

tation as no real reputation, but such as may be that of the unrighteous,—pain and chaff; for it may be acquired by crafty and unworthy persons, and by whatever further effort it is acquired it is worthless and a source of pain.*

TABLET XI.

Thus says the beloved of the Gods, King Priyadasi: There is no gift like the gift of virtue, whether it be the praise of virtue, the apportionment of virtue, or relationship of virtue. This (gift) is the cherishing of slaves and dependants, pious devotion to mother and father, generous gifts to friends and kinsmen, Brahmanas and Sramanas.

Thus far is Wilson's version; the remainder is given from Burnouf.

Respect for the life of creatures is good; this is what ought to be said by a father, by a son, by a brother, by a friend, by an acquaintance, by a relation, and even by mere neighbours: this is well; this is to be done. He who acts thus is honoured in this world, and in the other world infinite merit results from this gift of the Law.

Burnouf gives "gift of the law," where in Wilson we have "gift of virtue;"† the original word being *dharma dana*, which in the Sankhya Karika means money given to pious people who promote *dharma*. The commentator of the Karika explains "*dana*, gift, as when a person assists holy men by donations of a dwelling, of herbs, of a staff, etc.," and in requital receives knowledge leading to liberation.‡

TABLET XII.

Priyadasi, the beloved of the Gods, honours all forms of religious

* Burnouf gives the last sentence as "it is difficult to work for the *hereafter* (that is the future state), whether in high or in low station; unless by supreme heroism a man abandons all (becomes an ascetic), and that is difficult for a man in high station."—Appendix to Lotus, p. 659.

† The word *dharma* might mean 'the law;' but as it is explained in the Edict itself it is moral merit, or goodness.

‡ Sankhya Karika Bhashya, p. 156.

belief, whether professed by ascetics or by householders, both by giving alms and by other modes of showing respect. But the beloved of the Gods does not esteem alms and marks of respect so highly as the increase of that which is the essence of renown. Now the increase of that which is essential for all forms of belief is of many kinds, but nevertheless the base of it is, for each of them, praise in words. Further, a man must honour his own faith without blaming that of another, and thus will but little that is wrong occur. There are even circumstances under which the faith of others should be honoured, and in acting thus, according to circumstances, a man increases his own faith and injures that of others. He who acts differently diminishes his own faith and injures that of others; he, whoever he may be, who honours his own faith and blames that of others out of devotion to his own, and says moreover, Let us make our faith conspicuous; the man, I say, who acts thus merely injures the faith he holds: concord alone therefore is desirable. Further, let men listen to each law and follow it with submission, for such is the desire of the King, beloved of the Gods. Further, may men of all faiths abound in knowledge and prosper in virtue! And those who have faith in this or that religion should repeat this:—The King, beloved of the Gods, does not value alms or marks of respect so much as the increase of that which is the essence of renown and the multiplication of all beliefs. To this end great ministers of law, and superintendents of women, . . . and other officers are appointed, and the fruit of this institution will be the speedy increase of all religions, as well as the illumination of the law.*

The above interpretation is given wholly from Burnouf, who acknowledges the great assistance he derives from Wilson's rendering of *pashanda*; the varieties of religion included under that word being the chief subject of the Edict, which had no meaning so long as *pashanda* was understood to mean heretic.

This twelfth Edict is the most remarkable of the whole series, and it is therefore unfortunate that it is only found at Girnār, and that no second copy existsw herewith the

* Appendix, x. 761.

first might be collated. Some expressions remain, in consequence, undetermined, but the general bearing is the same as that of the seventh Tablet, which is repeated both at Dhauli and at Kapur di Giri: it awards respect to the followers of all *pashandas* (religious sects), and desires the followers of *dharma* (the law) to be respectful towards those with whom they differ. In the twelfth Tablet it is further stated that neither *dana*, gifts, nor *pūja*, worship, can be compared in value with *the increase of that which is essential*: this being apparently analogous to the Brahmanical doctrine of the Code, where, so soon as a devotee has become "passion-subdued," and has learned to fix his mind upon "the spirit," he is exempt from "ceremonial acts."* A passage to the same effect occurs in the commentary on the Sankhya Karika, where, after alluding to the twenty-five principles of Kapila, as the knowledge which destroys pain, it is added, "He who knows the twenty-five principles, whatever order of life he may have entered, and whether he wear braided hair, a top-knot only, or be shaven, he is liberated: of this there is no doubt."†

The thirteenth Tablet is too imperfect to admit of a continuous translation, but it is of importance from its mention of four or five Greek Kings, who are supposed to be Antiochus II. (who died B.C. 247), Ptolemy II. (who reigned in Egypt till B.C. 246), Antigonus Gonatas (who reigned in Macedonia till B.C. 239), and Magas of Cyrene (whose date is quite unmanageable, for he died B.C. 258, previous therefore to the era awarded to the Edicts).‡ At Kapur di Giri there is also a name supposed to be that of Alexander the

* Code, vi. 49, 54, 95.

† Lassen, vol. ii. p. 242.

‡ Sankhya Karika. See *ante*, Book I. Ch. IX.

Great ; the only explanation being that communication was at that time but slow between Eastern and Western Asia, and that in the careless and magnificent Eastern fashion, these names, having formerly appeared in State documents, were again inserted to add dignity to the list, although half a century had elapsed since any token had been given of their bearers still having a place among the living.*

The fourteenth Tablet is in the form of a conclusion, stating that, by command of this King, the text of the Law has been given in a short form, in a medium form, and in a developed form, and if it contains repetitions, it is owing to the importance of the thing repeated, and if it contains errors, it is owing to the mistakes of the engraver.

We have now before us the first series of those wonderful inscriptions, which, startling as volcanic irruptions, intrude abruptly into the history of Ancient India, and show no very close alliance either with the early Brahmanical systems or with the Buddhism afterwards developed. The *dharma* (law, or virtue,) which they inculcate is not at variance with the *dharma* of Brahmanical books ; but to teach this in the vernacular is an innovation : for a *King* to teach or exhort his subjects is also new ; and to teach all men, irrespective of caste, is a still more daring innovation. It is evident that the King, by whom these Edicts were promulgated, was no longer a slave to Brahmanical restrictions ; but neither, on the other hand, had he adopted the modes of reverence peculiar to the Buddhist books. He (or the religion which he represents) was apparently in a transition state,—emancipated from old Brahmanism, but not arrived at developed Buddhism.

* Edwin Norris, J. R. A. S., vol. xii.

The King issues his Edicts in the twelfth and fourteenth years of his reign, and begins by saying, that formerly hundreds of thousands of animals were slaughtered daily for his soup-kitchen, but that he had discontinued these convivial meetings because he had observed many faults in such assemblies. Now supposing Piyadasi to be another name for Asoka, this is explained by the 'Mahawanso,' in which history we read that, during the first ten years of his reign, Asoka used to regale sixty thousand Brahmans daily in the court of his palace, but that, being disgusted "with the despicable proceedings of these persons," which he witnessed from his "upper pavilion," he desired his ministers to bestow alms with greater discrimination. He then caused "ministers of all religions separately" to be brought to him, and having seated them "he discussed their tenets,"* and then, as we infer from the Edicts, gave commands that all, according to their views, should be examples of virtue, and should dwell unmolested, and receive respect within the limits of his dominion.

The Mahawanso further informs us that at a later period, when "enjoying the breezes in his upstairs pavilion," Asoka observed a *Sramana* (Buddhist ascetic) passing the palace square; and being delighted with his sanctified deportment, he caused him to be called in, and desired him to take whichever seat best suited him: the King was startled by the *Sramana's* sitting at once upon the throne; but he nevertheless listened with reverence to his discourse, and became, in consequence, a devout convert "to the religion of the vanquisher." At this era we may suppose his good works to have commenced.

* Mahawanso, ch. v.

Tablet I. protects life. II. commands supplies of vegetable food for man and beast. III. institutes quinquennial expiations. IV. makes proclamation of *dharma* by the beat of the drum. V. institutes ministers of morality, *dharma mahamatra*. VI. institutes informers on morals, to whom the King promises audience at all hours. VII. desires the new officers not to molest pious ascetics of other persuasions. The four next Tablets touch chiefly upon the King's personal conduct. In VIII. he gives up hunting and other amusements. In IX. he gives up all festivals except *dharma*. In X. he gives up all ambition, except as touching *dharma*. In XI. he promises gifts to *dharma*, but in XII. he says, that gifts are worth less than concord, and that even religious persons who do not receive *dharma* must not be molested.

. At Dhauli, in Cuttack (south of Calcutta), there are two additional Edicts, detached from the general series ; they also bear the name of Piyadasi, but belong apparently to a later stage of Buddhist progress. The first is addressed to the *Mahamatra*, or great ministers, of Tosali, a town in Cuttack : it declares that the Stupa of commandment prepared for the benefit of thousands of living creatures is offered as a gift, in the same manner as a *bouquet* of flowers is presented to a person of importance. Good men, Piyadasi says, are his sons, and for his sons he desires every advantage, not only here but hereafter ; therefore this Stupa has been erected to instruct the whole province submitted to his rule, and upon it the moral law is inscribed, which forbids murder, violence, and idleness ; "And this Edict must be read in the month called *Nakchatra Tichya*, and thus promote the interest of the *Sangha* (Assembly) until

the end of time.”* The *Dharma-matra*, or ministers, and the *prince royal of Ougein* are then exhorted to hold quinquennial confessions, but during their performance the people must not abandon their customary trades and occupations.

The second of these detached Edicts is less readable than even the first, but M. Burnouf distinctly makes out the following :—“The Stupa of Dhauri will secure to me bliss hereafter till the end of time ;” and, let this “Stupa of commandment be read every four months by the *Sangha* ; in the interval it may be read by individuals, and thus will the good of the Assembly be secured till the end of time.”

We will now turn to the corresponding series of Edicts inscribed upon the five columns at Delhi, Allahabad, Bakra, Mathiah, and Radhiah, which profess to be issued in the twenty-seventh year of Piyadasi's reign ; each column has four tablets, facing the four points of the compass : in the north tablet he proclaims that his government shall be guided by the law, which is compassion, alms, truth, and purity, which he practises ; but he interrupts himself with the remark, that it is easier to record one's good actions than one's sins, for “violence, cruelty, pride, envy, etc. will not raise a voice against themselves.” The western tablet institutes officers called *Rajaka*, who are to soften the rigours of justice, and be as careful of the people as a nurse is of a child : the meaning is not fully made out, but the King appears no longer to require the protection of his army, the *Rajaka* guarding him instead : the tablet concludes with granting three days' reprieve to criminals condemned to death, for the very singular reason, that by the virtue of

* Burnouf, Lotus of Good Law, Appendix x., p. 655.

fasts they may be enabled to earn bliss in a future state. The southern tablet contains an enumeration of the animals whom Piyadasi has saved from slaughter, and forbids the death of any animal during the three *four-monthly periods*, and states in conclusion: "Furthermore, in the twenty-seventh year of my reign, this present time, twenty-five prisoners are set at liberty." The eastern tablet is very doubtful; Prinsep thought it repented of the Edict issued in the twelfth year, but this reading requires confirmation.

Circling round the column at Delhi, there is another inscription, unknown to either of the other columns; it states that Piyadasi has planted banyan-trees for shade, and mango-trees for fruit, and has dug wells along the road, and that former kings had conferred similar enjoyments upon mankind; and further, he hopes that his good works, or "attachment to law," will incite those who follow him to do the same, and with this view "Let stone pillars be prepared, and let this Edict of *dharma* be engraven thereon, that it may endure unto remote ages."

Since the death of Mr. James Prinsep, yet another inscription has been discovered with the name of Piyadasi; it is not written on a pillar, but on a block of granite, not more than two and a half feet square by one and a half in depth, and this was discovered at a place called Byrath, six miles from Bhabra, and on the route to Jaypur: the dialect made use of is the ancient *Magadhi*, which was doubtless the language of the capital and the government at that period. A translation was attempted in Calcutta in 1840, by which it appeared to be another Edict issued by the King Piyadasi, but given on this occasion on the authority of Buddha; so much of this translation was

however philologically improbable, that Professor Wilson waited for verifications of the original before admitting it as evidence. In 1853 a translation by M. Burnouf was published amongst his posthumous papers, which was much less strange than that made in Calcutta ; but as it did not place the inscription altogether in keeping, either with the Piyadasi of the former Edicts or with the Asoka of Buddhist history, a new translation by Professor Wilson, made from a corrected transcript, is particularly welcome. These new readings differ on several points from those of Burnouf, and although based entirely upon grammatical considerations, without any reference to historical probability, they virtually remove all discrepancies.

TRANSLATION OF THE BHABRA INSCRIPTION,
BY PROFESSOR WILSON.

Piyadasi, the King, to the venerable Assembly of Māgadha, commands the infliction of little pain and indulgence to animals.

It is verily known, I proclaim, to what extent my respect and favour (are placed) in Buddha, and in the Law, and in the Assembly.

Whatsoever (words) have been spoken by the divine Buddha, they have all been well said, and in them verily I declare that capability of proof is to be discerned ; so that the pure law (which they teach) will be of long duration, as far as I am worthy (of being obeyed).

For these I declare are the precepts of the Law of the principal discipline (Vinaya), having overcome the oppressions of the Aryas and future perils, (and refuted) the songs of the Munis, the Sutras of the Munis, (the practices) of inferior ascetics, the censure of a light world, and (all) false doctrines.

These things, as declared by the divine Buddha, I proclaim, and I desire them to be regarded as the precepts of the Law.

And that as many as there may be, male and female mendicants, may hear and observe them, as well also as male and female followers (of the laity).

These things I affirm, and have caused this to be written (to make known to you) that such will be my intention.

Thus corrected the Bhabra inscription becomes a consistent portion of the long series of Edicts previously inscribed by Piyadasi. At the commencement the King honours Dharma, the Law; at a later period he respects the Sangha, or Assembly; and here, in the maturity of his faith, he reverences Buddha, the Law, and the Assembly.





CHAPTER IV.

"What noble vanities, what moral flights, . . .
Glittering through their romantic wisdom's page,
Make us at once despise them and admire:
Fable is flat to these high-season'd sires."—YOUNG.

THE inscriptions upon rocks and pillars, being now fully established as the work of a Buddhist King, stand out before us as an exhibition of what Buddhism was subsequent to Alexander the Great, but coeval with the Greek rule of Bactria. The Allahabad pillar bears a wreath of Græco-Assyrian lotus and honeysuckle;* the form of letter used in the inscriptions is identical with that of the Greek coin legends, and the name of Antiochus, the "Yona-rajah," is given more than once distinctly written. Piyadasi's Edicts serve therefore as a fixed buttress on which to hang the long loose threads of Buddhist literature, connecting them on one side with the dim origin of Buddhism, and on the

* See vignette at the close of Book II. Chap. I.

other side with the phenomena which Buddhism exhibits in modern times. Some of the interpretations now proposed may possibly be swept away by the next critical battery, for our best authorities put forward their suggestions "subject to very great reservation:" where Wilson finds Piya-dasi speaking of "Sutras and Agamas," Burnouf makes him "wish much knowledge and virtue;" where Lassen and Prinsep say, "Let the Rajaka *abide around the banyan-trees*," Burnouf gives, "Let the Rajaka (royal officers) act *without uneasiness or fear*;" and many similar discrepancies might be cited. But although critics differ in the rendering of particular phrases, they are all agreed as to the general import of the Inscriptions, and accept them as a record of the religion prevailing in the chief kingdom of India about the middle of the third century before Christ, or from B.C. 247 to 220. More earnest and honest than modern Buddhists, they are too independent of the Divine Spirit for contemporary Brahmans; and again, whilst too liberal and philanthropic for Brahmanism of any age, they are too free from affectation and hyperbole for Buddhists of even two centuries later. No Buddhist literature appears to have been written previous to the Inscriptions; but it is this doubtful and comparatively recent literature which alone pretends to give the history of Sakya-muni, who founded Buddhism, and of the Kings by whom he was cherished and protected. Written as it is by enthusiasts, some two or three centuries after the events recorded, we must receive it with considerable reserve, remembering that but little of it has, as yet, received that full philological criticism which was contemplated by the enlightened and lamented M. Burnouf; much however he did perform, and

we thus learn that the Northern Books may be separated generally into three or four classes, as:—1. Simple Sutras, written in prose, which are imagined to give the words of Buddha, as remembered by his disciples and preserved by oral teaching, and in which he appears as a human teacher with a human audience; 2. Developed Sutras, in which Buddha claims to be heaven-descended, and tells long stories of his former births in previous ages of the universe,—his audience chiefly composed of men who had become flying Bodhisattavas through the force of Buddhism. These *vaipulya*, or developed Sutras, are written either in verse, or in prose mixed with verse, in a barbarous dialect, which confuses Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit forms of grammar: this, amongst other reasons, leads M. Burnouf to believe that some of them were composed or recomposed in Kashmere or the Punjab, where Buddhism flourished about the Christian era, and where Sanskrit was a foreign tongue. The third class contains the transcendental doctrines, which are Brahmanical metaphysics, carried to an extreme; and the fourth, which is not very strictly divided from the third, is made up of transcendental metaphysics mingled with Siva practices; but this corruption was ultimately rejected by respectable Buddhists in the north, and never extended to Ceylon.

The Ceylon books are also divided into Simple Sutras, Developed Sutras, and Metaphysics; but the writings now most read in Ceylon are commentaries on these earlier works, written A.D. 400, by a learned Buddhist named Buddhaghoso, from the Ganges; and a compendium also of his composition; to which books may be added a history of Ceylon, called the 'Mahawanso,' composed by a native

of Ceylon named Mahanamo, out of the materials which Buddhaghoso had recently revised. The Mahawanso was finished A.D. 490. Another most popular religious work in Ceylon is the 'Milinda Prasna,' recording conversations between a King and a Buddhist sage, or hierarch, who lived in northern India during the first century A.D.; and the remainder of Singhalese literature consists of modern compendiums and compilations.

The first-named series, the books of Nipal, are written in Sanskrit, those of Ceylon in Pali: but neither collection is translated from the other; each appears independent, but taken equally from Pali oral tradition. The Burmah books are translated from the Pali of Ceylon; the Tibetan and Mongolian from the Sanskrit of Nipal, and thus we have the Nipal and Ceylon collections as joint authorities. These facts have been elicited by a long series of laborious efforts, much of which necessarily sink into the ground like piles into a quaking bog, lost to sight, but preparing a foundation for subsequent exertion. When the learned Rémusat and Schmidt thought Buddhism as old as the Deluge, they had little to guide them beyond the popular legends written in Mongolian and Chinese; for neither Sanskrit books, Pali books, nor inscriptions had been then discovered. In 1828 Mr. Hodgson announced his discovery of Buddhist libraries in the mountains of Nipal, and in 1830 sent twenty-six volumes home to London: in 1836 he forwarded copies to Paris, where the indefatigable M. Burnouf at once commenced their examination. About 1830 a learned Hungarian, Csoma Korösi, fortunately visited Tibet and acquired that difficult language; and going afterwards to Calcutta, was gladly engaged by Mr. H. H. Wilson, then

Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, on the part of the Society, to make an analysis of the Tibet Buddhist books. For this his knowledge of Tibetan eminently qualified him, and the result proved the Tibetan to be copies of the Sanskrit discovered by Mr. Hodgson. Whilst these discoveries were being effected in the north, the late Hon. George Turnour, resident at Colombo, in Ceylon, was equally successful in the south. Obtaining the confidence of influential Buddhist priests, he induced them to disclose their whole treasure of sacred literature, of which they knew very little themselves, but were willing to assist Mr. Turnour in obtaining the knowledge of Pali necessary for its investigation. Had these Singhalese Pali books been met with in the days of Colebrooke, they would probably have been cast aside, for Pali was then esteemed "a provincial jargon." When Wilson published his dramas, its character was raised, for in his preface he praises its "richness both in structure and metrical code," and shows that it must have been cultivated before the Christian era; and this prepared the public to receive James Prinsep's discovery, that Pali in different forms was the language of the Edicts and of all the early inscriptions upon rocks and temples. Books in Pali were therefore more allied to Pi-yadasi's edicts than books in Sanskrit, and Mr. Turnour's communications at once excited the deep interest to which they were entitled; they have not however realized all the expectations of their discoverer, for, although written in the language in which Buddhism was first taught, they are in general of less authority than the Sanskrit writings in Nipal. The explanation is, that Buddhists wrote nothing for four or five centuries, and then, writing in India, they made use

of Sanskrit as the language of learned literature; but in Ceylon, where Pali was not the vernacular, but the sacred language, in which the new religion had been first taught, it was esteemed most suitable for sacred records. In a valuable memoir on Buddha and Buddhism, Professor Wilson shows that the great body of the Buddhist literature of all countries was translated from the language which the Chinese call *Fau*, and *Fau* he proves to be Sanskrit. A learned Chinese who travelled to India in the sixth century, to study original Buddhist documents, gives a description of its grammatical peculiarities, mentioning the dual number; and "all this," Professor Wilson says,* "is Sanskrit; and, what is more to the point, it is not Magadhi, the proper designation of the dialect termed in the south Pali. No form of Prakrit, Pali included, *has a dual number*, and the terminations of the cases of the noun are in several respects entirely distinct." The Law of Buddha was not therefore recorded in the language commonly spoken. In India, where this was Pali, the books are all in Sanskrit; and in Ceylon, where Pali was a foreign tongue, Sanskrit was translated into Pali, with commentaries in Singhalese; but whether in Sanskrit or Pali, these books are all the product of artificial conventual regulations, written under the guidance of a formal religious assembly, "*après coup*," as Burnouf says, "*dans le loisir d'un Vihara*" (or convent), and wanting therefore entirely in the fresh genuine feeling, right or wrong, and free imagination which are so charming in the early Brahmanical literature.

The most popular portions of these vast Buddhist libraries, both in the north and the south, are developed

* Lecture on Buddha and Buddhism, read at the R. A. S., April 8, 1854.

Sutras, relating the history of Buddha. His biography commences with the countless ages during which he submitted to birth and death previous to being born on earth. Not contented, like the Brahmans when narrating the history of their Sage, Kapila, with merely stating so incomprehensible a fact, the Buddhists go boldly into detail, and tell us that when Sakya (Buddha) was a king upon earth, he established peace in the universe, and had a thousand sons, all virtuous and brave; that after he was born in heaven he lived as Indra for thirty-six million five hundred thousand years, but that, desirous of saving men, he came to earth, and gave his body to a hungry tiger; and at length, having amassed the necessary amount of virtue, he approached the bosom of his mother on a white elephant. His destined mother, who was wife to the Raja Suddhodhana (in Rohilcund), dreams that this white elephant filled the universe with light; awaking frightened, she tells the King her dream, and soothsayers being consulted, predict that a child will be born to her, who shall attain either worldly or spiritual greatness. This is one amongst many sketches of Buddha's origin; sometimes histories are given of twenty-four Buddhas who preceded Sakya (the only Buddha known to history), and the three last of these imaginary Buddhas are thus mentioned:—

“The twenty-second was manifested in a pure Brahman tribe. He issued from the womb of his mother like a flame of fire from a golden furnace, and lived the life of a layman, maintaining domestic relations for four thousand years. He had three palaces, and an establishment of thirty thousand females. When he left his home to assume the religious character, he went in his state-car, drawn by six high-bred

horses ; and in pursuance of his example, forty thousand persons also entered the priesthood." The sacred tree of this Buddha was the Acacia. During his reign, or Buddhahood, the historical Buddha was a king who presented the twenty-second Buddha with alms, dishes, robes, sandalwood, and medical drugs. The twenty-third Buddha lived in the domestic relations of a layman for three thousand years, had three palaces, and left his home mounted on an elephant : his sacred tree was the *Ficus glomerata* ; his stature was thirty cubits, and " he was invested with a golden glory, like the flames issuing from a blacksmith's forge." The twenty-fourth Buddha " bestowed largely in alms : his sacred tree was the Banyan ; in stature he was twenty cubits, dazzling like the lightning in the skies, and refulgent as the full moon ; and the term of his existence was twenty thousand years." The twenty-fifth Buddha was the real man with whom Buddhism originated : he had existed one hundred thousand ages, had attained the necessary attributes, and had made the earth quake seven times by the merit of his charities ; and when the period arrived for his translation to earth, " the *Dewas* with loosened top-knot and dishevelled hair, wiping their tears with their hands, clad in red vestments, and assuming revolting forms," wandered through the world, to make the announcement that in one hundred thousand years the world would be destroyed. Then at length Indra, the great King of *Dewas* and other Gods, and the great Brahma assembled together, and repairing to the Buddha elect, said, " Blessed ! by thee the ten probationary courses have been fulfilled, not for the purpose of realizing the beatitude of a Sakra (Indra), a Brahma, or other deity ; the state of omniscience has

been sought by thee for the purpose of redeeming the world, by attaining Buddhahood." They therefore request him to submit to be born ; and he begins reflecting upon where and when and all the particulars, and finally determines that he must be born at Kapila-vastu, in the north of India, in a Kshattriya family ; and that the Raja Suddhodhana must be his father, and the Princess Maya his mother. His future mother is then described as "exalted by the gift vouchsafed to her, enjoying perfect health and free from fainting fits." When the time for her child's birth drew near, she was seized with a longing to repair to the city of her own family ; and her husband, signifying his consent, ordered the road to be smoothed and decorated with arches of plantain-trees and areca flowers, foot-cloths, etc., along which the Queen travelled in a newly-gilt palanquin. Midway she entered a forest, wherein was a hall of recreation, resorted to by the inhabitants of both cities. The trees were covered with blossoms, the woods were ringing with the melody of the sweet-toned Coïl ;* and in this enchanting scene the Buddha elect was born. Extricating himself immediately from the hands of nurses, he made seven paces towards the north, and at the seventh step he stopped and "shouted forth with the voice of a lion, 'I am the most exalted in the world, I am the most excellent in the world ; this is my last existence, henceforth there is no regeneration for me.'"[†] By which he meant he was emancipated from future transmigration. The child and his mother were then

* The Indian cuckoo ; but the note is totally unlike that of our cuckoo, being a rich loud ringing strain, like the high eager tone in which nightingales occasionally sing.

† J. A. S. B., vol. vii. Sept. 1838.

conducted back to Kapila-vastu ; and the mother died, as previously predicted. The child was entrusted to the care of his aunt Gotami, and carried to a temple to do homage to the God L'ha (say the Tibetans) ; but instead of *receiving* worship, the idol rose and showed reverence to the infant.*

At this time a Sage, or retired Brahman, living on the Mountain of Perfumes, was disturbed in the night by the quaking of the heavens and the earth : he saw a great fire, the blaze of which extended from Kapila-vastu to the mountain on which he dwelt. In the middle of the fire was a flower, and out of the flower came the lord of lions, who made seven steps and roared ; and birds, beasts, and insects hid themselves in terror. Guided by this light the Sage flew through the air towards it ; but when within a short distance of the palace he approached on foot, to show respect for the newly-born future Buddha.† When the Sage‡ arrived, he was reverentially welcomed by the Raja, who sent for his infant, intending it to do homage to the holy man ; but this could not be accomplished with the Sage any better than with the idol. The child no sooner appears than the holy man falls down in worship, and the infant puts his feet upon his hoary head. The *tapasa* (holy man) smiled and said, "This is the wonderful mortal ;" and he wept when he reflected that he should not live to see him attain Buddhahood. In consequence of these and other signs of the child's future greatness, he is named Siddhārtha, the 'establisher' of faith. But whilst the wise men of the court think this his probable destiny, they also predict that if he were to lead the life of a layman he would

* Csoma Korösi, *As. Res.* vol. xx. p. 289.

† Rémusat, *Chin-tin*.

‡ The Chinese call him a "Doctor of Reason."

become a *chakravarti*, or supreme monarch ; and this prediction so much excited the Raja's ambition that he spared no pains to fit his son for the duties of royalty, and to preserve him from the severities of a religious life.* He was instructed in sixty-four different alphabets, amongst which are mentioned the *Yavana* and the *Huna*.† When he was sixteen, "the Raja built for him three palaces, adapted to the three seasons,—one of nine, another of seven, and the third of five stories ; the edifices were nevertheless of the same height, but the stories constructed on different plans." The Raja then sent leaves (despatches) to all the Sakya Princes, announcing, "My son is of age ; I am causing him to be installed with me in the sovereignty. Let all send from their own homes their grown-up daughters to this house." But the Princes objected, that although the young Prince had personal beauty, he was "untaught in a single martial accomplishment, and incapable of controlling women." Hearing this, the Buddha elect offered to exhibit his proficiency in every exercise they might propose.‡ He strung the bow which requires the strength of a thousand persons, and let the arrow fly with a noise like that of thunder, and he pierced a horsehair, from which was suspended a fruit at the distance of a *yojana*. After this triumph the Sakya tribes sent their daughters superbly decorated, and the young Prince's palace was furnished with "forty thousand dancing and singing girls," amongst whom was Yasodhará, who became chief of the Zenana, and mother of his son Rahula. The Raja

* J. A. S. B., vol. vii. p. 803.

† Csoma Korösi, As. Res. vol. xx. p. 220.

‡ J. A. S. B., vol. vii. p. 804.

is indefatigable in his efforts to divert his son from any thoughts of a religious life, but the young Prince early shows an interest in disease, decrepitude, and death ; and notwithstanding all his father's earnest precautions, he encounters three predicted signs ; and all the charms of his pleasure-gardens and bands of female musicians cannot withhold him from reflection. At the moment of his having encountered the third of the appointed signs, and of his having resolved in consequence to abandon domestic life, a messenger arrived to tell him that his wife Yasodhará* had become the mother of a son. He quitted his pleasure-garden, mounted his chariot, drove back to his superb, enchanting palace, and spent the night in contemplation. His most beautiful women crowded round and endeavoured to delight him with their singing and musical instruments, but when they perceived his indifference, they said, "Why should we fatigue ourselves?" and went to sleep. When the Buddha elect, sitting cross-legged on his couch, perceived "these sleeping females, some in ungraceful attitudes, some with dishevelled hair, some gnashing their teeth, some muttering," he "became the more thoroughly confirmed in his abhorrence" of his lay life. "Unto him the splendid and charming palace, like unto the mansion of Indra, became, as it were, a disgusting object, filled with loathsome corpses," and he resolved that on that very day his final separation from lay connections should take place. Rising at once, he went to the door of the apartment and called, "Who is there?" Channa, who had been born the same day with the Buddha elect, was sleeping on the threshold, and replied, "Prince, it is I, Channa." The Buddha elect

* J. A. S. B., vol. vii. p. 805.

then said, "This very day am I resolved to effect my great final deliverance: without uttering a word bring me a swift *sindhawa* (steed)." Channa replied, "*Sadhu* (well), Lord;" and seeing the superb charger *Kanthaka* standing under a canopy decorated with jessamine flowers, he said, "It is proper that this charger should be caparisoned today for the final deliverance of my master." Unwilling to go without seeing his new-born infant, the young father, the Buddha elect, proceeded "to the chamber of the mother of Rahula, and gently opened the door. At that moment a silver lamp, lit with fragrant oil, was shedding its light on the interior of the chamber, and the mother of Rahula was slumbering, with her hand resting on the head of her infant, who was reposing under a superb canopy. The elect, his foot still resting on the threshold, and intently gazing, thus meditated: 'If I remove the hand of the Princess, to take up my child (and embrace him), she will be awakened, and thus an impediment will be produced to my departure. Let me then, after I have attained Buddhahood, return and see my son.' He then descended from the upper apartments of the palace and sprang upon his steed, saying, 'Do thou, my cherished *Kanthaka*, in one night translate me.' He would have had some difficulty in getting through the guarded gates of the town, but his tutelary *Dewata* came to his aid. In the course of the night he traversed three kingdoms, and performed a march of thirty *yojanas*,* and reached a river, over which his horse leaped and landed him in a bed of sand on the opposite bank. The Buddha elect then said, 'Channa, my friend, take thou my regal orna-

* A *yojana* is sometimes four miles and a half, sometimes five, but it seems to be most frequently reckoned as a distance of nine miles.

ments and my charger, and depart; I am about to enter into the religious life.' Channa entreated permission to do the same, but was not allowed. Kanthaka, the charger, took the parting still more to heart, and, after proceeding a certain distance and finding the Buddha elect no longer visible, unable to endure his grief, expired, and was reproduced in the form of a *Dewa* in the Tatwatinsa heavens." The Buddha elect then passed seven days in a mango-grove, "in the enjoyment of sacerdotal happiness, dazzling in his yellow raiment, like the sun under the blazing clouds of a glaring sunset," etc. After a time he crossed the Ganges, and entered the city of Rajagriha, celebrated for its superb palace, resplendent with gems, and here he at once commenced the Buddhist practice of begging alms from house to house. The inhabitants were awe-struck by his remarkable and godlike appearance, and when, having collected scraps sufficient, he went outside the gate to eat his uninviting repast, King Bimbisara himself repaired to the spot, and held "intercourse with him as refreshing as the intercourse of relations;" but although the Buddha elect enjoyed the King's conversation, he resisted his entreaties to remain and accept wealth and luxuries. "Maharaja," replied he, "to me there is no longer need either of the enjoyment of wealth or the gratification of the passions; severed from the domestic and lay ties, my aspirations are directed to the attainment of supreme omniscience."*

The Buddha elect next sought the Brahmanical schools which were held on the hills near Gaya: he first became the pupil of Arada Kalama, and afterwards of Rudraka; but after acquiring all the knowledge these teachers could com-

* J. A. S. B., vol. vii. p. 809.

municate, he appears to have been convinced that Upanishads and aphorisms, whether of Kapila or Kanada, etc., were insufficient to produce the state of exaltation at which he aimed; he therefore left Rudraka and took with him five pupils, who, being of the Sakya tribe, had attached themselves to him.* For six years he gave himself up to ascetic seclusion, meditation, and hardship, and carried fasting to such an extreme that he reduced himself to a skeleton, and his complexion, which had been of a fine golden hue, became black. But this emaciated condition of body he found weakening to the mental powers, and, convinced that this could not be the means by which to attain Buddhahood, he left his retreat, and making alms-pilgrimages through the neighbouring villages, obtained a full supply of food. By this means he regained his health and his complexion, but he lost his pupils, who gave him up as a person whose resolution had failed, and went to live by themselves at a hermitage near Benares.

After this the Buddha elect went alone into a forest, and contended with powers of darkness. Mara, called God of Death, is represented as jealous lest Prince Siddhārtha (the Buddha elect) should overthrow his dominion. A strange scene is described, in which Mara advances against him with all his legions, making an uproar as if bursting the earth, which was heard from a distance of a thousand *yojanas*. Mara, mounted on his tusked elephant, and accompanied by his army, equipped with swords, axes, javelins, bows, arrows, spikes, clubs, rings, wheels, and assuming the faces of deer, lions, bears, monkeys, serpents, cats, owls, buffaloes, etc., and with terrific unnatural forms of men,

* Lassen, vol. ii. p. 69.

demons, and spirits, continued rushing towards the spot on which the Buddha elect was seated at the foot of the *Bodhi* tree (*Pipal*). Indra, Brahma, and other celestials who had been in attendance upon the Buddha elect, all fled at the terrific approach of Mara, "the great mortal, as if he were Maha Brahma himself, alone retaining his position." Crashing storms and awful earthquakes, and every other imaginable device, were alike resistless, and by the power of his merits the great mortal overcame the efforts of Mara, and during the course of the night attained omniscience and realized sanctification; and having thus acquired in perfection the virtues (inherent in) all the Buddhá, he chanted forth the Hymn, which is the established thanksgiving of a Buddha (on the achievement of Buddhahood).

"Performing my pilgrimage through the (*sansara*) eternity of countless existences, in sorrow have I unremittingly sought in vain the artificer of the abode (of the passions), *i. e.* the human frame. Now, O artificer! thou art found. Henceforth no receptacle of sin shalt thou form; thy frames (literally, ribs) broken, thy ridge-pole shattered: the soul (or mind) emancipated from liability to regeneration (by transmigration) has annihilated the dominion of the passions."*

After this victorious consummation of his trials, he remained for seven weeks in a sort of trance, during which time he was supported entirely by his miraculous attributes; on the forty-ninth day he washed his face and cleansed his teeth with the twigs of the Nagalata creeper, and accepted parched rice and honey from two travelling traders; but still he lingered in the forest, reluctant to commence his great undertaking, and doubtful apparently whether he was sufficiently qualified. "Alas," he exclaimed, "that *dharma*

* J. A. S. B., vol. vii. p. 813.

should devolve on me to be established!" Brahma and other divinities are then represented as saying, "The world is assuredly about to perish; Bhagavan (lord), vouchsafe to propound the *dharma*." From this moment his resolution never failed him; and considering where he should commence, he remembered the services formerly rendered to him by his five pupils, and determined that to them, in the deer-forest near Benares, he would first proclaim the supremacy of *dharma*. The time is supposed to have been April or May, B.C. 588. He approached the *Isapataka*, or holy residence,* and his former pupils recognized him in the distance; but they said one to another, "Here is the *Sramana* Gotama (or Sakya), who having indulged in good things and recovered his stoutness of person, acuteness of senses, and brilliancy of complexion, comes hither; but we will not bow down to him, we will only prepare a seat." Bhagavan, divining their design, manifested toward them such an amount of benevolence that they were wholly unable to carry their intention into effect; and bowing down, they rendered him every mark of reverence. Thereupon announcing to them his attainment of Buddhahood, and taking a suitable seat, he expounded to them a discourse upon *dharma*.

There is beauty and truth, as well as absurdity, to be detected in these tales; and the superficial resemblance which they bear to parts of Christian Scripture is such as to make one thoughtful. In truth, Buddhism still lies entangled in a net; and the time has not yet arrived when, like the lion in the fable, the nibble of a mouse can set it free. We do not know whether these resemblances should

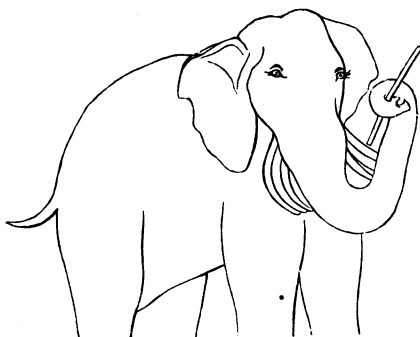
* Literally the city of Siva, which Benares has been always designated.

be attributed wholly to the similarity of human vanity and human hopes in all ages of the world ; but we could almost imagine that, before God planted Christianity upon earth, he took a branch from the luxuriant tree and threw it down to India. It was from the Tree of Truth, and therefore it taught true morality and belief in future life ; but it was never planted, therefore it never took root and never grew into full proportions ; and it was *thrown* upon earth, not *brought*, and though man perceived it heaven-born, he knew not how to keep it alive. When its green leaves drooped, he stiffened them and stifled them with varnish ; and soon, although bedizened with tinsel, it shrank into formal atheism or dead idolatry. It is difficult wholly to suppress discussion of this kind, even when convinced that it is but little to the purpose, because the subject to be discussed has so little distinctness. Sometimes the artificial character of the tales is sufficiently conspicuous, as when we find a number of Buddhas all made according to one pattern, and the three last born like flame, or resplendent like fire or gems ; occasionally we may also detect a legend at various stages of its growth, as in the story of the holy man who visited the infant Buddha. The Ceylon books represent him as going out of respect to the Raja to wish him joy on the birth of a son ; but the Chinese version adds miraculous signs, and a bright light which guided the Sage from his home on the mountain to the King's palace in the city. So also in reference to Buddha's birth, the Ceylon books relate that his mother dreamed that an elephant from Chadanta rubbed her side whilst she was pregnant, and state that Chadanta was a lake in the Himalaya celebrated for its breed of elephants ; and since elephants were much

esteemed, there was nothing unnatural in supposing that the Queen received this mark of affection from her elephant as a sign of future greatness in her child. The Tibet translation gives a very different aspect to the tale, saying that the Buddha elect entered the womb of his mother as a six-tusked elephant. Mr. Turnour accounts for this by supposing that the Tibetans translated *chadantu* literally as six-tusked, instead of giving it as the name of a place.* In Pegu the story took a different turn. Such are the legends now current amongst northern Buddhists, and yet Csoma Korösi says their sacred books contain no mention of the virginity of Buddha's mother.† The individual threads of Buddhist literature are indeed of doubtful character, many-coloured, tangled, and confused; but nevertheless we may conclude as we began, that, whether more or less fictitious, they are an indispensable link between the edicts of Piya-dasi and existing Buddhism.

* Turnour, J. A. S. B., vol. vii.

† Csoma Korösi, Analysis of the Dulwa; As. Soc. xx. p. 299.





CHAPTER V.

“Dim echoings,
Not of the truth, but witnessing the truth.”

SYDNEY YENDYS.

PROFESSOR LASSEN speaks of Buddhist tales as shells of fiction enclosing kernels of truth; and what we gather as truth from the shell of fiction just exhibited is, that Buddha was a man, and not a myth, as the Chinese Tien-ti of the nineteenth century is said to be. Buddha's personal beauty, and the portraits and images given as likenesses of him, were myths, or rather mere abstracts of Hindu conventional ideas of beauty; and the names given to his father and mother, himself and his native city, are all shown by Professor Wilson* to be allegorical, and thus the semi-fictitious character of the *literature* is confirmed; but as smoke betokens fire, so the floating gaseous wreaths of Buddhist story may be believed to spring from a fact, the

* Buddha, Buddhism, p. 19.

existence of a man of individual and decided character who lived between the years 640 and 560 before our era. He was, as we have seen, the son of a *King*, who chose to pass through the severe noviciate of study and hardship required only of the highest order amongst Brahmins, and so soon as his probation was concluded he announced himself a Teacher, as was the custom with learned Brahmins; but, unlike the Brahmins, he gathered his pupils as freely from the unprivileged races as from the high-born. In the Brahmanical Sutras we must seek an explanation of the doctrine which he announced, and we there find that the full attainment of *Buddhi* (intelligence) endows its possessor with *aiswara* (supernatural power).* But *Buddhi* was not mere intellectual superiority, it was to be acquired through *dharma*, duty, goodness; therefore when the princely ascetic believed that by the force of *dharma* he had attained *Buddhi*, and become possessed of *aiswara*, he believed no more than was deducible from his Brahmanical education: he believed, in other words, that his long-continued ascetic privations and his strenuous course of study had so expanded his intellect that he had become omniscient. So far he was not unbrahmanical; his peculiarity was not in his metaphysical apprehensions, but in the enlarged, definite, practical conclusions which he drew from philosophic data: he overlooked dis-

* The Brahmins derived the word *aiswara* from *Iswara*, the Supreme Spirit, and called those who attained it *Isis*, or *Rishis*. Speaking of supernatural power conferred by science and holiness, M. de St. Hilaire says, "Les légendes sont pleines de ces superstitions et de ces extravagances, qui sont à l'usage des Brahmanes longtemps avant que le Bouddhisme ne les adopte et les sanctionne à son tour.—Voir mon *Premier Mémoire sur le Sankhya*, dans les Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques," p. 208, *note*.

tinctions of caste, and believed that what was truth for one man was truth for all, and taught that self-denial and unworldliness were not good merely for boys and elderly *dwijas* (persons invested with the sacred thread), but that men of all ages and races, and also women, might attain blessedness after death, by mercy, charity, mendicity, and hardship whilst on earth.

This liberal doctrine met with opposition from the Brahmins, whose monopoly it invaded, but with encouragement from the cultivators, merchants, and other classes, whose rights it advocated, and was generally favoured by the contemporary Kings, who were glad of its indirect support against Brahmanical domination. The new teacher seems to have abandoned his name Siddhārtha as soon as he became a religious character, and to have been thenceforth called either Buddha (the enlightened), Gotama, or Sakya; Gotama being the favourite name in the south and Sakya in the north—wherefore is not stated, but if the northern books were compiled under Scythian patronage, as seems probable, this name will have been a compliment to the rulers, implying that the Buddha sprang from a family related to their race: in the Ceylon books the name Gotama is almost always preferred, but as this is also the name of a distinguished Brahmanical philosopher (author of the Nyaya school of philosophy), it will be less perplexing to call Buddha usually by some of his other names. *Muni*, saint or holy man, is often added to Sakya, making Sakya-muni, and this the Tartars read as Chingemuni, who figures as chief object of worship amongst the Buraets on the Selinga river;* Sakya and Gotama are therefore equally

* Erman, Travels in Siberia.

names of the Buddha, "he by whom truth is known"*; and in the books he bears likewise a variety of epithets, as Bhagavat, Sugata, and Tathagata. We will now note some incidents in the life of this remarkable individual, as given by Buddhist writers, always keeping in mind that, although the events narrated occurred about B.C. 600, the narrative usually communicates opinions and a tone of thought not earlier than B.C. 200, and sometimes of a considerably later date.

The rainy season commenced soon after Sakya's arrival at Benares, and, as this puts a stop to travelling, he remained with his former pupils in the deer-forest, in the edifice "near which no living creature could be deprived of life;"† and he then began to teach *dharma*, or "turn the wheel of the Law,"‡ and gained many converts, especially amongst the *Vriji* of *Vesali*. One of his first friends was Bimbisara, King of Magadha, and this was an hereditary friendship, their fathers having also been great allies. Rajagriha being at this time Bimbisara's capital and usual place of residence, he presented Sakya, "the great ascetic," with a residence, or *Vihara*, in a bamboo-grove adjoining,§ and here, during the first year of his teaching, he was joined by his two chief disciples, Shariputra and Mogalana; Shariputra being the disciple of his right hand|| and Mogalana of his left hand,|| whilst his cousin Ananda became his per-

* Professor Wilson observes that "much erroneous speculation has originated in confounding 'Buddha' with *Budha*, the son of Soma and regent of the planet Mercury."—Vishnu Purana, *note*, p. 393.

† Turnour, J. A. S. B., vol. viii. p. 815. ‡ Lassen, vol. i. p. 810.

§ This Vihara was called Kalandaka, after the name of a bird.

|| Csoma Korösi, Anal. Dulwa: Trans. As. Soc., vol. xx. p. 51, and J. A. S. B., vol. vii. pp. 816, 817.

sonal and constant attendant. He is described as moving about attended by these and numerous other disciples, "as the moon amongst planets," or "the elephant amongst beasts," etc., just as a Brahman or a Raja in the epic poems moves amongst his followers. He seems to have held public discussions in various places, and is said to have been visited by a King near Ougein, who was dissatisfied with the teaching of "a Gymnosophist Brahman." The King came with a pompous train of attendants, and found Sakya-muni in a grove; the conversation was chiefly carried on between Buddha's disciples and the Brahman, and turned upon the usual subjects of emancipation and deliverance.*

On another occasion a Brahman disputant came from the Dekkan, where he had been studying: he found Sakya sitting in the centre of his disciples, who formed a curve on each side of him, like the horns of the moon, while Shari-putra stood behind with a *chowrie*, or cow-tail, flapping away flies. The Brahman starts his objections to Buddha's doctrine, but is told that his state of feeling is the consequence of "attachment," and he is directed to strive to acquire a state free from "attachment," and further instructed as follows :—

"This gross and material body is formed by the union of five great elements. A disciple should dwell upon the idea that the body is constantly subject to birth and death; he must dwell on the idea of freedom from attachment, on annihilation and abandonment. If a respectable disciple has reflected on these things, then love, attachment, affection, etc. are conquered, and no longer exist."

This is the old Sankhya doctrine of five elements, and of

* Csoma Körösi, Anal. Dulwa, p. 446.

man's liberation (from transmigration) being effected by his perception of the "nothingness" of everything! But Buddha's discourse does not even refer to Prakriti (eternal nature) or Purusha (universal soul), it merely urges the acquisition of *indifference*, because all sensations, whether pleasant or unpleasant, will cease at death.*

The converts most frequently mentioned are Kings and merchants, as in the following little story of the King of Roruka, which, whether partly true or wholly fictitious, gives a distinct picture of the manner in which Buddhism is supposed to have been promulgated.

Rudrayana, who was King of Roruka, sent to Bimbisara, the King of Magadha, a coat of armour endowed with wonderful properties and covered with jewels. Bimbisara was at a loss for a present of sufficient value to send in acknowledgment, so taking the armour he bowed down his head to the feet of Buddha and begged advice. Buddha told him to get a piece of cloth, and have represented on it the image of a Tathagata, meaning himself; the artist began his task, but every time he looked at Buddha he felt fascinated and unable to continue his work. Buddha then threw his shadow on the cloth, and desired the painter to fill up the outline and write beneath it the Buddhist formula of refuge. The following version is in verse, and translated by M. Burnouf:—

“Commence, depart (from your home); apply yourself to the Law of Buddha;

Annihilate the army of death, as an elephant upsets a cottage of reeds.

He who walks without distraction under the discipline of this Law,

* Burnouf, p. 457.

Escaping from birth and the revolution of worlds, puts an end to sorrow."

"If any one asks what are these sentences, the reply is: the first is the introduction; the second, the instruction; the third, the revolution of the world; the fourth, the effort."

The artist having written this from the dictation of Buddha, he then desired Bimbisara to address the following letter to King Rudrayana :—

"Dear friend,—I send you as a present the most precious thing in all the three worlds: you must have the road decorated for two *yojanas* and a half, and go out yourself to receive it at the head of your army, composed of four descriptions of troops: you must place it in a wide open place, and not uncover it until you have paid it worship and every kind of honour. Attention to what I recommend will secure to you a great amount of merit."

When Rudrayana read this letter he felt angry impatience, and assembling his council proposed calling out his army to lay waste the dominions of the King who sent it; but his counsellors persuaded him that Bimbisara, being a magnanimous King, would not trifle with him, and that the better course would be to obey his instructions to the letter, and then, if dissatisfied, means of vengeance would not be wanting. The road was therefore made, and honours rendered as prescribed, and then the covering publicly removed. Now it so happened that some merchants from Madhyadesa (including Magadha) were at this time in the town of Roruka, and the moment they beheld the portrait they exclaimed, "Adoration to Buddha!" When the King heard the name Buddha, of whom no one had spoken to him before, he felt his hair to stand on end, and turning to

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the merchants said, "Who is it that you call Buddha?" To which the merchants replied, "Great King, it is the Prince of the Sakya race, born on the banks of the River Bhagirathi, near the Hermitage of the Rishi Kapila, of whom it was predicted that if he remained at home he would become a Chakravarti Raja (supreme monarch); but that if he shaved his hair, put on yellow garments, and abandoned home for a religious life, he would be a Tathagata (complete and perfect Buddha)." After this explanation, King Rudrayana readily comprehended the precepts and causes of existence, etc., and "laying aside all worldly affairs, seated himself with his legs crossed, his body erect, his mind collected, to meditate on the causes of successive existence; and, cleaving with the thunderbolt of science the mountain of ignorance, he saw before him the state *Srota-apatti*;" and when he had learned the four truths he repeated the following stanza:—

"My perception of knowledge has been purified by Buddha, who is the jewel of the world: adoration to that good physician, to whom my cure must undoubtedly be due."*

This story bears the marks of an ancient legend with later additions. It is old, because the scene is on earth and Sakya-muni is a man amongst men; but the intermixture of verse is a sure sign of later addition, and the introduction of Tathagata and Bhagavat as appellations of Sakya-muni are also suspicious. Tathagata means, He who has come (or has gone) in like manner;† meaning that Sakya-muni was one of a succession of Buddhas: but whilst there is no

* Burnouf, pp. 340–4, from the 'Divya Avadana.'

† Turnour, Mahawanso, Introd., pp. 106–8, and Klaproth, note to Favian, p. 191.

proof that this doctrine was a part of original Buddhism, there are many reasons for supposing it to have been an afterthought. So also with the epithet Bhagavat, which means the divider, the distributor, or ruler; it is an old Sanskrit word, but not used in the sense of Deity until after the Christian era. A third sign of comparatively late date may be suspected in the fixed attitude assumed by the new convert, the Vedanta mode of "conquering ignorance" by the aid of posture being more recent than Kapila's doctrine of Buddhi and five elements.

Sakya-muni is represented as living all the earlier part of his career in Magadha, the kingdom of Bimbisara; but, with the consent of this Raja, he accepted an invitation from Prasenajit, the King of Kosala, whose chief city was Sravasti.* This kingdom was, like the Panchala of the Pandus, a part of the country since known as Oude. Sravasti and the Viharas, or convents, in the neighbourhood are the scene of many of the Buddhist tales. Great dissatisfaction is said to have been caused by the King of Kosala's adoption of Buddhism, all his offerings of lamps, incense, garlands, and perfumes going now to Bhagavat. A set of devotees called Tirthyas showed open hostility, complaining that before the "great ascetic" came, they were honoured by kings, ministers, Brahmans, and house-keepers, and received from them clothing, food, seats, medicines, and other things, but that now none but Sramana Gotama and his assembly received these things. The

* Professor Lassen calls Bimbisara King of Kosala, and Prasenajit King of Sravasti, which is apparently an oversight, Bimbisara being King of Magadha, with Rajagriha for his capital, and Prasenajit being King of Kosala, with Sravasti his capital. *Indische Alterthumskunde*, vol. ii. p. 17.

Tirthyas are described as men "who did not know all, but who thought they knew everything." The original meaning of the word was "one who makes the round of the sacred tanks;" but they made themselves so conspicuous by their hostility to Buddhism, that in Buddhist literature a Tirthya usually means a factious opponent.*

A story is told of six Tirthyas persuading King Prasenajit to allow them to try their strength in public against Sakya-muni. The great ascetic was then at Rajagriha, but he accepted the challenge, bid his followers "wash and mend their vestments," and started with them for Sravasti. A long hall is said to have been erected for the occasion, with a throne for Bhagavat and a *mantapa* (tower or spire). After sending a messenger flying through the air, Bhagavat entered into a meditation so intense that a flame issued from the lock of the door and set the whole edifice on fire, but before water could be procured the fire had extinguished itself without injuring the building. At length Indra and Brahma and many hundred thousands of gods came to assist, and amongst them two Naga Kings, who presented a thousand-leaved lotus, the size of a cart-wheel, all of gold, with a stalk of diamond. Bhagavat placed himself upon the lotus, his legs crossed, his body erect, and his mind concentrated, and then created an endless mass of similar Buddhas, reaching up to the heaven Akanichtas, some of whom were repeating, "Commence, depart," etc. The effect was so triumphant that the chief Tirthya drowned himself in the next pond.† The remaining Tirthyas fled in dismay to

* Burnouf, pp. 200 and 163; p. 158, *note*.

† Burnouf, p. 190, *Legend of Mendhaka*. In a note to the 'Lotus of Good Law,' Burnouf supposes this city to be Pandukara, a town of Berar. Lotus, p. 689.

a distant city, where they persuaded the inhabitants to refuse admission to Bhagavat. There happened however to be in this town the daughter of a Brahman from Sakya-muni's native place, and this woman, getting a lamp, descended the city wall at night, and went to render homage to the great ascetic; he, perceiving her favourable disposition, taught her the four truths, so that she acquired faith in the formula of refuge; he then bade her go to a man in the town named Mendhaka, and tell him that Bhagavat had come to that place upon his account, and that the fine which the town awarded to all who should visit him should be paid out of the purse carried by Mendhaka's son, and that however many fines were paid it would still continue full. As soon as Mendhaka received the message, he paid the fine, went to Bhagavat, learned the *four truths*, and saw before him the state which leads to *nirvana*.

The "four truths,"* so frequently mentioned in the Sutras, are worthy of particular attention, as incorporating some of the most ancient Buddhist doctrine. The first states that all existence is grief; the second, that existence is caused by the passions; the third, that the passions may be extinguished; and the fourth gives the means of accomplishing this extinction; the whole together constituting Sakya-muni's answer to the inquiries of ascetic Brahmins as to his mode of dealing with the evils of birth, old-age, sickness, and death. The same idea is expressed in the popular stanza commencing, "*Ye dharma hétuprabhavás*;" the translation of which is,—

"Those duties which originate in cause;
Their causes the Tathâgata has declared:

* Burnouf, 'Lotus of Good Law,' Appendix, v., p. 517.

What is the counteraction of those (causes),
The great Sramana has equally explained."

A summary of this occurs in the Life of Buddha (Lalita Vistara).

"Birth being no more, old-age and death are not; therefore by annihilation of birth, old-age and death are annihilated; and as ignorance is the ultimate cause of existence, then by the removal of ignorance all its consequences are arrested, and existence ceases; by which means old-age, death, wretchedness, sorrow, pain, anxiety, and trouble, the whole mass of suffering becomes for ever extinct."*

This stanza was first observed upon the pedestal of a mutilated statue of Buddha, dug up amongst some ruins near Bakra; but it has since been discovered upon endless statuettes at Sarnath, and also in the books both of Ceylon and the north. In some of the Sutras it is followed by the Buddhist exhortation or invitation given above:—

"Arise! depart (from your house), apply yourself to the law of Buddha. Annihilate the army of death, as an elephant upsets a cottage of reeds. He who walks without distraction under the discipline of the law, escaping from birth and the revolution of worlds, puts an end to sorrow."

Unfortunately this discipline of the Law was supposed to require quiescence in a disciple; and another verse expresses that ignorance (or vice) causes action, that transmigration is the consequence of action, and that he only who abstains from action escapes from its effect.

M. Burnouf has taken much pains to ascertain whether the Pali or the Sanskrit version is the original, and his conclusion is, that the Pali form of the Ceylon books is older than the Sanskrit of the north; but that neither the

* H. H. Wilson, *Memoir on Buddha, Buddhism*, p. 17.

one nor the other can be identified as precisely the original formula of the first Buddhists. He only determines that, metrically and grammatically, it shows itself to have been current in a popular dialect before being fashioned into a classical form.





CHAPTER VI.

“Horizon there was none,
But vast infinitude
Spread over and below.”—ALFORD.

To follow Sakya-muni through all the tales which have been recorded, would only be to mystify the subject ; but we shall do well to note how he is said to have passed his life under the protection of contemporary kings, and then to rehearse shortly the closing scenes of his life, as related in the legends and poetry of Buddhist religious romance.

Sakya-muni's friend and patron, Bimbisara of Rajagriha, was murdered by his son Ajatasatra, and the new King commencing his reign in hostility to Buddhists, the “great ascetic” left his dominions and lived almost entirely at Sravasti, in Kosala. Prasenajit, the King of Kosala, was a friend, and probably connection, of Sakya-muni's father, and through his friendly mediation Sakya was induced once more to visit his native place. A large Vihara was

erected in a banyan grove for the occasion, and each family of the Sakya tribe sent one member as a disciple or follower. This is only related as a passing visit ; and Sakya-muni appears to have lived again at Kosala, until King Prasenajit was dethroned by his son, and the new King made war upon Sakya's native city, Kapila-vastu. He returned to Magadha, in which country Prasenajit had taken refuge ; but this King died soon afterwards, from eating immoderately of turnips, and then indulging too freely in draughts of spring water.* Ajatasatra, the King of Magadha, had now relaxed his hostility to Buddhism ; and it seems suddenly to have occurred to him that the sagacious Sakya-muni might assist in manœuvring him into possession of the neighbouring town of Vesali. To effect this object he sent his prime minister to visit Sakya, and the conversation which ensued is given in detail. Vesali was a city famed for the beauty of its gardens, its baths, jewels, horse-furniture and sports.† The government was carried on by a confederation called Lichhawi Rulers (or Vriji Princes), and its constitution was something peculiar to itself. Marriage was forbidden, and high rank attached to the lady who held office as Chief of Courtesans. The affairs of government were discussed in Assemblies of Elders, governed by traditional laws and books, as in other Hindu republics ; but the criminal proceedings differed. If the Council convicted any one of crime, they sent him to the *Mahamatra*, or chief officer of justice ; and if this second authority thought him innocent, he was acquitted ; but if the Mahamatra confirmed the decision of the Council, he

* Csoma Korösi, *As. Res.*, vol. xx., p. 87.

† J. A. S. B., vol. vii., p. 992.

was given over to the Professor of Law and four other officers in succession, the final verdict resting with the King.* By this we may understand that, like all republics in India, they paid taxes to the King who "protected them;" and to this King appeal was made in cases of emergency. Ajatasatra wished however to obtain more complete dominion over Vesali, and concocted a plan with Sakya-muni for producing internal dissension, which led ultimately to the accomplishment of his wishes.

The great ascetic felt now that his life was drawing to a close; and soon after his interview with the King's minister he assembled the members of the Vihara in which he was living, on the Vulture Mountain, near Rajagriha, and made them farewell discourses in preparation of his moving to the place in which it was destined he should die, or, in Buddhist language, obtain *nirvana*. At Patna, then no more than a village, he was lodged in the new Rest-house, built by Ajatasatra for the accommodation of his messengers.† When he arrived at Vesali he was lodged in a garden belonging to the Chief of Courtesans, and received a visit from this grand lady, who drove out to see him, attended by her suite in stately carriages. Having approached and bowed down, she took her seat on one side of him and listened to a discourse on *dharma*. She then requested him to accept a repast which she would prepare the next day for him and his disciples; and having obtained his consent, signified by silence, she rose from her seat, bowed down, walked three times round him, and departed. On entering the town she met the Rulers of Vesali, gorgeously

* J. A. S. B., vol. vii. p. 993, *note*; Lassen, vol. ii. p. 80.

† Such Rest-houses are still in use in the Bihar districts.

apparelled ; but their equipages made way for hers. They asked her to resign to them the honour of entertaining Sakya-muni ; but she refused, and the great man himself, when solicited by the Rulers in person, also refused to break his engagement with the lady.

It was now the season of Varsha, or rains ; and telling his followers to accept invitations from the neighbouring inhabitants, Sakya-muni retired with Ananda to the Cocks-foot Vihara, not far from Vesali. Whilst there he was seized with illness, and although he in a great measure recovered, he felt that at his advanced age and with his infirmities he could not long survive. He called the members of the Vihara together, and told them that within three months he should realize *nirvana* ; and then exhorted them to renounce passion, keep their thoughts under subjection, adhere to *dharma*, and, “escaping the eternity of transmigration, achieve the extinction of misery.” A little to the north of Vesali, he visited a place called Pawa, where Chundo, a goldsmith, lodged him in a mango-grove ; and, according to the Ceylon narrative, he there ate pork at his own particular request, and, according to his own prediction and expectation, was taken ill, and felt it necessary to hasten his journey to Kusinara, a town on the Bhagirathi, near which he wished to breathe his last. When he reached the forests of Tirhut (to this day famous for their timber), “the Saul-trees shed flowers, although it was not the season for them to be in blossom, the air rang with heavenly music, and perfumes were showered from the sky. The aged teacher laid himself on his left side, and desired the disciple who stood in front fanning him to stand aside, because the *Devatas* of ten thousand worlds, who hovered in

the air to watch and lament, should not have their view of him intercepted.”* Crowds of men as well as *Devatas* were in attendance, some disciples of his old master, Arada Kalama, amongst the rest; and he breathed his last (or achieved *nirvana*), whilst discoursing upon *dharma* and discussing the relative merits of different religious systems.

Bhagavat is represented as himself giving minute directions that the ceremonies attending his funeral should be conducted in a manner precisely similar to those performed for a Chakravarti Raja; these appear to have been such as are described in the Mahabharata, at the funeral of Dasaratha, but whether really performed for Sakya-muni, or invented afterwards, may be doubted. At length, whilst lying beneath the Saul-trees, he says to his followers, “I am exhorting you for the last time; transitory things are perishable: without procrastination qualify yourselves for *nirvana*.” These were the last words of Tathagata. “At this moment the earth quaked, the music of the gods rang in the air, and gods and men sang hymns.” Brahma said:†

“All things gathered in this world must be relinquished. The man who had no equal, Tathagata, who had great powers and clear eyes, at last has died!”

Indra sang:

“A compound thing is not lasting, all things subject to reproduction must assuredly perish: it is a happiness for such to be at rest (or arrive at extinction).”

The disciple Anaraddha said:

“He who with a firm mind was a protector, he who had found steadiness and tranquillity, no longer indicates inspiration and respi-

* J. A. S. B., vol. vii., p. 1005.

† Csoma Korösi, Anal. Dulwa, As. Res., vol. xx. p. 309.

ration. The immaculate Muni, whose aim was *nirvana*, has expired. He endured the agonies of death in the full possession of his faculties. His mental faculties expired like the extinction of a lamp."

The disciple Ananda had not yet attained that state of conviction or of knowledge which was called becoming an *Arhat*, and to him the death of Bhagavat was in consequence very appalling; he said:

"When the all-perfect Buddha Supreme expired, then was there great terror; then stood the hair on end."

So also the other disciples who had not attained *arahathood* wept aloud, with uplifted arms, or rolled upon the ground, exclaiming, "Too soon has Bhagavat expired; too soon has the Eye (*chakka*) closed upon the world." But the *Arhats* sat tranquil and composed, saying, "Transitory things are perishable; how in this world shall we gain permanency," etc.

Anuradha, being the chief disciple present, then took the direction of the rest, and, after spending the remainder of the night in discoursing with Ananda upon *dharma*, he desired Ananda to go early in the morning, with his begging-dish in hand, to announce the death of Bhagavat to the Mallians, who inhabited Kusinara. Ceremonies for the funeral are then arranged, and the corpse of Buddha carried into the city in a grand procession: not only the Kusinara Mallians, but also *Devatas* assisted, and so much of the divine Mandara, or Coral-flower, fell from heaven on the occasion that the whole town was covered with it. Many other details are given of the offerings made and the honours paid, but these are recited in a very extravagant and artificial tone, and need not be particularized. The concluding ceremony of setting fire to the corpse was de-

layed until Kasyapa could arrive. He had become chief disciple since the death of Mogala, and Shariputra had remained at Rajagriha, endeavouring to confirm the faith of Ajatasatru, who had but recently begun to listen to Buddhist doctrine. The quaking of the earth gave Kasyapa notice of the moment at which Bhagavat expired; he also perceived meteors, and heard the sound of drums beaten by the *Devas*; he knew therefore that Bhagavat was delivered entirely from pain, and said calmly, "This is the case with every compound thing."* But Ajatastara, having "a faith without roots," would, he knew, be in consternation at the melancholy news, and he feared that the effect would be to cause the King to vomit blood and die; he therefore directed Yarchat, one of the chief ministers at Rajagriha, to go into the King's garden, and cause a series of pictures to be painted, representing how Sakya-muni descended from the heaven called Tushita into the womb of his mother, being in the shape of an elephant; how at the foot of the pipal-tree he attained Buddhahood; how at Varanasi (Benares) he turned the wheel of the Law of twelve kinds; how at Sravasti he displayed great miracles; how at some other town he descended from the heaven to which he had gone to instruct his mother; and how, after having tamed and instructed men, he went to his last resting-place in Kusinara.

After this Kasyapa directed Yarchat to take seven long basins, or troughs, filled with fresh butter, and one filled with the powder of sandal-wood, and place them in the garden. The King was then to be induced to come into the garden and observe the pictures, and when he fainted, as he

* As. Res., vol. xx. p. 309.

would on discovering Buddha's death, Yarchat was to place him in a trough of butter, and as soon as the first melted he was to be removed to the second, until he had passed through the seven troughs of butter, and lastly, he was to be laid in the powdered sandal-wood, which would complete his restoration.*

Having made these arrangements, Kasyapa set out for Kusinara, and at Pawa met a man carrying some of the celestial coral-flowers which had fallen from heaven at Bhagavat's death. As soon as he arrived at the Mallian Coronation Hall, he walked three times round the funeral pile, and then, making an opening at the bottom, bowed down his head at the feet of Bhagavat, and immediately the funeral pile spontaneously ignited. For some days the Kusinara Mallians sprinkled scented water on the ashes, and then Ajatasatra, and the Vriji Princes of Vesali, and the Sakyas of Kapila-vastu, and others, sent to beg for the corporeal remains, as relics. The different claimants seeming likely to go to war on the occasion, a Brahman, with a measure called a *drona* in his hand, reminded them that Buddha had been *patient*, and had praised the virtue of patience, and that it would be highly unbecoming to raise a contest over his remains. "Rather let us," he said, "divide the relics into eight portions." The relics were therefore measured in the *drona*, and lastly, the *drona* served as a ninth relic. The nine *dagopas* cannot however be traced, and none of those yet existing can be dated earlier than the age of Asoka.†

* The effect of sandal-wood as a refrigerator occurs also in the Legend of Purna, where a man trembles and shivers in consequence of carrying a log of this wood upon his shoulders. Burnouf, vol. i. p. 235.

† As. Res., vol. xx. p. 312.

And here we pause to draw a long breath, or heave a sigh. We believe that Sakya-muni lived and died true to his type of excellence, and it is impossible to dwell earnestly upon his career without feeling a deep interest and a strong wish to reconcile the contradiction presented by the sublimity of the man and the poverty of the religion. Speculations upon this subject are not perhaps quite prudent, but they can scarcely be avoided, and are therefore given, although with an apology.

Sakya-muni felt, as earnest men in every age have felt, dissatisfied with all that is finite, and he believed, as was the custom of his age and country, that years of meditation in seclusion could raise him even above the condition of the demi-divine Bhrigus and Ribhus of Sanskrit literature. Sakya sought for God, although he knew not that it was for God he sought, and, with all the power and energy of which man is capable, he devoted his whole being to the pursuit ; and he found God in a degree far exceeding that usually vouchsafed to man, but it was unconsciously. He knew that there was something better than earth could give; he knew that benevolence and duty were better than human reward, whether in this world or in a future state ; and he knew that he was aspiring above all the Gods and the Demi-gods of the popular creed ; but he knew not the voice that taught him ; he knew not that " God drew him," therefore he did not teach his disciples to watch and seek as he had done ; therefore he used no prayer, and taught no prayer, and bade his disciples look no higher than himself ; and therefore, no sooner was his influence removed, than the whole system began to degenerate into self-glorification and lying, hypocritical cant.

Had Sakya-muni known that duty was the law of God, and that the *nirvana* for which he yearned was going home to God, he might have saved millions of men from idolatry; but such knowledge was utterly beyond his reach. We may believe that his unconditional surrender of *himself* to duty gave him a clear perception of right and wrong: he never thought of reward for himself, and abandoned every lighter wish for that which he believed to be *right*, and, as we believe, he trusted implicitly that this would lead to eternal union with the Eternal Essence of the Universe: but this was not what he taught. True to the conceit and self-sufficiency of his age and country, he believed that he had wrested a secret from the Eternal: his clear and fresh perception of right and wrong he looked upon as a spell, which he could communicate to others, and thus enable his followers to attain the advantages he had gained, without enduring the painful, tedious, self-denying probation which he had endured.



CHAPTER VII.

“Meanwhile the winged heralds, by command
And trumpet’s sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council forthwith to be held.”—MILTON.

THE progress of Buddhism after Sakya-muni’s death has been agreeably recorded in the Ceylon Chronicles, translated by Mr. Turnour; and from these we gather that Kasyapa claimed to be Leader of the Assembly, because Buddha had said to him, “Kasyapa, thou shalt wear my hempen robes.”* And it was soon apparent to the new chief, or hierarch, that decided measures were required for

* Turnour, J. A. S. B., vol. vii. pp. 1007, 1011.

holding the community together; an old dotard was working insubordination, saying, "Weep not, bewail not; we are happily rid of that ascetic, . . . who kept us in subjection, saying, this is permissible and that is not permissible; . . . now whatever we may desire that we can do."* And Kasyapa, fearing that the teachings of the divine teacher might become extinct, determined to convene a general assembly for the purpose of preserving the words of Buddha. He wished to have five hundred members, and he wished particularly to have Ananda amongst them, because he had been more constantly with Buddha than any other disciple; but it so happened that Ananda had not yet attained that state of conversion called by Buddhists Arhathood; whereas the four hundred and ninety-nine other members were Arhats. Nevertheless Ananda was elected. It was next determined that the five hundred should meet at Rajagriha for the rainy season, and that no other *Bhikshus*, that is, no other Buddhist mendicants, should be admitted to the city during that period. These arrangements being made, Kasyapa said to them, "Beloved! ye have leisure now for forty days, after which time no excuses will be admitted, neither in reference to father or mother, or getting a refection-dish or robe made; . . . do therefore what requires to be done."†

The disciples then dispersed all over India, and at the commencement of the rains the five hundred met at Rajagriha. Their first anxiety was to get the Viharas repaired, which had been neglected and untenanted for more than a twelvemonth. With this object, a deputation placed itself

* Turnour, J. A. S. B., vol. vi. p. 512; 2 Kings, ii. 13.

† *Ibid.*, vol. vi. p. 515.

at the palace-gate, petitioned the King, and obtained a promise of artificers. When the Viharas were finished, they again sought the King, and begged for his aid in appropriating a cave in the neighbourhood as a Hall of Assembly. The King was again propitious, and a suitable hall was prepared and "adorned, as if by Viswakarma, the divine artificer himself." And now when all was ready, and the assembly on the eve of being convened, Ananda was in great distress at being still "deficient in sanctification. He spent the whole night in peripatetic meditation, and reflected that Buddha had told him that by perseverance he would be shortly sanctified. Since then, he thought, a declaration of Buddha admits no qualification, my own exertion must be over-anxious." Endeavouring therefore to feel more trust he sought repose, and "whilst in the act of reclining . . . his mind extricated itself from the dominion of sin," and he attained Arhathood; and "with a countenance full of sanctity, purity, brilliancy, and splendour," he attended the meeting with the other Bhikkhus.* At this meeting, whilst Kasyapa presided, Upali rehearsed the discourses relating to discipline; and Ananda those which referred to morals and general conduct. Different portions of these discourses were consigned to the disciples of different eminent Elders as their especial charge; a certain number, for instance, "to the disciples of the deceased Shariputra," and others to the pupils of Anuraddha. This is recorded as the first Buddhist convocation held at Rajagriha, at the close of the rainy season, in the autumn of the year B.C. 543.

After this period the principal Rajas for several centuries

* J. A. S. B., vol. vi. p. 518.

were unfavourable to the new religion, and it made but little progress in wealth or power. Morals were apparently more than usually corrupt in India; for not only Ajatasatru but three succeeding kings of Magadha obtained the throne by murdering their fathers, and then at length the populace cried out and said they would have no more of the "parri-
cidal race;" and deposing the reigning Raja, they installed the eminently wise minister named Susanaga, who reigned eighteen years.* Susanaga had the reputation of being the child of the unmarried lady who held office at Vesali, where the Vriji determined "that it would be prejudicial to the prosperity of their capital if they did not keep up the office of 'Chief of Courtesans.' " Susanaga was a most accomplished person, and was succeeded by his son Kalasoka, or Kâkavarnin,† who removed his capital from Rajagriha to Patna, called Pushpapura (city of flowers), and first called Pâtali-pura and later Pâtali-putra.‡ This is the town in which Ajatasatru was building forts a century previous, when Buddha passed through it shortly before his death, and at that time it was a mere village.

During the reign of Kalasoka, or Kâkavarnin, insubordination was observed in a Vihara at Vesali, into which ill-disposed people had insinuated themselves for the sake of a subsistence. "These shameless ministers of religion," says the Ceylon Chronicle, "pronounced the following ten indulgences allowable:"§—

* Mahawanso, iv. 16.

† *Kakavarna* means "black as a raven," and was the name or epithet usually applied to Kalasoka by Brahmanical historians.—Lassen, vol. ii. p. 83.

‡ Wilson, quoted by Lassen, vol. ii. p. 82, *note*.

§ 'Mahawanso,' translated from the Pali by Mr. Turnour. The 'Mahawanso' is a history of Ceylon, written by a Buddhist resident at a Vihara in Ceylon, about A.D. 400.

1. The preservation of salt in horn.*

The rule being, that salt could only be kept seven days ; and the innovation, that *in horn* it might be kept longer.

2. The allowance of two inches.

Buddhists are forbidden to take food after midday ; the innovation allows two inches' shadow of the declining sun.

3. Indulgence in the country.

Which means, taking in the country what is denied in the Vihara.

4. Ceremonies in sacerdotal residences.

Performing ceremonies in private houses, which should be observed in the appointed Hall.

5. Obtaining subsequent consent.

Whereas consent of Elders ought to precede religious acts.

6. Conformity to example.

No example is an excuse for a forbidden act.

7. Acceptance of whey.

But whey, equally with milk and other food, is forbidden after twelve o'clock.

8. Acceptance of *toddy* resembling water.

Whereas no fermented beverage is admissible.

9. The use of seats covered with cloths without fringes.

No costly covers, whether with or without fringes, are allowed.

10. The acceptance of silver and gold.

All precious metals are prohibited.

* Turnour, J. A. S. B., vol. vi. p. 728, from Buddhagosa's Commentary, written about A.D. 400.

An eminent Buddhist, named Yasas, hearing in the course of his pilgrimage that these ten indulgences were being propagated at Vesali, felt it necessary for the preservation of *dharma* that he should endeavour to suppress them. He went therefore and took up his abode at the Vihara indicated; but finding it impossible to suppress the schism without assistance, he went into the hills beyond the Ganges to consult other eminent elders. These all agreed that an aged Buddhist named Revata was the person to whom they should refer as chief authority, or hierarch, of the community. To the Sthavira (elder) Revata of Soreya, therefore they applied, and he expressed his willingness to accompany them to Vesali; but being infirm, he travelled slowly and by water. At one of their evening halting-places an embassy from the schismatics appeared, with presents for Revata; but the offerings were declined, and the "messengers of the sinful fraternity" being dismissed by the holy Revata, made their way to Patna, and gaining admission to the presence of the Raja Kalasoka, they entreated his protection against the designs and aggressions of certain priests resident in the provinces, who were hastening to take possession of their Vihara. Kalasoka, supposing them really oppressed, promised them redress, and sent messengers to remonstrate with Revata; but in the night he had a dream, and thought he was thrown into a place of torture after death. The King's sister was a gifted Buddhist, and possessing the usual Buddhist accomplishment of flying through the air, she came instantly to the aid of her brother, told him that he had offered to assist the wrong party, and that he must unite himself with Revata and uphold true *dharma*; and, "by adopting this course," she

concluded, "peace of mind will be restored to thee." As soon therefore as day dawned, the King proceeded to the Vihara; and having assembled and examined all the disputants, he perceived that Revata and Yasas were upholding true *dharmā*, and to them he promised his royal protection. Revata then advanced into the middle of the assembly, and caused the rules to be read, and by these rules selected eight persons, himself being one, for the purpose of examining into these controverted indulgences. The eight persons selected then withdrew to a Vihara, "free from the strife of men," and so secluded that not even the note of a bird could be heard in it. Having determined that all the indulgences were inadmissible, they returned to the chief Vihara; and selecting seven hundred out of the twelve hundred who had been collected by Yasas, a second convocation was held, under the guidance of Revata and the protection of the King Kalasoka.* The system of discipline was purified, and the whole of *dharmā* and Vinaya, or morals and discipline, were revised, and the sitting was brought to a close in eight months. This second convocation was held at Vesali, at the close of the first century after Buddha's death, B.C. 443.

After Kalasoka, the Magadha dynasty becomes exceedingly confused: he was in fact succeeded by Kings who were approved of neither by Brahmans nor Buddhists, and in consequence their history is nowhere told intelligibly; but the general version is, that the "nine Nandas" reigned about this time, and that one or more of these brothers was the sovereign of Patna, when Alexander the Great made his way across the Indus, and that when, after Alexander's

* Mahawanso, ch. iv.; Lassen, vol. ii. p. 85.

retreat, the west of India was agitated by the murder of Porus, the weak government of the Nandas was usurped by the adventurous Chandragupta and his clever companion Chanakya. Chandragupta reigned thirty-four years; his son Bindusara twenty-eight years; Bindusara leaving one hundred and one sons, "the issue of sixteen different mothers." Amongst these sons was the celebrated Asoka, who was so wild and turbulent in his youth that his father thought him safest at a distance, and sent him to reign as viceroy at Ougein. Whilst administering that government he formed an attachment to the lovely and youthful daughter of a *setthi*, or president of corporation, at Ougein.* This lady was the mother of Asoka's two celebrated children, the Prince Mahendra and the Princess Sanghamitta; and with them and his wife he continued at Ougein, or Avanti, until messengers arrived with "a leaf," announcing that his father was upon his death-bed. Asoka started instantly, leaving his children behind: their mother sent them afterwards to Patna, but remained herself with her father. When Asoka arrived, the ministers rubbed him with saffron and lac, boiled in an iron pot, for what purpose is not explained;† but we are elsewhere told that Asoka had a remarkably rough skin, so that we may suspect the ministers of wishing to make it appear smooth;‡ at any rate, when the dying King was in such a state that scarcely any life was left, Asoka, "decorated with all sorts of ornaments," was presented to his father, although Susima was the son

* Mahawanso, v., xiii.

† Asoka Avadana, Burnouf, p. 363.

‡ "And Rebekah . . . put the skins of . . . goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck; . . . and Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, whether thou be my very son Esau or not."—Book of Genesis, xxvii.

for whom he had asked and whom he had wished to nominate as his successor.

As soon as Bindusara died, Asoka raised the *chatta* (umbrella) of universal dominion; and, by way of extirpating "all disaffected persons," put ninety-nine of his father's sons to death, only reserving Tissa, who was born of the same mother as himself. No record is given of the first years of his reign; but as his dominion extended much further than that of previous sovereigns, we may suppose that he was engaged in war or diplomacy. "In the fourth year of his accession to his sole sovereignty" he caused his inauguration to be solemnized, on which occasion the Ceylon historian records that *Dewatas*, as well as men, combined to do him honour. Mangos, saffron, medicinal substances, and tooth-cleaners were brought from the Himalaya; yellow cloths, woven without seams, were brought by the Nagas; but more extraordinary offerings were "the elk, wild hog, and winged game, which went to the royal kitchen of their own accord and then expired; herds of cattle led forth by tigers, and loads of paddy brought by parrots. Mice husked the paddy, and boars worked in the royal arsenal with hammers." So much for the historical simplicity of the Mahawanso,* never backward in the invention of marvels in the honour of pious Buddhists! Asoka's eldest brother, Susima, whom he had deprived of life, left a widow and infant son; and thinking her child unsafe near the court, this poor woman went out to live in a neighbouring village of outcasts called Chandalas. Whilst in this retreat the child was noticed by a Buddhist as worthy of Buddhist training, or, in Buddhist language, as "possessing the requisites for

* Mahawanso, ch. v.

Arhathood." The little Nigrodha was consequently brought up in a Vihara in Patna, and happened just to have attained *Arhathood* at a time when King Asoka was feeling disgusted with the greediness of Brahmans. Following the example of previous reigns, sixty thousand Brahmans were regaled daily at his palace ; "but noticing from his upper pavilion the despicable proceedings of these persons, . . . the King enjoined his ministers to bestow alms with greater discrimination, . . . and caused to be brought to him ministers of all religions separately" (meaning, probably, of the various Brahmanical schools), "and having seated them and discussed their tenets and given them alms, allowed them to depart." Whilst reflecting upon their conduct and doctrine as he enjoyed the air in his lofty apartment, he observed an ascetic crossing the palace-square, whose sanctified deportment was most edifying to him. This stranger, although unknown to Asoka, was his nephew, by name Nigrodha. The King desired that he should be brought into his presence ; and although his visitor seated himself upon the throne and exacted homage from the King, his discourse was so impressive that Asoka undertook from that day to provide rice daily for Buddhist priests ; and no long time elapsed before both the King and the people generally were established in the tenets of Buddhism.

From this period the affairs of Ceylon are so interwoven with those of India, that it becomes necessary to know something of that island's history. According to the old Sanskrit poem, the Ramayana, Ceylon or Lanka was originally inhabited by an evil-disposed demoniacal race ; and although conquered by Rama, they retained possession of their island, and appear again in history about B.C. 500,

when Vijaya and a little band of Hindus set foot upon Ceylon. The story is told in the Mahawanso "under the veil of fables;" and the veil being removed, we find that a lady of royal birth, in the north of India, brought shame upon her family by marrying a man of low birth named *Sinha* (lion); and the lady and the lion, being banished from court circles, took refuge on the southern coast. Their son Vijaya scorned the obscure life which he was forced to lead with his parents, and made his way to Ceylon, where his adventures so much resemble those of Ulysses with Circe, that had the works of Homer been accessible in Ceylon, the author of the Mahawanso must have been convicted of plagiarism, says Mr. Turnour. Vijaya and his companions had no sooner landed, than the Queen, or chief of the female demons, sent her servant to them in the form of a dog. The stratagem succeeded,—“dogs are only found where there are inhabited villages,” say the men,—and following the dog, seven hundred of them fell into the power of the sorceress. Vijaya, alarmed at the prolonged absence of his companions, followed them, seized the demon, and threatened to put her to death; but she restored the missing men, transformed herself into a beautiful bride, and assisted him to kill the King and seize the government. Two years afterwards Vijaya's Hindu followers were anxious to have him regularly installed as sovereign; and as that could not be done unless he married a princess of rank equal to his own, they sent a deputation to Southern Madura, to request King Panduwo to send his daughter. The King consented, and his daughter embarked, accompanied by seven hundred daughters of the nobility. When she arrived, Vijaya dismissed his native wife, promising her a maintenance of *bali* (offerings).

This story is told with some variation by the Chinese traveller Fa-Hian. A merchant, named Sinhala, went with five hundred companions to an island inhabited by demons, for the purpose of procuring pearls and precious stones; the demons inhabiting the island assumed the form of beautiful women, and allured them into their town, which was called the Iron Town. In the night Sinhala had a dream, showing him into what danger he had fallen. Rousing his companions, they all escaped to the sea-shore, where a wonderful horse stood ready to transport them across the sea. When the demons found themselves abandoned, they complained to the King; and although Sinhala warned him of the true nature of the beautiful Ogress, he and all his family fell victims to her snares. The morning after the sorceress had been admitted to the palace, the ministers went to obtain audience, and found nothing left but bones. No one could explain the calamity, until enlightened by Sinhala; and the relation of his sagacity and courage so struck the people that they forthwith made him their King. Sinhala then collected troops, and embarking them in boats, fought the female demons until they either sank in the sea or sought refuge in another island. Sinhala destroyed the Iron City, and settlers quickly coming from various quarters, he soon established a kingdom, called after himself, Sinhala.*

This is evidently a northern adaptation of the story in the Mahawanso, and is related in nearly the same manner in a Nipal book, '*Karunda Vyuha*,' or "Construction of the Basket of Qualities," of Avalokiteswara, it being ex-

* Note by Landresse; Fa-Hian, p. 338, from a Chinese work, called '*Pian-i-tian*.'

plained that Sinhala was Buddha in one of his former births, and that Avalokiteswara was the horse which saved him. With this saint of lengthy name we shall have to make further acquaintance hereafter, and he is only mentioned here in order to explain the accompanying outline of a painting from the Caves of Ajunta, in which Sinhala and his companions arrive in boats to fight the female demons; and, victory being accomplished, worship is offered to the Saint in the form of a horse, and the King receives consecration.

Sinhala, or rather Vijaya, was succeeded on the throne by his descendants; and contemporary with Asoka we find a King Mutasiva, whom Asoka vainly endeavoured to convert to Buddhism.*

We must now return to the affairs of the Buddhist convents, or Viharas, at Patna, on the Ganges, which were thrown into disorder by some of the old *Tirthyas*, who contrived to get admission and to introduce heretical doctrine. This so much distressed the aged Mogalaputra, who then presided, that he gave up his charge to a younger man, and went to a mountain beyond the Ganges, to reflect in solitude on measures for averting the dangers which threatened his religion. When the Hierarch was gone, the disorder increased, and the Assembly felt it impossible to perform the *Upasathas*. The suspension of this rite was reported to the King, who, ignorant of the reason for its suspension, sent over his officers to command its performance: the presiding priest still refused, and the officer cut off his head;

* Mutasiva sent to Asoka gems, chank-shells; eight descriptions of pearls, etc. Asoka sent various things in return, amongst which were costly hand-towels, which are cleaned by being passed through the fire, and a message announcing his conversion to Buddhism.—Mahawanso, xi.



Escape and Coronation of Sinhala. (Painting from the Caves of Ajunta.)

this occurred several times, until the King's brother rushed to the presidential chair and prevented further carnage. The King was appalled when the circumstances were made known to him, and in great distress of mind sent a deputation to the aged Mogalaputra. After repeated solicitations, the venerable man at length consented; as he was infirm, a boat with a state canopy was sent for his accommodation. The King received him with the greatest reverence, gave him a pavilion in his own garden, and held frequent conversations with him. After expelling the sixty thousand *Tirthyas*, Mogalaputra selected one thousand of the right-believing as members of an Assembly, which sat in convocation for nine months, and restored *dharma* to purity in the eighteenth year of Asoka's reign, B.C. 241 or 245.



CHAPTER VIII.

"Where now the haughty empire that was spread
 With such fond hope? Her very speech is dead."

WORDSWORTH.

MOGALAPUTRA exerted great influence over King Asoka, and this circumstance probably accounts for the difference which we have already observed between the two series of the stone-cut Edicts. In the first series the King speaks with equal respect of Brahmanas and Sramanas, and makes no reference to Buddhist institutions; in the second series he commands the observance of the three sacred days and of the *upasatha* ceremonies, and shows other symptoms of progress in Buddhist doctrine.* The Books affirm that he had become the obedient and enthusiastic disciple of his venerable guest, and although we cannot entirely unriddle the puzzle of the King's two names of Piyadasi and Asoka, or explain all the dates satisfactorily, there is a general and undeniable coincidence in his history as developed in the

* In the recently-published work of M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire he makes nearly the same observation: "On peut remarquer que Piyadasi met dans ses édits les Brahmanes avant les Sramanes; mais dans ceux qui ont été promulgués après le concile il met toujours les Sramanes avant les Brahmanes."—Du Bouddhisme, p. 169, *note*.

Edicts and related in the Books: not indeed that any close resemblance could be established, or need even be expected, between short inscriptions and lengthy poems. The first are a record of the very words in which an actual proclamation has been made, whilst the second are amplifications worked up at leisure, according to the fancy or genius of the artist. Possibly, if some future Rawlinson should decipher stone records of the Siege of Troy, we should find that the original Hector or Agamemnon bore about the same relation to his prototype in Homer as the Piyadasi of the Edicts does to the Asoka of Buddhist literature. Nevertheless Buddhist books must not be neglected, for these Sutras and legends and poems are the basis upon which all modern Buddhism has been erected; and it is only by acquaintance with the foundation, that we can hope rightly to understand the superstructure. Taking therefore that most tedious and extravagant of legends, the 'Asoka Avadana,'* and sifting the facts, we find that the King accompanied Mogalaputra on a pilgrimage to all the places rendered holy or remarkable by the events of Buddha's life. At the tree under which he had attained Buddhahood, a monument, or *chaitya*, was to be erected, and persons engaged to live on the spot and preserve the tree. A monument, or *dagoba*, was also to be erected on the spot where Buddha died; and after all the places connected with Buddha had been reverently worshipped, the King expressed a wish to do honour to Buddha's first disciples, and to raise dagobas to the memory of Shariputra and Mogalana. The legend says, the

* Legend of Asoka in the 'Divya Avadana.' M. Burnouf explains *Avadana* as legends which explain present actions by events in previous states of existence, p. 11.

King raised these dagobas at Jetavana (meaning Kosala, near Fyzabad), where old bricks and rubbish show that much masonry has perished. At Sanchi dagobas to Shāripūtra and Mogaḷana actually exist;* and when once it was established as an act of merit to erect monuments to deceased Buddhist saints, the most distinguished saints would inevitably have many dagobas in various places and of various ages. The King was next persuaded by his venerable guide to allow his eldest son, Mahendra, to become a Sthavira (elder) in the Buddhist hierarchy. Mogaḷaputra persuaded him that a son and daughter were the best offerings he could make to Buddha; and as Agnibrahma, his daughter's husband, had already become a Buddhist and abandoned his wife, the King consented that the Prince Mahendra and his sister Saughamitta should enter the Buddhist community, making the usual vows of celibacy and going through all appropriate ceremonies with the utmost pomp.† Mogaḷaputra then, "reflecting on futurity, perceived that the time had arrived for the establishing of the religion of Buddha in foreign countries, and despatched Sthaviras into foreign parts."‡ Perhaps this is a second edition of the despatching of *dharma mahamatras* to the dominion of Antiochus, etc., recorded in the Edicts; or perhaps Mogaḷaputra looked upon Asoka's *dharma mahamatra* as mere lay teachers, in nowise lessening the necessity that well-instructed *Sthaviras* should give instruction in those benighted regions. It is at any rate well authenticated that Buddhist missions were

* J. R. A. S., vol. xiii. p. 110. 'Topes of Central India,' by Major A. Cunningham.

† Mahawanso, ch. v. p. 39 (small edition).

‡ Mahawanso, ch. xii.

at this time made, and that Asoka's son, Mahendra, was appointed to Ceylon. "The profoundly sapient great Mahendra was enjoined by his preceptor, the son of Moggali, to convert the land of Lanka;"* but thinking it would be best to wait until after the death of the old King Mutasiva, Mahendra went in the meantime to visit his mother, near Ougein: this lady's name was Chetiya; she is described as living in a city called Chetiyagiri, and the remains of her city are supposed to be still visible in the extensive and interesting ruins of Sanchi.† She was overjoyed at the arrival of her son, and established him in the Chetiya Vihara, built by herself; and whilst he spent six months preaching to his maternal relations, and converting Bhandu, the son of his mother's "younger sister's daughter," we must follow the proceedings of the Buddhist missionaries in other quarters. To Kashmere and Kandahar Mogalaputra sent *Majjhantiko*. To Maharashtra and to the Yona country and to Aparantaka he sent Sthaviras named *Rakkito*. But to the Himalaya he sent Majhima and Kassapa, which are most welcome names, for the reason that in the dagobas at Sanchi Major Cunningham has discovered a relic "of the emancipated Majhima;" also relics of the emancipated Kassapa, son of Koti, and of *Haritiputra*, the son of Hariti; a certain Yakho in the Himavanta, "together with his wife Harita," being commemorated in the Mahawanso as having attained the first stage of sanctification, etc. At Sanchi also there are relics and inscriptions to Mogalaputra, thus showing that the Books and the Dagobas are agreed as to who were the eminent people contemporary with and subsequent to Asoka, and also in some cases as to the precise

* Mahawanso, ch. xiii.

† J. R. A. S., vol. xiii. p. 114.

place in which their celebrity was acquired. Kasiyapa is said, in the Mahawanso, to have accompanied Majjhima, and Majjhima is twice mentioned in the Sanchi inscriptions as having been an *acharya* to Himavat. Kashmere and Candahar, and the neighbouring regions are mentioned in the Mahawanso as afflicted by thunderstorms, which destroyed their crops, and which they attributed to the power of *nagas* (snakes), whom they worshipped. In the time of Alexander the Great, two snakes were kept at Taxila for worship, and the Mahabharata also makes allusion to the snake-worshippers of the north-west of India; but there is still a mystery about the Nagas, to which we shall have further occasion to allude. On this occasion the Nagas became most willing converts to Buddhism; the Sthavira said, "Do not, as formerly, give way . . . to anger; . . . but, evincing your solicitude for the happiness of living creatures, abstain from the destruction of crops, . . . live, protecting mankind." And the Naga king being convinced by this discourse, "placing the Sthavira on a gem-set throne, respectfully stood by fanning him." And after recording how many discourses were preached, and how many thousands of persons were converted, the historian adds, that "from that period to the present day the people of Kasmira and Gandhara have been fervently devoted to the three branches of faith, and the land has glittered with yellow robes."*

The mission to Ceylon was still more important and lasting in its effects; for, even to our "present day," in the nineteenth century, the "yellow robes" glitter, and the religion of Buddha prevails, but very little altered from what it was when carried there by Mahendra, about B.C. 246.

* Mahawanso, ch. xii.

Devanipiatisso had become sole sovereign in Ceylon, and Mahendra meditated, "The period has arrived for undertaking the mission enjoined by my father." Accompanied by other devotees, he then made the journey, "rising aloft into the air, . . . and instantaneously alighting on the superb Missa Mountain,"* which means Mehentele, a hill rising abruptly from the wooded plains about eight miles to the north of Anuradhapura, where the remains of Buddhist temples, steps, walls, and cells may still be seen. These flying saints happened to arrive during the celebration of a "Salila" festival for the amusement of the inhabitants of the capital, when the King, with a retinue of forty thousand men, engaged in an elk hunt, and in the course of the pursuit came to Mehentele, or the Missa Mountain, upon which Mahendra had alighted.

"A certain *Deva* of that mountain," says the Mahawanso, "being desirous of exhibiting the *theros*,† having assumed the form of an elk, stationed himself there in that neighbourhood, grazing. The sovereign descrying him, and saying, 'It is not fair to shoot him standing,' sounded his bowstring; the elk fled, . . . the King gave chase," and came upon the Buddhist priests. Mahendra rendered himself alone visible, considering that the King might be alarmed if too many persons presented themselves. The King's name was Devanampiatisso (*tisso*, "well-pleasing to the Gods"), but Mahendra addresses him simply as Tisso, and says, that he has come from Jambudwipa (India) to teach him the faith of Buddha. The King remembered

* Mahawanso, ch. xiii.

† *Thero* is the Pali form of *Sthavira*, and means *elder*, or a Buddhist priest of experience.

the communication which Asoka had made upon this subject (during the reign of his father), and "laying aside his bow and arrow," and approaching this "Rishi," and conversing graciously, he seated himself near him. These appear to be the scenes depicted in the picture from the Caves of Ajunta, of which a tracing is given on the page opposite: the only difference being, that the northern artist represents the friendly *Deva* in the form of a lion, which stands proudly near the saints, one of whom is concealing himself beneath the trees.

On the right hand we see the next scene, in which the King sits conversing with the pious Mahendra; and above are depicted men, women, and children, sitting in the stables. This also accords with the Ceylon history, which speaks of the Princess Annula and her five hundred women as very early converts; and after saying that "these females attained the first stage of sanctification," it continues, "The inhabitants of the town hearing of the pre-eminent piety of the *thero* from those who had seen him the day previous, and becoming impatient to see him, assembled and clamoured at the palace-gate. Their sovereign hearing this commotion, inquired respecting it; and, learning the cause thereof, desirous of gratifying them, thus addressed them:—'For all of you (to assemble in) this palace is insufficient; prepare the great stables of the state-elephants, there the inhabitants of the capital may see these *theros*.' Having purified the elephant stables, and quickly ornamented the same with cloths and other decorations, they prepared seats in due order."*

Here again the northern artist makes a slight alteration,

* Mahawanso, ch. xv.



Buddhism carried to Ceylon. (Painting from the Caves of Ajunta.)

substituting horses for elephants. At the bottom of the picture, to the right, a man appears to be suffering punishment, a circumstance to which no allusion is made in the Mahawanso.

After the Princess and her ladies had attained the second stage of sanctification, they were anxious to enter the order of priesthood; and, as Mahendra explained that men could not ordain women, the Ceylon monarch took his advice and sent messengers to India, requesting King Asoka to send his daughter, the renowned Priestess Sanghamitta, and to send also in her charge the right-hand branch of the sacred Bo-tree. During the voyage Nagas came and endeavoured to obtain possession of this treasure; and Sanghamitta, yielding to their importunity, permitted them to take it to their Naga King, and retain possession of it for seven days.

The next great event in Ceylon was the erection of relic-shrines, called Dagobas, and as these required relics, another deputation was sent to King Asoka begging for Buddha's right canine-tooth and right collar-bone. This request was granted, and the bones arrived in safety; but at a later period, when a King of Ceylon, celebrated by the name of Dushtagamini, sent for relics, they were waylaid by Nagas; and this piratical reverence and worship of the Nagas is probably the subject of the bas-relief at Sanchi.†

Mahendra's latest works appear to have been the institution of Viharas or convents at Anuradhapura, and on the neighbouring hill of Mehentele, upon which he usually resided. We read of "sixty-eight rock cells" and "thirty-two sacred edifices."*

* Mahawanso, ch. xvi.

† See woodcut at the close of this Chapter.

The pious King Devanampiatisso was succeeded by his equally pious brother Uttiyo, in the eighth year of whose reign Mahendra died, and in the tenth year he died himself, on which occasion the Buddhist historian makes the following characteristic observations, with which we must conclude our notice of Ceylon Rajas :—"This monarch, Uttiyo, reigned ten years; thus this mortality subjects all mankind to death. If mortal man would but comprehend the relentless, the all-powerful, irresistible principle of mortality, relinquishing (the hopeless pursuit of) *San-sara** (eternity), he would, thus secured, neither adhere to a sinful course of life nor abstain from leading a pious one. This (principle of mortality), finding he had "attained this (state of sanctity), would be paralyzed, and its power (over him) utterly extinguished."†

Previous to these events the poor old King Asoka, in India, had fallen into many afflictions. His good wife, who gave mango-trees to the Buddhists, died,‡ and he unfortunately "raised to the dignity of queen-consort a malicious and vain creature," who was jealous of the presents he made to the sacred tree, and tried to poison it with the fang of a toad.§ Still worse was her jealousy of Asoka's son, Kumala, whose eyes she caused to be put out, but was herself burnt to death in consequence. Asoka is represented as growing childish in his later days, weakly giving all he possessed to the Kukkuṭi Vihara, until restrained by his grandson, Sampadi, who acted as Vice-King at Patna;||

* Professor Wilson explains this word as not eternity, but perpetual succession or revolving of births.

† Mahawanso, ch. xx.

§ Mahawanso, ch. xx.

‡ J. A. S. B., vol. vi. p. 967.

|| Burnouf, 426.

at length, three years after his disastrous marriage, he died, B.C. 226, after a reign of thirty-seven years.*

The reign of Asoka appears to have been the noonday of Buddhist prosperity, during which the devotees became a powerful body, with well-organized Viharas, or convents, in which luxury was prohibited and the sacred records studied and preserved. The holy men were not allowed seats of costly cloth, nor umbrellas made of rich material, with handles adorned with gems and pearls; nor might they use fragrant substances, or fish-gills and bricks for rubbers in the bath, except indeed for their feet. Garlic, toddy, and all fermented liquors were forbidden, and no food permitted after midday. Music, dancing, and attendance upon such amusements were forbidden. Nor were they allowed seal-rings or stamps of gold; but stamps of a baser metal they might have, provided the design were "a circle, with two deer on opposite sides, and below the name of the Vihara."† This regulation was probably made in reference to mythological emblems employed by the Bactrian Greeks, and it is only in the northern books that we meet with it. In Ceylon it was an act of merit to enrich the Vihara in every way possible. A pious King (Dushtagami) consoled himself on his dying bed by rehearsing his good deeds, and amongst others mentions the woollen carpets which he gave to the Vihara, and the golden ladle which he substituted for the cocoa-nut commonly in use.‡

Some inscriptions, discovered on the walls of the ruined Viharas at Mehentele, give us further insight into the wealth and importance to which these wonderful institu-

* Lassen, vol. ii. p. 271. † Csoma Korösi, *As. Res.* vol. xx. pp. 86, 87.

‡ Mahawanso, ch. xxvii., p. 164.

tions occasionally attained;* the date being A.D. 262, and the language what Mr. Turnour calls "the abstruse idiom and phraseology employed in regal and sacred documents."†

The devotees are to rise at dawn, to meditate on the four preservative principles, to perform ablutions, to attire themselves in yellow robes, to resort to a neighbouring convent to perform religious offices, to partake of *conjee* (rice-water) and rice, and duly to serve such members as are prevented attending through sickness. Twelve cells are assigned to those who expound the Abhidharma, seven to those who preach the Sutras, and five to the students of the Vinaya. The regulations regarding property provide that donations made to devotees shall not be appropriated otherwise, but that all lands and products shall be enjoyed in common and not possessed individually. The regulations regarding servants require that no retainer shall be dismissed without the concurrence of the whole community; and amongst these retainers we find, overseers of villages, cooks, writers of accounts, and receivers of income. If the servants attached to *daageys*, *bogeys*, and *pilemageys* embezzle the offerings, they are to be punished by hard work: *daageys* being houses or sheds in which offerings to a neighbouring Dagoba are placed; *bogeys* being similar houses, placed under a Bo-tree, to receive the offerings to the tree; and *pilemagey* being a similar house with the addition of an idol or idols.‡ Some regulations have in view the protection of tenants upon temple-lands, from whom

* Eastern Monachism, p. 156.

† Epitome History in Ceylon Almanac, 1832.

‡ These are the words used in Mr. Armour's translation, and belong probably to the local vernacular.

fees must not be exacted, nor their cattle compelled to labour for the Vihara: hereditary service fields shall not be resumed, and palm-trees, mee-trees, and other fruit-bearing trees shall not be felled without consent of the tenant. All temple-lands pay certain fees; but some lands are wholly set aside for the benefit of the Vihara, and the revenues of these lands, after paying the allotted wages, shall be entered in books, so that the whole may be under inspection. The items in these accounts were, expenditure on account of the Maha Patera (great bowl), hired servants, repairs.

Those who acted inconsistently with their yellow garments, by destroying life in the chase or otherwise, were to be expelled.

A second inscription of the same date, but upon a separate rock, specifies the exact sums to be given to Vihara servants, and is interesting from showing the services required; priests reading *bana* (sacred books) during the rainy season; priests reading *bana* at the conclusion of the rains; cook, florist, plasterer, scavenger, maker of sandals, one that spreads cloths on the ceiling, ditto on the floor, one who furnishes a water-strainer monthly, one who furnishes incense, oil, flowers for offerings; painters, carpenters, braziers, stone-cutters, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, lime-burners, washers of vestments and bed linen.

More than one hundred persons* are enumerated as servants to this monastery, and amongst these are a physician and a surgeon. In the time of Asoka, we are told that a devotee suffered dreadfully from a thorn in his foot, and that Asoka, hearing of this, reflected that a timely applica-

* Eastern Monachism, p. 156.

tion of a palmful of butter might have saved a dangerous ulcer, and decreed that in future, medicines should be dispensed daily at the four gates of the town of Patna. Whether or not this was the commencement of medical practice in Viharas need not be decided, but it is at any rate well ascertained that Buddhist devotees early studied the art of healing, and that the chief merit of the still-existing Viharas, or Lamasarais, in Tibet, is their knowledge of herbs, drugs, and surgery.



Relics carried from India to Ceylon intercepted by Nagas.



Demetrius.

CHAPTER IX.

"So roll, thou ancient Chronicle,
The ages' mist away."—ALFORD.

THE best Chroniclers of the ages succeeding King Asoka in Northern India are coins, and from these, and from such scant facts as are incidentally supplied by native and foreign histories, we learn that after the death of Asoka his large dominions fell into three divisions, each son or grandson becoming King of the province of which he was previously the viceroy. Sampadi, at Patna, and Kumala, at Taxila, were Buddhists, but Jaloka,* in Kashmere, adopted Saiva worship. Buddhists he persecuted, and Viharas he pulled down, until arrested by the apparition of a threatening Goddess, at whose suggestion he restored the ruined edifices; but so soon as he gained a victory over Euthydemus, then invading India, he instituted a festival of thanksgiving† to

* Lassen suggests that Jaloka, written probably for Jayaloka, means "Conqueror of the world," and is another name for the Northern King whom the Greeks call Sophagasenas.—Lassen, vol. ii. p. 273.

† Lassen, vol. ii. p. 274.

his favourite God Siva. Thenceforward we find but little mention of Hindu monarchs, and must take what facts we can from the coins and notices of Græco-Bactrians. Antiochus the Great advanced to take vengeance upon Euthydemus, who had declared himself an independent King in Bactria; but the great King was conciliated by Demetrius, the handsome son of Euthydemus, and a marriage took place between this youth and a daughter of Antiochus. The great King then pushed forward into India, and "renewed with Sophagasenas the treaty made with his predecessor;" which is understood to mean, that Antiochus renewed with *Jaloka* the treaty previously made with Asoka (or Piyadasi), to which allusion is made in the Edicts.* This treaty did not however deter Demetrius from subsequently invading India, and it is in token of successes in that country that he wears the elephant's head upon his helmet.

Whilst Demetrius was absent, Bactria was conquered by Eucratides, the Greek governor of Sogdiana. Castor and Pollux mounted, beautifully executed, are the prevailing device on the reverse of his coins. Those which are square have a bilingual inscription, Arianian on one face, Greek barbarized on the other. About fifty years later, Agathocles, who reigned where the grape-vine flourishes in the valleys of the Hindu Kush, wreathes vine-leaves round his head, fastens his fillet with a thyrsus, and has a vine and panther on the reverse of coins which bear a bilingual legend, the equivalent of the Greek being an alphabet of genuine Indian family. On a second series of Agathocles coins the legend is Greek only; on the reverse Jupiter holds in his outstretched hand a little three-headed Moon-

* Lassen, vol. ii. p. 273.

Goddess,* whilst the clumsy square copper coins of this same King bear on the reverse a woman dressed like an Indian dancing-girl, with a legend in old Indian (Pali) characters, "Nania," showing that she is the Anaites, Nanania, Ashtoreth, or Astarte, of Assyria. The coins of Menander give similar indications; but we must tarry no longer amongst the Greek Kings, whose numerous coins have all to find a place within little more than one hundred years, for B.C. 120 they are dethroned by a Scythian named Mayes,† calling himself King of Bactria, and imitating with his best endeavours the beautiful Greek coinage. This King and his successors are supposed to have held long contests with Menander and others, on whose coins are inscribed Soter (Saviour), in record of occasional success against the new intruders. About this same period, and contemporary both with Greeks and Scythians, another series of Kings or rulers has been discovered, through the medium of coins and rock inscriptions: these are the Sahs of Surashtra, or Guzerat, who flourished from B.C. 157 down to B.C. 57. Their coins are not without traces of fine workmanship, but one set of features is made to serve for the whole series, and although the face is in profile the eye is full-fronted: the features, mustachios, and earrings are of Indian character, whilst the reverse exhibits the heavenly bodies, a three-coned pyramid, and a waving line.‡ The pyramid has been supposed to be Mount Meru, and a waving line symbolizes water, so that the whole might typify "Mitra, Varuna, Aditi; Ocean, Earth, Heaven," the invocation with which the Vedic bard

* Wilson's Ariana, pp. 209, 297, 299.

† Lassen, vol. ii. p. 371.

‡ Wilson's Ariana, p. 411.

Kutsa invariably concludes his hymns. But it is more probable that the Sahs combined the symbols of several diverse faiths, according to the prevailing spirit of the age.

Suddenly Greeks, Sahs, and Scythians vanish, and Vikramaditya, of Sanskrit celebrity, occupies the whole stage of Western India. This King's reign belongs to our Third Book, when Brahmanism gains the ascendancy over Buddhism; the interruption it makes is very short, for about the year B.C. 24 the whole territory was once more under foreign sway. Scythians again descended from the tablelands of Asia, but Scythians of a different stamp from the barbarous hordes of King Azes. The Chinese call them Yu-chi, and they are supposed to be one with the White Huns of history and the Jats of modern India: evidently they were people of intellect, and worthy of descent from the original Zoroaster. All their coins exhibit objects of worship; the earlier ones indicate Persian fire-worship,—flames issue from the shoulders both of busts and standing figures, and the legend is *Ardethro*, God of Light; the word *Korano* follows the name of the King, a word supposed to indicate an elected King, it having been Scythian custom to choose from amongst the late King's sons the one most worthy to succeed him.* On later coins, the King's name and titles are written in ill-executed Greek characters, without any second legend in Arianian; and on the reverse appears Siva leaning upon his bull Nandi, his trident in hand, and his hair drawn up to a point like a flame; or instead of the flame he wears a cap surmounted by a crescent moon. On the reverses are inscribed,—*Helios*, the Sun-god, *Mao*, the Moon-god, *Nanaia*, the Moon-goddess, and

* Lassen, vol. ii. p. 827.

Athro, or *Ardethro*, the god of Fire. Nanaia we have already noticed upon the coins of Agathocles; she is the goddess mentioned in the Apocrypha, in whose temple Antiochus was slain.* Her worship seems to have taken strong hold of the people of the Kashmerian provinces with which we are at present occupied: her memory is still cherished in Afghanistan, Hindus and Mohammedans both invoking her as *Bibi Nani*, Lady Nani. Amongst other devices upon these coins, there is a running figure holding a large transparent veil, in which he seems about to envelope himself, whilst from his head radiate sunbeams; *Oado* is the legend, by some interpreted as Wind, but the appearance is much more in favour of his being the Sun† running through his daily course until enveloped in the veil of night. A figure holding a lance and having a nimbus with the legend *Pharo* is identified as an Iranian God of Rain.‡ Many others show Saiva attributes; the figure, sometimes a man, sometimes a woman, the dress Indian, the form occasionally classic, but oftener disfigured by four arms, or even six arms and three heads.

Thus far we find these Yu-chi Scythians adopting Greek coinage, and occasionally a Greek God or device, but leaning religiously toward the worship of fire and the heavenly bodies. But as their rule upon the confines of India became more established, we reach the fact on which our present interest in them is grounded. Upon the coins of a King Kanerki appears the image of Sakya Sinha, or

* "For when the leader was come into Persia, and the army with him, that seemed invincible, they were slain in the Temple of Nania, by the deceit of Nania's priests."—2 Maccabees iv. 13. Wilson's *Ariana*, p. 362.

† Wilson, p. 362.

‡ Lassen, vol. ii. pp. 827, 842.

Buddha, this name being apparently a variety of the name Kanishka, who was a King well known both to Brahmanical and Buddhist literature as a zealous protector and promoter of Buddhism. On a copper cylinder found in an adjacent tope, the name is Kanishka, and also in the inscription on a great stone covering the relic-cell in this tope.* The coins bearing the name of Kanerki are very numerous, the same probably belonging to several successive kings, and the whole series is known consequently as the Kanerki coins. Upon those of Oerki the words *Adi Buddha*† have been detected, and at this epoch Buddha's



Gold Cup.‡

image is often represented with flames at the shoulder, in imitation of Magian symbolism; an image of this kind, found in Tirhut, is figured in the fourth volume of the

* Lassen, vol. ii. p. 1177.

† *Adi Buddha* simply means First Buddha, the doctrine *Adhi Buddha*, the Supreme, belongs to a later period.—Lassen, vol. ii. p. 1176.

‡ Wilson's *Ariana*, plate iv.

‘Bengal Journal.’ A large head of Buddha with snakes* on his head may be seen in the same Journal, and on a gold cup found in the Manikyala Tope we see Buddha’s head surmounted by flames. At this stage of symbolism, lions and snakes are used as couches and footstools, either for Sivas or Buddhas, and Siva doctrine and formulas of magic are intruded amongst the Buddhist sacred books. This demoralizing confusion was not however permitted to prevail entirely unchecked, and although the coinage of the Kanerki princes gives evidence of wide latitudinarianism, Buddhist hierarchs at length obtained an ascendancy; this is admitted even in a Brahmanical Sanskrit history called the ‘Raja Tarangini,’ where it is said that three kings of Turushka descent reigned in Kashmere, each of whom founded a town which bore his name; they were protectors of virtues, and built *viharas*, schools, and *chaityas* (topes or dagobas); during the long period of their rule the whole of Kashmere was the enjoyment of Buddhists, and Nagarjuna was the spiritual lord. From the Chinese we learn that these *Turushka* Princes were so formidable that young Princes from China were sent to them as hostages; the Court residing in winter in India, in the spring and autumn at Candahar, and during the heat of summer up in the mountains to the north of Kabul. “And now,” says the Ceylon history, “the yellow robes glittered (again) in Kashmere, and Hushka, Jushka, and Kanishka . . . founded colleges and *chaityas*.” The *Nagas* of this country were converted, it will be remembered, in the reign of Asoka,† but the numerous topes and architectural remains with which it abounds appear to be referable to

* Lassen, vol. v. p. 484.

† Mahawanso, ch. xii.

the rule of the Kanerkis. They consist of tumuli common to many ancient nomadic tribes, under the protection of a mound or dagoba characteristic of Buddhism, and accompanied by fragments of the architecture and sculpture of Viharas, exhibiting beauty unaccountable unless explained in the same way as we account for the good workmanship of the coins, by supposing that when the Greeks were forced to abandon the country they left workmen who had profited by their instruction. Judging by their coins, these Scythic kings wavered for a time between Mithraic worship, Saiva worship, and Buddhism, but finally united the three, taking Mithraic symbols of flame and the heavenly bodies and belief in Swayambhava, joined with the general forms and doctrines of the Buddhists. During the reign of Kanishka, a great Buddhist assembly or convocation was held in Kashmere, which repudiated many Sivaite compositions; some objectionable Tantras were however retained, unwillingly as Burnouf thinks, even hierarchs not having power to exclude compositions which had become so popular. The leader of this fourth Buddhist assembly was Nagarjuna, or Nagasena, the name being spelt in both ways: he was born in Berar (Vidharba), and is supposed to have been sixty years old when he put forth his celebrated philosophical system, known as the *Madhyamika*.^{*} His delight was in transcendentalism,—“Wisdom arrived at the other shore,” and his works are still popular in Ceylon, although his doctrine is called by Burnouf “scholastic nihilism,” for he doubts everything, and to this circumstance his school is supposed to owe its name, *Madhyamika*, intermediate. The following are examples of his negative

^{*} Lassen, vol. ii. p. 1163, *note*.

mode of argument:—"Thought does not see thought: it is like the blade of a sword, which cannot cut that blade; it is as the extremity of a finger which cannot touch that finger. . . . Thought or mind is the object to be examined: that which is not apprehended (by the senses) is not perceived; that which is not perceived is neither past, future, nor present; that which is neither past, future, nor present has no proper nature; that which has no proper nature has no origin; that which has no origin has no distinction." And again it is asserted that Buddha himself is nothing,—a word, an illusion, a dream."* Herein Nagarjuna differs essentially from the Brahman philosophers, who, as we have seen, assert "the perpetuity of the subject." The book containing this, and much more to the same effect, claims to have been written by Nagarjuna, and Nagarjuna claims to have been the friend and spiritual adviser of Kanishka. Possibly Nagarjuna taught, like the Greek philosophers, one doctrine for the initiated and another for the public; for his name is appended to a Tantra work on magic circles, which is described as "miserable in doctrine, odious and degrading in principle."† Or perhaps the Kanerki allowed him to direct Viharas and colleges, but reserved to themselves the privilege of worshipping universally. We might even imagine that they worshipped Nagarjuna himself; for on some of the later coins of the series the obverse (where a figure of the King usually appears) is occupied by a holy personage, who sits upon snakes, with one hand elevated, in the act of teaching.‡ This looks very much as though

* Burnouf, Introduction, pp. 561, 562.

+ *Ibid.*, p. 558.

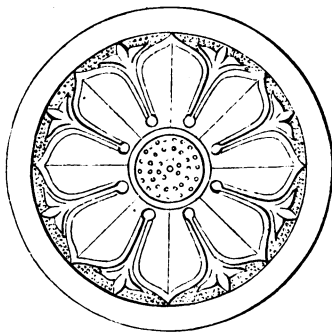
‡ Wilson's *Ariana*, Plate xiii., 8, 10.

Lama worship had then begun, Nagarjuna being the Lama, or Teacher, and the snakes an allusion to his name. Manjusri of Nipal is another saint, who acts a similar part. He was born twice for the benefit of mankind: on the first occasion B.C. 200, when he peopled Nipal; the second time in the first century of our era, when he taught the celebrated formula "Om mani padma hum." *Om* being the mysterious tri-literal monosyllable sacred to Brahmans before Buddhism existed; *Mani* meaning jewel, *padme*, lotus, and *hōm* or *hum*, something analogous to Amen. In Nipal Manjusri is still worshipped; but in Tibet the invocation "Om mani" is addressed to Padmasri, a saint or deity who has no human history or name. He is represented as a graceful youth, bearing in his hands a jewel and a lotus; but in the sacred books his name is Avalokiteswara, and his history is given in a legend called 'The Basket of the Good Qualities of the Saint Avalokiteswara.' In this work he is shown to be the same with Padma-pani, and declared to be *the* Buddha of this era; which is in itself the Lama doctrine of successive divine hierarchs. A second version of this legend in verse is much more in detail, and contains the important addition of "Adi-buddha." "At the commencement," it says, "Adibuddha, the Self-Existent, called Swayambhu, appeared in the form of a flame. From the spirit of Adibuddha . . . emanated Avalokiteswara," and also five Dhyani Buddhas, white, yellow, red, blue, green. The whole vault of heaven is filled with Buddhas, Dhyani Buddhas, Pratyeka Buddhas, Bodhisatwas, Arhats, Aryas, and Sramanas, Adibuddha being seated on the summit. The date assigned to the poem is about A.D. 1200. Dhyani Buddhas may have sprung into notice some centuries ear-

lier, but they were peculiar to Nipal, and never recognized in the mythologies of other Buddhist countries.*

We have now traced the outline of the course which Buddhism took in northern India, when checked in the more central provinces, our object being to watch the variations adopted when it encountered foreign faiths. In Ceylon, where it was insulated, it has retained the Indian stamp; but even there a periodical succession of Buddhas is believed in, and statues are raised to Maitreya, as the Buddha who will next be born on earth. This is a very slight sketch of a very complicated subject; but to fill it up would be always tedious and often impossible, and it must suffice if it but indicate the relation which Sakya Sinha's original movement bears to the cumbrous Buddhism of later ages.

* Wilson, Buddha and Buddhism, p. 27.



CHAPTER X.

"The evidence of others is not comparable to personal experience ; nor is 'I heard' so good as 'I saw.'"—*Chinese Maxims*, J. F. DAVIS.

DURING seven or eight centuries after the Christian era, Buddhists were in turn patronized, neglected, and persecuted by the Kings of India. At one period a long series of coins exhibits Buddhist symbols ; at another time we find Buddhist Viharas and Ascetics tolerated in a Sanskrit Brahmanical drama ; and, in other ways, we learn that Buddhists chased from the Ganges took refuge in Nipal, or we discover them amongst the volcanic hills of the Dekkan, where we shall have occasion to notice their wonderful excavations. But before taking up the subject of Buddhist architecture, it will be interesting to learn in what condition the religion appeared to Chinese Buddhists visiting India during the early centuries of our era. Fortunately the Chinese had not only the enterprise to come and see, but intelligence sufficient for recording their observations. "Depuis le quatrième siècle de notre ère jusqu'au dixième," says M. Stanislas Julien, "les pèlerins Chinois qui sont allés dans les contrées situées à l'ouest de la Chine, et particulièrement dans l'Inde, pour étudier la doctrine du Boud-

dha et rapporter les livres qui la renferment, ont publié un grand nombre de relations, d'itinéraires, et de descriptions plus ou moins étendues des pays qu'ils ont visités." Generals and magistrates sent on Government missions were also in the habit of recording what they observed, for the interests of war, politics, and commerce; one of these works being in sixty volumes, with forty books of drawings and maps; but unfortunately this valuable collection, and most of the other works, are lost or hidden, and only known through the mention made of them in Chinese Encyclopædias.* The earliest book of Chinese Travels extant is what Rémusat calls "Fo-koue-ki, ou Relation des Royaumes Bouddhiques." It is the work of a Chinese Buddhist, named Fa-Hian, who left the western capital of China A.D. 399. He writes in the third person, and commences, "Formerly Fa-Hian was afflicted to see the precepts and the theological works on the verge of destruction, and already injured by omissions. For this reason he departed, accompanied by several companions, to seek in India the laws and precepts of the religion."† He gives a striking description of the "river of sand," which is the desert where our contemporaries, MM. Huc and Gabet, suffered so much from burning winds, they having started precisely in the same direction; but as in the time of Fa-Hian Lhasa had not attained Buddhist celebrity, he and his companions crossed the "Montagne de Grandpère Blanc" further to the west, and visited Khotan, where they witnessed the ceremonies performed on the first day of the fourth moon. The streets were swept, watered, and decorated. Curtains were

* Stanislas Julien, Preface to Trans. Hiouen-Tsang, p. 111.

† Rémusat's translation.

hung before the gates. The King and the Queen and a company of beautiful women were seated on a pavilion above the principal gate. Presently a great procession of images approached, the images being placed within pavilions drawn upon cars: when the procession was within a hundred paces of the gate, the King descended to give it welcome. He took off his tiara, put on new clothes, and with naked feet prostrated himself before the chief image, and paid homage by scattering flowers and burning incense. As the images passed through the gate, the ladies on the pavilion above threw down so great a profusion of flowers as to cover the car. Festivals of this description were numerous, each having appropriate cars, and each Temple making its own distinct procession. The travellers were lodged in a Vihara (or convent) built in a square, where all the occupants took their repast in common; no noise was heard from basins or platters, and no word was uttered during meals. The religious buildings of this town are described as peculiarly magnificent: one temple was eighty-four years in building, occupying three kings' reigns. Sculptures are particularized, and gold and silver images decorated with precious stones, also gilded windows and doorposts of gold.

Whilst amongst these mountains, probably at Ladak, the five-yearly Assembly took place, to which Buddhists from all quarters came and assembled like clouds, with pomp and gravity. The Hall of Assembly was decorated with banners and hangings, a throne of rich silk adorned with gold and silver lotus-flowers, and below the throne elegant seats. The King and his ministers were in attendance, and performed their devotions according to the law. This ceremony is usually held in spring, and lasts one, two, or three

months; and when it is over, Fa-Hian remarks that the King, his ministers, and other persons of distinction, give their horses, shawls, and whatever they have of value to the Sramanas (priests) or Assembly, and afterwards purchase them all back again. This country is so cold that grain is ripened with difficulty; but as it was observed that the snow never came on until the Sramanas were provided for, the King forbade them to receive their annual supplies until the whole harvest was gathered in. The devotees of this region are remarked by Fa-Hian as using praying-wheels or cylinders. He also observes that, in travelling towards the west, each kingdom has a different language, all barbarous; but that, although a barbarous vernacular is the spoken language, the sacred books are written in the language of India, which is studied in the numerous convents, where strangers are warmly welcomed, entertained for three days, and then dismissed. He sees the gigantic statue of Maityra, which on certain occasions glistens with light, and he visits the scenes of all the extravagant legends of Buddha's sacrifices, and sees the Pillars set up in commemoration. Proceeding further east, he comes to the town where the begging-dish of Sakya Sinha refused to be stolen by the King of the Yu-chi: he put it on an elephant, but the elephant would not move; he put it in a car, but the car could not be stirred; so the King turned devotee, raised a dagoba to hold the dish, and built a Vihara for seven hundred holy men. A little before midday these holy men, all dressed in white, take the precious dish from its enclosure, pay homage, burn perfumes, and in the evening put it back into its shrine.* That *white* should be the dress adopted in this

* Fa-Hian, ch. xii. p. 77.

convent is worthy of remark, because the holy men represented in the paintings from the Caves of Ajunta* are mostly in white; whereas Buddhist literature gives white as the dress of laymen, and yellow as the distinguishing colour of religious robes.

In another town, probably Jellalabad, he speaks of the bones of Buddha's skull, guarded by eight royal ministers, each of whom daily affixes his seal to the door of the dagoba in which they are enshrined. Every morning this relic is placed upon a throne, the King and Court come to offer flowers and perfumes, and priests mounted on an elevated pavilion sound drums, conch-shells, and copper cymbals. In India, the places of Buddha's birth and of all the remarkable events of his life, are visited, and legends of the utmost extravagance or *development* are recounted; snakes or *nagas* are also mentioned with reverence; and a story is told of elephants who did temple-service in an abandoned Vihara, where "the elephants are seen to come taking water in their trunks to water the ground;" this may possibly explain the device on the pillars at Kennary, where elephants sprinkle water upon dagobas.† The woods, he says, are filled with monuments, but he could not visit them from their being so much infested by tigers and white elephants; from which we may infer that the present formidable Tarai, or jungle, was even then beginning to encroach upon human habitations.

At another place, apparently in Oude, a little snake, or

* See pictures now in the Crystal Palace, Sydenham.

† Fergusson, *Rock-cut Temples*, p. 36. It is also the subject of a bas-relief on the eastern gate of the Bhilsa Topes.—Major A. Cunningham, p. 212.

naga, whose ears were edged with white, was fed and worshipped daily. In this neighbourhood also Fa-Hian visited the "Grove of Restored Sight." The legend is, that five hundred blind men had taken up their abode here; that Buddha preached the law in their favour; that they recovered their sight; that each man stuck his staff in the ground and turned in adoration towards the temple, and that when they looked round again their staves had all taken root and were growing into trees. Fa-Hian found the devout inhabitants of the neighbouring Vihara in the habit of resorting to this grove for contemplation after dinner.

When Fa-Hian reached the kingdom of Magadha he found Buddhism held in great respect. Kings and nobles had given fields, houses, gardens, orchards, farms, and cattle to the Viharas, and recorded their donations upon plates of iron; and the Buddhist communities being thus provided with houses, lands, food, and clothing, constantly occupied themselves with good works and the study of their sacred books. Some of the Viharas adhered to the simple Sutras; but generally Fa-Hian found what he calls *la grande translation* very much preferred. The colleges, he says, are built in a grave majestic style, and *Sramanas* from all quarters of the globe make them their resort. Hospitals were also established, at which the poor, the lame, and the sick of the surrounding country received food and medical relief. No wine was drunk in these Buddhist countries, and neither wine-houses nor shambles were found within their towns. Garlic and onions, pork and poultry were forbidden; and the only people allowed to hunt or sell meat were Chandalas, whose very name

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Fa-Hian explains as "odious;" "their dwellings," he says, "are separate from those of other men; and when they enter a town or market they are obliged to strike on a piece of wood to announce their presence." This custom is still in force in southern India; the more favoured races requiring the unhappy outcasts to give sufficient warning to enable them to escape all contact.

The Kings of these prosperous districts took off their tiaras to do homage to the priests; and both Kings and nobles gave food with their own hands to the *Sramanas*, and then sat near them on a carpet, but never occupied a raised seat if a priest were present. Capital punishments were not allowed, but fines resorted to instead, or, in extreme cases, the right hand was amputated. The only money mentioned by the Chinese journalist is cowrie-shells. "In the kingdom of Magadha," says Fa-Hian, "the towns and villages are large; the people rich, fond of discussion, but compassionate and just in action; and the paintings and sculptures such as this age could not produce." He then proceeds to describe a grand annual festival, when a tower of lances is erected upon cars, which are covered with hangings representing images of all the celestial divinities. These hangings are so arranged that each corner is attached to a little image of Buddha surrounded by Bodhisatwas. On these occasions the streets are crowded, and the people entertained with theatrical representations and gymnastic exhibitions; flowers and perfumes are scattered in profusion, and when night falls the whole scene is illuminated by lanterns. Fa-Hian mentions a pillar on which is inscribed, "The great Asoka gave . . . to the religious of the four quarters: he ransomed it from them for money, and this

he did three times." At a town called Nili he saw another pillar surmounted by a lion, with an inscription recording the foundation of the town. Fa-Hian was altogether so much delighted with Magadha, and with the grave sedate deportment of the Sramanas, that he remained three years in the kingdom; and hoped if in future he should become Buddha he might be born in Magadha, and not on the eastern frontier, where the Sramanas "neglected the precepts and transgressed in their *devoirs*."*

Fa-Hian's companions returned from Magadha to China; but his first desire being that the precepts should penetrate the Land of Han, he embarked on the Ganges, arrived in sadness at Tamlouk, and proceeded to Ceylon, which he calls the "Island of Lions." He there finds *bana* (the Law, or sacred books) being read publicly three times every month, halls being erected at every four crossway for the purpose. But image-worship was also fully established; and an image of blue jasper, holding in its hand a pearl of inestimable value, was to our traveller "dazzling and majestic beyond expression." Many years had now elapsed since Fa-Hian had quitted his native country; and always speaking in the third person he says, "The people with whom he had had intercourse had all been people of strange countries. The mountains, the rivers, the herbage, the trees, all that met his eyes was new to him. And of those with whom he had first started, some had separated from him, others had remained behind, and others were dead. In reflecting on the past his heart was filled with thought and sadness. Suddenly, by the side of the jasper figure he saw a merchant making an offering to the statue of a Fan of

* Ch. xxxvi.

white silk from the country of Tsin (China); although unperceived, this caused him so much emotion that tears ran down his cheeks."

Fa-Hian also found the tooth-relic enjoying a full measure of popular esteem, and thus describes a festival held in its honour:—"Ten days previously, the King having carefully chosen a large elephant, a preacher arrayed in royal robes mounts, and, striking the drum, proclaims Buddha's chief merits as,—‘He abandoned the Queen his wife; he tore out his eyes to give them to another man; he cut his flesh to ransom a pigeon; he threw his body to a hungry tiger; he spared neither his marrow nor his bones: . . . it is thus by practising austerities and macerations for all living beings that he succeeded in becoming Buddha.’" Ten days afterwards the tooth is carried to Mehenteli, pictures of the five hundred manifestations of Buddha being placed upon the sides of the road. Amongst these manifestations are mentioned his transformation into "Lightning," into "the King of the Elephants," and into the "Wonderful Horse." During its whole progress the tooth is surrounded by successive crowds of worshippers, and when it arrives at the mountain of Mehenteli it is carried up to the hall of Buddha, where thick clouds arise from burning perfumes, and where lamps are kept lighted, and religious acts are practised uninterruptedly for ninety days and nights.*

* The tooth-relic is scarcely less honoured now than it was in the days of Fa-Hian, only it follows the Court, and has migrated with the Royal family from Anaradhapura to Kandy. Images are also universal in Ceylon, and often of gigantic size, and a building erected for the occupation of an image is usually well built, and covered with tiles; in Burmah these are gilded, but even in Ceylon the house of the image is made more costly than the houses for priests.

About two centuries later, another eminent Chinese undertook this difficult pilgrimage, safely returned to his native land, and handed down to posterity a record of his impressions. Hwan Tsang was the son of a much-esteemed man of letters, who lived a life of study in retirement. Hwan Tsang describes his father as tall, with kindly eyebrows and brilliant eyes, wearing ample vestments and a broad girdle, which gave him the air of one of the *litterati*. Hwan Tsang was the youngest of four sons, grave from childhood, and showing wonderful intelligence ; one of his elder brothers took him with him to his convent, thinking him well suited to become a teacher of the doctrine of Buddha. The Emperor published a decree that twenty-seven members of this convent should be ordained, and although Hwan Tsang was too young to be a candidate, he was selected on account of his distinguished ability. He was at this time only thirteen years of age, but he studied with ardour, comprehended quickly, and never forgot what he had once acquired. Political disturbances interrupting study in the capital, the brothers retired to the country where they shed tears of joy at meeting two renowned teachers from the west.

As soon as he has attained his twentieth year, Hwan Tsang is fully admitted as a monastic member, and during the following summer he studies the books called the Vinaya, the Sutras, and the Shastras. He sometimes meets with passages which he cannot understand, and seeks help from the studious at other convents. He is however constantly called upon to take a part in religious discussions, from which he uniformly retires victorious : he nevertheless perseveres in trying to get his own difficulties solved, and as the sacred books themselves are proved to contain many

contradictory texts, he resolves to travel to the West, in imitation of Fa-Hian: he is told that the route is difficult and full of peril, but he sounds his heart and satisfies himself that his courage is equal to the undertaking. The Government forbids his journey, and he is obliged to depart secretly and alone. He prays to the statue of Maitreya for a guide, and a guide appears: his guide afterwards fails him and he meets with various adventures, until he reaches the sandy desert; he is perishing for want of water, and does not know his way, but he prays without ceasing to Avalokiteswara, saying: "Hwan Tsang seeks neither riches nor profit, praise nor reputation, his only aim is the acquirement of superior intelligence and of the correct law. I feel, O Bodhisattwa! that your affectionate heart is constantly occupied with delivering creatures from the pains of life, and never were there more cruel pains than those I suffer. Canst thou be ignorant of them?" He thus prayed until the middle of the fifth night, when suddenly he was refreshed by a cooling breeze; a voice spoke, a vision appeared, his horse took a different direction, and he arrived in fertile pastures and beside sweet waters.* Hwan Tsang took a more northerly course than Fa-Hian, and visited I-gou, a place identified as Hami, or Khamil: here the King strives to attach him to his service, and his anxiety to retain a learned Buddhist at his Court is so great that when Hwan Tsang declines he uses compulsion, absolutely forbidding his departure. The Sage is firm, and steadily refuses food, until on the fourth day the King gives way, but makes two requests; first, that on his return he will live

* These deserts were still haunted by spirits in the days of Marco Polo. See Preface Stan. Julien, p. xli.

at his Court three years ; and secondly, that when he is born again as Buddha, he, the King of I-gou, shall be his patron, as Bimbisara and Praesnajit were of Sakya Sinha. Hwan Tsang spent a month with this zealous King, holding conferences and teaching and receiving profound homage. When the conferences are concluded, the King presents the Chinese travellers with warm dresses, masks, gloves, and boots to defend them from the cold they were about to encounter : he also gave Hwan Tsang satin, silk, horses, and servants, and twenty-four letters of recommendation to the Khans, or Kings, whose territories he wished to traverse, each letter being accompanied by a piece of rich satin. Hwan Tsang feeling overcome by such great liberality, addressed a letter of gratitude to the King, which commences : "Hwan Tsang has heard that whoever desires to traverse a great river or a deep ocean has need of a boat and oars," and he proceeds to show at great length that Buddha has furnished such a boat, and that his doctrine had reached China more than six hundred years ago, but that, owing to the great distance from the country of Buddha, the translations and interpretations of texts had become incorrect and contradictory, and that on this account he had undertaken to visit the scenes in which Buddha first promulgated the Law. He concludes with compliments to the King, on the blessings which he secures to his kingdom of I-gou, and also to the countries of Leou-lau and Yu-chi. Once returned to China, he says, "I will translate the Books, I will promulgate the unknown truths, I will hew down the forest of error, I will destroy false doctrine, I will restore omissions in the doctrine of the Elephant ; perhaps by these poor merits I may respond to your immense benefits. Tomorrow

I must take leave of your Majesty, and my heart is torn by the idea of the separation."

From Khamil our traveller still pursued a western route, going to the north of Lake Lob and crossing the mountain now called Mussur Durban, the snowy scenery of which he describes with great effect. After much suffering from cold and hunger he descends upon the borders of the vast Lake Issikul, or Temourtou ; and here they find a Khan, rich in horses, occupied in hunting, and wearing a green satin mantle and a bandeau of ribbon with long ends fastened at the back of his head, like the Tartar and Parthian kings in Wilson's 'Ariana.' He was surrounded by officers dressed in brocade mantles, with their hair twisted or plaited, and a troop of men mounted on camels or horses, with garments of fine wool or fur, and bearing long lances, bows and arrows, and banners. The royal residence was a tent ornamented with flowers of gold and protected in front by mats. But although this Khan was a barbarian, living in a tent of felt, it was impossible, says our traveller, not to regard him with admiration and respect. These people adored fire, and would not sit upon wood because wood contained fire : they were very convivial, enjoyed noisy music, and regaled themselves with wine, mutton, veal, rice, cream, sugar, etc. After the repast was over, Hwan Tsang was requested to explain the Law : he taught them the ten virtues, love for living creatures, and the means of arriving at the other shore, or final deliverance. The Khan lifted his hands, threw himself on the ground, and declared that he received this instruction with faith. He then endeavoured to persuade his guest not to go further. "India," he said, "is very hot, their tenth moon resembling our fifth moon, and

to judge by your appearance you would be dissolved. The inhabitants are nearly naked, have no respect for propriety, and do not deserve your presence." Hwan Tsang again expresses his ardent desire to seek the Law of Buddha and trace his steps amongst the monuments of antiquity; and the Khan then made search in his army for a good linguist and with his help prepared letters of recommendation, and on parting presented Hwan Tsang with a red satin religious dress and fifty pieces of silk. After passing through a desert where heaps of bones are the only sign-posts, the travellers arrive in Samarkand, where the inhabitants worship fire, do not believe in Buddha, and are inhuman savages, until Hwan Tsang teaches them the Law and induces them to abandon all their barbarous customs. From Samarkand he goes through a Pass called the Gates of Iron, the precipitous rocks of which contain iron and are surmounted by bells of wrought-iron and cast-iron.

He now crosses the Oxus and arrives at Balk, where he is charmed with its magnificent site, commanding a view of universally fertile plains and villages. He mentions one hundred convents within the town, and many other monuments connected with Buddhism. Here he resided above a month, receiving much honour from Kings and priests; and again crossing snowy mountains he arrives at Bamian, where the King invites him to his palace. The objects of interest in this town are numerous, and he remains a fortnight; then loses his way, blinded by a snow-storm, in the hills, and meets with hunters who guide him to Kabul. All the members of the one hundred Viharas, with the King at their head, come out to receive and invite him; and he is perplexed to know which to prefer, until one

Convent urges the irresistible claim of having been originally built for the accommodation of a Chinese Prince (sent as a hostage). The memory of this Prince was held in great honour, and his image represented upon all the walls of the building. He had enriched the convent in many ways; and in anticipation of its requiring repairs, had deposited gold under the right foot of a statue of Buddha. This money was now required, the cupola of a stupa or dagoba having fallen into ruins, but the money could not be got, the earth groaning and trembling terrifically whenever any one approached the spot. Hwan Tsang is entreated to lend his influence: he burns perfumes before the statue and makes a petition, promising himself to weigh the treasure and prevent unnecessary expenditure. He then commands the workmen to dig, and at a depth of about seven or eight feet a copper vase is found containing several hundred pounds' weight of gold, and a quantity of carbuncles.*

On all occasions Hwan Tsang shows great reverence for relics, giving at one time fifty pieces of gold, one thousand pieces of silver, four banners of silk, two pieces of brocade, and two religious dresses, after which he scattered a profusion of flowers.† He alludes to all the legends mentioned by Fa-Hian and others in addition, but these it is unnecessary to repeat. To dwell upon his accurate geographical descriptions would be more interesting, but inconsistent with our present purpose. We will therefore merely notice that in Kashmere he studies the works of a disciple of Nagarjuna, refers to the conversion of the Nagas (or inhabitants of the country), and to the great

* Hwan Tsang, p. 74.

† *Ibid.*, 78.

council called by King Kanishka for the revision of the Buddhist books.* On this occasion he says sacred texts were engraved on sheets of copper, enclosed in a cell of stone, sealed, ornamented with an inscription, and surrounded and surmounted by a stupa.† In Kashmere our traveller remained two years, and then proceeded to the Ganges: he sees great numbers of Viharas and Buddhist monuments; sometimes the Vihara is sixty feet high, and the monument a cupola of stone over a statue of wood. In Shravasti (in Oude) the buildings were in ruins; and in Kapila-vastu, the kingdom of Sakya Sinha's father, ten deserted towns are noted. At Raja-griha, in Magadha,‡ or Behar, he saw many memorials of the King Asoka, and esteemed himself fortunate in being received into a convent where an aged man resided who had been favoured by a personal interview with the celestial beings known as Avalokiteswara, Mandjusri, and Maitreya.

He speaks of the religious edifices of Nalanda, a neighbouring village, as surpassing those in other parts of India. The dwelling-houses, or Viharas, have four stories; and the pavilions (Chaityas, or temples) are adorned with pillars, paintings, sculptures, and precious stones. The sectarians of the eighteen schools, he says, are collected in the *Samgharamas* of Nalanda,§ where they study every kind of work, from "les livres vulgaires, les Védas," up to works on medicine, the occult sciences, and arithmetic.

After an absence of seventeen years Hwan Tsang returned

* Hwan Tsang, 95.

† *Ibid.*, 96.

‡ Magadha is that portion of Behar which lies to the south of the Ganges.—Hwan Tsang, Preface, p. lx.

§ Hwan Tsang, 151.

across the mountains to China, where he is received with great honour by the Emperor, who wished to make him his prime minister ; but the sagacious Traveller objects, that he is unqualified, having never studied Confucius, the soul of administration, and that a religious life is his desire. The Emperor wishes he would accompany his army ; but Hwan Tsang says that his principles forbid combats and bloodshed, and at length obtains leave to retire to a convent amongst the hills far away from the sounds of markets and villages, where he may translate in peace the six hundred sacred books brought with him from India.

CHAPTER XI.

ARCHITECTURE.

"And some in marble mould
 Have toil'd with form and mien
 That unportrayed image to unfold,
 And named some fabled thing unseen—
 Something they know not, yet would love,
 Apollo, Pallas, Jove,—
 Then turn away; 't is in the bosom pent,
 And all that art can do is vain and impotent."

WILLIAMS.

HEATHENS, no less than Christians, feel a yearning of the heart for something beyond the gratification of worldly wants and vanities. This yearning Buddhists mainly sought to express by memorial monuments. They were philosophers; they did not ascend hill-tops like the Persian, and prostrate themselves before the infinity of God's horizon; they did not, like their fathers, watch for the rising sun as the emblem of "all that has been or will be," nor, like their Vedic ancestors, did they kindle sacred fire, sending flames up as messengers to Deity. They were philosophers,

and neither sun-worship, nor fire-worship, nor Indra-worship satisfied their wants : they felt all these ceremonies as superficial tinsel, or cumbersome coverings to the inner core of truth. But, like Thomas in the Tale of the Tub, in trying to tear off the gold-lace they also tore away the coat ; or, to change the metaphor, they rejected every component of the religious atmosphere until, under the painful pressure of a vacuum, they welcomed a mirage and adored their Teacher's Relic-shrine.

We have already had occasion to observe that Buddhism was an attempt to make general, doctrines hitherto restricted to learned and privileged classes. But the public cannot accept abstractions, and the more vague and negative the doctrine, the more absolute its demand for visible types and images ; and consequently in every country the foot-prints of Buddhism are gigantic monuments, pillars, towers, caves, and temples. This architecture is divided into four classes :—

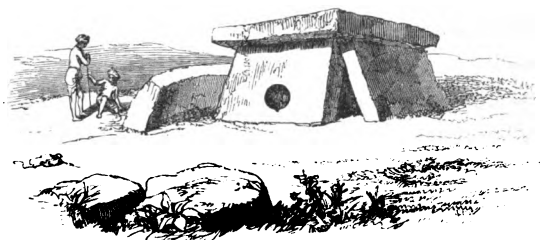
1. Funeral Mounds and Relic-shrines.
2. Pillars and Towers to commemorate events.
3. Convents or Viharas.
4. Chaitya, Caves, or Temples.

Of these by far the most conspicuous class is that first-named, and monuments of this description, have so constantly accompanied Buddhism that an inclination has arisen to treat all traces of analogous mounds or monuments as indications of Buddhism. But this assumes too much ; for although we know that Buddhists made memorial mounds and monuments, we are far from knowing that all memorial mounds and monuments were made by Buddhists. The fact is, that our earliest evidence of such monuments in

India dates about two hundred years B.C. ; whereas Tumuli are found all over the world, giving traces of the first wanderers on the face of the earth, or recording names the earliest known to history. In the high plains of Asia, and in the Peninsula of India, in ancient Lydia and Greece, in Etruria and Sardinia, and in Scandinavia and Great Britain may such remains be seen. The tomb is usually circular, with inner chambers and an entrance, the outside occasionally ornamented with steles, like the tomb of Alyattes in Sardis ; and the inner tomb being sometimes concealed and closed by another built outside it, as the Regulini Galassi tomb in Etruria.

The original cell is usually square, composed of six flat stones, with earth heaped up around in the form of a circular mound ; and on certain occasions the whole is raised upon a hill or artificial platform, and surrounded by one or more circles of upright stones or pillars. Sometimes however hundreds of uncovered stone sepulchres are found in secluded valleys and groves. Captain Newbold describes such tombs as scattered throughout southern India,—left in secluded spots by races of whom tradition is silent. “ It is certain,” he says, “ that they are not the sepulchres of any of the sects of Buddha, Jineswara, or Brahma, or of the snake-worshippers who preceded them. Whose bones then do these huge blocks of granite cover ? Throw down one of the side slabs, with its circular aperture, and we have the cromlech or dolmen. Clear away the Cyclopean superstructure, and we behold the Druidical circles and the cairn. If we turn our eyes northerly to the mountains of Circassia, we there start with surprise on seeing an absolute facsimile of the mysterious tombs of southern India,

with the circular aperture:”* which tomb is thus figured in Bell’s work.†



It is hidden in a forest, and nothing is known of its history. The dimensions of its prototypes in India are about five feet by nine for the side-slabs, with a roof measuring thirteen feet by twelve. The ancient tombs described by Pallas, south of the Yenisec, in Siberia, “of enormous size, usually surrounded by flat or upright stones,” are also left by unknown people who have vanished. Similar to these are the monuments of our own native Isles, formerly called Druidical, as, The Ring of Stennis in the Island of Orkney, a prostrate cromlech, lying “beside the gigantic ruins of the circle which once enclosed it;” and the cromlech or circle in Lamash Bay. The antiquity of these northern remains is in many cases attested by their lying beneath an accumulation of slowly-formed peat-moss.‡ Sometimes the encircling stones are connected by flat stones, as at Stonehenge; but this appears to have been a modification of the older custom of single pillars, or monoliths. And almost universally the ancient cairns, cromlechs, tumuli, and tombs

* J. R. A. S., vol. xiii. pp. 90-94.

† Bell’s Circassia, p. 282.

‡ Archæology and Pre-Historic Annals of Scotland.—D. Wilson.

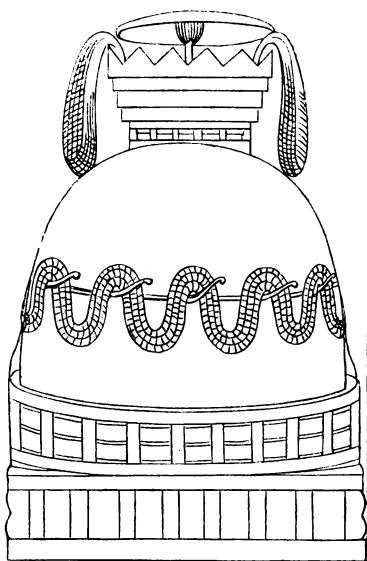
are traced to people who were not of the Sanskrit-speaking races, from whom we derive our origin, but of the mysterious people which preceded Hindus in India, Greeks in Greece, Romans in Italy, and Celts in Scandinavia and Great Britain. The subject deserves and requires much more research, but it seems evident that cromlechs, cairns, and effigies of serpents travelled westward with Turanian tribes who were often metal-workers; and that people of allied race in India (often called *Nagas*) made similar tombs independent of Buddhism, and previous to the rise of that religion. The people inhabiting the hills to the north of Sylhet make monuments of this description at the present time, and they appear to be a people allied in race with the Gonds, Koles, and other Aborigines of India; and, like the tomb-makers in Arcot and Scandinavia, the inhabitants of the Khasiya hills are metal-workers. Mr. Walters speaks of "two or three thousand monuments, great and small."* And, further to the north-east, Dr. Hooker sees at Nurtiung "several acres covered with gigantic, generally circular, slabs of stone, from ten to twenty-five feet broad, supported five feet above the ground upon other blocks." These monuments he mentions as a curious feature in the scenery of the mountains and in the habits of their savage population.

It seems therefore not unreasonable to conjecture that Buddhism adopted funeral mounds and monuments from the Turanian people, who were at all times its most numerous and enthusiastic supporters.

A most confusing variety of names has been given to these Buddhist monuments:—Tope and Stupa, meaning

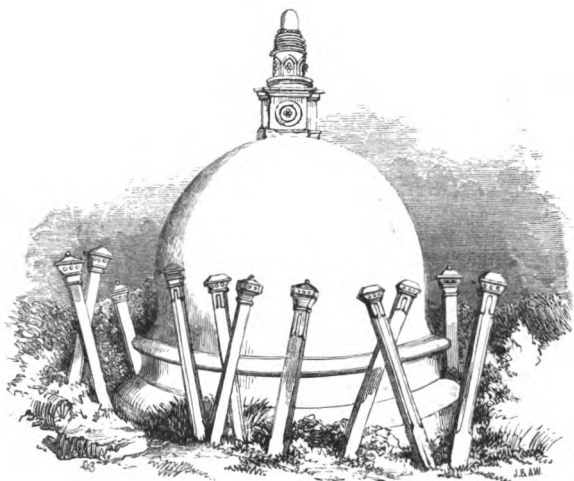
* As. Res., vol. xvii. p. 500.

that they are lofty pyramidal structures ; Dagoba, referring to their office as relic-shrines ; and Chaitya, a word for sacred monuments of any kind, whether funereal or otherwise. The large Tope at Sanchi (Central India), described in Major Cunningham's valuable work, is probably one of



Dagoba, with festoons and umbrella.

the oldest yet remaining. It stands on the western edge of a hill, enclosed by a court one hundred and fifty yards by one hundred, which is entered by lofty gates facing north, south, east, and west. At three of the corners were small Topes, and at the fourth a small temple. The large Tope is a solid dome of brick and masonry, one hundred and six feet in diameter and forty-two feet in height, rising from a plinth of fourteen feet, which served as a terrace for



View of the Lanka Rama, a Dagoba to the north of Anuradhapura, in Ceylon,
from a Sketch by Captain I. J. Chapman, F.R.S., of the Royal Artillery.

"Lanká-Rámo is situated to the north-west of the Maháwihára. It was erected by King Abha Sen, or Tisso, whose reign commenced A.D. 231. In 1829 it was in excellent preservation, having been repaired within the last century. The Dágoba was then coated with *chunam*, a most excellent kind of white cement, which has a resemblance to marble; and the pillars on the raised platform which sustains the dome had generally retained their places. The whole suggested how magnificent the others must have been in the days of their glory."—*Captain I. J. Chapman, Remarks on the City of Anurádhapura*, (Journ. R. As. Soc. xiii.)

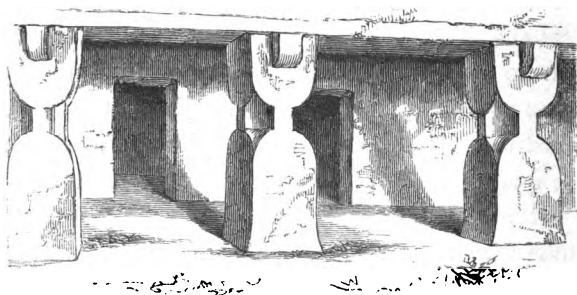
the convenience of worshippers. The tallest of the Topes in the Punjab is nearly double this height, and is also solid, with the exception of chambers for relics at different heights. Of the same description are the celebrated ruins, called temples, in Ceylon: the Jetawana and the Thupa-Rama at Anuradhapura, and the beautiful ruin which crowns Mehenteli, are all alike mere relic-shrines, the Jetawana being a mass of brick-work sufficient for building a wall ninety-seven miles long, twelve feet high, and two feet broad. In Tibet, where first a conception of Adibuddha, the Supreme, and then of living Buddhas, has been added to original Buddhism, dagobas are unimportant; but in Burmah, where (as in Ceylon) Buddhism retains its first low level, we are startled to find that the grand edifice called the Shwe-dagon, three hundred feet in height, is not a temple in which to worship, but a solid pyramid, and itself the object to be worshipped.

The second form of Buddhist architecture consists of Towers and Pillars set up to commemorate an event or do honour to a building. When Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar, in token that the place wherein he had dreamed was "the Gate of Heaven," he adopted this primitive mode. Such pillars, carved or uncarved, are common all over the world, but we do not meet with them in India earlier than the Buddhist King Asoka. And always supposing that Asoka is one and the same with Pi-yadasi, he set up six or seven of these Laths, or columns, whereon to inscribe his Edicts. The capitals of these pillars are of the usual lotus-form,* and are encircled either

* Suggested, we imagine, from the appearance of a Lotus pericarp and stamens, after the fall of the petals. See Vignette, *ante*, p. 247.

with the reed and ball, or with the honeysuckle and lotus, which are the architectural ornaments of Greece and Assyria, whilst they are surmounted by lions or griffins, also significant of Assyria. These pillars are supposed to have stood, like the Jachin and Boaz of King Solomon, in front of some holy edifice, and one such pillar yet remains, watching like a sentinel at the entrance of the Viswakarma, Karli, and other celebrated Cave-Temples of western India.

Of towers erected with the same intent, the Tower of Babel was probably the earliest instance; but, although not uncommon at very early periods in western Asia, Buddhists appear first to have introduced them into India. Few of these erections now remain; but happily the custom survived when Buddhism became extinct, and two beautiful Towers of Victory may be seen in Central India, the one erected in the eighth and the other in the eleventh century.*



Viharas, or convents, constitute our next division; and these may be regarded as more radically Buddhist than any other form of Buddhist architecture. Sakya-muni himself

* See Fergusson's *Illustrations of Architecture in Hindostan*, pl. xi. 8.

required conventual residences, with numerous cells for his followers, and a central hall wherein to address them. Religious Brahmans had long been accustomed to dwell in hermitages apart from the bustle of life, and the *Brahmavarti*, of the Code of Manu, was a district celebrated for such *asramas*. But the genius of Buddhism required dwellings on a larger scale, and, as we have already remarked, it soon began to seek relief in the magnificence of architecture for the deadness of its worship.

The structural Viharas have all perished in India, but the Caves, which were fashioned in imitation of those wooden prototypes, yet remain to exhibit the stages by which their ultimate perfection was attained. The outline given above is from a Cuttack Cave of the simplest form,—a mere verandah added to a natural cavern. In such cases, the preaching-hall was a wooden building erected, when required, for periodical readings of the sacred books. By degrees the Verandahs became more decorated, and the sleeping-cells were arranged around a central hall; and at last we find twenty beautiful pillars supporting this hall, and its walls adorned by paintings,—copies of which adorn the Indian Court at Sydenham.

At Anuradhapura, in Ceylon, may be seen the remains of a grand Vihara, erected B.C. 161 by King Dushtagamini, called the Loha prasada, or, Loha maha paya, from *loha*, iron, its roof having been of metal. It had nine stories, each containing one hundred apartments; the whole was supported upon pillars of stone, and Baldæus honours it by marking Anuradhapura on his map as “the place of the thousand pillars.”* It is fully described in the Maha-

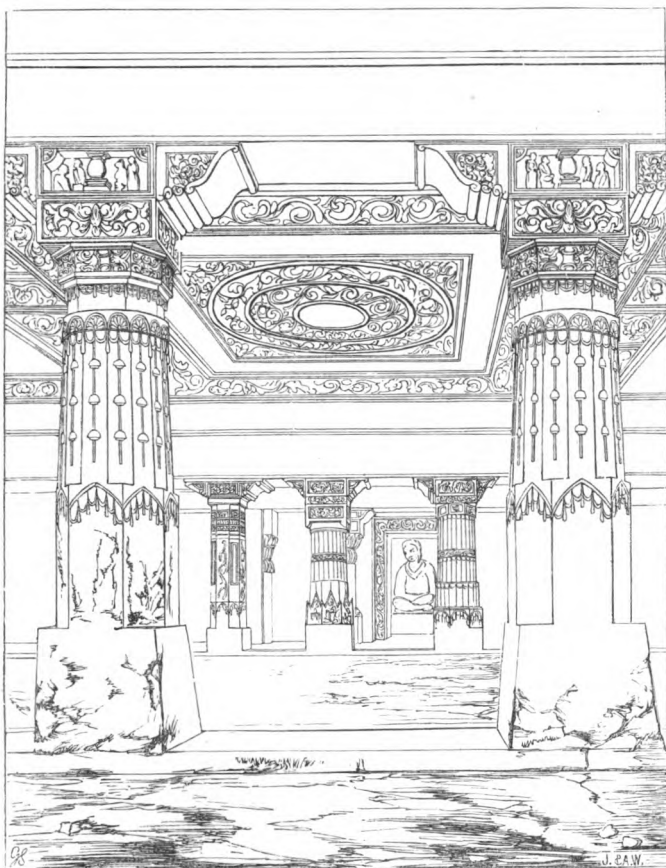
* Mahawanso, ch. xxvii. p. 164.

wanso, and Lassen dwells upon this description with great interest, because he considers it the most ancient authentic description of an Indian building extant.* The embellishments may be those of a later period, but we need not hesitate to admit that the dimensions are given correctly, and that the middle of the building was occupied by a hall supported on pillars. The upper stories of this nine-storied building were of timber, and required frequent renewal, and sometimes the nine stories were reduced to five stories; but the thousand pillars lived through all vicissitudes, and were still in wonderful preservation when seen by Captain Chapman in 1820.†

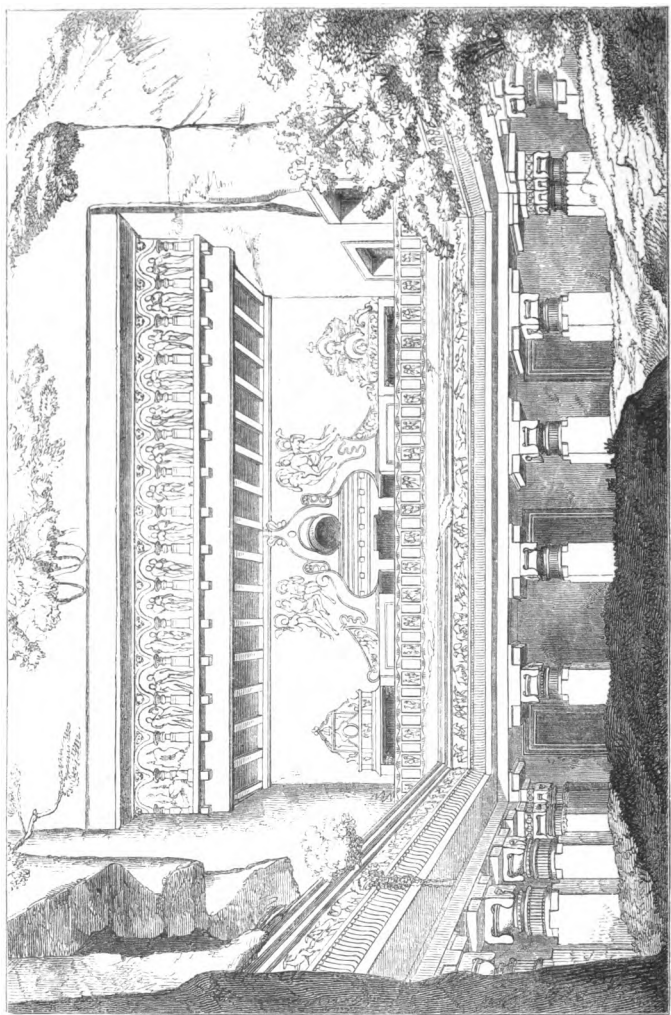
The third class of Buddhist architecture is the Chaitya Cave. "These," Mr. Fergusson observes, "are the temples or (if I may use the expression) churches of the series, and one or more of them is attached to every set of caves in the west of India, though none exist in the eastern side." "Unlike the Viharas," he continues, "the plan and arrangement of all these caves is exactly the same, and though the details and sculpture vary with the age in which they were executed, some strong religious feeling seems to have attached the Buddhists to one particular form for their places of worship. In the Viharas we can trace the progress from the simple cavern to the perfect monastery, but these seem at once to have sprung to perfection, and the Karli Cave, the most perfect, is, I believe, also the oldest in India." Mr. Fergusson looks upon them as copies of the interior of structural buildings, and adds, that "it is not one of the least singular circumstances attached to their

* Lassen, vol. ii. p. 420.

† Transactions R. A. S. vol. iii. ; also J. R. A. S. vol. xiii. p. 170.

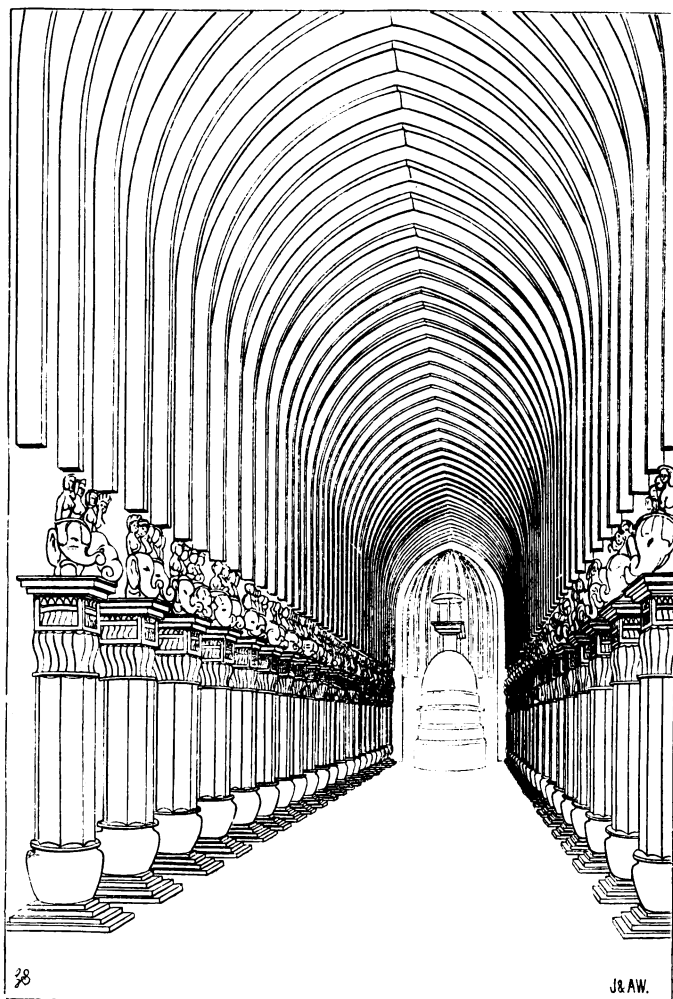


Interior of Vihara at Ajunta. (Fergusson, No. 17.)



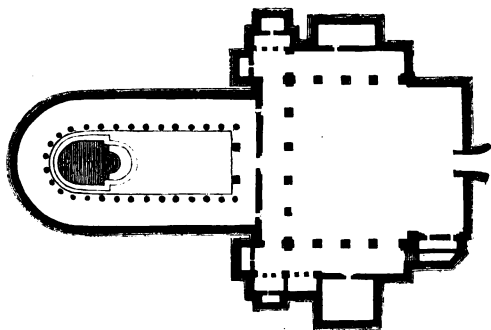
A Chatra Cave.





Interior of the Karli Cave.

history that no trace of such buildings exists in India, nor I believe in Ceylon, nor in the Buddhist countries beyond the Ganges.”*



The Chaitya Caves are very imposing, and are described with enthusiasm by Lady Calcott, Captain Seely, Lord Munster, and every one who visits them, whether learned or unlearned. “They consist of an external porch, or music-gallery, an internal gallery over the entrance, and a centre aisle, . . . twice the length of its breadth, roofed by a plain waggon-vault; to this is added a semi-dome terminating the nave, under the centre of which always stands a Dagoba or Chaitya.” A narrow aisle surrounds the interior, separated from the centre aisle by a range of massive columns, and this smaller aisle or passage is usually flat-roofed. A very interesting part of the arrangement was the manner in which the Cave was lighted: across the front there is a screen, in which there are three doors,—the largest, in the centre, opening to the nave, the others to

* Rock-cut Temples, p. 6.

the side aisles ; over the screen the whole front is a great window, usually in the horseshoe form, as seen in the exterior of the Viswakarma ; the whole light thus falls upon the Chaitya or Dagoba, and the effect from the dark colonnade is described as most remarkable.

Architecture thus confirms our previous observations, that although Buddhism originated in India, and was based upon Hindu philosophy, it was mainly fostered and developed by people who were not Hindus. Its architectural forms are those of other countries, and it owes its success, not to Hindus, but to the underlying Turanian population who became enthusiastic converts both in India, Ceylon, and in Northern Asia. These people had a natural love for raising mounds; and from the foreign artists and architects who came in the wake of Alexander they learned to elevate mounds into monuments, verandahs into Viharas, and image-cells into temples.

CHAPTER XII.

“Earnest sympathizing meditations upon the actual efforts of men to discover the secret of their life, and the ends for which they live, contain equal encouragements to humility and to hope.”—F. D. MAURICE.

LET us now look down the long vista up which we have been toiling, and try to gather up a connected outline of the shifting phantom known as Buddhism. We have studied it in royal Edicts, in Literature, in Coins, Sculptures, and Symbols, in the Journals of the Chinese, and in Architecture. The Edicts of Piyadasi we look upon as its earliest reliable manifestation, and we feel that the teacher under whose influence they originated was, in Buddhist language, “a man both wise and great;” one who preached grandly on the sin of destroying life, the excellence of kindness, the instability of riches, and the blessedness of abstraction from the pleasures of sense. This doctrine the King, in the Edicts, rehearses : he comes forth, as it were, in sackcloth; he repents of indulgence in travelling and hunting, and rejoicings at births and marriages, and in the destructive hospitality of his soup-kitchen; and he causes the drums to beat, and fireworks to be displayed, and a great procession to be made, for the public proclamation of *dharmā*, which is virtue as inculcated by Buddha. These Edicts do

not touch upon religion ; they are moral enactments, good in themselves, but far less beautiful if viewed as abstract truth than portions of the Brahmanical Code. Their peculiarity is, that they are addressed to all mankind without restriction,—a liberality unknown to Brahmans ; and that they breathe an earnest purpose of imposing Moral Law upon the Universe,—an exertion wholly inconsistent with Brahmanical pride and indolence.

But if Buddhism was a sincere effort to advance man's general welfare, and if, even in its degenerate form, it encourages less vice than other idolatry, why, it may be asked, was it so distasteful to Aryan (or Sanskrit-speaking) races, and so little elevating to its Scythic-derived converts? Because, we answer, Buddhist morals are like gathered blossoms,—flowers cut away from the root of morals. A Buddhist teacher acknowledges no superior ; and if the Edicts are too liberal for Brahmans, they are also too independent of Almighty power. Brahmans taught in the name of Brahma, and looked reverently on the Sun and the Dawn, on the Fire and the Flood, as tokens of Supreme and universal Soul. But the Edicts claim no higher authority than that of the King who proclaims them : he has cast aside the gods of the Vedas, and has not yet deified the memory of Buddha. All previous worship had been swept away, and teaching alone offered in its place. No Agni, no Indra, no Iswara, under any name was worshipped ; for Buddhism, not content with proclaiming the equality of men, imagined the same equality to pervade the Universe. This scheme makes infinite space one vast republic, peopled by gods and men, who alike enjoy infinite equality and are alike subject to endless successions of perishable life. From time to time a chief arises who, by his personal qualities, attains omniscience

and a modified supremacy, and such a chiefship was claimed by Sakya-Muni. Buddhists believe that whilst on earth he held spiritual dominion, and that when he died he passed away into unknown and inaccessible regions, where for some he exists merely as a memory, for others as a being with power to enforce his precepts, but for none as a power ruling beyond the influence of Buddhism.

Sakya-Muni, striving to be independent of divinity, reminds one of the air-plants of his native jungles. Like the *Dendrobium*, which disdains to cast its roots into the soil, Buddhism strives to owe nothing to extrinsic power, and, like the graceful *Dendrobium*, it becomes an epiphyte. The first support of Buddhism was the philosophy of the Brahmins, but when cut adrift from Brahmanical learning and spirituality, this would have proved insufficient, but for alliance with foreign faiths, and the adoption of foreign arts and customs. The first feeling of popular Buddhism seems to have implied a cry of "Down with the Brahmins! all beings are equal! let gods and men start fair!" And next we find Buddhists learning from the unknown makers of cairns and cromlechs to erect mounds in memory of Buddha; and these mounds not being sepulchres, relics were placed within, and the structure called a Dagoba,* shrine of a relic. In further imitation of their nomadic converts, they placed circles of stones around their monuments, standing like worshippers, who do homage to a sacred object by walking round it. Foreigners, from Assyria apparently, taught them to erect single pillars to commemorate events, and to make halls supported by central columns, and to raise many-storied buildings upon a thousand-

* Mr. Fergusson derives this word from *dhatu*, relic, and *gabba* or *garba*, shrine or womb. Illust. Handbook of Architecture, vol. i., p. 8.

pillared base. Who gave the model for their beautiful Chaitya Caves, where the Dagoba disfigures the pillared aisles and vaulted roof, is not *decided*; but on the one hand it is shown that the Temple of Solomon had much in common with Assyrian architecture, and on the other hand, a close connection is discovered between Buddhist architecture and that of Assyria.*

And contemporary with, or rather earlier than, the dates assigned to, the splendid Buddhist excavations, we meet with what may be called touches and snatches of Hebrew recollections incorporated in the Buddhist Sutras. As, for instance, in the Asoka legend, where the old King wants to make his eldest son his heir; but his ministers prefer Asoka, and softening his rough skin with saffron and lac, take him to his dying father and deceive him as effectually as Rachel deceived old Israel. In another story, giving a last morsel of food to a holy person during a drought is followed by clouds and showers of food. A money-bag used for the promotion of Buddhism is as unfailing as the widow's cruise; and like Elijah, Buddha transfers his authority to his successor by bidding him wear his ascetic mantle. The stories of Buddha's birth belong exclusively to the second and later periods of Buddhist literature, and thus it is quite possible that their authors should have had an indirect and remote knowledge, not only of Jewish prophecy but of the Christian Gospels; but a reference to Christian teaching is most decided in the later Buddhism of Tibet.

And now if we retire a little from the easel, what is the outline we find traced upon our canvas?

1st. We have the Edicts so liberal and pure that we are

* Fergusson, Nineveh and Persepolis, pp. 113, 349, and Rock-cut Temples, p. 17.

ready to exclaim, "This is God's writing on the wall !" but the Daniel was wanting to interpret, and they degenerated into egotistical formalism.

2nd. We have the Buildings, Columns, Excavations, and Coins, showing that art—glorious art from Assyria and Greece!—gave to hidden Buddhism the torch which has made her conspicuous to the Universe and attractive to the populace.

3rd. We have Buddhist Literature,—and this is positively repulsive : a formal, conceited, extravagant tone pervades the whole. No sentiment comes from the heart or goes to the heart. Good moral maxims are at times rehearsed, but there is no freshness of feeling and no simplicity of character. Eternal rest, or *nirvana*, is to be obtained by the extinction of natural emotions. We entirely lose therefore the generous love and devotion of the Brahmanical tales ; here there is no love conquering death, or brethren emulous of suffering for each other. One incident follows another with inexhaustible invention, but arranged according to a preconceived rule ; something in the fashion of musical airs with variations, fugues, acrostics, or anagrams. There is in fact no freedom, no swelling thought too big for utterance. A Buddhist Teacher is never himself a learner,—his sole object is to prove and explain. A vigorous modern thinker writing of art as the answer which the human spirit makes to the Supreme, says, "Some nations have called their poets Finders. The countenance of the true poet, while at work, is that of one listening or receiving."* To the Sanskrit bards this attitude is not unknown ; but Buddhists never listen and never "look up." The first act of their infant Buddha, according to their ad-

* A. J. Scott, Discourse on the Range of Christianity, p. 42.

miring Chronicle, was to take seven steps upon the earth and shout forth, "I am the most exalted on the earth."* And it was in the same spirit that the Singhalese priest answered Bishop Heber's question of "Do you worship the Gods?" by "No, the Gods worship me."† In Buddhism, temples for universal worship, and precepts for general acceptance, dazzle you for an instant like a heavenly vision; but when you look again the gleam of glory has passed, and the stars of heaven can no longer be distinguished from the false lights of the morass.

And yet, tricked out in borrowed trappings, Buddhism has been imagined capable of accounting for Christianity. It is painful to find any honest mind giving such undue value to superficial resemblances, and only one such instance shall be noted. The writer to whom we allude assumes that Buddhism is "Christianity without Christ." As well might he call it "Judaism without God." The argument runs thus‡ :—"To a mind already impressed with Buddhistic belief and Buddhistic doctrines, Christianity was no abjuration of an old faith, . . . but a mere qualification of an existing belief, by the incorporation into it of the Mosaic account of the creation, and original sin, and the fall of man." This means, that a Jew in adopting Buddhism produced Christianity; therefore that the Gospels of the New Testament are fictions, more groundless than Buddhist Sutras; for the Buddha of the Buddhist writings was a real historical person; whereas if Christianity be derived from Buddhism there has been no Christ, and the Gospels are

* Pali Annals, J. A. S. B., Sept., 1838, p. 801.

† 'Ceylon Friend,' for 1838, vol. ii.; Printed Report of Schools, p. 5.

‡ 'Liverpool Journal,' 1852. The article is reprinted from the 'Reasoner,' No. 293, and is based upon an abstract of Huc's Travels in Tibet and Tartary.

tales invented in imitation of those which relate the birth, life, and death of Sakya-Muni, whom we call Buddha.

Such an idea cannot be dragged too fully into daylight. It can only be harmful when whispered in carelessness or ignorance, and listened to by ignorance. So far from Buddhism accounting for Christianity, it seems to me that a careful consideration of its merits and defects leads strongly to an opposite result. Buddha lived when morals were extremely corrupt, and with honest energy and self-denial he induced men to give up luxuries and live in communities apart from worldly aims, occupying themselves in acts of kindness and ascetic self-denial. Were it possible for a man to produce a Divine religion, here was the man. He did not countenance the fanaticism of contemporary ascetics who went about half-starved, unclothed, and with unwashed, matted hair, but he required his followers to provide simply for the wants of this life, and look for eternal rest beyond. Thus far we may believe that he made himself servant to what his soul recognized as right and true. But he was too weak to be able to separate his intuitions from himself, and he bade his converts follow *him* and become a part of the machinery which he had constructed; and thus he closed for them the access by which himself had risen. He was not to blame for sharing in the intellectual errors of his day, but for seeking to stereotype them upon the minds of his disciples. To Sakya-Muni the body and the material world were corrupt illusions, and "escape" was in consequence his watchword. No expression of joy in the beauty of creation, no delight in human affection, no anticipation of universal love, whether on earth or in heaven, is ever attributed to him. Buddhist precepts and hopes are

all confined to negatives :—Not to injure living creatures :
Not to indulge in luxury : Not to drink fermented liquors :
Not to marry or live in families : Not to enjoy the sights
and sounds of nature : Not to encounter future birth or life.

Such are the duties and the hopes of Buddhists ; and
therefore he who does least harm and feels least joy realizes
the highest type of excellence, and he who escapes from
perishable illusion realizes the highest type of happiness.
Buddhist transcendentalism is indeed a dreary waste
through which you wander, feeling as though you had
fallen into Jean Paul's dream, where the Bell of the Uni-
verse tolls, mankind awakes in consternation, and Christ
declares that he has been in Heaven and in Hell, but can-
not find the Father : there is no God ! there is no God !

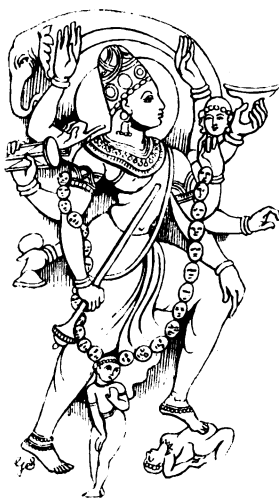


BOOK III.

INDIA SUBSEQUENT TO BUDDHISM.



"The great body of the present religious practices of the Hindus are subsequent in time and foreign in tenor to those that were enjoined by the authorities which they profess to regard as the foundations of their system."—H. H. WILSON, *Oxford Lectures*.



CHAPTER I.

“ In every country where there are national legends they are always deeply and vividly impressed with a feeling of the magnificence or loneliness in the midst of which they have arisen.”—*Guesses at Truth.*

IN the Mahabharata, Siva is the god of the Himalaya mountains, its summits his brow, its lofty crags and forests his hair. The Ganges could not descend to earth until he consented to receive its waters on his head. When he was propitiated, and Ganga heard the word “ descend !”

“ Full of wrath, the mandate heard Himavan’s majestic daughter,
To a giant’s stature soaring, and intolerable speed,
From heaven’s height down rushed she, pouring upon Siva’s sacred
head.”

But with such pride and impetuosity she came, that the

God grew angry, and locked up her struggling floods amid his labyrinthine hair, until, being again propitiated, he permitted the waters to burst forth and find their way to the plains of India by seven separate streams.

We first hear of Siva worship about B.C. 300, some centuries after the first promulgation of Buddhism, but before Buddhism had become the Court religion. At that time Alexander the Great was dead: Seleucus held Bactria and Babylon, and his ambassador Megasthenes dwelt with Hindu Rajas at Patna, on the Ganges. Brahmanical philosophy had before this time made war upon the Vedas; Rain and Fire-worship had become obsolete, and Sacrifice typical; the Greeks were not therefore likely to see Soma-festivals, or to hear of offerings to Indra and Agni; and as the philosophic Brahmins reserved their religious doctrine for the privileged few, the only obvious religions were those of the populace, which Megasthenes describes as Siva worship on the hills and Vaishnaiva worship in the plains. The first was, he says, celebrated in tumultuous festivals, the worshippers anointing their bodies, wearing crowns of flowers and sounding bells and cymbals. From this the Greeks conjecture that Siva worship must be derived from Bacchus or Dionysus, and have been carried to the East in the traditionary expedition which Bacchus made in company with Hercules. This view was confirmed by finding that the wild vine grew in some of the very districts where this worship flourished. But these conjectures are treated by Professor Lassen as pure invention, and all that he accepts from the observations of Megasthenes is, that Siva worship was prevalent in the hills of India previous to the reign of Chandragupta.

For a time the Brahmans resisted this innovation, and refused their patronage both to Siva and his worshippers; but the popular current was too strong for their virtue, it swept away their breakwaters, and left them in danger of unimportance and neglect. Then perceiving their selfish errors, and looking for a selfish remedy, the old Brahmans resolved to consecrate the people's harbours, or, in other words, to adopt the people's gods. Unable to stand like Moses, firmly promulgating a law which they declared Divine, they took the part of Aaron and presided over worship to the Golden Calf. From this era the morality and grandeur of ancient Brahmanism degenerated. Brahmans still wrote beautiful poems, but with an obvious motive of connecting the newer gods with the older mythology. One of these, on Siva, is the work of Kalidasa, who is supposed to have lived B.C. 56.

At that period Vikramaditya reigned at Ougein, in Malwa, and invested his country with such brilliancy that he and his Court have never ceased to be a favourite theme with Sanskrit bards and dramatists. Nine poets are described as nine jewels sparkling around his throne, and amongst these jewels Kalidasa was pre-eminent. It is indeed possible that Vikramaditya's poets may, like King Arthur's knights, partake of a traditionary character, and have lived not all contemporary, but in successive centuries. But this does not disturb the main fact that, nearly coeval with the Christian era, Buddhism was subdued and its asceticism interrupted by the victorious career of a Hindu King who honoured Brahmanical literature and Brahmanical religion.

The poem alluded to above is entitled 'The Birth of the War-God.' It is incomplete, for it gives the history of

the War-God's father and mother, and their espousals, but finishes before his birth. The scene is in the mountains always spoken of as Siva's dwelling-place, and the poem opens with an allegorical description of Himalaya as a proud mountain-king with his diadem of snow, who—

“ Lifting high
His towery summits till they cleave the sky,
Spans the wide land from east to western sea,
Lord of the Hills, instinct with Deity.”

Gems and gold and sparkling ores are described as the inherent riches of the realm, amongst whose wilds “the eager hunters roam, tracking the lion to his dreary home.” Around its zone are dark shadows which the sylphs love:—

“ Till the big rain-drops fright them from the plains
To those high peaks where sunshine ever reigns ;
There birch-trees wave, that lend their friendly aid
To tell the passion of the love-born maid,
So quick to learn with metal tints to mark
Her hopes and fears upon the tender bark.”*

In the caves and valleys winds resound, which are described as a glorious hymn led by Himalaya ; and within the mossy caverns magic herbs pour forth a streaming light ; whilst through the forests the wild kine roam with “tails outspread and bushy streaming hair.”

Himalaya, thus rich and powerful, was the father of one lovely damsel whom he married to Siva, but Siva had not then apparently acquired importance ; for Himalaya treated his son-in-law with scorn, and the “tender soul” of his daughter was so torn with anguish at seeing her

* Specimens of Old Indian Poetry, by Ralph T. Griffiths,—‘Birth of the War-God Kalidasa.’

husband contemned, that "her angered spirit left its mortal cell:" in other words, she died; and from that moment Siva knew no love. Clad in a rude coat of skin, he lived for nought but prayer and solitary thought. His followers inhabited the clefts of the hills, their bodies tinted with mineral dyes, with mantles formed of the bark of trees, and red garlands twined around their hair. High up on the mountains, with only these companions, the mournful Siva dwelt.

"The holy Bull before his master's feet
Shook the hard-frozen earth with echoing beat;
And as he heard the lion's roaring swell
In distant anger from the rocky dell,
In angry pride he raised his voice of fear,
And from the mountain drove the startled deer.
Bright fire—a shape the God would sometimes wear,
Who takes eight various forms—was glowing there:
Then the great Deity who gives the prize
Of penance, prayer, and holy exercise,
As though to earn the meed he grants to man,
Himself the penance and the pain began."

Whilst Siva thus lived in stern seclusion, his lovely and lamented wife was born again, and was as before the daughter of Himalaya. She was more beautiful than ever, and her father could never "satisfy the thirsty glances of a parent's eye." She was decidedly a new existence with an individuality of her own, but—

"As herbs beneath the darksome shades of night
Collect again their scattered rays of light;
So dawned upon the maiden's waking mind
The far-off memory of her life resigned,
And all her former learning in its train,
Feelings and thoughts and knowledge came again."

And therefore the one fixed desire of her life was to win the love of Siva. Her beauty was so remarkable that no enterprise could appear too great for her achievement.

“ There was a glory beaming from her face,
With love’s own light, and every youthful grace . . .
Bright as a Lotus, springing where she trod,
Her glowing feet shed radiance o’er the sod :
That arching neck, the step, the glance aside,
The proud swans taught her as they stemmed the tide ;
Whilst of the maiden they would fondly learn
Her anklets pleasant music in return. . . .
What thing of beauty may the poet dare
With the smooth wonder of those limbs compare ?
The young tree springing by the brooklet’s side,
The wounded trunk, the forest-monarch’s pride ?
Oh no ! too cold, too chilling cold the tree, . . .
This too unyielding for such rivalry.”

Her voice was sweeter than the voice of the Koil, the glance of her “soft liquid eye, tremulous, like lilies when the breezes sigh.

“ Which learnt it first—so winning and so mild—
The gentle fawn, or Mena’s gentler child ?”

Fortunately it suited the schemes of all the Brahmanical Gods that this beautiful and love-lorn damsel should become Siva’s wife, for they were jealous of Siva’s continued penance, which tended to give him supreme dominion in the mythological realms ; and moreover a mighty fiend was abroad who deprived them of their offerings, and this enemy, named Tarak, was destined to be conquered by no other than a son of Siva. It was therefore decreed that the lovely Uma should be taken to the retreat of Siva. She presented herself, and—

"The Hermit welcomed with a courteous brow
 That gentle enemy of hermit vow ;
 The still pure breast, where Contemplation dwells,
 Defies the charmer and the charmer's spells :
 Calm and unmoved he viewed the wondrous maid,
 And bade her all his pious duties aid.
 She culled fresh blossoms at the God's command,
 Sweeping the altar with a careful hand :
 The holy grass for sacred rites she sought."

But she made no progress until Kama, God of Love, was
 sent to her aid. A beautiful picture is thus drawn of the
 coming of Love, accompanied by his comrade Spring :—

"How fair was Spring! to fill the heart with love,
 And lure the Hermit from his thoughts above.
 In that pure grove he grew so heavenly bright
 That Kama's envy wakened at the sight. . . .
 Then from its stem the red Asoka threw
 Full buds and flowerets of celestial hue,
 Nor waited for the maiden's touch, the sweet
 Beloved pressure of her tinkling feet. . . .
 How sighed the spirit o'er that loveliest flower
 That boasts no fragrance to enrich its dower!
 For Nature, wisest mother, oft prefers
 To part more fairly those good gifts of hers :
 There from the tree Palasa blossoms spread,
 Curved like the crescent moon, their rosiest red,
 With opening buds that looked as if young Spring
 Had pressed his nails there in his dallying. . . .

"The cool gale speeding o'er the shady lawns
 Shook down the sounding leaves, while startled fawns
 Ran wildly at the viewless foe, all blind
 With pollen wafted by the fragrant wind.
 Sweet was the Koil's voice—his neck still red
 With mango-buds on which he just had fed—
 'Twas as the voice of Love to bid the dame
 Spurn her cold pride, nor quench the gentle flame. . . .
 E'en the pure Hermit owned the secret power

Of warm Spring coming in unwonted hour ;
 While Love's delightful witchery gently stole
 With strong sweet influence o'er the saintly soul."

The bees, the elephants, the goats, the flowers, the trees, the birds,—all feel the "glowing touch," save Siva, for

"No charmer's spell may check the firm control,
 Won by the Holy, o'er the impassioned soul."

Therefore when Love and Spring arrived at the mighty Hermit's door, his servant went to them with his finger on his lip, saying :

"Peace! be still!
 Nor mar the quiet of this holy hill.
 He spake, no dweller of the forest stirred,
 No wild bee murmured, hushed was every bird,—
 Still and unmoved, as in a picture, stood
 All life that breathed within the waving wood."

Siva, with his three eyes, looked very awful, sitting on a tiger's skin beneath a pine-tree upon a mound. He was absorbed in thought, his shoulders bent, his feet beneath him, and his hands pressed upon his breast. In each ear was a double rosary, serpents were wreathed in his hair, his neck was a bright blue, and his dark eyebrows bent sternly with a terrible frown. His eyes glared fiercely, but were fixed in devotion's meditating gaze.

"Calm as a full cloud resting on a hill,—
 A waveless lake when every breeze is still ;
 Like a torch burning in a sheltered spot—
 So still was he, unmoving, breathing not. . . .
 At all the body's ninefold gates of sense
 He had barred in the pure intelligence,
 To ponder on the Soul which Sages call
 Eternal Spirit, highest, over all."

Kama was perfectly frightened at the awful sight, and hid himself amongst the tangled flowers and clustering trailers, and even dropped his sweet arrows in despair, until the lovely damsel Uma came, adorned with all the brightest flowers of spring. As she approaches, led by Love, Siva

“Breathes, he moves, the earth begins to rock ;
The snake, her bearer, trembling at the shock.”

The beautiful Uma bent so low that the flowers in her ears fell to the ground, whilst with brow relaxed,

“ ‘ Sweet maid,’ cried Siva, ‘ surely thou shalt be
Blessed with a husband who loves none but thee !’ . . .
Like the moon’s influence on the sea at rest
Came Passion, stealing o’er the Hermit’s breast,
While on the maiden’s lip that mocked the dye
Of ripe red fruit, he bent his melting eye ;
And oh ! how showed the lady’s love for him,
The heaving bosom, and each quivering limb !
Like young Kadambas, when the leaf-buds swell,
At the warm touch of Spring they love so well :
But still with downcast eyes she sought the ground,
And durst not turn their burning glances round.”

Kama thought the moment had arrived when he might surely aim a successful shaft, but instantly Siva recovers his self-possession : he is unwilling to lose the benefit of his accumulated amount of penance ; and quelling the storm of passion in his troubled breast, he looks round to seek the cause of this unusual tempest in his soul ; and discovering the bold young archer, Love, he bends upon him a look so fiery that poor Kama is instantly burnt to ashes ; and having thus blasted the hinderer of his vow, Siva and all his train withdraw to solitudes in which woman’s face is never seen.

"Now woe to Uma ! for young Love is slain,
 Her Lord hath left her, and her hope is vain :
 Woe, woe to Uma ! how the mountain-maid
 Cursed her bright beauty for its feeble aid ! . . .
 Penance must aid her now, or how can she
 Win the cold heart of that stern Deity ?
 Penance, long penance,—for that power alone
 Can make such love, so high a Lord, her own."

But the idea of penance was most distressing to Uma's
 mother, who kissed her child, wept, sighed, and prayed ;
 but the daughter's will is stronger than the mother's
 prayers, and the resolute maiden sends to her father to beg
 him to grant her some solitude, in which she might give
 her whole soul to penance and to prayer ; and the great
 Himalaya gives her in consequence that hill which the pea-
 cocks love, and which is known to all ages by her name.

"Still to her purpose resolutely true
 Her string of noble pearls aside she threw, . . .
 And clad her in a hermit coat of bark . . .
 With zone of grass the Votaress was bound,
 Which reddened the fair form it girdled round. . . .
 Alas ! her weary vow has caused to fade
 The lovely colours that adorned the maid ;
 Pale is her hand, and her long finger-tips
 Steal no more splendour from her paler lips. . . .
 "The maid put off, but only for awhile,
 Her passioned glances and her witching smile ;
 She lent the fawn her morning melting gaze,
 And the fond creeper all her winning ways. . . .
 Her gentleness had made the fawns so tame,
 To her kind hand for fresh sweet grain they came ;
 And let the maid before her friends compare
 Her own with eyes that shone as softly there."

Many hermits came to see her, and found the fires of wor-
 ship kindled, no rite forgot, and the grove so pure that even

savage monsters lived together in love and peace ; but Uma feared that her penance was too mild to yield the need she sought, and now,

“ Full in the centre of four blazing piles
Sate the fair lady of the winning smiles,
While on her head the mighty God of Day
Shot all the fury of his summer ray :
Yet her first gaze she turned upon the skies
And quenched his splendour with her brighter eyes.
To that sweet face, though scorched by rays from heaven,
Still was the beauty of the Lotus given ;
Yet, worn by watching, round those orbs of light
A blackness gathered like the shades of night.”

After spending the summer scorched by the heat of fire, she was drenched in autumn by the annual rains, and in winter she lay upon

“ the cold damp ground,
Though blasts of winter hurled their snows around.”

At length her penance exceeded that of the most renowned anchorites, and she earned the glorious title of Apáraná—Lady of the unbroken fast ! Then came to her a hermit of the first rank in sanctity,—

“ With coat of skin, with staff and matted hair,
His face was radiant and he spake her fair.
Up rose the maid the holy man to greet,
And humbly bowed before the Hermit's feet :
Though meditation fill the pious breast,
It finds a welcome for a glorious guest.
The sage received the honour duly paid,
And fixed his earnest gaze upon the maid,
While through her frame unwonted vigour ran ;
Thus in his silver speech the blameless saint began.”

He asked how her tender frame could perform her firm

spirit's task, and bring the grass and fuel and water required for the daily offerings. He then noticed her careful tending of the flowers, "Till like thy lip," he says, "each ruddy tendril glows;" he observes also how—

"With loving glance the timid fawns draw nigh;
 Say, dost thou still with joy their wants supply?
 For thee, O Lotus-eyed! their glances shine,
 Mocking the brightness of each look of thine.
 O Mountain-Lady! it is truly said
 That heavenly charms to sin have never led;
 For even Penitents may learn of thee
 How pure, how gentle, Beauty's self may be. . . .
 Purest of motives, Duty leads thy heart,
 Interest and pleasure there may claim no part.
 O noble maiden! holy sages tell,
 Friendship may soon in gentle bosoms dwell,
 Seven steps together bind the lasting tie;
 Then bend on me, dear saint, a gracious eye!
 Fain, lovely Uma, would a Brahman learn
 What noble guerdon would thy Penance earn."

The Hermit urges this question in various ways, asking what can move one so faultless "to dwell in solitude and prayer apart." Can it be, he suggests at last, that she desires a husband?—

"Oh forbear the thought!
 A priceless jewel seeks not, but is sought:
 Maiden, thy deep sighs tell it is so."

And then the gallant anchorite expresses great surprise that any one could have looked upon her with indifference. "Surely," he continues,

"Thy loved one, vain in beauty's pride,
 Dreamed of himself when wandering at thy side,
 Or he would count him blest to be the mark
 Of that dear eye, so soft, so lustrous dark!"

He however consoles her by saying that he has himself a rich store of merits won by a year of penance, and that she shall have the half, name her secret purpose, and give up stern hardships.

A beautiful passage follows, in which the fair Uma makes her attendant tell the story of her love, and the attendant then explains that, as the Lotus disdained all gods except the God of Day, so Uma had disdained all love except the love of Siva :—

“ For him alone, the trident-wielding God,
The thorny paths of Penance hath she trod ;
But since that mighty one hath Kama slain,
Vain every hope, and every effort vain. . . .
Alas, poor maid ! she knows no comfort now,
Her soul 's on fire, her wild locks hide her brow. . . .
Oft as the maidens of the minstrel throng
To hymn great Siva's praises raised the song,
The love-lorn lady's sobs and deep-drawn sighs
Drew tears of pity from their gentle eyes.”

At length in despair she came to this holy grove, but alas ! although since then “ The fruit hath ripened on the spreading bough, no fruit hath crowned her holy vow.” When the maiden ceased, the Brahman turned in secret joy to Uma, and asked if this was indeed the darling secret of her breast. “ She clasped the rosary in her quivering hand,” and replied,—

“ ‘ O holy sage, learned in the Vedas' lore,
'T is even thus Great Siva I adore ;
Thus would my steadfast heart his love obtain,
For this I gladly bear the toil and pain ;
Surely the strong desire, the earnest will,
May win some favour from his mercy still.’ ”

'Lady,' cried he, 'that mighty Lord I know,
 Ever his presence bringeth care and woe,
 And wouldst thou still a second time prepare
 The sorrows of his fearful life to share?
 Deluded maid, how shall thy tender hand,
 Decked with the nuptial bracelet's jewelled band,
 Be clasped in his, when fearful serpents twine
 In scaly horror round that arm divine? . . .
 On Siva's heart the funeral ashes rest,
 Say, gentle lady, shall they stain thy breast,
 Where the rich tribute of the Sandal-trees
 Sheds a pure odour on the amorous breeze?' "

She, he says further, should ride upon the king of elephants, and could she bear the scorn of being borne by Siva's bull? Siva is of unknown ancestry, poor, dressed in the vilest garb,—

" 'No charms hath he to win a maiden's eye:
 Cease from thy Penance, hush the fruitless sigh.
 Not 'mid the gloomy tombs do sages raise
 The holy altar of their prayer and praise.'
 Impatient, Uma listened; the quick blood
 Rushed to her temples in an angry flood;
 Her quivering lip, her darkly-flashing eye,
 Told that the tempest of her wrath was nigh.
 Proudly she spoke: 'How couldst *thou* tell aright
 Of one like Siva,—perfect, infinite!
 'Tis ever thus, the Mighty and the Just
 Are scorned by souls that grovel in the dust.
 Their lofty goodness and their motives wise
 Shine all in vain before such blinded eyes.
 Say, who is greater, he who strives for power,
 Or he who succours in misfortune's hour?
 Refuge of Worlds, oh how should Siva deign
 To look on men enslaved to paltry gain?
 The spring of wealth himself, he careth nought
 For the vile treasures that mankind have sought;
 His dwelling-place amid the tombs may be,

Yet monarch of the three great worlds is he.
 What though no love his outward form may claim,
 The stout heart trembles at his awful name!
 Who can declare the wonders of his might,
 The Trident-wielding God, who knows aright?
 Whether around him deadly serpents twine,
 Or if his jewelled wreaths more brightly shine?
 Whether in rough and wrinkled hide arrayed,
 Or silken robe in glittering folds displayed;
 If on his brow the crescent moon he bear,
 Or if a shrunk skull be withering there?"

The conclusion of Uma's eloquent defence of Siva is remarkable, for she says, that in calling him of ancestry *unknown*, there had been *one* word of truth amid the slanderous speech, for—

“How should mortal man
 Count when the days of Brahma's Lord began?
 But cease these idle words; though all be true,
 His failings many and his virtues few,
 Still clings my heart to him, its chosen lord,
 Nor fails nor falters at thy treacherous word.”

And forthwith she desires her attendant to send away the evil-speaking Hermit; for although he is most guilty who begins such faithless speech, yet he who stays to listen also sins.

“She turned away, with wrath her bosom swelling,
 Its vest of bark in angry pride repelling,—
 But sudden, lo! before her wandering eyes
 In altered form she sees the sage arise;
 'Tis Siva's self before the astonished maid,
 In all his gentlest majesty displayed.
 She saw, she trembled, like a river's course
 Checked for a moment in its onward force
 By some huge rock amid the torrent hurled,
 Where erst the foaming waters madly curled;

One foot uplifted—shall she turn away ?
Unmoved the other—shall the maiden stay ?
The silver moon on Siva's forehead shone,
While softly spake the God in gracious tone :—
' O gentle maiden, wise and true of soul !
Lo ! now I bend beneath thy sweet control !
Won by thy penance, and thy holy vows,
Thy willing slave, Siva, before thee bows ! ' "

The remainder of this poem is painfully incongruous. Taken as a narrative of earthly love it presents beautiful pictures of father, mother, daughter, husband, and bride ; but details of domestic bliss, which are in themselves most pleasing, and even holy, become irreverent and shocking when related of a being proclaimed to be a manifestation of the Supreme and Triune God. This irreverent mingling of the divine and human is far less felt in Greek mythology ; for not only are the Greek gods less human, and less occupied on earth with all the affections and interests of men ; but, on the other hand, the Greeks never reached the sublimity which the Brahmans of all ages have occasionally attained in their conceptions of Supreme Deity. The passages of this poem, which inculcate *faith* and attribute supremacy to Siva, may possibly be additions belonging to a subsequent development of religious doctrine ; and for the present setting these aside, the poem may be enjoyed as a charming and fanciful tale in which the gloomy, awful Siva is won to love and happiness by the bright daughter of the snow-crowned Himalaya. Continuing the history, then, Siva had no sooner avowed his love than the gentle Uma entreated him to ask her father's sanction. An august deputation of heavenly powers waits in consequence upon Himalaya, who receives them in the

presence of his wife and daughter ; she, whilst the messengers were speaking,

“ Bent her head
To hide her cheek, now blushing rosy red,
And numbered o’er with seeming care the while
Her Lotus-petals, in sweet maiden guile.
With pride and joy Himalaya’s heart beat high,
Yet ere he spake he looked to Mena’s eye ;
Full well he knew a mother’s gentle care
Learns her child’s heart and love’s deep secret there ;
And this the hour, he felt, when fathers seek
Her eye for answer, or her changing cheek.
His eager look Himalaya scarce had bent
When Mena’s eye beamed back her glad assent :—
O gentle wives, your fondest wish is still
To have with him you love one heart, one will !”

A gorgeous description is given of the royal city on the day of the wedding, when crowds of noble dames were seated under canopies upheld by pillars decked with gems and gold. The bride’s hair was graced with feathery grass and wild flowers, amid which a glittering arrow was introduced, and behind each ear was placed an ear of barley. We must forbear to touch upon her beauty, or on that of Siva, whose head-ornament, the “withering skull,” became as a “bright coronal ;” whilst his “mid-eye” beamed softly, as a mark of glory, and his “twining serpents” changed into ornaments set with blazing gems. At the moment when he is permitted by his chamberlains to behold his bride arrayed in all her loveliness,—

“ His lotus-eyes
Flashed out the rapture of his proud surprise ;
Then calm the current of his spirit lay
Like the world basking in an autumn day.
They met, and true love’s momentary shame

O'er the blest bridegroom and his darling came ;
Eye looked to eye,—but quivering as they met,
Scarce dared to trust the rapturous gazing yet. . . .
Thrice, at the bidding of the priest, they came
With swimming eyes around the holy flame ;
Then, at his word, the bride in order due
Into the blazing fire the parched grain threw,
And toward her face the scented smoke she drew ;
While softly wreathing o'er her cheek it hung.
And round her ears in flower-like beauty clung.
‘ This flame be witness of your wedded life ;
Be just, thou husband, and be true, thou wife !’
Such was the priestly blessing on the bride.
Eager she listened, as the earth, when dried
By parching summer suns, drinks deeply in
The first soft droppings when the rains begin :—
‘ Look, gentle Uma !’ cried her lord, ‘ afar
Seest thou the brightness of yon polar star ?
Like that unchanging ray thy faith must shine !’
Sobbing she whisper'd, ‘ Yes, for ever thine !’ ”





CHAPTER II.

"For spirits, when they please,
Can either sex assume, or both."—MILTON.

WHEN Kanerki and the Indo-Scythians became settled in India they inscribed Okro on their coins, thereby indicating Siva by one of his Sanskrit epithets, Ugro, "The Fierce;" and later in the series Okro becomes Ordokro, and this it is conjectured means *half-Okro*, or half-man, half-woman, and accounts for the female form so frequently invested with Siva attributes. The coin etched at the head of the present Chapter bears on its obverse the head of King Kadphises;* but on other coins of the same series Siva appears as an elegant male figure, his hair drawn up to a point ending in flame, but still leaning on a humped bull. The later coins frequently give four arms to the god or goddess, each hand holding a weapon of war; but the barbarism of a third eye is not introduced on coins. Professor Lassen† alludes to some with three heads. Siva being thus represented as the highest God of a *Trimurti*,—as also to be

* Wilson's *Ariana*, p. 356, plate 10, fig. 17; and Lassen, vol. ii. pp. 844, 1089.

† Vol. ii. pp. 847, 1092.

seen in the sculptures at Elephanta, Ellora, and other temples,—it is supposed that different sects adopted different forms; some Siva as threefold, others, Siva as symbolized



by flame. In Kashmere vestiges yet remain of temples in which Siva was worshipped as flame or Swayambhu.

In the poem which we have just been considering, Siva is the supreme deity, and fire one of his eight shapes. In the Introduction it is Brahma, "whose face turns every way," and who "bodies forth the mystic three," and "fills three persons;" but when toward the conclusion Siva presents himself to the other Gods and announces his wish to wed the daughter of Himalaya, the ancient sages above the moon address him as the "World's Great Father," and entreat him to tell his wondrous nature; for, although they see his outward form, they have no means of knowing him as he should be known, and are at a loss whether to consider him as a creator, preserver, or destroyer. No very definite answer is given to this inquiry; but on occasion of the wedding the three Gods are thus described:—

Brahma came on—Creator, Lord of Might,—
 And Vishnu glowing from the realms of light. . . .
 In those three persons the one God was shown ;
 Each first in place, each last,—not one alone :
 Of Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, each may be
 First, second, third, among the Blessed Three.”*

And this is, in few words, nearly all that need be said about the religion of India in the early centuries of the Christian era. A threefold Almighty power became more distinctly recognized ; in some localities and at certain epochs Siva was this Power. Often gloomy and ungainly, riding an awkward bull and delighting in sad symbols, but free from the odious attributes assigned to him in later times, Kalidasa’s dramas all begin with an invocation to Siva ; and in his celebrated poem, called the ‘ Cloud Messenger,’ the town of Ougein is especially mentioned as the head-quarters of Siva worship. The story is as follows :—Amongst the hills of the Himalaya reigned Kuvera, a demigod, celebrated for his wealth : his Court was held at the rich city of Alaka ; and here an unfortunate demigod (called a Yaksha) had suffered Indra’s elephant to trespass upon a garden placed under his charge. His sentence of punishment was banishment for a twelvemonth to the Dekkan, the peninsula of India ; and there the poem finds him, grievously lamenting his separation from the beloved wife who was pining for him in his home at Alaka. Eight weary months had he been suffering exile, and he was now so worn and shrunk that his golden bracelets slipped from off his arm. It was the month of July, when the rainy season commences, and all travellers start in haste for their homes, eager to take advantage of the first cool showers, and equally

* Page 73.

anxious to escape the coming floods which render travelling impossible. Sadly the exile looks at the lowering sky, which all other men's wives will hail with joy as the sign of the absent husband's return; but suddenly it occurs to him that a cloud, "the friend of Indra," going to his home in Alaka would take a message to the partner of his woes. Gathering flowers he makes an offering and invokes sympathy. Leading a painful life, counting the moments of the lingering year, "she still lives," he says; "for female hearts, though fragile as the flower, are firm when hope supports them." The blessings attendant on the prayers of the Cloud are then noticed, as, the languid jessamine lifts its head, nature revives, the buds open, and at last

"Earth's blazing woods in incense shall arise,
And warbling birds with music fill the skies."*

Ougein was not in the direct northern route; but it is proposed that the Cloud shall make a slight deviation, and pay homage there to Siva, "the God whom earth and Heaven and Hell obey." This beautiful city was greatly in want of so refreshing a visitor; for its river was wasted to a thread not bigger than a braid of hair, and was bleached with the withered foliage rudely showered from the overhanging trees. The Cloud's next resting-place was to be the poor exile's home, the mountain-city of Alaka, where he describes his house as a bower, made conspicuous by the beauty of its flowers; whilst a

"Golden column on a crystal base,
Begirt with jewels, rises o'er the place."

But the messenger is entreated not to present himself to the beloved occupant until he has disguised his awful

* Meghaduta, by Kalidasa, translated by Professor H. H. Wilson.

size. His poor wife, he says, is nipped by chill sorrow, her dear lips dried by parching sighs, and her pallid cheek resting sadly on her hand. Her favourite bird, the "tuneful Sarika," is with her, and she strives to soothe her own grief by mourning over her feathered prisoner's kindred fate. Her lute, or *vina*, lies idle, for she cannot sing for tears, and tears also have corroded its silver strings. She sits in her beauty and loveliness—

"Not wholly waking nor resigned to sleep;
Her heavy eyelids languidly unclose,
To where the moon its silvery radiance throws
Mild through the chamber; once a welcome light,
Avoided now and hateful to her sight."

Having thus excited the sympathy of his aerial messenger, the exiled husband sends this message to his wife,—that she must bow to fate, and learn courage from her husband's firmness, remembering that "very few are always wretched or always blessed."

"Life, like a wheel's revolving orb, turns round,
Now whirled in air, now dragged along the ground."

And he concludes by expressing confidence in the benevolence of the Cloud, who will answer his wishes not in deeds, but words. "To thee," he says, "the thirsty Chataca* looks up, and thy answer is a falling shower." And in the present case the Cloud so well performed its embassy, that the Gods in Alaka relented, the husband was quickly restored to his beloved wife, and both were thenceforth blest with ceaseless joy.

* The Chataca is a poetical bird, supposed to live wholly upon rain-water.

Whatever may have been the condition of women, as women, in Ancient India, it is quite evident that the matrimonial relation was often one of great honour and deep affection. In both these poems the wife is as necessary to the husband as the husband to the wife. When Siva is widowed he turns ascetic; when the Yaksha is banished, the sole cause of his "wild despair" is his separation from his wife; and, on the other hand, when poor Kama, the God of Love, is blasted by the lightning of Siva's angry eye, it is his darling wife that sings a lament for him; at first she swooned away, but

"Too soon her gentle soul returned to know
The pangs of widowhood,—that word of woe! . . .
'Speak to me, Kama! why so silent? give
One word in answer,—doth my Kama live?
There on the turf his dumb cold ashes lay,—
That fiery flash has scorched the soul away. . . .
Sure woman's heart is strong, for can it be
That I still live while *this* is all of thee?"

And she consoles herself, in Indian fashion, by thinking that she will throw herself on his burning funeral pile, and be again united with him in a future world, before Heaven's maids have been able to throw their winning glances over him. A slight difficulty however occurs; for Kama having been annihilated by a glance, both soul and body vanished in the viewless air, and it is difficult to know how to prepare the funeral rites. Her lament on this occasion is too beautiful to be omitted:—

"As dies a torch when winds sweep roughly by,
So is my light for ever fled, and I,
The lamp his cheering rays no more illumine,
Am wrapt in darkness, misery, and gloom.

Fate took my love and spared the widow's breath,
 Yet fate is guilty of a double death ;
 When the wild monster tramples on the ground
 The tree, some creeper garlands closely round,
 Reft of the guardian which it thought so true,
 Forlorn and withered, it must perish too.
 Then come, dear friend ! the true one's pile prepare,
 And send me quickly to my husband there ;
 Call it not vain ; the mourning lotus dies
 When the bright moon, her lover, quits the skies. . . .
 Set water near us in a single urn,
 We'll sip in Heaven from the same in turn,
 And to his spirit let thine offering be
 Sprays, fresh and lovely from the mango-tree,
 Culled when the round young buds begin to swell,
 For Kama loved those fragrant blossoms well.' "

This melancholy consummation is happily averted by a heavenly voice, which breathes around the mourning widow, and tells her that Kama will come again so soon as Siva has been won by Uma ; and the raging of her wild despair being thus soothed,

" She watched away the hours, so sad and slow,
 That brought the limit of her weary woe,
 As the pale moon, quenched by the conquering light
 Of garish day, longs for its own dear night."

In the dramas which belong to this period, a little more of domestic life is revealed, and we shall find that the Hindu arrangements in matrimony were not exactly satisfactory to all parties, even in the palmy days of Indian chivalry. The Drama extends over many centuries ; but the finest Plays belong to our present era, in which Siva was chief divinity and Kalidasa chief poet. Fortunately Professor Wilson has enabled English readers to enjoy much of the literary thought and poetic merit by which

these productions are characterized. Translations of a few dramas have also appeared from other hands, and all are welcome, not merely for their intrinsic freshness and uncommon imagery, but as pictures of life, "Life in India," and especially Life in Ougein, when native princes reigned in peace, and when prosperous Brahmans were tolerant of powerful Buddhist institutions. The Hindu drama claims to be entirely of native growth; neither Persia, Arabia, nor Egypt appear to have possessed a theatre; and although Greece and China both delighted in the stage, the Hindus must be allowed the merit of originality, for their Plays "exhibit," says Professor Wilson, "characteristic varieties of conduct and construction which strongly evidence both original design and national development."* The greater part of each Play is written in Sanskrit, although Sanskrit had ceased to be a living language; and thus, like the Latin Plays annually represented at Westminster in the present day, they were but imperfectly understood by the audience and were wanting in dramatic effect. All the droll parts however were given in the language of common life, and the puns and jokes will have been universally appreciated. The general rule is to make only the great people talk Sanskrit, and to allow buffoons and women to discourse in the vernacular. Kalidasa's Play of the 'Hero and the Nymph' commences by the Manager's coming forward to make an invocation to Siva:—

"May that Siva who is attainable by devotion and faith, . . . to whom alone the name of Iswara is applicable, and who is sought with suppressed breath by those who court final emancipation, bestow upon you final felicity!"

* Hindu Theatre, H. H. Wilson. vol. i. preface, p. 12.

Suddenly a cry of "Help! help!" is heard behind the scenes: a troop of heavenly nymphs enter in the air, the King Pururavas meets them, driving an aerial car from the opposite side. The nymphs entreat him to rescue their friend, the graceful Urvasi, who has been torn from them by a haughty Danava. The King waits but an instant to ask "Which path pursued the wretch?" and, urging the rapid steeds to swiftest flight, before the car divides the scattering clouds like dust, whilst the whirling wheel deceives the eye and seems to circle double round the axle: the waving chowrie* which ornaments the horses' heads points backward, and backward streams the banner from the breeze. This rapid driving soon overtakes the foe, and presently the "deer-emblazoned banner" of the King is again seen advancing; but he now drives slowly, the fair nymph Urvasi having fainted in his car. This does not prevent the King from falling violently in love; and the damsel was already in the same predicament, for she no sooner recovers her power of speech than she says apart, "What thanks I owe the Danava" (for making this hero my deliverer, being understood); but whilst the whole party is indulging in sweet emotions, a rushing sound of chariots is heard from the east, and a messenger appears to recall the nymphs to Swarga, their heavenly home, and thus the lovers for a time are parted.

In Act II. the scene is the Palace Garden, the King's confidential buffo friend Mánava enters and says,—

"It is mighty inconvenient for a Brahman like myself, one so much sought after and subject to such frequent invitations, to be burdened with the King's secret! Going so much into company

* The white bushy tail of the Yak, or Tibet cow, fixed on a gold shaft.

as I do, I shall never be able to set a guard upon my tongue. I must be prudent, and will stay here by myself in this retired temple until my royal friend comes forth from the council-chamber."

Whilst he is sitting in a corner with his face hid in his hands, the Queen's confidential attendant comes in, saying to herself, that her mistress is sure that since the King's return from the regions of the Sun he is changed, and must have left his heart behind him. So she determines to get the truth out of Mánava, sure that "a secret can rest no longer in his breast than morning dew upon the grass."

And accordingly the woman gets the better of the man, and it is confessed that if the King has, in an absent fit, been calling his Queen by the name of Urvasi, why then Urvasi must be the name of the King's new love. Whilst this scene is going on, the Warder proclaims the sixth watch, which answers to the hour of two, a period set apart for royal recreation, and immediately the King leaves his council-chamber and comes to the garden-bower to indulge in thoughts of Urvasi. Whilst thus occupied, he feels his eyes twinkle, and hails it as a token that his moon-faced nymph is hovering near; and at last the heavenly damsel, no longer able to restrain herself, drops a leaf inscribed with words of love. The King is in an ecstasy of happiness, until his Queen, coming into the garden, happens to get a sight of this leaf, and her grief and indignation throw perplexity upon his bliss. Mánava (the buffo) proposes that her Majesty should order dinner, and so put an end to all discomfort; but the Queen's feelings are too deep either to be diverted by a joke, or soothed by the idle protestations with which the King endeavours to secure peace. The Queen withdraws in silent dignity, and in the evening

sends her chamberlain with a message, which he delivers as follows :—

“ Glory to the King ! So please your Grace, her Majesty expresses a wish to be honoured with your presence on the terrace of the pavilion of gems, to witness from it the entrance of the moon into the asterism Rohini.”

The King obeys, expecting to find her repenting her petulance and seeking a renewal of his love. The scene must have been one of considerable dramatic effect. The Queen has laid aside all her ornaments, and looks very lovely in the simple white dress of a devotee. She presents trays of sweetmeats and perfumes and flowers to Mánava and the chamberlain, and then, after making similar offerings to the King, she throws herself at his feet, and calls upon the “ Moon and his favourite Rohini” to hear and attest the promise which she makes her husband,—

“ Whatever nymph attract my lord’s regard,
And share with him the mutual bonds of love,
I henceforth treat with kindness and complacency.”

Before leaving, she states that her object has been to promote his happiness by sacrificing her own, and she then withdraws to lead a life of secluded devotion, and is no more seen upon the stage.

The discarded Queen looked so divine in her adversity, that Urvasi, who was hovering near invisible, felt slightly jealous ; but no sooner did the King venture to invoke her presence than she playfully came behind him, covering his eyes with her hands. All is then resigned to love, the King abandons his capital, throws up the reins of government, and spends his whole time with Urvasi in loneliest groves. One day however he cast a momentary glance upon an-

other nymph; Urvasi was jealous on the instant, pushed him from her, and, forgetting in her ill-humour that women were forbidden access to a neighbouring grove, she fled across the prescribed boundary and was changed into a vine for her temerity. Her distracted lover followed, and day and night searched all the woods in vain.

Act IV. has much the character of a melodrama. It opens with a chorus of nymphs, lamenting the loss of their beloved companion Urvasi :—

“The swans along the stream that sail
A fond companion's loss bewail;
With murmuring songs they soothe their grief,
Or find from tender tears relief.”

Presently the scene changes to another part of the forest, where invisible voices sing,—

“The lord of the elephant train
Now wanders afar from his mate,
And frantically comes to complain
To the woods of his desolate state.
Distraction his vigour consumes,
As he plunges amid the dark bowers;
Whilst o'er his vast bulk sweetly blooms
The garland of wild forest-flowers.”

This song is interrupted by the hasty appearance of the King, in dress disordered and with mind unhinged by grief. At one moment he believes some fiend to have carried off his bride, and he calls upon him to suspend his flight. Hail and rain fall, and he finds it is no fiend that he is addressing, but a friendly Cloud :—

“The cooling rain-drops fall, not barbed shafts,
And I mistake the lightning for my love.
[*Faints, and reviving sings,—*

"I madly thought a fiend conveyed
Away from me my fawn-eyed maid :
'Twas but a Cloud that rained above,
With the young lightning for its love."

He then wanders on, making poetical and moral reflections, and asking all the birds and beasts if they have seen his love. The peacock gives him no reply, but beats a merry measure, pleased to show his glories unrivalled by the floating tresses of the lovely Urvasi. He next observes the Koil cowering amid the shady branches of the Jambu. "She, of the birds, is wisest famed," he says, and he thus addresses her :—

"Say, nursling of a stranger nest,
Say, hast thou chanced my love to see
Amidst these gardens of the blest,
Wandering at liberty,
Or warbling with a voice divine
Melodious strains more sweet than thine? . . .
Why did she leave
One so devoted to her will?
[And then, as if in reply, he continues, turning to his left :
In wrath
She left me ; but the cause of anger lives not
In my imagination : the fond tyranny
That women exercise o'er those who love them
Brooks not the slightest show of disregard.
How now ! the bird has flown. 'T is ever thus
All coldly listen to another's sorrows."

He wanders past the elephants beneath the Kadamba-tree and the lake upon which swans and the lotus-plants were floating, and reaches a mountain-cliff, adown the rocky sides of which rush glistening springs. He calls "Urvasi," and hears a reply,—it was but the echo of his words.

Overcome by fatigue, he sits exhausted by the bank of the stream, saying,—

“Fatigue has overcome me. I will rest
Upon the borders of this mountain-torrent. . . .
Whilst gazing on the stream, whose new-sworn waters
Yet turbid flow, what strange imaginings
Possess my soul, and fill it with delight ;
The rippling wave is like her arching brow,
The fluttering line of storks her timid tongue.”

Yet further he wanders, singing verses of considerable beauty, until at length his steps are arrested by the sight of a ruby ; but what could he do with the gem, now that she is gone whose brow it would have best adorned ? “Why distain the ruby with my tears ?” Whilst thus considering, a voice in the air tells him, that by virtue of that gem he shall recover his lost bride. He then takes it, saying, he will wear it on his diadem, and hold it dear to him as to *Iswara*, his crescent-moon. Immediately a mysterious emotion on the sight of a vine induces him to caress the clinging plant, and at his touch it changes into *Urvashi*.





CHAPTER III.

“The audience are motionless as statues, . . .

What subject shall we select for representation

That we may ensure a continuance of their favour?”

Prologue to Sakoontala.

SAKOONTALA, another work by Kalidasa, is a drama long since introduced to European Orientalists by their distinguished leader Sir William Jones. But his translation, although valuable not only as the first Sanskrit drama that appeared in English, but also for its intrinsic merit, was made before correct Sanskrit manuscripts were accessible. The corrupt and modern text weakens “the bold and nervous phraseology of Kalidasa,” clothes “his delicate expressions of refined love in a meretricious dress,” and dilutes by repetition “ideas grand in their simplicity.” For these reasons a new translation* is a most welcome addi-

* Sakoontala, translated from the Sanskrit of Kalidasa by Monier Williams, Professor of Sanskrit at Haileybury.

tion to our literature, and the more so because Professor Williams gives in metre those portions which are poetry in the original. Like the beautiful verses already quoted, here again is poetry fit to tempt an English reader to study Sanskrit; but as Kalidasa has already engaged much attention, only a few short passages can be admitted.

Sakoontala, about to leave her childhood's home, grieves at parting from the little fawn which she had nurtured: her revered and beloved guardian says,—

“Weep not, my daughter, check the gathering tear
That lurks beneath thine eyelid, ere it flow
And weaken thy resolve; be firm and true—
True to thyself and me; the path of life
Will lead o'er hill and plain, o'er rough and smooth,
And all must feel the steepness of the way;
Though rugged be thy course, press boldly on.”

Different in character, but not less beautiful, are the reflections of a King who has “attained the objects of his aspirations,” and finds that his troubles then *begin*.

“’Tis a fond thought, that to attain the end
And object of ambition is to rest;
Success doth only mitigate the fever
Of anxious expectation; soon the fear
Of losing what we have, the constant care
Of guarding it, doth weary. Ceaseless toil
Must be the lot of him who, with his hands,
Supports the canopy that shields his subjects.”

Heralds behind the scenes cry, “May the King be victorious!” and one comes forward, saying,—

“Honour to him who labours day by day
For the world's weal, forgetful of his own;
Like some tall tree that, with its stately head,

Endures the solar beam, while underneath
It yields refreshing shelter to the weary.”*

The effect of pathetic music on a sensitive person is thus described :—

King. “Strange ! that song has filled me with a most peculiar sensation. I seem to yearn after some long-forgotten object of affection.

“Not seldom in our hours of ease,
When thought is still, the sight of some fair form,
Or mournful fall of music, breathing low,
Will stir strange fancies, thrilling all the soul
With a mysterious sadness, and a sense
Of vague, yet earnest, longing. Can it be
That the dim memory of events long past,
Or friendships formed in other states of being,
Flits like a passing shadow o’er the spirit ?”†

It is with regret one leaves so attractive a poet as Kalidasa, but we must now turn our attention to the “Toy-Cart,” a lively drama, giving pictures of daily family-life in India, probably before the Christian era.‡ It commences with an invocation to Sambhu, or Siva, “as he sits ruminating with suspended breath, whilst his serpents coil around his knees.”

The scene of this drama is the famous city of Ougein, in Malwa, and the state of society it represents “sufficiently§ advanced,” says Professor Wilson, “to be luxurious and corrupt.” The heroine, Vasanta, belongs indeed to the

* Page 124.

† Page 121.

‡ Hindu Theatre, H.H. Wilson, vol. i. p. 9.

§ By some this Play is attributed to the second century B.C., a century previous therefore to the reign of Vikramaditya. Professor Lassen, on the other hand, assigns the two first centuries after Christ as the earliest era of the drama. See Introduction to Sakoontala, M. Williams, p. 6, and Lassen’s Alterthumskunde, vol. ii. pp. 1113, 1147.

class of courtesans countenanced by existing Brahmanical governments. She is a lady of spirit and generosity, and evidently holds a station not esteemed degrading. The hero, Charudatta, is a Brahman, reduced to poverty by his munificence : he has an affectionate wife and darling son ; but, according to Vasanta's notions, this presents no reason against her falling in love with him. Nor, on his part, does he regard the possession of a virtuous wife as an impediment to the indulgence of a new affection. His friend, the simple-hearted shrewd Maitreya, has more misgivings on the subject ; but his doubts relate to the possible character of the new love, not to the rights or comfort of the wife. On our first introduction to Charudatta, we find him lamenting that, instead of those rich offerings which he formerly presented to the Gods, he is now reduced to a "scant tribute to the insect tribe." "To die," he says, "is transient suffering ; to be poor, interminable anguish," because "the guest no longer seeks the dwelling," "the love of friends hangs all unstrung ; and from poverty comes disrespect, and from disrespect does self-dependence fail." He says, he would have given up the world and become an ascetic, but that he had not liked to impose such hardship upon his wife. Suddenly a tumult is heard in the street, to which Charudatta's house has a side or back entrance (the approach to the main entrance being through a court), and flying down the street appears Vasanta pursued by a dissolute Prince and his companions. "Stop, lady, stop !" cries the Prince's servant ; "she runs along like a peahen in summer with a tail in full feather, whilst my master follows her like the young hound that chases the bird through the thicket." Luckily at this moment Charu-

datta happened to open the side door of his mansion, and in rushed the fugitive, cleverly making her scarf brush out the light of the lamp as she passed ; and the night being pitch dark, the whole party were then at fault. After much blustering and threatening the Prince and his suite depart.

Charudatta relights his lamp and discovers Vasanta, and he and she forthwith salute each other with apologies, until Maitreya says, " Whilst you two stand there nodding your heads to each other like a field of long grass, permit me to bend mine, although in the style of a young camel's stiff knees, and request that you will be pleased to hold yourselves upright again." As a pretext for further intercourse Vasanta begs permission to leave a casket of jewels in Charudatta's house, saying, that it was for the jewels that the villains were pursuing her.

In the next scene of interest a robber is " creeping along the ground, like a snake crawling out of his old skin." He feels the wall until he discovers a rat-hole, which he hails as an omen of success, and then considers how to proceed, saying, " The god of the golden spear teaches four modes of breaking into a house,—picking out burnt bricks, cutting through unbaked ones, throwing water on a mud wall, and boring through one of wood ;" and, as Charudatta's wall was of baked bricks, he picked them out, doubting whether to make the aperture in the shape of the *Svastika* or a water-jar ; and, feeling at a loss for a measuring-line, he makes use of his Brahmanical thread, which, he observes, is a most useful appendage to a Brahman of *his complexion*, for it serves to measure the depth and height of walls, to withdraw ornaments, to open a latch, or to make a ligature for the bite of a snake.

Having entered through the breach, he contrives to abstract the casket from beneath the head of Maitreya, then lets fly what he calls the "fire-flapping insect," which hovers round the light and puts it out with his wings, and finally he escapes. The household wake up just as he departs, and are in a terrible consternation at the loss of the jewels. Charudatta feels that a foul blight will now for ever rest upon his fame; but his wife, in the inner apartments, whilst expressing joy that he is himself unhurt, takes a string of jewels "given to her in her maternal mansion," and over which she alone had control; and, fearing that her husband's "lofty spirit" would not accept them from her, sends for Maitreya, pretends that she gives them to him because he is a Brahman, and feels sure that they will be used for the relief of her husband. Her confidence is not abused: Maitreya presents the jewels to Charudatta, and, after some reluctance and hesitation, Charudatta bids Maitreya take them to Vasanta, tell her that he had unhappily lost her casket at play, and intreat her to accept this offering in its place. When Maitreya reaches the dwelling of Vasanta, he gives graphic descriptions of the place:—

"The threshold is very neatly coloured, well swept, and watered; the floor is beautified with strings of sweet flowers; the top of the gate is lofty, and gives one the pleasure of looking up to the clouds; whilst the jessamine festoon hangs tremblingly down, as if it were now tossing on the trunk of Indra's elephant. Over the doorway is a lofty arch of ivory; above it wave flags of saffron colour, their edges curling in the wind like fingers, saying, 'Come hither.' Young mango-trees in crystal pots support the doorposts; the door-panels are of gold studded with adamant. . . . The

whole cries 'Away!' to a man who is poor." Entering the first court, he sees a line of palaces as white as the moon; golden steps set with coloured stones lead to the upper chambers, whence crystal windows, festooned with pearls, look down upon Ougein. The porter dozes in his seat as stately as a Brahman deep in the Vedas; and the very crows, crammed with rice and curds, disdain the fragments of the sacrifice. In the second court are the stables,—the carriage-oxen, the rams kept for fighting, a monkey "tied as fast as a thief," and the *mahouts* feeding elephants with balls of rice and *ghee*. In the third court young men are gambling. The fourth court is used for music and dancing, and the recitation of plays and poems. The fifth court is redolent of oil and assafoetida: the kitchen sighs softly forth its fragrant and abundant smoke; the butcher's boy is washing the skin of an animal; the cook is surrounded with dishes; the sweetmeats are mixing, and the cakes are baking. The sixth court is entered by an arched gateway of gold and gems: it is the jewellers' court, where jewellers are examining pearls, topazes, sapphires, emeralds, rubies, the lapis-lazuli, coral, and other jewels; some set rubies in gold, some work gold ornaments on coloured thread, some string pearls, some grind the lapis-lazuli, some pierce shells, and some cut coral: here we have perfumers drying the saffron-bags, shaking the musk-bags, expressing the sandal-juice, and compounding essences. The seventh court is an aviary, where the doves bill and coo in comfort, where the pampered parrot croaks, like a Brahman Pundit chaunting hymns when stuffed with curds and rice, and where the *maina* chatters as glibly as a lady's-maid issuing her mistresses commands to her fellow-servants, while the *koil*,

crammed with juicy fruit, whines like a water-carrier." It must be remembered that Maitreya was hungry himself, and viewed all these overfed *gourmands* with a little envy. In the eighth court he sees Vasanta's brother, "dressed in silk raiment, glittering with rich ornaments, and rolling about as if his limbs were out of joint;" and next he observes that lady's mother "dressed in flowered muslin, her feet, shining with oil, thrust into a pair of slippers;" a very portly old dame he thinks, but cannot imagine how she got into her seat, unless, like an unwieldy image of Siva, she was set up first and then the walls built round her. At length he enters a lovely garden, where the yellow jessamine, and the *grandiflorum*, and the *Zambac*, and the blue *Cli-toria* float in festoons between trees of delicious fruit; here in an arbour he receives a kind welcome from Vasanta, the owner of all this splendour. Maitreya tells his story, and presents the string of diamonds; Vasanta smiles, takes the diamonds, puts them to her heart, and playfully bids Maitreya tell that sad gambler, Charudatta, that she will call upon him. Now it so happened that Vasanta already knew the truth of the case, and was again in possession of her casket, for the thief was in love with a servant-girl of hers, to whom he brought his prize. The girl immediately recognized the casket, and succeeded in persuading her lover to restore it to Vasanta, and, by saying that he was commissioned so to do by Charudatta, escape the reputation of being a thief.

Act V. opens with a fine description of a storm :—

"The gathering gloom
Delights the peafowl and distracts the swan,
Not yet prepared for periodic flight. . . .

Through the air. . . . The purple cloud
Rolls stately on, girt by the golden lightning . . .
As by a yellow garb and bearing high,
The long white line of storks. . . .
From the dark womb in rapid fall descend
The silvery drops, and, glittering in the gleam
Shot from the lightning, bright and fitful, sparkle
Like a rich fringe rent from the robe of heaven.
The firmament is filled with scattered clouds ;
And, as they fly before the wind, their forms,
As in a picture, image various shapes,
The semblances of storks and soaring swans,
Of dolphins, and the monsters of the deep,
Of dragons vast and pinnacles and towers."

In the midst of this deluge Maitreya returns, and complains to Charudatta that Vasanta and her damsels smiled and laughed and made signs, but kept the jewels: "A pretty job," he says, "to lose a necklace worth the four seas for a thing of little value, and one we neither ate nor drank, and which a thief carried off." Whilst yet talking, Vasanta arrives, under cover of an umbrella, but nevertheless "her locks are drenched with rain, her gentle nerves shaken by angry tempests, and her delicate feet by cumbering mire and massy anklets wearied." The lady enters, approaches Charudatta, throws flowers at him, and says, "Gambler, good evening to you." Playfully she makes her attendant restore the casket, tells him he should not have sent the jewels, and presently he and she confess mutual affection.

In Act VI. Vasanta sends the necklace to Charudatta's wife, saying, "I am Charudatta's handmaid and your slave ; then be this necklace again the ornament of that neck to which it of right belongs." But it is returned with these words, "Madam, you are favoured by the son of my lord ;

it is not proper for me to accept this necklace : know that the only ornament I value is my husband." Presently the child comes in, complaining of its little cart because it is only made of clay, whilst the child of a neighbour has one of gold. Vasanta caresses the child, laments her poverty, takes off her ornaments, fills his cart with her jewels, tells him she is his mother, and bids him buy a toy-cart of gold, and it is from this incident that the drama obtains its name.

Charudatta's arrangement was that the next day he should meet Vasanta at the Old Flower Garden, and going forward himself he left orders that Vasanta should follow in his curtained carriage drawn by oxen. But whilst Vasanta was preparing, the carriage of her persecutor, the dissolute Prince, was stopped at Charudatta's door, owing to the road being blocked up by country-carts, and in the confusion Vasanta jumped in by mistake. Soon after the Prince meets his carriage, and is well enough pleased to discover Vasanta within, until, finding her as obdurate as ever, he tries to strangle her, and leaves her for dead beneath a heap of dry leaves. Just then a Buddhist devotee appears upon the stage; he had formerly been a bathman and rubber of joints, but, inveigled by gamblers, he was reduced to the extreme of misery, and about to be sold as a slave, when Vasanta, with her usual generosity, gave him protection and redeemed his debt. Determined never again to touch the dice, he had joined the Buddhists, and now, in virtue of his daily duty of begging his food, he was wandering about; he had just been washing his outer garment and was about to spread it out to dry upon the heap of dry leaves beneath which Vasanta lay, when he perceived a

hand and heard a sigh, and anon discovered his beloved protectress. His expression is, "It is the lady Vasanta, the devoted worshipper of Buddha." Vasanta makes signs for water: no water is near, but the Sramana applies his wet garment to her face and she revives.

The plot of this Play is further complicated by the adventures of Aryaka, a cowherd, who conspires against the unpopular and weak King then upon the throne: he is described as a man with "arms like the elephant's vast tusks, his breast and shoulders brawny as the lion's, his eyes a coppery-red." The Government succeeded once in capturing this insurgent, but he escaped from his prison and had taken refuge in Charudatta's carriage at the time it was waiting at his door for Vasanta. The driver mistook the clank of his chain for the jingle of the lady's bangles, drove on and brought him to the garden. The unhappy Charudatta, grieved though he be at his disappointment, is too generous not to help a fugitive in his distress, and desires Aryaka to go forward in the carriage until safe beyond the frontier. In Act IX. we are introduced to a Hall of Justice, where the Prince accuses Charudatta of being the murderer of Vasanta, and where Charudatta is tried according to the Code of Manu. The end of the whole is, that Vasanta reappears just as Charudatta, adorned with a funeral wreath of oleander, is about to be executed; and Aryaka having at the same moment defeated the King and obtained possession of the throne, Charudatta is not only released, restored to life and honour, but receives high office and dominion from the new sovereign. Charudatta is now anxious to show his gratitude to the Buddhist Sramana who saved Vasanta; and, as the devotee says it is his wish

“to follow still the path he has selected, because all else is full of care and change,” he procures for him the honourable appointment of “Chief of the Viharas.” The Prince’s servant, who had also assisted and who was a slave, is made a free man, and the Chandalas, who had purposely delayed the execution, are made heads of their tribe; even the wicked Prince is set free by the benevolence of Charudatta, whose wife embraces Vasanta, calling her “happy sister;” and the Tenth Act closes on a scene of perfect unanimity and bliss.

In the eighth century arose another dramatist, whose works still enjoy a popularity second only to those of Kalidasa. Bhavabhuti flourished at the Court of Kanouj, A.D. 720: he was a native of Berar, and delights in descriptions of its gloomy forests. His style is vigorous and harmonious; but, “although classical, it is highly laboured,” —the author being fond of an unseasonable display of learning.” His Play of ‘Malati and Madhava’ is interesting, not only on account of its plot and poetry, but for the hints it gives of the prevailing religious Siva worship, then beginning to assume a terrific character, and Buddhist convents being tolerated under Brahmanical governments. To the superiors of these convents indeed we find Kings and Prime Ministers entrusting the education of their children. Madhava, the hero, is son to a King of Behar, and is sent to Ougein to be instructed in logic under the auspices of a female Buddhist devotee, a friend of his father’s, and the Superior of the Buddhist Institutions in Ougein. This same woman has been nurse, and is still the confidential friend, of our heroine Malati, who is daughter to the Prime Minister of Malwa. The scene is laid in Ougein,

and a pleasing description given of the town and its surrounding scenery as seen from a neighbouring height.*

“ How wide the prospect spreads—mountain and rock,
Towns, villages, and woods, and glittering streams.
There, where the *Para* and the *Sindhu* wind,
The towers, and pinnacles, and gates,
And spires of *Padmavati*, like a city
Precipitated from the skies, appear
Inverted in the pure translucent wave.
There flows *Lavana's* frolic stream, whose groves,
By early rains refreshed, afford the youth
Of *Padmavati* pleasant haunts, and where,
Upon the herbage brightening in the shower,
The heavy-uddered kine contented browse.”

The character who gives the above description is another female Buddhist who has attained the rank which confers the power of flying through the air: and consequently through the air she came from a hill in Berar, sacred to a Sivaite goddess. The whole Play shows that occasional union of Buddhism and Sivaism which we have already remarked on coins, and in the Tantra portions of the northern Buddhist books. The devotee pauses in her flight to render homage at a Sivaite temple, “ fane of the Lord of *Bhavani*, whose illustrious image is not of mortal fabric.” “ Hail ! all hail !” she cries, “ Creator of the universe ! source of the sacred *Vedas* ! God of the crescent-crested diadem ! destroyer of love's presumptuous power !”

Professor Wilson says “ there is more passion in the thoughts of Bhavabhuti than in those of Kalidasa, but less fancy :” he makes no attempt at wit, but, “ on the other hand, he expatiates more largely in the description of pic-

* H. H. Wilson, *Hindu Theatre*, vol. ii. ; Introduction to ‘ *Malati and Madhava*.’

turesque scenery and in the representation of human emotions, and is perhaps entitled to even a higher place than his rival as a poet.”*

The *Mudra Rakshasa*† is again different from either of its predecessors, and with this we must conclude our notices of Hindu dramas. The plot is a series of political intrigues without a single love-scene, and almost without the introduction of a woman. Much variety is nevertheless contrived: one of the spies goes about with a scroll inscribed with figures of Yama, about whom he sings verses, and calls his performance a Yama show, in virtue of which he gains admission to the houses of rich men, and exhibits in the courts where the women and children reside. Another spy, or secret messenger, disguises himself as a snake-catcher, holds the following conversation with the passengers in the street, fronting the house of the man with whom he wants to communicate:—

“ *Scene before Rakshasa’s house.*

Enter VIRADHA, an agent of Rakshasa, disguised as a snake-catcher.

Viradha. Those who are skilled in charms and potent signs may handle fearlessly the fiercest snakes.

Passenger. Hola! what and who are you?

Viradha. A snake-catcher, your Honour; my name is *Jirnavisha*. What say you, you would touch my snakes? What may your profession be, pray? Oh, I see, a servant of the Prince,—you had better not meddle with snakes. A snake-catcher unskilled in charms and antidotes, a man mounted on a furious elephant without a goad, and a servant of the King appointed to a high station and proud of his success, these three are on the eve of destruction. Oh! he is off.

Second Passenger. What have you got in your basket, fellow?

Viradha. Tame snakes, your Honour, by which I get my living.

* Hindu Theatre, vol. ii. p. 122.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 127.

Would you wish to see them? I will exhibit them here, in the court of this house, as this is not a convenient spot.

Second Passenger. This, you blockhead, is the house of Rakshasa, the Prince's minister; there is no admittance for us here.

Viradha. Then go your way, Sir: by the authority of my occupation I shall make bold to enter. So,—I have got rid of him."

Viradha then changes his language from the Prakrit vernacular to Sanskrit, and makes a long soliloquy.

When Rakshasa is informed that a snake-catcher is anxious to see him, he feels his left eye throb, which is an unlucky omen, and he desires that the man may receive a donation and be sent away. A servant goes therefore to the snake-catcher and says,—

"*Servant.* Here is for your pains; for not seeing,—not for seeing.

Viradha. Inform the minister that besides exhibiting snakes I am a poet, . . . and give him this."

The verses show that he is the bearer of news, and procure him an immediate audience.

We will allude but to one more drama,—Retnavali, or the Necklace. It is considerably later than any of those yet mentioned, and shows a more complicated mythology. The Benediction alludes to Siva thus:—"May that presentation of the flowery offering, made by the mountain-goddess to her mighty lord, preserve you! May Siva ever be your trust! Prosperity attend illustrious Brahmins!"

In the conduct of the plot, and also in the style of the language, there is a marked imitation of the celebrated Kalidasa, but more extravagance. At the commencement the Queen and her damsels celebrate the festival of Kama-deva, "the flower-armed God," "the lord of Reti." He is supposed to be abiding in an Asoka-tree, and the Queen, standing near this tree, presents to his image gifts of san-

dal, saffron, and flowers ; and as soon as the worship of the divinity is concluded, she, according to prescribed usage, offers similar adoration to her husband. Amongst other incidents a great sage is mentioned as having arrived from a hill-temple consecrated to Siva in Berar : his sanctity has conferred upon him gifts of magic, and he teaches the King the craft of making flowers blossom at any season ; but the most striking scene is one in which a magician from Ougein exhibits his art in the presence of the King, Queen, and Court. He comes forward laughing and waving a bunch of peacock's feathers, saying,—

“ Reverence to Indra, who lends our art his name ! . . . What are your Majesty's commands ? would you see the moon brought down upon earth, a mountain in mid-air, a fire in the ocean, or night at noon ? . . . What need of many words ? By the force of my master's spells I will place before your eyes the person whom in your heart you are most anxious to behold.”

After the King has said, “ Now, Sir, display your power,” he waves his plume and cries,—

“ Hari, Hara, Brahmá, chiefs of the Gods ! and thou their mighty monarch, Indra, with the host of heavenly spirits . . . appear rejoicing and dancing in the heavens !

[*The King and Queen look up and rise from their seats.*

King. Most wonderful !

Queen. Extraordinary indeed !

King. See, love ! that is Brahmá throned upon the lotus ; that *Sunkara*, with the crescent moon, his glittering crest ; that, *Hari*, the destroyer of the demon race, in whose four hands the bow, the sword, the mace, and the shell are borne. There, mounted on his stately elephant, appears the King of *Swerga* ; around them countless spirits dance merrily in mid-air, sporting with the lovely nymphs of heaven, whose anklets ring responsive to the measure.”

The spectacle is interrupted by the arrival of ministers

from Ceylon, and the magician is dismissed ; but whilst the King is giving audience to his newly-arrived guests, a cry arises that

“The inner apartments are on fire. The flames spread over the roof of gold ; they wind around with clouds of smoke . . . and fill the female train with fear.”

The King rushes into the flames to rescue a maiden whom he loves ; but he no sooner releases her from her imprisonment than the flames disappear, and the palace stands unharmed, and the semblance of fire is found to have been the work of the magician, who possessed similar skill to that displayed in the presence of the King of Prasenajit, at Kosala.





CHAPTER IV.

“When at length four weary months have fled,
Vishnu rises from his Serpent-bed.”*—*Old Indian Poetry.*

WHEN historical data are notoriously slight and scattered, students can do little more than rehearse and make summaries. A muster-roll of the kings, whose unpronounceable names appear on coins, could teach but little, for it would be too hard a lesson for the memory; but a slight outline of the facts beaten out from Archæology may be traced and retraced with advantage, so often as fresh facts appear.

* The Serpent-couch is the mythological snake Ananta, whose thousand heads formed a canopy over Vishnu during his four months' sleep,—supposed to allude to the four months of the periodical rains. (See Wilson.)

Commencing* therefore about B.C. 160, we find Menander, Apollodotus, and other Greeks, holding dominion on the Indus. Guzerat and the lower part of Scinde is governed either by Hindu viceroys, under Greek sovereigns, or by public assemblies, choosing a chief who acknowledged fealty to the Greek superior. In B.C. 157, this condition of affairs was changed by a dynasty of Hindus called the Sahs; they were independent kings in Guzerat, issued their own coins, and carried on extensive public works successfully for about one hundred years. In B.C. 57 the Hindu hero Vikramaditya conquered Greeks, Indo-Scythians, and Sahs, extending his sovereignty from the Nerbudda to the Himalaya, making Ougein, in Malwa, his capital city, but holding Kashmere also under his dominion. In B.C. 26 the Yu-chi Scythians, under Kadphises, Kanerki, and their followers, made conquests in India, and for a time got possession of Scinde and Malwa. In A.D. 91 died Salihavana, a Brahmanical Hindu Raja, celebrated for having delivered Malwa from the Kanerki and their Indo-Scythian or Turanian followers. The next important event is the death of Meghavahana, whose name signifies "Great Rider upon the clouds." He was a zealous Buddhist; his death occurred A.D. 144, and from this time forth Brahmanism appears to have kept the ascendancy in all the important towns of India. After this period we find Buddhists of note and learning going to China, or settling themselves in Nipal, Kashmere, or in Southern India; and it is reasonable to conjecture that persecution or neglect in earlier sites drove Buddhist colonies to establish themselves among the western

* The above sketch is made from the careful deductions of Mr. Thomas, in the 'Journal of the Asiatic Society,' vol. xiii.

hills of the Peninsula, where their wonderful excavations at Ellora and Ajunta are so notorious.

The next important Hindu dynasty is the Guptas; and, judging by the coinage, it appears that the Mint of Minnagara on the Indus, established by the Greeks, was used first by the Saks, then by the Kanerkis, and lastly by the Guptas. The series of Gupta is very long, and the symbols undergo considerable variation. They commence with Siva and the Bull,* and the Peacock of Siva's son, or his wife, seated on a lion, holding in her hand a lotus. At length we come to a stout man on horseback called Mahendra Gupta, dressed in loose trousers, a buttoned coat, and a full-bottomed wig,—the counterpart of wigs worn both in Buddhist and Sivaite paintings at Ajunta and Arungabad. In A.D. 319 the Guptas were driven out of Guzerat by the Sena family, who had acted as their vice-roys, and, taking the name of Vallabhi, this became one of the most celebrated of Hindu dynasties; their capital was on the eastern coast of Guzerat, but now lies buried beneath overwhelming sands. From the Chinese we know that Buddhism was still patronized in some parts of Central India even so late as A. D. 645; but during the seventh century it gradually declined and disappeared; whilst Sivaism adopted gloomy and terrible forms, and then both Poetry and Architecture point to the rising superiority of the old God Vishnu. This deity appears in the earliest books, even in the Rig-Veda hymns, but merely as one amongst many

* Skanda Gupta has his fame recorded on a pillar at Gorakpur, as resembling Indra in his rule, possessed of the chiefest of riches, and born of the royal race of Guptas, whose earthly throne was shaken by the wind of the bowing heads of a hundred kings. J. A. S. B., vol. viii., p. 37.

inferior divinities. In the epic poems he is also mentioned, but rather as an after-thought, to give dignity to the popular heroes Rama and Krishna. In the Bhagavat Gita, the poem which we have now to consider, he is, on the contrary, an integral part of the composition. With Krishna as a friendly warrior we have already made acquaintance; but in the Bhagavat Gita, Krishna is identified with the God Vishnu, and the God Vishnu is declared to be the Supreme Deity from whom all things have issued, and into whom all will be absorbed. This poem is attributed to the seventh or eighth century of our era, and it acknowledges the two divisions of the Sankhya philosophy; but, avoiding the Buddhist error of driving abstract argument into nothingness, it rests mind, virtue, and phenomena upon God. It does not deny inferior Gods, and it devoutly believes in transmigration, and in a material form of Supreme Deity; but to a Christian who has waded through the arid wastes of Buddhist Sutras it sounds almost as a far-off echo of home to a Siberian exile. It pretends to a place as episode in the Mahabharata, an epic poem which must have been eight hundred years old before the Bhagavat Gita can have been written, but its being so placed is consistent with the Brahmanical aim of investing old literature with a new religious character. The story of the Mahabharata serves therefore as a framework, giving us again the generous Arjuna and his friend the powerful Krishna. The last tremendous battle between the Kurus and the Pandus is about to begin. The forces on either side are marshalled face to face; Krishna stands by Arjuna in his splendid chariot drawn by white horses, whilst on the opposite side the chief of the Kurus, shouting like a lion, blows his shell to

raise the spirits of his followers ; immediately other shells reply, and the clangour is excessive. Arjuna is overcome with distress at the idea that the enemies opposed to him are all of his own kindred,—grandsires, cousins, tutors, bosom-friends ; he would rather die, he says, than be the murderer of his race. “I wish not for victory ; I want not dominion ; . . . although they would kill me, I wish not to fight them ; no, not even for the dominion of the three regions of the universe, much less for this little earth.” And at length he puts his bow and arrows aside, and sits down, “his heart overwhelmed with affliction.” Krishna combats his arguments, telling him, that to stand still in the field of battle is contrary to duty. Arjuna replies respectfully, “I am thy disciple, instruct me, my understanding is confounded ; I see nothing that could assuage the grief which drieth up my faculties, even were I to obtain a kingdom unrivalled upon earth, or dominion over the hosts in heaven.” Krishna then applies a different argument, saying, it is folly to grieve either for the dead or for the living, “because the soul neither killeth nor is killed, it is without birth, and cannot be destroyed in this its mortal frame.” Arjuna must therefore fight without trembling ; for to fight is his duty as a Kshattriya, and duty requires men to work bravely and without concern for the result. Krishna’s argument will be yet more favourably explained if we once more borrow from the beautiful translations of ‘Old Indian Poetry,’ for which we are indebted to Mr. Griffith :—

“ Know that What Is can never cease to Be,
What Is Not can Be never : they who see
The mystic Truth, the Wise, alone can tell

The nature of the things they study well.
 And be thou sure the mighty boundless Soul,
 The Eternal Essence, that pervades this Whole,
 Can never perish, never waste away ;
 The Indestructible knows not decay. . . .
 Up, then, and conquer ! in thy might arise !
 Fear not to slay It, for It never dies. . . .
 As men throw off their garments worn and old,
 And newer raiment round their bodies fold,
 The ethereal spirit leaves its mortal shell,
 And finds another form wherein to dwell.
 Essence of Life ! It lives, undimm'd its ray,
 Though fiercest fire or keen dart seek to slay. . . .
 Incomprehensible ! It knows not change,
 Boundless in being, limitless in range.
 This is the Nature of the Soul, great Chief !
 It lives for ever, therefore spare thy grief. . . .
 All that is born must die,—that dies, be born again.”

Krishna further warns his disciple not to be guided exclusively by the speculative portion of the Sankhya philosophy, but to attend also to the practical ; and not to delight “in the controversies of the Veds,” which ordain innumerable ceremonies and lead to mere transient enjoyment, but to be “free from duplicity, to stand firm in the path of duty, free from care and trouble.” “Let the motive,” he continues, “be in the deed, and not in the event. Be not one whose motive for action is the hope of reward. Let not thy life be spent in inaction. Depend upon application, perform thy duty, abandon all thought of the consequence, and make the event equal, whether it terminate in good or evil ; for such an equality is called *Yog*. The action stands at a distance inferior to the application of wisdom. Seek an asylum then in wisdom alone . . . When thy reason shall get the better of the gloomy weakness of thy heart, then

shalt thou have attained all knowledge which hath been, or is worthy to be taught. When thy understanding, by study brought to maturity, shall be fixed immovably in contemplation, then shall it obtain true wisdom."

Such a wise man is called a Muni. His wisdom is established when in all things he is without affection, and neither rejoiceth at good nor is cast down by evil; when, like the tortoise, he can draw in all his members and restrain them from their wonted purposes. What happiness can he enjoy who hath no rest? The heart, which followeth the dictates of the moving passions, carrieth away his reason as the storm the bark in the raging ocean. But he obtaineth happiness whose passions enter his soul (or heart) as the multitudinous rivers flow into the unswelling passive ocean.

In Lecture III. Arjuna begs Krishna to explain how it is that, if the use of the understanding be superior to the practice of deeds, he should be urged to so dreadful an undertaking as war with relatives. Krishna replies, that exemption from action is only to be obtained by a previous wise performance of action for unselfish motives. Warnings are then given against self-sufficiency, and against illiberality towards others. A man who has much knowledge and might dispense with outward works, must not drive those from works who are slow of comprehension and less experienced than himself; rather should he still perform works, in order to induce the vulgar to attend to them. But whilst a wise man performs works, he must not be led astray by the pride of self-sufficiency to suppose that he himself is the executor of those actions which are performed by the principles of his constitution. And then, speaking

in his character of *Iswara*, God, or the Lord, Krishna says,—

“Throw every deed on me, and, with a heart over which the soul presideth, be free from hope, be unpresuming, be free from trouble, and resolve to fight.”

In the following Lecture Arjuna ventures to question Krishna concerning his nature and the length of time which he has existed; Krishna replies,—

“Both thou and I have passed many births: mine are known unto me, but thou knowest not of thine.

“Although I am not in my nature subject to birth or decay, and am the Lord of all created beings; yet, having command over my own nature, I am made evident by my own power; and as often as there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world, I make myself evident; and thus I appear from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of virtue.”

Some interesting observations follow, upon the great varieties of men's actions and the various modes in which they worship or sacrifice. Some sacrificing their “breathing spirit,” others their organs and faculties; all worship is acknowledged to be beneficial, but that worship alone is wise which recognizes God, or *Iswara*, in everything:—

“God is the gift of charity, God is the offering, God is in the fire of the altar, by God is the sacrifice performed; and God is to be obtained by him who maketh God alone the object of his works.”

In Lecture V. we learn, that to abandon works means to abandon the hope of reward, and to act wholly in a spirit of faith. Krishna says:—“Children only, and not the learned, speak of the speculative and the practical doctrines as two; they are but one, for both obtain the same end;” and whilst to be a recluse without a spiritual state

of mind is to obtain pain and trouble, he who is employed in the practice of his duty presently obtaineth *Brahme*. To these difficulties Krishna replies, that the discipline called *Yog* only requires practice and temperance, and, although difficult, may be attained by one who hath his soul in his subjection; but supposing death to occur before this happy consummation, the man endued with faith will not be destroyed.

“No man who hath done good goeth unto an evil place. A man whose devotions have been broken off by death, having enjoyed for an immensity of years the rewards of his virtues in the regions above at length is born again in some holy and respectable family, or perhaps in the house of some learned *Yogi*. The *Yogi* is more exalted than *Tapasas*,—those zealots who harass themselves in performing penances,—he is more respected than the learned in science, and superior to those who are attached to moral works; wherefore, O Arjuna! resolve thou to become a *Yogi*. Of all *Yogas* I respect him as the most devout who hath faith in me, and who serveth me with a soul possessed of my spirit.”

It will be unnecessary to follow this poem or treatise through its laboured exposition of the Vedanta system, with its eight distinctions and its three qualities and the three mystic words, this, and the Sankhya systems, etc. we studied sufficiently in the Chapter on Philosophy at the close of Book I. But we must dwell upon the views of Faith and Deity which are here displayed, for they deviate considerably from any which we meet with at an earlier epoch.

“The man who performing the duties of life, and quitting all interest in them, placeth them upon *Brahme*, floats like a lotus on the lake unruffled by the tide.”

“The man who keepeth the outward accidents from entering his mind, and his eyes fixed in contemplation between his brows; who

maketh the breath to pass through both his nostrils alike in expiration and inspiration; the man who is happy in his heart, at rest in his mind, and enlightened within, is a *Yogi*, and obtaineth the immaterial nature of *Brahme*, the Supreme."

In Lecture VI. we find the following sketch of a *Yogi* :—

"He is a recluse of a subdued mind and spirit, free from hope and free from perception. He planteth his own feet firmly on a spot that is undefiled, neither too high nor too low, and sitteth upon the sacred grass which is called *Kusa*, covered with a skin and a cloth. There he, whose business is the restraining of his passions, should sit with his mind fixed on one object alone, in the exercise of his devotion for the purification of his soul; keeping his head, his neck, his body steady without motion, his eyes fixed on the point of his nose, looking at no other place around."

This condition cannot be attained by him who eats more than enough or less than enough; neither by him who hath a habit of sleeping much, nor by him who sleepeth not at all. A man is called devout when his mind remaineth thus regulated within himself; and the *Yogi* thus employed is like a lamp, standing in a place without wind, which waveth not.

Arjuna ventures to express that, considering the restlessness of human nature, he cannot conceive the permanent duration of such a doctrine. "The mind, O Krishna!" he continues, "is naturally unsteady, turbulent, strong, and stubborn; I esteem it as difficult to restrain as the wind." He also intimates a wish to behold Krishna as the Universal Spirit, or "Mighty Lord." Krishna says, that as his natural eye would be unequal to the sight, he will give him a heavenly eye for the purpose; and having thus spoken,—

"The mighty compound and divine being Hāri made evident

unto Arjuna his supreme and heavenly form ; of many a mouth and eye ; many a wondrous sight ; many a heavenly ornament ; many an up-raised weapon ; adorned with celestial robes and chaplets ; anointed with heavenly essence ; covered with every marvellous thing ; the Eternal God, whose countenance is on every side ! The glory and amazing splendour of this mighty Being may be likened to the sun rising at once into the heavens with a thousand times more than usual brightness. The son of Pandu then beheld within the body of the God of Gods, standing together, the whole universe divided forth into its vast variety. He was overwhelmed with wonder, and every hair was raised an end. He bowed down his head before the God, and thus addressed him with joined hands :—

“ ‘ I behold, O God ! within thy breast the *dewas* assembled, and every specific tribe of beings. I see Brahma sitting on his lotus throne ; . . . I see thyself of infinite shape, . . . with abundant arms, mouths, eyes, . . . etc. ; but I can neither discover thy beginning, thy middle, nor thy end. . . . Again I see thee with a crown, and armed with club and *Chakra*, a mass of glory darting refulgent beams around. . . .

“ ‘ Of the celestial bands I see some flying to thee for refuge ; whilst some, afraid, with joined hands sing forth thy praise. . . . The world, like me, are terrified to behold thy wondrous form gigantic, . . . with many mouths and eyes, . . . and with rows of dreadful teeth. Thus I see thee touching the heavens, and shining with such glory ; of such various hues, with widely opened mouths, and bright expanded eyes. . . . Having beholden thy dreadful teeth and gazed on thy countenance, Time's last fire, I know not which way I turn ! I find no peace. . . . The sons of Kuru, and even the fronts of our army, seem to be precipitating themselves hastily into thy mouths, discovering such frightful rows of teeth ! whilst some appear to stick between thy teeth with their bodies sorely mangled. . . . As flowing rivers roll on to the ocean, so these heroes rush on towards thy flaming mouths. As troops of insects seek destruction in the flaming fire, even so these people, swelling with fury, seek their own destruction. Thou involvest and swallowest them, whilst the whole world is filled with thy glory. Deign to make known to me, thou most exalted ! who is this God of awful figure.’ ”

The concluding chapters are chiefly occupied with explanations of Brahmic or essential essence, substance, nature,

and qualities, taken apparently from the Upanishads; but the application is different, for the worshipper is not directed to fix his mind upon Brahme, the indefinite essence of deity, but upon the personal God Vishnu, of whom Krishna was a visible form. The following lines are taken from Mr. Griffith's poetical translation of these passages :—

“Life of all life ! prop of this earthly frame !
 Whither all creatures go, from whence they came,
 I am the Best ; from Me all beings spring,
 And rest on me, like pearls upon their string.
 I am the Father, and the fostering Nurse,
 Grandsire, and Mother of the Universe ;
 I am the Vedas, and the Mystic Word,
 The Way, Support, the Witness, and the Lord.
 They who with pious care have studied o'er,
 And made their own the triple Veda's lore,
 Whose fires have glow'd
 . . . hie to Indra's holy sphere, and share
 The joy of Gods,
 And gain their longing bliss, but for a day.
 But those a nobler, higher blessing find,
 Who worship me with all their heart and mind :
 Me, only Me, their wrapt devotion knows,
 With Me alone their tranced spirit glows. . . .
 Do all thine acts to Me through all thy days,
 Thy food, thy gifts, thy sacrifice, thy praise ;
 Then will the bonds of actions done by thee,
 Worthy or evil, leave thy spirit free ;
 And thy pure soul, renouncing earthly care,
 Will come unshackled, and My Essence share.
 Though equal looks on all things I bestow,
 Nor enmity nor partial fondness know ;
 Yet happy they who love Me faithfully,
 I dwell within them ever,—they in Me.”

This is the same principle of *bhakti*, or faith, which we found faintly appearing in the north-west Provinces, where,

shortly after the Christian era, Siva was worshipped as *Swayambhu*, and Sakya-Sinha as Adi-Buddha. Minor deities were in neither case altogether banished; and it was becoming possible to the worshipper to conceive the Eternal Essence, as a Unity, holding personal relations towards mankind. Professor Wilson notices the resemblance of the doctrines of the Bhagavat Gita to those of some divisions of the early Christian schools, and hints that the remodelling of the ancient Hindu systems into popular forms, and "in particular the vital importance of faith, were directly influenced by the diffusion of the Christian religion."* We hail also with satisfaction a similar opinion from Professor Lassen. Brahmans he believes to have met with Christianity in the countries bordering upon Kashmere. St. Thomas he believes really to have visited Parthia; and although he denies the possibility of St. Thomas himself having reached Madras or any part of India, he sees no reason to doubt that Christian churches were introduced into southern India within the first four or five centuries of our era.†

* Oriental Magazine, vol. iii.

† Indische Alterth. vol. ii. p. 1103; see also Wilson, Introd. Vishnu Purana, p. 8.



CHAPTER V.

“ ’Tis the old-age of day, methinks, or haply
The infancy of night.”

BARRY CORNWALL.

It cannot be determined when the heroes Rama and Krishna became elevated to the dignity of divinities ; but legends of Vishnu thus personified are given at length in the Puranas, and are evidently derived from the same religious system as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. A gradual change may be traced from the domestic elemental worship of the Vedas, “ addressed to unreal presences,” down to “ the sectarial fervour and exclusiveness” of modern Hindu idolatry. Of these modern modes the Puranas are the chief exponents : they are voluminous works written at different periods, and compiled under various circumstances ; none of them, probably, in all respects the same works as were current under this name in the century previous to Christianity,* and in their present forms “ the oldest of them not” estimated as “ anterior to the eighth or ninth cen-

* Oxford Lectures, H. H. Wilson, pp. 25, 27, 31.

ture," whilst some are not above three or four centuries old.* They appear to have been composed chiefly during the religious ferment, which had for its object the extermination of the Buddhists, beginning in the third or fourth century of our era. The doctrine of the sufficiency of faith alone is "carried to the very utmost of that abuse of which it is susceptible. Entire dependence upon Krishna, or any other favourite deity," not only obviating the necessity of virtue, but sanctifying vice.† Krishna as the boy Cowherd, or Krishna as the lover of Radha, are the characters in which he is most popular. These legends we shall find in the Vishnu Purana, translated by Professor Wilson; and some acquaintance with them is necessary if we would understand the mythology exhibited in literature, religion, paintings, and architecture, since the disappearance of Buddhism from India.

Vishnu is announced as born on earth, in the family of Yadu, and consequently "whoever hears the account of the race of Yadu shall be released from all sin." The Yadus were settled at Dwaraka, on the west coast of Guzerat: their government was chiefly carried on by means of public assemblies, at which even women were present; and although they had a king, no great importance seems to have attached to his office. At the period of the following story Krishna lived amongst the Yadus as a powerful and successful warrior. At times he is alluded to as a form of the God Vishnu, but never in the character of an earthly sovereign. The following is abridged from Wilson's 'Vishnu Purana:—

* Vishnu Purana, Introd., H. H. Wilson, pp. 3, 6, 9.

† Oxford Lectures, H. H. Wilson, pp. 25, 27, 31.

STORY OF THE SYAMANTAKA GEM.

A king named Satrajit enjoyed the privilege of a personal acquaintance with the Sun. As he walked along the seashore at Dwaraka he addressed hymns and praises to him, and presently the divinity appeared and stood before him; but the shape was indistinct, and the King said, "I have beheld thee, Lord, in the heavens as a globe of fire; now do thou show favour to me, that I may see thee in thy proper form." On this, taking the jewel called Syamantaka from his neck, he placed it apart, and Satrajit then beheld him of a dwarfish stature, with a body like burnished copper, and with slightly reddish eyes. Having offered his adorations, the Sun desired him to demand a boon, and he requested to have the jewel. The Sun immediately presented it to him, and then resumed his place in the sky. Satrajit placed the spotless gem of gems upon his neck and returned to Dwaraka; but the inhabitants, startled at the approach of such effulgence, fled in consternation to the warrior Krishna, saying, "Lord, assuredly the Divine Sun is coming to visit you." Krishna smiled at their fears, and assured them that they had not seen the Sun, but merely their own king Satrajit, to whom the Sun had presented the Syamantaka gem. Satrajit in the meantime reached his house, and there deposited the jewel, which, by virtue of its presence, yielded eight loads of gold a day, and averted fearful portents, wild beasts, fire, robbers, and famine.

Krishna was privately of opinion that this wonderful gem should have been given to Ugrasena, another Yadu chief and his own near relative, but he said nothing, in order

to avoid quarrels. Satrajit nevertheless lived in terror lest Krishna should demand the jewel, and in order to preserve it he transferred it to his brother. Now it was the peculiar property of this jewel, that although it was an inexhaustible source of good to a virtuous man, it caused death to the wicked. The King's brother was not virtuous; but he took the gem, hung it round his neck, concealed it from view, mounted his horse, and went into the woods to hunt.

In the chase a lion killed him, and, taking the jewel in his mouth, was trotting off, when he was observed and killed by the King of the Bears, who, securing the gem, retired to his cave and gave it to his little son to play with. When a length of time had elapsed and the King's brother did not reappear, whispers began to circulate that this must be Krishna's doing, who, desirous of possessing the jewel, had killed the wearer.

These rumours no sooner reached the indignant Krishna than, collecting a number of Yadavas around him, he tracked the course of the hunter; and the impressions of the horse's hoofs giving full evidence that both horse and man had been killed by a lion, Krishna was at once acquitted. Wishing however to recover the gem he followed the steps of the lion, and arrived at the spot where the lion had been killed by the bear; and then tracking the footsteps of the bear he arrived at the foot of a mountain, where he desired his followers to wait for him whilst he ascended to the cavern residence of the King of the Bears.

He had scarcely entered when he saw the nurse holding up the jewel to the child in her arms. Seeing Krishna with his eyes fixed upon the gem, the nurse screamed, and the King of the Bears came at her cry. A conflict then

took place between Krishna and the bear, which lasted one and twenty days. After seven or eight days Krishna's followers gave him up, returned to the town, and reported he was dead. This was a most fortunate circumstance for Krishna, for his relations immediately performed funeral rites, and the food and water thus offered supported him in his combat ; whilst the bear, bruised in every limb and exhausted for want of food, cast himself upon the ground and declared that his mighty antagonist must be invincible, and " a portion of Narayana, the defender of the Universe."* Krishna acknowledged this to be the case, explained the purpose of his being on earth, and relieved the pain which the bear suffered from his wounds ; and he and the bear then became such good friends that the former accepted the bear's daughter in marriage, and taking the jewel accompanied his bride to Dwaraka.

When the people beheld him returning to them alive, they were seized with such delight that old people recovered youthful vigour, and men and women assembled around the father of the hero offering congratulations. Krishna related to the assembly everything exactly as it had happened, and, restoring the jewel to the King, was exonerated from the crime of which he had been accused.

The King alone remained uneasy, reflecting that he had been the cause of the aspersions cast upon the character of the hero ; and, with a view to reconciliation and safety, he presented his daughter to Krishna as a wife. This proceeding had precisely the reverse effect to that intended ; for three of the most distinguished Yadu chiefs had already been in treaty with the King for the possession of this

* Narayana is one of Vishnu's names.

daughter; and when he disgraced them by conferring her upon another, they made a league amongst themselves to kill the King, seize the jewel, and support each other if attacked in consequence by the mighty Krishna.

At this conjuncture news arrived at Dwaraka that Krishna's friends, Arjuna and his four Pandu brothers, had been burned in their house by order of the Kurus. Krishna knew that they had escaped, but they were in danger, and he started instantly to their assistance. His absence gave the offended lovers a safe opportunity for killing the King and seizing the gem; but the King's daughter was Krishna's wife, and seized with fury she mounted her chariot, travelled to her husband, and implored him to avenge the heinous wrong. Although Krishna is ever internally tranquil, his eyes flashed whilst she told her tale; but when he spoke it was to beg his wife to dismiss excessive sorrow, for it required not her lamentations, he said, to excite his wrath. Krishna quickly returned to Dwaraka, and the chief who had struck the blow took alarm, and his two associates refused help: he left the jewel with the one named Akrura, mounted a very swift mare that could travel a hundred leagues in a day, and fled towards Upper India. Krishna forthwith harnessed his four horses to his car, and, accompanied by his brother, set off in quick pursuit. The mare of the fugitive was true to her hundred *yojanas*; but on reaching Mithila, in Tirhut, she dropped down dead. When Krishna reached the spot he left Balarama in the car, and running over a few miles of rough ground, which no carriage could have traversed, he discharged his discus and struck off his adversary's head whilst yet at a considerable distance. He then searched the

man for the jewel, but unable to find it he returned, and told Balarama what had occurred. Balarama flew into a rage, believing that Krishna had secreted the precious gem ; and in consequence he refused to return to Dwaraka, and for three years remained in cities on the Ganges. Akrura in the meantime obtained the throne of Dwaraka, and kept the gem in secret. For fifty-two years he lived in affluence, the virtue of the gem averting death and pestilence ; but at the end of that period he abandoned his throne and his duty, taking flight with some allies in a neighbouring political disturbance ; then came portents, snakes, dearth, and plague. So strange a coincidence induced Krishna to call a public assembly, at which it was agreed that Akrura must be recalled ; and no sooner did he return than the plague and famine ceased. Krishna was now confirmed in his belief that Akrura had possession of the Syamantaka gem ; and on the pretext of a festive celebration, he called a meeting of Yadavas at his own house. After other business was dismissed, he laughed and joked and said to Akrura, " Kinsman, you are a very prince in your liberality ; but we know very well that you have the precious wealth-supplying jewel in your possession. Your holding it has been to the great benefit of this kingdom, so with you let it remain ; but my brother Balarama suspects that I have it, therefore out of kindness to me show it to this assembly. Akrura hesitated, but said at length, " It is true that the jewel of the Sun was entrusted to me : it has caused me much anxiety ; and fearing that you might not consent to my being the holder of a jewel so essential to the welfare of the kingdom, I forbore to divulge that it was in my hands ; but take it now yourself, and give the care

of it to whomsoever you please." Akrura then drew forth a small gold box, and took from it the jewel, and the whole chamber was illuminated by its radiance. "Here," said Akrura, "is the gem, let him to whom it belongs now take it." At the sight of this wonderful jewel the assembly was clamorous with delight. Balarama claimed it as the joint property of himself and Krishna; and Krishna's wife claimed it as having been given to her father; and Krishna himself said that he stood between the two like "an ox between the two wheels of a cart." He addressed himself however to Akrura as follows:—"This jewel has been exhibited in order to clear my reputation: it is the joint right of Balarama and myself, and is the patrimonial inheritance of my wife; but to be of advantage to the kingdom it must be in the charge of a person leading a life of perfect purity. Now as I have sixteen thousand wives, and Balarama is addicted to wine, we are out of the question; and I and my brother and my wife unite with all the Yadavas in requesting that you, most bountiful Akrura, will retain the jewel as heretofore for the general good." Thus urged Akrura accepted the jewel, and thenceforth wore it publicly round his neck, where it shone with dazzling brightness. The story concludes with the following remark:—

"He who calls to mind the vindication of Krishna from false aspersions, shall never become the subject of unfounded accusation in the least degree, and living in the full exercise of his senses shall be cleansed from every sin."

In a subsequent story, Vishnu's supremacy is distinctly declared, and the frolics of his childhood, when born upon

earth as Krishna, are related with much dramatic effect. The first scene is at Mathura (or Muttra), on the Jumna, then inhabited by the Bhojas, a division of the Yadavas. Vasudeva has just married a maiden of celestial beauty; he sits in a car beside his bride, and Kansa, the king of the tribe, acts as his charioteer. Suddenly a voice deep as thunder comes from the sky, telling Kansa that he is a fool, for that the eighth child of the damsel in the car will take away his life. Kansa immediately draws his sword and is about to destroy the prophecy by slaying the damsel, but her husband interposes, saying, "Kill her not, great warrior! and I will deliver to you every child that she may bring forth." Appeased by which promise, and relying on the character of Vasudeva, Kansa desists.

The scene here changes: Earth, groaning under her load of sin and trouble, seeks relief from the gods assembled upon Mount Meru. "Vishnu," she commences, "is the mighty inscrutable being of whom other gods are but a part. This assemblage is but a part of him. The sun, the wind, the saints, the Rudras, . . . the Aswins, fire, . . . all are but forms of the mighty and inscrutable Vishnu. . . . The heavens painted with planets, etc., fire, water, wind, and myself; . . . the whole universe consists of Vishnu." She then proceeds to relate, that at present many demons overrun and harass the region of mortals, and that the chief demon, formerly killed by Vishnu, had revived in the person of the cruel King Kansa, at Mathura. When the gods had heard the complaints of Earth, Brahma, at their request, explained how Earth's burden might be lightened; and since even himself and the other celestials were but impersonations of Vishnu (or Narayana), "Let us," he

says, "repair to the northern shore of the Milky Sea, and, having glorified Hari (Vishnu), report to him what we have heard. He who is the spirit of all, and of whom the universe consists, constantly, for the sake of Earth, descends in a small portion of his essence to establish righteousness below." The Gods accordingly repair to Vishnu, and address him, partly in the language of the Vedas,* as "without name or colour, hands or feet, one and multiform, the eye of all, and wearer of many shapes; as fire, though one is variously kindled, and though unchangeable in essence is modified in many ways. To thee, Spirit Supreme! be adoration; Thou assumest a shape, not as a consequence of virtue or of vice, but for the sole object of maintaining piety." The unborn, universal Hari (Vishnu), being pleased with these eulogiums, asked what they desired, and when Brahma explained that the Earth was oppressed by demons, he bade the gods go down to the earth, each in his own portion, and wage war with the mighty Asuras, and for himself he promises to become impersonated as the eighth child of Vasudeva, and in that character to destroy the evil Kansa.

In the meanwhile Vasudeva was true to his promises, he had delivered up all his children to the King, and six had been put to death as soon as born. The seventh child was a portion of Sessa, who was a portion of Vishnu, and this child, named Balarama, was miraculously transferred to Rohini, another wife of Vasudeva. The eighth child was born in prison, and was Vishnu, as Krishna. The guards of the prison were on this occasion charmed by a spell, and the father enabled to fly with his infant to the further side of the river Jumna,

* Vishnu Purana, *note*, p. 495.

where he safely reached an encampment of Gopis, or cowherds, who had come to Mathura in order to pay tribute to Kansa. Whilst the Gopis were yet sleeping, Vasudeva contrived to exchange his child with that of Nanda, the chief of the Gopis; and consequently when Nanda's wife awoke, she found the little Krishna, and rejoiced at having a boy as black as the dark leaves of the lotus. Vasudeva's wife, Rohini, was one of this tribe, and the brothers were consequently brought up together, and became constant companions, although ignorant of their real birth and close relationship.

Vasudeva was however very uneasy so long as the Gopis remained living in their waggons on the banks of the Jumna, and going once more to Nanda, he urged that after the yearly tribute had been paid it was not safe for men of property to tarry near the Court. "Up, Nanda! quickly, and set off to your pastures!" and accordingly, their goods being placed in their waggons, the cowherds returned to their village, called Gokula.

Krishna occasionally startled the community by amazing feats of strength;* as on one occasion when put to sleep in a little bed beneath a waggon, he kicked up his feet, upset the vehicle, and broke in consequence a whole set of pots and pans. He and his brother were in fact most troublesome children, creeping everywhere amongst dust and ashes and getting into the cow-pens amongst the calves to pull their tails; and when tied to a large mortar to keep him quiet, Krishna ran off with it and pulled down a couple of trees, laughing and showing his little white teeth at those who came to see what had caused the crackling noise. When

* Vishnu Purana, *note*, p. 509.

Krishna became a lad, he had a long and arduous contest with a serpent, which, ending successfully, is a favourite subject with Hindu artists. On another occasion his bro-



ther Balarama fought a demon who had mingled in their boyish sports: the game consists of jumping with both feet at once, two boys together, and the one who holds out longest, or comes first to a given point, is victor, and the vanquished then carries him on his shoulders.*

At the conclusion of the rainy season, when the skies were bright with stars, the herdsmen were busily engaged in preparing a sacrifice for Indra; but Krishna, resolving to put the king of the celestials into a passion, persuaded Nanda to worship mountains and cattle, and have nothing to do with Indra. "Kine," he said, "are our support; we have neither fields nor houses; we wander about hap-

* Vishnu Purana, *note*, p. 518.

pily where we list, travelling in our waggons; we are then bound to worship the mountains and offer sacrifices to cattle. What have we to do with Indra?" Offerings of curd, milk, and flesh were in consequence presented to the mountain, and then the worshippers circumambulated the cows and bulls, who bellowed as loud as roaring clouds. Indra's anger broke forth in a furious tempest, which lasted seven days and seven nights, but Krishna protected the distressed community by plucking up the mountain and holding it aloft as an umbrella until the tempest ceased, when he planted it again upon the earth.* Upon witnessing these marvels, the herdsmen wished to render worship to Krishna, but he desired them not to inquire into his nature, but to be contented that he lived among them as a friendly relative. He next amuses himself amongst the *Gopis*, or young damsels of the tribe: he begins by singing sweet low strains, such as women love, and the girls all quit their homes, approach, and are entranced.

At about this period the cruel King Kansa gets information that Krishna is the eighth child of Vasudeva, whom he believed he had killed when an infant, and from whom it was predicted he would meet his death. He sent therefore for one of his nobles, and told him confidently that two vile boys, portions of Vishnu, had been born amongst the *Gopis* for the express purpose of destroying him, and he bade the Yadu chief go to the settlement and bring them to Mathura, on the pretext of their being present at the festival of arms to be celebrated at the lunation. During the trial of arms, he intended to oppose the youths to his most experienced

* A remarkable representation of this occurs upon the sculptured rocks of Mahabalipur.—Wilson's *Vishnu Purana*, *note*, p. 527.

boxers, and if not thus destroyed to send his elephant against them; and lastly, his design was to seize upon the flocks and herds of their supposed fathers, for the Gopis, he says, have always been his foes. The Yadu chief accepts the commission, but secretly rejoices in having thus an opportunity of beholding a form of Vishnu. "I shall," he says, "see *Kesava*, who is without beginning or end; by worshipping whom with a hundred sacrifices Indra obtained the sovereignty over the Gods. *Hari*, whose nature is unknown to Brahma, Indra, etc., he who is all and is present to all, he, the unborn, who has preserved this world in the various forms of a fish, a tortoise, a boar, a horse, a lion, glory to that being whose deceptive adoption of father, son, brother, friend, mother, relative, the world is unable to penetrate! Glory to him who is one with true knowledge, who is inscrutable, and through whom, seated in his heart, the Yogi crosses the wide expanse of worldly ignorance and illusion! I put my trust in that unborn, eternal *Hari*, by meditation on whom man becomes the repository of all good things." On another occasion, the same person makes an address to Vishnu, from which the following are extracts:—

"Salutation to thee who art uniform and manifold! . . . Salutation to thee who art truth and the essence of oblations! Salutation to thee whose nature is unknown, who art beyond primeval matter, who existed in five forms, as one with the faculties, with matter, with the living soul, with supreme spirit! Show favour to me, whether addressed as Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, or the like. I adore thee whose nature is indescribable, whose purposes are inscrutable, whose name even is unknown; for the attributes of kind or appellation are not applicable to thee, who art THAT. . . . But as the accomplishment of our objects cannot be obtained except through some specific form, thou art termed by us Krishna, Achyuta, Ananta,

or Vishnu. . . . To him who is one with true knowledge, who is and is not perceptible, I bow. Glory be to him, the lord Vasudeva ! ”

Three other names are added, it being customary for worshippers of Vishnu to address him as identical with his brother, his son, and his grandson, and the names usually given are Krishna, Balarama, Pradyumna, and Anirudha.*

Krishna's visit to Mathura ended of course in the death of Kansa ; but it is unnecessary to follow all the strange jumble which it makes, of Krishna as Vishnu, and Krishna sporting with men and maidens. On one occasion he offended the King of Benares, who worshipped Siva, and Siva sent in consequence a vast and formidable female, like flame out of fire, blazing with ruddy light, and with fiery radiance streaming amidst her hair. Angrily she called to Krishna and departed to Dwaraka. Krishna was playing at dice, and, seeing the apparition, said to his discus, “ Kill this fierce creature whose tresses are of plaited fire.” The fiend terrified fled to Benares, but the discus pursued, and, consuming the King and all his forces by its radiance, afterwards set fire to the city, in which the magic power of Siva had concealed herself.

Many stories are told also of his marriage with Rukmini, daughter of a king of Behar, and of his wild music and dancing with Radha and the Gopis. These are favourite subjects of poems, from one of which Mr. Griffith gives us the following pleasing verses. Nanda, Krishna's foster-father, is the first speaker :—

“ Go, gentle Radha ! seek thy fearful love ;
Dusk are the woodlands, black the sky above ;

* Vishnu Purana, *note*, p. 530.

Bring thy dear wanderer home, and bid him rest
His weary head upon thy faithful breast."

A pitying maiden then reveals that Krishna is near at hand, and says,—

"In this love-tide of spring, when the spirit is glad,
And the parted—yes, only the parted—are sad,
Thy lover, thy Krishna, is dancing in glee
With troops of young maidens, forgetful of thee.

"The season is come when the desolate bride
Would woo with laments her dear lord to her side,
When the rich-laden stems of the Vakul bend low
'Neath the clustering flowers in the pride of their glow :
In this love-tide of spring when the spirit is glad, . . .
Thine own, thy dear Krishna, is dancing in glee,
He loves his fair partners and thinks not of thee."

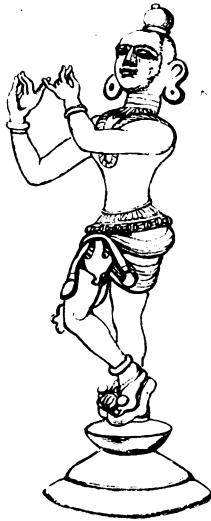
Radha's image however lingered in his breast, and dissatisfied amid his dancing, "he sought his faithful love, and mourned his darling in the shady grove." But she was no longer there, and he sings,—

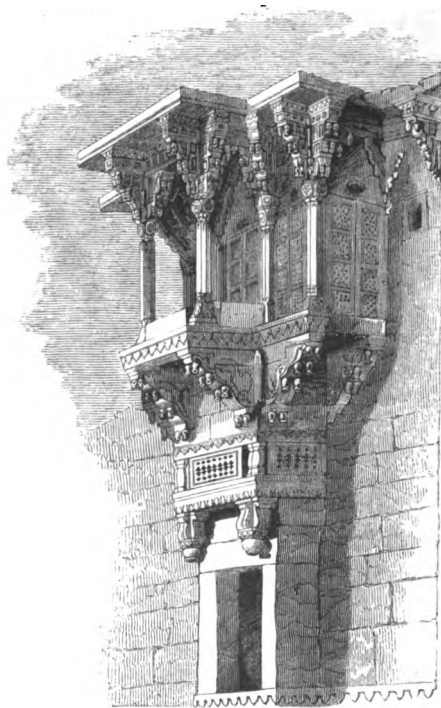
"She is fled, she is gone! Oh, how angry was she
When she saw the gay shepherd-girls dancing with me!
Oh! how could I speak to her? how could I dare
Entreat her to stay and to pardon me *there*?
Oh, Hari! vile Hari! lament thee and mourn,
Thy lady has left thee, has left thee in scorn!

"How bright in her anger she seems to me now,
With her scorn-flashing glance and her passion-arch'd brow!
And her proud trembling eye in my fancy I see,
Like the lotus that throbs 'neath the wing of the bee.
Oh, Hari! vile Hari! lament thee and mourn,
Thy fair one has left thee, has left thee in scorn!"

Krishna's life appears to have closed amid civil feuds;

for he is said to have assisted in destroying his native city of Dwaraka, and to have migrated with the remnant of the Yadava tribe to the Punjab, and finally to have received his death from a hunter, who shot him whilst absorbed in contemplation under the trees of a lonely forest.





CHAPTER VI.

“Far, like the comet’s way through infinite space,
Stretches the long, untravell’d path of light
Into the depth of ages.”—BRYANT.

OUR way has now been threaded hastily, but methodically, through the three marked periods of Ancient India; and in concluding this sketch of those great periods, it only remains for us to indicate the onward progress of the schemes

which then originated. Three privileged castes and one subordinate we have seen as the intention, but now we read, "In the present day the only one of the original castes extant is the Brahman; the Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra are extinct; and the innumerable castes which are now met with are in part the representations of the ancient mixed castes, but in a still greater degree are the progeny of later times, and distinctions unauthorizedly assumed by the people themselves."* Even Brahmins are very different to what was intended; for whilst men of this caste are often poor and illiterate, and obliged to support themselves by the work of their hands, men of low caste are frequently the influential religious guides of society.†

And also, "the Kshatriya caste is extinct;" that is, Kshatriyas no longer exist as a division of society. The whole country of Rajputana claims to be inhabited by Kshatriyas; but if such claims were admitted, Kshatriyas would be changed from a caste into a tribe; and the fact still remain, that soldiers, and even Rajas, may be and usually are without the sacrificial thread with which Kshatriyas were originally invested. The third privileged caste, the Vaisyas, are no longer heard of; and Sudras are more changed than even Brahmins. Instead of being serfs, as was intended, they are a small independent race or family, proud of their lineage. Kings of Magadha have been Sudras, the whole nation of Mahratta is Sudra, and in many parts of India writers and artists are exclusively Sudras. The Brahmanical system of caste has therefore proved a failure; failing to maintain nobility, but fixing fast the fetters of hereditary self-importance.

* H. H. Wilson, Oxford Lectures, p. 59.

† *Ibid.*, p. 29.

The effect of Brahmanical regulations upon women may be considered more at length, for the position of women has ever been one of the most remarkable features of social life in India. The Code of Manu gives woman no independence; she *belongs* to father, brother, or husband, "and neither by sale nor desertion can she be released."* So long as the husband lived and loved, the wife's happiness required no more; but under any circumstances she had no resource, and if he died she was required to live in a state of ascetic penance for the benefit of his disembodied soul, and in the hope of securing to herself a place in his mansion of eternal bliss. And behold the consequence: "many Koolin Brahmans marry ten or fifteen wives for the sake of money, and never see the greater number of them after the day of marriage." They wash, scour, and cook by night and by day, and "are treated worse than the inferior animals;" and when the husband dies, the chief wife is bound down with bamboos and burned upon his funeral pile. Here is the moral! The law makes woman the property of man, and her fate is slavish drudgery whilst he lives, and death upon his funeral pyre when he dies! But nature has not entirely succumbed to law, and the fine free woman's character of the Sanskrit epics has not been universally suppressed in India. Colonel Sleeman gives a most touching account of a Hindu woman whom he had known upon the banks of the Nerbudda: she was the widow of a Brahman of a numerous and highly respectable family, and begged permission to burn herself with the body of her husband. This being refused, and a guard placed to ensure obedience, she sat down by the edge of the water and refused food.

* Code of Manu, ch. ix., pp. 198, 85, 86, 87.

The family were urgent that she should return home if she could not get permission to be burned, for whilst she remained fasting on the bare rock the law required that they should likewise fast; but neither children nor grandchildren could induce her to relent, although she was certain of respect and kindness from them if she lived. From Tuesday the 24th November, 1829, when her husband died, until the Saturday following, did she sit immovable, and then Colonel Sleeman believed it his duty to withdraw the prohibition. He rode to the spot and spoke to her; her mind was firm and collected, and she said that her determination was to mix her ashes with those of her departed husband, and she should wait until he gave permission, assured that God would in the meanwhile sustain her life, although she dared not eat or drink. Looking at the sun then rising over a beautiful reach of the Nerbudda river, she said calmly, "My soul has been for five days with my husband's near that sun; nothing but my earthly frame is left, and this I know you will in time suffer to be mixed with the ashes of his in yonder pit, because it is not in your nature or your usage wantonly to prolong the miseries of a poor old woman." After much conversation, she convinced Colonel Sleeman that religion alone impelled her. "My soul," she repeated, "is with Omed, and my ashes must here mix with his." Colonel Sleeman could make no impression on her, either by promising wealth and honour if she lived, or suggesting the displeasure of Government towards her children if she were burned. She held out her arm, saying, "My pulse has long ceased to beat, my spirit has departed, and I have nothing left but a little earth, which I desire to mingle with the ashes of my husband. I

shall suffer nothing in burning, and if you would have proof, order some fire, and you shall see this arm consumed without my feeling pain." Colonel Sleeman asked her when she had first resolved upon being a Suttee, and she said it was thirteen years ago, when bathing in the river near the spot on which she then sat; and the idea fixed itself in her mind as she looked at the splendid temples before her, erected by the different branches of her family over the ashes of their relatives who had from time to time been burned as Suttees. The Colonel thought it unjustifiable any longer to resist her determination; but he required from her chief relations a formal written agreement that no other member of their family should ever attempt the same. He also prohibited the building of any temple on the spot; but unfortunately, during his absence, his post was held by a Resident unacquainted with the circumstances, and a commemorative temple was erected.*

One of the most illustrious characters in native Indian history is Alia (or more correctly, Ahalyá) Bhye, a woman—pious, compassionate, clever, and energetic—who governed the country with so much wisdom and firmness that her supremacy was acknowledged by all the surrounding states: but she was a Mahratta, and owed her independence of character to the free though turbulent character of her nation. When the daughter of Alia Bhye lost her husband, she desired to burn herself upon his funeral pile. Unlike an orthodox Hindu, Alia Bhye remonstrated and endeavoured to dissuade her daughter; but the touching reply of the young widow was, "You are old, mother, and a few years will end your pious life. My husband and my only child

* 'Rambles,' by Colonel Sleeman, ch. iv.

are gone, and then you follow ; life will be insupportable to me ; but the opportunity of terminating it with honour will then have passed.”*

But whilst Hindu women of the present day are chiefly remarkable for helpless submission and frivolity, the women of the free Bheels, who inhabit hills and forests, are mentioned with much interest by Sir John Malcolm and others labouring successfully for their advancement. The following short anecdote shows a generous courage and self-reliance wholly wanting under Brahmanical institutions.† During the examination into the guilt of Nadir Singh, a girl fourteen years of age was examined, whose father and husband had been instruments in committing the murder of which he was accused. She was asked if they put the deceased to death : “Certainly they did,” was her firm reply ; “but they acted by the Dhumnee’s (or lord’s) order.” She was told this did not clear them ; for that it was not an affray, but a deed committed in cold blood. “Still,” she remonstrated, “they had the Dhumnee’s order.” The person conducting the examination shook his head, whereupon the girl rose from the ground on which she was sitting, and, pointing to the two sentries who guarded the door, exclaimed with strong feeling, “These are your soldiers ; you are their Dhumnee ; your words are their laws ; if you order them this moment to advance and put me, my mother, and my cousin, who are now before you, to death, would they hesitate in slaying three female Bheels ? If we were innocent, would you be guilty of our blood, or those

* Oriental Magazine, vol. i. p. 117.

† Sir John Malcolm’s ‘Central India :’ Captain T. D. Stuart assisted at the trial, and noted down the expressions at the time.

faithful men?" She then sat down, saying, "My father and husband are Nadir's soldiers."

The religions of India have fared no better than the political institutions. The Brahmans tried to debar the people from spiritual light, and the people dragged the Brahmans down into idolatrous darkness. Popular heroes and wild fancies became exalted into divinities, and Siva and Vishnu were but the forerunners of an ever-increasing mythological assemblage. Durga is wife to Siva; Kartikeya, riding a peacock, son to Siva; Ganesa, a fat man with an elephant's head, removes difficulties, presides over the entrance of edifices, and is invoked at the commencement of all undertakings.* But one feels very little encouraged to pursue the subject of India's idolatries, for in general they are lamentably debasing, as may be seen in the ceremonies daily enacted, or as may be learned from the pages of the missionary Ward, or the fearful revelations of Thuggism.

Turning from religion to architecture, we find splendid temples arising after the religion had ceased to be sublime. The age of the Vedas has left no buildings; and even the Greeks, who write of India B.C. 300, and who tell us of cities, gates, towers, and wells, mention no large or public building. All the known architecture of India dates later than the periods of foreign occupation; and the splendid ruins, consecrated to Vishnu or Siva, which are figured in the works of Tod and Fergusson, are supposed to range from the fifth or sixth, down to the ninth century, A.D. The ornamentation of these temples is singularly beautiful, as may be seen in the elaborate drawings made under

* Elphinstone, Hist. Ind., 89.

the direction of Colonel Tod, and bequeathed by him to the Royal Asiatic Society.

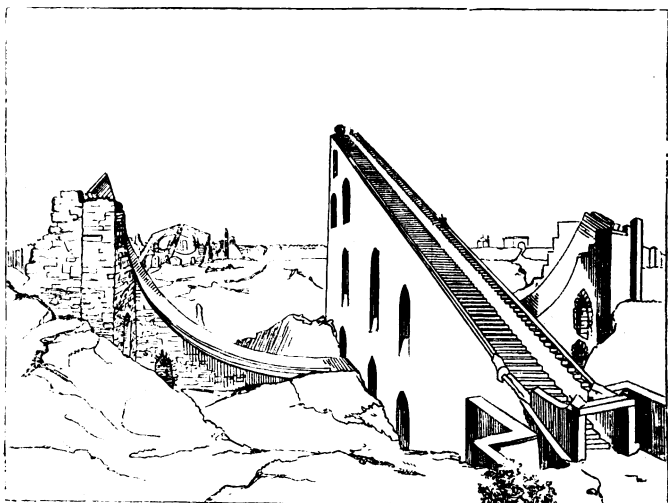


The semicircular panel ornament figured above, the leaf-scroll at the conclusion of Book I., the vases which conclude this Chapter and Chapter IV., and the peacock panel heading Chapter V., are all from pillars in a temple at Cheetore,* which Mr. Fergusson thinks cannot be earlier than A.D. 727; whilst the beautiful ceilings in Tod's Rajasthan are from temples at Chandravarti, about A.D. 692. It is worth while to make close acquaintance with these fine buildings, and with those at Barolli and in the Mokundara Pass, for they belong strictly to Hindu history; whilst nearly all architecture of later date in India "is so mixed up with Mohammedan details as to be scarcely recognizable at first sight from that style."† It is not perhaps sufficiently remembered in England that some of the most celebrated cities in Western India, as Aurungabad and

* Tod's Rajasthan, vol. ii. p. 734.

† Fergusson's Ancient Architecture of Hindostan, Preface, p. iv. and pp. 33, 34, 36, plates v. vi. vii. and others.

Dowlatabad, are "in all their buildings and forms as purely Mohammedan as Bagdad or Damascus."* But putting aside Mohammedan buildings, with which we are not at present concerned, we shall find almost universally that the finest temples in India are the oldest. For in that country, Mr. Fergusson says, "all the styles of architecture have their history written in decay: of any two buildings or specimens of art of any sort, if one is more perfect or of a higher class than the other, we may at once feel certain that it is also the more ancient of the two."† As national monuments of a different character, we may point to the



lofty Dial and extraordinary "mural instruments for astronomical purposes"‡ near Delhi, which immortalize the

* Fergusson's *Ancient Architecture of Hindostan*, Introduction, p. 2.

† *Ibid.*, p. 11.

‡ Daniell's *Antiquities of India*, plates xix. and xx. A full account of

memory of the Raja Jey or Jaya Sing,* who reigned from A.D. 1699 to 1743. The beautiful vignette heading to this Chapter is the balcony of Jey Sing's Observatory at Benares, which affords another memorial of the delight which this Emperor took in scientific observations.

Astronomy is one of those sciences which has resisted the deadening influences of the last nine centuries, and even in these degenerate days can boast of votaries capable of mastering ancient Hindu learning, and of comprehending European science, if it be exhibited from a Hindu point of view. At a meeting of the Asiatic Society, in Calcutta, June 17, 1837, two works were presented written in the Mahratta and Hindi languages, by two natives, for the purpose of explaining the correct system of astronomy to their countrymen. After arguing in vain for eight years, Mr. Lancelot Wilkinson had an opportunity of making them acquainted with Hindu astronomical books; and immediately the real size and shape of the earth, and other important physical facts, were understood, and conviction carried to their minds.* Subhaji Bapu had the master mind which exercised its influence over all the other Pundits. "He was lost in admiration when he came fully to comprehend all the facts resulting from the spherical form of the earth; and when the retrogressions of the planets were shown to be so naturally accounted for on the theory of the earth's annual motion, and when he reflected on the vastly superior simplicity and credibility of the supposition these Astronomical Buildings is given by Dr. Hunter in the fifth volume of the '*Asiatic Researches*.'

* This is supposed by Dr. Kitto to be the form of the dial seen by King Hezekiah, described as the "Steps of Ahaz." Buddhists reckoned time by *inches* (see *ante*, p. 294), but the form of their dial is not indicated.

that the earth had a diurnal motion, than that the sun and all the stars daily revolve round the earth, he became a zealous defender of the system of Copernicus. He lamented that his life had been spent in maintaining foolish fancies, and spoke with a bitter indignation against all those of his predecessors who had contributed to the wilful concealment of the truths that had once been acknowledged in the land.”*

In Metaphysics we have already had occasion to notice the ingenuity and perseverance of Hindu speculation.† Of Hindu attainment in medicine much also might be said, as attested by the flourishing schools in Calcutta and other parts of India. And that India has not lost her ancient skill in arts and manufactures, we have had ample evidence in the exquisite muslins, embroideries, shawls, and kincobs, the dyes and scents, the magnificent carved furniture, the gold and silver filagree, the trophies of jewelled arms, and other attractions of the Indian Department of our Great Exhibition in 1851, and that of Paris in 1855. And when thinking of India's actual attainments and resources, it is difficult to refrain from a digression upon the magic of railway communication ; upon the good which one hopefully anticipates, although evil effects be first apparent : we see indeed that it first unearths and exasperates wild Santhals, but one hopes that it may bring many groups of retired Pundits within the influence of European civilization, although denied the rare blessing of a Lancelot Wilkinson as resident amongst them. And religiously, how wide the question !—but we

* Letter from Mr. Wilkinson, the Governor-General's Agent at Bhilsa, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. vi. p. 401.

† *Ante*, p. 292.

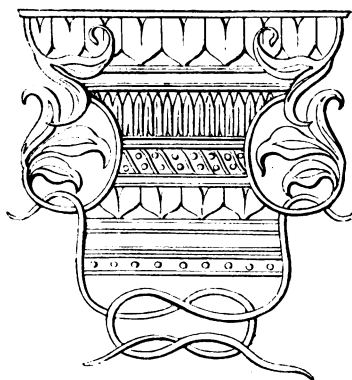
must forbear. Ancient India is our subject, and of Ancient India we must take leave, casting one lingering glance upon its best-loved features.

Wherever man has thought much, we find that he has by necessity thought much upon religion, for the mind of man seeks for God as surely as the sunflower seeks the sun. Ancient Hindus were men of intellect; their institutions devoted a large portion of their society to contemplation, and the result is, that religion was ever the strongest point of interest in their history. But India's holy books, instead of being a record of God's commands or a narrative of man's confiding trust, are a mass of heterogeneous tales and wild conjectures, in which practical views of duty, chiefly negative, alternate with intuitions sublime but evanescent and theoretical. First, we have seen Brahmins capable of sublime thought striving to fetter their fellow-creatures with hereditary rank and hereditary occupations. Secondly, we have seen the democracy of Buddhism sweeping away Brahmanical institutions and upholding universal rights, but, at the same time, blighting the poetry of life and literature. And thirdly, we have seen a regenerated corrupt Brahmanical system triumph over Buddhism, and partially restore the poetry of earlier days, but fail essentially in the working of its fourfold system of Caste.

The old Brahman was not so wanting in abstract belief as in obedience to law and knowledge of God's will. The Buddhist tried to give the law, but it was law without God, and resulted in barren formalism. The Buddhist was republican but not spiritual, the old Brahman spiritual but exclusive, and thus we may compare them with those terrible insects of India known as white ants. Periodically they are clothed

with wings, burst from their dark homes and soar upwards ; unguided, they fly equally toward sun or lamp or rushlight : many perish in flame ; others fall exhausted, and, crawling home without wings, again become an industrious community, but incapable of flights toward heaven. And thus we close these studies, standing like weather-bound travellers on a mountain-top,—

“ Wrapt as in the cloud
In which light dwelt before the sun was born.”



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