AUS DEM ALTEN INDIEN. By H. OLDENBERG. Berlin, 1910.

This little book adds another to the many valuable volumes published in Germany dealing at once in a popular and a scientific manner with questions of Oriental study. Their appearance testifies to the existence of a wider and more discriminating interest in matters Oriental than is to be found in England, an interest which renders it worth the while of so accomplished a scholar as Professor Oldenberg to cater for its needs.

Of the three essays here collected the first is a refutation of the thesis, put forward by the late Professor Pischel in his *Leben und Lehre des Buddha*, that *metta* in Buddhism corresponds to and plays the part of love in Christianity. The matter is in great measure one of terminology, but so far as there is a real difference in the views of the two scholars the opinion of Oldenberg certainly seems preferable. *Metta*, as he shows from the evidence of the canon, is not one of the most prominent of the qualities to which Buddhism attached importance, and the *metta* which is exhibited is the feeling of friendship to the whole of existing things, a state of calm affection, not the active exertion of good will. It is, indeed, a mental condition not far removed from the indifference to the universe which was the aim of the Vedāntin, and it betrays an unmistakable resemblance to its source, the Yoga of the Brahmin ascetic. It is not, of course, to be denied or doubted that the Buddhist texts know the frame of mind which is parallel to the love of the Christian, but it does seem certain that such love was not the Buddhist ideal end, and after all it would be idle to expect that this could be the case. There is no correspondence between the Buddhist conception of Nirvāṇa and the doctrine that God is love.

The second essay deals with the *Sutta Nipāta* as evidence for the thought of primitive Buddhism. Professor

Oldenberg¹ still holds that this collection is of very old date, and that part of it may approach nearly the time of the death of the Buddha himself, while he recognizes in it two passages referred to by Aśoka. It is hardly probable that this view is correct: at least the evidence for it is of remarkable paucity and far from being cogent. But at any rate the text is of great interest and of some beauty, though it may be doubted whether anything in the Suttas equals in depth of thought and felicity of expression the stanzas scattered through the Upaniṣads, which form the model for the verses of the *Sutta Nipāta*. But in Professor Oldenberg they find a sympathetic interpreter and a most skilled translator, and as a brief exposition of the Buddhist life in the early centuries before the Christian era it would be difficult to praise too highly this brief essay.

Not the least interesting of the essays is the last, a sketch of historical literature in India. It is true that the times have changed since it could be said that there was no history in India, but despite a considerable amount of historical information it is clearer than ever that India has never possessed an historian. The best part of the *Rājataranginī* is no more than a mere chronicle, relieved from dreariness only by the not inconsiderable poetic skill of the author, and raised above the rank of the European mediaeval chronicles mainly by the noble language which serves as the medium of expression. It is perhaps impossible even with absolute accuracy to ascertain the causes of the phenomenon, but Professor Oldenberg rightly emphasizes the necessity of a great national life for the writing of great history. India has never been a nation, and India has never had an historian of the first rank.

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¹ pp. 26, 69, where he attributes the oldest form of the Buddhist texts to about 400 B.C.