contemporary with Yudhishthir of the Mahābhārata.

[223] "The Brāhmans," says Max Müller, "were proud of their ancestors, and preserved their memory with the most scrupulous care. . . . A Brāhman . . . is obliged by law to know to which of the forty-nine *Gotras* his family belongs" (*Hist. Sans. Lit.*, pp. 378, 380).

The late Dr. Rajendralal Mitra, C.I.E., President of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, says: "The writer of this note claims to be a descendant of this Devarát, and in common with a large number of men in different parts of India, at every solemn ceremony is required, by the Śástras and the custom of his ancestors, to describe himself as belonging to the tribe (*Gotra*) of Viśvámitra, and of the family (*Pravara*) of Devarát; he is not prepared, therefore, to say that Śunaḥśepha is purely a mythical personage" (*Indo-Aryans*, vol. ii., p. 75).

And India's loving memory clings
Still round her ancient bards and kings:[224]
Fresh, ever fresh, to Indian hearts, the cherished lines,
Where many a regal name revered, immortal shines.

4.

The associations of this story,—

its interpretation being derived exclusively from Indian authorities, will assure its welcome in India.

And this old tale, retold, they'll hold as dear,
Since those who made Ind one in mind are here
Relumed—let Pandits mark!—by lights their own
From sacred Vedic hymns, laws, rites, alone,[225]
Which long were clouded. Whence its ritual themes
Were deemed mere banquet vaunts, and idle dreams.

Parallel of its present elucidation with certain contemporary physical discoveries.

But now, as melt the clouds, their hidden truth
Beams bright and clear, as erst in India's youth.

[224] "Much as the Homeric poems are still admired, no one, in any part of the world, now dreams of placing the slightest faith in their legends, so as to connect them with religious opinions and practices. In India a complete contrast in this respect may be observed. The myths of the Indian Epics are still closely interwoven with *present* faith" (Sir Mon. Williams, *Indian Wisdom*, p. 433).

[225] In the present work sedulous care has been taken to exclude all modern ideas, phrases, and forms of expression—whether Indian or other—which might not fairly be presumed to be familiar to the enlightened priests and Rishis who recited the story, during the ages when its true inner meaning was understood and appreciated.

With this view, an exact literal English translation, both of the legend and the hymns, is given in the margin—and the paraphrase is everywhere illustrated by references to original Sanskrit works, belonging as nearly as possible to the periods before Vedic belief and ritual were obscured.

It will be observed, in many instances, that while these passages throw light on some obscurities of the legend, the legend, in its turn, throws light upon their meaning, which would be undiscoverable, but for connection with this legend.

Its glorious light on ancient traditions.

Thus cosmic forces now are late revealed,
Thus dark mines long-hid powers and light now yield;
And Ind's hid wisdom too grows bright,
A Koh-i-nūr! A "Mount of Light!"
Reset within the crown of ancient Hariśchand,
From Svarga beaming light immortal through the land.[226]

PART III. ITS RELATION TO THE BRITISH RĀJ

5.

India's affection to be won by respect for her ancient traditions.

Lo! as it beams, renascent India owns
The British Rāj established o'er her thrones.
Therefore—let Britain mark!—'tis hers to earn
Ind's love—by care her ingrained thoughts to learn.

Permanence of the British Rāj.

Her opened heart will then her Kaisar place
Firm where he reigns in those of British race,

Glorious hopes for India therefrom.

And Britain's peaceful sway, free chosen, fixed
By Indian laws, with British justly mixed,
May bring again her golden days of prime,[227]
And add new splendours to her crown sublime.
Like Rāma's throne, from sea to sea,
His long posterity's may be;
Like Hariśchandra loved, in radiance, they may reign,
Like him, with all his people, heights celestial gain.[228]

[226] It is a popular belief, still current in India, that the City of Hariśchandra, in the Svarga, or heaven, of Indra, is yet sometimes visible among the glorious clouds of sunset.

[227] "We will that generally in framing and administering the law, due regard must be paid to the ancient usage, and customs of India" (from the Royal Proclamation of Queen Victoria, 1 November, 1858, sometimes called "*India's Magna Charta*").

[228] According to ancient traditions and popular belief, Rāma ruled the whole country. In the tables of genealogy, Hariśchandra bears the title "King of India." It is also a popular tradition that he and all his people

6.

Anglo-Sanskrit re-union.

One British-Indian throne! O glorious dream!
'Tis sure no vision! Sure no baseless dream!
That it may Anglo-Sanskrit peoples weld,
As brethren, sundered since the world's grey eld.

Common origin of the Āryan peoples.

Twain Āryans! we from common parents sprung,
Our infant nations lisped a kindred tongue.[229]

Prospective benefits to each other,

And, though through ages far asunder tost,
With memory of our ancient kinship lost,
But now revived; let but the noblest, best,
Both of the dreamy East and active West
In trust unite, each blessing each,
What heights of glory we may reach!

And to mankind.

Let new-world science join Ind's Vedism pure, to trace
"HEAVEN'S LIGHT OUR GUIDE," we'll lead the world-wide human race.[230]

were translated to the heaven of Indra (Svarga), for his performance of the coronation rites, described in this Legend (see Note 94).

The Mahābhārata (*Sabhā-Parva*, 1,204) says: "Yudhishthira ruled his Rāj with great justice, protected his subjects as he would his own sons. . . . Every subject of the Rāja was pious, there were no liars, no thieves, and no swindlers, and there were no droughts, no floods, no locusts, and no parrots to eat the grain. The neighbouring Rājas, despairing of conquering Yudhishthira, were very desirous of securing his friendship."

[229] "There was a time when the ancestors of Kelt, Teuton (to both of which the modern British race mainly belongs), Slav, Latin, Greek, Iranian, and Indian, lived together as one nationality.

"To have discovered this important fact of primitive Aryan unity, through investigations of language, common traditions, and coincidences of early religious beliefs and social institutions, is one of the greatest triumphs of modern research.

"At the first, and great, Āryan separation Iranians and Indians appear to have remained together, and they afterwards migrated separately to Persia and the Panjāb. (Cf. Notes 165, 166 *inf.*) From the Panjāb, they spread over India, where from them sprang the leading races of the present day.

"The others, impelled by a great and mysterious Law of Progress, have continuously pushed forward to the West; and peopled Western Asia and Southern Europe. In our own day the same Āryan race has peopled America, and is fast covering Australasia and many parts of Africa."

[230] The benefits which have already accrued, and those which may be

7.

Beneficence of the British Rāj will ensure its continuance for all time.

Such blessings, Britain, may thy rule convey!
And so thy Rāj will never pass away;
Until the Lord of All, the King of Kings,
Returns with longed-for healing in His wings.
Then India's Krita age once more will come,
And Moslem's, Christian's, Jew's, Millennium;

The Desire of the World.

The world's desire shall be fulfilled; blest peace
Shall reign for evermore, and evil cease;
The kings of earth, with joy, before His throne,
Will cast their jewels down to be His own,
And in th'Anointed's diadem,
Not least, will be the glittering gem,
Victoria wore the first, and passed through ages down,
A righteous, bright, united, Anglo-Sanskrit Crown.

---

expected in the future, from India are thus strikingly expressed by Sir Henry S. Maine:—

"India has given to the world comparative philology and comparative mythology; it may yet give us a new not less valuable than the sciences of language and folk-lore. I hesitate to call it comparative jurisprudence, because, if it ever exists, its area will be much wider than the field of law.

"For India not only contains an Āryan language older than any other descendant of the common mother tongue, and a variety of names of natural objects less perfectly crystallized than elsewhere into fabulous personages, but it includes a whole world of Āryan institutions, Āryan customs, Āryan laws, Āryan ideas, Āryan beliefs, in a far earlier stage of growth and development than any which survive beyond its borders.

"There are undoubtedly in it the materials for a new science, possibly including many branches. To create it, indeed to give it more than a beginning, will require many volumes to be written, and many workers to lend their aid" (*Rede Lecture*, 1875).



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