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Recent Works on the Rigveda

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THE CLASSICAL REVIEW.

NOTES ON THE LATIN PROHIBITIVE.

IN an investigation of the force of the tenses of the prohibitive in some of the authors of the Silver Age, the following facts have been noted. The authors covered are Persius, Lucan, Valerius Flaccus, Silius Italicus, Statius, Juvenal, Martial, Curtius Rufus, Pliny the Younger, and Bährens' *Poetae Latini Minores*. I hope, as my engagements permit, to extend my investigations to the whole literature of the Empire, finally making a detailed presentation of the results secured.

Dräger, *Hist. Syntax*, i 326, § 153 4, followed by Gildersleeve-Lodge, §271, n., states that *cave* or *cave ne* with the first or third person of the subjunctive never occurs after the classical period. I have noted six instances of the usage, always with the third person: Gratt. *Cyn.* 50; Plin. *Ep.* 5, 10, 2; Stat. *Theb.* 11, 111; Mart. 6, 79, 1, Mart. 7, 15, 6; Mart. 11, 102, 7.

Elmer, in his treatment of the supposed occurrence of *non* with the imperative in Ovid says (*Am. Jour. Philol.* xv. 327): "No other author, I believe, has been suspected of such barbarism." Kühner and Dräger are quoted in support of his view. Lane (§ 1582) says that *non* is used a few times from Ovid on, but gives no examples. In *Ilias Lat.* 1037, (Bährens), 'Non vitam mihi nec magnos concede favores,' there is the authority of at least one manuscript.

In the earlier language *cave* with the perfect subjunctive frequently occurs, there being 30 examples in Plautus and 34 of *ne*. In the Silver Latin, it has almost disappeared. My collections show only one case out of 26.

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RECENT WORKS ON THE RIGVEDA.¹

I.

A standard English translation of the Rigveda has been looked for at the hands of Professor Max Müller for more than a generation. In 1869 there appeared the first volume of such a translation, entitled *Hymns to the Maruts, or the Storm-gods*: but it included twelve hymns only, from a collection of which the range would be inadequately represented by the title *Book of the Thousand and One Hymns*. In 1891 a further volume appeared, bringing up the number of hymns to 49, and entitled *Hymns to the Maruts, Rudra, Vāyu, and Vāta*. This volume is published by the Clarendon Press, and is again entitled Part I., since it includes the hymns previously translated. In 1897 the Clarendon Press published a second part, containing

130 of the Agni hymns translated by the eminent German scholar Professor Oldenberg with Professor Max Müller's assistance. Professor Max Müller may fairly be congratulated upon having rightly appreciated from the first the conditions of a task of which the fulfilment must be left to others. No one would now deny that a standard translation of the Rigveda should be in prose, and that it requires a full commentary; nor will anyone entertain the hope that a 'complete, satisfactory, and final translation of the whole of the Rigveda' will ever be obtained. Nevertheless, the new volume marks very substantial progress, and may be no unfitting opportunity for a review which, by including in its scope other works of comparatively recent date, may afford some indication of the present position of Vedic studies to those who are not specialists in the subject.

¹ *Die Religion des Veda*, von HERMANN OLDENBERG. Berlin, 1894.

Vedische Studien, von RICHARD FISCHER und KARL F. GELDNER. Stuttgart, 1888-1897.

Vedic Mythology, by A. A. MACDONELL. Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde, Strassburg, 1897.

Vedic Hymns, pt. ii. Hymns to Agni, translated by HERMANN OLDENBERG. Sacred books of the East, vol. xlv. Oxford, 1897.

II.

To the scholars of thirty years ago the Rigveda was encircled with a halo of antiquity which seemed to carry them back to the first struggles of thinking men to

confront the problems of the universe. Professor Max Müller could then speak of the hymns as 'the simple though strange expressions of primitive thought and primitive faith': he was convinced that the Veda would 'take and maintain for ever its position as the most ancient of books in the library of mankind.' To-day, although the absolute date assigned by Professor Max Müller to the Rigveda (about 1500 B.C.) may not be questioned, its primitive character no longer impresses the reader. It is recognised that both in matter and in form the hymns rather represent an era of decadence: they mark an effort to retain and stereotype the wisdom of the past. How many waves of continuous poetical or religious development preceded the era of our hymns it is impossible to conjecture: but it is clear that the poets cast their eyes backwards over a long past, which they only imperfectly understood or appreciated. The hymns of the Rigveda may in their present form be a few centuries older than our recension of the Homeric poems: but the two literatures are alike the final shape in which the inspiration of many preceding generations of professional bards has been recorded. The fundamental laws of metre being the same in the Vedic and the Homeric poems, we must necessarily infer that they are the work of two branches of the same family of poets: but we have no reason to conclude that the Rigveda represents to us forms of speculative thought substantially earlier than those that appear in Homer: in each case the earlier conceptions, which we may attribute to an Indo-European period which is at least relatively 'primitive,' have been overlaid by successive strata of religious or philosophical reforms.

In a too violent reaction from the 'primitive' theory of the Rigveda, Professors Pischel and Geldner have recently called upon us to regard the hymns as a 'distinctively Indian' product, and to interpret them far more closely in accordance with Indian tradition. Against this view Professor Oldenberg rightly protests, and he emphasises in particular the hundreds of phrases and the many objects of worship which are common to the Rigveda and the Avesta. 'We cannot conceal from ourselves,' he writes, 'that whole passages that we find in the Rigveda might have been recited, and probably were recited in the Indo-Iranian period in almost identical language.' For the authors of the 'Vedische Studien' an intimate knowledge of the native commentators is an indis-

pensable condition of the profitable study of the Rigveda. Without denying that fresh light may still be thrown upon isolated passages from these sources, experience shows that they are far more frequently the cause of misinterpretation. How can it be otherwise, seeing that the spirit of the Rigveda had been lost even in the times of the Brāhmanas, and that even then its verses were violently torn from their context, and their meaning distorted to suit a creed and a ceremonial that the authors of the hymns would never have recognised as their own?

But if we are obliged to use so much caution in employing outside help in the interpretation of the Rigveda, a danger of the same kind remains in interpreting one Vedic hymn by another. It is now fully recognised that our Rigveda contains a group of hymns, which we may reckon as about one-sixth of the whole, which is of markedly later date than the remainder. 'In this later period,' says Professor Oldenberg, 'the fixity of the ritual left little room and little need for poetical production of the older kind. On the other hand, there begins in this period the poetry of philosophical and cosmogonic speculation. There is an increase in the number of tales, originally composed partly in prose, and partly in verse, but of which the latter part alone is preserved to us. A literary accompaniment is given to a number of the less important ceremonials, as those that are concerned with marriage, burial, and exorcism.' In these later hymns is contained a mass of material of considerable interest to the modern world; but it must always be borne in mind that whilst the folklore, mythology, and cult which these hymns illustrate may be indefinitely old, the literary form is without question relatively modern: that exactly as in Greece and at Rome, the philosophical speculations are no key to the religion that preceded them, but represent a force which is steadily undermining that religion: and that in any case these poems can contribute little to the due understanding of the older part of the Rigveda, which alone consists of 'hymns' in the proper sense of the word.

III.

To the earlier critics of the Rigveda it seemed easy to find a key to its general meaning. The worship of 'nature,' the sky, the sun, the storm, the rivers and the forests, seems intelligible enough to the civilised man, especially when he shakes himself free

during a summer holiday from the trammels which habit and tradition impose upon his own speculations. In the hymns of the Veda, as in the religion of Greece and Rome, there is a certain space occupied by these 'natural objects.' The comparison of Indo-European tongues points to a supreme god, Dyaus, Zeus, or Jove, whose name is identical with that of the sky. The Indian traditions readily resort to similar interpretations of the names of other deities. It was too hastily concluded that Vedic worship as a whole was based upon similar conceptions.¹ In particular, the meaning of the worship of the god Agni has been greatly misunderstood, and its importance overrated, in consequence of ill-founded pre-conceptions of this kind.

One fifth of the hymns of the Rigveda are addressed to Agni, the fire-god; and in the most conspicuous collections these hymns are always placed first. It may seem easy to infer that Agni was the chief or at least one of the highest gods of the Vedic Pantheon. The Indian scholiasts freely recognise the deity in the Sun and in the Lightning: and the former view in particular seems to harmonise with his supposed high rank. Yet Professor Oldenberg rightly states² that such conclusions have but little foundation. 'It is very seldom,' he says, 'that there is any mention of that side of Agni's nature which corresponds to the sun': whilst 'a relationship with the lightning is only an occasional ornamentation of the figure of Agni.'³ The very fact that Agni is so frequently compared to sun and lightning shows that his nature is conceived as essentially different. In the main the Agni of the Rigveda is the ceremonial fire kindled by the priests by means of attrition. He is first of the gods, because he is lowest and nearest to his worshippers: he dwells close by them on earth, others in the far distance. He is most frequently addressed, not so much because the theme is inspiring as because it is simple. An adoration similar in principle, though less

extended, is paid to the stones which press out the sacred drink, the milk with which it is mixed, the mat of grass on which it is placed, and the fee which is paid to the celebrant. Equal in rank with Agni is 'King Soma,' the sacred drink itself, to whom an almost equal number of hymns is addressed. The material instruments of worship have therefore become the objects of worship; we are surrounded already by the pedantry of a priestly caste, destined to reach maturity in the course of time in that gigantic monument of literary folly, the Indian Brāhmaṇas. For an explanation of the original form of this worship we must look to an earlier period, for our poets themselves find it a mystery. They have inherited it from their ancestor Manus, and their highest aim is to perform the rite 'as Manus did.' That worship by means of fire and the soma-drink was inherited from the Indo-Iranian period seems clear, since they occupy much the same place in the Zoroastrian worship. But it was probably not of any such early cult that our poets were dimly conscious as the true aim of their worship, and we can only trace with clearness the stages immediately preceding the Vedic period.

Besides Agni and Soma, the most conspicuous figure in the Rigveda is Indra, and in the earliest hymns he is by far the most prominent of the three. Traces of Indo-European antiquity may be found in connexion with Indra: he wields as his mace the thunder-bolt of heaven, and cleaves the rock to rescue the imprisoned cows. Yet in the Rigveda Indra has little claim to higher rank than Agni. The poets are conscious of him as a rebel deity, who has pushed aside the lawful reign of his predecessor. The Avesta does not recognise him at all as a god: his drunken habits, as Prof. Oldenberg suggests, stood in too violent contrast to the spirituality of Zoroastrianism, and caused his forcible removal from the regions of heaven. But the warrior-princes of the earliest Vedic period delighted to hear the story of Indra; his example stimulated them to force open the castles of their foes, to appropriate their cows, and to celebrate their victories with barrels of intoxicating drink. To this taste the priestly caste accommodated themselves upon terms, and the Indra of the princes and the Agni of the priests swore brotherly alliance. Yet kings and priests alike remained conscious that they had pushed aside deities more wise, more spiritual, and even more powerful:

¹ The 'primitive' character of nature-worship in the sense referred to is of course no longer generally assumed. Cf. ROBERTSON SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 127. "Among the Semites the worship of sun, moon and stars does not appear to have had any great vogue in the earliest times. Among the Hebrews there is little trace of it before Assyrian influence became potent, and in Arabia it is by no means so prominent as is sometimes supposed."

² *Religion des Veda*, pp. 108, 109.

³ The evidence is also collected by Professor Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 92, 93. This writer candidly admits the comparative rareness of such allusions.

deities whose names they still mentioned with respect, and whose possible anger might yet strike or ensnare them. We are thus brought to the conception of a group of gods which is immediately pre-Vedic, and yet not necessarily primitive: gods in whose honour the fire had been kindled and the soma pressed before Indra and Agni eclipsed their majesty, though even these are not necessarily the gods in whose honour these ceremonies were invented. The true character of this pre-Vedic worship has not, I think, been fully brought out by any recent writers,¹ but Prof. Oldenberg's chapter on 'Varuna, Mitra, and the Ādityas' leads in the right direction. 'We come now,' he writes,² 'to a circle of gods sharply distinguished from all others. They are not characterized by the greatness of their deeds, but by the fixity of their nature, and by the unchanging character of the laws by which they work.' But when he continues: 'two great gods, Mitra and Varuna, stand at their head, and of these the latter is the greatest of all,'³ and when he sums up their attributes in the words 'heaven, light, sun,'⁴ he seems to be going beyond his authority, and to be establishing a new nature-deity or nature-deities in a period to which such conceptions were foreign.

The theory that the Sanskrit Varuna is identical with the Greek Οὐρανός is an etymological guess, which is in no way supported by the description of this god in the Rigveda, in which he appears as Ruler, Lawgiver, and Judge. The Sanskrit Mitra is undoubtedly connected with Avestan 'Mithra,' and so indirectly with sun-worship: but the Mitra of the Rigveda is only the Friend and Ally of his worshippers. With these in the oldest hymns of the Rigveda is joined a third deity Aryaman, whose title, though obscure, at least suggests no physical attribute. But the number of deities in the group cannot be limited to three; the analogy of the Avesta as well as the precise statements of the later Rigveda fix it at seven: and there is to my mind little doubt that the four remaining names are Savitar (the quickener), Bhaga (prosperity), Dakṣha (wisdom), and Anṣa (share). But whatever the precise names or number of these gods, their general character is clear: they belong to the world of law and moral order, not to the physical universe. They

are not primitive deities, and only one is even Indo-Iranian in name. Yet they present in their general character a close analogy to the Archangels of the Zoroastrian creed, and they point to an analogous reform of religious worship.⁵ The history of their decay may easily be conjectured, and indeed traced in the hymns. The whole group is first referred to by the names of the three first members only: then the name of Aryaman slips out, though in one case at least the plurality of the group is still indicated by the use of the plural, not the dual number, in the corresponding verbs⁶: then Mitra becomes obscured, and Varuna alone represents the old order: whilst a varying number of the old names is still grouped in catalogues by the side of Indra Agni and other gods under the title of Ādityāḥ. But in reality Varuna was never worshipped as supreme god: amidst many changes the old supremacy of Dyaus was still vaguely recognised,⁷ and Varuna was but one of a group of his agents: and the more primitive the hymns we examine, the more fully is the equality of his companions recognised.

IV.

From the evidence of the Rigveda, as summarized above, it is possible to deduce a history of the general development of religious thought within its scope, if a few links may be supplied by the imagination upon the analogy of cognate religions. Upon the basis of a more primitive system, in which folk-lore, nature-worship, and social usage each played their part, some Indian Zoroaster, possessed of the ideas which were more fully accepted by the Iranians, endeavoured to establish a humane and logical creed. The worship of Dyaus, the kindling of the sacred fire, the pressing of the Soma he left undisturbed⁸: but he

⁵ See Ludwig's admirable remarks, *Rigveda*, iii. pp. 314-317.

⁶ *Rigveda*, iv. 13, 2.

⁷ The use of fire as an instrument of worship is certainly very consistent with the supposition that a celestial deity was at the same time its object. Cf. ROBERTSON SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 107. "In later times celestial gods predominate, as we see from the prevalence of sacrifice by fire, in which the homage of the worshipper is directed upwards in the pillar of savoury smoke that rises from the altar towards the seat of the godhead in the sky."

⁸ The conception of Dyaus is however changed. He ceases to be closely associated with the physical heaven: he becomes 'Father' and 'Lord': and his residence is in 'the highest place.' The history of

¹ The discussion in A. LUDWIG's *Rigveda*, vol. iii. seems to me still to hold the field.

² *Religion des Veda*, p. 185.

³ *ib.* pp. 185, 186.

⁴ *ib.* p. 189.

gave a more important position to deities of a pronounced moral and law-abiding character, probably to the precise number of seven. A later and more warlike generation revolted against ideas that were too abstract, and rules that were too sober for them. The kings chose Indra as their hero, the priests Agni: by both classes, but for different reasons, the Soma deity was equally honoured. The moral deities were treated with uniform respect, but with diminishing attention, until their names became almost as obscure as that of Dyaus himself. But at the same time nature-worship gradually revived: the Sun, the Wind, the Lightning, the Dawn, and the pair Earth and Heaven¹ came into honour: and (as I hope to show) Agni developed the character of an elemental and all-pervading deity. A little later, and all these gods alike lose their dignity: the ritual limits their power, and a new philosophy explains away their individuality: and the ranks of the degraded deities are joined by a crowd of spirits, some from river and forest, others sprung from vague traditions of the beginning of the human race, and from the fears of those to whom sickness and witchcraft are ever present dangers. Amongst these Agni retains his position, becoming the most skilful of medicine-men: and the religion of Northern India, owing to the collapse of the superstructure raised by men of loftier ideals, assumes a character which corresponds generally to our present conceptions of a primitive religion, and which in many important particulars may well have been identical with the beliefs and cults of a period many hundred years older.

V.

In his *Religion des Veda*, Professor Oldenberg gives his views of the development of the worship of Agni, beginning with pre-Vedic times. In the Rigveda Agni strikes down the evil spirits and consumes their castles. Oldenberg remarks that 'this function of Agni is derived from the oldest of all the functions of fire, in the cult even of the most barbarous peoples².' To the Indo-Iranian period he ascribes the personification

of Agni as 'the strong, pure, wise, and generous god, the protector of his worshipper and the destroyer of his worshipper's foes³.' 'Obviously later,' he says, is the conception of Agni as priest. Nevertheless this conception is prominent throughout the Rigveda, and nowhere more than in its earliest hymns, in which the constant prayer goes to Agni as priest to 'bring hither the company of the gods,' so that gods and men may take part in their common feast. It might with advantage be pointed out that the only form of 'sacrifice' prominent in these hymns is that of the sacred feasts, and that the gods who are invited to share it are chiefly those of the group Mitra Varuna Aryaman . . . , that is, the gods of the last pre-Vedic period.

In sharp contrast to this strongly personified conception of Agni as king and priest is the mysticism which pervades a great number of the Agni hymns, of which i 140 may be taken as a type. Professor Oldenberg says that the 'anthropomorphism of Agni is less developed than that of Indra⁴.' This is hardly true of the earliest and simplest Agni hymns: and it should be said instead that the anthropomorphic conception at a certain stage gave way to an entirely different view. The influence at work is that of 'priestly speculation, delighting in plays on words, and in fanciful exchanges of names, conceptions and similes.'⁵ Agni is no longer a god, but a divine element: and the subject-matter of the hymns is his 'births,' 'appearances,' or 'homes,' or as we should perhaps say, his manifestations.

The 'births' of Agni are double or triple. The 'two-fold births' are according to Oldenberg, in heaven and on earth: but as the context more often suggests, amongst gods and amongst men. The birth in heaven is explained as the appearance of Agni in the Sun: for Oldenberg rejects the view that the heavenly Agni is, in any appreciable number of instances, the Lightning. But it cannot truly be said that the sun is clearly indicated in such passages: priestly speculation had already convinced itself that the earthly 'sacrifice' or rite was the counterpart of a heavenly sacrifice, or rather an imitation of it. Various myths recount how the fire was brought from heaven to earth: but it is by no means

this development is admirably treated in Bradke's pamphlet *Dyaus Asura und die Amoren*. The Dyaus who appears in the Rigveda by the side of Prithivi (earth) appears to be practically a new deity of lower rank.

¹ See the preceding note.

² *Religion des Veda*, p. 128.

³ *Ib.* p. 103.

⁴ *Ib.* p. 105.

⁵ Pischel and Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, Introduction, p. xxvii.

plain that the heavenly fire was the Sun any more than the Lightning.

The 'triple births' of Agni are variously enumerated, but amongst them the birth 'in the waters' is always prominent. Again Oldenberg rejects the theory that the Lightning is indicated. That the 'waters' are earthly, not heavenly, is shown by their constant association with the plants: the 'waters' must therefore be those which furnish the nourishment of the plants, and form an essential condition of all animal and vegetable life. These waters are not found in any one place: rather they are elemental and all-pervading: and in the expression 'child of the waters,'¹ we find, even in the Indo-Iranian period, a personification of this element. The identification of the 'child of the waters' with Agni belongs, as Oldenberg points out, to the Vedic period. In what sense then can it be said that fire dwells in the waters? Oldenberg I think is right in supposing that the fire spoken of is 'a vital force residing in the heart of all things,'² an element akin to the ideal 'fire' of the Stoic philosophy, but described as 'breath' in the system of the Brāhmanas, and as 'spirit' in modern times. In this sense the theological statement that 'Agni dwells in the waters,' corresponds to the scientific view that fluid elements maintain and diffuse the principle of life. If this is the interpretation of the birth 'in the waters,' those 'on the earth,' and 'in the heaven' are probably similar in kind, and the last is not in essence either Sun or Lightning, although these material objects may occasionally be chosen as illustrations of the working of a force or element everywhere diffused.

The cult of the elemental Agni is the most striking original feature of the Rigveda. Oldenberg says that 'the conception of "Agni in the water" is living and real to the poet,' and 'no petrified expression borrowed from a myth which has become unintelligible.'³ and to it applies with much force the statement of the authors of the *Vedische Studien* that 'the Agni mythology is distinctively Indian, and altogether modern, the immediate forerunner of the mysticism of the Brāhmanas.'⁴

The same conception will serve to explain a number of terms, of which the majority are left untranslated in the *Sacred Books*, and which have never yet been interpreted on any homogeneus principle. We cannot,

I believe, be far wrong in interpreting Jātavedas as 'he who has all living things as his possession,' Tanūnapāt as 'the principle of bodily life,'⁵ Narācaṇsa as 'the spirit of mankind,' and so forth. Similarly, Agni as 'sūnūḥ cāvasaḥ' is 'son,' that is, personification 'of strength.' That the sacrificial fire is ignited by an exercise of manual strength on the part of the priests is an illustration, not an explanation of the title.

At the end of the Vedic period this conception is, in the main, lost. Agni is in the waters because he has hidden there for fear of the gods, who are summoning him to act as their priest. Philosophy has become petrified in myth.

VI.

The views here summarised can be fitly illustrated and tested from the admirable collection of material to be found in Prof. Macdonell's *Vedic Mythology*. The writer indeed seems personally to incline rather to the theories of the older generation of Vedic scholars in Europe, as, for instance, when he endeavours to sustain the explanation of Varuna as a deity of the sky, and the identification of the name with the Greek *Oἰάριος*. Nevertheless, Prof. Macdonell has produced a book which, without claiming to be an original treatise on its subject, will be of the highest value to all students of the Veda; a book entirely unrivalled both in its fulness of reference, and in the fairness and completeness with which the views of others are summarised. Professor Oldenberg's views, in particular, have evidently received very careful attention from the author, and appear to have won his respect, and, in many points, his approval.

On the other hand, the authors of the *Vedische Studien* take a very strong stand in opposition to the views of Professor Oldenberg, 'even in his latest publications.'⁶ In so doing, they admit that they are opposing the general consensus of European scholars, and they raise the cry, 'India for the Indians,'⁷ or, in other words, 'The Rigveda for Sāyana and the native commentators.' European scholars, these writers urge, have been misled by two false theories, the one, that the matter of the Rigveda can be explained by Indo-European mythology or 'folklore,' the other, that its language can

¹ Apām Napāt.

² *Religion des Veda*, p. 121.

³ *Religion des Veda*, p. 112.

⁴ Introduction to Part I., p. xxvii.

⁵ The 'anima' of Lucretius.

⁶ *Vedische Studien*, ii. p. v.

⁷ *Ib.* p. 322.

be interpreted by comparative philology. Sāyana, on the other hand, 'has grasped the true character of the Rigveda far better than the European interpreters,'¹ because the Rigveda was always 'specifically Indian,' and its ideas were still in force in his own time; and he rightly interpreted the words because tradition, 'earlier than the period of the Brāhmanas,'² had been handed down to him. In the first volume of the *Studien* these views were stated with considerable qualifications, and were the occasion of a genuine advance in interpretation. It was then quite true that the theory, which may shortly be called the 'sun-myth' theory, and the practice of explaining words by the 'roots' from which they were supposed to be derived, had been carried by European scholars to extremes which made progress impossible. But it must not be forgotten that for these faults Sāyana and the Indian tradition are directly responsible, and that the 'folklorists' and comparative philologists of the present day no longer follow the views of their predecessors. Again, Professors Pischel and Geldner have had great success in connecting more intimately the elaborate myths which appear in the latest hymns of the Rigveda with those which are found in the Brāhmanas. These two periods of literature are at least in direct succession; but it is still an unproved and, indeed, a most improbable, hypothesis that we still possess a tradition of the Vedic hymns, reaching to an earlier period than the Brāhmanas. It is, indeed, admitted that the 'Brāhmanas and Sūtras can only be used to a very limited extent for the right understanding of the Rigveda'³; in other words, that they embody a huge scheme of pedantic misuse of these documents.

The interpretations of Sāyana give a bewildering freedom of choice to his readers, and amongst them may often be found a suggestion which throws unexpected light on particular words or phrases. But the general views of Sāyana have no such claim on our regard: and unfortunately it is just at this point that our authors abandon the critical attitude which they practice so successfully in details.⁴ I propose to illustrate by three examples the uncritical spirit in which these writers accept the native views of the character of Vedic deities.

1. Aditi, the mother of the group of gods called Ādityās, is according to Max Müller

'The Infinite':⁵ whilst according to the Indian tradition, which Pischel accepts 'without any question,'⁶ she is the Earth. The word as an adjective means, as seems agreed, 'inexhaustibly bounteous,' and it is used as an epithet of various deities, as well as of the streams, and also, very appropriately of the bounteous earth, as in AV. 12. 1. 61. But that the poets of the Rigveda did not think of Aditi as the Earth seems clear from the fact that it is invariably Prithivī, not Aditi, who is coupled with Dyaus. Pischel explains that 'Aditi is the mythological figure, Prithivī the natural element,'⁶ a distinction which seems to me quite foreign to Vedic thought. The Vedic conceptions of Aditi are correctly stated by Macdonell⁷ as two: (1) she is the mother of the Ādityas (2) she has the power of releasing from the bonds of physical suffering and moral guilt. The latter conception, being also prominently connected with Varuṇa the Ādityas, may well be derived from the former. The natural inference seems to me to be that the name of Aditi the goddess is a purely verbal abstraction from the title Ādityāḥ.⁸ Max Müller's attractive interpretation lacks corroboration, and has not been adopted by any other Vedists: whilst the Indian interpretation, far from being shown to be derived from a tradition older than the Brāhmanas, merely recalls the later use of the adjective Aditi.

2. With regard to Agni, the *Vedische Studien* accept in numerous passages the native theory that Agni is the Sun or the Lightning: a view acceptable to naturalist interpreters, both European and Indian. The fact that the two interpretations are offered in so many passages must however weaken our belief in both: and it is impossible to agree that 'without hesitation we may accept the views of the commentators that "Agni dwelling in the waters" was conceived in the Rigveda in two forms, as

ii. p. 243. 'If I find that the interpretation of a word or phrase which is established in classical Sanskrit or is given by the lexicographers suits all passages in which the word or phrase occurs in the Veda, I interpret the Veda accordingly: if it does not suit them, I abandon the interpretation and go my way without troubling about classical Sanskrit or the lexicographers.'

⁵ *Rigveda*, vol. i. (1869), pp. 230 seq.

⁶ *V.S.* ii. p. 86.

⁷ *Vedic Mythology*, p. 122.

⁸ So Oldenberg remarks (*Religion des Veda*, p. 203) that the goddess Aditi is, historically considered, younger than her children. How he reconciles this statement with his own view that Aditi is a 'cow-goddess or rather cow-fetish belonging to a very low grade of myth-formation' I do not know.

¹ *Ib.* p. iv.

² *Ib.* p. 268.

³ *Ib.* p. 244.

⁴ The principle is thus stated in *Vedische Studien*,

Lightning in the clouds, and as a suboceanic fire,' and that 'both forms of this Agni are united in the figure of Apām Napāt'¹

3. The high god Varuṇa is according to many European scholars, the sky; according to Oldenberg,² originally the Moon. Neither of these theories finds any distinct countenance in the Rigveda. But in the later mythology Varuṇa was a god of the sea: and this view is now accepted by Pischel and Geldner as true for the whole of the Rigveda. In the preface to Part I, indeed, they speak of him as 'the old king of the gods, who has little by little been pushed from his place by Indra, the head of a younger race of gods.'³ But now we are told that 'from the beginning Varuṇa was a god of the the sea and waters, and did not take up this position only at a later period':⁴ that he is at all times an 'almost demonic figure,'⁵ that 'he is bald-headed, diseased, with red eyes, and projecting teeth.'⁶ This description, taken from the Brāhmanas, is obviously inconsistent with the Varuṇa of the Rigveda, the mighty ruler of the moral and physical world. But even of the more cautious statement that Varuṇa is a water-god, the evidence is of the slenderest. To show this, and at the same time to recall his true character, I translate here two verses for which a single phrase is

quoted apart from its context to bear out a preconceived conclusion:—

'Ye two that rule over the space in heaven and on earth, let festal offerings of butter be poured forth to you: let Mitra and Aryaman of noble birth, and the king Varuṇa of wide realm accept our sacrifice.

'Ye kings that are guardians of the mighty Orders, lords of the rivers, of royal rank, come to meet us: Mitra and Varuṇa send us rain and sustenance from heaven, for life-giving are your streams.'⁷

It will be observed that the title 'lord of the rivers' is only one of many titles applied to Mitra and Varuṇa, or to Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman, and that it is universal, not local supremacy, which is attributed to all three alike.

This passage therefore entirely fails to corroborate the 'Indian theory': and the other passages quoted in the *Vedische Studien* are substantially open to the same objections.

These aberrations, however, affect comparatively little the value of the work of Professors Pischel and Geldner in detail: their learning and acumen have rendered the greatest services to Vedic study, and their fundamental principle, that 'with the prevailing theory that all deities are to be explained as natural phenomena we can make no progress,'⁸ is, in my opinion, thoroughly sound.

E. V. ARNOLD.

⁷ *Rigveda*, vii. 64, 1, 2.

⁸ *Vedische Studien*, ii. p. 231.

¹ *V.S.* ii. p. 271.

² *Religion des Veda*, p. 193.

³ *Vedische Studien*, i. p. xxvii.

⁴ *Ib.* ii. p. 125. ⁵ *Ib.* p. 292. ⁶ *Ib.* p. 292, note.

NOTES.

BACCHYLIDES X. (XI.), 118.

ἄλσος τέ τοι ἱμερβέν
κῆσαν παρ' εὐδρον πρόγο-
νοι ἑσσάμενοι, Πριάμοι' ἔπει χρόνῳ κ.τ.λ.

Read πόρον
οἱ ἑσσάμενοι

This is a simpler correction (πόρονοι could very easily have been corrupted, in such a context, to πρόγονοι) than other proposals with which I am acquainted; it gives better sense; and it improves the metre (πόρον corresponding to κάμον and βροτῶν). 'The founders (of the city) gave you a lovely grove, when,' &c., οἱ ἑσσάμενοι scil. Μεταπόντιον are the Ἀχαιοί of l. 115. For the use of ἔπορον with ἄλσος cf. Pindar, *Pyth.* iv. 259 ἔπορον λιβάδας πεδίων.

J. B. BURY.

Whatever may have been the oratorical shortcomings of the youthful Cicero (see Plut. *Cic.* 3 ff.; *Cic. Brut.* 91, 316), it is demonstrably certain that an awkward delivery, such as was noted in the young Demosthenes, was not one of them, nor can Plutarch have thought so, as ch. 3 ext. 4 ext. 5 ext. are sufficient to show. On the other hand, the high importance which both Demosthenes and Cicero always attached to an appropriate delivery is amply attested by such passages as Pseudo-Plut. *Vitae X. Orat.* 845 B; *Cic. de Orat.* iii. 56, 218; *Brut.* 38, 142; and it is doubtless this very coincidence of conviction that the biographer wished to point out here.

Now the sense called for will be secured if, instead of the objectionable νοσήσας, we read, with an extremely simple change, νοήσας, i.e. 'It is recorded that Cicero, also, though no less highly of delivery than did Demosthenes.'

A. GUDEMAN

ON PLUTARCH, *Cic.* 5.—Λέγεται δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς οὐδὲν ἥττον νοσήσας τοῦ Δημοσθένους πρὸς τὴν ὑπόκρισιν.