ART. II.—Miscellaneous hymns from the Rig and Atharva Vedas.¹ By J. Muir, Esq., D.C.L., LL.D.

The hymns of the Rig Veda are, as is well known, almost entirely of a religious character, designed, or at least, adapted, for recitation at the worship of the various popular deities, or at some of the ceremonials connected with various important events in the domestic or public life of the ancient Indians. Among these, however, are interspersed a few of a different description, which, from the wide celebrity they had acquired, were carefully preserved by the descendants of their authors, or by other interested persons, and have been incorporated in the great collection of sacred songs. Some of these productions, like the colloquy of Yama and Yamī (translated in a former paper), the very obscure conversation between the hero Pururavas and the Apsaras Urvasī (R. V. x. 95),² and the Vrishākapī hymn (R. V. x. 86), derived their importance from the interlocutors being personages regarded as divine, or ranked among the ancestors of the human race. Others, like the 72nd, the 90th, and the 129th hymns of the 10th Book (also quoted in previous articles) were venerated from the nature of the topics which they handled, or the depth or gravity of the speculations which they contain. Others, again, such as the hymns referred to by Professor Roth in his dissertation “on the historical matter contained in the Rig Veda,”³ would possess an interest for the descendants of

¹ I have again to acknowledge the valuable aid which I have received from Professor Aufrecht in rendering some of the more difficult parts of the hymns translated in this paper.
² Professor Max Müller’s Essay on Comparative Mythology, in the Oxford Essays for 1856, contains a translation of this myth as narrated in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa. The Brāhmaṇa, however, only quotes and illustrates the easiest verses of the hymn (R. V. x. 95), making no reference to its most obscure and difficult portions. Some of the verses not cited in the Brāhmaṇa are explained by Professor Müller. See also Roth’s Illustrations of Nirukta, pp. 153 ff. and 230.
³ Sur Litteratur und Geschichte des Weda, pp. 87.
the contending priestly races to whose rivalries they made allusion, and might even be valued for the purposes of imprecation to which they could be applied. And those compositions which celebrate the liberality of different princes to their domestic priests would naturally be handed down with care by the successors of those favoured individuals.

In the following paper I shall adduce some other hymns, both from the Rig and the Atharva Vedas, which are only in part of a religious character, and possess a greater general interest than the bulk of those with which they are associated, from the references which they make to human character, dispositions, feelings, passions, and circumstances; from the light which they throw on the progress of sacerdotal pretensions, or from some other feature of their contents. In some of these hymns it will be seen that a considerable amount of shrewdness and worldly wisdom is expressed in a sententious form.

HYMN TO ARANYĀṇĪ, R. V. x. 146.

The first hymn which I shall adduce, addressed to the goddess of forest solitude, is distinguished by the poetical feeling which pervades it, and the natural manner in which the emotions arising from the situation there described are depicted, though some of the allusions which it contains are difficult to explain or comprehend. It is repeated in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, and explained by the Commentator on that work. (See also Roth’s Illustrations of the Nirukta, p. 132).

1. “Aranyāṇī, Aranyāṇī, thou who seemest to lose thyself there, why dost thou not ask [the way to] the village? Does not terror seize thee (at thy solitude)? 2. When the chich-chika (a bird) answers to the roar of bulls when it is uttered, flying about as if with cymbals, then [by their voices] Aranyāṇī is lauded [as if by hymns]. 3. And the cows seem to eat, and the house appears to be seen, and at evening Aranyāṇī seems to discharge the carts. 4. One man calls to his cow,

1 See Sanskrit Texts, i. 127 ff.

2 Professor Aufrecht thinks this clause (sakātir īva sarjat) should be rendered, "In the evening the forest moves like a cart," with reference to the agitation of the branches by the evening air.
another fells a tree; a man lingering in the forest (in Ḡraṇ-\-yāṇī) fancies that she [or some one] has screamed. 5. Aranyāṇī is not [herself] murderous, if no one else (a tiger, etc.) assails; but after eating of sweet fruit, a man rests there at his pleasure. 6. I laud Aranyāṇī, the mother of wild beasts, the unctuous-scented, the fragrant, who yields abundance of food, though she has no hinds to till her.”

The next hymn which I shall quote refers to the great variety by which the aims and pursuits of different men are characterized. It is distinguished by a vein of naive observation, not unmingled with satire; and is curious as revealing to us the occupations pursued by the poet’s father and mother, though it makes no reference to the class to which they belonged.

RIG VEDA, ix. 112.

1. “We different men have all our various imaginations and designs. The carpenter seeks something that is broken, the doctor a patient, the priest some one who will offer libations. O Indu (Soma), flow forth for Indra. 1. 2. With dried-up sticks, with birds’ feathers, with metals, the artizan continually seeks after a man with plenty of gold. O Indu, etc., etc. 3. (= Nirukta, vi. 6) I am a poet, my father is a doctor, and my mother is a grinder of corn. With our different views, seeking to get gain, we run after [our respective objects] as after cattle. 2. O Indu, etc. 4. The draught horse desires an easy-going carriage; merry companions a laugh; the female sex the male; and frogs a pond. O Indu,” etc.

RIG VEDA, x. 34.

The next hymn, which may possibly be the production of one who lays before us the sad results of his own bitter experience, describes with great vividness, graphic power, and truth of observation the seductions and miseries of gambling,

1 This last clause, which is repeated at the end of each of the verses, and transforms the hymn into an address to Soma, is perhaps a later addition to an older song; as it seems to have no connection with the other parts of the verses to which it is attached.

2 The three preceding verses are translated by Roth in his Illustrations of the Nirukta, p. 74.
which, we see, were as acutely felt in those early ages as they are in these later times.

1. (= Nirukta ix. 8). “The tumbling, air-born [products] of the great Vibhídaka tree (i.e. the dice) delight me as they continue to roll on the dice-board. The exciting dice enchant me like a draught of the soma-plant growing on mount Mūjavat.

2. She (the gamester’s own wife) never wronged or despised me. She was kind to me, and to my friends. But I for the sake of the partial dice, have spurned my devoted spouse.

3. My mother-in-law detests me; my wife rejects me. In his need [the gamester] finds no comforter. I cannot discover what is the enjoyment of the gambler any more than I can perceive what is the happiness of a worn-out hack horse.

4. Others pay court to the wife of the man whose wealth is coveted by the impetuous dice. His father, mother, brothers, say of him, “We know nothing of him; take him away bound.”

5. When I resolve not to be tormented by them, because I am abandoned by my friends who withdraw from me,—yet as soon as the brown dice, when they are thrown, make a rattling sound, I hasten to their rendezvous, like a woman to her paramour.¹

6. The gamester comes to the assembly, glowing in body, and inquiring, “shall I win?” The dice inflame his desire, making over his winnings to his opponent.

7. Hooking, piercing, deceitful, vexatious, delighting to torment, the dice dispense transient gifts, and again ruin the winner; they are covered with honey, but destroy the gambler.

8. Their troop of fifty-three disports itself [disposing men’s destinies] like the god Savitri whose ordinances never fail. They bow not before the wrath even of the fiercest. The king himself makes obeisance to them.

9. They roll downward; they bound upward. Having no hands, they overcome him who has. These celestial coals, when thrown on the diceboard, scorch the heart, though cold themselves.

10. The destitute wife of the gamester is distressed, and so too is the mother of a son who goes she knows not whither. In debt and seeking after money, the gambler approaches with trepidation the

¹ These words are quoted in Nirukta xii. 7.
houses of other people at night. 11. It vexes the gamester to see his own wife, and then to observe the wives and happy homes of others. In the morning he yokes the brown horses (the dice); by the time when the fire goes out he has sunk into a degraded wretch. 12. He who is the general of your band, the first king of your troop,—to him I stretch forth [my] ten [fingers] toward the east [in reverence]:¹ I spare no expense [in my offering]. That I declare with perfect truth. 13. Never play with dice; practice husbandry; rejoice in thy property, esteeming it sufficient. 'There, o gamester, are thy cows; [this is] thy wife;'—so the adorable Savitri addresses me. 14. Be friendly [o dice]; be auspicious to us; do not bewitch us powerfully with your enchantment. Let your hostile wrath abate. Let others be subject to the fetters of the brown ones (the dice)."

That the passion for gambling prevailed very extensively at the time when the hymns of the Rig- and Atharva-vedas were composed is clear, from various other allusions to the practice which we find there. Thus in R. V. vii. 86, dice are mentioned along with wine, anger, thoughtlessness, etc., as causes of sin. The following verses from the A. V. prove the same point:

A. V. vii. 50-1. "As the lightning every day strikes the tree irresistibly, so may I to-day irresistibly smite the gamester with the dice. 2. May the wealth of the rich and of the poor unresisting be collected from every side into my hand as winnings."

vii. 109. 1. "This reverence be paid to the brown [die], who is ruler among the dice. With butter I worship Kali; may he thus be auspicious to us. 2. Bring, o Agni, butter to the Apsarases, but dust, sand, and water to the dice. Seeking oblations according to their several shares, the gods delight in both offerings. 3. The Apsarases hold a festival between the oblation and the sun. May they anoint my hands with butter, and overwhelm the gamester who is my opponent. 4. Dispense bad luck to our adversary, but moisten

¹ Compare A. V. v. 28, 11, and Vējāsaneyi Sanhitā, xvi. 64.
us with butter. Strike, as lightning does a tree, the man who plays against us.”

vi. 118, 1. “Whatever sins we have committed with our hands, seeking to obtain the host of dice,—remit to us to-day that debt, ye Apsarases Ugrampasyā and Ugrajit.”

A. V. iv. 38. 1. “I invoke hither the skilfully-playing Apsaras who cuts up and conquers, and gets gains in the game of dice. 2. I invoke hither the skilfully-playing Apsaras, who collects and scatters, and receives gains in the game of dice. 3. May she who dances about with the dice when she wins by gaming, grant gain to us, and obtain superiority, through her skill. May she come to us with abundance of riches. Let them not conquer our money. 4. I invoke hither the joyful and exulting Apsarases—those [goddesses] who delight in dice, and bring with them grief and anger.”

It will be seen from these verses that the Apsarases are intimately connected with gambling. In A.V. ii. 2, 4, they are said to be “fond of dice,” and “soul bewitching.”

The next two hymns which I proceed to quote are in praise of generosity. The first of them celebrates liberality to the destitute in general; the second eulogizes the same virtue when exhibited in giving presents to priests.

Rig Veda, x. 117.

1. “The gods have not ordained hunger to be our destruction. Even those who are full-fed are overtaken by various forms of death (lit. deaths). The prosperity of the liberal man never decays; while the illiberal finds no comforter. 2. He who, himself well provided with sustenance, hardens his heart against the poor man who approaches him, starving, and who has long courted him, desirous of food,—such a man meets with none to cheer him. 3. He is the bountiful man who gives to the lean beggar who comes to him craving food. Success attends that man in the sacrifice, and he secures for himself a friend in the future. 4. He is no friend who bestows nothing on his friend who waits upon him, seeking
for sustenance. Let every one depart from such a man;—his house is no home,—and look out for some one else who is liberal, even though he be a stranger. 5. Let the powerful man be generous to the suppliant; let him look along the path [of futurity]: For, oh, riches revolve like the wheels of a chariot: they come, now to one, now to another. 6. In vain the fool obtains food: I tell the truth; it becomes his destruction (comp. v. 1). He nourishes neither his friend nor his companion. He who keeps his food to himself, has his sin to himself. 7. The ploughshare furrowing the ground, brings men plenty. A man moving onward with his feet, accomplishes his journey. A priest who speaks is more acceptable than one who is silent. A kinsman who is beneficent excels one who is stingy. 8. A one-footed being advances faster than a two-footed. The two-footed comes after the three-footed. The four-footed follows in the rear of the two-footed, and moves on observing his steps. 9. The two hands, though alike, do not perform an equal amount of work. Two men with the same mother do not yield the same quantity of milk. Two men, though twins, have not the same strength. And two others, though kinsmen, are not equally liberal.”

**RIG VEDA, x. 107.**

1. “The great [lustre] of these opulent ones has been manifested. The whole living [world] has been liberated from darkness. The great light given by the Fathers has arrived. The broad path of Largess has been beheld. 2. The givers of gifts abide aloft in the sky; the bestowers of horses live with the Sun; the givers of gold attain immor-

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1 It is curious to find in so ancient a composition this now trite comparison of the changes of fortune to the revolutions of a wheel. The same idea occurs in the **Mahabharata**, iii. 15489: “After happiness, suffering, and after suffering, happiness, visit a man in succession, as the spokes of a wheel [revolve round] the nave.” According to *Herodotus* i. 207, *Ctesias* said to *Cyrus*: “If thou knowest that even thou art human, and rulest over mortals, learn first this lesson, that in the affairs of men there is a wheel which, by its revolution, renders it impossible for the same persons always to enjoy prosperity.”

2 Professor Aufrecht suggests that the one-footed may mean a cripple, and the three-footed, an old man with his staff.

3 Compare R. V. x. 68, 11. “The Fathers have adorned the sky with stars... and placed darkness in the night, and light in the day.”
tality; the bestowers of raiment prolong their lives. 3. A gift which is a satisfaction of the gods, an offering to the deities, [proceeds] not from the illiberal; they bestow nothing; and many men of extensive liberality are bountiful merely through fear of reproach. . . . . 5. The giver of gifts, invited, advances first; he walks in the front as leader. 1 I regard as the king of men him who first presented a gift. 5. They call him a rishi, a priest, a reverend chanter of hymns and reciter of verses,—he knows the three forms of the resplendent (Agni),—the man who was the first to crown [his religious service] with a gift. 7. Largess bestows a cow, a horse, silver (?) and gold. Largess bestows (?) food, which is our life. The wise man makes largess-giving his breastplate. 8. Bountiful men neither die nor fall into calamity; they suffer neither wrong nor pain. Their liberality confers on them this whole world as well as heaven. 9. The bountiful conquer for themselves first, a pleasant abode, a well-dressed wife, and a draught of wine; they conquer those who walk in the front (?), uninvited. 10. A fleet horse is trained for the generous man; he obtains a brilliant damsel for his portion; this house of his resembles a lotus-pond, beautiful, embellished like a palace of the gods. 11. The liberal man is borne along by rapid horses. The car of largess rolls forward on easy wheels. Preserve, ye gods, the bountiful man in battle. He overcomes his enemies in the fight."

The next hymn, from the Atharva Veda, sets forth with great liveliness and vigour the advantages accruing to princes from the employment of a domestic priest.

**Atharva Veda, iii. 19.**

1. "May this prayer of mine be successful; may the vigour and strength be complete, may the power be perfect and undecaying, of those of whom I am the victorious priest (purohita). 2. I fortify their kingdom, and augment their

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1 Compare R. V. iv. 50, 8 f, where the prosperity and honor which attend a prince who retains and cherishes a domestic priest are described. See Professor Wilson's translation, and note on v. 9, in p. 214; and Roth's Art. on Brahma and the Brahmans, Journ. Germ. Or. Society, i. 77 f. See also the hymn from the A. V. iii. 19, next quoted in the text.
energy, valour, and force. I break the arms of their enemies, with this oblation. 3. May all those who fight against our wise and prosperous [prince] sink downward, and be prostrated. With my prayer I destroy his enemies, and raise up his friends. 4. May those of whom I am the priest be sharper than an axe, sharper than fire, sharper than Indra’s thunderbolt. 5. I strengthen their weapons; I prosper their kingdom rich in heroes. May their power be undecaying and victorious. May all the gods foster their designs. 6. May their valorous deeds, o Maghavat, burst forth; may the noise of the conquering heroes arise; may their distinct shouts, their clear yells, go up; may the gods, the Maruts with Indra as their chief, march forward with their host. 7. Go, conquer, ye warriors: may your arms be strong. Ye with the sharp arrows, smite those whose bows are powerless; ye whose weapons and arms are terrible (smite) the feeble. 8. When discharged, fly forth, o arrow, sped by prayer. Vanquish the foes, assail, slay all the choicest of them; let not one escape.”

The two following hymns from the Atharva Veda declare the guilt, the peril, and disastrous consequences of oppressing Brâhmans, and robbing them of their property. The threats and imprecations of haughty sacerdotal insolence could scarcely be expressed more energetically.

**Atharva Veda, v. 18.**

1. “King, the gods have not given thee [this cow] to eat. Do not, O Râjanya (man of royal descent), seek to devour the Brâhman’s cow, which is not to be eaten. 2. The wicked Râjanya, unlucky in play, and self-destroyed, will eat the Brâhmin’s cow, saying, ‘Let me live to-day, [if I can] not [live] to-morrow.’ 3. This cow, clothed with a skin, contains deadly poison, like a snake. Beware, Râjanya, she is ill-flavoured, and must not be eaten. 4. He [who eats her] forfeits his strength, destroys his own splendour, consumes everything like a fire which has been kindled. The man who looks upon the Brâhman as mere food to be eaten up, drinks serpent’s poison. 5. Indra kindles a fire
in the heart of that contemner of the gods who slays the Brâhman, esteeming him to be inoffensive, and foolishly covets his property. Heaven and earth abhor the man who so acts. 6. A Brâhman is not to be wronged, as fire must not be touched by a man who cherishes his own body. Soma is his (the Brâhman’s) kinsman, and Indra shields him from imprecations. 7. The wicked (?) man who thinks the priests’ food is sweet while he is eating it, swallows [the cow] bristling with a hundred sharp points, but cannot digest her. 8. The priest’s tongue is a bow-string, his voice is a barb, and his windpipe is arrow-points smeared with fire. With these god-directed, and heart-subduing bows, the priest pierces the scorners of the gods. Brâhmans bearing sharp arrows, armed with missiles, never miss their mark when they discharge a shaft. Shooting with fervour [austerity?] and with anger, they pierce [the enemy] from afar. 10. The descendants of Vitâhavya who ruled over a thousand men, and were ten hundred in number, were overcome after they had eaten a Brahman’s cow. 11. The cow herself, when she was slaughtered, destroyed them,—those men who cooked the last she-goat of Kesaraprabandhâ. 12. Those hundred persons whom the earth shook off, after they had wronged the priestly race, were overwhelmed in an inconceivable manner. 13. He lives among mortals a scorner of the gods; infected with poison he becomes reduced to a skeleton; he who wrongs a Brâhman the kinsman of the deities, fails to attain to the heaven of the Forefathers. 14. Agni is called our leader; Soma our kinsman. Indra neutralizes imprecations [directed against us]; this the wise understand. 15. Like a poisoned arrow, o king, like a serpent, o lord of cows,—such is the dreadful shaft of the Brâhman, with which he pierces his despisers.”

ATHARVA VEDA, v. 19.

1. “The Srinjayas, descendants of Vitahavya, waxed exceedingly; they almost touched the sky; but after they had injured Bhrigu, they were overwhelmed. 2. When men pierced Brihatsâman, a Brâhman descended from Angiras, a
ram with two rows of teeth swallowed their children. 3. Those who spit, or throw filth (?) upon a Brâhman, sit eating hair in the midst of a stream of blood. 4. So long as this Brâhman’s cow writhes (?) when being cooked, she destroys the glory of the kingdom; no vigorous hero is born there. 5. It is cruel to slaughter her; her ill-flavoured flesh is thrown away. When her milk is drunk, that is esteemed a sin among the Forefathers. 6. Whenever a king, fancying himself mighty, seeks to devour a Brâhman, that kingdom is broken up, in which a Brâhman suffers. Becoming eight-footed, four-eyed, four-cared, four-jawed, two-faced, two-tongued, she (the cow) shatters the kingdom of the oppres-
sor of Brâhmans. 8. (Ruin) overflows that kingdom, as water swamps a leaky boat: calamity smites that country in which a priest is wronged. 9. Even trees, o Nârada, repel, and refuse their shade to, the man who claims a right to the property of a Brâhman. This [property], as king Varuṇa hath said, has been turned into a poison by the gods. No one who has eaten a Brâhman’s cow continues to watch (i.e. to rule) over a country. 11. Those nine nineties [of persons] whom the earth shook off, when they had wronged the priestly race, were overwhelmed in an inconceivable manner (see v. 12 of the preceding hymn). 12. The gods have declared that the cloth wherewith a dead man’s feet are bound shall be thy pall, thou oppressor of priests. 13. The tears which flow from a vanquished man as he laments,—such is the portion of water which the gods have assigned to thee, thou oppressor of priests. 14. The gods have allotted to thee that portion of water wherewith men wash the dead, and moisten their beards. 15. The rain of Mitra and Varuṇa does not descend on the oppressor of priests. For him the battle has never a successful issue; nor does he bring his friend into subjection.” The attention of the reader is directed to the intensity of contempt and abhorrence which is sought to be conveyed by the coarse imagery contained in vv. 3, and 12-14, of the last preceding hymn.
8. "And if a woman have had ten former husbands, not Brāhmanas, and a Brāhmana take her hand (i.e. marry her), he is the only husband. 9. It is a Brahman only who is a husband, and not a Rājanya, or a Vaisya. The Sun marches on declaring that to the five tribes of men."

The four hymns of the A. V. which follow contain incantations designed to save persons suffering under dangerous diseases, and on the point of death, from death, or rather perhaps to recall their spirits after their separation from the body. They supply various illustrations of the ideas entertained by the Indians of the period when they were composed regarding the vital principle, the relations of the different senses to the several elements, the deities by whom men’s tenure of life was regulated, the power of incantations to arrest the approach of doom, and other kindred particulars.

**Atharva Veda, v. 30.**

"1. From thy vicinity, from thy vicinity, from a distance, from thy vicinity [I call] to thee: remain here; do not follow, do not follow, the early Fathers. I firmly hold back thy breath. 2. Whatever incantations any kinsman or stranger has uttered against thee,—with my voice I declare thy release and deliverance from them all. 3. Whatever hurt thou hast done, or curse thou hast spoken, in thy folly, against woman or man, with my voice, etc. 4. If thou liest there in consequence of any sin committed by thy mother, or thy father, with my voice, etc. 5. Receive the medicine which thy father, mother, sister and brother offer to thee. I make thee long-lived. 6. Come (?) hither, o man, with thy entire soul; do not follow the two messengers of Yama; come to the abodes of the living. 7. Return when called, knowing the outlet of the path, the ascent, the advance,

1 Compare a curious passage from the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa iii. 7, 12, 3 f., "May Agni deliver me from any sin which my mother may have committed when I was in her womb, or which my father may have committed. May my parents have received no injury from me, when I, a son, in sucking, squeezed my mother and father in my delight." Compare also R. V. vii. 86, 5, referred to in my paper, "Contributions to a knowledge of Vedic Theogony," etc., p. 82, line 19.

2 See my former paper on Yama, pp. 282 and 287.
road of every living man. 8. Fear not; thou shalt not die; I make thee long-lived. I have charmed out of thy members the consumption by which they are wasted. 9. The consumption which racks and wastes thy limbs, and sickens thy heart, has flown away to a distance like a hawk, overcome by my word. 10. The two sages, Alert and Watchful, the sleepless, and the vigilant, these the guardians of thy life, are awake both day and night. 11. May this adorable Agni rise here to thee as a sun. Rise up from deep death, 1 yea even from black darkness. 2 12. Reverence to Yama, reverence to Death, reverence to the Fathers, and to those who guide us. I place in front of this [sick] man, for his security, Agni who knows how to carry him across. 13. Let his breath, let his soul, let his sight come, and then his strength; let his body acquire sensation, and stand firm upon its feet. 14. Provide him, Agni, with breath, and with sight; restore him, furnished with a body, and with strength. 3 Thou hast the knowledge of immortality; let him not depart, or become a dweller in a house of clay. 15. Let not thy inhaled breath cease; let not thy exhaled breath vanish. Let the sun, the lord, raise thee up from death by his rays. 16. This tongue speaks within, bound, convulsive. By thee, I have charmed away the consumption, and the hundred torments of the fever. 17. This world is the dearest, unconquered by the gods. To whatever death thou wast destined when thou wast born—we call after thee, do not die before thou art worn out by old age.”

**Atharva Veda, vii. 53.**

1. “Brihaspati, thou hast delivered us from dwelling in the realm of Yama, from the curse. Aśvins,—ye who, o Agni, are the two physicians of the Gods,—ye have repelled death from us by your powers. 2. Continue associated, ye two breaths, inspired and expired; forsake not his body: may they, united, remain with thee here. Live prosperously a hundred autumns. Agni is thy splendid protector...

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1 Compare the ἱππος ἀλεθρός of Homer.
2 Compare the passage quoted in my paper on Yama, p. 304.
3 Compare the article just referred to, p. 8.
and lord. 3. May thy life which has been dissipated afar, may thy breaths, come back to thee again. Agni has snatched it from the lap of Nirriti (Destruction); and I introduce it again into thyself. 4. Let not his inspiration abandon him, nor his expiration quit him and depart. I commit him to the seven Rishis; may they carry him on in health to old age. 5. Enter into him, ye two breaths, like two steers forcing their way into a cow-pen. May this man flourish here, an unmolested depositary of old age. 6. We invigorate thy life. I drive away consumption from thee. May this excellent Agni sustain our life on every side. Ascending from the darkness to the uppermost heaven, we have reached, among the gods, the god Sûrya, the highest luminary.”

**Atharva Veda, viii. 1.**

1. “Reverence to Death the Ender! May thy inhaled and exhaled breaths rejoice here. May this man remain here united with his spirit in the domain of the sun, in the world of deathlessness. 2. Bhaga and Soma with his filaments, the divine Maruts, Indra, and Agni, have raised him up to health. Here is thy spirit, here thy breath, here thy life, here thy soul. We rescue thee from the bonds of Nirriti by a divine utterance. 4. Rise up hence, o man. Casting off the fetters of death, do not sink downward. Do not depart from this world, from the sight of Agni and the Sun. 5. May the Wind, Mâtarisvan, blow for thee; may the waters shower immortality (or ambrosia) on thee; may the Sun shine healingly upon thy body; may Death pity thee; do not die. 6. Thou must ascend, o man, and not descend; I give thee life and vital power. Mount this pleasant and imperishable car; then, when aged, thou shalt declare a festival. 7. Let not thy soul go away thither, let it not disappear; do not wander away from the living; do not follow the Fathers. May all the gods preserve thee. 8. Do not long after the departed, who conduct men afar. Ascend from the darkness; come into the light. We lay hold of thy hands. 9. Let not the two dogs sent by Yama, the

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1 Compare R. V. x. 85, 17. 2 See A. V. v. 30, 6, above.
black and the brindled [seize thee]. Come hither; do not hesitate; do not remain here with averted mind. 10. Do not follow this path; it is terrible; I speak of that by which thou hast not hitherto gone. This, o man, is darkness; do not enter it. Beyond, thou hast fear; on this side, thou hast security. 11. May the fires which are in the waters preserve thee; may the fire which men kindle preserve thee; may Játavedas Vaisvânara (the fire which is common to all men) preserve thee; let not the celestial fire together with the lightning, consume thee. 12. Let not the flesh-devouring fire\(^1\) be hostile to thee; go far from that wicked one. May the sky, the earth, the sun, and moon, preserve thee; may the air protect thee from the bolt of the gods. 13. May Wakeful and Watchful, may the sleepless and the waking preserve thee. May the guardian and the vigilant protect thee. 14. May they protect and guard you. To them be reverence. 15. May Vâyu, Indra, Dhâtri, and Savitri the deliverer, restore thee to converse with the living. Let not breath and strength abandon thee; we call back thy spirit. 16. Let not any violent devourer, let not darkness find thee. May the Ádityas and Vasus, with Indra and Agni, raise thee up to health. 17. The sky, the earth, Prajâpati have rescued thee. The plants with Soma their king, have delivered thee from death. 18. Let this man remain here, o gods; let him not depart hence to the other world. We rescue him from death with a charm of boundless efficacy (sahasra-vrtyyena). 19. I have delivered thee from death; may the vigorous breathe upon thee.\(^2\) Let not the she-devils with dishevelled hair, or those that howl dreadfully, yell at thee. 20. I have snatched thee; I have caught thee; thou hast returned renewed. I have got, o man perfect in thy members, thy entire eye, and thy entire life. 21. [Life] has breathed upon thee. Light has come to thee. Darkness has departed from thee. We remove from thee death, Nirriti and consumption.”

\(^1\) There are three kinds of fire, the krovyâd, or funeral (here referred to), which devours dead bodies, the culinary (âmâd), and the sacrificial. See the Vâj. S. i. 17, and the commentary there.

\(^2\) See the 4th verse of the next hymn.
1. "Seize this boon of immortality; may long life, which cannot be cut off, be thine. I restore to thee breath and life; do not depart to the mist (rajas) or to darkness (tamas); do not die. 2. Come hither to the light of the living; I rescue thee that thou mayest survive a hundred autumns. Loosing the bands of death and imprecation, I lengthen out thy existence. 3. I have recovered thy breath from the wind, thine eye from the sun. I place in thee thy soul. Receive sensation in thy limbs. Speak, articulating with thy tongue. 4. I blow upon thee with the breath of bipeds, and of quadrupeds, as on Agni when he is born (i.e. on fire when kindled). I have paid reverence, o Death, to thine eye, and to thy breath. 5. Let this man live and not die. We restore him. I make for him a remedy. Death, do not kill the man. I invoke for his safety a vivifying . . . , living, delivering, strong, and powerful plant. 7. Befriend him; do not seize him; let him go; though he is thine only, let him abide here with all his strength; o Bhava and Šarva, be gracious; grant deliverance; remove evil, and confer life. 8. Befriend him, Death, pity him; let him arise. Unharmed, with all his limbs, hearing perfectly, let him obtain enjoyment during a life of a hundred years. 9. May the shaft of the gods pass thee by; I bring thee across from the mist (see v. 1); I have rescued thee from death. Removing far away the flesh-devouring Agni, I draw round thee a circle (see R. V. x. 18, 4) that thou mayest live. 10. Preserving him from that misty egress of thine, o Death, which no one may escape by menaces, we make prayer a protection for him. 11. I give thee thy breaths, death at thy full age, long life and health. I drive away all the messengers of Yama, who roam about, sent by the son of Vivasvat. 12. We remove afar evil, Nirriti, Grâhi, and flesh-devouring Piśāchas, and hurl all wicked Rakshases, as
it were into darkness. 13. I seek thy life from the immortal, living, Agni Jâtavedas. I procure that thou mayest suffer no injury, that thou mayest also be immortal. May this be the fortunate result. 14. May heaven and earth in unison be auspicious and innocuous to thee. May the sun shine and the wind blow pleasantly to thy heart. May the celestial streaming waters drop down upon thee favourably. 15. May the plants be auspicious to thee. I have raised thee from the lower to the upper earth. There may both the sons of Aditi, the Sun and the Moon, preserve thee. 16. Whatever garment for clothing, or whatever girdle thou makest for thyself, we cause it to be agreeable to thy body; may it be soft to thy touch. 17. When, as a barber, thou shavest our hair and beard with a sharp and cleansing razor, while cleansing our face, do not rob us of our life. 18. Let the rice and barley be auspicious to thee, innocuous, undisturbing. These destroy consumption, and deliver from suffering. 19. Whatever thou eatest or drinkest, the grain derived from husbandry, or liquid, whatever is or is not to be eaten—all that food I render for thee free from poison. 20. We commit thee to both the Day and the Night: preserve him for me from the goblins who seek to devour him. 21. We allot to thee a hundred, ten thousand, years, two, three, four, ages (yugas). May Indra and Agni, may all the gods regard thee favourably, without anger. 22. We commit thee to autumn, winter, spring, summer. May the rains be pleasant to thee, in which the plants grow up. 23. Death rules over bipeds; death rules over quadrupeds. From that Death the ruler I rescue thee; do not fear. 24. Thou who art uninjured shalt not die; thou shalt not die; do not fear. They do not die there; they do not go to the nethermost darkness, (25) every thing lives there, cow, horse, man, beast, in the place where this prayer is used, the bulwark of life. May it preserve thee from curse from thy equals and friends. Be

1 The Moon is not in the Vedas generally reckoned among the Âdityas. See my "Contributions to a knowledge of Vedic Mythology," etc., pp. 75-77.
2 It would be difficult to say how great a duration is here denoted by this word; but it must be one of great length, if the long periods of years which are mentioned just before, may be taken as any indication.
undying, immortal, long-lived; let not thy breaths abandon thy body. 27. May the gods deliver thee from those hundred deaths, from those dangers which are surpassable, and from that Agni Vaiśvānara (fire of the funeral pile?). 28. Thou art the body of Agni, the deliverer, the slayer of Rakshases, and of rivals; and thou, the medicament named Pūtudru (Butea frondosa), art the chaser away of diseases.”