



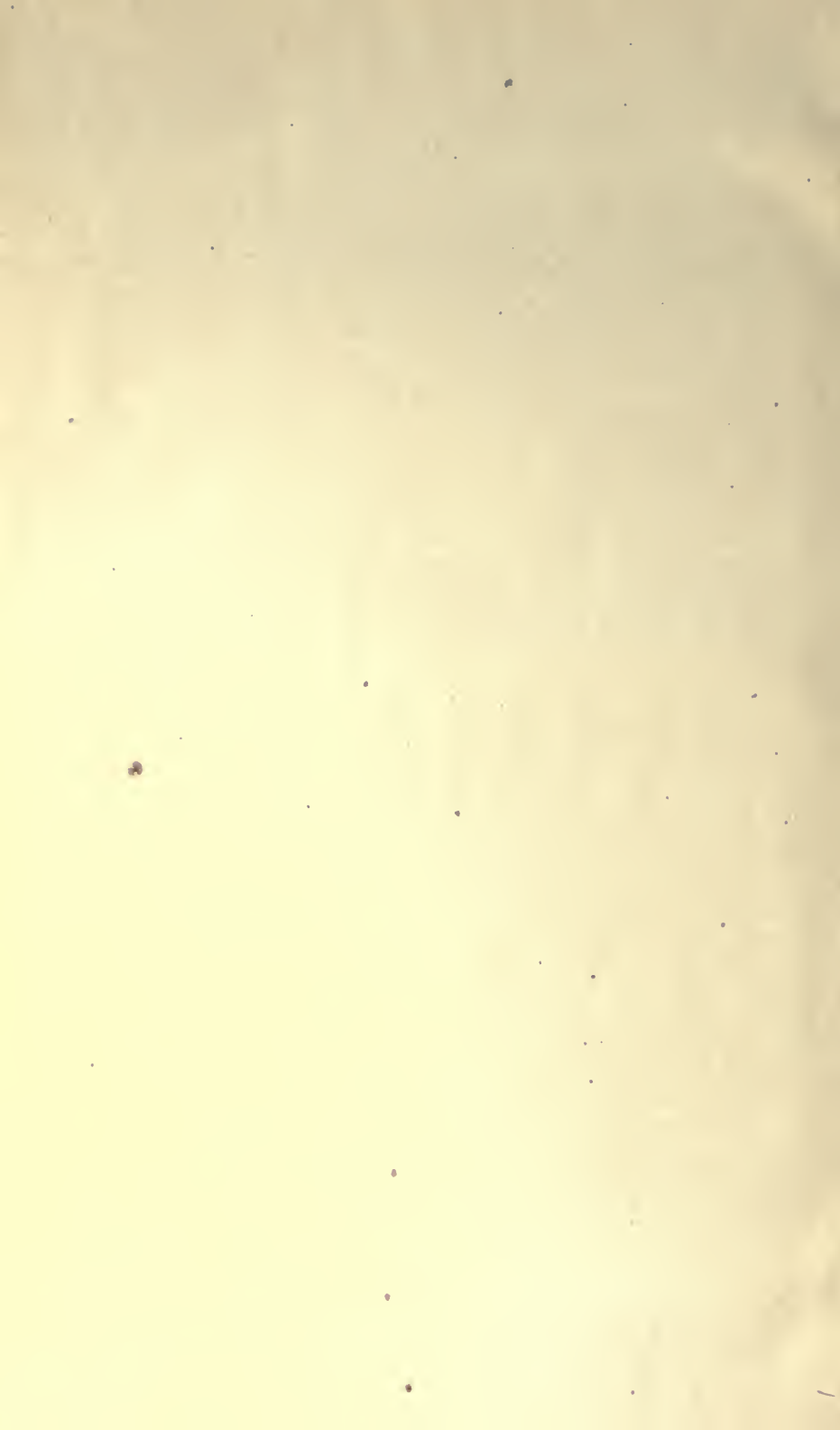






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G E N T I L I S M:

RELIGION

PREVIOUS TO

CHRISTIANITY.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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THE great question between the friends of revealed religion and its opponents has always been, more or less, a question of origin. - For it is the special character of our Holy Scriptures that every thing in them is precise, and asserted in clear terms. In the boldest flights of poetry our inspired prophets never contradict for an instant the positive statements of our sacred annalists and historians. In this the authors of the Bible differ essentially from all other ancient writers on cosmogony and the origin of mankind. Hence, in conformity with their narrative, man cannot be supposed to have appeared on earth millions of years ago; and thus is found an occasion of attack.

The chronology of Holy Writ is, it is true, to a certain degree, elastic. The Church has never adopted any system on the subject; and her children are free to place the first appearance of man in creation, at any period they choose consistent with any one of the various authorized versions of Scripture; and if there is any question fairly raised between reverent and orthodox exegetists on the sacred text, any one is at liberty to adopt the system which refers to a higher antiquity the moment of inception in the history of man. It is, moreover, understood by all that what precedes this solemn moment remains in Holy Writ without real chronology, and, consistently with orthodoxy, any length of time can be assigned to the formation of the globe itself and to the successive creative acts related in the first twenty-five verses of the first chapter of Genesis.

But it is clear that the period which has elapsed since the appearance of man cannot be of an indefinite duration. Conse-

quently the opponents of revelation have always tried to give him an antiquity which cannot be reconciled with the statements of the Bible. Already in the time of Origen—the third century of our era—Celsus “produced from history, other than that of the divine record, those passages which bear upon the claims to great antiquity put forth by many nations, as the Athenians, and Egyptians, and Arcadians, and Phrygians, who assert that certain individuals have existed among them who sprang from the earth, and who adduce proofs of these assertions; and he said that: ‘The Jews, leading a grovelling life in some corner of Palestine, and being a wholly uneducated people, not having heard that these matters had been committed to verse long before by Hesiod and innumerable other inspired men, wove together some most incredible and insipid stories, etc.’” (*Adversus Celsum, Lib. IV., cap. xxxvi.*) Edition of Ante-Nicene Fathers.

From the time of Celsus down to our own, therefore, this has been a standing objection against the revealed Word of God. And all know the extraordinary efforts made last century to prove by the records of India, Egypt, Greece, and many other ancient nations, that man must claim an antiquity of hundreds of thousands of years. But all those labors of erudition and criticism have been reduced to naught, in our days, by the almost precise dates assigned by modern critics to the real origin of all nations. There are only a few Egyptologists who dare yet to believe in some of those fabulous stories.\* The fact is,

\* Among recent writers on the subject, Sir John Lubbock, in his “Pre-historic Times,” is one of the most notorious. In his disappointing chapter on the “antiquity of man”—disappointing, because treating chiefly of the “antiquity of the globe” according to geologists—he states several facts to which he gives a meaning of his own, when many others could as well be suggested. The chief one regards the excavations made near the base of the huge statue of Ramceses II., at Memphis. It seems that Mr. Hornér found a “piece of pottery” at the depth of thirty-nine feet, and Sir John Lubbock forthwith concludes that man existed in

that neither in the numerous most ancient records of Hindostan, nor on the monuments of Egypt, nor anywhere else, can there be found any positive proof of such extraordinary antiquity, for the simple reason that all Southern and Eastern nations paid no regard whatever to chronology; and nothing, either in their writings or on their monuments, can indicate positively the succession of time. All that modern antiquarians have to do is to establish a *relative* antiquity among them, without being able to assign a starting-point. Thus the wise among modern scientists have altogether abandoned the idea of looking into those records for what cannot be found there. The truth is, as we have already observed: The Bible is the only book of real antiquity which is precise, and deals in positive assertions. And this circumstance, whilst it affords, in fact, a great presumption in favor of its truth, supplies enemies with a strong motive for assailing it.

The proceedings, therefore, of those who wish to distinguish themselves by endeavoring to place revelation in antagonism to science, have taken an altogether new direction. They have, we may say, abandoned history and the study of the oldest existing monuments, which are, in fact, in open opposition to their theories, and they think they will find in natural science the antagonism they are in search of. Hence the celebrated theory of "evolution." They imagine they can prove, not only for other organized beings—which might be granted them—but even for man, what seems to be the fact for inorganic matter, chiefly for the frame-work of our globe: a gradual develop-

Egypt 13,000 years ago. But suppose that, before erecting such an immense colossus, the Egyptians dug down forty feet, to find a sure foundation below the alluvium—builders of astronomical observatories go some times as deep to secure their telescopes against exterior motion—in such case can we not suggest that some unlucky workman may have let fall there a "piece of pottery," the innocent cause of so many speculations? Should this suggestion not be admissible in the present case, many others can be offered.

ment; in this case an evolution from aerial vapor to the solid and diversified crust of our dwelling. But we are sure they cannot do so for man.

First, Science is not yet on their side altogether, with respect to the origin and essential nature of species; and the number of men learned in natural history who have not been convinced by all the facts accumulated by their chief leader, Mr. Darwin, is yet a stumbling-block to the universal acceptance of the system. We have no fear that further discoveries will demonstrate the soundness of their views. We think, on the contrary, that as Lamark, who first broached the theory on a large scale, remained finally without almost any followers, so likewise those who now have revived his enterprise, will see behind them a scanty number of fervent disciples, when the ardor always natural to a new system shall have cooled.

We must, however, leave the discussion of the subject to special writers, who have made these studies the object of their life. Some have already appeared worthy of respect. Others will follow, to bring on the usual triumph of truth.

Meanwhile, in our opinion, the historical treatment of the subject ought not to be discarded. It ought, on the contrary, to be more insisted upon than ever; for human history cannot contradict natural science, and what it obliges us to accept, has to be accepted. It is true, the gentlemen who give to man a really fabulous antiquity altogether unacceptable to Christians, imagine they can place themselves in a position of safety with respect to the direct testimony of history, by the assertion that man could not have annals nor monuments when he was yet unconscious. For, in their opinion, the natural passage by evolution of the ancestors of man from the original "protoplasm" to the state of a well-developed "ape," must have required millions of years of complete unconsciousness; and how many ages more must have been necessary for a "Simian anthropoid" to acquire the art of sharpening flint into an arrow, and a stick

of hard wood into a spear, not to mention the farther greater progress supposed by the invention of a covering of leaves for their nudity? During all this time, of course, the ancestors of man were absolutely "unconscious." And, finally, the commencement of "records," rude at first and of the simplest kind—first proof of real "consciousness"—supposes another long series of years. This we find substantially in an article of the *North American Review*, for October, 1873. The conclusion is that historical times, the only ones which we can discuss, have been preceded by long, long ages which give altogether the lie to the Bible of Jews and Christians.

This, of course, supposes that the whole system of evolution has been proved without fear of contradiction. This will scarcely be maintained by even the most fervent "scientists." And, what is more, we will venture to assert that such a demonstration never will be forthcoming. But we will not insist on this. Our purport is very different—we say: We assert, that if things had taken place as the evolutionists assure us they have, the first records of mankind would be those of rude people just emerging from barbarism. In point of art and culture, in point of ideas and language, chiefly in point of religion, we should find in their social state the most rude elements of a "childish" and "growing" soul; we should be able to trace the steps by which, from the first notions of a coarse religious system, they would have arrived at the point of *inventing God and all His attributes*. This would have been in the sense of evolutionists a mere subjective theory perfectly independent of any objective Divine Essence, and having nothing in common with the certain belief that the reason of man can know God and demonstrate to himself His existence. They assert it has been so, and that historical man began everywhere by being a barbarian. Here we join issue with them, and one of the great purports of this volume will be, to establish solidly the fact, that man appeared first in a state of civilization, possessed of noble ideas

as to his own origin, the Creator, One Supreme God, ruling the universe, etc. We intend to prove historically that he invented none of the great religious and moral truths by the process mentioned above; but that these came to him from heaven. We will endeavor to show the first men everywhere monotheists, generally pure in their morals, dignified in their bearing, and cultivated in their intellect. Should this be well and firmly established, the whole monstrous system of man's evolution falls to the ground. Still more will this be the case if it be proved, besides, that the supposed "continuous progress," which is the main-stay of their theory, is a dream, a non-entity; that on the contrary man everywhere progressed in the wrong direction, going from monotheism to pantheism, from this to idolatry, and from this last to "individualism" in religion; that this seems to be the law which has governed mankind until the Redeemer happened to bring back man to truth, and to found at last a true and strict religious society, not confined to one nation like Judaism, but universal.

Progress is a fine and catching word, but its greatest admirers are themselves bound to confess that, historically, it has been distinguished by many an overthrow; the edifice in process of construction has often crumbled into ruins, and the savage Goth has spurned with his foot the graciously-moulded Grecian statue, the last and perfect expression of art. No sensible man can admit a "continuous progress" in history. Yet is it of the nature of evolution to be "continuous," since history cannot contradict natural science. If evolution is once interrupted, it ceases entirely to be, and must start afresh. But we intend to go much farther than this, and to prove our previous assertion: that nations, after having reached a certain point, always "progress backward," and lose gradually the steps in advance they had made. This at least seems to be the historical law for the times anterior to Christianity.

As we treat chiefly the religious question, this will appear



very distinctly, we hope, in these pages, and independently of the antagonism sensible men always feel for system-mongers. The matter we treat of has a peculiar interest of its own, which of itself is calculated to attract the serious attention of the reader.

There is an obvious want even in the actual forward state of historical studies of a simple, easily understood, concrete view of the origin of the false religions which have afflicted mankind. Many notions on the subject are afloat, but they are vague, shifting, and unsatisfactory. A thorough investigation of this question, it is true, would require immense developments; and we intend to devote to it only a few pages. But at least a comprehensive compendium will not be worthless, if it is clear and firmly grounded.

Gentilism, in fact, has remained until our days in a state of hopeless confusion; and the author of "Gentile and Jew" has not in the least rendered the subject clearer. We have not the presumption to lay claim to more erudition than is contained in the above-mentioned work, nor even to as much. But we complain that the reader rises from its perusal not one whit more enlightened on the subject of the origin and growth of the whole delusion than when he commenced it. Now we think that something at least can be said on a subject at once so instructive and so interesting. And it is time to say it. For this, we will call to our help what we know of antiquity; and by its aid alone endeavor to explain the enigma of the origin of error. On our way we may investigate some celebrated myths on which we think a flood of light has been thrown by late investigations. The greater number of them, however, are quite without any such illumination, and thus we leave them in their obscurity.

The valuable discoveries lately made in the antiquities of India, Bactriana, Egypt, and Greece, render possible such a short work as we undertake. It would have been little more than

theoretical some fifty years ago. By these discoveries the range of Gentilism has been greatly extended. Formerly, scarcely anything was understood by the word but what came to us from Greece and Rome. Now the whole Gentile world, chiefly the central part of it, Hindostan and Egypt, has to be included; and as in this study each part helps the whole, the actual knowledge we have of India and Central Asia throws a flood of light on the mythology of Egypt and Greece. Many things, in fact, which could not be known to the Greeks of the age of Pericles, which were perfectly unknown to the Romans, which were scarcely and dimly seen fifty years ago, are now clear and palpable; and the sure derivation of truth and error from the east and north towards the west and the south must be now considered as a fact above possible contradiction.

When the antiquities of Europe alone were known, or, rather, when people thought they knew them, many important points remained almost completely in the dark. One of these among others deserves, so early as this, a rapid mention. The starting-point of humanity from light and culture, and not from darkness and savagery, could scarcely be explained satisfactorily, because of the long ages during which our European ancestors had been plunged in comparative barbarism, or, at least, in what was thought to be such. The clear-speaking sacred books of India have removed in great part the difficulty, and the result has been a reflected light on the west, enabling us to appreciate much better the "heroic ages" of Hellas. Even the numerous tribes of barbarians of the north, who destroyed the Roman power, could not have been so rude in their beginnings, as when they swarmed into Europe; for their languages, as well as many traditions preserved among them, show manifestly that they came originally from a centre of light, and that the condition in which they were when they invaded Gaul, Italy, and Greece was not their primitive state, but had been gradually produced by that historical law, to which we have alluded, by which na-

tions left to themselves naturally degenerate and fall into gross superstition and degraded customs.

Hence, we hope to be able to give a completely different turn to the myth of Prometheus, who was supposed to have invented, to the profit of mankind, the art of speech—nay, reason and memory, as well as the use of fire, and of more comfortable dwellings than caves and holes underneath the ground. *Æschylus*, we shall see, had no real conception of the great truths concealed under the noble allegory which he produced so splendidly on the Grecian stage; and that poet was probably the cause of the common error of many subsequent authors, who represented man as at first feeding on acorns and addicted to all the instincts of the brute. We never find such myths in the oldest poems or compositions of the Far Orient. There, on the contrary, it is always the reign of the gods on earth, the happy life of *Rishis*, of patriarchs, of men nourished intellectually by the sublime effusions of the noblest *upanishads*, and, physically, by the luscious and abundant fruits of a teeming and friendly earth. We will try to find out which of the two, the East or the West, is more likely to have spoken the truth. This is the problem in its simplicity.

Those who will condescend to read this work ought not, however, to expect a complete demonstration as strict as that of a mathematical theorem. Many reasons confined us within narrow limits; and historical deductions are not susceptible of the dogmatism leading to the absolute and final Q. E. D. We hope, however, to establish that the balance of probability is found overwhelmingly on the side herein advocated; and that the contrary position may be considered as decidedly untenable. It will be for Christians merely a confirmation of what revealed truth says with much more authority and innate power.

A last remark of consequence, in conclusion, is that the subject, most important and interesting in itself, possesses besides this advantage, that it is the natural prelude to considerations

of a far higher import. In studying the religious aspect of the world, during several thousand years of Gentilism, we are necessarily attracted by the grand spectacle offered to our view when, at the end, the decomposition of all previous religious principles took place, to make room for another pouring out of divine effulgence, to last, this time, forever; when the loss of those truths first communicated by heaven to mankind was amply compensated by a far higher and nobler revelation; and when, at the very moment of almost complete darkness, light broke out afresh more brilliantly than ever, not to be obscured any more, because the torch was intrusted to the hands of an infallible guide.

The bright form of the Catholic Church arises on a sudden in the midst of universal darkness; and the infinite boon conferred on man by the Divine Redeemer is appreciated with a tenfold delight, because it comes unexpectedly after so many ages of doubt and error. Gentilism becomes, thus, the natural introduction to the study of the new, complete, final revelation which followed it. Religion, invested henceforth with the permanent characters of universality, perpetuity, and holiness, takes from the start the guidance of the world, never to lose hold of the reins, in spite of all obstacles and of millions of enemies.

Where is the pen that can adequately describe that sublime struggle, which has now lasted more than eighteen centuries? What power of description is equal to such a theme? Where is that master of language who shall narrate in fit terms the gradual spread of heavenly truth to the utmost bounds of the earth—embracing all nations, all races, all tribes—and making one family of mankind; victories without number over a powerful and hostile world; and Christian holiness subduing the passions of men, and establishing on earth the peaceful reign of virtue?

The subject is so vast and of so exalted a nature, as to inspire with fear the heart of any one who should make the bold at-

tempt. Be ours the more modest task of describing the times which preceded Christianity. There was no Church then ; at least, no universal Church claiming the love and homage of all mankind ; it was only the conflict of unorganized truth with all the passions of man and all the fury of hell. The result was unavoidable : Truth could not stand ; Error and Vice were destined to conquer. Not so now, thank God ! The World has now the Church to contend against, and the Church is stronger than the World.



G E N T I L I S M :  
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# GENTILISM.

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## CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE EARTH, ITS POSITION AND CONFIGURATION AS PROOFS OF DESIGN (I)—ON THE UNIFORMITY OF NATIONS IN PRIMITIVE TIMES (II)—ON THE OBSTACLES THEY MET TO THE PRESERVATION OF THEIR TRADITIONS (III).

*Domini est Terra et plenitudo ejus.—Ps. xxiii.*

WHAT can be the object of our globe as it is fashioned? How is it adapted to human society? Was it made originally for one universal race, having but one religion—or the reverse? How did the actual obstacles to the primitive plan originate? What must have been, therefore, the first state of society and religion on its surface? And, finally, how does revelation agree with reason and history on the subject? These are the momentous questions we propose to ourselves on the very threshold of our investigations. We do not intend to treat them *ex professo* in this first chapter. But in it we shall confine ourselves to throwing out in broad outline, by way of assertion, the several propositions which the remainder of the work will be devoted to establishing. The rest of the work will afterwards fill up and corroborate what we have sketched in advance, and make it, we hope, clear and evident.

Our chief object is to show that man really came from heaven, and did not receive his being from the development of an inferior species. And a few preparatory observations will not be misplaced on the relations which God established originally between Himself and the inhabitants of our globe, after the fall,

to prepare them for the fulness of redemption and the bonds of a higher uniformity.

The configuration of the globe, the unity of the human race, the same language for all, the same primitive traditions given to all, would seem to indicate that the intention of Providence was to keep them united, and chiefly under the control of the same worship. This was to be the form of universality in the patriarchal period, or rather until the Saviour should appear and call all mankind to Himself—*cum exaltatus fuero, omnia traham ad meipsum.*

This plan of God was frustrated at the dispersion of nations. Henceforth, we say, the ocean, the large rivers, the chains of high mountains, and the deserts spread here and there over the globe, became obstacles to intercourse, owing to the social breaking up which then took place. And thus, the configuration of the globe, instead of facilitating universal communication among men, was turned into a hindrance, or rather into an almost insurmountable barrier. The primitive language was replaced by a large number of idioms, many of which had scarcely any roots in common. To the unity of origin and of species succeeded the diversity of races, a source of untold division. Finally, the primitive traditions were soon obscured, and were, at length, disfigured by the grotesque mythologies and absurd philosophies which then became prevalent to such an extent, that only the faintest traces of them could be detected in the mass of gross inventions which had buried them out of sight, and those only here and there. Thus, what we may call Patriarchal Catholicity, disappeared; chiefly owing to a complete want of a central authority, for direction and counsel even, which the existence of the Synagogue among the Jews was not intended to furnish. Such are our preliminary assertions.

But we must go a little more into detail before we advance beyond our preparatory observations.

## I.

And first, What does our globe itself tell us of its own conformation, and how does the revealed Word of God explain its object ?

“ There are men of our generation,” says a sagacious writer in the *Dublin Review* (July, 1873, page 67), “ for whom this world is only one of innumerable planets, careering through space without any particular object ; while its inhabitants are, more or less, intelligent animals, who know neither whence they come nor whither they are going.”

In spite of all the discoveries in modern science, it may be said, that the number of such men as these increases every day ; and we are fast going back to the period anterior to Christianity, when the most important problems of human destiny, often agitated by philosophers, had not yet reached the first rational solution. Our globe is now much better known physically ; yet the moral ignorance of some learned men is as great as ever, with respect both to man himself and to his dwelling religiously considered. It is true, this is considered by them as out of the pale of science, but is it so really ?

Revelation, we assert, has long ago solved even the physical problem most satisfactorily to human reason, as well as to human conscience, and given us facts which true science has nothing to do but to register. But its light is precisely the guide which many refuse to admit. Unable to quench it, they remove it from the sphere of their vision ; and thus, groping in the dark, they pretend that the utter obscurity of the divine splendor is the most sure means of finding their lost way. We assert that the revealed word of God was not certainly given to teach us science ; but that not a single phrase of it, rightly understood, can be opposed to true science, and that there is much in it which has anticipated science.

Many ardent investigators of human knowledge in our days imagine that, because revealed truth does not satisfy an idle curiosity; and contents itself chiefly with giving us the information required for the fulfilment of our eternal destiny, no ray of light is thrown by it on external creation; and that, whatever it says of the origin of our dwelling, of its object in the mind of God, and of the ways of Providence in its very history, is an absurd legend, worthy only of affording amusement to children in the nursery.

Yet, as we shall presently see, the solution it gives to the physical problem even of this earth, is the only one that can satisfy rational beings; and any one who does away with it, or refuses to take an account of it, has nothing to fall upon but crude conjectures ending in materialism or scepticism. Hence all the absurd cosmogonies which have ever been imagined, from the time of the first Hindoos or Greeks to our own. At a period of time before any other writings now extant, Holy Scripture gave to man the noblest and justest idea of the immensity of creation, and of the position of the earth in the physical heavens; and modern astronomers cannot expect, by all their labor and discoveries, to do more in noticing the general aspect of the whole exterior creation than comment on the sublime imagery of Job, who wrote in the time of Moses, if not before.

For whatever may have been the individual thoughts of the true prophets of God, whatever sense they may have personally attached to the words they uttered, the words themselves had a deep meaning, intended surely by the Divine Revealer to illumine the future discoverers of His laws, and show them that whatever they might discover He had created. Happy they, should they pay attention to it! Hence when Moses represented the Almighty creating light by His great *fat*, before he had launched into space the bright orb of the sun, he may have continued to imagine that it was the sun itself which emit-

ted the effulgent rays of light; but He had used an expression on which men might long afterwards ponder, and which God alone could at the time utter; He had asserted the creation, at the beginning, of the imponderable ether from which light, and heat, and electricity must come.

Of the same nature are the astounding questions proposed by the Almighty to Job, (Ch. xxxviii., 19, 24): "Where is the place where light dwelleth, where is that of darkness? . . . . By what way is light spread, and heat distributed upon the earth?" Should the prophet of the land of Hus have dared to open his lips when God spoke, he might have found the answer easy, and replied: "Light dwelleth in the sun and stars, and darkness wherever they do not shine. Light is spread by that dazzling globe, and from its fiery furnace heat is distributed upon the earth." But God would have repeated what He told him at the beginning of this chapter (v. 2): "Who is this man that wrappeth up sentences in *unskilful* words?" and Job, no doubt, did not make the reply previously supposed, as he knew his own ignorance in the presence of Eternal Truth; and he acknowledged humbly that what appeared to him easy of answer was in fact unknown to him, since God said so; and that in spite of the testimony of his eyes, light and heat might come from another source than the sun and stars.

After light itself, the innumerable bodies destined to set it in motion through space, are described in Holy Scripture with such a splendor of expression that never, either before or after, has the ear of man heard such glowing and eloquent words on so august a subject. Compare with it the low and ridiculous ideas all the Greek physical philosophers, with the exception, perhaps, of Pythagoras, had of the visible heavens; remember that one of the boldest among them thought he would astonish his hearers by asserting that the sun was as large as Peloponnesus, and read Job afterwards. The only license we shall allow ourselves, will be to place in a new juxtaposition the

various verses of the sublime 38th Chapter, which relate to the great subject under consideration. "Who can declare the order of the heavens, and who can make the harmony of heaven sleep? (by interrupting it)." "Tell me, if thou knowest all things: where does light dwell, and where is the place of darkness? That thou may'st bring everything to its own bounds, and understand the paths of the dwelling thereof." How could the immensity of creation be better expressed than in making it co-extensive with light itself?

Job had already said of God (Ch. ix., v. 8): "He alone spreadeth out the heavens, and walketh upon the waves of the sea." "He made Arcturus, and Orion, and the Hyades, and the constellations of the far south"—invisible to us and to Job. "He doeth things great, and incomprehensible, and wonderful, of which there is no number." But God with a far greater majesty, exclaims (Ch. xxxviii., v. 31): "Shalt thou be able to join together those shining stars, the Pleiades?"—by reducing to naught the space between them—"and canst thou stop the turning about of Arcturus?" "Where wast thou when the stars praised Me on the morning of creation, and all the sons of God sang for joy?" "Didst thou even since thy birth, command the morning, and show the dawning of the day its place?" "Canst thou bring forth the day star in its time, and make the evening star to rise upon the children of the earth?" "Dost thou know the order of heaven, and canst thou set down the reason thereof on the earth?"

In vain, we think, would all the literature of Rome and Greece, of the Far Orient and mysterious Egypt, be searched for a single phrase containing at the same time as much truth and as much poetry.

Alexander von Humboldt was struck by it; and in his *Cosmos*, (vol. 2, p. 412, Bohn's edit.) he says (The underlines are ours): "It is a characteristic of the poetry of the Hebrews, that as a reflex of monotheism, it always embraces the universe in its

unity, *comprising both terrestrial life and the luminous realms of space.* The Hebrew poet does not depict nature as a self-dependent object, glorious in its individual beauty, but always as in relation and subjection to a higher spiritual power. Nature is to him a work of creation and order, the living expression of the omnipresence of the Divinity in the visible world. Hence, from the very nature of Hebrew lyrical poetry it is grand and solemn. . . . . Devoted to the pure contemplation of the Deity, it remains clear and simple in the midst of the most figurative forms of expression, delighting in comparisons which recur with almost rythmical regularity."

Commenting, page 413, on the Psalm 104, which he quotes at length, Humboldt remarks: "We are astonished to find in a lyrical poem of such a limited compass, the whole universe—the heavens and the earth—sketched with a few bold touches." . . . . .

"Similar views of the cosmos occur repeatedly in the Psalms, and more fully perhaps in the 37th (38th?) Chap. of the Book of Job. The meteorological processes which take place in the atmosphere, the formation and solution of vapor, the play of its colors, the generation of hail, and the voice of the rolling thunder are described with individualizing accuracy; and many questions are propounded which we, in the present state of our physical knowledge, may, indeed, be able to express under more scientific definitions, but scarcely to answer satisfactorily."

The "more scientific definitions" may pass for what they are worth; a slightly greater knowledge often obliges our "scientists" to change altogether their "definitions;" but the fact deserves to be recorded here: Humboldt himself acknowledges that the questions propounded in the 38th Chapter of Job, "can scarcely be answered satisfactorily," with all our modern knowledge.

Yet, as we have before observed, the more science advances, the more the accuracy, even of expression of these scientific

hintings of Holy Scripture, shows that, often at least, the words themselves could not come but from the lips of God.

The same must be asserted of what the Book of Job says of our globe, which is the proper subject of this chapter, and of which we must now begin to treat.

Who can read without astonishment and admiration the 7th verse of Chap. xxvi: "He"—God—"stretcheth the north"—the northern constellations—"over the empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." There we have the position of our globe in the physical heavens, accurately described in the oldest book that remains to us of all those ever written by man, unless, as some pretend, the first Vedas are more ancient.

Here, as usual, according to Humboldt, "Hebrew poetry embraces the universe in its unity, *comprising both terrestrial life and the luminous realms of space.*" To understand the phrase, the reader must remember that he stands, as Job stood, on some point of the northern hemisphere; and, looking at night on the starry firmament, he sees "the North"—the boreal constellations—"stretched over the empty space," and he knows, as Job knew already, since God had revealed it to him, that "the earth is hung upon nothing."

Compare with this, we repeat, what all the Greek philosophers have ever said of the cosmos. And all the Greek philosophers, without exception, flourished long after the author of the Book of Job.\*

Thus the oft-repeated objection disappears, that Science alone discovers the greatness of the physical world, and knows

\* We speak of philosophers and physicists, not of the Latin and Greek poets, who have preserved in their verse some precious fragments of the primitive revelation. Our readers will remember here the line of Ovid (Lib. 1, Metam.),

*"Nec circumfuso pendebat in aere tellus  
Ponderibus librata suis."*

It looks almost as a literal translation of the passage of Job just quoted.



how to enlarge the ideas of man. The Author alone of that immensity knows perfectly His secrets, and He had condescended to reveal something of it to man more than thirty centuries ago—long before Science, as it is called, was born. Yet puny man imagines that, because he sees a little more than his immediate ancestors, he has no thanks to give to the Creator of all things. Nay, he claims to be himself almost the very *demiurgos*, since, in his opinion, a discoverer can be called an inventor, nay, a creator.

The strong light which the 7th verse of Chapter xxvi. throws so suddenly on the isolation of our globe in space, is curiously singled out and rendered more vivid by the apparent metaphoric obscurity of the Chapter xxxviii., as a bright ray becomes more dazzling in the black emptiness of the *camera obscura*. “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me if thou hast understanding? Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? *Upon what are its bases grounded?* Or who laid the corner-stone thereof?” Archbishop Kenrick, whose translation we adopt, remarks on the words we have underlined, that “the position of the earth in space, unsupported, is clearly intimated.” The whole passage is metaphoric, and under material images depicts the mighty operations of the great creative mind. He alone knows the exact measure of our globe which he has made, and he has stretched over its surface the curved lines which give it its form. By requiring of Job to tell “upon what its bases are grounded,” He wanted him evidently to answer, “Upon nothing.” And the expression of the Septuagint version deserves to be here mentioned as the word translated in the *Vulgate* by “bases” is in Greek “*κρίκοι*,” namely, rings or circles. Nothing is more remarkable than this expression, since it is precisely the spherical shape of the earth, the whole globular circumference pressing upon the attracting centre—which can explain how it

can "hang upon nothing." Physicists will easily understand that even if our globe was the only one created, and if it was not attracted by other spheres, but acted upon only by its own forces, the earth would for ever stand immovable in space, yet it would be and remain spherical through gravitation, and owing to the force of cohesion which that very form supposes and creates. Why modern interpreters have translated the Hebrew word here by "bases," when the Septuagint gave it the meaning of "circles" or "rings," we cannot say. But the Jewish translators, who wrote that version three hundred years before Christ, thought themselves right in their interpretation. And the Church has, to a certain degree, consecrated this particular version of the Bible, which all the Greek Fathers have followed.

We hope that our readers have drawn from what precedes the conclusion, that God has not left altogether to "Science" the task of instructing us on the immensity of creation, on the mysterious nature of light, on the place and form of our dwelling—the small globe where we accomplish our mortal destinies. From what precedes we can also conclude that the Creator takes a particular care of this insignificant "spheroid," without, however, neglecting the rest of His creation. Whatever He may have done for the beings who, perhaps, inhabit other planets has little or nothing to do with our eternal welfare, and consequently of this His revelation has not spoken. But how rich and abundant is the divine communication made to us of all the details which may interest us with regard to the precise little spot where we "move and have our being!" Let us see: First, we can say but a word of that atmosphere where the "waters which are above the firmament," as Moses describes it, follow constantly the marvellous guidance of laws until now almost perfectly unknown. We will merely repeat the few words of Job: "Hast thou entered into the storehouses of the snow, or hast thou beheld the treasures of the hail?" . . . .

“Who gave a course to violent showers, or a way for noisy thunder; that it should rain on the earth, without man, in the wilderness, where no mortal dwelleth; that it should fill the desert and desolate land, and should bring forth green grass? Who is the father of rain? Or who begat the drops of dew? Out of whose womb came the ice? And the frost from heaven who hath gendered it? The waters are hardened like a stone, and the surface of the deep is congealed” (Job, Ch. xxxviii).

This is the passage, with others of similar import, which filled with admiration Humboldt himself; who confessed that many of these questions “can scarcely be answered” in the actual state of our knowledge. Let us hope that the efforts now made on this Continent of North America by the “Signal Bureau,” will ultimately render less problematical the various theories invented until our time by so many explorers and meteorologists, to explain the innumerable processes of atmospheric variations.

But two-thirds of our globe are covered with “the waters that are under heaven,” and which were from the beginning, “gathered together into one place;” and this “gathering together of the waters God called the seas.” (Gen., Ch. 1.) This grand feature of our dwelling calls for a particular attention.

Whatever may have been the various theories by which cosmologists have tried to explain the formation of our globe, and the first functions of the immense atmosphere which from the beginning enveloped it, the general opinion of the greatest philosophers, beginning with Thales, has been conformable to the inspired text of the Christian Scriptures. The earth, after its first condensation, is supposed by nearly all the great thinkers to have been surrounded by a vast envelope of aqueous vapors, a part of which was ultimately condensed to form our ocean and the rivers it receives, the other part remaining suspended in the air and undistinguishable from it. This primitive process of “the separation of the waters” must have been one of the

grandest phenomena accompanying the birth of our globe. The Book of Genesis devotes two or three lines to it, with the simplicity of an ordinary chronicle. And this very way of treating such a stupendous subject is to every thinking man a sufficient proof that God himself dictated the narrative. What was, for His power, the pouring down of the liquid sea from the ocean of the air? Exactly what is for man the cooling of a few drops of water into a glass receiver from the heated coils of a cubic foot alambic. A simple word or two expresses sufficiently the wonderful fact.

But to please all minds, the splendor of inspired poetry was to be thrown over the same creative act; and, in his terrible affliction, the prophet of the land of Hus was to hear from the lips of God, and to preserve for all time to come the following words:

(Chap. xxxviii., v. 8, and foll.): "Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as issuing out of the womb?"—namely, from the atmosphere—"When I made a cloud the garment thereof, and wrapped it in a mist as in swaddling bands? I set my bounds around it, and made it bars and doors; and I said: Hitherto thou shalt come, and thou shalt go no further; and here thou shalt break thy swelling waves."

The ocean here is individualized. It is a new-born infant. It issues forth from the womb of the all-surrounding atmosphere. It breaks forth having a cloud for its garment, and a mist instead of swaddling bands. Could the physical process be better expressed, and a more gracious image represent more truthfully the passage of invisible vapor to liquid through the intervening state of cloud or mist? Often human poets have expressed physical truths under graceful imagery. But how often have they not failed either in the metaphorical expression or in the exact statement of the truth? Here both were admirably rendered, many ages before Lavoisier, by the invention of his gas-receiving tub, was the first to render the process visible

to the eye of man; for it is here the same phenomenon on a scale commensurate with the globe.

After all this magnificence of language, a yet greater height of sublimity is reached by the last words, which soar to the utmost height possible to human language: "I set My bounds around it, and made it bars and doors; and I said: Hitherto thou shalt come, and thou shalt go no further, and here thou shalt break thy swelling waves."

And it is books containing such descriptions as these that some men of the last and the present age have thought they could make the butt of their ridicule, and speak of them with contempt as beneath the dignity of "Science."

We could indefinitely enlarge on this theme, and show how correctly Holy Scripture speaks not only of the great features of the earth, but likewise of the beings which fill the air, the sea and the land. Humboldt calls it an "individualizing accuracy." Compare its language in the description of the horse, the crocodile, etc., with that of the great naturalists of past ages, of Pliny the Elder, for instance, and the most renowned philosophers of Greece, not excepting Aristotle, and men may see on what side is true Science. We cannot, however, dispatch this branch of our subject without insisting on a particular reflexion of a general character. The whole hubbub which is now raised, not only among "Scientists," but among almost all classes of readers—since "Science" is now popularized—is reduced in our days, to a great extent at least, to the theory of "evolution" as explanatory of the existence of all material substances, of the mind itself and of its most intricate operations. We know what consequences are drawn from the theory by some "leaders of thought" in our age, to explain the formation of every species of beings, from an original "protoplasm," by the action of laws independent, in their opinion, of any creative act. There is undoubtedly some truth in the theory of "evolution." But as the belief in the essential dis-

tion of species has not yet been overthrown by all the arguments and facts adduced by the supporters of the system, since many learned naturalists not only are not convinced, but appear more persuaded than ever of the solidity of the doctrine opposed to the modern theories; it is possible that the only fragment of truth, after all, that the "new science" can rely upon, consists in the fact that the production of material beings has begun by the simplest forms, and proceeded gradually to more complex organizations; until the highest and noblest work of nature appeared in our humanity. And it is remarkable that the strongest proof, after all, that this is true as to the succession of material beings is contained in the first chapter of the first book of the Bible. For so it is. How could Moses begin his narrative by speaking first of the creation of mere inorganic elements: earth, light, ether, called by him firmament, and water either in the form of vapor suspended in the atmosphere, or visible and gathered in the seas; next of vegetable forms, before reptiles and birds are introduced; to be followed by aquatic mammalia first, and later on by tame and untamed quadrupeds; the whole of it to be crowned finally by the creation of man? How could he do so, unless apprised of it by the Author Himself? His narrative reaches directly the most scientific form that any book on natural history can take. Modern naturalists, even now that the more proper and natural order is known, begin generally their descriptions by the "bimana"—man;—then the "quadrumana"—apes; afterwards other "mammalia," before they speak of inferior organizations; they thus unaccountably reverse the natural order. Moses was the first, long before "Science" was invented, to give the proper classification of material beings, commencing by the most simple elements, and ending by the most complex being—man—whom some Fathers of the Church called, on that account, a "microcosm." Let it be understood that this was the real evolution of mundane things, and science will be reconciled with truth; and the

first chapter of Genesis will be placed at the head of all scientific treatises on natural history, as it surely deserves to be for its accuracy and completeness.

Nature presented under this light, offers itself at once to the most determined sceptic as the work of a designer; and it is precisely what many modern naturalists try their best to avoid. When reproached with the tendency of their theories toward materialism and atheism, they exclaim that they are misjudged, and their intentions misconstrued. Yet it is undoubtedly the main apparent object of all their scientific labor to take away from human sight the view of design—which many of them certainly positively deny—and to present creation as the result of mechanical laws behind which mind may exist, but without being seen or felt, without consequently deserving the gratitude and love of man.

But in the narrative of Holy Scripture God is heard and seen in the smallest as in the greatest things; and we have to acknowledge Him as the true Author, both of the design and of its execution. For as Humboldt himself acknowledges, “the Hebrew poet does not depict nature as a self-dependent object, glorious in its individual beauty; but always as in relation and subjection to a higher spiritual power. Nature is to him the work of creation and order, the living expression of the omnipresence of the Deity in the visible world.” And thus it is proper it should be.

Design is therefore visible in all the features of the earth, the dwelling of man, the future temple of a universal Church. But we must examine more in detail the configuration of its surface as conducive to the great object in view; namely, the formation of a place adapted to all the evolutions of human society, with respect either to distinct nations, or to the possibility of combining them all in one great catholic whole. Holy Scripture everywhere delights in speaking of the seas and of the high mountains, and of the flowing rivers, as well

as of arid deserts and level plains. It would be idle to imagine that the chief object of the inspired writers was to please our imagination by a striking description of those great features of our globe. As from the very beginning, and throughout all those glorious pages, we see mention made of the origin and various fortunes of all the diverse nations, to which invariably places are assigned often by a direct intervention of Providence, we must suppose that the actual configuration of the earth was the result of a great design on the part of God, with respect both to the social life of individual nations and to the spread of the "universal kingdom" of God so often spoken of in Scripture. We would, otherwise altogether misunderstand the spirit and character of Holy Writ.

## II.

Mankind was to come from a single pair; and if the first man had persevered in the state of holiness in which he was created, it is very possible that the surface of the globe would have been very different from what it is. Nothing in that case would have prevented mankind from remaining united, and most probably human society would have existed as a Church rather than as a civil government. It is, moreover, doubtful if the waters of the universal flood, in retiring to their former bed, restored to the continents and seas their former delimitations. But these are mere theoretical questions of which we cannot speak; and we have merely to suppose that the actual earth, as it exists since the flood, was intended for the dwelling of actual men, such as we know them to be since the fall.

The general appearance of the earth, as sketched out on a map, is that of an all-embracing ocean, over whose surface rise several large continents, chiefly in the northern hemisphere. This first aspect shows at once that the Designer intended all men to



have intercourse of some kind with each other ; an intercourse well-nigh impossible without the all-surrounding seas, as it shall presently appear. This is the first and general outlook (*a*).

But a more close consideration of the continents themselves, with their chains of high mountains, their broad and long rivers, and, in some cases, the large, sandy deserts or rocky and barren plains, with which their surface is dotted, intimates that, socially, man was not to form a universal republic, but must consent to exist in larger or smaller groups, each of them surrounded with well-defined limits, determining numerous nationalities. This is the particular aspect not inconsistent with the first (*b*).

This state of human society shows itself directly of such a nature, that, owing to numerous obstacles arising from the antagonism of character in nations, a universal religion, humanly speaking, is impossible ; and, if such an institution exists, it must come directly from God. In the supposition, even, that He has decreed it, it must remain subject to the play of the free will left to man. Thus, the struggle of the Church to realize itself, and to continue, after having once started into existence, must be the main history of the true religion ; and it may require long ages to come to a complete and final state, although all along the character of universality must be discernible. The fact, however, that there can be but one religion coming from God is plain enough, and need not be discussed in these pages (*c*).

But, before we enter at length into these considerations, we must speak first of the adaptability of the human race to the whole globe, and show that the earth is really his dwelling, and the dwelling of him alone, considered in its entirety. A fact most striking and well-ascertained, now that our globe is known, is that man not only adapts himself to all countries and all climates to which he migrates, but that it is in his nature to spread himself over all continents, and to take possession of the whole

earth, although he at first started from a single point. This is not the case in any single class of other living beings, even of a high order. The learned and acute observers, who have written on the geographical distribution of plants and animals, have been obliged to draw on their maps curved lines, across the various meridians, showing the invariable limits in which the different orders and families of organized beings are confined. And it would be a matter of great astonishment to find any individual of those orders and families out of the well-ascertained limits of each. Yet such law does not bind man; the whole globe being his by the right of his organization and aptitudes.

It is true that man himself, in his character of lord of creation, can extend the sphere of existence of those inferior beings, by transferring them wherever he chooses, and naturalizing many of them in other countries; provided he follows some rules of artificial acclimation. But man alone can do it; and plants and animals will not of themselves choose a new place of residence. Thus, even this apparent exception proves that the whole earth is the dwelling of man and of him alone. Many details contained in modern books of natural history would render these considerations most striking and interesting. We can only but refer to them in general:

(a) Man, endowed with such a general adaptability to all parts of the globe, finds it made precisely to suit this quality which he possesses, since the very distribution of water over the earth shows the possibility for him to become acquainted and deal socially with all other men. Yes; the oceans and rivers, instead of being primarily dividing lines, intended to separate men from each other, had precisely for their first object to become highways and common channels of intercourse between the various nations of mankind. To become convinced of this truth, which is now, however, admitted by nearly all, we have only to reflect on the great cause which rendered, for so many ages, India and China almost totally unknown to Europeans.

The passage of ships around the Southern Cape of Africa, had not yet become possible for western navigators, and the communication between Europe and Eastern Asia was yet confined to the exertions of a few undismayed travellers, or of Arabian caravans through the old continent. It took then several years to go from one end of it to the other. Hence only a few books of travel conveyed all the information Europeans had received concerning those distant regions, an information often impaired by many fables; and the only things they could see coming from the great East were products of the land or manufactured goods imported at a great labor and cost. Those countries were yet, in the opinion of Western people, the dwelling of monsters and the theatre of fabulous institutions. It looked almost as if the inhabitants of the east and west belonged to two altogether distinct species of beings, and dwelt in two different planets scarcely connected together. But as soon as Vasco de Gama opened the gates of the vast Indian Ocean, a new and wonderful world was unfolded to the curiosity and energy of men of the Japhetic race, for so many centuries estranged from their Mongolian brethren. The way existed before, but was closed. Had not the ocean been there, should we know much more at this time of Hindostan and Japan than our ancestors four centuries ago? Again, supposing that in place of the Atlantic, a barren desert, a far larger Sahara than that of Africa, had stretched itself between the old world and the new, it would have required a persistence, an energy, and a foreknowledge far superior to that which has immortalized Columbus to bring in contact the adventurous Spaniards and the simple-minded natives of Cuba, which then would have been in the midst of a vast continent. God, therefore, could not render more easy the spread of the human race, and the subsequent intercourse of all its members together, than by covering our earth with the universal element where wood can float, and where a simple sheet of canvas can become a sure means of propulsion through the waves, by op-

posing, in a few feet of the atmosphere, the free passage of a current of air. We do not speak of the modern means of locomotion, since they never would have been found out by man, if the previous ones, more simple, natural, and always of universal use, had not been first known and adopted from the beginning of navigation.

King David knew this particularity of our globe when he exclaimed (Psalm xxiii. 2): "God hath founded the earth upon the seas, and established it upon the floods," and (Ps. cxxxv. 6): "God has spread out the earth upon the waters."

And the sublime king-poet knew the object of this earthly arrangement when he cried out (Ps. ciii. 25): "Look at the great and wide sea, wherein are creeping things without number, both small and great beasts. *There go the ships*; there is that leviathan Thou hast made to play therein."

And (Ps. cvi. 23): "They that go down to the sea in ships, doing business in the great waters: these have seen the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep. He"—God—"said the word, and there arose a storm of wind; and the waves thereof were lifted up . . . . And they cried to the Lord in their affliction; and He brought them out of their distress. And He turned the storm into a breeze; and its waves were still. And they rejoiced because they were still; and He brought them to the haven they wished for."

Job, long before, had in a few words, as usual, pictured vividly this great feature of the earth and its object, when He said (Chap. xxvi. 10): "God hath set bounds about the waters, till light and darkness come to an end . . . . By His power the seas were suddenly gathered together, and His wisdom defeats the proud." The prophet described thus the wide expansion of the liquid element, spread wherever terrestrial light and darkness extend, and this geographical fact, so favorable to the general intercourse of mankind, is at the same time an impas

sable barrier against the ambition of a proud conqueror aiming at universal dominion.

But Isaiah went further and announced openly the subser-  
vience of the seas to the conquests of religion, and the future  
spread of the Church of Christ through the open highways of  
the ocean, unamenable to the laws of a despotic police, and des-  
tined for ever to be left free to the zeal of the messengers of  
God (Chap. xlix. 11, 12, etc.): "I will make all my mountains a  
way, and there shall be paths over their highest ranges. Be-  
hold peoples shall come from afar, and behold these from the  
north and from the seas, and these from the land of Sinim."  
And (Chap. lx. 4, 5, 9): "Lift up thy eyes round about and  
see: all these are gathered together; they are come to thee:  
thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up  
at thy side. Then shalt thou see and abound, and thy heart  
shall wonder and be enlarged when multitudes from beyond  
the seas shall be converted to thee, the strength of the Gentiles  
shall come to thee;" and v. 8: "Who are these that fly as  
clouds, and as doves to their dove-cotes? For the islands wait  
for me, and the ships of the sea in the beginning; that I  
may bring thy sons from afar; their silver and their gold with  
them, to the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One  
of Israel." Could stronger and clearer language express the  
idea under consideration?

And as the last words of a seer are always those which are  
more particularly retained in the memory of his hearers, the  
last verses of the prophet give yet more brilliancy to the  
thought in the following words: "I will set a sign among  
them, and I will send of them that shall be saved to the Gen-  
tiles beyond the sea, into Africa and Lydia, them that draw the  
bow; into Italy and Greece, to the islands afar off, to them  
that have not heard of Me and have not seen My glory. And  
they shall declare My glory to the Gentiles."

(b.) According to the prophet, whom St. Jerome called an

Evangelist, the mountains even were destined to be "a way" for the general intercourse of men and the propagation of the gospel. The sea, however, was a plainer and more universal one. We may say that naturally mountains are rather an obstacle to the intercourse of mankind, and, in fact, they were evidently intended for a very different object, and the great feature of high mountain-chains so remarkable on the surface of our globe was designed for a far dissimilar purpose, which must now attract our attention.

By the cosmologist and the geologist the high ridges of rocks—by which the earth is intersected so as to furnish to geographers remarkable land-marks to guide them in their descriptions—are attributed to various causes and are supposed to be destined to purely physical functions; to the Christian philosopher they afford considerations of a far higher order. For him the earth at its creation was intended to become in time the dwelling of intelligent and moral beings; and the smallest features even of its exterior organization must have some reference to this destination. Design must appear in all the details of the works of God; and the more striking ones in the exterior arrangement of our globe must have a corresponding striking purpose with respect to the whole of mankind.

Thus, there can be no doubt that, viewed as a cause of variation of climate as powerful, at least, as the difference in degrees of latitude, mountains were formed designedly to render the earth more pleasant and more universally habitable to man, and that by gathering around their high peaks the vapors of the atmosphere, they were to keep constantly filled the various reservoirs of all rivers and lakes. But another grander purpose, referable, in fact, to the whole history of mankind, appears to us written, as it were, on their very rocks, and the most important probably in the designs of the Creator. They were to form immense parks, with well-defined limits, to inclose within them the various nationalities into which mankind was destined to be

for ever divided. Apparently, therefore, a cause of division rather than of union for man, one civil government, one despotism, could not be possible; and the true religion alone, coming from God and possessing a divine power, would, at a future day, be able to overcome all those barriers; so that God would make, according to Isaiah, "all His mountains a way, and there would be paths over their highest ranges." (Ch. 49).

We are not, therefore, surprised that the prophets of the old law delighted so much in describing the *mounts of God*, and in referring constantly to this, the greatest feature of our globe, after the ocean. The mountains certainly did not fulfil that high purpose during the whole ante-diluvian period; but see how soon after, when Noah became a second father of the human race, and left his sons to become directly the progenitors of the various nations, this purpose is directly unfolded.

We cannot show in detail the adaptation of all mountain-chains to this object. They were not, moreover, intended to fulfil it alone. The rivers, the seas, and the sandy deserts, as well as the mountains, were destined to be the dividing lines of nations and races. It is, however, to our purpose to give some remarkable instances of it, in order to show that we are not merely following the delusions of our fancy.

In his general description of Asia, Heeren uses the following words: "To enable us to form an adequate notion of the natural features of the different parts of Asia, and the *intercourse* of its inhabitants which is *dependent* on the former, it is necessary before all to become acquainted with the great mountain-ranges which stretch across this portion of the globe, and determine, in a great measure, the nature of the soil, and the mode of life of its occupants. Two of these vast chains of mountains extend across the continent from west to east, forming, by their ramifications to the north and south—by which they are connected together—a species of gigantic network; or, as it were, the

skeleton on which the surface of the whole country is disposed, and to which it is attached.”

Then, describing them, he shows how the races of men which they divide differ from each other. The first, the Altaic range, in a great measure unknown to the Greeks, extends through the southern part of Siberia, from the north of the Caspian Sea, in the west, to the Pacific Ocean, near the Behring Straits; the second, known to the ancients under the name of Taurus, stretches likewise through the whole continent from west to east; beginning in Asia Minor, then through Armenia, to the north of which it becomes the Caucasus; turning afterwards round the southern coast of the Caspian Sea it runs along through the countries known of old as Media, Hyrcania, Parthia, and Sogdiana; where it branches off into two lower chains, one going north-east and the other south-east, embracing between both the great Sandy Desert of Herodotus, known to us as the Desert of Gobi, until it reaches finally the Pacific Ocean in Mantchou Tartary.

These two great mountain-chains divide Asia into three parts “essentially distinct,” says Heeren, “from each other with respect to climate, and the property of their soils; and presenting differences no less striking in the mode of life and manners of their inhabitants.”

These last are, 1st, the hunting and fishing tribes of Siberia north of the 50th degree of latitude, and of the Altai mountains; 2d, the pastoral and nomad nations known as the Mongol, Kalmuc, and Sangarian tribes of Tartary, north of the 40th degree; and, 3d, south of this parallel, the numerous agricultural races inhabiting a country blessed with the choicest gifts of nature; so that as our author says: “The earliest records of the human race ascribe to this region the first origin of tillage, of the cultivation of the vine, and the establishment of cities and political combinations.”

These striking remarks show conclusively how mountain-



chains have become, under Providence, the natural limits of many races of different aptitudes; and, carried into minor details, this study might become yet more striking and interesting. A mere child, looking over the map of Europe, will see how Spain is divided from France by the Pyrenees; Italy from France and Germany by the Alps; Turkey in Europe from the Austrian provinces by the Balkan; Austria from Russia by the Carpathian mountains; and how Russia in Europe was, until last century, separated entirely from Asia by the Ural chain. A good map of Switzerland would show, further, that the tribes, originally distinct, which formed what we call the Swiss Cantons, had, each of them, well-defined limits in the highest ranges of the Alps.

These are merely particular instances, which could be generalized and extended to nearly the whole globe. It is clear that the various products of the whole earth—the result of the industry of each and all the races of mankind—destined to be interchanged by commerce, and thus to form a bond of union among men, were dependent on this general configuration of the globe. No diversity of products could be obtained if a dead level obtaining everywhere, the same climate, the same atmospheric changes, the same energy of nature, should be the universal feature of all countries; and in this case commerce among men would be out of the question, as no interchange could benefit any one. At the bottom of these considerations a subject opens which could furnish matter to long dissertations. We can only point at it in a few words. The multiform divisions of the earth require, for drawing out their capabilities, as many different aptitudes in those intrusted with the work; and the general result is commercial intercourse on a large scale, and, consequently, social union of some kind. We can thus easily understand how the exterior geographical configuration of our planet combines, with the diversity of human races, to form a connecting

link for the whole, and tends to spread everywhere through commerce a spirit of universal kindness and amity. We begin to see, therefore, how design already appears tending benevolently to fraternity and peace. But in the primitive plan of Providence, this agency was to be powerfully strengthened by the unity of mankind coming from a single pair, and drawing the same blood from common ancestors.

We have not here to prove this unity. "Science" still allows us to suppose it, since the greater number of learned men still defend it energetically, and, we believe, victoriously. But if "science" was universally to contradict it, we would nevertheless prefer to follow the lead of "revelation," which has never yet contradicted itself as "science" has often done. For the Christian there can be here no question. He must admit Redemption if he have any faith, and redemption supposes the fall, and, consequently, a first single pair. There is evidently nothing more to say.

The unity of mankind is, therefore, for us, a truth adopted advisedly, conscientiously, and firmly. God created the race one; therefore He wished it to remain one. He placed in the heart of all a feeling of sympathy for all those of the same race; and the line of Terentius, applauded so ardently many ages later, expresses the feeling of all at all epochs, but chiefly in primitive times, at the very cradle of mankind, not long after the great calamity of the flood, when the traditions of all families went back so easily to the first, that of Noah: *Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto*. The passions of the human heart, the divergent interests of many, the forgetfulness of common human ties on the part of surrounding multitudes, may stifle for a moment the voice of a common blood speaking to the conscience of all, and uttering, at least unconsciously, the low murmur of sympathy. But reflection and the calmness of reason bring back infallibly, in times of quiet and peace, the feeling which God has so firmly implanted

in the breast of all, and which St. Paul expressed so felicitously when he said to the Athenians: *fecit Deus cæ uno omne genus hominum inhabitare super universam faciem terræ*. The crimes men often commit against this inward sentiment of a common humanity, are no more an argument against it than the occasional hatred of two brothers in the bosom of a single family.

But it was chiefly in that early period of human history, when mankind before its dispersion lived, spoke, worked in a kind of large community, so soon after the catastrophe which had overwhelmed the whole species, and left but a small band of three brothers, with their parents and their wives, that this sentiment of universal brotherhood sank deeply in their bosom, and must have become traditional in the race, even after its dispersion. From that time down, through long ages of ignorance, division, error, and crime, the small still voice of human conscience continued to speak audibly, when the storm of passion subsided, and appropriated the beautiful sentiment of the Latin poet before he had uttered it, as well as after.

The unity of which we speak could not be forgotten in those early ages, because the race had then but one language: *erat autem terra labii unius*—one tongue as well as one origin for man. Had this language been invented? Speech is a necessary consequence of human thought, and social man can no more be understood without it than God Himself without His Eternal Word.\* To speculate, therefore, on the supposed

\* We do not mean to say that the *personality* of the Divine Word is so necessarily connected with the idea of God in the reason of man, that the belief of God once supposed the person of the Divine Word is thereby known, since this great truth is above reason and required a positive revelation. But an infinite mind cannot really be understood without an infinite word or speech, and reflection will show directly the truth of the proposition. The only thing really revealed is that both are distinct as to *personality* in God.

invention of language is at once ridiculous and childish. All we know about it is, that man has never been a deaf and dumb animal. Individual deaf and dumb persons can subsist in human society, because they form an infinitely small minority, and are helped by their more favored brethren, with whom they have always had means of communication, even before the Abbé de L'Épée invented for them a system of signs. But a human commonwealth, even that of a small tribe, composed altogether of deaf and dumb persons, is completely unintelligible.

It may be said, however, by the friends of evolutionism, that man invented language gradually, as his mind was evolved; first, signs and indistinct voices, like animals and birds; later on, a kind of pantomime, with, possibly, interjections and ejaculations, when he had reached the intelligence of the ape; finally, articulate speech when his reason enjoyed full consciousness. For this they assert. But in their system, as there is no higher type than man, from which reason and, consequently, language can be *evolved*, both must come, either from mere matter, which is truly incomprehensible, and will not be asserted by them, or by the intrinsic power or force of mind itself, which from an almost indistinct germ is developed into a mighty and powerful individuality. This is certainly their only resource, and we doubt if they could express it in stronger terms. But this development is more mysterious than creation by a superior power. It is undoubtedly making something out of nothing, without a supreme agency. And this is not mysterious only, but truly impossible. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*. For the intellect of man is evidently of so superior and altogether different a nature from that of an ape, that evolving the first from the second is producing something out of nothing. The pretension, which they now put forward, of a sudden—so to speak—development of the brain, would reduce the evolutionists to be merely a materialistic sect, and mere materialism

is now condemned forever, we hope. Language, as well as reason, can no more come into existence by mere evolution, than a complete star out of pure *vacuum*. Both must have originated from above, and received their illumination and power from the Eternal Word, *Who illumines all men coming into the world, and by Whom all things were made.*

We know, moreover, that mankind at first had but one language, and we can see at once what a powerful means of union there must have been in that great privilege of each understanding all others and being understood by them all. Had not this unappreciable prerogative been justly lost by the overbearing pride of the builders of Babel, how different would have been subsequent human history! Could men have ceased to form one great universal commonwealth, if they had continued to speak the same idiom? How many things, at least, they would have forever kept in common, of which they were deprived as soon as estranged from each other by the very words they uttered. To understand it, let any one reflect on the bond of union which remains between, for instance, all English-speaking communities, even when perfectly independent of the mother country.\*

(c) The reader is, we trust, now prepared to understand the real catholicity established at first amongst mankind, and which

\* We find the following remarks on the "original unity between the languages of Africa and Asia," in the "Herodotus" of Sir George Rawlinson (New York edit., 1870, page 525), and we merely copy them as appropriate to our present subject:

"The peopling of Europe in primeval times by tribes having a similar form of speech, which yielded everywhere to the Indo-European races, . . . is apparent from the position of the Lapps, Finns, Esths, and Basques, whose dialects are of the Turanian type. Africa, where the Hamitic character of speech prevails, might seem to be an exception, more especially since Hamitism is represented by the best modern ethnographers . . . as a form of Semitism, and distinct altogether from the Turanian family. But the early Babylonian language, in its affinity with the Susianian, the second column of the cuneiform bilingual inscriptions,

took a directly religious aspect by the dogmatic truths and the exterior rites of worship, which most certainly a primitive revelation alone could grant liberally and equally to all the children of Adam. We call this: Patriarchal Catholicity; and the uniformity of religious traditions among men in primitive ages—a well-established fact—proves it beyond question. It is known, moreover, that it took centuries for religion to become totally corrupt; and there was for a long time such a mixture of truth and falsehood in the worship of various nations, that nothing else than a primitive revelation can explain many startling facts well ascertained by the labors of modern savants. Even as late as the age of total darkness, just previous to the appearing of the “light which was to illumine all men,” we are surprised to find ourselves occasionally blinded by the bright flash of some primitive truths in the writings even of shallow poets as Ovid and Horace.

The nations on parting from each other carried evidently to their new homes the treasure confided to man at the first unveiling of God himself to our humanity, and we shall be able to trace many points of direction this “treasure” took. The *dogmas* of the unity of the Godhead, preserved at least in the personality of One Supreme among the gods; of the exalted

the Armenian cuneiform, and the Mançchoo Tâtar on the one hand, with the Galla, the Gheez, and the ancient Egyptian on the other, may be cited as a proof of the original unity between the languages of Africa and Asia; a unity sufficiently shadowed out in Genesis (x. 6–20), and confirmed by the manifold traditions concerning the two Ethiopias, the Cushites above Egypt, and the Cushites of the Persian Gulf. Hamitism, then, although no doubt the form of speech out of which Semitism was developed, is itself rather Turanian than Semite; and the triple division corresponding to the sons of Noah . . . . may still be retained, the Turanian being classed with the Hamitic.” . . . .

The meaning of the whole is that “primitively” the language of Europe had “a form similar” to that of Asia and Africa, whose “original unity is apparent to the best modern ethnographers;” therefore linguistic now confirms Genesis: *terra erat labii unius*.

state of primeval man during the golden age; of his fall, the cause of all misfortunes; of the immortality of his soul even after the fall;\* of the hope left at the bottom of Pandora's box; of the necessity of expiations for sin, of sacrifices consequently, chiefly the sacrifice of pure and innocent victims; of a possible expiation for sinful man by the austerity of penance, except, perhaps, in the case of some few great, inexpiable crimes; of the communication of guilt passing from father to son, kept till our days in the legislation of China, but in antiquity universal among all nations; these truths stand out clear and precise in the infancy of all ancient races, and previous to idolatry, by which they were gradually clouded, though kept for a long time under the veil of types or myths.

Besides these dogmas, the great *facts*, likewise, of creation, under the shape of some imaginary cosmogony; of a primitive paradisiacal state of bliss, of subsequent evil creeping in and degrading man; of consequent universal corruption; of the flood following it, and of a renewed humanity starting on a new career, are discovered more or less distinctly in the traditions of all Asiatic peoples without exception, and from Asia passed over to Greece and Italy in Europe. Whoever reads the first pages of the metamorphoses of Ovid cannot but see in them a translation of the first chapters of Genesis adapted to the Romans of the Augustan age.

\* Mr. E. B. Tylor, it is true, in his "Early History of Mankind," pretends that "the general prevalence of a belief in the continuance of the soul's existence after death, does not prove that all mankind have inherited such a belief from a common source." He thinks that it was more probably derived from dreams and visions of the dead of which he gives in his introduction a list which he might have indefinitely enlarged; but few, we suppose, will adopt his opinion; for the reason, chiefly, that if man did not previously believe in the "continuance of the soul's after-death," he would have had indeed few "dreams and visions of the dead," or would have laughed at them, should they ever come to trouble him. The explanations of many modern thinkers are indeed too weak intellectually to account for the universality of our traditions.

But the religious *rites* of antiquity are of a yet more striking character than the few *dogmas* and *facts* preserved in the primitive traditions of men. All nations had altars, priests, offerings and sacrifices, a sacred fire, rites requiring lustral water, libations of wine, sprinkling of salt and of flour, prayers recited in a standing position with hands raised and head erect. The rites of the patriarchal religion as related in Genesis, and developed later on by Moses in the "Leviticus," are reproduced almost identically in the poems of Homer; in the long-subsequent Greek dramas; in the prayers and rites of the Etruscans in Italy, whence the original religion of the Romans sprung; in what we know of the primitive rites of the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Hindoos. The monuments which have remained standing, after so many ages in Egypt, Italy, Greece, Hindostan, and Persia, reproduce on their walls the scenes enacted, as we know, in Solomon's temple, and, at a much earlier period, in front of the simple altars raised in Syria and Mesopotamia by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

All these and many things else argue an identity of belief and religious practice in primitive times; and we call it the universal creed of old Catholicity, which lasted in its purity about a thousand years, except probably at Babylon, where it seems that the most rank idolatry followed close upon the dispersion of mankind.\*

\* Max Müller, in his first lecture "On the Science of Religion," says: "The theory that there was a primeval preternatural revelation granted to the fathers of the human race, and that the grains of truth which catch our eye when exploring the temples of the heathen idols, are the scattered fragments of that sacred heirloom, . . . . would find but few supporters at present; no more, in fact, than the opinion that there was in the beginning one perfect, primeval language, broken up in later times into the numberless languages of the world." If the celebrated writer meant and thought that many have believed that there was "a primeval preternatural revelation," perfect in all its parts, and clear and precise as the *credo* of the Christian, he is mistaken in the supposition; and certainly there can be but few supporters of it. But if he thinks that God had not



It was, therefore, apparently from that great centre of unity—the former tower of Babel—that error and superstition radiated gradually toward all the points of the compass, and replaced the pure patriarchal religion by all the aberrations originating in the corrupt inclinations of man; so that Asia, the cradle of primitive truth, became at last the hot-bed of the most abominable superstitions.

But the conclusion is irresistible, not, indeed, from the meagre details our space has allowed us to give, but from the many undeniable facts which have come down to us from the highest antiquity, that God certainly revealed to man at the beginning a number of truths which may be said to have formed in their complexity a system of belief, and a code of morality all-sufficient for the guidance of mankind; and the germs of this primitive revelation have been found scattered, yet preserved in the traditions of all ancient nations. Should this not be admitted, the universality of those traditions is truly inexplicable. Contrary to the supposition of those who believe that man appeared at first everywhere in the savage state—nay, derived all his faculties from the brute—the higher we reach in the history of man, the nearer we come to his cradle, and the purer and holier we find his religion to be. The oldest fragments preserved to us of human wisdom, are likewise the most rational

spoken to the patriarchs as He spoke later to Moses, and that *few* now believe in such divine communication, he is again mistaken on a subject with which he is, however, perfectly familiar. He seems, everywhere in his writings, to imagine that the “primeval revelation” was only an interior one to each individual, who found in his heart the great truths of the unity of God, the creation of the universe, the necessity of expiation for sins, etc. But how can he explain in this case the primitive uniformity of belief which he himself admits, and of which he often speaks so well and so eloquently? In this age of wrangling we ought to know at last, and Mr. Max Müller ought to be one of the first to perceive, that, with the “inner, individual word of God to man alone,” there is no possibility of uniformity in the human assent to truth; although each one certainly can reach it, when it is question of the domain of pure reason.

and consistent with what we know to be the truth; and without going to the length of Cudworth in his "*Systema Intellectuale*," without attempting to prove that all the philosophies and religions of antiquity asserted the dogmas of what we call "natural religion," it is certain at least that by supposing monotheism and its cognate truths to have been at first admitted by all, the gradual creeping in of error and the slow progress of corruption in belief and morals, is much more naturally explained than in any other supposition; and we shall see the whole process unfold itself in these pages.

Yes! all nations believed at first that there is a God superior to all Powers—the Almighty Father of gods and men, the rewarder of right and the avenger of wrong; that bliss and woe after this life are to be eternal; that there was first a golden age when God communed with us; that man lost this privilege by disobedience, and that hope alone remained in the midst of all the calamities originating in sin; that expiation is necessary and blood required for it; that sacrifice, and chiefly the sacrifice of the innocent, propitiates heaven; that God's law is written in the conscience of man, and nothing that this conscience reproveth can possibly be right; finally, that a heavenly teacher is required for our safe guidance, and that the great hope left us in Pandora's box is, after all, the coming of such a teacher.

But if all these truths were the universal treasure possessed at the very beginning by men of all nations, history has not begun universally by barbarism, and we have, on the contrary, the strongest proof of an original culture among mankind. The sublime being created to the image of God had not passed through an interminable period of education, during which modern theories pretend that he painfully and laboriously developed himself, and actually changed many times his own species, before he could acquire the erect position and the faculty of speech and of abstract reasoning. The proofs of a

primitive civilization, and of universally-received dogmas, which could not come but from heaven, are too clear in the oldest annals of mankind to allow the new-fangled notions of "evolutionists" to prevail among sensible men, at least with respect to the human kind. When the chronology of the "stone period," of the "troglodytes," of the "lacustrine subterranean villages," is as well established as that of the Bible—although no one thinks of raising any chronology to the dignity of dogma—it will be time to discuss the matter coolly, and to see what reason can accept and what it cannot. Should the defenders of the old doctrines by which human society is upheld, use for their arguments such loose conjectures and baseless suppositions as many pretended "scientists" bring forth to support their destructive systems, all the floods of ridicule that engraving, printing, and oratory can let loose at once to overwhelm antagonists, would certainly be lavishly spread out against the luckless assertors of conservatism. But because it is question *only* of upsetting the foundation-stones of the social fabric, in order to erect a new and problematical one in its place, whatever the new builders may assert, ought to be considered as sacred and directly admitted as proved beyond question; myriads of ages are clearly required since the appearance of man, because, forsooth, fossil bones and rude implements are found together in strange juxtaposition; and all the wild conjectures of a disordered fancy must be pronounced to be the only means of solving a problem which a hundred other suppositions can as well explain. But of this we shall speak *ex professo* in the next chapter.

No! although the prerogative of close thought and reasoning seems to have been abdicated by most men of our generation, we are not yet brought down to the level of quasi-idiocy, and the men of our days are not simple enough to reject plain and glaring truths for the sake of adopting at most ingenious fancies.

And, curiously enough, a new proof of what we call the catholicity of patriarchal religion in primitive times is found in a universal fact of that period, which has been thoughtlessly considered as an argument for primeval barbarism, and which is, in fact, one of the strongest supports of our opinion.

All thoughtful investigators of general ancient history are struck by the aspect of human society at its beginning. Everywhere, at the time, men are found in small groups, in what is called the "tribal state." Evidently mankind began by *clanship*. Central and Southern Asia, the cradle of the human race, offer everywhere that strange spectacle. The English savants, who have studied Hindostan most carefully, are compelled to admit that the tribe system prevailed at first through the whole peninsula, and the land-tenure of the present time, which the government dared not suddenly abolish, bears, it seems, a striking analogy to the primitive land-tenure of the Celtic nations; yet how many foreign invasions, in the course of ages, have subverted apparently the original institutions of the country! Ancient Persia, Media, Sogdiana, and all the other States of Central Asia, bear out the same supposition. It is now admitted that the same took place, to a certain extent, in Egypt, where the antagonism of city against city in later times was the lasting consequence of the first state of society. Every one knows that Arabia, Syria, and Palestine have offered at all times, down to our very days, the same spectacle. Europe: heroic Greece, primitive Italy, the Spain of antiquity, and all the Celtic nations, are another proof of the universality of the fact. Hence many writers have concluded that everywhere, at first, barbarism prevailed, and that man began really in the savage state. But clanship is not barbarism; and admitting the unity of the human species, it must have begun by clanship, since it all came from a primitive family.

In the supposition of "evolutionism," men would have sprung everywhere, after millions of ages of successive "nat-

ural selection ;” and the absurd theory of “autochthones,” imagined, first, by the overflowing fancy of the Greeks, would have to be resorted to, in order to explain the appearance of man on the globe. He would have certainly begun everywhere in the savage, or rather the brute state, but he would never have come out of it ; since the transit of the Rubicon, as it is ingeniously called, namely, the passage from brute instinct to real abstract intellect, is yet unexplained, in spite of Mr. Wallace and of the pleasant author of a late article in the “North American Review” for October, 1873. That “natural selection” may be busy at first in changing the physical appearance of man, and afterwards turns its activity towards increasing the volume of his brain, as soon as “man is endowed with sufficient intelligence to chip a stone tool, . . . or when intelligence has progressed so far as to sharpen spears, to use rude bows, . . . to cover the body with leaves or skins, and to strike fire by rubbing sticks,” may be allowed to pass for the sake of argument. Yet the difficulty will always be for the brute to acquire such a degree of intelligence as to perform all the operations above enumerated, by its own effort, and without the assistance of a superiorly civilized master. We have seen Jocko, a monkey, serve a lady and gentleman at table, and do everything that a well-trained waiter could accomplish ; but we do not advise Mr. Wallace or the writer in the “North American Review,” if they ever travel to South America, to leave their cosy hotel in Rio Janeiro, and go in the afternoon in the neighboring forests with the expectation that they would find their dinner ready and nicely served out by the swarms of monkeys who chatter in the immense trees of the country.

If this is the way to explain the “passage of the Rubicon” in the “progress from brute to man,” and if readers of our times are satisfied with such an explanation, we assert that the average intellect of our age has strangely deteriorated, and that our reason is too easily satisfied, indeed, and admits too

readily what would have but raised a smile on the grave face of a monk of the thirteenth century. Yet this "passage of the Rubicon" is given as a wonderful discovery, and "one of the most brilliant contributions ever yet made to the Doctrine of Evolution!"—we copy the capitals as we find them in the "Review." Henceforth surely the expression, "Doctrine of Evolution," must be treated with as much respect as that of "Christianity."

But even granting everything to the partisans of the new theory, it is clear that neither their system nor that of the Greek "autochthones" could have produced the universal state of society mentioned above. As there would be, in either supposition, no unity in the human race; and as, moreover, the system of evolution supposes no real distinction or even existence of species, although they try likewise to explain the origin of such, all the supposed human beings evolved from brutes would have presented unimaginable differences which have not been sufficiently opposed to these theorists, as producing necessarily a real *jumble* without order and possibility of comparison. To employ a simile which has often been used against other and previous sects of "philosophers," there is no more probability of the "evolution" of a well-defined and organized species, than of the poem of the Iliad coming out ready-made from the mixing up together of an infinite number of the characters of the alphabet thrown at random. For the explanation they give, that through natural selection, only *one* results from *many*, is not sufficient; since on account of the process going on in so many places at once, under so many altogether divergent conditions, and with no guiding control but chance, in fact, under the name of "selection," the ultimate effect cannot be but a "jumble" of dissimilar monsters, out of which man could never issue.

In the supposition, on the contrary, of all mankind coming from a single pair, created at first and instructed by their

Maker, the government that would naturally prevail, at first, among men, would be that of the tribe, and all would necessarily adopt it. Mankind would, therefore, on that hypothesis, consist, at first, of an immense number of small groups of people, each group governed by a patriarch; all the details of clanship, as they obtained formerly among the Jews and the Celts, and as they were preserved by the Irish until the seventeenth century, a period which we can call contemporary, would become the universal features of human society; and the first epoch of human history would be the reproduction everywhere of what we read in Genesis of the posterity of Heber, or of Abraham, his grandson. This is precisely what the discoveries of modern historians of antiquity tell us of the state of mankind in Asia, Europe, and Africa, four or five thousand years ago, a state which continued, as we shall see, to a very modern period.

But was then clanship a condition of barbarism or of civilization? To answer the question, we have only to make a general remark: When large empires arose shortly after, we are dazzled by their brilliancy; and the monuments which still exist of the original civilization of Egypt, India, Persia, Arabia, and even Ethiopia, excite our wonder, chiefly when we compare ourselves to these nations with all our boasted progress. But these splendid empires themselves could only have been formed by the agglomeration of previously existing tribes, and the high degree of culture which they immediately displayed must have existed in great part, at least, in the tribal fragments of which they were composed. In fact, the change did not destroy the tribes, which invariably continued to exist. We propose to prove it.

We are not here reduced to conjecture. We have the positive proof of the book of Job, and of the Hindoo Vedas, for our firm belief that the first patriarchal civilization was of a high order; and that the Arabians, who existed before Job

and Moses, and the East Indians who lived before the authors of their sacred poems, were men of a high culture intellectually, and of a brilliant and luxuriant life materially.

But what we must chiefly insist upon is the fact, that all the tribes of which we speak, and into which mankind was then split up, preserved the traditions handed down by their first progenitors, which became the common property of all ancient races. And there is no fear that any people preserving intact and uncorrupted those traditions, would become barbarous and uncivilized. Job, Abraham, and Jacob were patriarchs. They lived when original clanship obtained yet universally. What elevation of intellect, greatness of soul, firmness of character, "*and amplitude of mind to greatest deeds,*" as Milton says, do we not admire in the little we know of their lives! The civilization then prevailing spread broadcast the seed from which arose the brilliant empires which followed. Not only nobleness of soul and character was everywhere impressed; but art, primitive art in the Orient, has preserved to our very times the human figure as it then was; not the cast of an ape and gorilla, but the majestic features of primeval man, nearly as he came from the hands of God. If it has not the softness of a Grecian statue, it possesses the august and sovereign grandeur of the King of creation. Phidias had, no doubt, in his mind what he may have seen of Egyptian, Persian, and Syrian art, when he modelled the head of his Olympian Jove, besides a few lines of the Iliad, of which alone all authors speak. And it is enough to look at the few remains preserved in European cabinets of antiquities, nay, at some ancient marbles dug out of Cyprus and brought lately to New York, to cause one to smile at the idea of man originating in the ape, and at the conceit that "our human form divine" in these days of progress, is of a higher type than that of those intellectual giants who trod this earth three thousand years ago. We could enlarge indefinitely on this part of our subject, but we



must prescribe ourselves narrow limits on this preliminary matter.

The reader, we hope, at the end of this volume, will share our conviction that there was at first existing on this globe a real patriarchal catholicity, of a truly civilized character, and coming directly from God. We must now consider how, not having received any heavenly promise of perpetuity, it finally failed and disappeared. The first signs of a future dissolution showed themselves as early as the building of the Tower of Babel, when all the fatal seeds of disunion were thickly scattered in human society. We must, therefore, say a word of it.

### III.

The narrative contained in Chap. xi. of Genesis is the most *rational* explanation of the change which certainly took place at that time among men, although it supposes a positive intervention of Divine power. We pity from our heart those partisans of an irrational rationalism who directly reject an historical fact as soon as it is clearly miraculous, and then are reduced to wild conjectures to explain the sequel of history. What amount of intellectual labor has been expended on the childish effort to "elucidate" the life of Christ and the establishment of His religion, while doing away with the manifest prodigies related in the gospel! It is in the name of "Science" that many assertions of Scripture have been either denied openly or pleasantly turned into myths by writers of this and of the previous centuries. And this fact of the miraculous dispersion of mankind, on account of a suddenly-imposed diversity of speech, has been one of the most violently attacked by many modern authors. The "Tower of Babel," of course, in their opinion, was a most ridiculous myth. Mankind, yet united, had never entertained such a project. No

edifice of the kind had ever been raised. It was, in fact, the first of "Arabian tales." And they certainly thought themselves perfectly safe in these assertions, as they could not for a moment imagine that the very first monument built by man could have left any of its ruins in existence to our very days to testify against their unbelief, or, at least, that any chain of historical evidence could be found to connect with it existing debris. Yet in this even their hopes have been deceived, and the curious inquirer can see with astonishment the proofs of it detailed by Heeren in his work on the "Babylonians." The concordance of ancient authors with the discoveries of modern travellers, chiefly of Rich and Ker Porter, is certainly most convincing. And should the consequence be denied, namely, that the ruins of Birs-Nimrod on the Euphrates are the true remains of the celebrated Tower of Babel, we do not see how any fact of ancient history can be believed as true, since no other, undoubtedly, is more clearly proved. E. F. C. Rosenmüller has admirably condensed this discussion of the Gottingen Professor in his excellent little work entitled, "The Biblical Geography of Central Asia."

Yes, we have yet among us a great portion of the prodigious pile raised by united mankind before its dispersion—three stories out of eight—and men of our time have actually handled the very same "fire-burnt bricks" mentioned in Genesis: "*Faciamus lateres et coquamus eos igni.*" This positive discovery, corroborated by the inscriptions found on the spot, and interpreted by François Lenormant, render easy of belief the remainder of the story—that the builders had to part company and look for distinct habitations, because they could no more understand each other. And this was the first and sufficient cause of division among them.\*

\* George Rawlinson in his "Five Great Monarchies" (Vol. I., page 21) seems to object entirely to the identity of the ruins of Birs-Nimrod with the Temple of Belus and the Tower of Babel. He relies on cuneiform

This want of mutual agreement, resulting from difference of utterances, has been ever since a powerful source of discord, nay, of bitter enmity. Every one finds no difficulty in admitting it who is aware of the fact so often mentioned in antiquity, of anger and wrath immediately appeased and changed into sympathy by the sudden discovery of a common speech. Who has not witnessed, even in our days, men thrown by various circumstances at a great distance from their country, among people of a different race and language, becoming at once intimate friends, as it were, because of their discovering by chance, through a few words spoken at random, that they were born under the same sky, and came originally from the same province or city? If such is the power of a common tongue to excite in the hearts of men warm feelings of reciprocal affection, we cannot wonder that a different state of things produces altogether contrary results, and that the impossibility of understanding each other is immediately the cause of distrust at first, and soon of mutual contempt and hatred. How is it that uneducated people, transplanted to a strange country, invariably pronounce, with assurance, that the language of this nation, foreign to them, is barbarous and far inferior to their own, when they have not, through ignorance, the most necessary means of comparison? We have no doubt that when the fol-

inscriptions for placing them in a city of Borsip or Borsippa, distinct from Babylon, and thinks they are the debris of a temple of Nebo—a god far posterior to Belus. But in his second volume, page 534, he modifies considerably his opinion, and states that “the Birs-Nimrod had certainly seven, probably eight, stages—*stories*—and it is the only ruin on the present western bank of the Euphrates which is at once sufficiently grand to answer the description of the Belus temple, and sufficiently near to the other ruins to make its original inclusion within the walls not absolutely impossible. Hence . . . opinion has been divided on the question, and there have not been wanting persons to maintain that the Birs-Nimrod is the true Temple of Belus.” In a note he names those “persons,” namely, not only Mr. Rich, Major Rennell, Sir R. Ker Porter and Heeren; but Niebuhr in 1826, and “recently,” he adds, “they have been

lowers of Nimrod were hunting beasts and men in the plains of Mesopotamia or around the Persian Gulf, they made very little difference between both, because both appeared to them deprived of speech; and the men, women, and children whom they captured and bound with cords, appeared to them as unintelligent as the beasts of the field, which they drove together on their return to Babylon. The nations of antiquity which subdued foreign people and wished to keep them in subjection, never allowed them to use the language of their conquerors, and thus originated, probably, the distinction of the "sacred" and "popular" idioms in Egypt, India, and Iran. In modern times, on the contrary, the kingdoms or empires whose rulers wish to arrive at a complete unity and peace among their subjects, insist on having one prevalent and universal language with the ultimate object of abolishing gradually all the other primitive dialects and idioms. Greece and Rome were the first to inaugurate the policy now universally followed among civilized nations. It is remarkable that no religion, except the Jewish and the Roman Catholic, has ever insisted on a common language for sacrifice and liturgy among tribes of different origin although professing the same faith.

We can see, therefore, how, from the beginning of mankind, diversity of speech began to oppose the universality of the

described and copiously illustrated by Mr. Oppert" ("Expédition Scientifique," tom. I. pp. 200-216). These "persons" are respectable enough.

But a very remarkable corroboration of our belief on the subject is found in a most interesting study by Mr. François Lenormant on a number of cuneiform inscriptions brought to England by Mr. Layard, and in which the learned Frenchman thinks he has discovered a first Chaldean empire anterior to the one described by Sir G. Rawlinson. He calls this most ancient people the Accads, whose chief city was the Accad mentioned in Gen. x. 10.

In one of the poems whose translation he attempts; is frequently mentioned "the House with its head erect"—"the House of the right hand," etc.; and Mr. Lenormant, grouping all the details, sees evidently in it the celebrated "*Tower of languages*," as he calls it from the inscription it-

same religion, and how the primitive traditions and dogmas given at first by the Almighty Himself to man, were gradually to become dim, and finally to disappear almost altogether, by the action of various causes, of which the fact now under consideration was to be one of the most powerful. These considerations enable us likewise to acknowledge the profound wisdom of the Church of Rome, and place before us vividly the reason why she has always attached such an importance to the use of the same idiom in her liturgy and sacraments, and always granted, with an evident reluctance, the privilege of using a different one to some branches of the true Church, but only to those whose origin went to the Apostolic period.

We cannot know, it is true, what length of time it took exactly for men to forget their former dialects, and acquire new ones, nor how many were thus originally formed; but there can be no doubt that from that epoch began the state of things we now witness, when the number of distinct languages is so inameasurably great, and opposes such a barrier to intercommunication among men. Many, no doubt, in subsequent times, originated naturally among nations unacquainted with the art of writing, by which alone language is fixed, and becomes durable; and thus, certainly, were formed numerous

self. He is most decidedly of the opinion that this edifice was at Borsippa, and, consequently, at the modern Birs-Nimrod; and he says that "this venerable monument, with which so many legends are associated, was, even at the epoch of the composition of the Accadian poem, in the dilapidated state in which Nebuchadnezzar found it when he undertook its repair. 'The temple of the seven lights of the earth, the Pyramid of Borsippa,' says the Assyrian king, in a preserved inscription, 'has been constructed by the most ancient king of all; . . . but he could not crown the top of the edifice; . . . consequently the rains and the storms had worn away what was built interiorly with unburnt bricks, and thus the exterior construction of fire-burnt bricks had split. . . .'"

The whole composition of the learned French Academician, under the title of "Un Vêda Chaldéen," ought to be read; it will be found in the 92d vol. of "Le Correspondant."

idioms of North American Indian nations. But as there are certainly human languages which do not possess any number of roots in common, such a catastrophe as the one described in Chapter xi. of Genesis, can alone explain this complete antagonism of tongues, if we believe the truth of the unity of mankind.

To this first source of division among men was added a much more powerful one, that of the diversity of races. We know, from the tenth chapter of Genesis, that the posterity of the three sons of Noah was distributed over the surface of the old world, and that the three continents were occupied by the various nations which sprung from them. They would have, henceforth, only one bond of union: the same patriarchal religion based on primitive traditions; and that bond of unity itself would be gradually loosened by the opposing forces of difference of language, of race, etc., which would, in course of time, introduce idolatry with all its accompanying errors and crimes, and render the unity of worship, humanly speaking, impossible, and the existence of national religions universal over the globe; so that the future catholicity of the Church would become visibly a divine fact, impossible in truth without the direct intervention of God.

The inspired author of Genesis intended certainly to explain in his tenth chapter the spread of nations over the various regions of the earth. The names contained in it are understood by many modern exegetists, chiefly Protestant, to be the names of tribes. Catholic commentators generally think they are the names of individuals. Some were, certainly, individuals, as Nimrod and Canaan; others were undoubtedly nations, as the Philistine, and most of those having the same termination. But whether individuals or nations, the various races of men which have since formed the whole of mankind, were certainly derived from them.

The origin of those human varieties which we call races, is

clouded in mystery. When we see the persistence of the national character in each social family, resisting, during long ages, all opposing forces, and exhibiting the same features after thousands of years; when we contemplate each nation or tribe, forming, as it were, a compact and almost indestructible unity; when we mark how the striking differences between contiguous peoples continue, passing from fathers to sons, without even dove-tailing in the very points of contact between each and each; we demand a cause for all those *strangé* phenomena, and we can scarcely see any other than the diversity of progenitors. Hence, we all say that these differences are in the blood; and we think we have said enough. The opposers of the unity of mankind would have here the basis of a strong argument in their favor, if, unfortunately for them, it did not go too far; as it is clear that the origin of the human race cannot be so multiform, and that *one* Adam is yet more acceptable to reason than *four* or *five hundred*.

All things considered, the most sensible opinion on the subject is that God presided at this arrangement, which entered into the plan of His providence throughout the future history of man. And we think that He Himself gave to each progenitor of a race the distinguishing characteristics which were to pass to all its future members. The otherwise unaccountable permanence of these characteristics is a strong support of this opinion. The progenitor himself may be any individual in the line of ancestry, chosen by God for some reason of His own.

Yet we admit there is a great deal of truth in the supposition maintained by several modern writers of note, that many of those diversities arose from the various circumstances in which the descendants of the sons of Noah were placed, with respect chiefly to the special character of the dwelling they chose. Thus, as we have seen, it looks as probable that the inhabitants of the north of Asia from east to west, down to the

50th degree of latitude, became hunters and fishermen, owing to the multiplicity of game, whose flesh and fur they needed, and to the abundance of fish in the seas and the large rivers of Siberia; and thus the chief habits and characteristics of those nations were acquired. Similarly the immense plains deprived of trees and covered only with herbage, forming the whole of Asia from east to west, between the 50th and 40th degrees of latitude, originated the pastoral habits of the nomad Tartars dwelling in those regions from the beginning. Finally, the rich agricultural countries of Asia, from the 40th degree downwards, furnished to their inhabitants the determining motive for their social life, and enabled them to cultivate literature, the arts, and the sciences, together with agriculture, which have rendered Persia, Hindostan, and China so celebrated from a very early period.

This may, no doubt, explain some divergences in the social and physical life of many peoples, but not all the facts by which they differ; and the diversity of races is alone adequate to this explanation.

But whatever may have been the causes originating that great variety remarked in the nations of antiquity and of modern times, there is no doubt that the opposition of temper, inclinations, aptitudes introduced by this dissimilitude, became an immense obstacle to moral unity among mankind. Hence the institutions which have always ruled Arabia could never prevail in contiguous Persia or Iràn. And this last country was at all times in antagonism with the nations of the north or of Turàn; and thus of all the others. Nothing is more striking in human history than this mutual opposition and antagonism, the source of all the wars and of most of the calamities which have afflicted mankind. And this can almost invariably be traced to difference of race among men. It is clear that a merely human religion cannot overcome such an obstacle as this to unity—hence all false religions are national;—and



with such a constant and powerful cause of divergence, what was first common among men becomes gradually weakened and finally must disappear. Thus the common traditions imparted to mankind by the first utterances of divine revelation, grew, by degrees, more and more dim, vague, and uncertain, until they were altogether veiled and obliterated by the successive additions and perversions of error. To establish this in detail, is the purpose of this book.

That special spirit which characterizes each nationality, and gives it the peculiar aspect by which it is distinguished from any other, soon grew to such prominence that the features of our common humanity almost disappeared; and men came, at length, to consider all other races as enemies, so that the very name of foreigner became synonymous with barbarian or foe. The geographical limits by which they were separated became the scene of a constant border war; and unless high mountains or extensive deserts intervened, the mutual depredations and the incessant depopulation going on in those almost mutual grounds prevented everywhere the delimitation of precise frontiers, which, in the history of man, has generally characterized Christian Europe alone. In our own America it is well known that the Mexican Emperor considered the countries around his dominions as veritable nurseries of men, having no other object but to furnish his subjects with slaves and the altars of his gods with victims. Such was also in general the ideas powerful nations of antiquity had of their surrounding neighbors. Among the primitive Romans themselves the word "hostis," which was applied by them to nearly all foreign tribes, had no other derivation than the word "hostia"—victim; and the old Greek dramatists tell us what was the fate of shipwrecked strangers stranded on their shores.

The early unity of mankind had, therefore, in a few centuries, been altogether forgotten, and was replaced by division, enmity, and war. And this unhappy state of things was the fruit

of the antipathy produced by diversities of race, and by the long-continued separation of the various families of nations. Egotism had entered into those partitions of the globe destined to be the dwellings of each; every distinct territory had become a lair of wild beasts, and mankind appeared to be irremediably sundered and split into hundreds of hostile fragments, because according to Scripture (Gen. xi. 9), *Dispersit eos Dominus super faciem cunctarum regionum.*

Thus, likewise, the very configuration of the globe which, as we have before urged, was intended primarily as a bond of union among men, became a new source of division. Henceforth the mountain-chains, the great rivers, the inland seas, and the all-surrounding ocean were to be truly dividing lines, which nations dared not cross, in view of a sure hostility on the farther side. Occasionally an insignificant stream became a Rubicon, impassable except by the most daring spirits; and strange to say, it was only in the interminable deserts of Africa, and the immense plains of Central and Southern Asia, that, united in large caravans, men travelled to a great distance for the purposes of commerce. Every pleasant country became forbidden ground for all those not born in it. The words of Scripture placed at the head of this first chapter, appeared no more to be true. The earth in all its amplitude did no more belong to the Lord, and man lived in each small district of it as a prisoner kept within bounds.

The vastness of the ocean, the breadth of large fluvial currents, the height of mountain-chains, the barrenness of sandy or rocky wildernesses, had, in fact, become great fences, inside of which the different races of men were "parked," and kept apart from each other, until in the designs of God, these barriers were to be lowered down, or thrown everywhere open, by the future discoveries in navigation, aided by the introduction of a new spirit of universal brotherhood: a spirit which no religion for many ages fostered, and which was to be ushered in

finally among men by the only one destined in future times to spread and rule everywhere; which the Jewish religion was not.

The most superficial acquaintance with ancient history discloses the facts just enunciated. Men could scarcely know the nations living at some distance from them, since the very next neighbors were real enemies. To whatever extent may be supposed to have gone the incursions of a Nimrod, and a Semiramis in the far East, of a Sesostris in Syria and Asia Minor, of other conquerors in those primitive ages, these few sudden explosions of the fury of conquest form but a few short-lived exceptions in the general history of those remote ages, in which mankind was in fact cut up in an infinite number of small tribes, governed each of them by a petty ruler dignified with the name of king. The reader of Holy Scripture knows how Abraham, with his three hundred and eighteen men, fought and conquered four of those chieftains near Damascus, and delivered Lot from their hands. The fourteenth chapter of Genesis, in which this victory is recorded, deserves indeed to be carefully studied, in order to form an exact idea of society in those far-distant ages. Yet, antecedently to Abraham, and during his time, communications on foot or on the back of camels were much more easy than they became afterwards; since the population of many large districts was as yet sparse, and patriarchal manners were still prevalent. Men had not yet heard of the strict regulations of despotism, nor of the harsh measures taken by the egotistic municipalities which soon followed.

Modern researches in the oldest annals of mankind have placed beyond question the fact that in India, Bactriana, Iran, as well as in heroic Greece and Pelasgic Europe in general, the tribal state of society appears to have been the first, and to have everywhere preceded the great empires recorded afterwards in history; and we shall have occasion to show that it lasted far

longer than men generally suppose, coming down, in fact, very near to our time.

Not that barbarism was everywhere the first stage of humanity. For the clan system exists invariably with real civilization; and the clanship of primitive Hindostan, for instance, endowed with the sanscrit language and literature, can very well compare with many modern social institutions which boast of being civilized. But the state of Syria in the time of Abraham, so admirably described in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, so compatible with a happy state of society in spite of occasional wars, seems to have been generally the position in which men lived everywhere, immediately after the dispersion of mankind.

An immense drawback, however, resulted from the chief characteristic of that system, namely: an endless, and scarcely imaginable for us, division; such a disintegration of society, that it soon became very difficult to travel from one point of the globe to the other. What has been said, not very exactly, of the middle ages, that in the dark period of that name, men were afraid of losing sight of the steeple under the shadow of which they were born; and that, before travelling from Paris to Lyons in France, they invariably wrote their last will and testament, can be surely asserted of the long period of time following the first free and easy patriarchal manners. It was then a kind of feudal division of society carried to its utmost limits, and by referring to the twelfth chapter of the Book of Joshua, the reader will see how many different *kingdoms* there were then in a small part of Palestine.

It was only with arms in their hands, and in comparatively great numbers, that men could pass from place to place; either to colonize countries yet void of inhabitants, or to establish themselves in regions already occupied, but from which they first drove away the population.

This explains perfectly the endless subdivisions of idolatry,

as each city, each district came to have its gods and its religious rites. And hence arose the impossibility of modern social writers combining into any system the theological opinions of any single nation. Greek mythology, for instance, is formed of so many discordant elements, belonging to hostile cities into which the country was divided at the beginning, that the task of harmonizing the whole is perfectly hopeless.

The readers of Herodotus know how far this good man travelled to ascertain the truth with respect to Hercules, and how, finding the legend of the hero so different in Egypt, in Phœnicia, and in Greece, he gave up the attempt in despair, and could not solve the problem but by the supposition of three different men of that name.

The difficulty, in fact, of travelling through any continent or large island in those times became such, that even the sea appeared closed to the efforts of early navigators, through the fear inspired by the certain hostility to be met with at a comparatively short distance from the point of starting. Thus the Argonautic expedition to Colchis, across the Black Sea, became truly an heroic undertaking, and sufficed to inspire poets and historians so as to immortalize the few bold spirits who dared the attempt.

We can judge, by this single instance, of the state to which human society was reduced, and how truly insurmountable appeared to be the obstacles opposed to common intercourse among men. Who could then have imagined that the time would come when a universal religion would be proclaimed for the acceptance of all, and when the evils consequent on the first dispersion of mankind would be remedied as far as human imperfection can allow it?

So far, we have said nothing of the variations of climate to which the human race was subjected by its very aptitude for inhabiting the whole globe; and this was certainly another powerful cause of division among men.

We have seen how man differs from animals in that remarkable adaptability to every geographical zone. It seems that at first mankind spread chiefly under the tropics, and the most powerful empires of antiquity are found to have flourished in warm regions. Yet the sons of Japhet, from the start, took the north chiefly as their portion, and gradually the whole globe was peopled. But how different, after a few generations, became the inhabitants of the tropics from those of the cold zones!

We have only to compare in our days the natives of equatorial Africa with those of the temperate regions of Asia or Europe, to judge at once of it. Civilization ought not properly to enter as a factor in the problem, since civilization to a great degree is independent of climate, as the nations of the highest culture in antiquity were those of Southern Egypt and Gangetic India. But it cannot be denied that mild or ferocious disposition, precocious or sluggish intellect, impulsive or well-balanced nature, depend in a great degree on the direct distance from the equator or from the poles. Hence the old Persian Empire, which spread so easily as far as the Indian Ocean in Asia, and the southern borders of Meroe in Central Africa, could not cross the Danube in the north, and remained, in fact, limited to the southern coast of the Black Sea. The Roman Empire, on the contrary, made for middle latitudes, never crossed permanently the Euphrates in Asia, and possessed of Africa only the northern borders. The Mongolian Tartars, it is true, spread both north and south; but they never formed an empire properly so called. Theirs was a fitful and barbarous life, never merging in any permanent and positive settlement. If the Mongols reigned for a long time in Hindostan, they owed it to millions of Mahometan subjects who had come originally from Persia. The Mongol Tartars themselves formed always a very small part of the people, and it may be doubted if many of their descendants can be found in Hindo-

stan at this time, although the Mahometan population amounts to about ten millions.

There is naturally an extreme difficulty of coalescing between peoples of extreme geographical range ; and if the English remain in possession of Hindostan two centuries longer, we think it very probable that the broad line which divides now the two races, will be then as broad and impassable as it seems now to be.

What renders the cause of division more effective is the well-known and remarkable fact, that the natives of the most unpleasant and deleterious climates can scarcely adapt themselves to milder countries. They soon die away in regions in which there appears every probability that they would thrive. No Esquimau can live south of Cape Farewell in Greenland, and an original inhabitant of equatorial Australia, transplanted into England, would as soon disappear as would any of the black swans swarming in the rivers of its native country, taken suddenly to English waters or Scotch lakes.

Civilized man, it is true, can adapt himself to all climates by his foresight and intellect, but even in his case it requires a long period of time for his posterity to become perfectly acclimated.

It is true, that the differences of race and language, the difficulty of communication by travel, and the climatic variations, might have been overcome to a great degree, and have left to the human race a power of aggregation, which for several thousand years it never had, if God had condescended to establish for its advantage a central focus of authority or direction. But nothing of the kind existed during all the centuries which preceded the preaching of Christ and the establishment of the Church. Yet a sort of unity was preserved among men for many centuries owing to the holy truths originally given to mankind. And a counterpoise to the many causes of division previously mentioned, would have been found in them, if this

deposit of faith and morality, such as it was, had been entrusted to some competent authority to keep and explain.

The grand expiation imposed on mankind for its insolent pride at the erection of the Tower of Babel, was to last for centuries ; and, as the sin had been one of combination against God, preserved in the fable of the Titans, the fittest expiation was to be *division*, expressed so powerfully in the name *Phaleg*, given by heaven itself to the chief patriarch of those ancient days. Hence God refused to the human race, throughout the period of time allotted in the Divine counsels, a central power able to hold aloof at least the beacon-light, calling back all men to the memory of primitive revelation. It is true, that to supply this deficiency to a certain extent, a nation was called into existence for the very purpose of preserving always bright and clear, what was soon to become obscure and dim among other races. The Hebrew people was not only destined to be a kind of moral centre for mankind—placed, on that account, in the very physical centre of the world ;—but a directive authority for faith and morals was positively established in the nation, called the Synagogue, faint and diminutive figure of the future universal Church.

But although the social destinies of the Hebrew people were intimately connected with all the great nations of antiquity in the midst of which it was placed ; although the Assyrians, the Chaldæans, the Egyptians, the Persians, and, later, the Greeks and the Romans, were in constant communication with Jerusalem and the Jews ; although all those various races had under their eyes the astonishing spectacle of a monotheist people worshipping Jehovah alone, and preserving the ancient moral code, scarcely modified, from the time of Noah, they were all blind ; a veil was over their eyes, as St. Paul remarked later of the Jews themselves with respect to Christ ; they could not see what the loving intention of God designed they should see ; and they all sunk deeper and deeper in the mire of idolatry, atheism,



and vice, in spite of the instructive exemplar of the truth which they all saw in Judea. Meanwhile division lasted, and appeared to be perpetual. And in spite of those brilliant and immense empires which succeeded each other, city remained always hostile to city, district to district, tribe to tribe. It is a fact not sufficiently appreciated, yet admitted now by all, that under the dominion of the Pharaohs, even during the magnificent period of the eighteenth dynasty, there was no other union among Egyptian cities than the will of the despot, and at that very epoch the worshippers of the crocodile in one place made incessant war against the worshippers of the cat in another. The ox Apis was the only god universally respected, on account of his supposed identity with Ammon.

Again, in the Persian empire, when the Achæmenidæ were at the acme of their power under Xerxes, the innumerable tribes which obeyed the despot of Susa, were as absolutely distinct from each other, nay, as fiercely opposed the one to the other, as they had ever been previously; and to become convinced of it, the reader has only to go cursorily over the catalogue of those nations preserved by Herodotus in his description of the army of the Persian king.

The same must be said of the Greek empire under Alexander and his successors. Rome, in fact, was the first to insist, not on the fusion of the different nationalities she had conquered—she never dared to attempt it—but on their keeping the peace and not warring on each other. It was the great cause of admiration for her enlogists that she had universally *imposed peace* on her subjects, and to disturb it was for the first time in human history pronounced to be a crime, which Rome was sure and prompt to avenge. And, let the reader remark it, it was just on the eve of the coming of the Prince of Peace, when the protracted division of mankind was to come finally to an end, and the pristine unity was to be replaced by a higher one, that such a determination was solemnly taken by the People-king.

The end, therefore, God had in view in prescribing to the earth its configuration, and in giving to mankind one progenitor, first in Adam and then in Noah, was kept in abeyance, and instead of unity, division came to be the great feature of the globe itself and of the human family. The ocean, spread everywhere, and penetrating the various continents with its deep bays and inland seas, intended consequently for a universal element of intercommunication, became an impassable abyss over which men cast their shuddering eyes when they looked out upon its shores.\* The rivers, and the mountains from which they gushed forth, instead of being highways and public roads, were turned into barriers of division, behind which the timorous and hostile tribes looked askance at each other, and thought only of overreaching their neighbors, changed into enemies. That "articulate speech," so celebrated in Homer as the great characteristic of god-like man, and by which he is raised so high above the lower animals; the mind's medium of exchange, the instrument of sweet intercourse, the great bond of unity whilst remaining in itself one, was split into thousands of idioms, every one unintelligible to those who spoke any one of the rest, and thus reduced every insignificant tribe to the sad condition of looking on all mankind out of their own small community as if it was really deprived of speech, and composed of deaf and dumb individuals. Religion, finally, the worship of a common Creator, deprived of authoritative teaching and of a central light, became the greatest source of division, and would of itself have made of earth a real hell, inflamed incessantly by the burning fire of fanatical hatred and war.†

\* The Phœnician adventures cannot be objected, as they were the only ones which gradually spread, and proved by their success that all the other nations experienced the feelings described in the text. The Phœnicians were not, first, so daring as they became later on.

† The religious dissensions, in post-Christian times, result from opposition to authoritative teaching; the contrary was the case before Christ.

At the beginning of this chapter we begged of the reader to consider these preliminary remarks as assertions which the sequel would abundantly prove. This task we have now to undertake ; but we must first clear the ground by treating succinctly a previous question, namely, the now generally-supposed primitive barbarism of the human race. All our future considerations shall certainly tend to this, but not *ex professo* ; and it is proper, at the very beginning, to look into the matter directly, and to see what truth there is in many positive assertions of the day. To demonstrate the primitive high state of man,—intellectually, at least,—it is fit to show first the weakness of modern theories, built purposely to contradict this truth. When it is established that nothing has been really proved by the numerous geological and archæological discoveries made lately in Western Europe, in opposition to the comparatively modern origin of our species, then it will be clearly understood that history and tradition have not lost any of their real value, and that we can listen to their voice without fear of being deceived by them. If, on the contrary, the assertions of the advocates of “prehistoric times” had, in truth been sufficiently established, the demonstration we propose to undertake would be proportionately weakened. Hence the manifest importance of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SUPPOSED BARBARISM OF PRIMITIVE MAN.

THE modern doctrine of indefinite human progress, either from the brute—according to the followers of Mr. Darwin—or, at least, from the lowest condition of savage life—if we believe Sir John Lubbock, E. B. Tylor, and many others—may be called, with Dr. O. A. Brownson, “the creed of the nineteenth century.” “It is held by whole multitudes, with unquestioning faith, or, rather, with the blind credulity of fanaticism. It pervades all popular literature, even most scientific treatises. It is iterated and reiterated *ad nauseam* by the press, from the stately quarterly, the infallible daily, down to the *seven-by-nine* weekly. With not a particle of evidence to sustain it, treading on an earth covered all over with ruins, we know not how many layers deep, with the unmistakeable signs of deterioration, weakness, and decay everywhere staring us in the face, we yet are deluded enough to assert that man is naturally progressive, and that the nations now pursue a steady march towards the realization of an earthly paradise much more desirable than the heaven hoped for by Christians.” (Brownson’s *Rev.*, Last Series, Vol. I., pp. 226, 227.) This certainly is true of our age, and does not speak highly in its favor.

But we are here concerned only with the pretended starting-point of “barbarism;” the study of “progress” will come later on. The first must be treated apart to understand well the second.

### I.

We have already discarded the consideration of the zoological question with respect to the origin of man. We confine our-

selves to the historical or traditional view of the case. An argument, however, adduced lately by several writers on the subject, appears to us decisive and final on the zoological question. And as it will not detain us long, we are unable to withstand the temptation of saying a word or two upon it.

If man had really been evolved from the brute by an indefinitely long process of a succession of specific changes—the product of natural selection—we say that geology would have proved it long ago, and neither Mr. Darwin, nor Lamark, his predecessor, would have invented the system. The forms of a great number of extinct species are forever preserved in the fossil state. The specific characteristics of all these formerly organized and living beings are so precise that naturalists introduce them in their classifications, and we know that Baron Cuvier could, from a single bone of any of them, reproduce the whole lost skeleton. Not a single fossil yet discovered has been found in the incipient stage with respect to any of its future organs. And, by a strange accident, Mr. Darwin must place this universal fact in the chapter of accidents—none of those innumerable organizations which, in his system, must have existed prior to their ultimately reaching the well-defined characters of species now known to us, has been allowed to embalm its remains in the universal place of sepulture for all former beings—the rocks and drift deposits of former ages.

And this is true, not only of the “ancestors” of man, according to Mr. Darwin, but of all classes of ancient animals, of whatever kind they may be supposed to be. This, in our opinion, cannot be an accident, but is, in fact, an unanswerable refutation of the system of evolution. The supposed formations in embryo have never, in point of fact, belonged to any zoological system. They are the mere phantoms of a diseased imagination. And we may as well at once peremptorily deny the immense series of ages required to account for the origin of man in the new theory, without granting to its supporters

the privilege of a serious discussion, which the matter does not deserve.

## II.

We come, therefore, to the consideration of another pretended proof of the "incalculable" antiquity of man, and his primitive barbarism, namely: the well-ascertained facts of what is called the "stone period," everywhere *earlier*, it is said, than the *subsequent* periods of bronze and iron, as regards the whole human species, as well as any particular tribe.

We admit all the facts, but deny the anteriority and the subsequence in the sense we shall presently explain. We admit the facts, with the remark, however, that they are invariably selected so as to make a perfect caricature of "primitive man." All the ridiculous customs, all the filthy habits, all the horrible crimes which can be found narrated by not over-scrupulous travellers, are purposely chosen in order to construct a "history of early civilization." At least, this is decidedly the manner of Sir John Lubbock and his followers. We do not think, consequently, that the premises are unobjectionable.

If we consult other travellers, quoted certainly in these books, but never given *in extenso*, namely: Catholic missionaries, we find the state of the case to be quite different. With much that they acknowledge is reprehensible, they relate often admirable things calculated to raise a blush on the face of civilized man. Read throughout the "Jesuit Relations" as to North America, the startling histories of the "Reductions" as in the south of this continent, and all the details given by recent missionaries in Polynesia, and you will be able to complete the pictures of which Sir John Lubbock has presented only the revolting side. Read chiefly the first letters of Columbus, after he had become somewhat acquainted with the

primitive inhabitants of Hispaniola. Where can you find now on earth such a lovely simplicity, such ingenuousness, truthfulness, and candor, such artless innocence, if we can use the expression with respect to fallen and unregenerated man? And as to their exterior circumstances and habits; where will you see anywhere, at this time, such a truly patriarchal society, such temperance in the midst of plenty, such cleanliness in their dwellings, their persons, and all their surroundings? Those who, it seems, have undertaken the task of degrading man by their theories on his origin, and the supposed history of his first state, would do well, at least, to relate all the facts, since they rely only on facts, and repudiate with contempt all the traditions of mankind on the original "golden age."

These few observations were necessary, in order to qualify our admission of the numerous quotations contained in the works of Sir John Lubbock. But we deny the supposed anteriority of the "stone period," and the "subsequence" of those of bronze and iron even; although, on the very hypothesis we reject, it be susceptible of proof that the antiquity of man is not necessarily on this account indefinite, and that the length of his history on earth can very well fall in with the narrative of our sacred books, admitting even all the vagaries of the Palæolithic age, as F. Lenormant and E. Chevalier have done in their "Manual of Ancient History of the East," with which we do not agree altogether.

We must first acknowledge—and we do it with real pleasure—that among the most ardent admirers and promoters of the new discoveries, many give them a meaning perfectly acceptable to Christians. Thus, Mr. John Evans, in his "Stone Implements, etc., of Great Britain," speaking of some human remains, and objects of human industry, found in caves, together with fossil animals of supposed great antiquity, says with truth: "It must never be forgotten, that the occupation of caves by man is not confined to any definite period; and that even in the case of

the discovery of objects of human workmanship in direct association with the remains of the Paleistocene extinct mammals, their contemporaneity cannot be proven without careful observation of the circumstances under which they occur, *even if then.*" The underline is ours. "Another point may also be here mentioned, namely: that where there is evidence of the occupation of a cavern by man, and also by large carnivora, they can hardly have been tenants in common, but the one must have preceded the other, or possibly the occupations by each may have alternated more than once," etc.

We seldom find such candid admissions in the works of Sir John Lubbock, and their meaning is plain. It is scarcely possible to draw any safe conclusion with respect to the antiquity of man from all the discoveries which were at first thought by many as a clear refutation of the "Bible records."

The impression left by most of the modern books on the "stone and other periods," is that, in the main, mankind began everywhere by using *only* stone implements; and that the first utensils used were of the most rude manufacture—in fact, just made for the hands of an "anthropoid ape," or a gorilla. The writers who seem to take such a lively pleasure in thus picturing the first state of man, have, it is true, the condescension to admit that those three great periods ought not to be supposed so completely independent of each other, that no stone implement will ever be found in deposits of the bronze and other ages. They dove-tail mutually, they say, and have evidently passed gradually from one to the other. And this apparent concession is precisely of such a nature as to complete the delusion, and render their system simple, natural, and probable. But we wonder why they do not see that, even with this *concession*, it is completely opposed to the true state of the case. Not only all the facts which have been found out do not suppose a *periodicity* of the kind they proclaim; but they evidently set forth the real *contemporaneity* of all those periods



throughout *the long history of man*. If in each nation the stone utensils appear first, and are afterwards followed by those of bronze, etc., does not much concern us, when we wish to know the real progress of the *whole* of mankind? And for this simple reason, that Denmark, for instance, where the system was first broached, is not mankind in itself, but a very small part of it, and it is too palpable a sophism to argue from a small tribe to the aggregate of the race—the rude fallacy, in short, of inferring a universal from a particular. Should they insist that the same happened in many other tribes, the sophism remains the same; because from the “periodicity” in any given number of tribes, their conclusion is to a similar periodicity in the whole of mankind. When, on the contrary, the palpable fact must be known to all, even to the ardent supporters of the system under consideration, that in this last age in which we live, in the previous ages which we can know by clear and unobjectionable history, finally in the dimmest ages of antiquity of which we possess any sufficiently reliable records, the three “periods” of stone, bronze, and iron have always subsisted simultaneously, and consequently are no more “periods” when we speak of the aggregate of mankind, but they are only three co-existing aspects of the same specific individual, as distinct from the ape in the Polynesian with his bone hooks and stone hatchets, as in the highest European, with all the paraphernalia of modern civilization.

At this moment, it is true, the number of geographical spots where man is unacquainted with metals, is gradually and steadily decreasing, owing to the universal spread of the Japhetic race, together with the complete and rapid means of intercommunication all over the earth, which we owe, undoubtedly, to human ingenuity. Yet in how many extensive countries must not this still be the case! The whole interior of the Australian Continent, and the large island of New Guinea adjacent to it, besides numerous smaller districts, no doubt are

inhabited only by what modern writers call primitive—in our opinion, really degraded—men. There you will find surely, fish-hooks of shark's bone, arrows of flint, knives of obsidian, if the country furnishes it, clubs of hard wood, and axes of basalt or quartz. Let Mr. E. B. Tylor calculate how long it will take for those tribes to pass from these primitive implements to metals of any kind. The gentleman is positive, that if left to themselves, those poor savages would surely rise from their present degradation to the highest top of the civilized ladder. And he naturally finds fault with "the late Archbishop Whately," who had, this time, been sensible enough to state in a lecture on the Origin of Civilization, the well known and indisputable fact, that "all experience proves that men, left in the lowest, or even anything approaching to the lowest degree of barbarism in which they can possibly subsist at all, never did and never can raise themselves, unaided, into a high condition."

But to return to our subject, we see that in our own age, the simultaneity of the three pretended "periods" exists yet, in spite of all Europeans have done to spread their civilization and habits everywhere. Two hundred years ago, the phenomenon was much more remarkable. Earlier still—at the time of the discovery of America—the Spaniards and French found in the new continent the contemporaneous existence of these periods. The French in the North were confronted by the "stone age" in all its glory in the country of the Hurons and Iroquois; the Spaniards met with the bronze age in full sway, in Mexico and Peru.

A retrospective glance through all previous history would ascertain the same fact under the Romans, the Macedonians, the Persians, Assyrians, and even Chaldæans, of the most primitive times. At all the epochs known to us by history or tradition, a number of nations of antiquity have worked all the metals really useful to man. It is perfectly well ascertained, that the methods of the early Phœnicians for mining were exactly what our methods are yet now. Job, we believe, has

described the process in one of his chapters. And another previous chapter of the Bible—a book at least worthy of respect—tells us that Tubal Cain, before the Deluge, if you please, used extensively iron for many purposes, as we do to-day. Hence they say that he is old Vulcan himself—a god certainly dealing in iron long before the celebrated bronze age of Egypt or Greece.

At the very time this was taking place in the Old World, many other nations, then existing, used only stone, bones, or wood. The question is merely, who were the real “primitive men,” the first or the second?—those namely using iron, or those using stone and wood? Sir John Lubbock says, the second; and we may affirm the contrary. And this will be the place to interpose a few observations on civilization as distinct from barbarism. The speculators on the “stone, bronze, and iron ages” place civilization almost exclusively in the enjoyment by man of a multitude of little inventions of his own, many of which certainly are derived from the knowledge and use of metals. Any nation deprived of them cannot be called civilized, in their opinion, because reduced to a very simple state of life, which they say unhesitatingly is barbarism; and the stone age appearing everywhere at the cradle of nations, mankind began by savagery. We cannot admit this statement of the question. And one proof that we are free to do so, is the striking fact, admitted by all, that the whole of Africa, including the most central part unknown till our days, is at this time, and has been from time immemorial, in possession of iron and steel. Livingstone found it to be the case, not only in the south of the continent and along the Zambezi, but all over the extensive country of the great lakes, whence probably the Nile derives its source. Strange indeed! The most inveterately barbarous portion of our globe—wretched, degraded, almost *uncivilizable* Africa, if we are allowed to coin a word—has enjoyed the greatest means of civilization, according to

modern thinkers, namely, the use of the most intractable but necessary metal, iron, so long that in order to find the epoch when the great triangle of the sons of Misr or Cush was buried in the barbarism of the "stone age," we have to go far beyond the dynasties of Manetho; and our modern collections of stone hatchets and flint arrows from Africa will have to come from the head waters of the Senegambia, or contain only the stone utensils of the ancient priesthood, obliged by their strict ritual to avoid the use of iron in their sacrifices. Egypt, however, has furnished a number of them lately, to which subject we shall return.

We submit that this fact alone concerning Africa must prevent the necessary identification of a really civilized state with the use of metals, and consequently the forced connection of what is called the "stone period" with the savage social state. Barbarism, in fact, depends much more on moral degradation than on physical want of comfort. And when we come to describe patriarchal society, our readers will understand how a tribe or nation may deserve to be placed on an exalted round of the social ladder, although living exclusively on the fruits of the earth and cultivating it with a simple wooden plough. The Brahmin of the Rig Veda epoch, living under his thatched roof on the cool borders of a grove of palms, by the banks of a limpid stream of pure water, using only stone to break his nuts or grind his roots, and covering his body with the cotton he had himself planted and spun; nourishing his soul at the same time with the reading of sublime "upanishads," and reciting his "gayatry" to the Supreme God at the beginning of his chief actions, was more truly civilized than the voluptuous Babylonian of the same period, enjoying all the advantages of a refined "iron age," all the means of luxury furnished by the progress of arts, but degraded by the long-established idolatry of Hamitism, which from Nimrod had come to him through a succession of downward steps, always the more enticing to

the senses that they were more and more monstrous and unnatural.

It seems to our modern scientists that the use of stone is in itself contaminating and discreditable. They do not fail to record the fact that in our age it is yet used even by some Europeans. But they always take good care to select their examples so as to connect the use of it with a kind of semi-barbarism. Thus they state with due emphasis that the Irish, wherever in their island they are less in contact with the blessed "Sassanagh," brandish yet in their clumsy work stone mallets and basalt hammers; and that some of their Gallic neighbors, chiefly the fruit-venders and nut-peddlers of western France, break yet the shells between two stones, exactly as the roughest Polynesians do in their island homes of the Pacific Ocean. They are perfectly right in these remarks; and we remember that, whilst yet a boy, we have often bought nuts from good women who were at the very time breaking them just as described. But since the "prehistorians" are so fond of small details—their books literally teem with them—we would like to ask them what is the difference of the two methods with respect to "barbarism" or "civilization?" If a simple stone hammer can turn out as good a horse-shoe as a steel one; and if a walnut or hazelnut can as deftly be opened and present as temptingly the fruit inside, by using a couple of clean white pebbles, as by handling a many-toothed steel cracker, why does the use of one argue a higher civilization than the use of the other?

We have to ask the pardon of our readers for detaining them with such trifles. But it is literally the fact that Sir John Lubbock, Mr. E. B. Tylor, and all writers of the same class, believe conscientiously that they are founding a new science by accumulating and heaping together almost at random, from every book of travel and every possible excavation made anywhere on our globe, trifling facts, oftentimes of no bearing whatever on the question; on which, however, they speculate

in their own way, forgetting, as it would seem, that others may draw from the same facts absolute contrary conclusions to theirs, when everyone could do so differently, and deluding themselves all the while with the imagination, which they often assert in so many words, with no little positiveness, that they have found the true solution of hitherto intricate problems of the greatest importance to mankind; as if it were their object to assign to the human being a position of the utmost possible degradation.

But is it not true that every tribe or nation began everywhere by the roughest stone period — what is called the Palæolithic age — using unpolished stone tools, whose very make denote real barbarism? Is it not a fact attested by many discoveries in Western Europe? Did not man at the time drag on a troublous existence in companionship with ferocious beasts, in the midst of a frozen ocean, like our actual Arctic region? We answer, that this is asserted by many, and admitted by such men as Messrs. Lenormant and Chevalier, in their excellent “Manual of Ancient History of the East.” We reply, that if it is proved, it is only for Western Europe, where man did not originate, and no general conclusion can be drawn from it.

Bewildered as we are by the accumulation of innumerable facts, mostly insignificant, or proving often only what everybody knows; and wishing in truth to treat the matter rationally, so as to come to some practical and tangible conclusion, we have only to propose to ourselves two queries:

*First.* What kind of researches have been made in Western Europe, and what do they say pointedly?

*Second.* Has the remainder of the globe been interrogated on the same topic, and to what effect?

I. Into our present inquiry the ages of bronze and of iron do *not* enter, since all admit they coincide with historic times; and we shall have sufficient proofs on our side when we come to interrogate antiquity. The “stone period” even does not offer any great difficulty, except for the first stage of it — what is

called the palæolithic age; as the neolithic, or the period of "polished stone," shows already a high degree of artistic development, and is generally admitted to coincide in point of time with the first spread of the Aryan races toward the West and North — an epoch very far from the pretended reign of barbarism. But the palæolithic discoveries have apparently thrown back the existence of man to an almost incalculable distance, owing to the manner in which they have been interpreted; and the *man* they suppose must certainly have been a barbarian. The question for us will be, Was he the primitive man? At the time he existed, was there no other type of the human race on the globe? And must we begin the history of our species by the monster placed under our eyes by Sir John Lubbock in England, and M. De Mortillet in France?

To treat the subject with lucidity, we will state first the facts, and then some of the speculations of these gentlemen. Our own we will not offer; but we will afterwards adduce those of other competent writers on the subject, and conclude how far barbarism has existed in former ages, as it certainly exists at present.

(a). On both banks of nearly all the rivers of Western Europe, often at a distance from the shores, are seen ranges of hills running parallel with the streams. If these topographical elevations are looked into closely, deposits of coarse gravel below, and sand above, generally are found, varying in depth, but descending mostly to a depth of from ten to twenty feet. These strata are always — sometimes as high as a hundred feet, often less — above the actual bed of the river. Over the whole a coating of argillaceous clay is spread. In many localities in England, France, and other European countries, two kinds of heterogeneous substances are found imbedded in the gravel, the sand, or even the clay. First, pieces of flint — never anything else — worked, or rather clipped, unartistically in the rough shape of pointed cones, rounded clubs, or flattened spears,

arrows, awls, etc., never to be inserted in handles of any kind; and, secondly, often together with these the undoubted remains of huge animals, some of them of extinct species, others of actually existing kinds, but living in countries farther north or south, together with extinct species of plants.

These deposits are generally met with *on both sides of the rivers, mostly at a distance from them*; and it looks really as if the whole intermediate distance across in the entire length of the stream had been originally filled with the same deposits, which must have been swept away to the sea, or into caves often discovered in the neighborhood choke full of the same objects. When this occurs near the mouth of rivers, the great distance between both ranges of hills, the depth looked down into from the tops of surrounding heights, strikes the beholder with awe, when he knows that such an enormous quantity of material has been swept away by the current and buried at the bottom of the ocean. It is useless to add that the insignificant bed of the actual stream adds to the effect produced on the imagination by the conception of the past. These few words, we think, have placed the difficulty before us in all its strength. We are now in possession of the leading facts. Our limits do not admit of going into any minuter detail.

(*b*). It is easy to suppose how such discoveries, after they had been well ascertained, gave rise immediately to numerous speculations, some of the wildest kind, all more or less unjustified by the actual facts. When men propose themselves an *a priori* object the remotest pretext becomes directly a most powerful argument.

First, a name was to be found to convey to the student some adequate idea of the immense importance of the treasures concealed in the newly-found deposits. Formerly, being well known exteriorly, they made in books of geology a part of what was called the Drift. And this name was perfectly appropriate, as the reader must not suppose that the whole globe, or a great



part of it, is covered with this now celebrated coating of clay above an underlying of sand and gravel. It is found, as we have stated, only along water-courses. It is, therefore, a phenomenon of drift and nothing else. It came evidently from powerful floods, of the violence of which we can have now scarcely any conception. But the name only half-pleased the discoverers, and they preferred to call it the Quaternary deposit. As the well-known Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Strata are absolutely, or at least nearly, co-extensive with the earth itself, the student was led to believe that the new Quaternary shared in the same ubiquity. Thus a new geological epoch was invented. And as remains of human industry have been certainly exhumed from the lowest strata of the new deposits—the pretended discovery of them in the Tertiary itself by Mr. P'Abbé Bourgeois and others, has been rejected, and ridiculed even—it was evident, they argued, that not only has man existed through the present alluvial formations, but that in a previous long geological epoch, a barbarian industry had been at work, which could not have been but the first attempt at intelligent labor by primitive-barbarian man. Thus a great deal was gained by the cause of barbarism.

Secondly, in studying the fauna and flora of this Quaternary epoch, another step was made, but not fairly, perhaps, in the same direction. The remains of immense mammalia: elephants (the mammoth), bears, tigers, etc., the congeners of which in our days look like young cubs compared to those prototypes, astonished the beholder, and gave a stronger idea of the weakness, inferiority, and rough life of primitive-barbarian man. We certainly do not deny the fact of the existence of those huge beasts, since their bones exist, and are now preserved. It has been long known that the mouths of rivers in Siberia are full of their gigantic carcasses. But simple reason tells us that if the life of our first ancestors had been such as they describe, mankind would have disappeared long before the extinction of

such fearful enemies as *ursus spelæus*, *felis leo spelæa*, *rhinoceros tichorinus*, and *elephas primigenius*. The upholders of the supposition have evidently gone too far and defeated themselves; and there must be some other way of solving the problem. We will not certainly pretend that because no human fossil remains have been undoubtedly found in the Quaternary,\* man did not exist, since the flint implements must be the work of intelligent beings. But we maintain that these coarse tools do not give the measure of his intellect at the time, and that many things have been lost which might have given us a different idea of man as he was. He must have been certainly superior in intelligence to all those monsters, since being so much weaker in body than they were, he conquered them, and subsisted when they perished. He must have had other weapons than any which have been yet unearthed to oppose successfully such huge and ferocious enemies; and the Bible alone, perhaps, has solved the problem in telling us that "there were giants in those days"—a text which we will not undertake to explain, since we have not yet met with the offensive and defensive arms which enabled man in those early ages to maintain his superiority throughout a period of such gigantic animal life. No one has a right to say dogmatically what was his social and domestic life. We do not know enough at present to venture even a hypothesis. Shall we ever be able to do so? Perhaps we shall know more when the same researches have been extended to Asia and Africa.

Thirdly, the artistic distance between the rough palæolithic flints and the polished stones of the neolithic period exhibits a gap, which tells but indifferently in favor of the believers in continuous progress. Either there has been a strange severment of continuity, or the men of the first period were better artists, and not such rough barbarians as the remains we possess of

\* This is the assertion of English writers: the French speak quite differently.

them seem to attest. To explain the existence of this gap, which they acknowledge, the supporters of primitive barbarism express the hope that the time may come when the intervening links will be discovered. It may then appear that originally men were not satisfied with the rude unpolished flint implements, which alone are now found. The only conclusion which can be drawn is, that we know very little yet of those ancient times; and that the speculations indulged in our days will be found probably as wide of the mark as the hasty inferences of the first geologists, whose imaginations are now repudiated.

But should everything be admitted that Sir John Lubbock himself asserts, it would not be a solution of the problem in his favor. Because, since all acknowledge that barbarians exist, and have existed at all times, the question is merely, "Did barbarism embrace the whole of mankind at first?" So far our researches have been limited almost exclusively to Western Europe. We have not yet said a word of the two other continents, of which we shall shortly have to speak. Man did not originate in Europe. He came from the East, and his migrations, now well ascertained, will tell a very different tale. Even in the stone period of the most remote age, he was not without congeners in other parts of the globe. We propose, in this chapter, to take into consideration some of the human races, which, as the best ethnographers admit, went forth from the original seat of mankind, to spread themselves in successive streams of slow, but continuous migrations, in the most remote corners of the earth. Then, indeed, we shall be able to compare race with race, and to examine if all were barbarous at the origin. Meanwhile we reaffirm that the totally degraded state of man as supposed by the supporters of the new theories is not proved. And this suffices for us at present. The neolithic epoch, which must have been connected with the previous one, is certainly admitted to have been far

from barbarous, and on this account we do not speak of it *ex professo*.

“We have,” as Mr. Evans himself says of it, page 423, “hatchets, adzes, chisels, borers, scrapers, and tools of various kinds, and know both how they were made and how they were used. We have battle-axes, lances, and arrows, for war or for the chase. We have various implements and utensils adapted for domestic use. We have the personal ornaments of our remote predecessors, and know something of their methods of sepulture, and of their funeral customs,” etc. We may add to this enumeration, that all this is often artistically manufactured; and we have also spirited sketches in intaglio, in which the animals then existing, including the mammoth with his mane, are represented with astonishing precision. Moreover, this (and it is a fact on which we lay especial stress) must have belonged to the palæolithic age, not to the neolithic, since those animals had disappeared in the latter times. We have therefore to smooth down considerably the rough picture offered us of “homo primitivus.” The number of those beautiful artistic sketches found in the oldest deposits, increases every day, and of themselves alone would prove that man was not then a barbarian.

But, lastly, a consideration which is of extreme importance in our present investigations, and which, consequently, we propose to treat somewhat more at length, is as follows:

Nearly all the writers on the subject, including several sincere Christians, seem to admit, that in the quaternary geological epoch, the deposits of sand, gravel, and clay followed nearly the almost peaceful course which we witness ourselves on the banks of the Mississippi River, and which are present under the eyes of South Americans, along the Amazon. Consequently, to calculate the time required for the scooping out of the immense valleys then in process of formation, is merely an affair of common arithmetic. It is true, the results of the mathematical operation vary in a most wonderful manner. Sir Charles

Lyell, according to Mr. John Evans (page 619), requires no less than 800,000 years for the whole process from the glacial period, during which time man—but barbarous man—is supposed to have always existed. Sir John Lubbock undertakes the same calculation, and finds that 200,000 years have sufficed. Finally, the Christian writers of whom we spoke, think that a minimum of 10,000 will sufficiently account for the general facts; and to that extent must the chronology of the Bible be extended. Such a disaccord ought evidently to demand a denial of the whole by sensible men.

It is true, that independently of our sacred records, reason alone, and geology, to a great extent, proves that man could not, and did not appear on our globe before it was settled definitely, and was fit to become his dwelling. And, in fact, the remains of man—of his body, I mean—can be found only in the scrapings of its uppermost surface; namely, in the drift—the real drift—not the quaternary strata understood in the modern sense. Since the epoch of the real drift, naturalists of the true stamp, endowed with a deep spirit of observation, can calculate with sufficient accuracy, the time required for the various operations going on yet under our eyes; such as the forming of deltas at the mouth of rivers, the spreading of sand on the outskirts of deserts, etc., etc. Yet, we may say it incidently, Baron Cuvier having undertaken to show in his “*Discours sur les Révolutions du Globe*” that our continents in their present shape could not go farther up in time than the epoch generally assigned for the Noachian deluge, after he had brought to the study of the question all the resources of his exact and powerful mind, all his extensive knowledge, all the means furnished him by the libraries and collections of Paris, having, in fact, apparently given an opinion which could be called final; what was our surprise to hear, lately, from the lips of an eminent geologist of this country, that all this discussion of Baron Cuvier must now be considered of no value! We ask our candid read-

ers, what will be thought in fifty years to come of all the calculations of actual geologists and palæontologists?

But to return to our subject. What is positively asserted by eminent naturalists of this important quaternary epoch? Was it a peaceful period of ordinary development, following clear and steady rules? Is it easy, or, rather, is it possible, in the actual state of our knowledge on the subject, to calculate the number of years required for its formation? Are we consequently able to conclude from the incredible length of time it supposes, that man, at first nearly a brute, slowly developed with the globe on which he trod? For this is the real object all those modern writers propose to themselves in their investigations.

On the contrary, our knowledge of this newly-invented geological period tends to prove that either on account of the most strange climate which can be imagined, or of the extreme violence of water-courses which must have amounted to numerous and extensive floods, or finally of the almost complete absence of regular and orderly stratification, puzzling indeed to geologists, the celebrated quaternary epoch must have been one of severe and constant disturbances, scarcely allowing man to exist, and certainly placing an insurmountable obstacle in the way of calculators, when it is a question of determining the length of the period; so that the 800,000 years of Sir Chas. Lyell, the 200,000 of Sir John Lubbock, nay, the *insignificant* 10,000 of Christian palæontologists, are only unreliable guesses which can as well be passed over without a word of discussion.

The climate, it seems, was such at that geological epoch, that neither before nor after, has anything ever been experienced to equal its irregularity. The whole series of other strata offers nothing of the kind; everywhere there is order except in the quaternary. Vast *moraines* testify to the existence of stupendous glaciers, one of them spreading itself from the source of the Rhone, east of the Lake of Geneva, nearly to Lyons in the west; the whole of Europe, in very truth, north

of the Pyrenees was covered with them. Consequently the reindeer throve everywhere over that vast area. Many valleys, however, must have been exposed to a high summer heat, to admit of their being a home for the elephant. The hippopotamus of Africa, only much larger, found a congenial climate as far north as Belgium. Many conjectures have been ventured to explain such anomalies as these. Not one of them, however, is satisfactory. To obviate this difficulty, geologists assure us that "the glacial disturbance did not last long." How do they know that? Is not the fact that remains of the reindeer are found throughout the period, and that it was the only large animal which did not perish, but retired to the north, where it thrives yet—a sufficient refutation of the assertion that "the glacial period did not last long?"

But it is well known that extremes of this kind must powerfully influence the meteorological phenomena; and nothing is more effective for disturbing the surface of the globe, and for producing most fearful storms. We might, therefore, already conclude that the quaternary period was, during its whole extent, a violent one, whose effects can scarcely be calculated, and to pretend to measure it at this time is a dream.

All palæontologists tell us that, during this epoch, the atmospheric moisture must have been extreme, and the fall of rain nearly incessant. Which fact, joined with the rapid melting of the glaciers, must have caused a literal deluge, lasting through the whole time of the period. If this be so, (and we wait for it to be controverted,) there is then no need of calling to one's aid the true Noachian flood, as Mr. l'Abbé Lambert has done in his interesting work, "*Le Déluge Mosaique, l'Histoire et la Géologie*," to explain the same facts. Perhaps the palæontologists go too far on this subject. Yet much of what they affirm is proved by the short description we have given of the enormous water-courses which existed at the time. Our surprise is, indeed, great, that Sir Charles Lyell was not dis-

turbed in his calculations by such an obvious objection as this, and that he felt himself at liberty to speak so dogmatically on a subject so obscure.

It is certain that in the whole field of geology nothing is so problematical as every thing connected with what is called the quaternary deposits; yet it is on this subject men now speak most peremptorily.

Finally, to confirm all these views, we are supplied with another striking characteristic of the quaternary period: namely, that the "statiographic classification of the deposits of this geological epoch is yet very obscure and uncertain." Which means, we presume, that the stratification of the various deposits is irregular and without order, so that palæontologists are at a loss to know how to begin or to end the epoch, and the way things used to go on during the whole of it — to us a homely but very appropriate phrase. This, of course, all students of geology well know, supposes an habitual state of disturbance during the whole period, constantly displacing the strata, and rendering any system on the subject impossible.

It is true that Mr. Ed. Dupont, after a deep study of the caves near Dinan, in Brittany, "has been able to reconstruct all the phases of the primitive industry of man, as it existed at the time in the country we now call Belgium!" and Mr. Gabriel de Mortillet "has proposed a classification of the whole period, which has been adopted in the Paris Museum of National Antiquities." But this last gentleman has been obliged to designate his subdivisions of the period merely by the names of the places where he supposes the remains of each are mainly found, thus: *époque du Moustiers*—the most ancient; *époque de Solutré*—next in order; *époque d'Aurignac*—succeeding the previous one; and lastly, *l'époque de la Madeleine*. But it is obvious that it is merely the individual view of Mr. G. de Mortillet, and not a natural one, based on precise data, as seemed to be the one proposed by Mr. Ed. Lartet, namely: *époque du renne*;



*époque de l'ours ; époque du mammouth*, which at first satisfied a number of learned men, but had to be abandoned as not sustained by actual facts, owing to the confusion of everything at the time those deposits were accumulated.

The conclusion of the whole is well expressed by Mr. Adrien Arcelin, in "Le Correspondant, Décembre, 1872": "Some geologists have thought, not without foundation, that the appellation—quaternary epoch—ought to be suppressed, because not representing any precise idea. It is, in fact, rather a transition from the tertiary period to the actual one, than an "epoch" properly so called. Our own conclusion is that nothing is yet known positively of the length of the period, and all calculations in the face of its numerous anomalies are altogether worthless." Thus the barbarism of "quaternary man" is not yet proved, any more than his high antiquity.

But we cannot dismiss the subject without calling the attention of the reader to the theory of Mr. l'Abbé Lambert, mentioned above. We have not seen his work, but we learn from Mr. Arcelin that its object is "to assimilate the diluvian"—or as we prefer to express it, the drift—"phenomena to the Biblical deluge." The idea is, in fact, striking after one has perused sufficiently what has been written on the quaternary or drift deposits.

The extreme moisture of the atmosphere, not only during the fall of the pouring rain, but all through the subsidence of the waters, and perhaps long after even, must have been nearly of the nature described above. With respect to the strangeness of climate, if the deluge was universal, as the literal text of the Bible, and the traditions of it spread among all nations, *except the blacks*, seem to intimate, may we not suppose that the immense volume of the then universal sea detached from the neighborhood of both poles, not glaciers, perhaps, but at least immense and innumerable icebergs, deposited afterwards over the continents, when they emerged anew from the ocean? What would be the climate of England and France for the sub-

sequent time? Not very different, possibly, from what we described above. Then the incalculable rush of the waters, when they subsided, might account for the "scooping out" of those large valleys, which fill the beholder with wonder and astonishment, and which excite the wild speculations of ardent geologists. In this case, again, we cannot be surprised at the confusion of the various deposits, which bewilder learned men, and defeat all attempts at classification. The presence of human remains—there were many, at least in France, as we shall see presently—together with the uncouth animals of the ante-diluvian period, both mixed together as they are often found, can be best explained by the supposition of the Mosaic deluge. For, as Mr. John Evans very properly observes, men and ferocious beasts could not live together in the same caves. All these considerations, and many others which might be indulged in, will for ever prevent the opinion of Mr. Lambert from being considered as ill-founded, when compared with the theories of "prehistorians."

On this hypothesis—for it is claimed only as such—the clipped and unpolished flint instruments found everywhere in the drift, would have been used by the ante-diluvian people; but it was not, by a great way, all they possessed in point of art. It may be conjectured that innumerable objects, already in those far-off ages, invented by man for his convenience and pleasure, have either perished, or have not yet been found, and may be later discovered in the drift deposits of Asia, where man really originated. For if we do not believe in indefinite and continuous progress, any more than in the barbarism of primitive man, we acknowledge in fact that the only thing which man did not invent was language. Writing, the knowledge and use of metals, the various arts, the sciences, etc., are the proud conquests of the King of creation. But if he had to go through a long process of investigations and discoveries after his fall, he still possessed reason, nourished at first by divine revelation;

and nothing can give more elevation and activity to the human mind, besides its native energy, than the word of God communicated first to the race, and preserved more or less faithfully during a long period at least of the ante-diluvian epoch. His inventions, therefore, were then more rapid and remarkable than we can suppose them to have been at a later period.

These considerations, worthy of the respect of all Christians, cannot any more be derided by merely learned men; because, in our age, the truth of the Noachian deluge gradually gains ground, and begins to be adopted by men of learning, even when unfortunately deprived of the belief in divine revelation.

The following quotations from Mr. E. B. Tylor, and Mr. Maury, deserve, on this account, to find a place in our pages:

“The notion of men having existed before the flood, and having been all destroyed except a few who escaped and re-peopled the earth, does not flow so immediately from the observation of natural phenomena that we can easily suppose it to have originated several times independently in such a way; yet this is a feature common to the great mass of flood traditions. Still more strongly does this argument apply to the occurrence of some form of raft, ark, or canoe in which the survivors are generally saved, unless, as in some cases, they take refuge directly on the top of some mountain which the water never covers. The idea is, indeed, conceivable, if somewhat far-fetched, that from the sight of a boat found high on a mountain, there might grow the story of a flood which carried it there, while the people in it escaped to found a new race. But it lies outside all reasonable probability to suppose such circumstances to have produced the same story in several different places, nor is it very likely that the dim remembrances of a number of local floods should accord in this with the amount of consistency that is found among the flood traditions of remote regions of the world. The occurrence of an ark in the traditions of a deluge, found in so many distant times and

places, seems to entitle them to be received as derived from a single source." (E. B. Tylor, "Early History of Mankind," page 324.)

"The cause of the likeness of the diluvian traditions of the people of the New World to those of the Bible, remains still an unexplained fact," says Mr. Maury, who nevertheless tries in the same book to destroy the authority of the Mosaic narrative of the deluge. The fact once admitted, most of the discoveries of the palæolithic age can be explained. We will, however, show later on that there is yet a better explanation of the whole misconception of unbelieving scientists, and that not only the actual state of the quaternary deposits, but chiefly the human remains they contain, prove their real age, and their probable origin bring them absolutely within the limits of historic times, and do away entirely with the immense number of ages supposed to be required by enthusiastic prehistorians.

II. We have, thus far, briefly examined the researches made in Western Europe in the Drift, and compared the conclusions drawn from them by many "prehistorians" with those of a very competent class of writers on the same subject. We must now answer the question, What of Asia and Africa?

It seems that a large number of specimens of stone implements have already been received in England from Bombay. But we have not heard that the circumstances of their discovery agree with those enumerated above, with respect to the European Drift. For the various theories on the quaternary period, as it is called, do not rely only, nor principally even, for their support on the stone relics of the palæolithic age, but chiefly on their surroundings *in situ*; on the remains of extinct mammalia, which often accompany them; on the clear proofs of a very different climate at the time; on their *stratigraphy*, as geologists express it; and on several other circumstances which have been closely investigated in Europe. We

have not heard anything of the kind from Bombay, so that no conclusion whatever can yet be deduced from Asiatic discoveries.

But an answer has come from Africa, and it is, in its simplicity, a terrible blow given to the fine-spun theories of "prehistorians." Mr. Mariette has already been heard from Egypt; and Mr. F. Chabas, in his "*Etudes sur l'Antiquité Historique, etc.*" (2d edit. Paris, 1873), has summed up the conclusions deduced from those African discoveries. Mr. Mariette states positively that Egypt and the adjacent countries, chiefly in the north, are literally filled with stone implements of the (so-called) palæolithic and neolithic ages; but all evidently belonging to the true historic period, to all centuries, in fact, from the first Egyptian dynasties to the Ptolemies. They are invariably mixed up with copper, bronze, and even sometimes iron utensils. Workmen continued to use them indiscriminately, probably because silex is extremely abundant all over Egypt, and they are as useful as metallic tools for many operations. They served in the mines of Mount Sina—which Mr. Mariette went to explore—to extract from the clay the turquoise which are abundant there, and were used by the Pharaohs for the ornamentation of their temples and palaces. They served around Memphis and Thebes for cutting stone, and polishing the obelisks, columns, statues, etc. With them are often found fresh-water shells, on the fish of which the workmen fed, as well as many objects of Egyptian art of all periods, etc., etc.

These few remarks evidently nullify all the prehistoric systems invented by ardent French and English discoverers. But combining the facts of Egypt with those of Europe, Mr. Chabas draws conclusions perfectly in accord with our own, and expressed pithily in the analytical index placed at the end of his most interesting volume. We quote his own words, on account of the rare good sense they exhibit, so different from the idle guessing of shallow theorists :

“Les silex taillés des époques du renne et de l'éléphant (en France), sont aussi remarquables que ceux dits de la pierre polie.” (Consequently neither belong to a barbarous age.) “Des outils grossiers et des instruments bien travaillés sont répandus dans toutes les *stations*.” (Consequently no *periodicity*.) “Supériorité incontestable du travail de l'os à l'époque du mammoth et du renne.” (Therefore no quaternary period, so called.) “Le grand déplacement d'eau qui a donné le relief actuel du bassin de la Seine a été de peu de durée.” (No proof consequently of a great antiquity for objects found in it. It was not an epoch.) “Incertitudes sur la durée et sur l'universalité des phénomènes glaciaires,” etc., etc. A phrase somewhere in the book seems to indicate that the author would not be much opposed to the opinion that all those drift phenomena are the effects of the Noachian deluge.

Mr. Chabas is a man of science, of no mean attainments; and, if we do not mistake, he began his investigations with a real bent towards the new theories; but, in his good faith, he soon perceived the error, and, with an honest simplicity, he declared openly his convictions.

### III.

The question seems now to be in a fair way of a rational solution. By looking at it under a new aspect, we hope to solve it in a way which, we trust, may be considered to be not very far from a complete demonstration.

The English scientists generally assert that very few undoubted remains of the human skeleton have been discovered among the deposits of the palæolithic age, if, indeed, any can be said to have been found really belonging to it. The French, on the contrary, have had the good luck to fall on real treasures of this kind, to which a slight allusion has already been made by us.

In the classification of the various stages of the quaternary period suggested by Mr. de Mortillet, and adopted in the Paris Museum of National Antiquities, the first and oldest epoch, we said, was that of "du Moustiers," in which no human remains have been discovered. But in the deposits of the second epoch—that of "Solutré"—a number of skeletons, more or less perfect, have been exhumed, "well constituted," says Mr. A. Arcelin, "worthy in every respect to be called men, although offering, certainly, some characteristics now belonging only to inferior races." But in the subsequent epoch—that of "Aurignac"—to which the remains found at Cro Magnon, in Dordogne, France, are supposed to belong, far superior characteristics are visible. Dr. Broca published in the "Memoirs of the Anthropological Society," a most interesting dissertation on the subject. He found that, in some respects, that antique race "possessed some of the highest and noblest traits of the human form, whilst in some others it could only be compared with the lowest types of the present age."

Already, not only many conveniences for life existed, but art was likewise attempted in those productions of sculpture and bas-relief of which we have already spoken. The men of that very early age worked not only on stone, but also on bone and ivory. The representations of the various animals existing at the time, and of which several species are now extinct, are so well brought out that they are easily recognizable specifically, and their individual nature is clearly expressed. There is even a kind of boldness in the execution which supposes in the workman a real artistic taste, at least, in the incipient stage.

We are far, it is evident, from finding in "primitive man," even in Western Europe, the brute type of the pretended Neanderthal cranium which had produced such a lively and triumphant sensation in the Darwinist ranks, until it was proved that its age could not be ascertained, and that it might have

belonged to an idiot, a class never extinct, even among the most polished and civilized races. And the same may be said of several other human bones found isolated and mutilated, so as to offer scarcely any positive and certain characteristics. Yet were such discoveries as these invariably received by the evolutionists with shouts of exultation.

It was not the case with respect to the remains of man in what is called the Quaternary deposit. They were so abundant and so well preserved that anthropologists began to study and ascertain their characteristics; and the result was, in our opinion, a complete refutation of the common delusion of our age regarding "primitive man." Dr. Pruner-Bey was instrumental in bringing this about. He asserted plainly that they belonged to the branch of the human family remarkable for a lozenge-shaped visage, to which he had already given the name of "Mongoloid"—much more extensive, remark it well, than the former Mongolian race, but including it. He thought even that he could recognize in the skeletons in his possession four principal types, which could be assimilated to races existing at the present time, namely, the Lapps, the Finns, the Esthonians, and the Esquimaux of Behring Straits.

Therefore the "man" of the Quaternary period, according to Pruner-Bey, belongs to history, and there is, in fact, no prehistoric man; a discovery so important that we must consider it somewhat at leisure; and the more we examine it, the more surely shall we arrive at a rational solution of the problem.

First, to establish firmly the competence of the discoverer, it must be said that his declaration was stoutly opposed by the transformist school, as it is called, namely: by the partisans of Darwinism. They pretended that, as, in the opinion of their leader, all organized beings are in a constant state of transformation, it is not possible to establish the permanent characteristics of races, and distinguish one from the other. This was to deny the possibility of a scientific natural history; and as it



is certainly a positive consequence of their system, it is another proof that it must be wrong. But it is useless to add that all men in France, learned in the science of anthropology, declared themselves firm supporters of the ideas and conclusions of Pruner-Bey. De Quatrefages, acknowledged universally as one of the first European anthropologists, distinguished himself by his ardent championship of the discovery.

To understand fully its paramount importance, and show how completely it undermines the very existence of prehistoric times, we have only to compare its results with the well-known conclusions of the best ethnographers of our age. It will then be found that the men of the Quaternary period belonged, really, to those branches of the human family which have been called Allophylian by Dr. Prichard—Turanian, by the majority of writers—Hamitic, by very respectable scientists and historians, and by the majority of Christian writers, such as De Maistre, Lord Arundel, etc., and now are called Mongoloid, or Mongolian, by such men as Dr. Pruner-Bey, Quatrefages, and Max Müller.

We request the reader's particular attention, since we are going to speak of the real "primitive man" among the races degraded not only by the Fall, but likewise by a particular curse, to the fact, that, although the skeletons studied by Pruner-Bey belonged to races far superior to the pretended prototype of the supposed prehistoric times, still they were far inferior to other races included, it is true, in the fall of Adam, but not in the curse of Noah, namely: the Japhetic and Semitic families.

Dr. James C. Prichard, in his "Researches into the Physical History of Mankind," was the first to speak *in extenso* of the almost universal spread in primitive times of various races comparatively barbarous, when placed in juxtaposition with the Indo-European family of nations. He called them Allophylian, and showed that they were not yet extinct, but formed, even

in our own days, sometimes vast centres of population, chiefly in Northern and Eastern Asia, sometimes less numerous communities in the north and the west of Europe. He showed that the Basques, at the foot of the Pyrenees, were most probably allied to them; that the same may be said of the Iberians who occupied one-half of Spain; and that the Finns and Lapps were certainly branches of the same family. He proved it likewise of the Tartars and Turks—certainly not a degraded race. He includes in the same vast agglomeration of nations all the tribes of Siberia, together with the peoples inhabiting the high regions of Central Asia, divided between the Turkish, Mongolian, and Tungusian branches. Finally, besides numerous other less important tribes, he admitted into the same classification the Thibetians, the Chinese, and Indo-Chinese nations; also the aboriginal races of the Dekhan in India, and of Ceylon, so different from the Hindoos of Indo-European origin.

The “Mongoloid” race of Dr. Pruner-Bey, on which he ingrafts the “men of the Quaternary period,” whose remains were discovered at Solutré, and elsewhere in France and Belgium, is, we may say, co-extensive with the family of Allophylian races enumerated by Dr. Prichard.

But the author of the “Physical History of Mankind” went further. It was chiefly by the study of the languages of all those tribes that he showed their affinity. And he positively disproved by his deep researches the previous assertions of Léontier, in his “Letters to Mr. Langlès on the Literature of the Mandchoos,” of Klaproth himself, and of other best-informed writers, who apparently had established firmly the opinion of a radical difference in the languages chiefly of the Tartar, Mongolian, and Tungusian families. Dr. Prichard demonstrated so completely the affinity of language in all the tribes and nations which he called Allophylian, that from his time the decision has been considered as final; and the best

ethnographers of our times, besides such men as George Rawlinson and Max Müller, fully admit it as incontrovertible.

The name, Allophylian, given by Dr. Prichard to this immense agglomeration, was, it is true, soon forgotten, or at least neglected; and a new one, Turanian, was introduced. But its introduction brought out no new view on the subject, or none worth chronicling.

IN Sir George Rawlinson's "Herodotus"—Tom. 1, Essay xi.—we find a succinct, we may say, indeed, exhaustive discussion on the "Tâtar or Turanian races," as he calls them; and he has certainly collected there all the sound erudition, ancient or modern, which we possess on the topic. We can give only the conclusions he has reached; but they must not be omitted on account of their importance.

He gives more details than Prichard on the languages used by the various families of this ancient race, and admits that in "character and genius the Turanian tongues may be said to resemble one another." He pretends, it is true, that "although the connection between them may be accounted for by real consanguinity or descent from a common stock, it does not necessitate such a supposition, but it may be sufficiently explained without it. The principle of *agglutination*, as it is called, which is the most marked characteristic of their languages, seems almost a necessary feature of any language in a constant state of flux and change, absolutely devoid of a literature, and maintaining itself in existence by means of the scanty conversation of nomads." But all the remarks which follow this singular or rather too sweeping opinion of the learned Englishman, tend to show that he believed with Prichard in the real and substantial affinity of language between all these tribes. And after enumerating the various original races of Western and Central Asia, he adds a few phrases, which we quote on account of their important bearing on our present subject: "The primitive form of the tongue . . . has remained, from

the earliest times to the present day, the language of four-fifths of Asia, and of many of the remoter parts of Europe. It is spoken by the Finns and the Lapps . . . the Ostiaks and Samoyeds, by all the various races which wander over the vast steppes of Northern Asia, and Eastern Europe; by the hill-tribes of India—the Dekhan—and by many nations of the Eastern Archipelago.” We see its co-extension with the Allophylian family of Dr. Prichard. To show, moreover, that their language is not so unsettled as he seems to imply in this passage, he quotes, in his notes on the subject, Max Müller, who certainly, in his lectures “On the Science of Religion,” includes, with Prichard, Thibet and China in the category. And there is, and there certainly has been, a “literature” in those Turanian countries. He mentions several times, likewise, the remarkable fact that in most cuneiform-inscriptions found in formerly civilized countries of Asia, there is not only a Sanscrit as well as a Semitic column, but also a Turanian one, so that they are called “trilingual.” Thus identifying, as many ethnographers do, the Turanian with the Hamitic family of nations. We shall show this more fully presently. Asia exhibits yet in all its principal inscriptions the original division of mankind among the three sons of Noah, beyond which we have no traces of “primitive man.” Dr. Pruner-Bey, in his classification of the races found in the quaternary period, cannot consequently extend it to the epoch previous to the Deluge, but must confine this nomenclature to a posterior period of time, since it is only later on that there have been Lapps, Finns, Esthonians, and Esquimaux, whose types he has discovered among the remains of Solutré and of Cro Magnon. Those remains, therefore, belong really to historic, not to prehistoric times.

A second general remark of great importance made by Sir George Rawlinson, regards the priority of the spread of the Turanian family to the Semitic and Indo-European branches, which certainly appear in history after the Turanians. The

Paschal Chronicle, Epiphanius (adv. hæres), and John of Malala (Chronogr.), speak of a period which they designate by the term *Σκυθισμὸς*, when Turanian or Scythic races were predominant, and when Aryan or Semitic civilization does not seem to have been developed. Berosus and Justinus, the first by alluding to the Median dynasty, the second by what he calls the Scythic domination, evidently refer to this early epoch. In the time of Herodotus there was yet everywhere in Western Asia a large Scythic element in the population, which gave grounds for the supposition that formerly it was predominant. And the recently-discovered cuneiform records place the fact beyond a doubt. These Scythic writings appear not only in Media, but in Persia proper, chiefly at Pasagardæ.

To use the very words of Rawlinson: "All this can only be accounted for by the supposition that before the great immigration of the Aryan races from the East, Scythic, or Tâtar, tribes occupied the countries seized by them. This population was for the most part absorbed in the conquering element. In places, however, it maintained itself in some distinctness, and retained a *quasi* nationality, standing to the conquerors as the Welsh and ancient Cornish to the Anglo-Saxons of our own country."

On these sensible observations of the great English writer, we may be allowed to remark that the priority of which he speaks cannot have been one including many ages, as the prehistoric writers suppose. It is clearly allowable to speak of the prior period of *Σκυθισμὸς* as of an historic epoch; and thus the human remains of the so-called quaternary deposits in France do not belong in fact to prehistoric times: since the existence of the Lapps, Finns, Esthonians, etc., being admittedly included in that of the Scythic, or Turanian, or Allophylian tribes—whichever of these names the reader may adopt—everything found in the drift, even of the palæolithic age, must be referred to the same period of time.

Sir George Rawlinson's clear details on the Turanian race contain yet another remarkable fact, which ought not to be omitted in these investigations. The generic name he gives to the race itself—Turanian—includes not only Scythic, or Tatar, tribes of Central and Northern Asia, as well as of Northern and Western Europe, but likewise the Hamitic populations of nearly the whole of Africa, and of Southern Arabia and Asia. The details ought to be read in the work to which we refer, since the limit we have assigned to ourselves does not allow us to quote them *in extenso*. But from the whole the conclusion remains, that primitively the whole of Asia, Africa, and probably Europe, was inhabited by a race whose language differed certainly in most of the tribes composing it, but partook evidently of a common characteristic, and was of a similar nature. This similarity consisted chiefly in its form *by agglutination*. The ancient language of Egypt bore certainly that character, as well as that of actual China. That race is undoubtedly the most ancient with which we now are acquainted. Nevertheless, the immense addition to historic knowledge, acquired lately by the arduous labors of many investigators, enables us to assert that it does not reach beyond historic times. To that race belonged certainly the skeletons studied by Dr. Pruner-Bey, since the Lapps, Finns, and Esthonians are invariably ascribed to it by all modern writers on the subject. But Rawlinson, who sticks to the term "Turanian," by which he distinguishes it, is bound, by his own list of nations, to include in it all the Hamitic tribes known in ancient times.

Hence, Christian ethnographers and men of science have designated it by this last name, and state boldly, and probably truly, that the children of Ham spread at first more rapidly on the earth than those of Sem and Japhet; and thus took possession of the places where their more favored brethren were to come after them, and to assume the authority over them, promised by the father of all future men—Noah himself. Thus

the priority of which we spoke is not that of the race itself, but of its extension. The reason of its inferiority in this case is not that it was a more primitive state of humanity, but that it lay under a *curse*. We may here remark, incidentally, that Mr. de Maistre, in his celebrated passage of the “*Soirées de St. Petersbourg*,” quoted by Lord Arundel at the head of his chapter on “*Tradition*,” does not suppose the curse to have been a single one, as that of Noah referred to above; but he explains the existence of perhaps many savage tribes by the crimes of their chieftains. “A chief of a nation,” he says, “having altered the principle of morality in his household by one of those prevarications which, so far as we can judge, are no longer possible in the actual state of things—because happily our knowledge is no longer such as to allow us to become culpable in this degree; this chief of a nation, I say, transmits the curse to his posterity; and every constant force being accelerating in its nature, this degradation, weighing incessantly upon his descendants, has ended in making them what we call *savages*.”

Here, however, as we speak of a vast primitive race, composed of an almost indefinite number of tribes, *the curse* must have happened at the very beginning of mankind, and can be explained only by the fact recorded in the Book of Genesis. There are considerations on the subject in the chapter “on primitive man” of the recent work of Lord Arundel, well worthy of perusal. He, however, thinks that the Hamitic family was not co-extensive with the Turanian race, which, he says, is a philological, not an ethnic, entity; and this observation, striking at first, is, in my opinion, calculated to create a far greater difficulty than the one it obviates. The noble writer, in the course of his remarks, seems to limit the Hamitic race to black, or nearly black, tribes, as he readily classifies with it the degraded races of Hindostan, the Sudras particularly, on account of their dark complexion. But is he right in placing

“blackness,” as he calls it, among the essential characteristics of the Hamitic family? The Hamitic race spread from the very beginning, not only in Egypt and Ethiopia, but likewise in Babylonia, Palestine, and along the Syrian coast; many nations sprung from it not only were not black, but were remarkable for their ruddy complexion.

We prefer, therefore, not to distinguish, ethnically, the Turanians of the North and West from the Hamites of the South and East. And in this we are in harmony with the best ethnographers of our time. All the facts we have adduced, tend to prove the real origin of the skeletons found in the “Quaternary” deposits of France.

A great part of this is confirmed by the name given by Pruner-Bey to the race whose remains were found particularly at Solutr  and Cro Magnon. He calls it Mongoloid. Not that Mongolians alone are included in it, but because the chief members composing the whole body in our time are truly Mongolians. The term, then, becomes synonymous with Turanian, and Max M ller, everywhere in his works, but particularly in his third lecture “On the Science of Religion,” insists particularly on this point, that the “Turanian world,” as he calls it, is chiefly composed in our days of “the Chinese, the Mongolians, the Samoyeds, the Finns, and the Lapps.”

Our readers will, we think, by this time have perceived the reason of the great importance we have attached to the discovery of those human skeletons in France, studied and interpreted by a learned Frenchman, whose name indicates that probably he belongs to that class of his *Mussulmanized* countrymen attached to the service of the present Khedive of Egypt, and that consequently he had no preconceived Christian theory to subserve in his investigations and declarations.

We must not omit another and last argument in the same direction, which, in the wealth of matter, had well nigh escaped, and which no one will consider as without weight.



Mr. A. Arcelin positively states that human types have been found in the same localities, so nearly bearing the characteristics of the Aryan race, that it is very likely some early migration of it had already reached the centre of France at the time these drifts, supposed to be of the palæolithic age, became the common sepulchre of those "primitive men," as well as "the rough chipped arrows and hatchets" which the new scientists consider of such an appallingly ancient origin—200,000 years, according to the moderate calculation of Sir John Lubbock. Mr. Arcelin, it is true, adds that as the real and undoubted Aryan type was not positively ascertained, it could not be given as a fact resulting from these researches. But those Aryan characteristics, if not positively found, were, however, very nearly approximated to in those remains. They could not be, consequently, the relics of barbarians and savages; and it is a new proof of the worthlessness of the speculations indulged in by many modern scientists.

We may, therefore, now proceed to the investigation of the origin and nature of primitive man, after having removed from our path the phantom evoked in the name of natural science. And yet it must not be called science, but mere perverse speculation, urged in the teeth of all history which teaches us that man is only of yesterday; of geology which says that his remains are found only on the surface-crust of our globe, so that he cannot have appeared before the earth had reached the form and aspect it at present bears; in spite of the distinct and positive statements of revelation, which ascribe to him an origin totally opposed to the wild and fanciful theory of an evolutionary process progressing through untold ages; yet persists indeed, it is to be feared, precisely on account of those statements of revelation, in thrusting down the throats of men its far-fetched paradox, and in endeavoring to force them to believe that what is new must be called old, what is noble must be called mean, what is to last forever must be made perish-

able, and sure to disappear with all the other shadows of his earth.

It is but comparatively little we were able to produce from this vast field of investigation, within the limits of a work of ordinary dimensions. But we think we may be allowed to indulge the hope that our induction has been sufficient to satisfy the reader that with the history of Hindostan, as well as that of Mesopotamia, have really begun the annals of mankind; and, in proving what was their belief at first, we prove, in truth, what man has assented to from his very origin.

#### IV.

We now proceed to make a few general observations on primitive barbarism. Hitherto, we have only discussed systems opposed to what we believe to be the truth; and many considerations which have escaped us, as not lying directly in our line of thought, may here be introduced with advantage, with the view of adding additional cogency to what has already been advanced.

Now, first, as to the pretended long ages of unconsciousness for humanity, which, according to many writers of our age, have preceded historic times, and suppose evidently the state rather of the brute than of barbarism, we have to say that no barbarians have ever been discovered without language, and, consequently, without real consciousness. And, as the writers we oppose, delight in finding analogies between the degraded tribes of our days and "primitive man," a prompt answer can be given them by referring to our existing savages. Nay, the tongues of many modern savage tribes are very complicated and rich in their construction, showing evidently their degeneracy from a higher state; and in all, even in the *agglutinative* dialects of the Turanian nations, there is always a completeness

with respect to their wants, which assures us, indeed, that they are fully conscious and wide awake. Nay, should we try the experiment proposed by Max Müller in the "Contemporary Review" (January, 1875), we should easily find that the imperfection of the dialect of any nation does not arise from their individual barbarism or even inferiority. "We see, to-day, that the lowest of savages—men whose language is said to be no better than the clucking of hens or the twittering of birds, and who have been declared, in many respects, lower even than animals—possess this one specific characteristic, that if you take one of their babies, and bring it up in England, it will learn to speak as well as any English baby, while no amount of education will elicit any attempt at language from the highest animals, whether bipeds or quadrupeds. That faculty cannot have been formed by definite nervous structures, congenitally framed; for we are told that both father and mother clucked like hens" (page 325).

How can any one know that our ancestors have been at any time unconscious? It is a purely gratuitous assertion; and, as it rests on no basis of serious argument, it merits nothing more than a peremptory denial. Let prehistorians show, at least, that man can be a real man, and at the same time a dumb animal. The discovery of some few *disinherited* outcasts—to borrow a very appropriate French word—rambling in forests, and apparently denied the gift of speech, is no proof of this, but only a consequence of their having been deprived from infancy of the companionship of other men, required absolutely by the social nature of the King of creation. But, as soon as they were received in the bosom of human society, of whatever kind, their tongue was unloosened, and they began to speak. As to those born deaf and dumb, it is an evident abuse of language to call them dumb persons. They express their ideas; they speak in reality, although only by signs; they understand their friends, and their friends understand them.

Yet it is, we think, Sir John Lubbock who brings seriously the fact of the deaf and dumb people as a proof that man can exist without language.

But it is not the gift of speech alone which is required for true consciousness, and without which man remains a barbarian, or rather a brute. 'Writing, besides, they say, is necessary to transmit to posterity the consciousness of humanity; and a human creature deprived of that art, has no adequate means of passing over to his children the events anterior to his own time. Tradition by speech is not sufficient, according to Sir John Lubbock, and many others. Thus in their estimation humanity lives only for the time being; each one is disconnected from what went before, and what is to follow. Without writing, in fact, man remains in childhood all his life; and the tribal organizations of such infantine individuals cannot be composed but of barbarians, if not of savages. But is not writing a really modern invention?' Even if it be true that the art of writing is "modern," tradition by speech is amply sufficient to transmit to posterity the important events of past ages, and with it alone man can be a civilized and noble being. Antiquity attests with one voice to the retentive memory of early men; and the practice of universal oral tradition was considered so sure, and at the same time so *becoming* for man in those remarkable ages, that even after writing was invented, the custom prevailed everywhere, to transmit orally, not only the long series of previous events, but even the most considerable productions of primitive literature. It is known that the poems of Homer were for many ages preserved safely in the memory of Greece, and it was only the comparatively modern Pisistratus who thought of having them committed to parchment or perhaps papyrus. Many other facts of the kind, brought together by Lord Arundel, in his chapter "On the Tradition of the Human Race," confirm this statement. But the list might be made much longer, as he does not say a word of the immense

production called the "Vedas," in Hindostan, which certainly remained for a long time in the memory of Brahmins, before being indited on lotus leaves. The Zends in Bactria, the Kings in China, the enormous compilation of the Buddhist works in the Far-East; the later Greek Dionysiacs, Thebais, Epigoniads, etc., mentioned by Coleridge in his "Greek Classic Poets," have most probably to be placed in the same category. Moses certainly, when he wrote the Pentateuch, had only oral tradition to guide him, humanly speaking; the divine inspiration he enjoyed, having mainly for its object to prevent his falling into error in making the collection. The mind of men in those times was so capacious, that, almost without effort, their memory was stored with the sublimest productions of human genius; and they seem to have delighted in imbuing their whole soul with the most elevated thoughts of those who had preceded them. In making an estimate of them we must adopt a rule directly opposite to that followed by the "prehistorians" of our days. They predicate of them all that is low, mean, narrow in our actually existing savages. We must start from the other end of the series, and place them only "a little below the angels," as David says.

Hence, even supposing Sir John Lubbock to be right in what he states of the "Tasmanians," who, "a few years after Captain Cook had passed among them, had totally forgotten his appearance—which was that of the first white man—on their island;" an assertion, by the way, which Lord Arundel has victoriously disproved; what has this to do with oral tradition as it existed primitively, as all antiquity shows it in actual operation all over Asia and Europe? But, now, is the art of writing modern? And can mankind be said to have remained long ages without it, and, consequently, in a half-conscious state?

Sir George Rawlinson proves that, at least, some of the Turanian nations, in the oldest historic times, had already acquired

the art of writing. The Chaldæans of the most ancient known period were Cushites, and consequently Turanians. We possess many inscriptions of those early ages. They are invariably on bricks; either drawn on the fresh clay with the triangular point of a tool, or cast from a mould previously engraved. Rawlinson proves that it was a kind of picture-writing on a par with that of the more recent Mexicans; and the early Chaldæans are the first people known to history.

Moses certainly wrote the Pentateuch, in spite of what German and English exegetists may say; and Job has told us that even *flint—in silice*—was used in his time to perpetuate the memory of events. Those great men had not degenerated so far as to use the wretched paper on which we transcribe our thoughts; they wanted theirs to remain as permanent as *material* things can be. Hence they chose the hardest rocks or the toughest metals to write them on. This, it is true, was perhaps an obstacle to having large “libraries” in their possession, although that of the kings of Assyria transported to England cannot be called a very small and unimportant one. They, however, preferred in general to make of their memory the store-house of their longest literary productions.

If Moses wrote the Pentateuch, we may be sure that Egyptians of his time wrote, also, the already long history of their gods. And we know, from existing monuments, that, long before Moses, they practised writing either on granite, or on porphyry for great occasions; keeping papyrus and other light materials for the ordinary uses of common life. But we shall treat this part of our subject more in detail by and by.

The discussion of this subject at greater length is not required in these pages. For the present, we close our remarks under this heading, with the observation, that picture-writing is not necessarily the sign of a half-barbarous nation. It can exist in union with a high culture, as in Mexico, as in ancient Egypt, even as in the China of our day, which has not yet

adopted our alphabet. That may be said of writing which has already been proved of the "stone," "bronze," and "iron" ages. All kinds can exist together, even in the same nation. Without it, a people can still enjoy a high moral elevation; although we do not pretend that it is not a powerful help for real and sound development. In our times, it is far more important than in the first ages of the world. Our minds are occupied with so many different objects of thought; we are so little trained to the consideration of a single subject abstractedly from any other, and we impose so little restraint on our restless imagination, that writing seems to be absolutely required to fix the wandering faculties of our soul. Our memory, especially, is too often unreliable and unsafe. It was not so in the first ages of mankind. A few great thoughts occupied wholly the minds of men; they were accustomed to reflect deeply on the limited subjects of their mental activity; thus everything presented to their intellectual faculties became deeply impressed, and remained permanently in their souls as a spiritual treasure, always full and always open. This alone can explain the surprising fact of the richness and depth of their languages, and the immense amount of *inventions* which go back certainly to the cradle of mankind.

Finally, the difference of races, which appear from the beginning as distinct as they are now, show that universal barbarism is not the starting-point of humanity. We see, at the very origin of nations, Hindostan and Central Asia occupied by very superior races whose mental elevation astonishes the modern student, of which many examples will hereafter come under our observation; and, at the same time, by low and degraded tribes, called in the laws of Menu *chandalas*, in our age *pariahs*, co-existing with the others, and remaining, even to our very days, without rising in the social scale. We see in Egypt the same phenomenon of a ruling race, great in philosophy, in religion, in art; and, side by side, the debased negro appearing on the

monuments still in existence, with all the signs of degeneracy and enslavement which are, to this day, his share. We see the same variety and antagonism of races without number, in Iràn, in Arabia, in Syria; and later on in Greece, Italy, and the rest of Europe. Could the system of Sir John Lubbock and his friends be confuted more pointedly by any argument, than it is by all these facts of the primitive ages? What was the primary and original cause of this strange difference of races? We cannot know. We only are sure that the human species was one in spite of all those divergences. It does not seem probable that they arose one from the other, although, as Dr. Prichard has shown conclusively in his great work on the "Physical History of Mankind," they everywhere pass from one to the other by almost insensible gradations, so that the unity of mankind is never contradicted by the net-work of their variations. Lastly, they are so slow in changing, that often the greatest period of time makes scarcely an impression upon them. We may repeat the question: What has been the primary cause of the difference of races among men? No one can know positively. Either the opinion of De Maistre, quoted above, is the true one, or there must have been, at the origin of mankind, a far superior action of exterior circumstances on man than there is at the present time, when races change so slowly and so imperceptibly. If this last hypothesis is the right one, then that happened morally and physically for human kind, which took place in the physical order for the exterior covering of our globe. For, no intelligent geologist can admit, that the alterations of its surface could be always as slow and imperceptible as they now appear to be.

But meanwhile, at all times, the passage of any race from a lower point to a higher one is of the greatest difficulty. It is to us a matter of wonder to hear "prehistorians" talk, when they speak of it as if it was the "law of the moral universe." In North America, however, we meet with the real difficulty every day. Is it not known, nay, demonstrated, after so



many experiments, that it is almost impossible to reclaim the red man, with all the means of culture which surround him? Is not the same true of many tribes of Africa, of Polynesia, of South America? And, if in human history, many nations have effectually passed, on many occasions, from a low degree of culture to a higher one, to the highest, in fact, in some exceptional cases—have they not invariably been helped up to it at least at the beginning of the struggle, and a long time perhaps of their national existence? The Hellenes, one of the most remarkable examples of it, thus had certainly received a great deal at first from the anterior civilization of Hindostan and Egypt. The same was the case with the Romans with respect to the Etruscans and the Hellenes. The northern barbarians who destroyed the Roman Empire possessed, certainly, in their intimate nature, some germ deposited there by their long-forgotten ancestors of Central Asia—germs developed with infinite pains by Christianity, which first humanized and afterward civilized them.

Thus the self-educating principle is seen nowhere in history. And on this account, we presume, the “prehistorians” set themselves, from the start, in fierce opposition to history and tradition. We cannot do this. We propose, on the contrary, to consult them with all the zeal of ardent inquirers, bent on discovering the mystery of Isis by raising her veil.

### CHAPTER III.

#### ABORIGINAL RELIGION OBSCURED OR DESTROYED BY PANTHEISM OR POLYTHEISM IN HINDOSTAN.

THE best directed efforts to ascertain the origin of man, or primeval religion, by the facts of geology or zoology, can at best only result in more or less probable conjectures. The gradual development of the globe, even, has not been yet proved by so many arduous mental labors; for scientists are not agreed about many important details. And, in the classification of organized beings, opinions are almost as various as individuals. How can we hope to come to a more satisfactory conclusion with respect to man and his religious feelings, when the remains we have of him are so scanty, and their surroundings so problematical? History and the cognate sciences are much more likely to tell us the truth on those important subjects. We have at least in them positive records, which speak for themselves, and place directly the men of old in intimate communication with us. Particularly since philology has made so many gigantic strides of late years on a ground formerly closed, in appearance at least, against the most persevering student. Its former field, confined to the Latin and Greek languages, with a smattering of the Semitic tongues—Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic—has been extended so as to include, not only the Sanscrit and the Egyptian, but even the Turanian idioms, with their mere agglutinative process and most primitive grammars. Champollion has given us the key of the hieroglyphs; and the cuneiform inscriptions of every shape have now scarcely any mystery for our antiquarians. The Cushite tongue, spoken by the near successors of the builders

of Babel, nay, engraved on the very bricks which remain of it, reveals its meaning to the scientific academician of London or Paris; and the amulet of the negro, the totem of the red Indian, are no more mere objects of wonder or pity, but speak to the understanding of our Schoolcrafts or Catlins.

And not only the writing of man, but his manual work even, is often as eloquent as language to transmit his ideas and social customs to a later age. At this very moment the history of Egypt is being reconstructed from its monuments. Hundreds of ardent explorers are busy examining them, unearthing them, measuring their vast size, and reproducing on paper, by the art of the engraver, their grand proportions and gigantic surroundings. On pyramids, obelisks, walls, colossal statues, signs no longer mysterious indicate what happened thousands of years ago; and the former lists of Manetho are from them recomposed, combined, and made at last to agree. The archæologist has found likewise the means of judging of antiquity by the mere aspect of a monument, and the historical succession of former times is graphically represented by a simple series of architectural drawings.

Enriched with all these precious fruits of an arduous, but in the end pleasing and useful study, the exact and impartial historian can at last pronounce, without fear of great error, the verdict of truth on the most ancient ages. We are at least in much less danger of being misinformed and deceived; no longer are we limited to the untrustworthiness of feeble guesses, and it is the consciousness of this invaluable truth which inspires us, when we open the noble books where all this learning is condensed. The great works of Wilkinson, Max Müller, the two Rawlinsons, the Sanscrit scholars of India, and many others in the English language; those of Spiegel, Haug, etc., in the German; the writings of Champollion, Burnouf, Lenormant, Comte de Rougé, and others in French; those of Rosellini, etc., in Italian, are much more likely to be of real service

to us in our investigations into the origin of human society, than all the possible speculations on the rough stone implements of France, Belgium, and England, added to the numerous observations and experiments on hybridism and natural selection.

Moreover, when we consider that the more historical studies progress, the more profane learning becomes reconciled to our sacred records, that is, to the most ancient writings in existence, we find in this reflection a new motive of assurance, which is absolutely wanting whenever a new theory suggests conclusions in opposition to our Holy Scriptures. For, independently of Christian faith, if we follow only the dictates of reason, the books which form our Bible ought to be considered as of great weight merely as historical records of the past; and whatever new discovery in science, or intellectual research of any kind, agrees with them, finds in this agreement a corroboration and a strong support; whilst on the contrary whatever new speculation opens a prospect of antagonism to them, ought by this very fact to become an object of suspicion and distrust.

## I.

If, then, God spoke in the beginning to mankind, whose primitive religion must thus have been a pure monotheism; if man did not begin by the savage state, but enjoyed high moral prerogatives at his first entrance into the world; as we believe modern theories on the origin of our species are really founded on false suppositions or on mere conjectures, primeval history must say something of that golden age, and show the idea of one eternal, infinite, all-powerful God, existing in the traditions of mankind, previous to all polytheistic errors.

A hundred years ago this could not have been asserted. A true knowledge of antiquity did not then exist; and it is only

in our times, quite recently, indeed, that the veil covering the infancy of the human race begins to be raised, independently of the infallible Hebrew and Christian records.

The question, however, of the introduction of polytheism is, no doubt, not unattended with difficulties. Nevertheless, yet, on the whole, the universal voice of history in that regard is so precise, that the conclusion may be said to amount almost to demonstration.

For us, Christians, the truth is known, since the word of God has revealed it to us; and we place it far above the oldest Indian, Persian, or Egyptian pronouncements. And yet, if we discover that it is supported by these, our previous faith receives a subsequent confirmation of no mean value. We, therefore, begin by quoting the simple statement contained in the Book of Wisdom on the origin of idolatry. And some of our readers may be afterwards surprised to find, that the ascertained history of Hindostan, Egypt, Greece, and other countries, is, after all, the strict fulfilment of a single chapter of the Old Testament. It is the thirteenth chapter of Wisdom, which first makes a most remarkable distinction between those "who worshipped the works of God"—Nature—and those who "adored the works of man"—Idols. What took place, historically, everywhere on earth, in the declension from monotheism to pantheism, and from this last to strict idolatry, could not be more clearly expressed: Men first had received "the knowledge of God;" but later, "by the good things that are seen, they could not understand Him, that is; neither by attending to the works have they acknowledged who was the workman. But they have imagined either the fire, or the wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the great water, or the sun and moon, to be the gods that rule the world: with whose beauty, if they, being delighted, took them to be gods, let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful; for the first author of beauty made all those things. Or if they admired their

power and their effects, let them understand by them that He that made them is mightier than they."

Divine revelation tells us, in these few words, precisely what happened, according to well-ascertained history. After a period of universal monotheism, the nations began to worship "the works of God," and fell generally into a broad pantheism. They took subsequently a second step, perfectly well marked, later on, in Hindostan, Central Asia, Egypt, Greece, etc.; a step originating everywhere in the imagination of poets, materializing God, bringing Him down to human nature and weakness, and finally idealizing and deifying His supposed representations in statuary and painting.

The author of the Book of Wisdom describes this last downward step toward pure idolatry, in the second part of his thirteenth chapter, and the beginning of the fourteenth. And we shall now proceed to place the reader in possession of historical facts which will satisfy him of the faithfulness of the description by what actually took place in history. The text itself: "If a carpenter hath cut down in the woods a tree," etc., need not be quoted as even modern apologues have made it familiar to everybody.

## II.

There is, first, a general remark, not without force certainly, which will naturally introduce the subject. It is this: No one can refuse to admit that monotheism always existed among the Hebrews, from the time of the patriarchs downward, and that the various attempts to introduce idolatry among them were always successfully repressed. So that the nation continued throughout its history monotheistic. This high, intelligent worship, supposing in man an advanced state of knowledge and civilization, incompatible certainly with barbarism—consequently never expected to be found in savage tribes, in a state

of society such as the human race is fancied by modern theorists to have invariably presented at its cradle—was certainly the religion of the Hebrew race from its great progenitor, Abraham. At the same epoch, likewise, many noble traditions about creation, the origin of moral evil, the hope of better things; including a moral code worthy of God and of man, and a firm belief in Divine Providence—that is, an infinite, benevolent Power far above all “the forces of nature”—these traditions, we say, must have been likewise, owing to the unity of the human species, the heirloom of other nations existing at that time in the same tribal state. Now, besides what we know of the Canaanite Melchisedech, of the Arabian Job, and a little later of the Cushite Balaam, etc., besides all these, the people of the whole of Hindostan, and of Central Asia at the north of it, was living precisely in the same conditions, in the same original state of clanship, to which we alluded in our first chapter. But what is more, at this present time when their primitive books can be well understood, we are sure that those numerous tribes enjoyed the privilege of a pure and exalted monotheism, untainted, as yet, not only by the gross idolatry which now prevails in those unfortunate countries, but even by the grand and all-absorbing pantheism by which it was too soon invaded.

We say the whole of Hindostan, and Central Asia at the north of it: because it is now demonstrated that this was the native country of that old, rich Sanscrit language in which the three first Vedas were written, as well as the Zends, namely: the books attributed to Zoroaster. Strabo remarked it as a fact of his own time, when Hindoo civilization was already on the wane: “The name of Ariana is extended so as to include some parts of Persia, Media, Bactria, and Sogdiana in the north; for these nations speak nearly the same language.” (Book xv., c. xi., § 8).

Bactria and Sogdiana, therefore, the eastern part of what we

call Persia, and northern half of India, is the great country which ought to attract our attention. But as, owing to some unfortunate mistakes of former learned and well-intentioned critics, which have long delayed the discovery of the whole truth with regard to the antiquity of the Zends, it has become an established custom to consider the three first Vedas as exclusively Hindoo, and the Zend-Avesta as exclusively Persian, when both were Aryan books, previous to the division of the people; we propose to take an historical survey of those countries apart; and to study, one after the other, their tribal system, and the real primitive doctrines of their books. We shall thus ascertain the identity of their origin, as well as the primeval religion and social life of the tribes.

### III.

First, then, their civil and social condition.

When Alexander reached the Indus and invaded the country beyond, he found himself in what we now call the Punjaub, and was surprised to meet, not the monarch of a great empire, but the petty chieftains of many a tribe of warriors, the ancestors, it is now believed, of the modern Rajpoots. The name of the most valiant of them was Poros—in the Hindoo language it must have been Puru. Nearchus, the commander of the Macedonian fleet, Onesicritus, an amateur historian who followed Alexander, Megasthenes and Deimachus, sent later as ambassadors to the Head-Sovereign of India, at Palibothra on the Ganges, all spoke in their works, now lost, except that of the first, of an immense number of nations living in that vast country, each of them governed by a *king* in the Greek language, by a *chieftain* in our own, by a *rajah* in the modern Hindoo dialect. Strabo, (Book xv., c. 1., § 3), says that “Writers affirm that the Macedonians conquered nine nations between the Hydaspes and the Hypanis (now called the Behul and the Beas), and obtained



possession of five hundred cities." Nearchus, likewise, in sailing down the Indus to its mouth, met with many nations inhabiting the countries of Porticanus and Musicanus, as he calls them. Thus, also, Arrian and Ptolemy describe the western part of the Deccan exactly as it appeared to the Portuguese fifteen hundred years later.

It is supposed that Alexander with his army, advanced into the interior of the country only about half-way between the Indus and the Ganges; but he heard of a great empire whose capital, called Palibothra, was built on this last-named river. Megasthenes later on visited it, and many details of his narrative, now lost, have been preserved by Strabo, Pliny, Arrian, and others. What was then the great empire of the Prasii? For such was the name it bore.

First, Strabo remarks, that "the king," besides his individual name, had always the surname of "Palibothrus," and he adds: "Such also is the custom among the Parthians; for all have the name 'Arsacæ,' although each has his peculiar name of Orodes, Phraates," etc. Therefore, the "Emperor of the Prasii" was the head of a great clan called Palibothrus. We shall have the same remark to make of the tribe of the "Achæmenidæ" in Persia.

Secondly, although Alexander heard of the empire of Prasii as the most powerful in India, yet it could not have extended over the whole country; since we know the west was altogether out of his control; and, on the south-east, the country of the Gangarides marked its boundary. It did not, therefore, include modern Bengal. In fact, it comprised merely modern Behar, with some adjacent provinces.

But even in that limited extent, it was nothing like a centralized government; for, from the whole social state of the country at the time, it is fair to conclude that the monarch at the head of it was only the suzerain of a great number of almost independent chieftains or rajahs.

We have already remarked that the social or political life of mankind began by clanship. It now appears that in India, that state of things continued to exist as far down as the time of Alexander the Great. We shall see that to a great extent it has continued to our days.

But were all those tribes, or *nations*, as they are called by the historians of the times, real clans; so that all may be said to have been "blood relations?" It is difficult, or rather impossible, to answer with certainty such a question. The learned men, even of the age of Alexander, even of the Augustan age, which followed, knew nothing of what is called now "Social Science." Julius Cæsar, after a ten years' residence in Celtic Gaul, had not the least idea of the clan system. Authors, then, attached a great importance to the physical description of foreign countries, to the exterior peculiarities of the people inhabiting them, to their outward manners and customs, to their literary culture, or the reverse. They generally passed very lightly over the real constitution of their government, and the secular institutions which really ruled them, but which require considerable philosophical acumen for their analysis and exposition. We have, therefore, often to trust to a few incidental phrases which seem to have escaped writers almost unconsciously, and which help a modern reader to an insight into the political and social institutions of those people, about which such writers as those we have named did not concern themselves.

The few words of Strabo on the name "Palibothrus," are of that character. But we are not confined to their testimony in the present case. If the men who theret composed the tribes were not blood relations in the same sense as the Celtic, Jewish, or Arabian septs, they had certainly been so originally. And a sure indication of it was that everything in their social organization was determined by strict marriage-rules. It may be said that one-half at least of the laws of Menu have for

their object to regulate marriage relations, by establishing the strictest rules with respect to the bonds of consanguinity, and the innumerable consequences which may follow with respect to purity of blood or the reverse. But, in Hindostan, this strict marriage-relationship took the shape of castes, not of clans; not, however, from the beginning, not from Vedic times. At the origin of the system a distinction had been established among brothers, which was to continue for all time to come. Three classes—not yet castes, since the laws of Menu do not speak of them—had been admitted to be pure: the Brahmins, the Kshastriyas, and the Vaisyas; the fourth, the *class* of the Sudras, was declared impure, not regenerated. Their more fortunate brethren had been twice born, and could alone wear the thread of regeneration. What was the original cause of these strange distinctions? At what time were they introduced? No one can tell. And the only explanation given by the Hindoos, is, that the first class was born of the mouth of Brahma; the second of his arm; the third of his thigh, and the last of his feet. The chandalas, pariahs, etc., did not belong to the nation; they were aliens, and became outcasts.

But it is a fact now perfectly well established, that the opinion of Greek and Latin writers who pretend that marriage was absolutely forbidden between the various classes, so as to be really impossible, is a mistaken one; and that, at the very origin of the nation, when the Vedas and the laws of Menu were written, nothing was so common as those inter-marriages. All the consequences of them were mere disabilities, some of them not of a very grave character, and not carrying with them any stain or “impurity,” when such unions took place between the three first castes. That cases of the kind happened frequently even in the most ancient times, results clearly from many passages of the laws of Menu, where the reader may find striking and extremely interesting examples of them all through the book, but chiefly in the whole tenth chapter: *on the mixed classes.*

There is no doubt that the numerous *mixed castes* mentioned by various authors who, even in our age, cannot agree as to their number, and increase it sometimes indefinitely, came from the facility left to individuals to choose their wives in inferior or superior castes.

This alone shows the importance that was ascribed to blood-relationship in India. It may be said to have ruled everything in the country, as it did in the old Celtic nations. But the result was very different, as its action differed so considerably. Hence, Heeren could say, in his great work on India, Chapter II. (the underlines are ours): "The distinctions of castes, though a fundamental principle of the constitution itself, at least, in the three superior ones, is based upon *the organization of families*. The desire of perpetuating the memorial of his house *by heirs male*, is, to a Hindoo, one of the most lively importance; and the want of sons is considered a misfortune only to be remedied by *adoption*. . . . We have already seen what frequent use the Indian poets have made of this national peculiarity; and how, both in the epic poem and in the drama, the preservation of a male child is often the main point on which the action of the piece turns."

This remarkable difference between the tribal system of Hindostan, and that of other primitive nations, being kept in view, we must come to the numerous points of agreement between both; so numerous, indeed, that the conclusion forces itself upon the mind, that both belonged evidently to the venerable patriarchal period. We speak of the uniformity of institutions, not of the character of the two peoples, which are altogether different.

First, then, as to the village, or, rather, township. This universal social and civil element in India, which bears to-day exactly the features it had three or four thousand years ago, is, in reality, a small clan; with its head called the *potail*, who, superintending the affairs of the community; settling disputes,

attends to the police and collection of taxes, and is the exact reproduction of the small chieftain and brehon judge; with the Brahmin priest and astrologer, another name for the old Druid and Ollamh; with its poet, rhapsodist, and schoolmaster, instead of the shanachy and the filé; with their several other officers, whose counterparts could be found easily in the old Celtic septa. And to render the similarity more perfect, all these functionaries were paid in the same manner, either in land or in a certain quantity of grain furnished by the agriculturists of the community.

According to an evidently well-informed author, quoted, without name, in "Chambers' Encyclopædia" (Lippincott's ed., 1872): "Under this simple form of municipal government, the inhabitants of the country have lived from time immemorial. The boundaries of the village have been but seldom altered; and though the villages themselves have been sometimes injured, and even desolated by war, famine, and disease, the same name of the township, the same limits, and even the same families have continued for ages. The inhabitants give themselves no trouble about the breaking up or division of kingdoms. So long as the village remains entire, they care not to what power it is transferred, or to what sovereign it devolves. Its internal economy remains unchanged; the potail is still the head inhabitant, and still acts as the petty judge and magistrate, and collector, or renter of the village."

Heeren proves that these strange organizations have existed in India as far back as the time of Menu, whose laws spoke of them, probably, 1,500 years before Christ. He says: "The whole seems to have originated in the partial organization of isolated communities, which, with their respective headmen, might be considered as so many petty States; and this fundamental institution still continued to subsist even when several of these townships or communities were united under the dominion of one Rajah, and thus formed a part of a larger

State or kingdom"—we should say tribe. "In the northern parts of India, particularly near the Ganges, where the irruptions of foreign conquerors succeeded each other like the waves of the ocean, all traces of the primitive form must have long since been obliterated; but in the southernmost division of the peninsula, in Mysore and Malabar, etc., which were least of all exposed to foreign invasions, they are still in existence at the present day."

We have thus, under our own eyes, many precious remnants of a primitive civilization, which has disappeared everywhere else, and which calls to our remembrance the heroic times anterior to the formation of great monarchies and republics.\*

#### IV.

We may now treat briefly of those simple and pure manners, untainted yet with idolatry of any kind, and elevated by the doctrines of the holiest and highest monotheism.

As late as the expedition of Alexander, Onesicritus, according to Strabo (Book xv., ch. 1, § 34), had remarked this in particular of the tribes living near the mouth of the Indus river. They were governed by chiefs whom he calls Porticanus and Musicanus—their Hindoo names are, no doubt, strangely disfigured. "The inhabitants of that country," he says, "are long-lived, and that life is protracted to the age of 130 years; they are temperate in their habits, and healthy; although their country produces everything in abundance. The following are their peculiarities: to have a kind of Lacedæmo-

\* The similarity of institutions in old Hindostan and in the former Celtic countries is so striking, and the consideration of it is so important with respect to the primitive state of mankind, which is now the object of our investigation, that we give a more extensive sketch of it in an *Appendix* at the end of this volume.

nian common meal, which they partake of in common. Their food consists of what is taken in the chase. They make no use of gold nor of silver, although they have mines of these metals. Instead of slaves, they employ youths in the flower of their age. They study no science with attention but that of medicine . . . . There is no process of law among them but against murder and outrage."

Megasthenes, speaking of the Prasii, living far down on the Ganges, at a great distance from the just-mentioned tribes, says: "Charmers go about the country, and are supposed to cure wounds made by serpents. This seems to comprise nearly their whole art of medicine, for diseases are not frequent among them, which is owing to their frugal manner of life, and to the absence of wine; whenever diseases do appear, they are treated by the *sophistæ* (or wise men)." With respect to the "absence of wine," we shall see directly what was their "homa," or "soma," which replaced it.

It seems, therefore, that already Brahmins practised the healing art as they do now; whilst formerly the law of Menu forbid them to have anything to do with physicians, who ought to be considered, according to that code, as a degraded class, impure, it seems, from their barbarous surgical operations, etc.

Strabo says, again, (same chapter, § 53): "All the Hindoos are frugal in their mode of life, especially in camp. They do not tolerate useless and undisciplined multitudes, and consequently observe good order. Theft is very rare among them. Megasthenes, who was in the camp of Sandracottus, which consisted of 400,000 men, did not witness on any day theft reported, which exceeded the sum of two hundred drachmæ, and this among a people who have no written laws, who are ignorant even of writing, and regulate everything by memory." (We shall soon see that Megasthenes was mistaken; Sanscrit literature at that very time was most flourishing). "They are, however, happy on account of their simple manners and frugal ways

of life. They never drink wine but at sacrifices.\* Their beverage is made from rice instead of barley, and their food consists for the most part of rice pottage. The simplicity of their laws appears from their not having many law-suits. They have no suits respecting pledges and deposits, nor do they require witnesses or seals, but confide in one another. Their houses and property are unguarded. These things denote temperance and sobriety."

If such was the aspect of Hindostan three or four centuries before Christ, what must it have been in those early ages of the Vedas and the laws of Menu? For all that country the degeneracy of man, and of human institutions, is more visible probably than in any other known region of the globe. In this age something remains yet of those primitive manners; but how much allied with vices then unknown, chiefly with respect to purity of morals and chastity? Nothing can show better the advanced state of morality—that is, its real and genuine purity—than the various enactments of the code of Menu on marriage, and the situation of woman in the family. An abstract of them, put in order and published, would be redolent of the golden age of the Hebrew patriarchs, and show at once how mankind has truly degenerated from the primeval state of society. We can merely quote a few (chap. ix., 45): "Then only is man perfect, when he consists of three persons united, his wife, himself, and his son; and thus have learned Brahmins announced this maxim: 'The husband is even one person with his wife;'" (and 46): "Neither by sale nor desertion can a wife be released from her husband; thus we fully acknowledge the

\* The wine of which Megasthenes speaks is the "homa," or "soma," made of fermented rice, not of barley; the Vedas speak often of it, and call it sometimes *vinas*, *vinum*, although not made from the grape; but the sacred character these old and venerable books give to it, forbid altogether the supposition which many modern writers on Hindooism indulge in on the subject. To listen to them one might imagine that there was no sacrifice in Hindostan without the grossest intoxication; and the



law enacted of old by the Lord of creatures." Had they read the book which says : *erunt duo in carne una?*

The code said, it is true (chap. vi., 148): "In childhood must a female be dependent on her father; in youth, on her husband; her lord being dead, on her sons." And this last provision of the law contained a germ of wrong which produced in Hindostan that frightful state of oppression under which women live. But in those primitive times was the woman a slave? was the simple girl a slave? read (chap. ix., 88): "To an excellent and handsome youth of the same class, let every man give his daughter in marriage according to law." (89): "But it is better that the damsel, though marriageable, should stay at home till her death, than that he should ever give her to a bridegroom void of excellent qualities." (90): "Three years let a damsel wait though she is marriageable; but after that term, let her choose for herself a bridegroom of equal rank." (91): "If, not being given in marriage, she choose her bridegroom, neither she, nor the youth chosen, commits any offence."

Then follow many enactments full of the true sense of right and propriety, and which forbid any man to *sell* his daughter, under the pretext of gratuity: "Since a father," says the law, "who takes a fee on that occasion tacitly sells his daughter." (100): "Never, even in former creations, have we heard the virtuous approve the tacit sale of a daughter for a price, under the name of a nuptial gratuity." (101): "Let mutual fidelity continue til death: this, in few words, may be considered as the supreme law between husband and wife."

excesses of the Scandinavians in their *religious* festivals appear a mere copy of those of the Hindoos. Nothing more untrue and more in discord with all we know of former India could be imagined, and the long quotation from Megasthenes in the fifteenth chapter of Strabo's Geography, is a sufficient refutation of it. What he says of the Brahmins ought to be read attentively.

Read, again, the following, and say if there can be a brighter picture of a household even in Christian countries? (Chap. v., 149): "Never let the wife wish to separate herself from her father, her husband, or her sons: for, by a separation from them she exposes both families to contempt." (150): "She must always live with a cheerful temper, with good management in the affairs of the house, with great care of the household furniture, and with a frugal hand in all her expenses." (151): "Him to whom her father has given her, or her brother with the paternal assent, let her obsequiously honor while he lives; and when he dies, let her never forget him."

There is something so pure, so elevated, so truly refined in many passages of that venerable legislation, that some modern writers have pretended that it was never enforced; and that its author merely intended to publish a Utopia, as the Republic of Plato. Unfortunately for that opinion, the Hindoos have always taken the book to be a serious production, and a real law to which the nation has owned obedience for many ages. If, gradually, the primitive purity with which it is invested grew dim, and was replaced by a corrupt gloss, which led to the mass of depravity which disgraces modern Hindostan, it is only a new proof that the doctrine of the indefinite perfectibility of mankind is a mere delusion, and that in general the progress since the beginning has been backward.

But we have not yet done with this code. The marital relations as expressed in it, are those of a truly moral and chaste people, and would scarcely be understood in the present age. We will not recite the texts imposing the various times of conjugal abstinence, which in our days would appear truly impracticable and impossible; but we must quote a few passages calculated to give us a true idea of the real purity and refinement of patriarchal times. (Chap. iv., 43): "Let the husband neither eat with his wife, nor look to her eating, nor sneezing, or yawning, or sitting carelessly at her ease." (44): "Nor let a Brahmin

behold her setting off her eyes with black powder, or scenting herself with essences, or bringing forth a child. (Chap. ix., 77): "For a whole year let a husband bear with his wife who treats him with aversion; but after a year let him deprive her of her separate property, and cease to cohabit with her."

One particular feature, common to Hindostan, and to other patriarchal countries, we must not pass by without notice; we mean polygamy, which the law of Menu permitted within certain limits. But we prefer to quote a few judicious remarks of Heeren on the subject: "The world of India, both as it exists in the fanciful descriptions of poetry, as well as in the sober realities of actual life, presents us with a sufficient number of characteristic traits to show that monogamy is the prevalent custom . . . . From all attending circumstances we may reasonably conclude that polygamy among the princes and great men was the consequence of luxury and fashion; but that in general, wherever it existed among the higher classes, it was principally founded on the necessity of preserving families; and, moreover, on the religious precept which allowed a man to marry one or more additional wives, on account of the sterility of the first. The members of the fourth caste, the Sudras, were only permitted to have one wife, taken exclusively from their own class." Is not this a common feature in the patriarchal period?

But besides the remarkable spectacle of purity offered by the primitive Hindoo code with respect to conjugal relations, there are other prescriptions which concern unmarried people, and show a state of morals almost unknown on earth, except at the very origin of human society. We will quote only a text or two. (Chap. ii., 212): "A student must not greet a young wife of his preceptor, even by the ceremony of touching her feet, if he have completed his twentieth year, or can distinguish virtue from vice." This text alone surpasses our conception of human native purity. But it is clear, and it means

that in those primitive ages, in the burning climate of Hindostan, the age of twenty-one years was usually reached before the time of moral danger from female seduction arrived. But if the period of safety from temptation extended so far, let the reader ponder on the preservatives recommended to men of mature age in the following (215): "Let not a man sit in a sequestered place with his nearest female relations: the assemblage of corporeal organs is powerful enough to snatch wisdom from the wise."

The previous details suffice to give an idea of the exalted type of virtue presented by our fallen humanity in those distant times, so near the origin of mankind; a virtue which, on the hypothesis of the evolutionists, would be impossible, on account of the imagined barbarism of our primeval state, but natural enough to those who have been informed by revelation. The reader will now not be surprised to learn that doctrines were promulgated and firmly believed in at the same epoch, which far transcend all the most solemn teaching of the greatest philosophers who flourished in the following ages; and which yield only to the sublime and exquisitely refined teachings of Incarnate Wisdom, who, through human lips, revealed a code of morality more exalted and more explicit than those glorious strains of human intellectual harmony. The pure monotheism of the old inhabitants of Hindostan will appear consequently in agreement with the whole domestic and social condition of the people. The texts are known now, and their meaning is no more problematical. When Sir William Jones first announced the fact to Europe, it was considered an exaggeration, and attributed to his sanguine and benevolent nature. The latest discoveries have proved that the great and good founder of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta was not mistaken.

## V.

We find the following passage and reflections in Heeren's *Asiatic Nat.* 11, p. 139: "As the Vedas, like the Zend-Avesta, are for the most part conversant about ceremonial laws, they imply consequently the existence of a certain form of religious worship, which, being subject to the observance of peculiar rites and invocations, would of course be confided to a sacerdotal caste. Now the worship in question concerns a religious system, which, according to the unanimous opinion of all those who have studied the subject, has for its foundation the belief in one God." And in a note he refers to *Asiatic Researches*, vol. viii., p. 396, adding the following phrase: "Sir W. Jones, Father Paulino, and the reports of the Danish missionaries, all agree on this point, which is further confirmed by numerous passages in the Upanishads." Since Heeren's time a far more extensive study of the Indian "sacred" books has raised his assertion to what we may call the height of demonstration; and Colebrooke, Haug, Spiegel, as well as Max Müller, have made it a truth which cannot be now contested, that the Vedas, as well as the Zend-Avesta, contain the doctrine of plain and pure monotheism. This last celebrated writer, particularly, has spoken eloquently and emphatically of it in his lectures "On the Science of Religion," to which later on we shall allude.

To show the importance of this concession, we have only to bring it in juxtaposition with the remarks of the Gottingen Professor at the beginning of his first chapter on *Indians*: "The historians who have inquired into the religion and learning of the East, have almost always been obliged to revert to India for information in their researches. That distant country, however, has at no former period attracted the attention of Europeans in these particulars, so much as at the present day. . . The learned of Great Britain now flatter themselves that they

have at length discovered the sources from which, not only the rest of Asia, but the whole Western World, derived their knowledge and their religion."

Our whole thesis, therefore, seems to be thus already granted, at least in a general way; and we might almost conclude at present, that the religion of the ancient world was pure monotheism.

For, this would seem, at first sight, to settle the question of the pure monotheism of the earliest civilized communities; of the Hindoos, at all events; and to emancipate us from the task of further elucidating the subject.

But so decided is the sceptical attitude adopted, alas! by a large portion of the literary, and, at times, even of the learned world, that were we to stop here, we might be condemned to listen to a remonstrance against our conclusion, drawn from a kind of ambiguity in the very word "monotheism," which many would now make synonymous with real pantheism, or rather with the absorption of all beings in one; and this they pretend is the real doctrine of the Hindoo Vedas. We must, therefore, enter into some discussion on those primitive books. And, although we cannot pretend to solve the difficulty with respect to the grammatical meaning, since we know nothing of the Sanscrit, old or recent, yet we imagine that we can communicate to our readers a conviction which is firmly established in our own mind, from numerous passages whose strict meaning has now been settled by competent writers, that any such remonstrance has no foundation in fact; and that the numerous other passages of a different nature, in which the language involves really the doctrine of absorption in Brahma, can be shown in truth to strengthen our very position, by indicating the first of those downward steps, from pure doctrine to the reverse, which, as we said previously, is clearly demonstrable in the case of Hindostan. Moreover, we expect to be able to show that the transition from truth to error was natural and so grad-

ual as to afford additional confirmatory evidence of the position we are endeavoring to maintain.

We cannot enter into a lengthy description of the celebrated books known as the Vedas. The reader can consult the more recent authors on the subject. Enough is it for us to say that they are of a very high antiquity, possibly, and even probably, older than the Pentateuch of Moses; that the three first, known as the Rig, the Yajur, and the Saman-Vedas, are admitted to be "canonical," if we may use the expression; and that the fourth—the Atharvan-Veda—contains, certainly, matter unacceptable to a strict exegetist, although a great part of it cannot give rise to any objection. Each of them may be divided into three parts, which, however, often encroach upon one another—the *mantras*, the *brahmanas*, and the *upanishads*. The first consist of prayers and solemn rites; the second contain precepts chiefly, but often accompanied with hymns and invocations; the last, met with sometimes among the mantras and the brahmanas, are in greater number placed at the end of each Veda, and consist of treatises, dialogues, and high considerations on the nature of God, on creation, on the world, on the soul of man, on the most elevated subjects of religious philosophy. It is chiefly in the upanishads that is to be found the purest doctrine of monotheism and natural religion. Sometimes, also, the errors—not found, however, in the Rig-Veda—of transmigration, etc., and chiefly of the final absorption of the soul, even of the whole universe, in God, lead evidently to open heresy, and to that broad pantheism which was advocated later by Hindoo philosophers, who carried it at length to atheism and annihilation, or, as it is called, the *nirvana*.

But before proceeding to point out the various steps downwards of the religious and philosophical systems of Hindostan, and how the grossest subsequent errors came from an exaggeration of truth, natural to a nature so poetical as was that of the Hindoos,—whence, it is evident, our thesis that the primitive

pure monotheistic doctrine was the starting-point from which were evolved the most erroneous systems of religion or philosophy will receive abundant support, we must pursue a brief inquiry into the authenticity and antiquity of the upanishads as a part of the Vedas. Indeed, the whole question would seem to hinge on this fact. So incontestible are the proofs in them, of a truly Christian monotheism, that those, too many, alas! modern writers, who will persist in asserting, against all the proofs, that the human race, started from sheer barbarism, and from the lowest conceivable doctrinal points, have pretended, lately, that the upanishads are very much later in point of time than the other portions of the Vedas, and were, in fact, the result of long studies on the highest subjects of philosophy. We, on the contrary, maintain that the purer and the higher is the doctrine, the older it is on that very account; that the noblest ideas are precisely those which mankind received and held at first; that all errors, all false beliefs and absurdities, were the strange progress made by the human mind reflecting on revealed truth as communicated to it at first; finally, that, as the grossest immorality, the absurdities the most revolting, and an almost incredible perversity, constitute, confessedly, in our days, the pagan moral atmosphere of Hindostan; whatever in the doctrine of the old books of the country is acceptable to a Christian, as noble, grand, just, and true, must be placed nearest to the origin of the nation.

First, there is no reason whatever to place, in point of time, the upanishads, at least those admitted as genuine and ancient, after the mantras and brahmanas. No Hindoo Brahmin would do so. They would all alike say, that both are Vedic, and belong to the same epoch. They are certainly written in the same style, that noble archaic, rich, and abundant Sanscrit, so different from that of the great poems of Ramayana, and Mahabharata, chiefly from that of the Puranas, and above all from the grovelling and detestable Tantras, the most modern of all.



Since there is perfect sameness of style in the whole of the three first Vedas, since the upanishads are often intermixed with the mantras and brahmanas, since the Hindoo nation has always accepted them as having the same authority and *divine* origin, what rational pretext can there be for endeavoring to make a distinction where, in point of fact, there is none; what motive can there be but to suit preconceived opinions, and to force an argument in behalf of what is precisely in question, namely: the supposed primitive low state of man? What but a perverse resolve to obliterate, so far as it is in their power to do, the undeniable testimony supplied by contemporary authoritative records to the nobleness of mind, elevation of thought, true civilization, and high religious and philosophical thought, which we see surrounding with their benedictions the very cradle of mankind?

Max Müller, in his "History of Sanscrit Literature," makes a marked distinction between the new and the old Upanishads. He says that "new Upanishads were always composed by new sects." . . . The old and genuine ones did not pretend to give more than "guesses at truth"; and "when in course of time they became invested with an inspired character, the text allowed great latitude to those who professed to be believers in their revelation." Consequently, "not only the Vedanta philosophers, but likewise the Sâṅkhya, the Nyâya, and the Yoga teachers all pretend to find in the Upanishads some warranty for their tenets, however antagonistic in their bearings." But this is said only of comparatively modern compositions.

The truly old and genuine ones are to be spoken of very differently. Rammohun Roy, according to Max Müller, asserted that, "The adoration of the Supreme Being is exclusively prescribed by the Upanishads, or the *principal* part of the Vedas, and also by the Vedanta." Every one knows the authority of the celebrated Rammohun Roy on the subject. Himself a Hindoo, no one, perhaps, in modern times has ever known so

well the language and the true doctrine of his country in the past.

But who were the composers of those remarkable books, the Vedas? Were they, from the beginning, arranged as they are in the eleven very large volumes which now form the collection? A word first on this second question: "The Vedas," says Heeren, "must evidently have required the labors of some compiler who incorporated the detached pieces into one work. And in effect, Hindoo tradition has assigned the task to Vyasa, whose age goes far back into the fabulous periods. Vyasa, however, is nothing more than a common term applicable to any compiler in general; we are therefore still in the dark. . . . There is, nevertheless, the less reason to be surprised at this uncertainty; the same is the case with the books of Moses. They have been preserved to our times, but the true account of their origin,"—Heeren should have said of their "compilation"—"is involved in the deepest obscurity."

But who were the original "composers" of these books? Each particular piece, prayer, hymn, precept, upanishad, bears in the compilation the name of its author; and it is especially recommended to the officiating Brahmin not to forget this name when using the text in any sacred rite. The whole is revealed in the opinion of the Hindoos, and comes from God. Thus every author of any particular piece is, according to that opinion, an inspired writer. No Christian, of course, can share in this belief. Yet it is well to mention it, in order to show that no discrimination can be made by any modern critic as against the upanishads in particular. But if the actual name of every one of those writers can very well be matter of doubt, there is, however, a general attribute given to many of them by all Brahmins, which it is as well to note. The hymns and prayers of the *mantras*, comprised in ten thousand verses or stanzas, are put into the mouths of holy men—Rishis—mentioned by name. And says Heeren: "The supposed composers are very

frequently Rishis themselves, and count, among their number, Brahmins, and sometimes even royal personages." This remark of the Gottingen Professor is worthy of attention. The mention of Brahmins is here superfluous, as in Hindostan, chiefly at the origin, all great and holy men belonged to that caste. But it is, in our opinion, extremely important to know that in general the authors of the various parts of the Vedas were holy men—Rishis—and likewise powerful men, "sometimes even royal personages." We cannot have a better description of a "patriarch" in olden time than a "Rishi" or holy man of high standing, rich and powerful, and of a kingly race. Thus were surely Abraham in Mesopotamia, Melchisedech in the land of Canaan, and Job in the land of Hus. The "inspiration" of these three great men was indubitable, and we cannot, we need scarcely remark, place the Hindoo Rishis on the same elevated plane. But how many other patriarchs in the times of Abraham and Job were holy and powerful men without being "inspired?" And what should prevent us from placing the Hindoo Rishis in the same category? We consider it, therefore, as extremely probable that the authors of the Vedas were true patriarchs of Central Asia, who left to their posterity the noble doctrine of which we propose to give a short sketch. And what confirms us in our opinion is, that invariably the laws of Menu, in texts which we have had no occasion to quote, recommend to the true Brahmin, together with high piety and entire devotion to God, together even with simplicity of manners and frugality of life, a great care of their wealth, attachment to it, and a real solicitude in increasing it by all lawful means. Wealth, in the institutes of Menu, is a precious thing, almost a virtue; its loss a great evil; and yet a luxurious life is strictly forbidden, and simplicity of diet and apparel highly recommended. We would like to know where all this can be found combined more preëminently than in the patriarchs of the east of Abraham, of Jacob, of Job?

After such testimony as this, he must be a bold man, and something more than bold, who would venture to dispute that the Vedas were composed before idolatry prevailed. The celebrated Orientalist, Henry Thomas Colebrooke, was, we think, the first to make the observation that the Vedas exhibit no traces whatever of the *sects* of Siva and Vishnu; "Nowhere," he says, "excepting only in the latter sections of the Atharvan-Veda—the fourth Veda—which must, therefore, be regarded as spurious, have I been able to discover the slightest vestige of the worship of Rama and of Krishna, considered as incarnations of Vishnu." In fact, the "Trimourti," which has so often been adduced as an evidence that the Hindoos had some knowledge of the Christian Trinity, but which was in truth one of the most prolific sources of the subsequent idolatry, makes its appearance long after the epoch of the Vedas. There is no mention in them of any real God but the "Supreme Spirit, which moves at pleasure, but in itself is immovable; distant from us, yet very near us; pervading this whole system of worlds, yet infinitely beyond it."

If Siva and Vishnu, as mythological personages, are not mentioned in the Vedas, much less can the reader find in them that crowd of gods whose ridiculous history form what is called the mythology of Hindostan. And, as all the monuments of former times in the country, even those of the highest antiquity in point of art, are literally covered with the various episodes related in the long epic poems sculptured in prominent relief on the remaining walls of these edifices, it follows strictly that the Vedas are more ancient than the oldest of them. No antiquary has yet found in Hindostan buildings which can be referred to Vedic times. This remark has not been sufficiently insisted upon. And nothing, in our opinion, is more natural, and more in the order of things. There can be no relics of that primeval period, because the "patriarchs" never could attempt to build such piles as those of a subsequent epoch. They lived mostly

under tents ; a rude stone altar was the place chosen for sacrifice ; and the smoke of the holocaust rose upwards in the blue atmosphere, and never blackened the interior walls of any gigantic edifice.

After these preliminary observations, we arrive now at the doctrine of those ancient days, as far as it can be ascertained.

## VI.

The *mantras* of the Veds make often mention of gods and deities, as they are called in our translations, and it is important to know what is really meant by such expressions as these. It seems that the word thus interpreted is *devatâ* in Sanscrit ; and its meaning, in comparatively modern language, may be, indeed, deity or god. But we protest against giving it this interpretation in the case of the first Vedas. It is beyond dispute, that in these old books, anything either consecrated or endowed with some native dignity, chiefly in the matter of religious rites, is called *devatâ*. Thus a horse led to be sacrificed, a weapon on which the help of heaven is invoked, even a remedy against impure dreams, considered justly as a great evil in the Menu code, as well as many other sacred or consecrated objects, are called *devatâs* ; and we by no means deny that some help, temporal or spiritual, was expected from them.

We ought not, therefore, to be surprised that *Indra*, or the blue vault of heaven ; *Agni*, or the elementary fire, chiefly that of lightning ; *Cuhu*, or the beautiful western sky, when the new crescent of the moon begins to appear, etc., etc., are all called *devatâs*, and addressed with devotion by the highly imaginative Hindoo. The primitive inhabitants of that extraordinary country were of so poetical a nature, that their greatest geniuses could never write a history or a chronicle. Their vivid imagination could not rest satisfied with cold and stub-

born facts, no more than with a precise philosophical language.

It is true the Vedas speak of *oblations* and *sacrifices* to Indra, to Agni, etc. Were not these, therefore, in the opinion of the writers, beings of a divine nature? We reply, not in the sense of our own more exact way of expressing ourselves, although they supposed in them some inexplicable consecration. But the "Institutes of Menu" appear to us to decide the question (Chap. ii. 83): "The trilateral monosyllable (om or aum) is an emblem of the Supreme; the suppressions of breath with a mind fixed on God are the highest devotion, but nothing is more exalted than the *gayatri*." (84): "All rites ordained in the Veda, oblations to fire (or Agni), and solemn sacrifices, pass away; but that which passes not away is declared to be the syllable om; since it is a symbol of God, the Lord of created beings." (85): "The act of repeating his Holy Name is ten times better than the appointed sacrifice, etc." (86): "The four domestic sacraments, accompanied with the appointed sacrifice, are not equal all together to a sixteenth part of the act performed by a repetition of the *gayatri*."

And what is the *gayatri*, so superior to all invocations of the elements for help? Here is the translation of it given by Sir William Jones: "Let us adore the supremacy of that divine Sun," — *not the visible luminary, but* — "the Godhead who illuminates all, who recreates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress towards His holy seat." This was the most sacred verse of the Vedas, whose recitation, according to the code of Menu, was not only far above all high expressions of awe in presence of the elements, but was to precede all the religious acts of Brahmins. How could they have been at any time worshippers of the forces of nature when anteriorly, and at the same time, they acknowledge such an infinitely Superior Being? It is repeatedly declared in the

Menu code that all ceremonies and rites are nothing compared to the adoration of the SUPREME.

As well might we say that the Catholic Church teaches the worship of the elements, because in her liturgy she consecrates them, and addresses them afterwards in language which in some way approaches to Vedic expressions. If some of the modern critics who comment on the Hindoo religious books, knew how the Catholic Church speaks of water, salt, fire, oil, and wine, they might be prepared to understand those other literary compositions, and they would not try, as they do, to assign to them an interpretation which they do not really bear. Not that we admit a perfect identity in them, nor see any difficulty in the strange forms of the Rig-Veda. The *mantras* led certainly the people gradually to idolatry. But we know that a primitive religion must have viewed the material world in a very different manner from the learned man of the nineteenth century. And we think that what astonishes the "modern savant," namely, the confidence reposed in the help expected from mere material beings, is caused by his ignorance of the natural primitive feeling of man in presence of a wonderful world, of which he feels that he was made to be the master, and yet finds that he is often the slave.

To explain our meaning more clearly, suppose a philosopher believing himself to be well acquainted with what he calls the laws of nature, yet, conscious of being profoundly ignorant of the Catholic religion, to enter by chance, on Holy Saturday, an edifice dedicated by the Mother Church, and to read carelessly from a book lent him by one of the worshippers. What would be his surprise to find, in the office of the day, at the moment that the officiating priest touches with his hand the water of the font he is blessing, the following words: "*Sit hæc sancta et innocens creatura*"—namely, the water contained in the font—"libera ab omni impugnatoris incursu, et totius nequitie purgata discessu. *Sit fons vivus, aqua regenerans, unda puri-*

*cans, ut omnes hoc lavacro salutifero diluendi, perfectæ purgationis indulgentiam consequantur. . .*" He would conclude that the Catholic expects his moral purification from mere material water, which besides is openly called a "holy and innocent being." Surely this philosopher would be as *safe* in his conclusion as the critic who, from the "oblation to fire" in the Vedas, is perfectly *certain* that the primitive Hindoo "worshipped the elements." Many other passages of the Catholic liturgy, chiefly in the administration of baptism, in the blessing of the holy oils, etc., etc., might be adduced in illustration of what few, we suspect, will be found willing to deny, and brought forward to illustrate the subject under consideration.

We hope no one, in our days, would call the "holy water," the "blessed salt," etc., used in Catholic rites, the gods of the Catholic. It is as just to imagine that the "sacrificial post," the "cords," etc., used in Hindoo worship, were really the gods of the Vedic Hindoo; yet they were *devatās*.

We can now somewhat understand the address in the Rig-Veda to the horse led for sacrifice, which, as a modern critic says, is *invoked* by the worshipper in the following strain: "Thy great birth, O horse, is to be glorified; whether first springing from the firmament or from the water, inasmuch as thou hast neighed at thy birth; thou hast the wings of the falcon, and the limbs of the deer. Trita harnessed the horse which was given by Yama, Indra first mounted him, and Gandharba seized the reins. . . . Thou, horse, art Yama, thou art Aditya, thou art Trita by a mysterious act; thou art associated with Soma." Job in describing the horse, was not so mystical as the composer of this piece of the first Veda; but any one acquainted with Catholic liturgy has really the key for the interpretation of this passage; because he knows that in high religious poetry, any natural element, any animal even, can be found associated with superior beings, and with a whole mystical world perfectly unknown to the physicist of modern times.



And the "critics" of whom we speak cannot strengthen their position by the opinions of Hindoo "theologians," as they call them, who evidently lived many ages after the Vedas were composed, who were, moreover, rank idolaters, and could no more understand those old and venerable books than the modern critics themselves. It has even become the fashion for Orientalists of our age to address themselves in India to *pundits*, and to consider their interpretation of the Vedas as a safe one. A sincere Christian will probably better understand them than an idolatrous pundit, because *natural religion* is a fundamental part of the Christian religion, not of modern Hindooism.

We must conclude briefly this part of our investigations, by stating that all the labor of modern writers, to explain in the Rig-Veda the evolution of Hindooism from the worship of elementary powers, by trying first to reconcile it with the idea of one Supreme Being, as expressed in the *brahmana* part, and then by emancipating altogether monotheism from the primitive elementary religion in the upanishads, is perfectly thrown away. There has never been such an evolution. The three parts of every Veda stand together. And nothing is more absolutely certain, nothing more completely out of the reach of cavil, than that antecedently to all other Hindoo beliefs whatsoever, existed the belief in the SUPREME; since all the ceremonies of elementary religion even, as it is called by modern critics, must begin by the solemn profession of the *gayatri*.

We are now prepared to listen to some of those grand voices of antiquity proclaiming the eternal existence of the INFINITE. It is called Brahma! But Brahma (neuter), not the (male) Brahma of the Trimourti—that abomination introduced by the poets of the Epic period.

It has been remarked by several recent writers that, in the Hindoo worship, Brahma has scarcely a place; and that Siva, Vishnu, Ganesa, etc., absorb all the interest of the worshipper.

We reply, yes, in the modern Hindoo religion. When the fables of Siva, and later those of Vishnu, were invented by the fertile imagination of the poets, they could not forget at once the great name of Brahma, which occupied a supreme place in the primitive religion of the country. They retained it, therefore; but they made it a man. Thus the male Brahma was invented; and henceforward the Hindoos had the elements of their Trimourti. But instead of having any correspondence with the Holy Trinity of the Christian, it was the introduction of pure idolatry, which has prevailed since that time; and it was only to be expected that the new monstrous god, the male Brahma, should take an inferior position to that of his two new brothers; an inferior position, we mean, as far as regards the interest taken in him by the idolatrous Hindoos. The male Brahma, the product of the later Vedic times, could not compete in mythology with Siva and Vishnu, whose *avatars*, or incarnations, were the great and absorbing subject of the then new Epic poems. He therefore—the male Brahma—remained in the back-ground, to use a vulgar expression; and the adoration of the more modern idolater was turned chiefly to Siva and Vishnu, the new and brilliant divinities invented by poets, whose fertile legends could fill the imagination of artists who then began to represent their history on the walls of majestic edifices.

But, in old and primitive times, Brahma (neuter), namely, the Supreme, the Eternal and Infinite Spirit, was the chief and all-absorbing object of the adoration of the well-instructed Brahmin. Read some few of the great conceptions transmitted, no doubt, from the origin of man, through the first Patriarchs or Rishis, who wrote the great Upanishads of the yet uncorrupted Vedas.

“What the sun and light are to this visible world, that is the Supreme Good and Truth to the intellectual and invisible universe; and as our corporeal eyes have a distinct perception

of objects enlightened by the sun, thus our souls acquire sure knowledge, by meditating on the light of truth which emanates from the Being of beings; *that* is the light by which alone our minds can be directed in the path to beatitude."

"Without hand or foot He runs rapidly, and grasps firmly; without eyes He sees; without ears He hears *all*; He knows whatever can be known, but there is none who knows Him; Him, the wise call the great, Supreme, pervading Spirit." (Sir William Jones, extracts from the Vedas).

Of this last text, says the same authority, Radhacant has given a paraphrase: "Perfect truth; perfect happiness; without equal; immortal; absolute unity; whom neither speech can describe, nor mind comprehend; all-pervading; all-transcending; delighted with His own boundless intelligence; not limited by space or time; without feet, moving swiftly; without hands, grasping all worlds; without eyes, all-surveying; without ears, all-hearing; without an exterior guide, understanding all; without cause, the first of all causes; all-ruling; all-powerful; the creator, preserver, transformer of all things; such is the Great One; this the Vedas declare." Can a Christian philosopher, we ask, speak more correctly? Were not the Hindoos at first monotheists?

Sir William Jones gives yet the following, as extracted from an Upanishad of the Yajur-Veda: "Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the world, that face of the true Sun, now hidden by a vase of golden light! so that we may see the truth, and know our whole duty!" "That all-pervading Spirit, which gives light to the visible sun, even the same in *kind* am I, though infinitely distant in *degree*." St. Paul said later: *Ipsius genus sumus*. "Let my soul return to the immortal Spirit of God, and then let my body, which ends in ashes, return to dust!" "O Spirit, who pervadest fire, lead us in a straight path to the riches of beatitude! Thou, O God, possessest all the treasures of knowledge; remove each foul taint

from our souls ; we continually approach Thee with the highest praise and the most fervid adoration.”

Of such sort were the first strains of Hindoo intellectual melody which reached the ears of Europeans. Yet, at that time, only a few pages of the Vedas had been perused and translated. How much more is known from the labors of later Orientalists, of Colebrooke, Max Müller, Wilson, Burnouf, Haug, and so many others !

Hear from the Rig-Veda that this world had a beginning, and what existed before : “ Then (before creation), there was no entity or non-entity ; no world, or sky, or aught above it ; nothing anywhere involving or involved in the happiness of any one (created) ; nor water deep and dangerous. Death was not, nor was there immortality (for created beings), nor distinction of day or night. But THAT breathed without (sensible) afflation, single with Her who is within Him (Eternal Wisdom probably). Other than Him nothing existed which since has been . . . . Who knows exactly, and who shall in this world declare whence and why this creation took place ? The gods (devatâs) are subsequent to the production of this world ; then who can know whence it proceeded, or whence this varied world arose, or whether it upholds itself or not ? He who in the highest heaven is the ruler of this universe, does indeed know ; but not another one can possess this knowledge ? ” In this passage we have inserted a gloss of ours between brackets.

Max Müller thinks that Brahma was not the only name given to the Supreme by the first Hindoos. He even goes so far as to say that many names were applied to Him ; and he supposes that the subsequent gods of the Indian mythology were all Supreme in the Hindoo mind ; and thus, in his opinion, polytheism was introduced. We cannot discuss this theory of the celebrated writer—for it seems to be with him a theory ; yet there is a name often used by the writers of “ hymns ” in the

Vedas, which evidently in their mind was that of the true Almighty God. It is Varuna, the Greek *Ὀὐρανός*, “an ancient name of the sky,” Mr. Müller says, “and of the God who resides in the sky.” He took the trouble to translate the whole hymn, and introduces it in his “Fourth Lecture on the Science of Religion,” by the following solemn words perfectly appropriate to our purpose: “It was—the hymn—more than three thousand years ago, uttered for the first time in a village on the banks of the Sutledge, then called the Satadru, by a man who felt as we feel, who spoke as we speak, who believed in many points as we believe.” He had previously given his name, Vasishta—“a dark-complexioned Hindoo, shepherd, poet, priest, patriarch . . . and does it not show the indestructibility of the spirit, if we see how the waves which, by a poetic impulse, he started on the vast ocean of thought, have been heaving, and spreading, and widening, till after centuries and centuries they strike against our shores, and tell us in accents that cannot be mistaken, what passed through the mind of that ancient Aryan poet, when he felt the presence of an Almighty God, the maker of heaven and earth, and felt at the same time the burden of his sin, and prayed to his God that He might take that burden from him, that He might forgive him his sin.”

“Wise and mighty are the works of Him who stemmed asunder the wide firmaments (heaven and earth). He lifted on high the bright and glorious heaven; He stretched out apart the starry sky and the earth.

“Do I say this to my own self? How can I get near into Varuna? Will He accept my offering without displeasure? When shall I with a quiet mind see Him propitiated?”

“I ask, O Varuna, wishing to know this my sin; I go to inquire of the wise; the sages all tell me the same: ‘Varuna it is who is angry with thee.’

“Was it for an old sin, O Varuna, that Thou wishest to destroy thy friend who always praises Thee? Tell me, Thou

unconquerable Lord ! and I will quickly turn to Thee with praise, freed from sin.

“ Absolve us from the sins of our fathers, and from those which we committed with our own bodies. Release Vasishtha, O King, like a thief who has feasted on stolen cattle ; release him like a calf from the rope.

“ It was not our doing, O Varuna, it was a slip ; an intoxicating draught, passion, dice, thoughtlessness. The old is there to mislead the young ; even sleep is not free from mischief.

“ Let me without sin give satisfaction to the angry God, like a slave to his bounteous lord. The Lord God enlighten the foolish ; He, the wisest, leads His worshipper to wealth.

“ O Lord Varuna, may this song go well to Thy heart ! May we prosper in keeping and acquiring ! Protect us, O gods, always with your blessings.”

“ This poem alone,” says Max Müller, “ shows that man was never forsaken of God ; and this conviction is worth more to the student of history than all the dynasties of Babylon and Egypt, worth more than all lacustrine villages, worth more than the skulls and jaw-bones of Neanderthal or Abbeville.”

Yet the same writer gives us a far superior hymn, in our opinion, in his “ History of Sanscrit Literature ” (London edit., 1860, p. 540), and as it is short, we copy it :

“ Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay. Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.

“ If I go along trembling like a cloud driven by the wind, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.

“ Through want of strength, Thou strong and bright God, have I gone to the wrong shore. Have mercy, Almighty, etc.

“ Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters. Have mercy, Almighty, etc.

“ Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the heavenly host, whenever we break Thy law through thoughtlessness ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.”

Mr. Müller remarks with justice on the subject of this short poem, that “the language of these simple prayers of the Vedas is more intelligible to us than anything we find in the literature of Greece and Rome, and there are here and there ardent expressions of faith and devotion in which even a Christian can join without irreverence.”

This is perfectly true, and we could not certainly “join without irreverence” in any of the prayers of the pagan Romans and Greeks when addressing Bacchus or Venus. Thus the men of those primitive times, when the Hindoo “sacred” books were written, may be said to have been much nearer our own days than the much more recent inhabitants of Italy or Hellas; and we naturally find the language and the feelings, of those old patriarchs untainted, as yet, with idolatry, a great deal more genial and acceptable to us.

But besides Brahma and Varuna (*Ὀὐρανός*), the Supreme God received often in Hindostan the name of “sky” and “light,” and we will here conclude our observations on this part of our subject. It is Max Müller again who remarks, that the name of the Supreme God was originally *Dyaus* in Sanscrit, Zeus in Greek, Jovis or rather Diespiter in Latin, and Tiu in German. “These words are not mere words,” he says, “but they bring before us with all the vividness of an event which we witnessed ourselves but yesterday, the ancestors of the whole Aryan race, thousands of years may be before Homer and the Vedas, worshipping an unseen Being, under the self-same name, the best, the most exalted name they could find in their vocabulary—under the name of LIGHT and SKY. And let us not turn away and say that this was after all but nature-worship and idolatry. No, *it was not meant for that, though it may have been degraded into that in later times.*” We underline these expressions as very remarkable in the gifted author, because he often seems to think that the Aryan, as well as all other races, began by nature-worship, and raised themselves

afterwards to the higher belief of true monotheism—a completely false idea, of which even Max Müller, it seems, could not dispossess himself. “*Dyaus*,” he continues, “did not mean the blue sky, nor was it simply the sky personified. It was meant for something else. We have in the Vedas the invocation : *Dyaus pitar*, in Greek *Ζεῦ πάτερ*, in Latin *Dies piter* or *Jupiter*, and that means, in all the three languages, what it meant before these three languages were torn asunder. It means Heaven-Father ! These two words are not mere words. They are, to my mind, the oldest poem, the oldest prayer of mankind, or, at least, of that pure branch of it to which we belong.”

We may add that this invocation, going back to the very origin of our race, is evidently a part of that primeval revelation of which we have already spoken, and which our Divine Lord only revealed with more consummate clearness, when He taught us to say : Our Father, who art in Heaven.

But there is in the name, *Light*, given to God, a great deal more than Max Müller appears to imagine. In another fine passage of the same lecture, he explained how the first Aryans themselves were led to give it to the Supreme Being ; and he imagines that they merely looked all around themselves to find in their language the expression most appropriate to the Being whom they worshipped in their own mind, and as they could see in the whole creation nothing to compare with the bright and immense sky over their heads, they chose it as that which came nearer to their original idea, although it could not express it entirely, and was, in fact, *a failure*, as, we think, he calls it. This is connected with his theory, that the religion of any people ought to be sought in their language ; that in truth religion came from language. A thought striking at first sight, and which we are far from placing on a par with the degrading doctrine of the supporters of primitive barbarism ; yet which we cannot admit, and must reject *in toto* ; because religion is *in se* anterior to language, although both belonged to man



from his very origin. Religion is a sentiment which could not be generated by language. This latter was merely the expression of the former.

Man, indeed, had many reasons for applying the name, Light, to God. According to St. Paul, the Author of all things has manifested Himself in His creation, and all His great attributes can be read there. Was it not, consequently, because light is the most perfect emblem of the Godhead that it was *first* created? *Fiat lux* is the great word which ushers in all the other creative acts of God. And we know how sublime Longinus, though a pagan, thought that short phrase to be. Light alone would have sufficed for expressing nearly all, if not all, the attributes of the Divine Being—His immensity, power, goodness, immateriality, indestructibility, etc. And was it not for this, when in the fullness of time, God wished to manifest Himself to us by assuming our nature, and the most beloved disciple was impelled by the Holy Spirit to declare the incarnation of the Son of God, and the real and substantial divinity of Jesus Christ, that in the first lines of his gospel, he called Him—what? the infinite? the absolute? etc. No; but the true Light—*erat lux vera?*

It is clear, therefore, that the primitive Aryans had many reasons for choosing the word *Dyaus*—light or sky—as the name of the Almighty. We have every motive for supposing that they did not find the name after a long search, as Max Müller supposes. It rushed into the minds of the first men in their communication with God—for revelation for us is identical with communication. We do not know indeed whether the Divine Author of our race in His sweet intercourse with the first man, and with many patriarchs of those early ages, revealed the name itself, as He did that of Jehovah to Moses—*I am He who is*. If He did not by word of mouth, He did by an interior revelation, which we intended to convey in the expression, “the name, Light, rushed to the mind of the first

men in their communication with God." And since that time it has been the most appropriate, and the most universal, even in pagan antiquity; and, we repeat, when a new, purer, clearer revelation was given through Jesus Christ, the same name was given again to the Incarnate God—*erat lux vera*.

These high considerations, which the study of the Vedas have naturally suggested, show how pure, elevated, really sublime was the primitive doctrine, since it originates such contemplations as these, which are, in fact, in the style of many Vedic upanishads.

We now hasten to the investigation of those less fortunate times, when pantheism began to invade the domain of truth.

## VII.

No Christian can pretend that the oldest upanishads are altogether free from error; no uninspired writing can be—and some of the finest among them contain already the seeds of the subsequent pantheism, gliding gradually into naturalism, to come finally to the epic idolatry which followed. But in those really astonishing productions of religious philosophy, even when already somewhat tainted, how clear appears the brightness of primitive revelation! We will quote as an example a passage of the *Kathaka* Upanishad: a doubt is submitted to Yama, the sovereign of the dead, in these words: "Some say that the soul exists after the death of a man (in connection with another body than this); others say that it does not. This I should like to know, instructed by thee." Yama explains to him that the soul and Brahma are one—(not in nature, at least in the primitive doctrine)—that a man attains immortality only by understanding this union, and that, to arrive at this understanding, he must free his mind from sensual desires, and get a correct knowledge both of Brahma and of the soul.

“ Know the soul as the rider and the body as the car ; know intellect as the charioteer, and *manas* (the will) as the rein. The senses, they say, are the horses ; the objects, their roads ; and the enjoyer (or the rider), is the soul endowed with body, senses, and *manas* (or will). Thus say the wise : “ If the charioteer is unwise, and his *manas* is always unbridled, his senses are uncontrolled like vicious horses ; but if he is wise, and his *manas* is always bridled, then his senses are controlled like good horses. He who, always impure, is unwise, and whose *manas* is unbridled, does not attain that abode (of immortality), but comes to the world (of birth and death, of expiation by transmigration). He, however, who, always pure, is wise, and whose *manas* is bridled, he attains *that* abode whence he is not born again. The man who has a wise charioteer, and whose *manas* is bridled, reaches *the other shore of the road*. Higher indeed than the objects are the senses ; higher than the senses is *manas* ; higher than *manas*, intellect ; and higher than intellect, the great one (the soul). Higher than the great one is that which is unmanifested, and higher than the unmanifested, is the Supreme Spirit. But higher than the Supreme Spirit there is nothing ; He is the goal, the highest resort. This highest spirit is the soul hidden in created beings ; it is not manifest, but is beheld by those who can see what is subtle with an attentive, subtle intellect.”

Here, with an admirable analysis of the soul's faculties, and of the relations of the soul and body, truly worthy of the most pure primitive doctrine, we see the beginning of two great aberrations, which became the unfortunate cause of the deviation of subsequent philosophy, and the ruin of the primeval true religion. These two aberrations were : the transmigrations of the soul, and its absorption in Brahma. This was the passage from monotheism to pautheism, from which was to issue the subsequent idolatry.

It is very remarkable that the transmigration of the soul is

never mentioned in the Rig-Veda—the oldest. At first it was thought by modern critics to be contained in some expressions of the thirty-second verse of one of the hymns, according to the translation of Professor Wilson. But a more serious examination proved that the passage, although susceptible of such a meaning, could more naturally bear a very different interpretation; so that it is now admitted that the Rig-Veda is pure of that error; a new proof that the oldest doctrine is the purest. The absorption of the soul in Brahma grew gradually also from the primitive tenet, orthodox certainly; that the soul was the same *in kind* with Brahma, but infinitely distant in *degree*. The union of the soul with God after death (a truth Christian as well as Vedic), became gradually a real absorption, and thus led to pantheism.

Nothing is more easy to conceive than such a degeneracy in doctrine, in the supposition of a primitive revelation left with only human tradition for a channel of communication through long ages. The versatility of the human mind is such, that a strong and exterior restraint is required to keep it in due submission to truth. Christ gave that power to the Church which He established. Nothing of the kind existed before His coming; not even in the Synagogue, which left the subversive tenets of the Sadducees uncontradicted. The great truths, therefore, entrusted to man at the beginning could not possibly remain entirely pure; and the natural *progress* which might have been expected was the retrogression from unmixed truth, first to a slight deviation from it, then to a strange misconception of it, leading finally to positive, unmitigated error.

The Book of Wisdom has told us that men began to err by worshipping the works of God instead of God himself. We see in Hindostan the first symptoms of the great evil. Absorption in God naturally leads to deify the whole universe, and thus to make the works of God equal to Himself, in order finally to worship them. Too soon was this the case in India.

The Vedas were not written all at once, and of course they are not inspired as the Hindoos think. The first even, the most pure, is the work of many Rishis and great personages. Soon, in the finest upanishads, which contained yet admirable traits of the primeval grandeur, a reckless imagination introduced new forms of thought, chiefly by exaggerating what had been first transmitted from heaven. Expiation was the great moral law revealed even in Paradise, when man had to leave it. It took in Hindostan the form of the wanderings of souls from bodies to bodies, until first the idea of existence became a burden, and the wish arose to be absorbed in God, until at last philosophy should come to turn it into positive annihilation—*nirvana*.

The progress of error was so rapid, that when the book of Menu was written, certainly before the end of the Vedic period—since the Atharvan-Veda had not yet begun to appear—already the imagined creation of the universe was a jumble of ridiculous legends, mixed up with some sublime conceptions left still entire in the universal wreck. (See the 1st chap. of Menu “On Creation.”) Yet this book was composed in a pure moral age, and contains an immense number of splendid imaginings. But, already, the error of transmigration had attained its utmost limits. Incredible details were given as inspired; so that to each sin committed in this world, the exact being, animal, plant, or mineral even, was allotted into which the guilty soul had to transmigrate. Already, likewise, the torments accompanying these changes were described with a minuteness and horrible accuracy worthy of the long-subsequent Inferno of Dante. It was hell indeed without its eternity. And such doctrines prepared already the Hindoo mind for the desire of absorption in God, merging at last in pantheism and the “*nirvana*.” The twelfth chapter of Menu deserves indeed to be read by every one who wishes to understand the rapid progress of error in Hindostan. The conclusion arrived at will be abundantly

confirmed by the reflection that a few centuries before, when the Rig-Veda was written, not an iota of that doctrine had yet been even imagined. It is to us perfectly clear that the error of transmigration preceded that of openly-declared absorption in God, for which it prepared the way. And the Institutes of Menu prove it; since, with all the minute details of the first doctrine they contain, the other one of absorption is nowhere in the book fully advocated. Not a word of it is said in the first chapter, which treats of creation, cosmogony, and the supposed divine plan in the existence of various beings; no full expression is given to it whenever the book speaks of supreme beatitude; and even in this twelfth chapter, after the elaborate explanation of the wanderings of souls, when speaking of the destiny of the pure, the wise, and the holy, the highest felicity it promises them is: union with the male Brahma (already known it seems), union with the *mighty* and the *unperceived*; but not with Brahma (neuter), the Supreme One, Infinite, Eternal Spirit. There is even, a little later, after all the trivial rubbish previously detailed, a bright spot reflecting yet something of primitive effulgence which deserves to be quoted (Chap. xii., 84): "The sages inquired: 'After all those good acts performed in this world (to insure final happiness), is no single act held more powerful than the rest in leading men to beatitude?'" (85): "Of all these duties," answered Bhriḡu, "the principal is to acquire from the upanishads a true knowledge of One Supreme God; that is the most exalted of all sciences, because it ensures immortality." (86): "In this life, indeed, as well as the next, the study of the Vedas, to acquire a knowledge of God, is held the most efficacious of those six duties in procuring felicity to man." (87): "For in the knowledge and adoration of one God, which the Vedas teach, all the rules of good conduct are fully comprised." (88): "The ceremonial duties prescribed by the Vedas (namely, oblations to fire, sacrifices, etc.,) are of two kinds: one connected with this

world, and causing prosperity on earth ; the other abstracted from it, and procuring bliss in heaven." (89): "A religious act proceeding from selfish views in this world (as a sacrifice to obtain rain), or in the next (as a pious oblation in the hope of a future reward), is declared to be concrete and interested ; but an act performed with a true knowledge of God, and without self-love, is called abstract and disinterested." (90): "He who frequently performs interested rites, attains an equal station with the rulers of the lower heaven ; but he who frequently performs disinterested acts of religion, becomes for ever exempt from a body composed of the five elements"—that is to say, is not any more subject to transmigration. (91): "Equally perceiving the Supreme soul in all beings, and all beings in the Supreme soul, he sacrifices his own spirit by fixing it on the Spirit of God, and approaches the nature of that Sole Divinity who shines by His own effulgence." This last paragraph does not, of necessity, lead to pantheism. A quite similar doctrine has often been developed by Catholic mystic writers of the school of "pure love ;" and one is really astonished to find it so clearly expressed in the law of Menu. But the road is already plain which error was to take, in order to invade the religious life of such enlightened men as the primitive Hindoos were. A similar, concurrent, testimony to the truth we are endeavoring to establish is supplied by what is said of "ceremonial rites." It furnishes a new proof, that those primitive religious functions contained really nothing of the worship of elements, and the theory which modern critics have endeavored to establish, the natural passage, namely, from "elementary religion" to "monotheism" is not substantiated ; because a truly grand monotheistic belief always accompanied those "ceremonial rites" even, of the Rig-Veda.

But when the doctrine of a "universal soul" was openly proclaimed ; when it was asserted that our own is a "spark" from the "blazing fire," that God is "all beings," and "all

beings are God," then indeed, Agni, Indra, Cuhu, and all the other "devatâs" became parcels of the Universal God. Then, indeed, they imagined, as the Book of Wisdom says, "either the fire"—*Agni*, or "the winds"—*Meruts*, or "the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the great water, or the sun and moon, to be the gods that rule the world."

This became for Hindostan the period of pantheism, ushering in the philosophy prevalent for many ages, until it culminated in Buddhism.

And here we must interrupt our direct course of thought to make one or two observations on that very mixture of truth and falsehood in many pieces of the Vedas, confirmatory of our opinion on the primitive purity of belief in Hindostan. When admirable doctrines are clearly expressed, bright as day and pure as light, and when, in the same chapter or paragraph, the seeds of error appear which subsequently ruled supreme in the same country, which of the two was the predecessor of the other? If the errors were, and the "worship of elements" was the primitive religion of the country, then monotheism, which on that hypothesis followed them, was a true and very remarkable "progress," which would have naturally struck deep into the Hindoo mind, and have formed, for a long time, the firm belief of the race. The exaggerations and false consequences which might have followed would certainly have taken a direction very different from the one out of which monotheism had sprung; and to suppose that a pure and exalted belief emerging from a kind of fetichism, would have almost immediately returned to it, or even to a large and universal pantheism, much more akin to the "worship of elements," is to ignore human nature and to contradict the very doctrine of "progress," advocated so warmly by the very supporters of the opinion we endeavor to disprove.

It took long ages to obscure entirely the primitive patriarchal religion, and the progress of error was so gradual, although at



times rapid, that it is impossible to assign a positive epoch to the introduction of idolatry. It would be unreasonable to imagine that the adoration of a "Supreme Ruler," so clearly expressed in primitive Hindooism, and which is supposed by many writers to have been the natural result of philosophical investigation, could have been so soon replaced by pantheism and the rank idolatry which followed. The same writers, it is true, try their best to ignore that primitive purity of belief which we advocate. But they cannot destroy the texts we have quoted and many others which could be adduced; and Heeren expressed only a simple fact when he said, that "the religious system of the Hindoos, according to the unanimous opinion of all those who have studied the subject, has for its foundation the belief in one God." At the same time, the whole formula of "progressive" error in Hindooism forms a "series" which cannot be broken. It begins in the Rig-Veda, by pure monotheism unmingled as yet with pantheism and transmigration. It exhibits in the laws of Menu a multitude of erroneous deviations which strike the reader at first sight. It teaches open pantheism in the subsequent philosophy which was deduced from those errors, chiefly in Buddhism, an offshoot of the Hindooism of that period, as we shall prove. Pure idolatry, or the worship of the works of man, according to the Book of Wisdom, is finally the religion advocated in the great poems of Ramayana and Mahabahrata, which followed; an idolatry which culminated in the *puranas* and the *tantras*, of which we have yet to speak. No link is wanted in that chain of errors which we have called a strict "series;" and we do not see how a more perfect demonstration of our opinion could be furnished, than the well-known succession of beliefs in Hindostan.

Our next step, therefore, is to examine briefly the philosophy which was the real introducer of pure pantheism in that country, and whose remarkable exponent, Buddhism, remains to this day.

## VIII.

The philosophical labors of Hindoo-Brahmins began during the Vedic period, since the Institutes of Menu contain already speculations which entered largely into the succeeding systems. The *Mimansa* is yet almost completely Vedic, and contains little of the subsequent errors. The *Vedanta* is considered in the same light by Max Müller; but its branches, called *Nyāya* and *Sāṅkhya*, preach openly the doctrine of a Great Pan, sole reality; the exterior world having no true existence. In this system the human soul is a *part* of the universal one, and is destined to be finally merged and absorbed in it. We remember the utterances of the first Vedas, declaring God "one in *kind* with our soul, but infinitely superior in *Degree*." How different are the two doctrines! Yet we see clearly in the first the genesis of the last.

The philosophy of Hindostan is remarkable chiefly in two ways: First, in the immense variety of objects it embraces, so that most of the speculations of Greek, Latin, and modern philosophy are already discussed in that rich Sanscrit of old times; and the systems of logic, metaphysics, and theodicea, so different in method from the Aristotelic and scholastic systems, often, nevertheless, open up views as remarkable as unexpected, and show the extraordinary acuteness and activity of the Hindoo mind. Second, in those strange, abnormal—with respect to us—and always original, speculations, we see from the start a union of abstract philosophy with physiology and physical science in general, truly astonishing, when we reflect that our Western mind was so slow in trying to make the world of spirits and the world of exterior objects help each other for the instruction of man. Leibnitz, we think, was the first to try it, at least in the modern sense. Catholic philosophy has always done it in its own way.

We must not be tempted to any digression on this interesting subject. The scope of our work limits us for the present to the religious aspect of the question. The philosophical doctrines, we repeat, which followed the Vedas, and preceded the great Epic poems, teach an undisguised pantheism, and prepare the way for the Buddhistic nirvana, or annihilation of the soul as the only deliverance from transmigration.

Already all the systems declare, in their opening page, that true philosophy is the final emancipation of the soul from the material evils of this world; Brahma (neuter), the previous true God of the monotheistic Hindoo, has become the Universal Soul. It is yet one, self-existent, supreme; but the universe has emanated from It, and remains a part of its substance; its visibility being merely a deception—*maya*. The soul of man is itself a part of the great Soul; it is a spark issued from a blazing fire; and it will remain, apparently, distinct from Brahma, only as long as its ignorance of truth shall continue; that ignorance consists merely in regarding the world as a reality capable of subsisting out of Brahma. The object of philosophy is, therefore, to teach that we are one with God, or rather that the whole universe is one with Him. The consequence is, that the whole universe must be adored, if there is such a thing as a worship of God. Thus, as the Book of Wisdom openly declared, man was led to prostrate himself before the works of God, ignoring the true Creator. The Hindoo worship remained meanwhile, apparently, that of the Vedas, which all those systems professed to acknowledge as revealed. But, indeed, the “devatâs” acquired then a very different consecration from the one they possessed previously. It was precisely what would happen if an uninstructed Catholic, altogether ignorant even of the first mystery of his religion—the most adorable Trinity—prostrated himself, as before a god, at the sight of “holy water” with which his ancestors had been directed to bless themselves in that Supreme Name. Hence

the *Yoga* part of the *Sāṅkhya* laid already the foundation of all the absurd practices of idolatrous fakirs, as they are witnessed in the Hindostan of our day.

How long a time this remained the prevalent superstition of India, we do not know, as the country does not possess any more architectural remains of it than of the preceding Vedic period. But it is now proved beyond question that it merged finally into the open *atheistic* pantheism of the Buddhists.

## IX.

Until very recently nothing was known of the true origin of Buddhism. For a long time it was thought to be more recent than Christianity. Later on, the general opinion inclined to make it older even than Brahminism. But in 1828, Mr. B. H. Hodgson, British resident at the court of Nepal, where Buddhism is the prevalent religion, discovered a voluminous compilation of Sanscrit manuscripts, which were found to be nothing else than what may be called the "sacred books" from which those of Thibet, Mongolia, and China were translated. The ones used in Ceylon, Burmah, Siam, etc., are in Pali, and agree in the main with the Nepaulese manuscripts, although neither set is the translation of the other.

Copies of this precious treasure, transported to London and Paris, attracted the attention of Orientalists, and Mr. Eugene Burnouf, after a serious study of those documents, published in 1844 his "Introduction to the History of Buddhism." From that moment a public opinion, regarded now as final, was formed on the subject.

The founder of this wide-spread superstition lived about six hundred years before Christ. This is now ascertained—his name was Siddartha, son of a Hindoo Rajah, whose territory lay on the confines of Oude and Nepal. Siddartha belonged

to the Sakya clan ; hence he is often called Sakya-muni, this last adjunct being equivalent to the Greek *μοναχός*, from which *monk* is derived. He is yet oftener called Gautama, because the Sakya clan was a branch of the great "Solar" race of that name. Without entering into the details of the life of this prince, suffice it to say, that renouncing the world, and even the wife with whom he had lived twelve years, he retired into a forest and abandoned himself to the wild reveries of a Hindoo ascetic. Brahminism, the religion of his family and ancestors, he rejected forever, and falling back on the Sânkya philosophy, then in full sway, he carried yet farther than any adept of that system the principles of *distaste* for this life and its pleasures, of *dread* of almost endless and painful transmigrations, and of ardent *desire* toward *nirvana* or total annihilation, no more by absorption in Brahma, which he rejected with the Hindoo Trimourti, but by returning into *the universal concatenation of causes and effects*, the only god which henceforth he admitted. . . . Hence the frightful doctrine he began to advocate, became, at least for those who knew it thoroughly and embraced it fully, an atheistic and destructive philosophy, the fully developed and altogether systematized Sânkya doctrine. But for the great mass of people who were carried into the whirlpool of this superstition, it became a real worship of man and the elements. Buddha (the enlightened), which was at first only a title given to the founder of the system—Gautama—became, in course of time, the real substitute for God in the mind of hundreds of millions of men ; and Buddha, or Lama, in Thibet, was any one who succeeded in making people believe that *he* was a real incarnation of a previous Buddha, and for the mass of the people there was, and there is yet, no other God.

It is not, therefore, true to say that 400,000,000 of the human race are professed atheists. The knaves of the sect, those who profit by the credulity of the people, and live on the abundant

alms profusely given to religious mendicants, deserve truly to bear that odious name. But the masses of deluded people who prostrate themselves before the colossal idols of the country, or in front of living impostors surrounded with all the pomp of external worship, surely believe that they adore superior beings from whom they can expect blessings and happiness. They are consequently by no means atheists, though they can truly be called idolaters. Let not, therefore, the infidels of our day flatter themselves, as some of them do certainly, that they have numberless correligionists in far-off Tartary, unless they choose themselves to worship the idol Buddha.

And this is so true that in the most ancient religious buildings of the sect, the subterranean rock temples of Bombay, chiefly the gigantic one of Salsette, together with the worship of Buddha, that of Siva, the god destroyer, is plainly indicated in the numerous reliefs of the adjacent temple of Monpeser. The correlation of both was so surprising to the first investigators of those antiquities who firmly believed in the perpetual antagonism, from the start, of Hindooism and Buddhism, that they thought they had found a strange case of two hostile creeds consenting to exist near each other in harmony. But it is known to-day that even in Thibet the triumphant Lamaism feels no opposition to the worship of Siva, whose adepts are numerous in the country, and join together the belief in nirvana, and the adoration of the great symbol of destruction in Hindostan.

Even in the rock temple of Elephanta, near Salsette, where the Trimourti begins to appear, Siva, however, being evidently the chief god, Buddha is also represented, according to Langlès—a very competent French authority. And it is worthy of mention here that the Lingam, in every possible form, shocks the eyes of the beholder; so that those who have seen only the plates of Langlès, 150 in number, say that “the obscenity displayed on the walls surpasses everything that the most de-

praved European fancy could possibly imagine.”—*Monuments anciens et modernes de l’Inde*. Paris, 1813.

These temples belong to the primitive great architecture of Hindostan ; so that nothing has remained of the edifices raised in Vedic and following times, so far down as the sixth century before Christ. The country where they are found, so distant from the native place of the sect, is the only one in India where remains of Buddhist buildings are met with, if we except those of Ceylon, just at the other extremity of the peninsula. It is now ascertained that in this island the strange religion of Gautama is far later in time ; and it is from it that the worship of Buddha spread all over the country beyond the Ganges : China, Thibet, and some of the large islands of those distant seas ; particularly Java, into which it penetrated only between the tenth and twelfth centuries of our era.

Buddhism is, therefore, an Hindoo sect, and nothing else, contemporaneous with the origin of pure idolatry in the country, but an offshoot of the atheistic and pantheistic Sânkya philosophy. This is positively ascertained. How it disappeared from India proper is yet an unsolved problem. Was there a long struggle between the new sect and the old Brahminism, as it is generally supposed ? And was the exclusion of the new heresy the end of that struggle, as all until lately believed ? It seems reasonable to answer this last question affirmatively, as Brahminism must have undoubtedly resisted the preponderance of a system destructive of *castes*, which do not exist properly in Buddhism. Yet the literature of Hindostan says absolutely nothing on the subject ; and the existing monuments common to both seem to point in a contrary direction. There is no doubt that in India the worship of Buddha and that of Siva is indivisible ; yet worshippers of Siva belong often to the Brahmin caste.

But — we must insist on this — what a fearful degeneracy from previous doctrines prevalent in the country ! How different the language of the first Vedas, and the utterances of the

new doctors! What has become of the sublime monotheism preached with such impressive eloquence? How have the noble patriarchal manners of the nation been replaced, wherever Buddhism prevailed, by the unnatural and ungodlike celibacy of myriads of deluded beings intent only on *annihilation*! The most rigorous, austere, but at the same time vulgar and gross kind of life is strictly insisted on, as the chief condition for reaching "the other side of the road," that is to say, a state of absolute non-existence, free, at least, from the burden of further transmigration!

And as the worship of Siva was, at the beginning, intimately connected with the sect—we do not know precisely how; as both are yet connected in Thibet, with all the apparent austerity of manners prevailing in that country—it is indeed surprising that the most flagrant and abandoned immorality has not yet eaten up the miserable nations bowed down under the yoke of those errors. The only explanation which can be given is, that human nature, with all its failings, is yet better than the absurd theories which try to degrade it; and the Providence of God does not allow one-third of the human race to be plunged irremediably in the mire of the most foul superstitions.

One feature of Buddhism chiefly has helped to prevent it from corrupting altogether the nations it keeps in darkness. It is the spirit of genuine benevolence it has always preached in the midst of the most immoral principles. The nations where Buddhism prevail, chiefly the Thibetan, are composed of two classes of persons; the largest number seem to give up the hope of nirvana on account of the austere life required of those who aim at it. But another, large, certainly, in many countries, professes the accomplishment of the harsh austerities practised at first by Gautama himself, and imposed on all those who wish to escape future transmigration. They live in monasteries, practise strict celibacy, dress very poorly, and subject themselves to a life compared to which that of a Christian



monk is pleasant indeed. Yet some travellers have tried to identify Buddhism with Christianity, or rather to degrade Christianity by the mere comparison. But both this class of people living in monasteries, and the larger one of those who remain in the world, are enjoined to practise unbounded benevolence toward all living beings, not men and women only, without exception of nationality and religion, but even toward senseless animals, even ferocious beasts, which are scarcely allowed to be killed in self-defence. Moreover, benevolence, or as we might say, charity, patience, courage, even self-abasement almost akin to Christian humility, and, what is yet more surprising, purity of morals, and the greatest restraint on the senses as being often causes of sin, are openly advocated. Yet, all this is not to be accomplished because God commands it, and threatens punishment on the evil-doers, but merely as a means of attaining annihilation in the next world, or, at least, of preparing a glorious and happy transmigration. An urgent motive, likewise, for those deluded people is the example of Gautama himself, who practised those virtues, they say, during his life, and recommended them to his followers after his death. In fact, he is for them God, since they acknowledge no superior one, except the strict, fatal, irresistible, and unavoidable "concatenation of causes and effects."

We repeat, however, that for the great mass of those nations, the ritual of the worship is the chief object of their religious life, and this ritual is altogether pagan. The admirers of those eastern atheistic "philosophers" try their best to insist that the ritual is merely commemorative, and they do not, they say, adore the Buddha, nor the objects before which they prostrate themselves; but they do this in honor merely of the founder of their religion, whom they believe incarnated in the living representative before their eyes. We answer, that for the mass of the people, such a commemorative worship is impossible. They adore in fact what is before them, and their earnest prayers are

addressed to the miserable impostor who personates their Gautama. "It is improbable," they say, "that the original scheme of Buddhism contemplated either the adoration of the statues of the Buddha, or the offering of prayers to him after his death. These are an after-growth, an accretion upon the simple scheme of Gautama, and in a manner forced upon it during its struggle with other religions." This may be so, and the founder himself, whoever he may be, might not have intended to originate an idolatrous sect, since he was himself an atheist. But so it has turned out to be; and we speak of what exists, not of what was the first project, if there was one. But the hold of that truly detestable superstition upon the many millions of Mongolians and East Indians is truly incredible, and can be understood only by those who have witnessed it.

Last century a Catholic Bishop, missionary at Ava, in the Birman Empire, whose name we cannot now ascertain, having asked a Buddhist priest for some short treatise on the doctrines of Gautama, received a compendious manuscript, which stated that the founder of the sect had died 2362 years before—a remarkable coincidence with the discovery made by Mr. Eugene Burnouf—and which contained the chief points of Buddhism as we know them. But imagine the surprise of the bishop, who had left country and friends to convert the Burmese, reading the following address by which the manuscript ended:

"Revolving these things in your mind, O ye English, Dutch, Armenians, and others, adore Gautama, the true god; adore also his law and his priests. Be solicitous in giving alms, in the observance of *Sila* (which prepare for *nirvana*), and in performing *Bavana* (by which the utter misery of life is acknowledged). . . . You have obtained, O Bishop, a great favor, having been thought worthy, although born in one of the small islands depending on *Zabudiba*, to come hither and to hear the truth of the divine law. This book is more worthy of esteem than gold and silver, than diamonds and precious

stones, and I exhort all English, Dutch, Armenians, and others to act up to it."

Max Müller in a short lecture on "Buddhism," to the surprise of many, tries to create a very different impression. Carried away by his feelings in favor of a sect which, in his opinion, practises charity with as much generosity and devotedness as Christianity itself, he endeavors to vindicate it from the two damnable doctrines of atheism and annihilation; but he is obliged to confess that on both points Eugene Burnouf—and he might have added with him all other actual writers on Buddhism—is against him. He himself quotes a passage of a Buddhist book of great authority, in which the invention of the existence of God—Brahma (neuter)—is attributed, as a piece of imposture, to Brahmin priests, and is openly rejected as false, so that Max Müller himself cannot save Buddhism from the imputation of pure atheism. Of nirvana he is more confident that he can explain it away. But all he can say consists in this, that the common people of Buddhist countries do not consider it as real annihilation, but as an Elisian Paradise where every good thing is enjoyed. This is very possible; and we believe it, since Mr. Müller affirms it. The only conclusion we draw from it is, that the poor people of those countries are the dupes of knaves who know well the meaning of their books, but would be afraid of the complete desertion of the great mass of the population if they spoke openly.

As to the Roman Catholic Bishop of whom Mr. Müller speaks, not the same as the one we previously mentioned, who lately published a work, altogether in praise of the manners of the nation, in the midst of which he has lived a long time; we can admit all he says, and not change our mind on Buddhism, because the Bishop spoke of the good life of many of these poor deluded men; but said nothing in praise of the real doctrine which lay at the bottom of the imposture.

## X.

This short history of Buddhism has showed us already, as contemporary with its origin, the idolatrous worship of Siva, if not of the whole Hindoo Trimourti. We are, therefore, naturally brought down a step further, and have to speak briefly of the introduction in Hindostan of pure idolatry—that is, the worship of the works of man, as the Book of Wisdom has it. It began certainly long after the Vedic times, and must have been gradually derived from the pantheistic doctrine of the Sânkya philosophy, joined with the previous Vedic rites and ceremonies, which finally became altogether misunderstood and misapplied. Then poetry, as in Greece, completed the work. It is, in fact, acknowledged generally that the whole jumble of Hindoo mythology is the offspring of Sanscrit literature, as the history of the gods in Greece came from the fertile brain of Hesiod, and chiefly Homer.

Herodotus tells us plainly that the mythology of his own country was, in his time, no more than four hundred years old, and had been fabricated by the epic poets.

It is true that the poetry of the Hindoos was much earlier than the strictly idolatrous period. It is natural to the race, and existed among them from the very beginning. With them private conversation, even, is poetical, which would be intolerable among us. And their very digest of law, the code of Menu, is a highly imaginative production. It is said they have no historians; yet they have, but of their own fashion. An historian, in their idea, ought not to be simply a cold narrator of events, but chiefly an embroiderer of facts. Rather facts, simple facts, do not exist for them. They are accustomed to look at them, when they occur, under the most brilliant prismatic colors; much more do they appear so to them long after they have taken place. Hence their *historians* became epic poets.

But something ought to be said of their preparation for it; since the great authors of the Ramayana and Mahabharata did not, and could not, appear directly after the compilation of the Vedas was finished. A long interval of time was evidently required.

First, the great truths of their primitive religion, the traditions they had received with the rest of mankind, the solemn rites embracing all the elements of nature as dedicated to the service of God, were not to remain in the strict line of orthodoxy, since there was not among them any central power invested with spiritual authority to restrain every attempt of private thought from corrupting the original purity of their creed. Hence, as was seen of two great dogmas in particular, pure *monotheism* gradually merged into a broad and elevated pantheism at first, before reaching the scattered state of mere *forces of nature*; and the necessity of *expiation* for the soul took easily the shape of almost endless transmigration. From these two errors the majority of those which followed, can easily be derived.

But the great "universal soul," the brilliant array of material beings concerned in "sacrificial rites:" fire, air, the dawn, the magnificent vault of heaven, etc., could not but take individual shapes in the imagination of the Hindoo, and thus the spiritual world became inhabited by a multitude of "devatâs," which in course of time could not but be changed into real individual "gods." Brahma himself, the "universal soul," could not remain in his single blessedness; but as creator, preserver, and destroyer, naturally was transformed in the "Trimourti."

How did the idea originate among them, that some deity ought to take a human shape and "dwell among us?" We cannot say. Perhaps it was derived from the primitive tradition about the One who was "to crush the head of the serpent." Perhaps it was merely the result of an exuberant fancy. But in their ideas of propriety it was not the head of the Trimourti,

so dignified in himself, nor the third member of it, the god of destruction, which could undertake a mission of salvation; the second one, Vishnu, the preserver, was therefore to be the "incarnate god;" and as the Hindoos cannot understand moderation in fancy, as many as ten "avatars" of the god are known in their poetry. The Sânkya philosophy, with its austere doctrine of contempt of life and aspiration toward "deliverance;" nay, the very extreme and absurd result of that philosophy, the aiming at complete destruction by the nirvana of Buddhism, had a strong poetical side which the Hindoos could not leave unemployed; and thus their first great architectural art was all in honor of Buddha and Siva.

This was the real origin of idolatry among them. Hence the horrible idol of Siva, the obscenity of its images, together with the unimpassioned, total apathy of the long face of Buddha, plunged in deep meditation, and looking vacantly into the void of nothingness, are the first mythological emblems offered by the poets of the period to the adoration of the wretched native of Hindostan. How fallen from his first state! Let the loathsome remains of the astonishing rock temples of Elephanta and Salsette speak to the eyes, since no poem of that epoch has yet been found to astonish our awe-struck imaginations.\*

But this was too horrible to last. Hence the critics who have studied most successfully Sanscrit literature, tell us, that the worship of Siva, and of Buddha consequently, since both appear always connected together in the really primitive monuments of Hindostan, had to give way to that of Vishnu, less disgustingly sensual, and of far milder and gentler type. They

\* It seems that, during that period, the Sanscrit was not the idiom of lapidary style, since Niebuhr, who first described those wonderful monuments, has published long inscriptions found there, totally unintelligible to Sanscrit scholars. There is here, we think, the germ of a great discovery.

speak of two sects, those of Siva and of Vishnu, struggling together for long ages, until the last conquered, and has ever since remained by far the most numerous in India.

The brilliant authors at last appeared who were to celebrate for ever the names of a multitude of gods, worthy rivals of those of Homer and his compeers, and the ever-gushing well-spring of an art so well described by the author of the *Book of Wisdom*.

Before speaking with some details of that luxuriant mythology of the Far-Orient, a word ought to be said on the precise epoch when this downward step in morality and intelligence took place among the Hindoos. We shall be surprised to find that it was exactly at the time of their highest culture, of the most brilliant civilization for them, as the word goes.

Mr. Hodgson and Eugene Burnouf are indeed to be called two great benefactors of mankind, since they have positively ascertained a date most important for the establishment of a sound doctrine: the first in discovering the documents, and the second in deciphering them. Buddhism is not older than six or seven hundred years before Christ; this the Nepaulese manuscripts assert, and the Burmese likewise which belong to the Ceylon or Pali class of manuscripts.

But, by the common consent of all intelligent travellers and antiquaries, the Buddhist monuments in the Bombay Presidency are incontestably the oldest of any architectural remains that exist in the country. At that epoch, certainly, the various incarnations of Vishnu were unknown. Siva, known undoubtedly, was not an "incarnate god," except, it seems, in much later times, when he had one or two avatars. Siva, therefore, at the time was merely an emblem, a revolting emblem certainly, of cruelty and lust. Buddha, at that same epoch, was ascertained to have been Gautama, a great man, but merely a man, the son of a Rajah on the borders of Oude and Nepaul. None of the numerous attendants sculptured on the monuments

could be "incarnate gods," since avatars were as yet unimagined. These statues, consequently, could not have the sanctity which those of Vishnu, in the shape of Rama, or of Krishna, subsequently possessed, in the eyes of the Hindoos.

We may, therefore, safely conclude that, although pure idolatry had already begun to a certain extent, and many, no doubt, adored really Siva with his "collar of human skulls," and his other unmentionable emblems, yet in the strict sense of the word, pure idolatry existed only in an inchoate state. The pretended sanctity of sculptured or pictured representations, which was afterwards supposed to exist, and which formed the only sure ground of real idolatry, could not yet have entered fully into the mind of the worshippers.

The conclusion of it all is, that the poems of Ramayana and Mahabharata are not nearly as old as the sixth century before Christ, namely, about the age of Lycurgus at Sparta; and they alone have actually introduced in the country idolatry based on mythology. The rock temples at Ellora, in Central Hindostan, were surely constructed after the period of the composition of the great epic poems, since most of the episodes narrated in those compositions are sculptured on the walls; but the Buddhist system had already ceased to exist in the country, as there is not a single sign of it on those monuments. Artists, besides, and antiquaries easily recognize a much earlier style of art in the temples of the neighborhood of Bombay. The ruins at Ellora, consequently, and the Ramayana and Mahabharata, are certainly much later than the sixth century before our era; and they give the first certain indications of pure idolatry in Hindostan. Buddhism, which preceded it, was a pure atheistic philosophical system, although it culminated likewise ultimately in Sivaic idolatry, and was from the beginning associated with the image of Siva and its detestable emblems.

From that epoch, temples or pagodas, as they are called, began to be constructed above the ground, and not to be hewn



out of the hard rock under its surface. And in all those monuments, whose ruins may be said to cover now the country, the same stories are repeated which were first celebrated in the great epic poems, or in the episodes elaborated later from them in the puranas or tantras. And the most rank and abominable idolatry has certainly prevailed, and prevails yet, over the whole peninsula. Everywhere it is the Trimourti, and Siva, and Vishnu, and all the stories connected with the "avatars" or incarnations of this last god.

It is important, therefore, to say a word of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, out of which two poems has issued an exhaustless stream of incredible superstitions. The Ramayana is thought to be the oldest, is certainly the finest, and according to Sanscrit scholars merits to be compared with the Iliad of Homer. It can be read easily through, since it contains only thirty thousand verses; and there are in it certainly great literary beauties. But what gave it its subsequent importance in the religion of the country is the poetical halo it throws around the incarnation of Vishnu in Rama. Vishnu, or God as Preserver, became Rama, a mere mortal, and henceforth his history could be sculptured or painted on walls and canvas, and men began to adore the works of the statuary or painter. Thus, according to the Book of Wisdom, "the creatures of God were turned to an abomination and a temptation to the souls of men, and a snare to the feet of the unwise." And thus, "by the vanity of men idols came into the world. . . . And in process of time, wicked custom prevailing, this error was kept as a law; and statues were worshipped by the commandment of tyrants." (Wisdom, Chap. xiv.)

Poetry and art were, therefore, the origin of pure idolatry in Hindostan, as they were in Greece; and, in both countries, this happened at about the same time, and during an age of advanced civilization and most luxurious living. The primitive clanship of heroic times had given way in Greece to numerous aristocracies

bearing the name of free States; and in India the tribal system of the Vedic, that is, patriarchal period, was succeeded by the already extensive Empires of Ayodhya and Mathura. In Greece, during what is called the barbarous epoch, the prevailing religion was to a great extent monotheistic, as will be illustrated later. But great poets introduced all the gods of mythology, worshipped later, in the period of the highest culture and refinement. Precisely the same thing happened in Hindostan, and at about the same time, as is evident from the ascertained origin of Buddhism.

The great Mahabharata poem, far inferior to the Ramayana in point of style and interest—of an interminable length, for it contains one hundred thousand verses, evidently the work of several authors, and on that account altogether episodical—is yet of extreme importance on account of the varied matter contained in it; on which account it may bear the name of Encyclopædia, as well as on account of the fanciful details of mythology it contains. It became, therefore, together with the Ramayana, the great source of delusion for the people of a great country—a delusion the more remarkable because of the great respect which continued to be paid to the venerable Vedas, which are everywhere spoken of in the poems as the true source of pure religion. Hence the Brahmins themselves, those perpetual readers of the primitive religious books, having at the same time their imagination full of the impure fancies of the Ramayana, forgot altogether the true sense of the old worship, and became as degraded idolaters as the populace itself, and intent only on the exterior rites of worship.

The corruption of morals which naturally followed the introduction of impure emblems, could not but increase the degradation of intellect which always accompanies lust. It has been already remarked that the lingam never appears in the Vedic period, and that it came into Hindostan with the worship of Siva. The same we shall have occasion to remark of Egypt,

where the phallus is never seen in the temples of Ethiopia ; and nothing can better explain the degeneracy of mind in both countries than the reckless profligacy which must have been caused by throwing before the eyes of every man, woman, and child, yea, by placing constantly into their hands, as was certainly the case in Egypt, the disgusting object known under those names. Let any one read the description of those immense processions of as many as 700,000 people, related by Herodotus in his second book, and he will easily understand how the most austere, sublime, and intellectual religion of early ages, became the mass of corruption and profligacy which any one may witness who should visit Hindostan, and assist at many of the pretended religious festivals.

We ought not, consequently, to be surprised that the worship of animals became prevalent in India, as well as in Egypt. For there is no doubt that the people adore there the bird which Vishnu rides, as well as the elephant-shaped Ganesa, and the ape—Hanuman. It is true that the admirers of mythological worship excuse the idea under the plea that they are “divine animals”—thus speak nearly all modern critics. But unfortunately those “divine animals,” as objects of *actual* worship, are far from elevating and refining the ideas and habits of the Hindoo people. And if we remember rightly, Miss Maria Graham, in her “Journal of a Residence in India,” complains that those rites she herself witnessed, were far from coming up to the exalted ideas she had previously formed of pagan worship as transmitted to us from Egypt and Greece. It is true that if the same British lady had been present at Bubastis with Herodotus, in a country where “divine animals” were also worshipped ; and had she seen what he describes in his Second Book—“Euterpe”—she might very probably have experienced the same disgust, and changed her opinion on the refining elegance of pagan rites of any kind. But such is the education well-bred people of our day receive and derive from their

“classical studies.” We will not certainly invite them to look at the plates given to the public by Langlès from the rock-temples of Elephanta. It is enough for them, as well as for us, to remember the words of Heeren we have already quoted on the subject.

But we have not yet reached the bottom of that unimaginable corruption originated by the mythology of the great poems. These were to be followed by the puranas and tantras, on which our limits do not allow us to say more than a word. Both are now the “main foundation of the actual popular creed of the Brahminical Hindoos;” and on this account they deserve attention. It is the last term of that “series” of which we spoke previously, which began by pure monotheism, and which ends in the present “abominations” of India.

It seems that there were originally eighteen *puranas* of a high antiquity, of which some Sanscrit works of the Vedic period speaks. But they have disappeared; and if in the *puranas* now existing there are any fragments or shreds of them surviving their destruction, it is absolutely impossible to distinguish them and point them out in the modern compositions. The late Professor H. H. Wilson, an eminent Sanscrit scholar, who studied, edited, and translated the eighteen puranas which now remain, was of opinion that the age of their appearance falls within the twelfth and seventeenth centuries of our era, with the exception of one of them, which, on account of its “unsectarian character,” as the Professor expresses it, he would place between the ninth and tenth. They are, therefore, quite recent. Yet, to a great number of Brahmins, they replace entirely the Vedas, although it is admitted by modern critics that even a slight examination and a hasty comparison of them with the ancient books containing the primeval lore of Hindoo religion and science, is sufficient to convince every one that the description of religious life they unfold is simply a misrepresentation of that afforded by the Vedic literature.

Of their general purport it is enough to say, that some advocate the worship of Vishnu, and others that of Siva; and several of them propose chiefly to the adoration of their disciples the female energy of the god they place at the head of the Hindoo pantheon. This is called in Sanscrit Sakti, which is generally translated by the word "wife." But it is, indeed, the god himself, originally hermaphrodite, as many statues of Siva exemplify, and who is considered either as male or as female by his deluded worshippers. The wife, or female energy of Vishnu, is called *Sri* or *Lakshmi*; and the name of that of Siva is *Durga*. In either case it may be called the concentrated spirit of the particular deity under consideration, as the female activity is known to be more energetic. Thus to speak of Siva, *Durga* represents all the fury of which the god of destruction and of lust is capable; for Siva is, indeed, the diabolical emblem of both. *Durga*, therefore, is the great object and the last term at which all Hindoo mythology and *religious* rites must aim, and fatally terminate. And this is the purpose of some at least of the puranas.

But this is the only, entire, and absolute purpose of the abominable *tantras*, which are yet oftener in the hands of the modern Brahmins than the puranas themselves. And strange to say, these books seem or look to be much older than the actual puranas. Everything appears to be in favor of such a supposition. Yet their name—the very word "tantra," as a particular *religious* work, is never mentioned except in quite recent times, even in Sanscrit glossaries of classical words. The modern critics who have examined them most carefully cannot account for this apparent contradiction. In our opinion, an easy solution of the problem is found in the character of those infamous books. They must have formerly circulated *secretly*, and not have been allowed to be known except to a few.

It is important to examine them more closely than the puranas themselves, as they express in fact the last phase of the

religion of Hindostan, and prove truly more forcibly than aught else could do, how entirely the primitive patriarchal rites of the great Hindoo nation were destroyed by polytheism, which is the main object of this chapter.

*Tantra* means, literally, an instrument or means of faith: "It is," say the modern Sanscrit lexicographers, "a name given to the *sacred* works of the female energy of the god Siva." The underline is ours. The definition cannot be plainer and more appropriate. Siva is the god of destruction and of lust. The lingam is his perpetual emblem. His female energy—Durga—is the *rage* of both. For *rage* expresses the maniac activity of a furious woman. What can be the *sacred* works of such things? Let our reader imagine it. We cannot ourselves describe it. Yet we *must* say something of it, however unwillingly; otherwise our very purpose would be somewhat frustrated.

The tantras are books which comprise many subjects. Some of these are, of course, the creation and destruction of the world; the worship of the gods; the attainment of *all* objects, etc., etc. But the chief one is a long detail of "magical rites for the acquirement of six superhuman faculties, and four modes of union with spirits by meditation." Devil-worship and spiritism are already visible enough. The votaries of this abominable religion are called Sacktas, and nothing is more common than to meet them everywhere in the country, chiefly in Bengal. Many belong to the Brahminical class. But those of other castes are easily admitted to that Hindoo freemasonry which has also for its device something akin to the modern motto, "Fraternity, equality." They do not, however, conceal themselves in our days, and take good care to besmear their forehead with lines of red sandal-wood or vermilion, and a circular spot of red at the root of the nose. Being openly worshippers of the female energy of Siva, which typifies all that is excessively terrific and obscene, our readers need not be

told what are their *rites*. They naturally lead to brutalism, and involve the grossest immorality of all kinds.

It seems, however, that there is a limit to shamelessness in some of those Brahmins, since they form two sects: the adherents to the right-hand, and the left-hand, ritual. The first are less degraded, and probably never imbrue their hands in the blood of innocent children, as many are suspected of doing. Yet these, even, are known to offer blood without causing death; and in the case of animals, to sacrifice annually numbers of kids and goats, a practice totally abhorrent to the well-known benevolent feelings of Hindoos toward all living beings. But the left-hand ritual is altogether unmentionable. A quotation from Professor Wilson may, however, be introduced: "All the forms of the ritual require the use of some or all of five words, beginning with M, namely: Mansa, Mataya, Madya, Maithuna, and Mudra — *i. e.*, flesh, fish, wine, women, and obscene gesticulations." "But," he adds, "when the object of the ceremony is to acquire an interview with, or control over, impure spirits, a dead body is necessary. The adept is also to be alone, at midnight, in a cemetery or place where bodies are burned and buried, or criminals executed." . . . . We cannot conclude the quotation, which is nevertheless only a repetition of the well-known diabolical rites generally ascribed to the devil-worshippers of the middle ages. It is enough to say, with him, that "the whole is terminated with the most scandalous orgies among the votaries."

It is strange after this, that the learned Professor should pretend that, "In justice to the doctrines of the sect, it is to be observed, that these practices, if instituted merely for sensual gratification, are held by these sectarians to be as illicit and reprehensible as in any other branch of the Hindoo faith." We will merely ask how such "practices" as these can be supposed free from "sensual gratification" of the grossest and most abominable nature?

We admire profoundly the benevolent feelings of most writers of our age who always try their best to excuse the most hateful excesses of polytheistic superstition. But, to us, vice is vice; and pure devil-worship, as this undoubtedly is, cannot be justified under any pretext, and must always be absolutely condemned as the highest crime and most horrible abomination.

The demonstration, we hope, is complete. The progress in India, from the beginning, has been constantly backwards. The nation began with pure monotheism, and ends in devilry. The noble picture of venerable rishis and patriarchs living in devout simplicity in the first ages, is replaced by the ignoble aspect of degraded adepts in witchcraft and the lowest superstition; and the gradual steps by which this unfortunate result was attained, appear clear and convincing in the whole history of this extraordinary people. Contrary to the dogmas of Darwinism, the Hindoo type, at first so noble and almost godlike, has followed an inverse evolution, which might, if not arrested, end in something very like the type of the ape and gorilla. Not that the physical features of the species can, in our opinion, be radically changed even inversely, and become those of a quite different species, of a much lower and degraded type. But morally the change is almost equivalent to it; and, in the words of the Prophet, we might exclaim: "*Quomodo cecidisti, Lucifer, qui mane oriebaris!*"

We will conclude this chapter with a word or two on a feature remarkable, certainly, in the actual idolatry of Hindostan. In reading the works of well-informed English travellers, when they profess to describe the popular religion, one is struck with the constantly-changing names of the gods in passing from one town or village to another. This is certainly very striking in the long and detailed account of Mysore and the Malabar coast undertaken by Buchanan, at the request of the East India Company, after the conquest of that part of the country by the



English and the fall of Tippoo Saib. In every village, as you read, you find the people at the foot of some idol altogether unknown to the common Hindoo mythology. And the names of these gods are seldom the same. So that the conclusion forces itself upon the mind, that besides the celebrated deities worshipped chiefly in large towns, there is an infinite number of inferior ones known only to villagers and rude people. The country, therefore, has arrived to that point of "individualism" in religion which will strike us more forcibly when we speak of Egypt, Greece, and Italy. But of this anon.

The primitive religion of Central Asia being intimately connected with that of Hindostan, we had thought of speaking of it at the end of this chapter. But on account of its length we prefer to transfer it at the head of the next. The reader will perceive where the natural connection lies; and the details will sufficiently point it out.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE PRIMEVAL RELIGION, AND ITS DECLINE, IN CENTRAL ASIA AND AFRICA.

### SECTION I.—CENTRAL ASIA.

A FEW years back, the exact time of the great "reform" of Zoroaster was unknown; or rather the general belief concerning it was incorrect. Owing to several mistakes of previous chronologists, Zoroastrianism was thought to be a great deal more recent than it really is; and had it not been for the labors and discoveries of several orientalist of our days, the common error could not have been corrected, and the arguments we have adduced in support of the primitive monotheism of Hindostan would have been the only ones possible. They might have sufficed, certainly, but a more exact knowledge of Asiatic antiquities, and the true interpretation of the Zend-Avesta, enable us to add to them a much more powerful one, which the plan we have adopted will oblige us to confine within as narrow a compass as is compatible with a satisfactory exposition of it.

We have already hinted that the Zends were not Persian books, but truly Vedic; and that if we still follow the old distinction, and consider them apart, it is merely for the sake of convenience. We must, in the first instance, establish this truth, most important in our present considerations.

The author of the Zend-Avesta, or at least of the oldest part of it—the Gâthas—since it was compiled, as it would seem, like the Vedas, by several authors,—Zoroaster, or in the old spelling, *Zarathustra*, has himself described very accurately the vast region which is to be now the object of our investigation. The Vendidad begins by an enumeration of the provinces

and chief cities governed by King Gustasp—or rather *Vistagpa*, according to the correct orthography—to whom the book is addressed, and, indeed, dedicated. The list includes all the countries east of the Caspian Sea and north of Hindostan, with the northern part of this peninsula, besides Azerbaijan west of the Caspian Lake. A glance over the map will show that it embraced Khorasan, Bactriana, and Sogdiana, Cabul, Lahore, and the Punjaub, with several other provinces of less renown. *Nothing absolutely is said in the book, either of Persia or of Media even.* King Gustasp's—Vistagpa's—Capital was evidently Bactra. The centre of his empire was the country included between the Oxus and the Jaxartes. It was, therefore, precisely Central Asia. None of the southern regions of the continent belonged to it. Knowing, as we do, that the Vedas came from the north of Hindostan, the remark is important. The Vedas, in fact, and the Zends were literary productions of the same country almost. The Zends, therefore, were not Persian books.

## I.

The apparent similarity of the name of Gustasp with Darius Hystaspis, had been a sufficient reason for the antiquarians of a previous age to presume that Zoroaster lived under his reign. Yet many Greek writers had asserted that this Sage, whom they all admired as one of the greatest men our world had seen, belonged to an epoch far earlier than the Persian, or even than the Median dynasties. Aristotle went so far as to state that he lived 6000 years before his own time; Xanthus of Lydia was therefore very moderate in placing him 600 years before the Trojan war; Berosus of Babylon made him a Babylonian King corresponding with an epoch equivalent to about 2000 years before Christ. Now that the Zend-Avesta is well known, and has been correctly translated, the general opinion makes

him at least contemporary with Moses. It is clear that we have here a book of very high antiquity, and that its doctrines must represent the thoughts of men very near the origin of our species. It was Anquetil Duperron, a Frenchman, who first brought a copy of it to Europe, about the middle of last century; and although his translation was very defective, owing to the backwardness of philology at the time, it produced an immense sensation. The English promptly accused it of being a forgery. The Germans, more equitable, were at first divided in opinion, but Klenker having translated it into German, its genuineness was generally admitted beyond the Rhine. It is Rask, a Dane, who having procured many Zend manuscripts for the Copenhagen library, showed conclusively the close affinity between the language of the Zends and the Sanscrit. But it is again Mr. Eugene Burnouf who determined several important points, admitted now generally by all orientalists, which clearly show the intimate relation of the Zends with the Vedas, establish the character of the first as a "reform" intended to bring back the second to their old pure monotheism, and determine many points which we may be allowed to set forth in the following catechetical form :

1st. Is the book really as ancient a production as has been just stated? It was not certainly written so as to circulate, at the time mentioned above; but was transmitted orally, as the Vedas, the Homeric poems, the Talmud, etc. At the beginning, undoubtedly, it was much more voluminous than at present. Pliny speaks of 2,000,000 verses written by Zoroaster, which must be an exaggeration common enough with the author of "Historia Naturalis." But a great part of the work perished in the frightful invasion of Omar in Persia, and what was saved was collected together only under the Sassanian Kings, in the third century of our era. These are real difficulties. Nevertheless, the style of a good part of what remains is truly Vedic. Whoever understands the Vedas will easily understand it. These

books must have been transmitted with the extreme precision and caution always attached to ritual prayers ; for such they are mostly. We have, therefore, an authentic, most ancient work. The language is somewhat different from the Sanscrit, but certainly of the same type. The verses are truly Vedic verses, without rhyme, and with the syllables only counted. All modern orientalistes seem to agree on this first point.

2d. Is the doctrine of monotheism as clear in the Zends as in the Vedas? The answer is plain, almost emphatic : It is clearer and more precise. From many expressions of the Zend-Avesta, it is evident that the nation to which Zoroaster belonged had been previously connected intimately with another Aryan nation. But a long war had raged between both ; enmity at the time of Zoroaster reigned supreme. The chief cause of complaint on the part of the Sage himself was, that the primitive religion of the people had been corrupted by this now hostile race. The pure worship of one God, admitted at first on both sides, had been gradually replaced by the worship of *devas*, and Zoroaster wished to bring back his nation to primeval monotheism. Thus the Bactrian patriarch was merely a reformer, in the true sense of the word. From the same text it appears that, since the introduction of corrupt worship, the people of Gustasp had been under the guidance of "fire priests," who had established a false religion known under the name of "ahura," because inferior spirits, called "ahuras," were adored instead of the "devas" of the enemy. Zoroaster declared himself against both, and proposed the worship of Ormuzd—Ahura-Mazda—alone, which he emphatically proclaimed as the old worship of both nations.

We recognize clearly in the "devas" of the enemy the "devatâs" honored in the Vedic sacrifices, to which Zoroaster objected as making mere creatures real "gods." We may also conclude from this warm hostility the motive which led Zoroaster to give to the Supreme God, not the name of

Brahma, but that of Ormuzd—Ahura-Mazda. He wished to have nothing to do with the Hindoo religion. And, moreover, the language in which he wrote had then become, to a certain degree, a different one from the Sanscrit of the Vedas, although closely allied to it. Other proofs of the Zend monotheism will presently be given. Before passing to the next point, we may here repeat that India has been, indeed, the centre of all the religions of Asia, as Heeren asserts. We have seen how Buddhism, which has since prevailed all over the Far-East, was derived from the Hindoo philosophy. And, now, we notice another curious fact: The Brahminic religion becoming the source of the worship of all Western Asia, where Zoroastrianism prevailed in the end, through the Medians and Persians, in Assyria, Babylonia, and a great part of Asia Minor; and that it might have ruled even over a great part of Europe, if Persia had not been defeated by Greece at Marathon and Salamis. It is even pretended by some orientalists that the religion of Zoroaster was the true source of the only three great monotheistic systems, embracing nearly all the Semitic nations: namely, Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. But this is an evident error. And every candid observer will easily acknowledge that neither Judaism, nor chiefly Christianity, not even Mohammedanism, have taken their dogmas from the creed of Zoroaster; although there is no doubt that many truths contained in this last, form also a part of the three others; because they are *truths* coming from God, and not because Zoroaster originated them. He insists himself on this: that he is a reformer, not an inventor of religion. The opinion, therefore, of Sir William Jones, that mankind originated probably in Iràn—Persia—and that the first study to which an orientalist ought to apply is that of the Persian language, as it is from that country that the truth radiated from the beginning, is not substantiated; and the very respectable founder of the Asiatic Society would, no doubt, have changed his opinion, had he known what a

more advanced study of Sanscrit and Zend has now demonstrated.

3d. What is the part of monotheism and that of "sacrificial rites" in Zoroaster's religion? The answer is plain again from the late discoveries in the text of the Zend-Avesta. There is much less room with respect to both, for error to creep in, than in the Vedas, as we know them; and, consequently, the pantheism, polytheism, and devilish idolatry which invaded Hindooism never made inroads of such frightful import in the worship of the Parsees, for Manicheism can scarcely be considered as a branch of this religion. The imagination of the northern tribes, over which Gustasp ruled, being more sober and guarded, the pure sparks of the heavenly doctrine which we have admired in the Vedas, were not in Central Asia so easily dimmed by vague expressions containing seeds of manifest error. Hence, its monotheism resembled much more the true, solid, always consistent doctrine of the Hebrew prophets independently of their inspiration. There has been, however, a great decline in Zoroastrianism, which it will be our duty to notice.

## II.

The Divine Unity in the person of Ormuzd—(Ahura-Mazda)—and the height of His divine attributes, are expressed in the Gâthas—the most authentic part of the Zends—with a supreme energy which cannot be misunderstood. The multiplicity of passages which contain them, their agreement together, and the identity of interpretation by the most learned and skillful translators, cannot leave room for hesitation and doubt. The name itself, Ahura-Mazda (Ormuzd) signifies, according to Mr. Haug, (Essays, p. 256) the *Living Creator of the Universe*. The most common appellations by which He is addressed are in the interpretation of the same gentleman, and of Mr. Spiegel, the last

translator of the Zends: "The living God—the Good Spirit—the Sublime Truth—the Creator of Life—the Essence of Truth—the Primordial Spirit—the Source of Light—the most Holy Spirit—the Creator of all that is good—the Author of the World and of Law—the most Powerful of Beings. It is He who has traced to the sun and the stars their road in the heavens; it is He who brings on the increase and decrease of the moon; it is He who has created the earth, the ocean, the trees, etc., etc."

It is precisely thus that we speak of God. Zarathustra, since his name ought, it seems, to be thus spelt, had received from tradition the true key-note of religious truth. He said, himself, that he had invented nothing; but merely restored the primitive belief obscured by the new worship of *devas*. In him we find, therefore, a great link of the golden chain, which starting first from the mouth of God, was often on the point of being broken and lost, until Christ secured it for us for ever, by handing it over to His infallible Church. Evidently the Bactrian Sage spoke as we do, and believed as we do, with respect to God. He appeared when the purity of doctrine, first contained in the Vedas, began to be dimmed by poetry and imagination; and devatâs, or devas, as he called them, were insensibly personified, and turned into personal beings and deities; to protest against this invasion of the rights of the Supreme and Living Author of the Universe; and all the terms by which he expressed his essence and attributes, were precisely those we employ ourselves, and which will be used henceforth to the end of time.

Hear one of the hymns of Zarathustra, translated in German by Mr. Spiegel, to which Max Müller gave an English dress. (It is taken from Spiegel's *Yasna*, p. 146).

"I ask Thee; tell me the truth, *O Ahura!* Who was from the beginning the father of pure creatures? Who has made a path for the sun and for the stars? Who, but Thou, makes



the moon to increase and to decrease? That, *O Mazda*, and other things I wish to know.

“I ask Thee; tell me the truth, O Ahura! Who holds the earth and the clouds that they do not fall? Who holds the sea and the trees? Who has given swiftness to the wind and the clouds? Who is the creator of the good spirit?”

“I ask Thee; tell me the truth, O Ahura! Who has made the kindly light and the darkness? Who has made the kindly sleep and the awaking? Who has made the mornings, the noons, and the nights? Who has made him who ponders on the measure of Thy laws?”

In perusing this passage, which is only one of many, the Christian may well imagine he is listening to fresh strains of the inspired Moses, Job or David! With respect to “sacrificial rites,” a greater precision of language than that of the Vedas, serves in the Zends to render much less imminent the danger of introducing polytheism through them. In the *Yazna* of the Zend-Avesta, where the five *Gathas*, of which we just spoke, are contained, and which treat of “sacrifice,” “devatâs” are not addressed, as in the Vedas, and cannot so easily be transformed into “gods.” But the ritual contains merely “prayers for the consecration of holy water, of the bundle of twigs used in the rites, of the liquor extracted from the plant called *homa*—the *soma* of Hindostan—or of anything connected with the sacrifice.” Thus it is only a blessing bestowed on some object which is *set apart* for the service of God, exactly as in the Catholic ritual prayers are directed to be said over water, oil, frankincense, etc. And thus the rites of Zoroastrianism become plain, and are void of the least danger of obscuring the pure monotheism advocated everywhere in the Zends. Fortunately, moreover, for our argument, their intimate connection with the corresponding forms of the Vedas, in which we find also blessings for fire, for water, for the *soma* liquor, of which we had an occasion to speak previously, explain the original

meaning of the Hindoo books, and show conclusively the truth of our preceding remarks on those rites, and the appropriateness of our protest against the translation of the word "devatâ" into that of "god;" at least as it was understood primitively; and thus our assertion was limited. From the need of a "reform," so early as the time of Zarathustra, it seems the decline to error began sooner than we might otherwise have imagined. Yet it may be supposed that the zeal of the "reformer" was kindled at the very first innovations, and perhaps at the interpretations the people alone gave to "sacrificial rites," when the pure Vedic meaning was well understood by the learned Brahmins. These, however, are mere conjectures on which we do not insist.

But we must here introduce a few remarks on the ritual of ancient religions in general, whether true or false. In all the new forms given by Protestantism to Christianity, the ritual is absent, or, if there is some remnant of it, it is merely a shred. In the old religions, it was always extremely elaborate; and we may say that the older a religion is the more complicated is the ritual. Could this be the effect of barbarism in man, as everything old is often considered as barbarous? And is a religion deprived of a ritual, on that account, more refined and true?

The Jewish ritual, given by God Himself, as we firmly believe, is certainly very copious and long. The Christian ritual in the true Church is, undoubtedly, much more simple and far less complex. Authors generally attribute the difference, in the first case (that of the Jews), to the necessity of striking their imagination, and obliging them to many small observances, and of thus opposing their proneness to idolatry. It might be so in part. Yet it is undoubtedly true that the rituals adopted, from the beginning, by all nations of antiquity, were all of a very elaborate nature, and contained as many apparently trifling prescriptions as the one of Leviticus. And

this did not prevent them from falling into many grievous errors. Nay, it was not unseldom the cause of leading them to polytheism, as it certainly was in the case of the Hindoos. A reason more consonant with the doctrine of several Fathers of the Church, and among them, we think, St. Leo the Great and St. Irenæus, is the difference of the three dispensations of nature, law, and grace, which required differences of worship and rites. To our thinking, the patriarchal religion adapted to men who were, in truth, giants intellectually, required strong, vivid, and varied rites, because their powerful minds must have been swayed by a correspondingly powerful imagination, which had to be occupied with the things of God in order to avoid the danger of plunging headlong into the things of this world, as all did sooner or later. If the Jewish patriarchs, from Abraham downwards, used much more simple rites, they were certainly exceptions in the general state of things at the time. Being frequently in direct communication with Almighty God, who treated them as friends, and whom they loved ardently, there was no need, for them, of so many slight observances and prescriptions. But there is no doubt that, when they lived on earth, all other nations of Asia were subjected to extremely complicated religious rites, which, on account of their uniformity, ought to be considered, in the main, as handed down to them by primitive tradition; and the only reason we can assign for this is the one mentioned above.

The Jewish nation, according to many Fathers of the Church, were kept under a rigorous dispensation, and bound hands and feet, from morning to night, at all hours of the day by observances of every kind, because they were children kept under the rod, and trained to better things by a harsh treatment necessary for their long education.

But to suppose that the dispensation of grace, the everlasting and final religion of Christ, was to leave us without a ritual of any kind, is to fall into an egregious error. Man

wants it; and if he emancipates himself entirely, or almost entirely, from it, under the pretext that we live under the dispensation of love, and are free from all the restraints of the law, he is most likely, in the course of time, to forget God altogether, and to lose completely, not only the exterior, but the very spiritual essence of religion. The man who belongs to a sect without rites, will soon be practically without God; because, owing to the double nature of man, prayer itself requires the elevation or joining of the hands, the bending of the knees, the raising of the eyes to heaven, or other acts of *bodily* worship. And all these are real rites, and without them prayer itself would soon cease to exist.

If Christ has freed us from the *law*, it is merely from the Mosaic ceremonial law. But He gave to His Church a true legislative power. And this Mother of all true Christians, knowing their wants and understanding their nature, yet aware of their native weakness, although living under the dispensation of "grace" (which, according to St. Paul, was instituted for men, and no more for babes, as the Jews were), this Mother Church, with the unlimited power given her by Christ, has, from the very beginning, instituted rites which, with the ever-increasing number of the faithful, have grown to the imposing forms we all know so well, and we love to witness daily, in the ever-recurring round of our festivals through the Christian year.

And, although the Mosaic law is abolished, although the patriarchal religion has long ago ceased to exist, yet we have still many points of similarity with the "men of old;" and we use yet all the elements to praise our Creator, because we worship the same God and inhabit the same earth. Our Holy religion is the true one; and as that of the patriarchs was in the same position in their time, there must be some points, at least, of resemblance between both.

It is time to return to Zoroastrianism, or rather to Mazdeism,

as it is now called ; and we must begin to adopt the general way of speaking of our contemporaries. Was not Mazdeism, from the very time of its first expounder, impregnated with dualism, and consequently not teaching pure monotheism ? To what extent can this be asserted ? Mr. Haug, who made it a point to examine this question, thinks that dualism is certainly expressed in the *philosophy* of Zarathustra, as distinct from his *religious teaching*. But he openly refuses to believe that in primitive Mazdeism, Ahura-Mazda, or Ormuzd, had a rival in power. "An evil spirit," he says, "distinct from Ahura-Mazda, possessing the same power, and in direct and perpetual opposition to Him, is a thing completely foreign to Zoroaster's theology ; although such an opinion among his followers may very well be found, by implication at least, in the later books, such as the Vendidad." Mr. Haug, however, admits that in the old Yaçna—which, as we saw, comprise the Gâthas, where the authentic Mazdean doctrine is contained—is found the positive teaching (very different from the previous one), "that there are two principles, the Good and the Evil spirit, the first the only author of *Gaya, entity*, namely, all that is good ; the other the only author of *Ajyâiti, non-entity*, namely, all that is bad ; both act in the universe ; both were together in the origin of things, subsisting," Mr. Haug says, "in the divine substance as they do now in mortal beings, and called the 'Twins.'"

On account of this discovery, confirmed by Mr. Spiegel, and of some other texts which seem analogous, the mass of orientalist in our days admit a kind of real dualism in primitive Mazdeism, but a very different one from that of the Zervanians, as Mr. F. Lenormant calls them. This latter doctrine of dualism was "promulgated about the time of Alexander, and developed only during our middle ages, chiefly after the Moslem conquest of Persia ; and is still held by the Guebres and the Parsees of Bombay. According to it, one great Being

existed before Ormuzd and Ahriman, superior to them, the source of all, called *Zarvanakarana* (*time without limits*); from whom had emanated the two principles, and into whom they are one day to be absorbed, together with all the beings who peopled the world" ("Ancient History of the East," Tom. ii.). This is pure pantheism, which can nowhere be found in the works of Zarathustra.

But is it true that real dualism, as contained in the passage quoted above from Mr. Haug, and interpreted by him, is surely to be accepted as pure, primitive Mazdeism? This would not certainly be surprising, as nobody concedes infallibility to Zoroaster, who never pretended to it himself, always announced himself as a single mortal, and was never called a god or even a semi-god by any of his followers in after ages. And this is certainly remarkable. A man of his moral and intellectual height, living in the remote antiquity all must now concede to him, would certainly, in any other nation out of Judaism, have been placed among the gods; to be worshipped, with temples and altars. He is the only hero of such high antiquity who has not enjoyed the privilege of godship, which he would himself have repudiated with horror. And, in this respect, he is on a par with the great men of the Bible who honored God, transmitted faithfully His worship to their descendants, fought for Him if needed, and were true heroes and sages, to whom no one ever thought of granting divine honors. Are we obliged to believe that he—Zoroaster—taught real dualism, the existence of two distinct, opposite principles, one good, the other bad; both equal? We have still great doubts upon this point, after having read what has been published lately by men whom we honor, and to whom religion is really indebted for their discoveries.

First, in the midst of that metaphysical obscurity which certainly surrounds the doctrine of Zarathustra on the origin of evil, we read in a passage of Mr. Spiegel, translated in French,

the following phrase, taken from the thirtieth chapter of the fourth Gátha: "Both these Celestial beings, the Twins, showed originally in their own persons, the Good and the Evil, in thoughts, words, and acts. . . . They both united together to create first life and transitory things, and regulate the future formation of the world. . . . Of these two Celestial beings, the Evil spirit *chose* evil, and the Most Holy who created the solid heaven, purity."

This is not certainly orthodox Christian teaching. We must, however, remark, that this very text supposes the belief in real creation, not by emanation. And this was undoubtedly a dogma of Mazdeism; and here the text speaks of an epoch previous to this creation. How difficult was it for Zoroaster to interpret correctly the original tradition on the subject? But when he says that the "Twins" showed "originally" the Good and the Bad in their thoughts, etc., we may suppose that the Bactrian Sage made a slight mistake in interpreting the true tradition contained in his own mind, and wished only to say, that the being who was destined to be the Bad Principle, by his own choice, "showed it by his thoughts, words, and actions." We should have an orthodox enough description of Lucifer. For the angels, for aught we know, may have been created long ages before man, and Lucifer may very well have been the first created among the angels, as he was the highest. He must have been, therefore, with God in heaven, during long ages, and united with Him, perhaps, in the creation of the world as His minister; only he was not Evil yet, but merely destined to be one day *by his own choice*, as Zoroaster has it. A very slight change, therefore, would make the text correct in doctrine.

This would be plain, perhaps, if so many books of the same author had not been lost. That some explanation of the kind is needed, appears from the following: Ahriman, in the Zends, is not only opposed to Ahura-Mazda, but likewise to Mithra. And, as everything goes by pairs in Mazdeism, he cannot be

called superior to Mithra, to whom he is opposed, and who drives him away from heaven, under the form of a serpent. Consequently he cannot be called equal to Ahura-Mazda or Ormuzd, to whom Mithra is subordinate.

There is evidently some confusion in the text which cannot be cleared up on account of the loss of the greatest part of Mazdean books. But the personage of Mithra, his fight with, and his victory over, Ahriman, prove conclusively to our own mind that there is no real dualism between Ormuzd and Ahriman, in the primitive religion of Zarathustra. This question, however, merits a somewhat more detailed investigation.

Who is Mithra in the theology of Zoroaster?

F. Lenormant and E. Chevallier, both great orientalist, the first pre-eminently, tell us (*Anc. History of the East*, T. 2, p. 33), that "Mithra was the Mediator, whose origin is not clearly explained in what remains of the Zoroastrian books; but who seems to have sprung from Ormuzd, and to have been consubstantial with him. Mithra had driven Ahriman—who is represented as a serpent with two legs—from heaven. Mithra was the guardian of men during life, and their judge after death. His functions are especially enlarged on in the later books; but his name, his title, "victorious," and his high position in the Mazdean faith, unquestionably belong to the most ancient phase of this religion. And as everything was arranged in hostile pairs, Mithra had his double and adversary in the creation of Ahriman (Mithra Daradj), "the evil Mithra," who labored to destroy all his beneficent work. Is not this merely the fight of Michael with Lucifer? Only Michael is not placed so high in the Old Testament.

Ahriman, according to this, was the adversary of Mithra, who conquered him and drove him from heaven. He could not be, consequently, *equal in power* to Ahura-Mazda, from whom *Mithra sprung*. Zarathustra, whose expressions are nearly always exact, certainly much more so than the often vague for-



mulas of the Vedic books, could not fall into so egregious a contradiction as this would suppose. The real obscurity of the case must come from the loss of the other Mazdean books; and to confirm this opinion, we have all the titles given to the Living Creator of the Universe (Ahura-Mazda), and noted previously. Such an all-perfect Being cannot brook an equal. Hence, in all the cuneiform inscriptions preserved yet in Asia, even those of the Persian kings of the Achæmenidæ dynasty, the only God recorded on the monuments is Ahura-Mazda, his supposed adversary never being mentioned.

Another argument, not without force, is derived from the general attribution given to the two principles in the text from which the difficulty arose. One is the cause, the author of *entity*, namely: of all that is good; the other is the cause, the author of non-entity, namely: of all that is evil. God is, and can only be, the cause of what is good, never of evil; all Christian theologians and philosophers agree in this—Calvin would have been the only exception, had he been a Christian. Zarathustra, consequently, in this shows himself to have been a most profound thinker, if he did not derive it from primitive tradition.

That the devil is the great cause of evil, and that evil is non-entity, is likewise the doctrine of some of the greatest Christian philosophers, among whom are St. Augustine and St. Thomas. Zarathustra, consequently, is right again in this doctrine. The only error consists in making both "Twins," which evidently must not be understood literally as enjoying equal power, since Ahriman was once conquered by Mithra inferior to Ormuzd. Every sound reasoning, therefore, goes to exclude real dualism from primitive Mazdeism.

There is no need of recalling to the mind of the reader the numerous inferior beings whose existence is proclaimed by this religion, either on the side of the good, or on that of the bad principle. Among the first were included the Amshaspands,

the Yzeds, and the Fervers; among the second, the Darvands, the Divas, etc. This was merely the doctrine of the existence of angels and demons.

This discussion, therefore, instead of weakening the impression that the religion of Zoroaster was monotheistic, has indeed added new proofs to what has been the universal belief of all learned men in ancient as well as in modern times. Bergier is the only one perhaps who in his "Dictionnaire Théologique," declares himself openly an antagonist of the prevailing opinion. But all the ancients were unanimous in asserting that the doctrine of the Bactrian Sage—they thought him Persian—was opposed to the multiplicity of gods. In modern times the more fully the question has been investigated, the clearer has it appeared that their appreciation of his doctrine was correct. Eugene Burnouf proclaimed it, it seems, openly; and he had a right to speak on the subject. The new texts, translated by Mr. Haug and Mr. Spiegel, appeared at first to throw some doubt upon it, but Mr. Haug admits unequivocally pure monotheism in the *religious* part of the Zends. And, if Mr. Spiegel inclines to the other side, his supposition gives rise to immense difficulties. We can say, certainly, that the new discoveries have brought to light the most unexpected results, and raised at once the religion of Zoroaster far above all the other natural religions of the East. It is now admitted by all, except a few, that dualism is an after-growth in the religious, if not in the philosophical, system of the Zends. Its restorer speaks constantly of one God, and not two. He inveighs vehemently against the multiplicity of gods; and wishes his people to adore but one. Even much later, when Media and Persia received his religion through the tribe of the Magians, real dualism, or the co-existence of two *equal* and *supreme* principles, the good and the evil, was completely unknown. All the cuneiform inscriptions found at Persepolis and elsewhere, which commemorate some great events under the Per-

sian kings of the Achæmenidæ family or clan, speak only of one God, Ormuzd, sole object of the worship of the nation. It is in the philosophical, not in the religious, part of the Zends, that the evil principle is spoken of, as a great fact appearing everywhere, and everywhere interfering with the harmony of the divine plan. It is just thus that a Christian speaks. But Zoroaster, it seems, had gone farther still in Christian philosophy, if we may employ such phraseology. God, according to him, can be only the *cause* of what is good. He cannot be the *cause* of evil. Consequently true evil, chiefly moral evil, ought to be detested absolutely as coming from a cause distinct from, and consequently opposed to, God. But how is the cause of evil opposed to God? Here, truly, we admire the noble discoveries made by modern learned men; and we would wish to be able to ascertain them of our own knowledge, by diving, as they do, into the great languages of primitive man.

They tell us that the cause of what is good is *entity*; the cause of evil, *non-entity*. Thus, at least, they make Zoroaster speak. And what is this but the language of St. Augustine and St. Thomas? All that exists in reality is being; entity comes from God. All moral evil, sin, imperfection even, arises from some deficiency, and in that respect is a non-entity. God cannot be its cause. Zoroaster, therefore, only asserts that God exists, *although* there are moral evils of which He is not the cause. In this he controverts all future atheists, whose great argument is precisely the reverse, namely: that God is not, because evil is. The sage friend of Gustasp answers them: evil in existing beings, as far as it is evil, is non-entity. Therefore God exists in spite of it.

We have, it is true, placed in strict order the thoughts spread less regularly in the translation of the Zend-Avesta; but from the whole context, we think that this was at the bottom of the mind of the author.

## III.

It is not surprising that such a pure doctrine should become, in course of time, less understood, and, indeed, distorted by commentaries. It is only what we should expect from human infirmity. That Zoroaster, when speaking of the "enemy," the "adversary" had in his mind the great cause of all evils, the Devil himself, we firmly believe; and if so, he was right. But this was not the dogma of Ahriman as subsequently developed. In the original text of the Zends, Ahriman was not "without the reach of Ormuzd"—this is textually taken from the Zend-Avesta. Ormuzd alone, therefore, was truly God. His enemy succumbed to Mithra, inferior to Ormuzd, but his minister and he—Ahriman—was driven from heaven. In course of time, however, both became independent of and hostile to each other, each ruling over a realm of his own. Then Parsees began, really, to believe in two gods—a belief which was thus a corruption of the ancient doctrine. The exact time when this took place cannot be ascertained. It was under the Persian dynasty, yet not at its beginning; at which time the Magians were not dualists. Manicheism came much later; and Manicheism did not belong to Zoroaster's doctrine in any manner. It was rather a kind of gnostic heresy, since, according to Manes, the good Principle, Primeval Light, had given birth to twelve æons, corresponding to the twelve signs of the Zodiac, and the twelve stages of the world; and Darkness, the Bad, or Archon, had peopled his kingdom with demons fighting each other; not knowing even the existence of Light until, in their contests, coming to the outer edge of their region, they became aware of it, and made captive one of the superior æons, Christ. Nearly all we know of Manicheism is from St. Augustine; and from his writings no parallelism can be established between it and Zoroaster's system. The most corrupt Ahrimanic

doctrine of the modern Parsees or Guebres is far superior to what Manes ever taught. Modern critics, therefore, have removed by their philological discoveries, all the doubts and uncertainties which formerly obscured the real belief of the primitive Magians. The doctrine was pure at first. In course of time it was altered, and dualism replaced monotheism. Thus several texts of Plutarch (*De Iside et Osiride*) are reconciled; and the conclusions drawn by Thomas Hyde, Peter Bayle, and other critics of the seventeenth century, are proved to have been mistakes; whilst the truths elicited by Cudworth, and Mosheim, his annotator, are confirmed; this time, however, supported by irrefragable documents, which render the conclusion final. Mithra, likewise, comes thus into the system.

We need not enter into other peculiarities of Zoroastrianism. Our whole object has been to ascertain if monotheism was contained in it, and we think we have placed that beyond dispute. A word or two, however, may be said on some other dogmas of that primitive faith. That the certainty of a judgment after life, of places of reward or punishment—Heaven and Hell—formed a portion of its creed, cannot be a matter of doubt. But even the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is clearly contained in the most authentic part of the Zend-Avesta; and the solid argument used by Christians to prove its possibility—the almightiness of the Creator—is likewise referred to in the work of Zoroaster. Finally, there is that august personage, apart from all superior beings under God, “who stands between God and man; shows the way to heaven, and pronounces judgment upon human actions after death; guards with his drawn sword the whole world against the demons; has his own light from inside, and from outside is decorated with stars,” who is, apparently, more powerful than the great archangel Michael in Scripture, and inferior only to our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing certainly more holy and more pure has ever issued from an uninspired pen, nor been bequeathed to

the teachings of reason and the transmission of tradition. We allude to the great personality of Mithra, as he is described in the Zends, not in his infamous travesty, in later times, in heathen Rome.

It was against the believers in such exalted doctrines that the brutal sword of Omar was drawn from the scabbard, never to return to it until they were well-nigh extirpated. A few thousand Guebres still surviving in Persia, and a few more thousand Parsees settled in the neighborhood of Bombay in India, are all that remain of the followers of Zoroaster. The Moslems, with their boasted mission of destroying idolatry, waged a more implacable warfare against the purest monotheists of the East, as well as against the Christians of the West, than ever they did against the fetichists of Africa, or the worshippers of Siva in Hindostan.

The fact is, the great danger in our days, in speaking of the religious system of the Zends, is to appear to favor the opinion of those modern writers who pretend that Judaism, or even Christianity, found there the substance of the belief elaborated in the Old and New Testaments. But Origen had already, sixteen hundred years ago, guarded us against this error by asserting (*Contra Celsum*, vi.) "that Christianity has received nothing from them;" and it is a fact easily ascertained by history.

In speaking of the doctrinal corruptions which time and the weakness of the human mind introduced into Mazdeism, we do not find the gradual and well-ascertained decline which we described in Hindooism. Zarathustra had spoken so openly against the multiplicity of gods, and his ritual was so clear and precise in the same direction, that his followers could not go totally astray as long as they read and revered his books. Yet, we have just seen how real dualism was introduced. And something has been said of the form it took when the fatal error of *Zarvanakanara* crept in. We refer to a paragraph a few pages back. "This monstrous conception"—

remark with justice F. Lenormant and E. Chevallier in their History of the East—"which converted Mazdeism into absolute pantheism, substituted emanation for creation, and reduced Ormuzd from the position assigned him by Zoroaster, as the Great Creator of all, to that of a mere demiurgos—the organizer of a pre-existent universe; which assimilates the self-existing Being, the Deity, with uncreated matter, with a chaos supposed to be eternal; which destroys all distinction in the moral government of the world between good and evil, making them both to have emanated from, and to be destined to be again absorbed into, the same divine being . . . this monstrous conception is absolutely contrary to the very spirit of the reform of Zoroaster."

Yet it seems that it is, and has been, the belief of the Parsees for many ages. Mr. Spiegel, Mr. Oppert, and the Baron d'Eckstein have shown that this "Zarvanian doctrine" resulted from the infiltration of the gross and materialistic pantheism of Chaldaea into Mazdeism. This religion, therefore, in course of time, took the first downward step in error—Pantheism—as described in the Book of Wisdom; but never reached the second, pure idolatry. Even during the dynasty of the *Achæmenidæ*, when bloody, nay, human sacrifices—a thing so abhorrent to primitive Mazdeism—made a part of the Persian religion, not only did not the worship of idols prevail, as in other countries at the time, as in Hindostan certainly; not only no great works of art were ever raised to polytheism as in Hindostan, Egypt, and Greece; not only poetry did not rival art for its illustration, as in all those regions; but invariably in their warlike expeditions the Persians showed their hatred of idolatry by destroying its emblems and its temples in Asia Minor, Egypt, and Greece.

"Fire worship" was another deterioration of the primitive doctrine, of which a word must be said. It became a real "worship of fire" as an element. Nor is there in that any-

thing to surprise us, inasmuch as fire must always be an important object in any pantheistic creed. But was it so in Mazdeism at first? Some modern philologists think so, and accuse Zoroaster of not having had the courage to destroy this superstition which he found in the country of Gustasp. This pusillanimity is scarcely intelligible in the Bactrian Sage, whom we heard, at the very commencement of his reform, declaring openly against the "fire worship" of the "ahura" priesthood of his own country, as well as against the "devas" of the "enemy." If he kept the symbol in his ritual, it must have been only as an emblem. Hence F. Lenormant and E. Chevallier state openly: "The only representation of Ormuzd admitted within the sanctuaries by the Zend-Avesta, and permitted in worship, was fire, because this was considered as perfectly pure and almost immaterial. From this arose the adoration of the sacred fire, though the Mazdeans did not adore the fire itself, but considered it merely a representative of Ormuzd."

In conclusion, it is almost needless to add that the morality of the Zends is irreproachable. Its ethical code is the only ancient one—the Jewish Decalogue being always withdrawn from comparison, which taught openly that purity of morals ought not to reach only human actions, but to embrace likewise words and thoughts. The phrase is repeated to satiety in the Zends, so as to become a general formula, which necessarily recalls to a Christian the order he has to follow in the examen of his own conscience.

With pure morality, a great simplicity of life is everywhere recommended in Mazdeism, as it was in primitive Hindooism. Three orders of men in society are mentioned—the priest, the warrior, and the agriculturist—never, however, degenerating into castes. To encourage agriculture ought to be the chief object of a good king; and Vistasp, *Gustasp*, is represented as a pattern in that regard. Under his sway, each Mazdean



“built to himself an habitation on the earth, in which he maintained fire, cattle, his wife, his children, and flocks and herds.” This is again the picture of patriarchal life we have already admired in Hindostan. In Bactria, besides, the Mazdean had to protect himself against the *nomads* of the north; and he could not do it better than by adopting a sedentary life, and devoting himself to agricultural pursuits. Another convincing example is thus furnished of primeval “civilization,” so different from ours, yet so superior to it, if we take an account of the spiritual and moral aspect of our humanity.

The greatest enemies the Mazdeans had ever to fear, according to the Zends, were the nomads in the north, and the worshippers of the “*devas*” in the south. No mention is ever made of savages and barbarians; so that the common theory of our days does not seem to hold good for Central Asia in the oldest times. There were, certainly, Turanian races all around the faithful subjects of King Vistasp; but they were not materially different from the Tartar nomads of our day. Of the “primitive man,” as described by Sir John Lubbock, E. B. Tylor, etc., not a single representative appears to be present. Had they all been already buried, and were their remains to be found only in the tertiary strata of the epoch? A geologist alone could answer. But we must ask permission to believe that “savagery” had not yet begun for Central Asia. The Russians even scarcely found it in their expedition of last year against Khiva, the very centre of the kingdom of ancient Gustasp; although, undoubtedly, the people they met with and described have prodigiously degenerated from the contemporaries of Vistasp and Zarathustra. Shall we ever find the theory of progress proved in history, except as a consequence of the doctrines of Christianity?

## SECTION II.—AFRICA.

In the preceding pages, we hope that we have established tolerably conclusively the fact, that monotheism was the primitive religion of the whole of Asia ; or, at least, spread itself over its whole surface from the central part of the continent, where it surely existed before any other known religion. The only parts of it which have not come directly under consideration, are at the west, Arabia, Syria, and Scythia ; but as Hamitism, or the Allophylian races, invaded all those countries, little can be said of them. We will waive all mention of them at present. As to the Far-East : China, Thibet, Farther-India, Japan, and other large-islands, Buddhism overran them with error, by a process we have already described, and into which Hindooism entered largely. Of the religion of those countries previously to Buddhism, nothing is known, except a very slight account with respect to China, which we may in due time adduce as not unfavorable to our views. In a future chapter more shall be said on these various points.

The field, therefore, which now offers itself to our investigation is the large continent of Africa ; and as the direction of immigration taken by its primitive population was from the basin of the Red Sea, and through the far-reaching channel of the Nile toward the interior of the country, Egypt must be the first and chief object of our attention. The negroes of the centre, the Kafirs of the south, the barbarian tribes of Guinea, will reveal to us their real ancestors in Egypt and Ethiopia ; and we shall be able to decide whether or not they ought to be placed in juxtaposition with the gorillas and the apes of the same country.

## EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA.

## I.

All ethnographers now admit that Egypt received its first inhabitants from Asia, the cradle of mankind. But the ques-

tion is, To what race did they belong? Sir George Rawlinson, in his "Herodotus" (Tom. 2d, Appen. to Book 2d, Chap. 1), says bluntly: "The inhabitants of the valley of the Nile derived their origin from Asia. . . . Their skull shows them to have been of the Caucasian stock, and distinct from the African tribes westward of the Nile; and they are evidently related to the oldest races of Central Asia."

Yet, everywhere, the same author, to his great credit, bends to the authority of the Bible, and rejects any system which openly contradicts it. The book of Genesis is plain in its language: Egypt was the land of Mesraim, and Mesraim was the son of Ham. Can the posterity of Ham be said to belong to the Caucasian stock? Indeed, universal opinion ascribes the old Egyptians to the Hamite races; and their language was certainly Turanian in its general character. There are, however, difficulties on the subject which it does not come within our plan to smooth over. It is believed by many that they were "an offset from the early undivided Asiatic stock," and that their language was not altogether "Turanian," but "partook also of the peculiarities of the Semitic and Sanscritic." Dr. Prichard, in his "Natural History of Man," thinks they were of a mixed origin.

This indistinctness both in their ethnic and grammatical characteristics, is only what we should have expected from the circumstance of their being the most ancient civilized people on earth. They must, like the Celts, have left Central Asia before the Aryan and Semitic character was fully formed; and on this account there was in them something of the primitive unity. The reflections of Sir George Rawlinson, and of several other modern Egyptologists, lead to this strange conclusion, which certainly lends an additional interest to the study of this ancient people.

There is another curious and suggestive peculiarity of the Egyptians, namely, their civilization from the very first. The

Hindoos, certainly, and the Bactrians, enjoyed from the earliest times a civilization of their own. Yet it was a very different one, as we saw, from that which is understood by the word in our modern ages. But "it is a phenomenon worthy of the most serious attention," says Champollion-Figéac, (*Egypte ancienne*, Paris, 1839), "to see Egypt already, at such remote period, in possession of all civil, religious, and military institutions indispensable to the prosperity of a great people, and of all the gratifications that science and arts can add to the advantages of civil and religious laws." And more emphatically still, Mariette Bey says in his "*Apperçu de l'histoire d'Égypte*," that "at the very origin of time we see Egyptian civilization already complete, and future ages, however, numerous and long, can scarcely teach it anything more."

The authors who hold such a language do not pretend, certainly, that something of the apparent progress we have already pointed out in Hindostan, and which took place even more obviously in Greece, did not take place in Egypt; since all are agreed that the eighteenth dynasty, and the reign of Ramesses II. was the apogee of Egyptian art and refinement. But they mean there was no visible childhood for this nation; which emerges in history with all the appliances of arts; so that E. Renan himself is obliged to admit (*Antiquités et fouilles d'Égypte*, *Revue des deux Mondes*, 1865), that "this country cannot be said to start from a mythic, heroic, and barbarous beginning."

It is, therefore, for us an especially important subject for investigation, on account of the flat contradiction it gives to the theory which supposes man to have been at first a barbarian. Whilst, at the same time, it establishes conclusively that man is not so ancient as modern theories pretend; for Bunsen himself assigns to the origin of the monarchy of the Pharaohs—in Egyptian, *Pir aa*—the date of 4245 before Christ. And although, generally, the first Manetho dynasty is believed to have

begun eight hundred years earlier—toward 5004—Mr. Mariette says, with a pleasing diffidence in his “*Notice des Monuments, etc., Alexandrie, 1864* :” “The Egyptian chronology offers difficulties which have not yet been conquered . . . . For all dates anterior to Psammeticus First (665 before Christ), it is impossible to assign more than approximations, which become uncertain the more we go up the stream of ages . . . . Doubt increases as we recede back from the time of our era, so that according to the various attempted systems, there may be a difference of two thousand years in the way of establishing the foundation of the Egyptian monarchy.”

Modern opposers of Christianity, therefore, have ceased to object the millions of years, and the interminable dynasties of the gods contained in the Egyptian mythology. They have changed altogether their tactics ; and, setting aside the teachings of history as lately developed, they fall back on the long-forgotten cosmogonies of the Greeks. And, in order to explain the creation of the world without the intervention of God, they present to our astonished gaze the infinite duration of a process which must begin by nothing (their celebrated protoplasm), to end with all the wonders we now admire.

Egypt, therefore, was one of the first countries settled by man ; and if we can know what divinity Egypt first worshipped, a great step will have been made in our progress toward the truth we are investigating. But an immense difficulty meets us at the very outset. We are surrounded with mysteries, and we have no certain records to solve them. For Egypt is, in truth, the land of mystery. Sphinxes of hard granite, sculptured and polished with a wondrous art, arrayed in long lines before the porticoes of the temples, seem yet in our days to mock the traveller, and dare him to raise the veil of Isis. The country as it was formerly is really a puzzle : so grand in her monuments, and so vulgar in her manners ; so civilized and so wretched ; full of noble temples and of dark sepulchres ;

with palaces for the great and wretched huts for the masses of the people; a paradise four months of the year, a desert of mud or of dust for the remainder. Celsus could with justice say to the Egyptian Origen, who, for once, did not contradict him: "In the places of worship of the Egyptians, as you approach them, are to be seen splendid enclosures, and groves, and large and beautiful gateways, and wonderful temples, and magnificent tents around them, and ceremonies of worship, full of superstition and mystery; but when you have entered and passed within, the object of adoration is seen to be a cat, or an ape, or a crocodile, or a goat, or a dog!"

## II.

It is chiefly religion that is in Egypt hard to understand. After all the researches of previous centuries, and of our own age, whose discoveries surpass those of all the others put together, there are still nearly as many opinions on the subject as there are investigators. Can we pretend to solve the problem? If the mystery had not been already cleared up as far as regards Hindostan, we might well despair. However, orientalist and learned travellers have of late years brought to light a certain amount of information as to the dark past of Egypt. And this, taken in connection with the full and instructive Indian discoveries, may yet help us to do something towards solving a problem which, at the first blush, seemed to be closed against us. And this the more, as, of late, inscriptions have been deciphered which will materially contribute towards such a result. The books which, no doubt, previously existed have been lost, probably for ever. We have not the Vedas and the Zends of Egypt; and thus we appear to grope in the dark. For the full knowledge of the hieroglyphs, if they

could all be read even, would not, probably, be sufficient to offer a complete solution of our difficulty.

That there were books written in Egypt in the most primitive times, cannot be denied. The proof of it exists in too many passages of ancient authors. There were even, in that strange country, simultaneously, several different alphabets and distinct kinds of writing. St. Clement of Alexandria, who is an authority, since they existed yet in his time, tells us, that "those instructed among the Egyptians learned first of all that style of the Egyptian letters which is called epistolographic (we call it now demotic); and, secondly, the hieratic, which the sacred scribes practise; and finally and last of all, the hieroglyphic, of which one kind is by the first elements literal (kyriologic), and the other symbolic. Of the symbolic, one kind speaks literally by imitation, and another writes as it were figuratively; and another is quite allegorical, using certain enigmas." (Stromata, Lib. v., Cap. 4). It appears from this passage, that the Egyptian language had forms enough to satisfy all tastes; and we do not think that any other country, even India, enjoyed such a superabundance of literary elements. Modern Egyptologists are familiar with ancient documents written in demotic letters and style; and owing to the recent discoveries of Young, Champollion, Rosellini, and others, the hieroglyphs, either literal (kyriologic)—we call them phonetic—or symbolic, of the two kinds mentioned by St. Clement, begin to be known to us, and to unveil many events of the past hitherto concealed or in doubt. But, unfortunately, the books written in the hieratic style, which were chiefly those answering to the Vedas of Hindostan, are now lost, or if a few pages of them are now occasionally found, as some pretend, these are but insignificant fragments.

A word on each of those subjects will render the matter clear. Nothing was written in Egypt in the epistolographic, or as we say, demotic style, but civil and domestic documents,

of which a great number now exist and can be deciphered. Hence, we know how the Egyptians kept their accounts, wrote to their friends, corresponded for the sake of trade, barter, information, sold or bought their houses and fields, etc., etc. But in vain should we look in those documents for anything concerning their religion, unless in a fragmentary shape, and by mere allusions, which give us the religious thoughts of the people by implication. According to Sir George Rawlinson (*Herodotus*, Tom. ii., Appendix to Book ii., Chap. 5): "The demotic character replaced the hieratic," which consequently fell into disuse. He asserts, likewise, that "it was used in historical papyri," and consequently did not serve only for domestic purposes. It seems that many important discoveries have been made lately in this kind of writing. Yet it is not known when the demotic came into use, although "it was as early as the reign of Psammeticus II., of the twenty-sixth dynasty." But this is not an early epoch for us, and cannot give us the primitive Egyptian religion.

People, in general, know well how, a few years ago, the key of the hieroglyphs was at last found; and this discovery produced the greatest sensation throughout the learned world. It was thought that, at last, we should know the religion of the Egyptians. For was it not on the public monuments, on the obelisks, and colossal statues of the gods, that the sphinx spoke? It turned out, however, that all those mysterious characters composed merely inscriptions in the "lapidary style," as a Roman would say, stating that such a monument, obelisk, statue, had been raised by such a king, who was of course devoted to the worship of Amun, Osiris, Ra, Phtah, etc., etc. It was a complete disappointment. Yet people might have expected it, had they reflected on passages in well-known authors, from which it appears that the hieroglyphs were perfectly understood, and could be read easily long ago. For the Ptolemies and the Cæsars had erected monuments, with the same



kind of inscriptions, all over Egypt. Such stale affairs could not, consequently, make us acquainted with the primitive worship, and the mysterious knowledge of this strange people.\*

How could any serious and deep information be satisfactorily conveyed by writings in which it seems there cannot be grammar nor orthography; since, on the same monuments, some of the characters are truly phonetic, others are strictly and literally figurative, and others finally enigmatical and allegorical? And that has actually been found out by Champollion and others, which was stated by St. Clement of Alexandria, in the passage quoted above, more than fifteen hundred years ago.

The *phonetic* or kyriologic signs, as St. Clement says, in a subsequent part of the passage referred to, are invariably composed of the *first* letters of well-known words. Thus, to speak in our modern language, an *l* might be represented by a lion, a lyre, a log, a locust, or by whatever you please, beginning by the same *first* letter. The literally figurative signs, or imitative, as St. Clement calls them, were plain and strict figures representing any object whatsoever; thus the sun could be represented by a circle, its exterior figure; and the moon could be denoted by a crescent, its supposed image, etc. But worst of all, the enigmatical and allegorical signs might be anything which in the fancy of an Egyptian artist could be called an *enigma* or an *allegory* of the object intended to be represented.

\* The men of the times anterior to our own, well acquainted with classical authors, had likewise the translation of two long inscriptions, taken from well-known obelisks, which might have taught them not to expect too much from those sources of information. There was first the one mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus, in his Book xvii., 4, translated into Greek by Hermapion, from the obelisk of Heliopolis, placed by Cæsar Augustus in the Circus Maximus, which runs thus: "Thus says Helios to King Ramesses: I have given to thee, with joy, to rule over the world; whom Helios loves, and Apollo the powerful; . . . the son of the gods, the ruler of the world . . . King Ramesses, to whom all the earth is subject, by valor and boldness . . .

"Apollo the powerful, the true lord of the diadem; Ramesses, of whom

And all those various signs of thought were indiscriminately used in the hieroglyphic inscriptions.

This brief description contains the substance of the chief discoveries explained in the poudorous volumes of modern Egyptologists until the death of Champollion. The hieroglyphs were merely objects of art to adorn the monuments of the nation ; and the ideas they conveyed were known by the beholders almost conventionally. The learned men among them tacitly agreed that such an idea would be represented by such a sign, and that is nearly all. It is evident that the knowledge of the primitive religion of Egypt cannot be deduced from such public documents. It ought, moreover, to be remarked, that the invention of hieroglyphs was probably later than the introduction of idolatry, as we shall have occasion to show ; and, thus, these inscriptions could only refer to the idolatrous religion of the people, not to their primitive worship, whatever that might have been.

Lately, it is true, a more exact study seems to have brought the system of Egyptian hieroglyphs to something of the nature of a rude alphabet ; by finding out what are thought to be *determinative* letters of a phonetic kind, either preceding or sometimes following the symbolic or enigmatical hieroglyph, imparting to forty-two characters—they say this is the last and most improved style—all the required meanings by the help of those *determinatives*, which might be thus called affixes or suffixes:

Egypt boasts ; who has glorified the city of Helios ; who rules over the earth ; who honors the gods dwelling in the city of Helios ; whom Helios loves.”

Four more paragraphs follow of the same kind.

The second example is found in the second book of the Annals of Tacitus, who, speaking of the expedition of Germanicus to Egypt, says :

“ He visited the mighty antiquities of Thebes, where upon huge obelisks yet remained Egyptian characters, describing its former opulence. One of the senior priests was ordered to interpret them: He said they related, ‘ that Thebes once contained seven hundred thousand fighting men ; that with this army King Ramesses had conquered Lybia, Ethiopia,

And it is said, that documents of this nature, chiefly on papyrus—for occasionally hieroglyphs are found on papyrus—contain not only inscriptions, but ideas of any kind, even ritual prayers and hymns. But this seems to us very conjectural; principally, for the reason that this kind of informal alphabet is said to have been constantly improving from the 4th dynasty to the 26th; and thus could never have had a permanent character; so that nothing certain and positive can be gathered from it. We should, indeed, wonder that the old Egyptians, so traditional, so conservative, so much attached to their customs, should have been constantly *revolutionizing* their alphabet, and never satisfied with the wisdom of their ancestors in so important a branch of their science and art. Moreover, the theory we are discussing would suppose that the Egyptian dynasties have been well ascertained; whereas, it is known that the best Egyptologists differ on that essential point, and there is very little prospect of their ever agreeing on the subject.

This discussion, however, is not essential for the object we have in view. For it is evident that, however improved and grammatical the Egyptian hieroglyphs may finally be found to have been, they could, at best, be of very little help for the question under consideration. Can we find in them the true primitive system of the Egyptian worship? Undoubtedly not.

The books which might, indeed, have helped us to solve the problem, were certainly those written in the hieratic style, as

the Medes and Persians, the Bactrians and Scythians, and to his empire had added the territories of the Syrians, Armenians, and their neighbors, the Cappadocians . . . Here, also, was read the assessment of tribute laid on several nations; what weight of silver and gold; what number of horses and arms . . . were by each people paid; revenues equalling those exacted by the domination of the Parthians, or by the power of the Romans.'"

This last translation was evidently a free one, such as a Roman conqueror might understand. But in substance it was true, and shows that hieroglyphs were merely used for pompous state inscriptions. The same has Champollion found out by his discovery.

St. Clement calls it, which, he says, "the sacred scribes practise." And the description he gives of some of them, in another chapter of his "Stromata," shows that they were the very ones so celebrated under the name of Hermetic books, as he attributes them himself to Hermes. The whole passage is so important to our purpose that we must give it entire. And the object of the illustrious author, in this particular instance, being to show that the Greeks had derived "many of their philosophical and religious tenets from Egyptian and Hindoo sources," as he had proved, in a previous very long chapter, that they had likewise "plagiarized from the Hebrews," lends to it a special interest and value in our present investigations.

(Strom., Book vi., Chap. iv.) We quote from the recent Edinburgh edition of the Ante-Nicene Fathers: "The best of the (Greek) philosophers, having appropriated their most excellent dogmas from us—namely, from the Holy Scriptures—boast, as it were, of certain of the tenets which pertain to each (philosophical) sect (among them) being culled from other barbarians, chiefly from the Egyptians—both other tenets, and that especially of the transmigration of the soul. For the Egyptians pursue a philosophy of their own. This is principally shown by their sacred ceremonial. For first advances the Singer, bearing some one of the symbols of music. For they say that he must learn two of the books of Hermes, the one of which contains the hymns of the gods, the second the regulations for the king's life. After the Singer, advances the Astrologer, with a horologe in his hand, and a palm, the symbol of astrology. He must have the astrological books of Hermes, which are four in number, always in his mouth. Of these, one is about the order of the fixed stars that are visible, and another about the conjunctions and luminous appearances of the sun and moon; and the rest respecting their risings. Next in order advances the Sacred Scribe, with wings on his head, and in his hand a book and rule, in which were writing-

ink and the reed with which they write. And he must be acquainted with what are called hieroglyphs, and know about cosmography and geography, the position of the sun and moon, and about the five planets; also the description of Egypt, and the chart of the Nile; and the description of the equipment of the priests and of the places consecrated to them, and about the measures and the things in use in the sacred rites. Then the Stole-keeper follows those previously mentioned, with the cubit of justice and the cup for libations. He is acquainted with all points called Pædeutic (relating to training) and Moschophatic (sacrificial). There are also ten books which relate to the honor paid by them to their gods, and containing the Egyptian worship—as that relating to sacrifices, first-fruits, hymns, prayers, processions, festivals, and the like. And behind all walks the Prophet, with the water-vase carried openly in his arms; who is followed by those who carry the issue of loaves. He, as being the governor of the temple, learns the ten books called ‘Hieratic;’ and they contain all about the laws, and the gods, and the whole of the training of the priests. For the Prophet is, among the Egyptians, also over the distribution of the revenues. There are, then, forty-two books of Hermes indispensably necessary; of which the six-and-thirty, containing the whole philosophy of the Egyptians, are learned by the forementioned personages; and the other six, which are medical, by the Pastophori (image-bearers), treating of the structure of the body, and of diseases, and instruments, and medicines, and about the eyes, and the last about women. Such are the customs of the Egyptians, to speak briefly.”

From the very way of expressing himself, it is evident St. Clement meant to say that all this existed in his time, and he had probably witnessed the ceremony.

From this very clear and interesting description, we may safely conclude that we have here evidently mention made of what we have already called the Vedas of Egypt. In these

forty-two Hermetic books we find the whole science of the Egyptians, that science in which "Moses had been taught." In Hindostan, it is true, the Brahmins were to study constantly the Vedas, to know them by heart, and transmit orally their interpretation; and the Vedas, as we have seen previously, contained all the science of the Hindoos, in a series of details exactly corresponding with those of the Hermetic books as described by St. Clement. But the recommendation addressed to the Brahmins in India was a general one. Each man was commanded to study and know by heart the whole large collection of the Hindoo scriptures. Here, on the contrary, priests invested with particular functions, had to commit to memory, and study thoroughly, some particular part of the Hermetic books. We may suppose, it is true, that each one of the priests was to be likewise acquainted with the whole collection, and have a general knowledge of them; but each particular minister of religion was to give his especial attention to a single branch of the whole; and we see nowhere in Hindostan such a distribution of mental labor recommended to specific classes of Brahmins. But keeping in view this distinction, how well all else agrees amongst both people no one can deny.

We shall have occasion to remark many other points of resemblance between the two races. This first one is sufficiently striking.

But how did it happen that we have yet the Vedas and we cannot hope ever to find an authentic copy of the books of Hermes? In India, the primitive religion, following the backward progress of which we spoke, was always, nevertheless, supposed to exist; and the most corrupt generations of our days practising in the dark the abominable doctrines of the tantras, profess still as great a veneration for the Vedas as their ancestors of three thousand years ago. Mohammedanism never had any chance of converting Hindostan to its doctrines, and

made a very slight impression on the country. Christianity itself has scarcely moved it yet. The missionaries of the true Church, led by the great Francis Xavier, were, indeed, beginning to turn the heart of the people towards the true "Brahma," when the Dutch first, and afterwards the English, thought they would serve God best by undoing what the successors of Xavier were zealously endeavoring to effect, and prevented the happy impulse given to truth in the sixteenth century, from becoming a universal movement toward the unification of the human race. The consequence was, the Hindoos are yet idolaters; but they, nevertheless, keep jealously their Vedas.

In Egypt the case was altogether different. Mark was sent by Peter to Alexandria. A number of holy doctors, beginning by Pantœnus, founded the Alexandrian Christian school, and in spite of the persecutions of pagan emperors, Egypt in the fourth, or at least fifth, century, was altogether Christian. The idolatrous ceremonies, frequent yet in the time of Origen, as he often testifies, and still in full sway in the time of St. Clement of Alexandria, gradually fell into disuse, and at length disappeared altogether. The Hermetic books had no more any object. The Christian teachers must have discountenanced the indiscriminate reading of them. And, when the Saracens came with their hatred of everything not contained in the Koran, they, too, disappeared, no one can say precisely how or when. The story of the water in the public baths of Alexandria being heated during six months by the burning volumes of the public library, if not altogether untrue, can easily explain how the old works of Hermes ceased to exist, as the same destructive measure must have been carried out all over the country. But previously to this, the Christians, by publishing false Hermetic books, which circulated more freely in a Christian country than the authentic ones, written in a character soon forgotten; and before them the Neoplatonic philosophers of Alexandria, by a series of analogous forgeries, contributed, likewise, considerably

towards their disappearance. To understand this more fully, a few remarks on the compilation itself will not be inappropriate.

In the common opinion of all, they had been written originally by Thoth himself; that is, they were divine; as, indeed, were the Vedas in the belief of the Hindoos. Thoth was the Egyptian Logos; for the name means "speech" or "word." The real authors of the Hermetic books, therefore, were unknown; and thus the compilation was supposed to contain a real "revelation" from heaven, from the Divine Word itself.

We have seen that, according to St. Clement of Alexandria, they were forty-two in number in his time. Iamblichus pretended there were of them as many as twenty thousand; and Manetho, not satisfied with this, made them equal in number to the astronomical cycle of thirty-six thousand five hundred and twenty-five. But these pretensions were evidently fabulous. The opinion of the Alexandrian Father of the Church is the only reasonable one; especially as he goes into details and mentions how many of them related to geometry, geography, and astronomy, to cosmogony and theological science, to law and justice, to the religious ritual, prayers, sacrifices, processions, etc.; finally to medicine, anatomy, physiology, and sexual considerations.

Many ancient classical authors distinguished two different Thothes or Hermes; the first, real and divine, the Thoth of whom we have just spoken; and another much later, bearing the name of Trismegistus, given him chiefly by the Neoplatonic philosophers and the mediæval alchemists. According to many ancient writers the books given to Egypt by the first Thoth were no more in existence. But those of the second personage were of almost, if not quite, equal authority; and these were, in fact, the only ones known to the Egypt of the Pharaohs. This distinction is no more taken into account by modern writers on the subject; although it does not appear to us to be deserving altogether of neglect. On the strength of



it we must be permitted to conjecture that idolatry penetrated into Egypt very soon after the first settlement of the country by Menes; and that thus the pure monotheism contained in the doctrine of the first Thoth was so anciently corrupted by the innovations of Trismegistus, that the memory of the first was only preserved in a vague tradition. This certainly did not happen to the Hindoo Vedas, whose primitive pure text remained yet clear in many upanishads, even after the progress of time had spread new and false interpretations of the primeval dogmas.

Be this as it may, we are compelled to limit our investigations to the Hermetic books, such as they existed during many ages in the country; and to ask ourselves if we can find here and there in antiquity a few fragments from which we may infer something of the original belief of the people contained in them.

Had we the forty-two volumes known to exist by St. Clement, we might find in them numerous allusions of a most precious character, able to guide us in our investigations. But, as we hinted above, when the Christian religion came to be that of all Egyptians, in the fourth or fifth century of our era, two kinds of spurious Hermetic volumes were spread all over the country, and helped to the complete disappearance of the genuine work. First in point of time certainly, some of the Neoplatonists, chiefly Iamblichus, Porphyry, and, later on, Proclus, thought they had found in the old Egyptian literature arms against Christianity, which they opposed all their life. Hence they tried to uphold polytheism by explaining away its absurdities, through a series of philosophical speculations; in about the same way as our modern "mythologists" try their best to render not only tolerable to reason, but even worthy of admiration and respect, the idolatrous rites of ancient nations. One of them, Thomas Taylor, an English pagan enthusiast, the translator of Apuleius' "God of Socrates," commenting on

the work of Proclus on the "Timæus of Plato," at the end of a long praise of Egyptian and Greek mythology, dares to say: "If we unite this with the preceding theory, there is nothing in the ancient theology (meaning polytheism) that will not appear admirably sublime and beautifully connected, accurate in all its parts, scientific and divine." This admiration of Egyptian polytheism the Neoplatonists of Alexandria endeavored to render prevalent, chiefly by using the Hermetic books for their purpose, adapting them to their philosophical ideas, and drawing from them a doctrine apparently acceptable to modern reason. But in that operation the original text must have been subjected to a great many exegetic changes. And as that text was rendered in those characters and that style which we have called "hieratic," and which gradually became unknown as the pagan worship was superseded by Christianity, a new form of the Hermetic books was gradually introduced which served to obliterate the memory of the former ones; especially as the new were written in Greek, a language well known to all, while the old hieratic Egyptian style fell into complete disuse.

The Christians, on their side, seeing what was done to spread error by means of the ancient literature of the country, began to study it anew, and found, in the primitive volumes of Hermes, many passages which appeared to them corroborative of Christian dogmas. Thus Egypt soon received a new edition of them, and the original books were destined to be buried in a deeper oblivion than ever. The subsequent violent destruction caused by the Mohammedan fanaticism completed the wreck. And if we inquire, finally, why, in Hindostan, the Vedas were preserved in spite of so many revolutions and invasions, and why Mohammedanism, in particular, did not destroy them, whilst it gave the last stroke to the existence of the Hermetic books in Egypt, an obvious answer is at hand. The Hindoo priesthood never perished; and it subsists to this day, intent as much as ever on the keeping, preserving, and studying its

sacred books. The Egyptian priesthood, to which was intrusted the same particular care of the books of Hermes, ceased to exist altogether when Christianity succeeded at length in converting the whole country, and in abolishing altogether the worship of Osiris and Isis.

### III.

But let us ask ourselves the question, Why is it that the Neoplatonists, and after them the Christians, attached so much importance to effecting alterations of the text of the Egyptian Sacred Scripture? Did the new books retain something, at least, of their primitive contents? The Neoplatonist philosophy has attracted the notice of many philosophers in our age, but of none more than of Victor Cousin, the celebrated French Eclectic, who popularized the ideas, on the subject, of Fichte and others in Germany. Later on, Simon, Barthélemy St. Hilaire, Lewes, and Tennemann, completed the work; and we may say that the tendencies and the doctrines of the school are now thoroughly appreciated. It is admitted by all that its main object was to give to polytheism a scientific basis; that the chief means used for that purpose was the mixture of Oriental mysticism with Plato's ideas; that theurgy, or magic, had a great function to fulfil in the system, by attracting the morbid curiosity so prevalent at the time; and, finally, that the writings of Hermes were the chief source of the new inspiration. Proclus believed them divine. Long before him Iamblichus, Porphyry, and the other chief adepts of the sect, quoted them in support of their opinions. And, to favor their design, a Greek edition of fifteen volumes of Hermes was published at Athens, according to St. Cyril of Alexandria, under the title: *Ἑρμιακὰ πεντεκαίδεκα βιβλία.*

Mosheim, in his notes on Cudworth's "Systema Intellectuale," pretends that all the spurious books of Hermes were the work

of deluded Christians, and that if the Neoplatonists began, after a while, to give a false interpretation of them, it was only in pure retaliation. But the contrary is proved; and the help given to Neoplatonism by these forgeries is a well-established fact. As to the time of their first appearance, nothing is known for certain. Of the Fathers of the Church, Origen and St. Clement of Alexandria, seem to have been ignorant of them, and to have been acquainted only with the genuine Hermetic books. Lactantius, however, was acquainted with them, and had perused them at the very beginning of the fourth century; and all the subsequent Greek and Latin Fathers mention them. Of the Neoplatonists, Ammonius Saccas, the founder of the sect, and Plotinus, who succeeded him, appear to have been unacquainted with those Greek forgeries. But Iamblichus and his successors, Proclus chiefly, made constant use of them. It seems clear that the end of the third century is the real epoch of their appearance, and that Christianity had not yet triumphed when they were first published. Hence the prophecy contained in one of the spurious volumes (the "Asclepius"), of the total conversion of Egypt, of the possession taken of the pagan temples by the bones of Christian martyrs, etc.—a prophecy which St. Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, Lib. viii., Cap. xxiii.) considered as a proof of the terror of devils at the near triumph of truth, and which Casaubon and Mosheim found too clear to be true, and attributed, consequently, to Christians after it had been itself accomplished, becomes a positive historical fact, established now by modern criticism.

But, such being the case, it seems that we cannot, with perfect certainty, know from them what was the genuine doctrine of the primitive books of Thoth. Yet very important consequences follow from this statement of facts; and the general tendency of the original Egyptian belief may be gathered from it to a great extent, at least.

First, the forgery must have been a clever one, and have retained a great deal of the primitive volumes not to have been exposed at once. When the Greek edition was published at Athens, the pagan worship, as described by St. Clement, was yet prevalent in Egypt, and the genuine work of Thoth, in hieratic style, still existed in all pagan temples. Many Greek scholars of Alexandria knew yet the Egyptian language, and must have been acquainted with the genuine writings of Hermes. Indeed Iamblichus, in a fragment which we yet possess, asserts this to have been the case. And, what is yet more to the purpose, he mentions that the very question of the genuineness of the Greek edition was raised in his time. Porphyry, in a letter to Anebon, an Egyptian priest, had stated that Chæremon objected to this interpretation, and he wished to know, from a man well versed in both languages, what was the truth in the matter. The reply of Anebon has not come down to us; but Iamblichus gives the substance of it by stating, that "the Greek books which go under the name of Hermes, contain really the Hermaic doctrine, although they use the phraseology of Greek philosophers; for they were translated from the Egyptian language by men well versed in philosophy." We may conclude that much of the writings of Thoth was contained in the Hellenic version.

But, secondly, the question comes, How can we distinguish the genuine from the spurious? No doubt, much obscurity must always surround the subject. Yet, we may possibly make a step further in advance, by asking, what was the object of the authors of this deception? It was evidently to help the cause of Neoplatonism—this is admitted, now, by all—to give to polytheism a scientific basis, by using both Plato's writings and those of Hermes, better known than the Brahminical books, namely: by uniting positive Hellenic philosophy with Oriental mysticism. The main object was to rescue polytheism from the load of opprobrium cast upon it both by Greek sciep-

tics of Lucian's type, and Christian apologists, as Arnobius, Minutius Felix, and others. An unextinguishable laughter had spread all over the world at the expense of that poor paganism. Lucian of Samosata had started it by his pungent sarcasm. His books were in the hands of all. And, to make matters worse, those hateful and contemptible Christians had found a never-dying well of pure wit in the remarkable adventures of gods and goddesses. Hence, the whole world was turning its back on that ridiculous mythology, and looking for a more rational religion even in the teachings of the Galilean fishermen. How could the movement be arrested more successfully than by combining what was highest in paganism—the sublimity of Plato's clear doctrine, with the strange, startling, grand theism of ancient seers, like Thoth, whose very origin went farther back than the memory of man, and the revelation of history could go? Plato, after all, with his monotheism, sacrificed to inferior gods; and Hermes, by his mystic language, had given rise to the grand pantheism of Orpheus, whence the subsequent polytheism had sprung. Iamblichus and Porphyry could now successfully resist the attacks of Christians, supported, as those writers were, by the highest and noblest efforts of human genius, the utterances of Thoth and of Plato. The whole history of Neoplatonism, at least from the time of Iamblichus down, seems to us to be comprised in this short description. And let our reader mark it well: the philosophy which the Neoplatonists endeavored to propagate, was to start from a supreme, self-existent, all-powerful God—the Absolute. So well had Christianity succeeded, in three hundred years, in establishing the essential truth of monotheism, that no theory, no speculation, no philosophy could hope to acquire adherents, and procure a following which did not propose to the veneration of mankind a great Father and Lord of all.

This was the first condition of success. And all the leaders of the system, from Ammonius Saccas and Plotinus, down to

Proclus and his disciples, have been careful to place at the head of all a Supreme, Infinite Being, whom we all call God. And this they found in the books of Thoth as well as in those of Pláto. The dialogue, "Aselepius," already quoted, contains a very remarkable passage, which, since the modern discoveries in Hindooism, must be admitted to have really belonged to the old work of Thoth, since it reproduces so exactly the primitive Hindoo doctrine on monotheism, providence, and renovation of worlds by cataclysm and fire. We quote the Latin translation as given by Cudworth. (Syst. Intell., vol. i., p. 492): "*Tunc ille Dominus et pater Deus, primipotens et unus gubernator mundi, intuens in mores facta que hominum, voluntate sua (quæ est Dei benignitas), vitiis resistens, et corruptelæ errorem revocans, malignitatem omnem vel alluvione diluens, vel igne consumens, ad antiquam faciem mundum revocabit.*" And a few pages further Cudworth quotes the following lines: "*Summus qui dicitur Deus, rector gubernatorque sensibilis mundi, qui in se complectitur omnem locum omnemque rerum substantiam.*" Mosheim, it is true, remarks in his notes, that the same Hermetic dialogue is full of the most superstitious ideas on the worship of idols. From this we may conclude that the primitive doctrine did not remain pure in the writings of Hermes Trismegistus. But the texts just quoted cannot be explained except on the supposition of a belief in one God; whilst the admixture of superstition with truth is only what we have already found in the Hindoo Vedas. This exactly served the purpose of the Neoplatonists; and they accepted both sides of the doctrine. They adopted the high and the true in order to help themselves in advocating and teaching the low and the false.

## IV.

We ought not to be surprised that the sacred books of the Egyptians contained originally a sublime faith, since many

ancient authors concur in attributing it to them. The philosophers and poets of antiquity have often spoken with admiration of their esoteric doctrine. And travellers, even such as Herodotus, when relating the absurd and occasionally revolting sights which presented themselves to them exteriorly in the country, often refer to secret explanations, which set them forth as connected with a high and pure doctrine. Origen himself alludes to it (*Contra. Cels.*, Lib. 1, Cap. xii.), when he says: "With regard to the statement of Celsus, that he is acquainted with all our doctrines, . . . he appears to me to speak very much as a person would do, who visited Egypt (where the Egyptians, learned in their country's literature, are greatly given to philosophizing about those things which are regarded among them as divine, but where the vulgar, hearing certain myths the reasons of which they do not understand, are greatly elated because of their fancied knowledge), and who should imagine that he knows the whole circle of Egyptian science, after having been a disciple of the ignorant alone, and without having associated with any of the priests, or having learned their mysteries from any other source."

We have no doubt that many of those pretended deep secrets were, after all, very flimsy affairs, and could not satisfy a serious and inquisitive mind. Yet it cannot be denied that some of the greatest Sages of Greece, who travelled through the country and heard the comments of the priests on the exterior symbols of religion, professed themselves admirers of a wisdom which they thought could not then be found anywhere else on earth.

The dogma of a positive creation of the universe, for instance, seems to have been one of those esoteric traditions kept in the land of mystery. Simplicius, at least, who lived, it is true, only in the sixth century, but who is considered by Bruckner and Fabricius as one of the greatest pagan philosophers, whose commentaries on Epictetus and Aristotle were translated into



Latin first, and afterwards into English and French in the seventeenth century, as the best in existence, did not scruple to say that "if the legislator of the Jews affirmed that God in the beginning created heaven and earth, . . . and separated light from 'darkness,' etc, let an intelligent man know that this is merely a fabulous tradition born altogether of Egyptian myths." (In *Arist.*, Lib. viii.) For Simplicius, so late as the reign of Justinian, believed in the eternity of the world.

The immortality of the soul, coupled, as in India, with the doctrine of transmigration, was publicly affirmed by their care in embalming bodies to which the soul was to return in three thousand years. Thus they admitted a real resurrection of the body.

Of the existence of one Supreme God we have already spoken; but the teaching that "man ought to love and fear Him" is curiously illustrated by St. Clement of Alexandria, (*Strom.*, Book v., Chap. v.): "The Egyptians place sphinxes before their temples, to signify that the doctrine respecting God is enigmatical and obscure; perhaps, also, to teach men that we ought both to love and fear the Divine Being; to love Him as gentle and benign to the pious; to fear Him as inexorably just to the impious; for the sphinx shows the image of a wild beast and of a human being together."

It is very remarkable, that, not only the ancient Greek philosophers who visited Egypt, not only the Neoplatonists, Iamblichus, Porphyry, Proclus, etc., but even the Greek Fathers of the Church, chiefly those who could form a correct judgment of it, Origen, St. Clement, and St. Cyril of Alexandria, speak nearly always with respect of the mysterious doctrine of the Egyptians, and certainly attribute to them a real belief in monotheism. There are, assuredly, positive assertions in St. Justin Martyr (*Cohortat ad Græcos*), in St. Cyprian (*De idol. vanitate*), in St. Augustine (*De baptismo*, Lib. vi. § 87), in St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Lib. 1, Contra Julianum*), to the effect

that the books of Hermes acknowledged a supreme, ineffable, and eternal God. St. Justin Martyr states positively that His name was Ammon.

Hence, after the Neoplatonists had produced, in support of their doctrine, the translation of the Hermetic books of which we spoke, the Christians likewise published their own, and among others the book called "*Poemander*" and the "*Sermo in monte de regeneratione*." Marsilio Ficino, who tried to revive Platonism under the Medici in Florence, gave an edition of them, which, we think, it would be hard now to procure. But it suffices for our purpose to know what was the object of the original compilers. They wished to deprive their adversary—the pagans—of a weapon which they had found useful. We do not pretend to decide on the morality of their action. Was it confined to reproducing only the text of some of the old Hermetic writings? which would have been fair; or did it include real literary forgery? No one can say. It is known to the literary world how frequent was the use of such forged tools, about the same time. We cannot enter into the examination of the question. We conclude from it only that, even then, when the genuine works attributed to Hermes were certainly yet in existence, the Christians could truly claim a great resemblance between several tenets of old Egypt and their own.

But, a new argument offers itself to our consideration, and it is one of no inconsiderable importance. If the Egyptians worshipped at first one God only—as the Hindoos did, viz.: Brahma (neuter)—there must have been for them some divine name superior to any other, corresponding to the Jehovah of the Jews, the Brahma of the Hindoos, the Ormuzd of the Bactrians. What was it? It was Amun (simpliciter), not Amun-Ra.

First, the worship of Amun was not confined to Egypt, but extended over to Ethiopia, and some say to a great part of

interior Africa. The temple built south-west of Lake Mareotis was not the most important, nor the most ancient one. The centre out of which the worship of Amun radiated was in fact in Ethiopia, not far from, and south-east of Meroe. Hence the Greeks called that god sometimes *Ζεύς Λίβυκός*, Libya being for them the name of Africa. It was not, therefore, a local god, of later origin, embalming a fact of previous history with respect to a single city, or to a particular district of the country. It was the chief God of the whole continent, and had not a human history like Osiris and Isis, both of whom, according to Plutarch (*De Iside et Osiride*), had "passed to godship from the inferior state of good genii," or men. Hence, although the cult of these two last divinities extended to all Egypt, that of Osiris was altogether local, at Abydos; and that of Isis, at Bubastis. The worship of Amun could not be said to have been local, even at Thebes, although the sacred name of that city was *No-Amun*. The temple in Ethiopia, near Shendy, consequently on the borders of Central Africa, and near the confluence of the White and Blue Niles, was certainly more august, ancient, and peculiar to Amun than any other in Egypt and out of it. The discoveries of Caillaud and Elphinstone, commented upon by Heeren in his "Researches on African Nations," have placed the fact beyond question; and all those acquainted with the origin and state of the various religions of antiquity will admit its importance. Great difficulties surrounded the question, because of the frequent indistinctness of ancient classical authors with respect to topography and local details. Hence, even learned men in modern times had become persuaded that the *Ammonium* so celebrated in antiquity was at *Siwah* in Lybia, west of Memphis, not far from Lake Mareotis; and the worship of Amun was thought to be altogether Egyptian. But after a deep and critical investigation such as the celebrated Professor of Gottingen knew so well how to accomplish, comparing the text and plates of the two French

and English travellers (Caillaud and Elphinstone), with what old classical writers have reported, he gave a complete demonstration of the fact that the great temple of Amun was south of Meroe in Ethiopia, near Shendy, almost at the confluence of the two Niles. Then, entering into a long and learned discussion of what antiquity has said of this country, he showed that the time of its greatest splendor was the eighth century before Christ, when Sabaco, Senechus, and Tarhaco ruled it; that at the period of Solomon, ten centuries before our era, at the time of the Trojan war—we invite special attention to this—it could send large armies to the conquest of foreign countries; that many monuments of Nubia and Ethiopia, still in full preservation, represent Ramesses, or Sesostris, with as much splendor as at Thebes and Luxor; and drew hence the inevitable conclusion that it was a civilized country fifteen centuries before Christ. This brings us nearly to Moses, whom Josephus represents as commanding the armies of Pharaoh, and conquering the South, and Heeren can conclude in these words: "History itself has carried us back to those ages in which the formation of the most ancient States took place, and has thus far shown that Meroe was one of them." This brings the belief in Amun to the times of the highest antiquity. But the most important details mentioned by the celebrated writer we have not yet stated. The first is, that although Nubia and Ethiopia are full of splendid monuments, some of them of the purest Egyptian art, with all the richness of architecture and sculpture that has rendered the land of the Pharaohs so celebrated; although the language of the travellers who first visited them is most positive on the subject: "These colossal figures," says Caillaud, "are remarkable for the richness of their drapery and the character of the drawing; their feet and arms are stouter than the Egyptian, yet they are altogether in the Egyptian style;" and "Ruppel," says Heeren, "notices a similar perfection on the pyramids of Kurgos in the same neighborhood;" yet when they come to

examine the mass of noble ruins which the Professor of Göttingen declares emphatically to be "THE ANCIENT ORACLE OF JUPITER AMMON," everything is of quite a different character. "The rarity of sculpture and hieroglyphs," he relates, "is very remarkable; no trace of that Egyptian art has been discovered here. The few figures on the pillars, now scarcely visible, have nothing in common with it. One of them has evidently the hair done up in the broad Nubian fashion." The reason is plain: this edifice is more ancient than all the other monuments. It existed, probably, before the folly of idolatry had covered Africa with the representation of polytheistic myths. Thus, with respect to Amun, the monuments agree with history. Another, and most important fact, which we think extremely significant, is given by Heeren in the following words: "One thing is very remarkable, namely, that of all the representations of Nubia yet known, *there is not one*, which, according to our notions, is offensive to decency." They are, therefore, anterior to the introduction of obscene emblems in the public worship of the people. At least we are allowed to think so until the contrary is proved by monuments as yet undiscovered. The same strange fact we have already remarked in Hindostan.

But a third, and, if possible, more striking conclusion drawn by Heeren himself from all the facts accumulated in his "Researches" is this: that although he does not believe that all the civilization of Egypt came from Ethiopia, but thinks that a part of it was native, and even reacted on Ethiopia itself by conquest, institutions, religion, and art; yet he is most positive in asserting that "colonies of the priest-caste spread from Meroe into Egypt." This happened according to the oracle of Ammon: "They undertook their expeditions at the time and to the place appointed by the god" (Herodot, ii. 29). And the learned writer goes on investigating this civilizing religious process from Central Africa to the basin of the lower Nile, and tries to prove that Merawé, Ammonium in the Lybian

desert, west of Memphis, and Thebes—*Amun-No*—with its celebrated temple of the same deity, were really colonies originally from Ethiopia, from the old temple of Amun there; and he thinks he finds his own historical researches confirmed by the discoveries of Gau, Champollion, and others in their studies of the monuments of Upper and Lower Egypt.

This last conclusion of the Gottingen Professor is now considered as disproved by the monuments. "As for the opinion once generally admitted" (say F. Lenormant and E. Chevallier in their *Ancient History of the East*, Tom. 1) "that the Egyptians belonged to an African race whose first centre of civilization was at Meroe, and who had gradually descended from the banks of the Nile to the sea, it cannot now be sustained. We know, in fact, from the monuments, that the most ancient centre of Egyptian civilization was in the neighborhood of Memphis, in Lower and Central Egypt, before even the foundation of Thebes; and we can follow the gradual march of culture, ascending the Nile towards Ethiopia, in a way exactly the reverse of what has hitherto been supposed."

The recent researches and discoveries of new explorers, chiefly of Mariette-Bey, seem certainly to afford a sufficient proof of this last opinion. Yet Heeren had so many very plausible reasons to give in support of his conclusions, that they may yet be reinstated in general acceptance; and it is for this we have given them in some detail. At any rate, the extreme antiquity of the civilization of Ethiopia, and the certainty of the worship of Amun at Meroe in the most remote ages, cannot be "disproved," and amply suffice for the establishment of our own thesis.

Finally, a last remarkable opinion of Heeren we will quote in his own words, and pass on to look more closely at Amun himself, the real object of our actual investigations. "Without digressing," he says, "into a detailed description of particular deities, which I leave to mythologists, I think I may

venture a step further, and assert that this worship of Amun had its origin in *natural religion* connected with agriculture." The underline is ours; but we think that, in the opinion of all, natural religion implies monotheism.

## V.

And, now, who was Amun? We have said already that we do not mean Amun-Ra. This last god, *Ἡέλιος* in Greek, begins to appear on the monuments of the eighteenth dynasty only. He is therefore a comparatively modern invention, and we will shortly find in it a corroboration of our peculiar belief on the gradual progress of idolatry.

It seems that even in the temple of Karnac at Thebes, which is more recent than the old one of Meroe, whence his statue has disappeared, he is represented as sitting alone on a throne, holding the symbols of life and power, and wearing a crown with a peculiar ornament of two feathers, and a band falling behind and hanging down to his feet. This is a very un-Egyptian appearance of a deity.

And what was said of the extent of his worship does not yet realize all the idea the ancients had of it. According to many, he was not only the Supreme God of Africa, but if we listen to the certainly learned poet Lucan (*Pharsal*, Lib. ix. v. 517, 518):

“Quamvis Æthiopum populis Arabumque beatis,  
Gentibus atque Indis unus sit Jupiter Ammon.”

Lucan seems thus to have entertained the thought that Amun of Africa, and Brahma of Hindostan, were the same Supreme God; and the word *unus* he employs is remarkable, as, in his time, Egypt had more *gods* than any other country on earth. Yet he thus acknowledges that there was *one* infinitely superior to all the others. Hence, even in our time, all admit that in

the Egyptian mythology "Amun held the highest place." But Egyptologists recognize, likewise, that his character was undefined, as was also that of Brahma; and thus inferior deities were identified with each of the two in both countries, as if no being could share in the divine honors unless he received something from the Head one, which was thus the original fountain of divinity. This has not hitherto been sufficiently considered.

We ought not, therefore, to be surprised that the very word *Amun* means "hidden," "invisible," "unapproachable to our understanding." And there is a curious passage on the subject in Plutarch (*De Iside et Osiride*), which makes allusion to an Egyptian custom quite significant to our purpose:

"Manetho the Sebennite" (the author of the celebrated list of kings), "thinks that the word Amun means 'hidden,' and also 'the act of concealing oneself' (*κρυψιν*); and Hecataeus of Abdera says that the Egyptians use that expression when they call each other" (probably in the dark); "for the word itself indicates invocation. And as they think that the First God is the same with the Universe, as being obscure and concealed, they say they call on Amun and pray to Him that He may unveil His face and allow them to see Him."

In the time of Hecataeus of Abdera, five hundred years before Christ, it was certainly true that the Egyptians thought "that the First God was the same with the Universe." They even thought worse than this, as we shall see. But is this a reason for concluding that it had always been so? The very words of our author show the contrary. The "Universe" is not certainly a "hidden" being. There is no need of calling on it to unveil its face. It was precisely on account of the true God being invisible, that in the course of ages corruption of belief had crept in, and substituted for an "invisible" God a visible Universe; for Monotheism the ancient Pantheism of Orpheus. The phrase, therefore, on which we comment,



renders the passage of Hecataeus, as quoted by Plutarch, unintelligible; and the only way to clear it up is to suppress the parenthesis (the First God is the same with the Universe), and to say, merely: "The Egyptians use that expression—Amun—when they call each other in the dark; for the word itself indicates invocation; and as they think that the First God is in His nature obscure and concealed, they say they call on Amun and pray to Him, that He may unveil His face and allow them to see Him."

The text being now intelligible, throws a flood of light on the divine nature of Amun; and we cannot but remember the beautiful passages of the Vedic upanishads where we have read that "God sees everything and is not seen; that He hears all and is not heard, etc.," and praying "that we may know Him and love Him, by seeing Him face to face."

But modern Egyptologists object that all those passages of old classic writers are unreliable. Difficulties have been raised about them without end; and this is true. Science, they say, is now positivist, and cannot be satisfied with conjectures; with etymologies, conclusions drawn from some stray passage of an old author, etc. Hence for Egypt, particularly, all the authority of ancient lore ought to be discarded; and, as the monuments say very little on the primitive religion of Egypt, we had better acknowledge our ignorance, and merely state what appears on the monuments under our very eyes—that Anubis had the head of a dog, Thoth that of a hawk or ibis, Isis that of a cow, Amun, finally, the great Amun, that of a ram.

To this we demur most emphatically. Our knowledge of the Egyptian religion is not derived only from stray bits of old manuscripts, from conjectural etymologies, from very doubtful conclusions, etc., etc. But, as our readers have seen, there has been in Grecian antiquity a positive public opinion on the subject, asserting that the first Egyptians worshipped one Supreme

God. This has been corroborated by the general belief of the oldest Fathers of the Church, of those most likely to know the truth. The researches of more modern authors have, undoubtedly, taken the same direction; and many Egyptologists of our age acknowledge the force of all those sources of information, and find that the monuments often hold the same language.

For, although, owing to the very few inscriptions and papyri relating to the primitive religion of Egypt, which have been so far discovered and deciphered, our demonstration derived from these cannot be but partial and fragmentary; yet the few words of real antiquity on the oldest monuments which have reached us, are emphatic, and of a most striking character.

These have been chiefly found in sepulchres or on funereal columns, where the true meaning of the inner religious feeling of the old Egyptians would be more surely met with than even in temples erected designedly for idolatrous purposes. Mr. Viscount E. de Rougé has given a strict translation of several of them, which, after due discussion, has been only strengthened by the labors of other French, German, and English Egyptologists, so as to be considered now as proof against contradiction.

We quote the very words of the noble author. They are taken from a "Conférence sur la Religion des Anciens Egyptiens," published at Paris in 1869.

"Nobody," he says, "has been able to directly dissent from our interpretation of the chief texts on which we think we can establish the belief of ancient Egypt, with respect to God, the world, and man.

"I have said on God, not on the gods. The first character of the old Egyptian religion is the Unity of God, expressed most energetically: *God one, sole, unique; no others with Him—He is the only Being living in truth—Thou art one; and*

*millions of beings issue from Thee—He has made everything, and alone He has not been made.*

“Second character: *God exists by Himself; He is the only Being who has not been generated.* The old Egyptians conceived God as the active cause, the perpetual source of His own existence; He engenders Himself perpetually. *God A SE.* Hence, the idea of God under two aspects: the Father and the Son. In many hymns is found the notion of *a double being engendering himself; the SOUL in twins*, as the funereal ritual speaks . . .”

Mr. de Rougé, however, in these last texts could have easily seen the first step to pantheism, and a visible copy of the later Vedic Hindooism. It is creation by emanation.

Yet, “on the subject of creation,” several texts quoted by the same writer, express certainly the true doctrine. *God has made the Heavens;—He has created the earth;—He has made all that exists;—He is the master of beings and of non-beings.* “These texts,” he adds, “date from fifteen hundred years at least before Moses. According to the same hymns, God has regulated the order of nature; the sovereign rights of the Creator cannot be more clearly asserted.” But he confesses that, “as to the origin of matter the old Egyptians seem to have believed that the world was eternally engendered . . . they thus fall into the doctrine of direct emanation; hence the deification of the Nile, of animals, of all that exist.” Mr. de Rougé might have seen that pantheism was contained in some of the texts in which he saw only the unity and immensity of God. Several striking passages, however, which we have translated from him in the previous paragraphs, show no sign of any error even in inception, and confirm powerfully what was quoted previously from Greek authors, and from what remains to us of the Hermetic books.

Mr. Mariette, in his “Notice sur les Monuments du Musée de Boulaq,” indicates several striking similarities between the

Egyptian cosmogony and the Hebrew traditions contained in Genesis. He says: "In the Egyptian cosmogony, Knouphis is the first *demiurgos*; his name is analogous to the Hebrew *nouf*, *breathing*, *spirit*. On a monument at Philæ, he is called: *He who has made all that is, the creator of beings; the first existing being, the father of fathers, the mother of mothers*. On several papyri he is represented sailing on the primeval ocean. The Egyptian spirit thus carried on the waters, calls to mind the passage of Genesis: 'And the Spirit of God was borne on the waters.'" Several other striking analogies are quoted by the same learned author, the most celebrated of recent or of any other discoverers.

There is no need of mentioning the belief of the Egyptians in the immortality of the soul. In the creed of no ancient nation was it more clearly defined. But, since the discovery of the "Funereal Ritual," on which Mr. de Rougé has published most important "Etudes," many details hitherto unknown have rendered this truth more definitely settled. This discovery has increased the universal regret that all the Hermetic books, of which this was probably a small fragment, are in all appearance lost for ever.

We will quote of it only the defence of the soul before the judgment seat of Osiris, and his terrible forty-two assessors. We quote from the "Ancient History of the East": "I have not blasphemed," says the deceased; "I have not smitten men privily; I have not treated any person with cruelty; I have not stirred up trouble; I have not been idle; I have not been intoxicated; I have not made unjust commandments; I have showed no improper curiosity; I have not allowed my mouth to tell secrets; I have not wounded any one; I have not put any one in fear; I have not slandered any one; I have not let envy gnaw my heart; I have spoken evil neither of the king nor of my father; I have not falsely accused any one; I have not withheld milk from the mouths of sucklings; I have not

practised any shameful crime; I have not calumniated a slave to his master." This is, indeed, the judgment after death—*post hoc autem judicium*.

And, after this "negative confession," as Champollion called it, the deceased man speaks of the positive good he has done in his lifetime: "I have made to the gods the offerings that were their due; I have given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and clothes to the naked," etc.

Such a high morality supposed certainly a pure dogmatic doctrine; for corruption of belief brings on necessarily corruption of manners; and "without doubt," F. Lenormant says, "it was this clear insight into truth, this tenderness of conscience, which obtained for the Egyptians this reputation of wisdom, echoed even by Holy Scripture" (1 Kings iv. 30; Acts vii. 27).

There is no doubt, certainly, that the clear assertion of a pure monotheism and of an undefiled morality, was not considered in Egypt, at least during the ages well known to us, as fit to be published everywhere and communicated to every one. Everybody knows that this was reserved only for the educated and higher classes of society. It was the esoteric doctrine revealed to a comparative few. But it had not probably been so at the very beginning; we cannot know when the unnatural distinction began. We can scarcely be sure for how long it was preserved. It is certain that, in the age of Herodotus and Plato, the esoteric doctrine was yet taught in the interior of the temples; and the father of history, who has preserved for us the knowledge of many ridiculous fables, has likewise positively asserted that "the Egyptians of Thebes recognized one only God, who had had no beginning, and would have no end." Thus at least F. Lenormant asserts (Ancient History of the East, Tom. i., p. 318).

Sir George Rawlinson is so much convinced of this, that he thinks it is from the primitive belief of Egypt that most Greek

philosophers of the ancient school admitted real Unity in Divine Nature, although their mythology soon divided it into several manifestations, from which polytheism sprung. As the words of so learned a man carry a great weight with them, we quote from his second volume of Herodotus (Appleton's edition), p. 249 :

“The philosophical view taken by the Greeks of the nature of the Deity was different from their mythological system. . . . Directly they began to adopt the inquiry into the nature of the Deity ; they admitted that He must be One Supreme ; and He received whatever name appeared to convey the clearest notion of the First Principle. How far any of their notions, or at least the inquiry that led to them, may be traced to an acquaintance with Egyptian speculation, it is difficult to determine ; Thalès and many more philosophers studied in Egypt, and must have begun, or have sought to promote, their inquiry during their visit to the learned people of that age ; and in justice to them, we must admit that they went to study there for some purpose. At all events, their early thoughts could not but have been greatly influenced by an intercourse with Egypt, though many a succeeding philosopher suggested some new view of the First Cause ; speculation taking a varied range, and often returning under different names to a similar conclusion.”

We shall, however, later on, show that an acquaintance with the primitive doctrine of Egypt was not the only, nor perhaps the greatest, cause of the monotheistic views of many Hellenist Sages. But the reflections of the learned editor of “Herodotus,” are certainly true, and remarkably appropriate to our subject.

In conclusion, we cannot do better than quote a somewhat long but very important passage of Mr. Mariette in his “Notice du Musée de Boulaq,” p. 15 and sq., in which we shall find a natural transition to the period of decline in truth and introduction of error in Egypt :

“The almost infinite variety of types presented by the Egyptian pantheon is a fact known to everybody. It would be wrong, however, to draw from this the conclusion that the Egyptian religion was never anything but a tissue of gross and ridiculous fables. . . . Had its only basis been composed of the strange superstitions practised in that country, it could not have run the splendid career of its history. . . . Such a shameless religion would have contained a germ of death, rather than the active principles of life which gave such a high position in the world’s history to the old Egyptian civilization. Recent discoveries in the art of reading hieroglyphic inscriptions have confirmed these views.

“At the head of the Egyptian pantheon appears a God, one, immortal, uncreated, invisible, and hidden in the unapproachable depths of His essence. He is the creator of heaven and earth; He has made everything that exists, and nothing has been made without Him. But He is the God reserved only to the *initiated*.

“Egypt, however, did not know how, or did not wish, to stop at so immense a height. She came down to consider the world, its formation, the principles by which it is governed, man and his destiny on earth, as an immense drama.” (We shall speak later on of the fable of Osiris.) “The Being of beings is the only actor in it; everything comes from Him, and must return to Him. He is served, it is true, by agents; but these are His own personified attributes, and these become finally so many gods under visible forms, inferior gods, limited in their actions, although participating in all His essential characteristics. . . .

“Behind those altars loaded with the images of deities, apparently so strange, Egypt, therefore, concealed serious dogmas. And thus it can be easily understood that if the Egyptian religion has lasted so long a time, it was because it rested, originally on a theology not altogether unworthy of the name.”

## VI.

These revelations of the great explorer of Egyptian antiquities bring us naturally to consider the first downward steps towards error in Egypt, as we have already done as regards Hindostan. And the result is again a rapid fall to the pantheism described by the Book of Wisdom. A text quoted previously in support of Egyptian monotheism, under a mistake, certainly, by Mr. de Rougé, expresses the doctrine clearly but crudely: "The idea of God is offered under two aspects: the father and the son; he is a double being engendering himself; the soul in twins." In this passage, and many others of the kind, the father is *God* and the son is the *World*. The world, as expressed by Plato in his "Timæus," is "the only-begotten Son of God." Both, therefore, are identified, and the most rigid pantheism is at once introduced as a religious dogma.

To give it a stronger hold on the Egyptian mind, both the texts on papyri and on monuments represent, in many different forms, the "principal god of the temples" engendering himself in the bosom of his mother. The god becomes, consequently, his own father and his own son, the mother contributing nothing in that system, but being altogether passive, as Diodorus asserts (Lib. I., 80). Thus there is the most complete identity between God and the world; and the Egyptian will be able, henceforth, to worship the sun, and the moon, and the winds, and the Nile, and the trees as real gods. The Book of Wisdom has, in fact, related only what really took place. Mr. Mariette says, with justice, that this "double god" is "the one whose image the Egyptians saw everywhere repeated on the walls of sacred edifices."

It is not probable, nay, it does not seem possible, that pantheistic error should have reached at once such an extreme limit. It came on gradually, we may well suppose. And as in



the Vedic upanishads sublime truths were often nobly expressed, with some incidental phrases introducing the fatal formulas, the same must have taken place in Egypt.

St. Justin Martyr, in his "Cohortatio ad Græcos," says of some author, whose name now escapes us: "*Ammon Deum prorsus occultum nominat; Hermes vero clare et manifeste dicit: Deum intelligentia comprehendere, difficile est; eloqui autem impossibile.*"

There is nothing here to which the strictest orthodoxy can object. Any Christian philosopher of our days will say, likewise, that God is truly "hidden" from us; and that if it is hard for our intellect to understand Him, it is really impossible for our tongue to express His nature.

But Iamblichus, in his book, "De Mysteriis Egyptiorum," stating briefly the answer of Anebon to Porphyry, no longer now in existence, gives a definition of God which any Catholic theologian could adopt, if it were not marred by some dubious expressions. God is declared to be "*totius naturæ et generationis potestatumque elementarium, Causa. . . immaterialis, incorporeus, ingenitus, indivisus, totus a seipso, et in seipso absconditus, . . . etc.*" It seems as if we were reading some of the scholastic theologians. But doubt begins to be awakened when we read: "*Universa in se complectitur,*" and "*sequeipse omnibus mundi partibus communicat.*" We cannot forbear pointing out this close resemblance of ancient Egyptian lore with the Hindoo Vedas. It is again the universal soul permeating creation.

The error is yet more clearly expressed in a passage taken from the dialogue "Asclepius"—in Greek, *ὁ τέλειος λόγος*—misunderstood by Lactantius and St. Augustine. We quote from the late Edinburgh translation of the Ante-Nicene Fathers: "Hermes, in the book which is entitled *The Perfect Word*, made use of these words: 'The Lord and Creator of all things we have thought right to call God, since he made

the Second God visible and sensible. . . . Since, therefore, He made Him first, and alone, and one only, He appeared to Him beautiful, and most full of all good things; and He hallowed Him, and altogether loved Him as His own Son.'” Lactantius and St. Augustine understood this of the Logos, Son of God; but Hermes meant to speak of the created World, and thus made the exterior creation a second and visible God, the first after the Supreme One. It is evidently that double god engendering himself, whom Mr. Mariette declares is represented everywhere on the monuments.

Likewise in one of the “Christian” Hermetic books—the *Poemander*—it is first stated that “the First God is the eternal architect of all things, made by no one;” but directly after, the writer adds: “The Second God is the one which has been made in the image of the First, contained in It, loved, nourished, and rendered immortal by its Father.” The visible world, therefore, is declared to be the Son of God, immortal likewise, and true God. This was also a Hindoo doctrine, which marks distinctly the passage from monotheism to pantheism.

It seems that in Egypt this occurred sooner than in Hindostan, as the Egyptians appear to have been more prone to idolatry than the Hindoos. But it is not a little remarkable that the same process of error shows itself in both countries at a very remote age; for this alteration of the primitive doctrine must have happened before any of the monuments still existing in Hindostan or Egypt were built. Certainly, at the time this was first written, nothing of the absurd mythology sculptured at length on the oldest edifices, had been yet imagined to please the vulgar.

The coincidences between the Hindoo and Egyptian religions are so remarkable, that we wonder indeed they have not yet been fully pointed out. It is true the most important discoveries in Vedic lore date only from a few years ago; and

Egyptology progressing apart, no extensive comparison of both could yet have taken place. A most interesting volume, we think, could be written on the subject; and as the Hindoo discoveries are admitted to be positive, we may say clear and final, the light thrown thereby on what is yet obscure in Egypt would, in our opinion, take away from modern writers the pretext that, for the country of the Pharaohs the old classics are "unreliable." Thus, who will not wonder that in the "Poemander" God is twice declared ἀρρενόθηλος — hermaphrodite. Cudworth, who lived in an age very little acquainted yet with Indian theology, says on the subject: "Hoc, ni fallor, Ægyptium est." He might as well have said: "This is purely Vedic," and we know that error penetrated first the mind of the Brahmins when they imagined Brahma (male). The same, namely, the hermaphroditism of Amun, is asserted also in the dialogue, "Asclepius," one of the Neoplatonist Hermetic books.

In the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the Poemander, the doctrine of transmigration first appears, and the destruction and renovation of the world is likewise broached. We know that these doctrines, specially the first, received in Egypt great later developments. And thus this country walked in the footsteps of India; where, nevertheless, the superior imagination and poetical feeling of the nation made of those two extraordinary beliefs, such a fantastic system of dreams that the like never could happen in any other country on earth; so that Egypt could never keep pace with it.

Pantheism in Hindostan originated chiefly first from the doctrine of "universal soul," or God animating the world; and, secondly, from the ritual and "Sacrificial rites;" and the process is rendered now manifest by all the recent researches which have brought to light so many texts descriptive of it. The Egyptian ritual is lost; yet we possess ancient texts, which show clearly that the passage to pantheism must have hap-

pened precisely in the same manner. We shall speak again later on of the "Book of Funereal Rites," lately discovered.

A passage of the book of Hermes (*περι τῶν γενικῶν*), preserved in the Chronicle of Eusebius, and referred to by Lactantius (*Divin. Inst.*, L. ii., C. 15), says clearly: "Nonne audivisti omnes animos ab uno hujus Universitat<sup>is</sup> animo profectos esse?"—"Did you not hear that all souls proceed from the soul of this Universe?"

Many, it is true, object yet to those texts of books published either by Neoplatonist philosophers, or by Christians, under the name of Hermes, as expressing merely the doctrines of the translators and publishers. The reader will remember what was stated previously on the subject. It is certain that authors such as St. Cyprian, Lactantius, St. Augustine, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and many Christian writers of the time, as on the other side, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus, etc., admitted their genuineness, and no one at the time rejected them as unworthy of credit. All that was said in opposition was confined to this observation: "They were not the very text of Hermes;" but all agreed that they expressed well the sentiments of Hermes, *ἑρμιακῶς δόξας*; it is all we claim; but every one will admit now that the "sentiment" expressed above is altogether Hindoo, and reflects perfectly the doctrine developed with such a superabundance of details in all the commentaries of the Vedas, after the East had passed from the pure original monotheism to the pantheism which followed.

And the following text "on creation" is so completely Brahminic, that we wonder it has hitherto escaped observation. It is taken from the dialogue, "Asclepius:" "*Hic ergo qui solus est omnia, utriusque sexus fecunditate plenissimus, semper voluntatis suæ prægnans, parit semper quid quid voluerit procreare.*" We do not think that any Neoplatonist philosopher would ever have spoken with this crudity, although their doctrine may, in the end, have come to this. The very words

indicate something Egyptian, as Cudworth would say; something Hindoo, as *we* would express ourselves. We are fully persuaded that it came in truth from the original Hermetic books; and in our conviction, if those old productions of "Thoth" had been preserved, we should have in them a true counterpart of the Atharvan-Veda.

Was India, then, the source of the religion, art, and civilization of Egypt or the reverse?

In both countries strict *castes* existed, and, originally, the same four in each: priests, warriors, merchants, artisans. The priest caste in Africa bore certainly a great resemblance to the Brahminical caste in Hindostan. Both had a great power over the kings, yet did not take an avowed part in the government of the country. Both had to study the sacred books: in India the Vedas; in Egypt the Hermetic writings. The every-day occupations of each were almost the same, as well as the religious ceremonies at which they presided—the processions, the sacrifices, the daily ablutions, the ritual, in fact, with all its numerous and perplexing details. The temples and other edifices devoted to religion had so many traits in common that when, at the beginning of this century, some Sepoy regiments were sent to Egypt by the British Government against the French, the Hindoo Sepoys fell down prostrate, and worshipped their gods in the colossal statues they saw at Thebes.

The military caste of Egypt was almost the exact reproduction of that of Hindostan. Neither were remarkable for their fighting qualities; once only did the Egyptian armies invade foreign countries; which was under Sesostris. And when the country itself was invaded, it nearly always succumbed. Thus the Ethiopians, the Hyksos, the Persians, the Macedonians, and the Romans, subdued Egypt successively, almost without any resistance. It was the same with India.

In the merchant caste we see likewise a great similarity. The people in both were more agriculturists than traders.

They had no great fondness for the sea. To trade abroad, the Egyptians used, first, the vessels of the Phœnicians, and afterwards those of the Greeks. The Indians employed for the same purpose the merchant fleets of Arabia.

Yet was the character of the Egyptian people of a very different type from that of the Hindoos. There was in the latter an exuberance of fancy, of poetry, of enthusiasm, which were quite wanting in the Egyptians. The literature of the latter, so meagre at all times, exhibits to us in the few fragments we still possess a low, material, realistic feeling altogether the reverse of the æsthetic ardor of the literature of India. When we read the explanation of myths communicated by the priests to Herodotus, whenever the honest Greek writer forgets the promise of secrecy he had given, and makes his revelations in spite of his fears of offending "gods and heroes," we wonder at the triviality, sometimes even the vulgarity of style, thought, and expression. We cannot imagine a Hindoo Brahmin, in such circumstances, exhibiting such a total want of noble feelings, or giving so mean a conception of his religion to a foreigner. Whoever has read anything of Sanscrit literature, even in the poorest translations, cannot possibly admit the smallest resemblance between the two peoples, in mental constitution at least.

Yet an ingenious writer, Mr. E. Pococke, attempts to demonstrate that Egypt was altogether colonized by Hindoos; and that the Egyptians came, in fact, directly from the country about the mouths of the Indus. In the fourteenth chapter of his book, "India in Greece," he argues that Egypt in general—in Greek, ΑΙ-ΓΥΠ-ΤΙΑ—derives its name from "Η' ΑΙ-ΓΟΠΑΤΙ," a term at once revealing their original land, and the object of their worship. They are settlers from the same land with the "HORSE TRIBES," most of whom are *Children of the Sun*, and worshippers of *Gopati*, a term which at once signifies "the Sun," "the Bull," and "Siva." Hence their desig-

nation as "Hyas of the Solar Race," or "H'ai-Goptai." These "Horse Tribes" come, he says, from the Gulf of Cush, near the mouths of the Indus.

In the same manner he endeavors to prove that the Ethiopians are "Cushites," as applied in Hindostan to the "ARTIOPAS, or "Chiefs of Oude;" that the Abyssinians and Nubians came originally from "ABUA-SIN," or the Indus, and the river Nubra. This is, indeed, a mere etymological argument to which no sound scholar in our days attach much importance. But Mr. Pocke groups around it such an array of facts, of texts, of historical, geographical, and ethnographical details, that he almost contrives to surround his speculations with an air of such plausibility as to resemble at times demonstration.

But unfortunately for his theory, the whole of it hangs on Buddhism. The book itself is an apparently serious argument to prove that not only Egypt, Ethiopia, and the interior of Africa, but likewise Palestine, Syria, Greece, Etruria, the North of Europe even, at least Scandinavia, were all settled by Buddhist tribes. His excess of zeal has carried Mr. E. Pocke too far. A few years after the publication of his very erudite and interesting book, Mr. E. Burnouf *demonstrated* that Buddhism is of a comparatively recent origin; and, consequently, that Egypt, of which alone we now treat, had been settled long before Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, appeared.

Such a mass of erudition, however, as is displayed in "India in Greece," must not be supposed to be on the whole barren of result. It quite establishes the fact that Egypt had from the beginning close and constant intercourse with Hindostan; that any resemblance between the two peoples is perceptible, chiefly, in the most remote ages; and that such remembrance displays itself most conspicuously in the similarity of their public buildings. "A striking analogy," he writes, "will be found to exist between the rock architecture of both countries; the grot-

toes of Salsette, Elephantina, and Ellore, remind us strongly of the excavations in Egypt and Nubia, of the royal tombs at Thebes, and the splendid monument rescued from the sand and restored to the light of day by Belzoni, at Ipsambul."

Lord Valentia was struck by the identity of character in the monuments of both countries, although few of them comparatively were known in his time. But here the question naturally presents itself, Did Egypt receive its civilization from India, or India from Egypt? To maintain the latter, we must suppose that in Hindostan civilization travelled from the South Northward, as the Egyptians could not then reach India except from the South. And it is demonstrated that the contrary was the case. We have seen, in a previous chapter, that Brahminism originated in the northwest of the Peninsula, and all the late discoveries go to prove that the Himalaya mountains, and along their range, probably Cashmere, was the starting-point of the intellectual movement. "In the heart of these mountains," says, again, Mr. E. Pococke (quoting Lemp., Barker's edit., "Meroë,") "are found the residences of the earlier Brahmins, and the more ancient temples of their gods. At the confluence of the two arms of the Ganges, rises the holy city Devaprajaga, 30°, 8' lat., inhabited only by Brahmins; further on is seen the temple of Badri-Nuth, said to be extremely rich, and to possess as its domains more than seven hundred flourishing villages, placed in a state of dependence on the high priest of the temple . . . .

"The most ancient poems of India represent the countries of the Ganges as the cradle of those heroes, who afterwards carried their arms in the southern regions as far as Ceylon. Everything, in a word, tends to show most clearly that civilization followed in India a route diametrically opposite to the one which it pursued in Egypt, where the Social movement was from the South to the North."

Colonel Todd, on the contrary (Rajasthan, vol. i., p. 250),



remarks that, "The allegory of Chrishna's eagle pursuing the serpent (Buddha), and recovering the books of science and religion with which he had fled, is an important historical fact disguised . . . . The gulf of Cush (at the mouth of the Indus), the point where the serpent attempted to escape, has been from time immemorial to the present day, the entrepot for the commerce (of India) with Sofala, the Red Sea, Egypt, and Arabia. There Buddha Trivicrama, or Mercury (Thoth), has been, and yet is, invoked by the pirates of Dwarica. Did Buddha, or Mercury (Thoth), come from or escape to the Nile? Is he the Hermes of Egypt, to whom the four books of science, the Vedas of the Hindoos, were sacred? The representative of Buddha, at the period of Chrishna, was Nema-Nath; he is of a black complexion (As. trans., v. ii., p. 304), and his statues exactly resemble in features the bust of young Memnon. His symbol was the snake. I have already observed that Chrishna, before his deification, worshipped Buddha; and his temple at Dwarica rose over the ancient shrine of the latter, which yet stands. In an inscription from the cave of Gaya, their characters are conjoined, 'Heri, who is Buddha.'"

If these conjectures of Col. Todd be correct, as we believe them to be, to a certain extent, the colonization of Egypt took place from India; and even it was through the gulf of Cush, or from the mouth of the Indus River. It is now generally admitted that Syria and Mesopotamia were the real channel of immigration. Yet this passage is of extreme importance; and shows that the Hindoos, at the time of the writing of the Puranas, were persuaded that the Vedas had been taken to the South by Mercury (Thoth). And if the attempt at first failed, according to the poet, they must have succeeded later, since the Hermetic books existed afterwards in Egypt. If Buddha—a much more recent personage—appears in the poem, the reason is that Buddhism existed at the time when the Puranas were composed, and was in conflict with Brahminism; and the de-

fender of this last system of religion, the poet who wrote the history of Chrishna and Rama, was not absolutely obliged to write quite correctly of what happened so long before him.

## VII.

From the pantheism which is the logical deduction from a belief in the "Universal Soul," we proceed to a short investigation of the "worship of elements," which is the natural consequence of it, and which the Book of Wisdom has told us is the first form idolatry took everywhere among men.

We shall be satisfied, on this subject, with a very remarkable passage of Porphyry, taken from his "Epistola ad Anebonem." He wants to know how far Chæremon was right, or if he was not altogether wrong, in attributing to the Egyptians a very gross and material belief in visible gods, namely: "The Planets, the signs of the Zodiac, the Stars, etc." Chæremon insisted that even the oldest writings on theology in Egypt, consequently the books of Hermes, did not acknowledge any other gods but these; and he added: "That those who believed the Sun to be the real architect of the universe, corroborated their arguments by what is said of Osiris and Isis; that all the sacred fables resolve themselves in the various aspects of the stars, in their occultations and wanderings, even in the Nile and its overflowings, finally in nothing but physical things, material altogether, without any need of a spiritual principle altogether."

Our readers perceive that the arguments of atheists are not recent. But it is clear that this followed logically from the doctrine of the "Universal Soul." Everything was divine; and we have only to look on the "visible god"—the world—without caring for the "invisible one"—Amun. In Hindostan, also, as soon as the "eternal, infinite, self-existent Brahma," falling asleep, had generated from himself another Brahma,

with a particular sex and visible attributes, the first god, too indistinct and "undefined" for popular worship, gradually ceased to attract the attention of the worshipper, and all homages and adorations were reserved for what the senses could perceive.

Hence the elements, the "forces of nature," to speak as men do in our age, became the objects of the exclusive worship of the Egyptians; and the belief began to spread among some of the Greeks, and was adopted by a few Christian ecclesiastical writers, that the inhabitants of that country never had any other gods than "the stars of heaven either fixed or erratic;" that the "esoteric doctrines, even of the priests, did not acknowledge any invisible and spiritual Creator, but that everything ought to be attributed to the visible sun, the centre of the world." This renders at least the sense of Eusebius in the "Preparatio Evangelica" (L. iii., cap. 4), and he concluded from it: "You know now the mysteries of that divine wisdom which brought finally the Egyptians to worship wolves, dogs, and lions."

Eusebius was right in asserting that the worship of Nature was the cause which gradually introduced into Egypt animal-worship. But if he pretended that the object of adoration was only the visible universe, without any reference to a "spiritual principle," he was evidently wrong. The error of the Egyptians consisted precisely in this: that they imagined the "Universal Soul"—Amun—to be portioned out and divided, as it were, into as many distinct particles as there were living beings, and thus each one of them was animated by a parcel of divinity. It was, therefore, not only a "spiritual" but a "divine" being they worshipped when they addressed their homages to the sun, the stars, the planets, the Nile, etc. Pantheism, for them, had become the origin of idolatry by offering to their adoration the "works of God," instead of "God himself." But their worship was directed, that of the enlightened among them, at

least, to the "spiritual principle" animating Nature. The same was likewise clearly the case in Hindostan; as the "Book of Wisdom" has it, "they imagined, either the fire or the wind, or the swift air, or the circles of the stars, or the great waters, or the sun and moon, to be the gods that rule the world."

As the monuments of the eighteenth dynasty are those on which Amun-Ra first appears, it seems probable that this was the epoch of the introduction of real idolatry, as subsequent to, and caused by, Pantheism. The god is usually represented under the form of a man with a high head-dress, on which is sculptured the globe of the sun. Hence the Egyptian word Amun-Ra was translated by the Greeks into *Ἡέλιος*, very different from *Ἀμμων*. The ram's horns which became in time the distinguishing mark of Amun, do not appear when the god is represented as the sun. The precise epoch when those various emblems were introduced into Egyptian mythology cannot now be determined. If some future Egyptologist, by interpreting aright and in detail the existing monuments, could state positively those diverse steps of Egyptian imagination and systematic polytheism, the whole secret of the progress of error in the land of the Pharaohs would be revealed, and a true history of superstition in that country might be written.

We cannot, however, be much mistaken when we state, that the eighteenth dynasty was the period when idolatry took a sudden and highly-developed form. It was at the same time the epoch of the greatest material civilization of Egypt; and we have already had occasion to remark that the same took place in Hindostan and Greece. In Egypt, nevertheless, an element is, or appears to be, wanting, which is most pre-eminent in the two other countries. We hear in Thebes and Memphis of no great poems to which the origin of the names of the gods could be ascribed as those of the Hellenic deities were to the poems of Homer and Hesiod by Herodotus; and

as the avatars of Vishnu, and the legends of Rama and Krishna, in Hindostan, to the great Indian epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Had the Egyptians any poetry? Did they possess any epic poems? Was music and the other fine arts cultivated by them? This last question may be answered affirmatively, as we know their musical instruments, and we have still models of their sculpture and painting. It is only very lately that any writing has been found which can be called poetry, such as we understand the word; but certainly no extensive work of the epic kind has been not only preserved, but even mentioned in all the Egyptian lore now in existence, unless it be "poems in prose." We may, however, state most positively that they must have had such poems; and, first, we cannot suppose music in antiquity except as an accompaniment to versification. We know, moreover, that the Egyptians had songs; among the priestly officers mentioned by St. Clement of Alexandria, the "Singer" was the first, walking at the head of the procession; and his chief office was to learn by heart the "hymns to the gods," and sing them. Can we suppose a "hymn" in ancient times except in verse and with rhythm?

The main question, however, is to know if the Egyptians had really poems of an epic kind, out of which an intricate mythology could grow. None certainly have been preserved, and none are alluded to in any ancient author. But we are acquainted with the history of several of their gods. Those of Osiris, Isis, Horus, and Typhon are especially known in all their details, made out of many bits of information contained here and there in Greek and Latin works. These histories are certainly fictitious; and we cannot admit fiction in ancient times except under the form of a poem. Novels were unknown, and the subject was too sacred for the Egyptians to be treated as a mere novel, in the modern acceptance of the term. We have no doubt, consequently, that the history of Osiris and Isis was first enunciated in a poem of the form of the

Ramayana among the Hindoos. The original work has perished ; we have only a few fragments, contained in more recent authors, yet so that a complete fabulous history has been recomposed, and is known now as the myth of Osiris.

We find, therefore, in Egypt, at least by indirect conclusions, the phenomenon so striking in India and Greece. The poets of Memphis and Thebes originated a mythology best known now by the astonishing sculptures which still exist, chiefly in the ruins of Thebes, Luxor, Philæ, Elephantine, and all over Nubia and Ethiopia. Their imagination created those monsters which strike the traveller in Egypt as in Hindostan ; and there is a remarkable fact in both countries, which establishes a wonderful difference between them and Greece : The gods are found in groups, never singly. Amun-Ra is always surrounded by his kindred deities, as Osiris, and Phtah, and all the others by theirs. Each temple represents, consequently, a different fabulous history, which must have originated from a different poem ; not so in Greece, where each god or goddess alone enjoys the monopoly of the temples consecrated to each.

There is, moreover, another resemblance in this respect between India and Egypt worthy of note. It is that each principal god is always accompanied with a goddess, called, by the vulgar, his wife, but, in reality, his "female energy," as we remarked in Hindostan, in the case of Siva, in particular. The original hermaphroditism of the Godhead is replaced by a distinction of sexes for each deity ; and we already know how immorality and monstrosity have spread, which sprung originally from this strange fancy of primitive poets and artists. Thus Phtah, or Vulcan, at Memphis, is never seen alone ; but the monstrous goddesses Pasht and Bast keep always attendance on him ; Knum, worshipped at Elephantine, is in company with Heka, or Anuka ; Amun-Ra, or Helios, cannot appear without Mu, the "Mother ;" Osiris and Isis are well known. But

we have no occasion to enter into the detail of all the Egyptian mythology. These few instances will suffice. It is difficult, however, not to see an identity of origin in a mythological idea of this kind existing at the same time both in India and Egypt.

A very striking peculiarity of this last country, however, is the local character of these gods, restricted, except in the case of a few, to a comparatively small territory; a local character whence, probably, animal-worship took a much greater preëminence in Egypt than in India. It is well known that except the worship of Amun (*simpliciter*), and that of Osiris and Isis, which was universal throughout the whole extent of the country, the other gods of Egyptian mythology were honored only in particular cities or districts; and this took place in groups, as each individual chief deity had always a number of invariable companions whose statues were worshipped with the principal one. Thus there must have been a special fabulous history connected with each group, which fact, in our opinion, supposed originally a poem, or, at least, some tradition in verse, poetry being invariably the religious language of ancient times. We have observed a similar fact in India, but not to the same extent.

Thus religion—although it had everywhere in this country the same character, which one invariably recognizes by its Egyptian look—was, in fact, divided to an incredible extent into individual deities for individual towns and villages. In Egypt, therefore, not only was the religion a national one—for idolatry made it national everywhere, instead of universal, as it was at first—but it became truly an institution of townships; and this was carried to extreme by animal-worship.

The doctrine of all living beings partaking of a spark of the universal fire, or rather of a divine parcel of the "Universal Soul," gave to all objects a strangely superstitious character. The attention of Egyptians had been very early attracted by

the peculiar habits of the few animals indigenous in the country; for the territory is not extensive, only a narrow belt of four or five miles on both banks of the Nile, and it is covered with water for several months every year. Particular places being benefited by the presence of some animals, these were divinized; other localities being plagued and cursed by the presence of some others, these were treated as enemies. And it frequently happened that the animal-god of a city was looked upon with horror by the next one along the river. And from this cause arose frequent quarrels, mutual insults, even wars between contiguous localities. To such an extent of absurdity, odiousness, and barbarism had religion—if thus it must be called—been debased by the introduction of idolatry.

But this state of religious disintegration, if we may call it so, supposed a previous *disintegration* of the country. This phenomenon has been remarked of other regions, but of India in particular; and our proposition, that “evidently mankind began by clanship,” has an especial applicability to Egypt. According to the general idea, it is supposed to have formed a compact kingdom, rising occasionally to the proportions of a mighty Empire, as it did under Sesostri; and as we, in modern times, are accustomed to see large nationalities existing with a high state of centralization, under the sway of one strong and ever-present administration, we are prone to conclude, hastily, that it has always been so, and that Egypt, in particular, was a powerful State, whose parts were firmly knit together by religion, civilization, and customs. But this is nothing but a huge mistake. There never was in Egypt such a social and religious compactness before the Ptolemies, and after them the Romans. And, even in this last case, the unification was rather one of administration than of social customs.

It is certain that under the Pharaohs, and long after, Egypt was parcelled out into a great number of small districts called



“nomes.” Learned men differ as to the precise meaning of this word; some deriving it from the Greek *νομός*, different from *νόμος*; others thinking, with more probability, that it was originally an Egyptian, or perhaps a Phœnician, expression. It meant a territory of any size, small generally, around a city or village. The same word was used by the author of the Book of Maccabees (I Lib., cap. x., v. 30), for certain small districts in Samaria and Galilee, called cities in the Douai version; and by Herodotus (in Thal.) for Persian Satrapies in general. Isaiah (cap. xix., v. 2) employs a word generally translated by *kingdom*, and which the Sept. expresses by *νομός*; and this last text being precisely adapted to our present considerations, we give it here: “I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians; and they shall fight brother against brother, and friend against friend, city against city, kingdom against kingdom.” This last expression translated by *νομός* in the Sept., is very remarkable.

J. J. Hoffmann, in his “*Lexicon Universale*,” gives a list of sixty-five nomes into which Egypt was divided. Pliny the Elder, having always before his eyes the Roman Empire, calls them *Præfecturas*, giving us to understand that they were merely provinces of a centralized government. But from what we have just quoted from the Book of Maccabees and from Isaiah, it would appear that decentralization was rather included in the meaning of the word “nome.” The question so often raised on the dynasties of Manetho has an important bearing on this part of our subject. Those who contended last century for the immense period of time required, apparently, by the only chronology of Egyptian history we possess, maintained, of course, that the dynasties of Manetho were all successive. But, although Egyptologists seem to have now adopted this opinion, there are very good reasons for supposing that a certain number at least of those dynasties were simultaneous; and that, for a long time, Egypt was, in fact, a kind of “pentarchy,”

or something of the kind. Rawlinson shows it perfectly well in his "Herodotus." The virulence with which, as it is now ascertained, "nome" frequently fought against "nome," or as Isaiah says, "kingdom against kingdom," proves clearly likewise that to consider Egypt as a compact commonwealth, ruled by the same laws, and under a centralized government, is altogether a mistake. When the worshippers of the crocodile went forth in battle array against the adorers of the ichneumon—the destroyer of the reptile's eggs—we do not read that the Pharaoh of Memphis or of Thebes interfered, at least usually. It was a fight of clan against clan, and the supreme monarch did not think his authority required him to chastise the disturbers of the peace. Each one had a right to fight for the honor of his god. We see at a glance what must have been then the state of society.

But there is, in Strabo, a short passage which supplies a very remarkable incidental confirmation of what we have just asserted. In Book xi., ch. xi., § 5th, we read: "When I was sailing up the Nile, schoeni—measures of distance—of different lengths were used in passing from one city to another, so that the same number of schoeni gave in some places a longer, in others a shorter, length of the voyage. This mode of computation has been handed down from an early period, and is continued to the present time." Strabo speaks of a fact to which he was himself a witness, and on which he could not be deceived. As his travelling in Egypt took place under Augustus, the whole country was cowed into submission, and strict laws, which the Romans knew so well how to impose and execute, were in full vigor in Egypt, and forced it to be one and whole. Yet the intelligent observer was struck with a fact which he could not explain, having not deeply studied the early history of the country. The mile around Memphis was different from the mile around Thebes. And it must have been for any traveller a source of inextricable confusion, to have to adopt a

new measure of distance every time he passed "from one city to another." It was the confusion which existed not long ago in Germany, with respect to coin and money, and which the French have had themselves so much trouble to remedy in their own country by their modern decimal system for all quantities. Formerly France, Germany, Italy, etc.; much more, in old times, Egypt, India, etc., were partitioned out into an immense number of "small states," each having its own measures of distance, of weight, of bulk, etc. Are they not yet to-day in Spain fighting for the old system against the new and quite recent one, of reducing large bodies of people to the same inflexible rules of what they call unification of races? Nothing is better calculated than this short passage of Strabo to give to the common reader an idea of what Egypt must then have been, or rather of what the world then was; for it is to be remarked that the whole geography of Strabo is merely a record of "tribes."

Most of those who have written on ancient Egypt suppose that this strange superstition—animal-worship—existed from the most ancient times, and that it is, in fact, a part of the "primeval religion." Do they not still see it everywhere in Africa, from Ethiopia to Senegal? What must have been its cause? Unable to conjecture a satisfactory one, they assume that, in the "infancy of nations," men were "infants" probably, and amused themselves with those strange toys, cats, dogs, etc., and admiring, we suppose, their curious antics, they believed them animated by a "divine instinct"—*divino instinctu*. Thus were they led to divinize the vilest animals, such as serpents and crocodiles. We find hypotheses of this kind in very thoughtful writers, for whom we entertain a real regard, and whom we would not for any consideration ridicule, or even treat with any kind of disrespect. Heeren of Gottingen is one of them.

Our readers know what we think of the "infancy of nations;" and many striking facts already related and commented upon in these pages, show how different the first period of hu-

man society was from the barbarous degradation said to have existed in primitive times. Heeren himself believes, and we honor him for it, that the first building erected by human hands was the "Tower of Babel," whose stupendous ruins, he thinks, exist yet in our days; three high stories out of eight. Men, therefore, built then for eternity. The same celebrated writer has told us what he believes of the antiquity and the original civilization of Ethiopia, saying in as many words that, "History itself carries us back to those ages in which the formation of the most ancient States took place, and has thus far shown that Meroe was one of them." His most interesting historical works are full of many admissions of the kind; and in very few modern productions of human literary industry shall we find so many arguments fatal to modern evolution-theorists. Yet he, too, speaks of the "infancy of nations," and of the childish admiration of man at that time for inferior animals; an admiration going so far as to make them his gods and to worship them. And he calls such a degrading worship a part of the "primeval religion." When he wrote this he was not consistent with himself, and must have forgotten many splendid passages of a contrary purport which had come from his own pen, and which will give him an honorable and lasting place among the great writers of our day. And the only reason he assigns for attributing this origin to "animal-worship" is, that human reason cannot explain otherwise such an absurd freak of human superstition. That origin, we have showed, is sufficiently *explained* by the pantheistic doctrines introduced in Hindostan and in Egypt from the belief in a "Universal Soul;" an obvious corruption of the first doctrine of an Eternal, Infinite, Self-existent Being creating the world; and thus supposed to have changed from invisible to visible. Animal-worship, consequently, derived from that great error, must have been long subsequent to the primitive times; and the "primeval religion" must have known nothing of it. And

although we have not ourselves seen any of the antique monuments of India, Egypt, and Ethiopia, we are sure that nothing bearing testimony to this absurd and low belief can be found in any building claiming a right to be called really old. According to the authors we have followed, we see at the cradle of African civilization, in the neighborhood of Meroe, monuments of a severe and noble style, with few sculptures and scarcely any hieroglyphs. Further on, in places farther north, on piles erected during the high material civilization of the eighteenth dynasty, we see the various histories of Osiris and Isis; Phtah and Bast; Knum and Heka; Amun-Ra and Mu. On none of them do we find anything relating to animal-worship, except, perhaps, here and there the presence of the ox Apis, a singular emblem, whose meaning was well known to all Egyptians. If anything is preserved on monuments of the worship of cats or dogs or crocodiles, they must have been built in the latter time of the Pharaohs, just before Cambyses came with his Persians to protest with indignation against such a degradation, to destroy the monuments and the priests, and to obtain from posterity the title of a mad man, because he could not overcome the wrath excited in him by such sights.

The recent discoveries made by Mr. Mariette around Memphis are, in fact, a splendid confirmation of our thesis. Close by the great Sphinx at Gizeh, but certainly much more ancient, he found, buried in the sand of the desert, a vast temple entirely constructed of enormous blocks of black or rose-colored granite, and of Oriental alabaster, *without any sculpture or even ornament of any kind*. Straight lines alone, in the severest purity, were used in its decoration.

But if the walls of this temple are deprived of sculptural ornaments, statues have been found in it which deserve a brief mention. They were certainly chiselled before the priestly "Canon of proportions" was imposed on Egyptian artists, consequently, at the very beginning of the nation. They are

merely statues of kings or great men adorning their sepulchres. There is in them an elegance of composition, a simplicity and reality of movement, a life in all the figures, such as to convince the beholder that, if the priesthood had not imposed strict ritual rules, the beauty of Greek art, later by, perhaps, as much as fifteen centuries, would have been anticipated in Egypt. But nowhere could Mr. Mariette find in this temple any proofs of the subsequently degraded worship.

In the "infancy of nations," therefore, at least in Egypt, not only was the human face that of a superior being, but even his life was that of a Hindoo *rishi*; since, on the walls of those tombs of the primitive dynasties of the country, are represented all the scenes—domestic or agricultural—of a truly patriarchal condition; large and well-cultivated farms, numerous herds of cattle, fish and game in abundance, commodious houses and villas, all the details of a most simple but truly civilized life. Not so a thousand years later.

Egypt was yet under the domination of the Persians when Herodotus visited it; and he has left us details of the stupid veneration of the people for animals, which is simply astonishing, when we reflect on the progress the Egyptians had long before made in civilization. "When a conflagration," he relates (*Euterpe*, 66, 67), "takes place, a supernatural impulse seizes on the cats of the neighborhood. The Egyptians, standing at a distance, think only of the cats, and neglect to put out the fire. Then the animals, making their escape, leap over the men and throw themselves into the fire. When this happens, great lamentations are made among the Egyptians. In whatever house a cat dies of a natural death, all the family shave their eyebrows only; but if a dog die, they shave the whole body and the head. All deceased cats are carried to certain sacred houses, where, being first embalmed, they are buried in the city of Bubastis. All persons bury their dogs in sacred vaults within their own city; and ichneumons are buried in the

same manner as the dogs; but field-mice and hawks they carry to the city of Buto; the ibis to Hermopolis; the bears, which are few in number, and the wolves, which are not much larger than foxes, they bury wherever they are found lying."

Everybody knows how all these details have been verified by modern researches, and what enormous quantities of embalmed cats, in particular, have been found in Egypt in this century. We cannot believe that the people who built the stupendous monuments of Thebes were so superstitious and so much addicted to animal-worship as those whom Herodotus has described from eyesight. It is, no doubt, much later than even the eighteenth or nineteenth dynasties that such scenes began to take place in Egypt.

Yet already, long before the time of Herodotus, the progress of idolatry had introduced strange superstitions. A single example will suffice—an example which will, at the same time, illustrate the old Egyptian exalted doctrine, and show how former noble traditions had been altogether forgotten in the midst of ever-advancing degradation. We take it from Herodot. II., 42: "The Thebans, and those who, following their example, abstain from eating mutton, say that this custom was established among them in the following way: Hercules (Khonsu) was desirous of seeing Jupiter (Amun), but Jupiter was unwilling to be seen by him; at last, however, as Hercules persisted, Jupiter had recourse to the following contrivance: Having flayed a ram, he cut off the head and held it before himself, and then having put on the fleece, he, in that form, showed himself to Hercules. From this circumstance the Egyptians make the image of Jupiter with a ram's head; and from the Egyptians, the Ammonians (in Ethiopia), . . . and, as I conjecture, the Ammonians from hence derived their name, for the Egyptians call Jupiter, Ammon (Amun)."

It is evident from this narrative that the "Father of History" attached no other meaning than the literal one to this

apparently absurd tale; and that all the Egyptians of his time, even the priests with whom he was in constant communication, saw no deeper meaning in it. And as the whole country was full of statues with rams' heads representing Amun, all the idea the people gathered from it was the altercation between Amun and Khonsu; and, on that account, many of them abstained from eating mutton. Yet the full understanding of this myth is easy for us, and we find in it a strong confirmation of some of our previous observations on the monotheism of the first Egyptians: Jupiter, or Amun (*simpliciter*), is "invisible," "self-existent," the "highest," the "supreme." He cannot be seen—understood perfectly—by inferior gods, his creatures. Hercules (Khonsu) is one of the twelve gods of the second order, according to Herodotus in another passage (II. 43). He (Khonsu) asks to see Amun, who cannot grant his request absolutely, but makes use of a "contrivance;" He creates the "visible" world, chiefly the Sun, centre of it. This visible Amun begins his course every year, by the first sign of the Zodiac (Aries). It is known that the Egyptians were the first inventors of the Zodiac. Every year, therefore, when the inhabitant of Egypt sees the sun enter Aries\*—the Ram—he can look on the visible representative of the invisible God, who has thus "covered himself" with the ram's head and fleece. Can any myth be more consistent and perfect in all its parts, and express more eloquently the truth of "one invisible God, Creator of the visible Universe?" Yet the Egyptians, the priests even, had entirely lost the meaning of such a grand conception, and looked only on the contemptible fable, intended, at first, as a striking symbol to remind them of it. Thus superstition and idolatry had crept in, and the people, at first imbued with a sublime doctrine destined to last forever,

\* That the world was created at the spring equinox, when the sun enters Aries, was, we think, the belief of many ancient nations, and probably of the Egyptians.



had become adorers of rams and timid fasters from the flesh of sheep!

It is impossible to read the second book of the interesting History dedicated to the Nine Muses, without a feeling of sad pity. We find there the artless effusions of a gifted writer setting out from his native Greece, at the beginning of the most brilliant period of its existence—Greece victorious over the Persians, Greece already refined, and on the eve of reaching the exquisite culture of the era of Pericles—he reflects in himself all the intelligence, culture, refinement of his native country; he comes to visit a land celebrated for its early civilization, which Solon and Pythagoras had already admired, and which Plato, with many other men of genius, would visit later; the common report is, that it is a land not only of mystery, but of wisdom; a thoroughly religious country, where many sublime truths can be known about the “worship of the gods.” The amiable traveller is himself religiously inclined, though, too often, even in him, the future scepticism of his countrymen begins to appear. Yet he is careful not to betray the secrets of religion, since religion has secrets in Egypt. At every moment he says that “he would speak if he dared;” that “it is more becoming for him not to mention it, though he knows it;” that the obscenities which he is obliged to relate “are accounted for by a sacred story;” that “it were impious for him to divulge” the reason of the absurdities which he narrates, etc., etc. And when, finally, garrulity conquers, and he says what he “ought not to say;” when he feels that he has betrayed some secret, and he is bound to pray that “he may meet with indulgence and pardon both from gods and heroes,” the secrets which he unveils are as ridiculous as the stories themselves. The Thebans abstain from mutton because Jupiter covered himself with a ram’s skin to show himself to Hercules!

When he compares the *religion* of his country with that of

Egypt, it is nearly always to place side by side the "dresses of the gods;" the "Hercules" of one country with that of the other; the ridiculous "rites" of the Egyptians with the yet more childish "rites" of the Lybians, the Phœnicians, or of his own Greeks. Of what deserves the name of religion, not a word! And, if ancient wisdom has spoken in the land of mystery, and the word she spoke reaches the ear of the traveller, it does not bring to his mind any rational thought; but it is altogether a jumble of puerilities when it is not a disgusting spectacle of coarseness. Miss Maria Graham, in her "Journal of a Residence in India," (1812), remarks that, "The coarseness and inelegance of the Hindoo polytheism will certainly disgust many people accustomed to the graceful mythology of Europe.... For my own part," she adds, "living among the people, and daily beholding the prostrate worshipper, the temple, the altar, and the offering, I take an interest in them which makes up for their want of poetical beauty." And, again, in another place: "When processions are in honor of a god, they take place during the day; the deity is carried on a litter in triumph, with banners before and behind, and priests are seen carrying flowers, and milk and rice; while hardly any one joins the procession without an offering. All this looks very well at a distance, but when one comes near, one is shocked at the meanness and inelegance of the god, and at the filth and wretchedness of his votaries."

Miss Maria Graham would, no doubt, have been highly pleased with polytheism in the East, in her time, had it been polished and elegant, as that of Greece and Egypt was in her opinion. Yet had she witnessed the scenes described by Herodotus, as he saw them himself on the banks of the Nile, she might have not found so great a difference between the polytheism of our day and that of antiquity. Let the reader imagine an incredible procession of boats on the mighty river, conveying seven hundred thousand men and women to Bubastis;

each barge filled with men and women together, some of the women playing on castanets, keeping time for men who played on the flute, the remainder of the human cargoes clapping their hands, singing and dancing without order. Let the reader imagine, we say, what must take place, not on the voyage only, but at every town on the banks of the Nile, where the huge fleet stopped to allow the travellers the pleasure not only of bandying words with the inhabitants, but chiefly of so outraging decency, that our pen cannot reproduce the words of the Greek writer. As to the festival itself, at Bubastis, Herodotus does not attempt to describe it, but he merely says: "They offer up great sacrifices, and more wine is consumed at this feast than in all the rest of the year." But with respect to the ceremonies which accompany the yearly sacrifice of swine to Osiris, we shrink from even an allusion to the obscenities in open air which disgrace the whole proceedings.

The Egyptian rites, therefore, in the time of Herodotus, were as gross and licentious as those of the degraded Hindoos of our days. But it was not so at the beginning. Already have we been told that nothing can be found on the primitive monuments of Nubia and Ethiopia, any more than on those of ancient Egypt, that "could offend decency."

We need dilate no more on the gradual decay of true religion in ancient Egypt. The process of disintegration in every respect is visible enough. Noble religious truths spread at first over a great part of Africa, begin by admitting a mixture of error. Soon the genuine dogmas are altogether obscured, and totally forgotten, although still preserved in books which have not yet perished. The worship of elements becomes, then, universal, until the progress of art brings the worship of idols, which ends finally in rank fetichism.

All the various tribes of the third continent, which had at first a common doctrine, lose it and are reduced each to its local superstitions. Religion becomes more clannish, perhaps,

in Egypt than in any other country on earth. What we see, now, all over the interior of that vast continent is merely the result of this long process of mental, social, and religious disintegration. When the Romans took possession of the lower basin of the Nile, the whole country was a putrid moral cess-pool. Hence there was not, there could not be, the slightest resistance against the spread of their power. The Christian religion alone gave it a temporary splendor by the great men whom the Church produced in that land so long degraded; until Mohanmedanism brutally quenched this last spark of holy fire, only to be succeeded by what we now witness in that devoted country.

A few remarks, in conclusion, on the "Funereal Ritual" of the ancient Egyptians, will complete our argument in proof of the process of moral deterioration universal in ancient history, in so far as Egypt is concerned. We quote F. Lenormant :

"The Egyptians," says Horappollo in the *Hieroglyphics*, "call knowledge 'sbo,' that is, 'food and plenty.' This passage certainly contains an allusion to the religious ideas as determining the destiny of the dead.\* Knowledge and food are, in fact, identified on every page of the Ritual. The knowledge of religious truths is the mysterious nourishment the soul must carry with it to sustain it in its journeys and trials. A soul not possessing this knowledge could never reach the end of its journey, and would be rejected at the tribunal of Osiris. It was, therefore, necessary, before commencing the journey, to be furnished with a stock of this divine provision. To this end is destined the long chapter, the seventeenth, at the end of the second part of the book. It is accompanied by a large vignette, representing a series of the most sacred symbols of the Egyptian religion. The text contains a description of these symbols, with their mystical explanation. At the beginning of the chapter, the descriptions and explanations are sufficiently clear, but as it advances, we get into a higher and more ob-

scure region; at the end of the chapter we lose the clue almost entirely, and, as often happens in such cases, the explanation ends by being more obscure than the symbols and expressions explained." (Anc. Hist. of the East, Vol. 1.)

In a note on this passage reference is made to a peculiarity of the text first pointed out by Baron Bunsen, which is this: "The original text is, after every sentence, followed by a commentary, explanation, or gloss, prefaced in every case by a group of characters in red, meaning 'The explanation is this,' or 'Let him explain it.' From this it necessarily arises: first, that the text had by a certain time become so unintelligible as to require an explanation; secondly, that the explanation itself had in its turn become unintelligible; and finally, that the text and gloss, equally obscure, had been jumbled together, and written out as one continuous document." No fact could better prove that any text requires an infallible interpreter to be for ever proof against error.

Here we have a very simple, natural, and probably true description of the way "the Egyptian faith" had become a real "jumble" of unintelligible phrases; and this by the early time of the eleventh dynasty, as this seventeenth chapter of the "Funereal Ritual" was found on a papyrus of that age.

Mr. Alexis Chevalier, in the "Correspondant" of Paris, of the 10th August, 1872, writes as follows, in accordance with the opinions of such men as de Rougé, Mariette, Lenormant, etc.: "If ancient civilization, particularly that of Egypt, has shed a brilliant light, it is only because the great things accomplished by the people of those times sprung originally from the truths and virtues of the natural order, and likewise from the remains of the primitive Revelation, of which the religious and moral doctrines of the Egyptians have so clearly showed us the footmarks.

"But as soon as those traditions decline in strength, a disagreement, nay, a contradiction becomes directly more and

more sensible between the healthy moral thoughts primitively contained in the Funereal Ritual, and that monstrous religion which degraded the soul of man by the worship of animals, and let loose by its shameless mysteries all the depraved inclinations of our fallen nature . . . .

“Under the pernicious influence of this corrupt religion the moral vigor of man is weakened, social order becomes less vigorous, and the nation finds itself powerless to repel foreign invasion . . . . We all know how animal-worship had rendered the Egyptians ridiculous and contemptible in the eyes of other nations. After having obtained a complete victory before Pelusium, merely by placing a number of cats, of dogs, and other ‘sacred’ animals in the front rank of his army, Cambyses made it a point of killing with his own hand the ox Apis, to show his worshippers the powerlessness of their god . . . .

“The more we go up towards the origin of the Egyptian nation, the clearer we find, in their primitive purity, the principles of the natural law revealed to man at first by God himself: the adoration of one only God, creator of the world and of man; paternal authority and the respect due to parents by their children; the love of the neighbor; the necessity of labor; the immortality of the soul, and due rewards and punishments after this life . . . .”

“But the more we go down in time, and farther from the cradle of primitive society, the more altered we find the primordial truths and divine traditions by the invasion of polytheism, which had perverted everything on earth when the Redeemer finally appeared.

“A time shall finally come,” says Hermes Trismegistus, quoted by St. Augustine (*De Civ., Dei viii., 23, 26*), “when it will be found that in vain have the Egyptians first honored God rightfully and faithfully; their most holy worship shall have brought them no profit, and go out in smoke . . . . Then this venerable land, consecrated of old by innumerable temples

and altars, shall be henceforth full only of dead bodies and of sepulchres."

With these quotations we close our argument, in so far as Egypt is concerned, and we think our induction was equally convincing with respect to India: that nations left to themselves, retrograde invariably; at least, that they did so in the time previous to Christianity, from truth to error, from a pure morality to degradation, from a truly civilized but simple state, to an artificial and brilliant corruption, ending in moral putridity and national dishonor.

## CHAPTER V.

### RELIGION IN PELASGIC GREECE.

#### I.

THAT Europeans are not autochthones, but came from another continent—that, consequently, the most primitive inhabitants of the western part of the old world were not of native growth, but immigrants from an original foreign country—is now admitted by all. And the strange theory so prevalent a few years back, which supposed many “centres of creation,” even for man, seems now to be forgotten, until, perhaps, our grandchildren hear of it again in some other shape. A Darwinian may, possibly, conclude that we came from Asia or Africa; since, with the exception of the rock of Gibraltar, where a few monkeys amuse, by their gambols, the English garrison settled there, no individual of the *Simian* family, from which man is said to have sprung, can claim Europe for its native country. We prefer, on the score of reason alone, to conclude that the creation of the primitive man did not take place in Europe; and all are now of this opinion, some for one reason, some for another. History, geography, philology, give the various proofs leading to that conclusion, independently of revealed truth. History began evidently in Asia and Africa, and except upon the supposition of the previous population of these two continents, European history, from the start, would be a puzzle. Asia, especially, is the great and high centre, looming up in the distance of ages, from which the diverse streams of human annals took their rise and began to flow. A



few years back some ingenious writers tried to make geography the great prop of the same truth; and Mr. E. Poccocke, in his "India in Greece," produced an immense number of names of mountains, rivers, lakes, and cities indicating Asia and North Hindostan, in particular, as the primitive spot whence tribes started in search of a new home in the wilds of the West. Precisely in the same way, as some future writer will be able to show, that America and Australia were colonized by Europeans merely by the various names given to the geographical features of these two continents. But philology, especially, has of late been adduced, with great force, to prove that it is to the great plateau of Central Asia we must look for the real origin of all European nations, with the trivial exception of the Turks, the Magyars, and the Finns. Sanscrit seems to be the mother tongue, though some philologists suppose a more ancient and primitive language out of which even the Sanscrit arose. But the very interesting discoveries of Max Müller in his "Comparative Philology," establish an intimate connection between Europe and Central Asia—the precise spot to which we traced, in a previous chapter, the original seat of the Vedas and the Zends. A new name has been given to the whole, or rather a very old name has been revived, and Europe speaks again of the Aryans as of her ancestors. God be praised! The current of European opinion, this time, does not run counter to revealed truth. For the latter, together with the whole voice of antiquity, had taught us to believe that the population of Europe and of Northern Asia was Japhetic; and the word *Aryan*, after all, means only the posterity of Japhet. A Catholic, therefore, can now embrace Science as a daughter of heaven, and replace, with her help, the true foundation of the history of man. And, at the same time that the dignity of our species is asserted anew, and the belief of our first ancestors is proved to have been that of rational beings, namely, the worship of one Supreme God; the true origin of error, and the

unfortunate spread of polytheism, become finally evident, and show conclusively how the author of the Book of Wisdom knew well history as well as ethics.

But in Europe, Hellas must be the first subject of our investigations, as she is the first spot where positive history appears, and from her all Europe, except the Celtic and the northern Germanic races, received truth and error.

First, let us describe, in a few words, what the new discoveries in philology have rendered probable with respect to the migration of primitive tribes from the starting-point of the great plateau of Central Asia. It seems to us to be only a detailed commentary of what the Book of Genesis had long previously stated.

The first migration is admitted to have consisted of the ancestors of the Celts or Kelts, the posterity of Gomer (Kymris), established first on the northern shore of the Black Sea. Later, the Teutonic people, perhaps Magog, a general term for tribes north-west of Caucasus, rather than Tartars, together with the Greeks and Italians (Javan). All these, it is now said, would seem to have made their way to their new settlements, through Persia and Asia Minor, crossing to Europe by the Hellespont, some, perhaps, through the passes of the Caucasus. The Slavonic nations are thought to have afterwards taken their route by the north of the Caspian. They may be indicated by the Teras of Genesis, the river Tiras, or the Dniester. Finally, the Medes, Persians, and North Hindoos are supposed to have been the last emigrants from Central Asia, through the passes of the Himalaya and Hindu Kush. We do not see precisely why this should have been the *last* emigration. Genesis places the one of the Madai directly after that of Magog. In our opinion, the direction southward must have been one of the first taken by the migrating patriarchal peoples. Yet it is certainly remarkable that modern investigators, in working away at their speculations derived only from the comparative

study of Sanscrit and European languages, without having, for a moment, in their minds, we are sure, the thought either of Genesis or of Japhet, should happen to give us a new interpretation of a few verses of the first book of Moses. So it is, however. Only, there is no question any more of the Tower of Babel, which was generally, until lately, considered as the starting-point of those primitive migrations. Central Asia now replaces it. But it is to be remarked that the history of Babel's edifice is given in Chap. xi. of Genesis, and the list of nations, which subsequently separated from each other, in Chap. x. The writer, therefore, did not intend to establish a connection between the various settlements of the nations alluded to and the confusion of tongues; and thus there is not the least discrepancy between our sacred text and the modern discoveries; and this is a very favorable circumstance for the "discoveries," as the "sacred text," in our opinion, never had anything to fear from modern investigators.

We are, therefore, brought back by the labors of recent ethnologists and linguists to the time-honored book and terminology, dear to Christians; and we may now, again, speak of the Japhetic race without fear of being "unscientific." We come, therefore, to consider the Javan (Ionian) family in that great race. The questions we propose to ourselves are: What is its origin? What was its primitive religion? How did it degenerate into the polytheist anthropomorphism of which our classical studies have so well informed us?

## II.

The various branches of the Japhetic or Aryan family which remained in Asia continued for many ages civilized, polished, monotheists; or, only if not pure monotheists, at least men whose religion was just on the borders of that broad and grand

pantheism to which we have had occasion to allude so often. Probably the Vedas and the Zends, containing at first the main doctrines of the primitive revelation, were written for them after their less fortunate brethren had left for the North-west. These, therefore, could take with them no copy of those great works. Had they at the time an alphabet? It is probable; since they knew so well the Sanscrit. Had they in their possession a written literature of any kind? The probability is, that they had not; since they made such indifferent custodians of the language they possessed on parting, and made subsequently such a poor use of it in the various settlements they occupied.

The language, at least, which they brought with them could not be but strangely modified by the various dialects of the nations through whose territory they had to pass. A great number of tribes had migrated before them, going in the same direction; and Mr. Max Müller has shown, in his "Languages of the Seat of War," that, from that early period to this, the Western part of Asia and the South-east of Europe have been inhabited by nations speaking an incredible number of tongues. "The Caucasus itself," he says, "is called by the Persians the mountain of languages; and the diversity of dialects spoken there in every valley has been the chief obstacle to a united resistance on the part of the Caucasian tribes against Russia. The South-east of Europe has indeed long been notorious as a Babel of tongues. Herodotus (iv., 24) tells us that caravans of Greek merchants, following the course of the Volga upwards to the Ural mountains, were accompanied by seven interpreters, speaking seven different languages. These must have comprised Slavonic, Tartaric, and Finnic dialects, spoken in those countries in the time of Herodotus as well as at the present day. In yet earlier times the South-east of Europe was the resting-place for the nations who transplanted the seed of Asia to European soil. Three roads were open to their North-

westward migrations. One east of the Caspian Sea, and west of the mountains, leading to the North of Asia and Europe. Another on the Caucasian Isthmus, when they would advance along the northern coast of the Black Sea, and following the course of the Dnieper, Dniester, or Danube, be led into Russia or Germany.

“A third road was defined by the Taurus through Asia Minor, to the point where the Hellespont marks the ‘path of the Hellenes’ into Greece and Italy. While the main stream of the Aryan nations passed on, carrying its waves to the northern and western shores of Europe, it formed a kind of eddy in the Carpathian peninsula, and we may still discover in the stagnant dialects, north and south of the Danube, the traces of the flux and reflux of those tribes who have since become the ruling nations of Europe. The barbarian inroads, which, from the seventh century after Christ, infested the regions of civilization, and led to the destruction of the Greek and Roman Empires, followed all the same direction. The country near the Danube and the Black Sea has been for ages the battle-field of Asia and Europe. Each language settled there on the confines of civilization and barbarism recalls a chapter of history.”

We can understand how many obstacles were thus placed in the path of the future Hellenes and Italians. But the worst, for them, was the aspect of the unpromising countries which they were going to turn into a paradise. We talk of our Western American colonists being hardy pioneers, and carrying civilization into the wilds of the far-west! We think it quite natural that these restless roamers over our immense prairies, should become half barbarians and savages on the borders of civilization! How different is their position in these recent days! Were our emigrants to the West to profit by all the advantages they enjoy, there would be no necessity whatever for them to fall into barbarism and uncouth savagery. But could the wretched children of the third son of Noah avoid

the terrible fate of lapsing into barbarous manners, and of falling into the most brutal ignorance and superstition? The more that they were destined to have no more any intercourse whatever with their original country, and to forget it so entirely, that it would take very nearly four thousand years to recover their claim of lineage with their real ancestors.

Picture we, then, these migrating tribes, as they wandered away from their early civilization, making a path for themselves through the tangled and interminable forests, stretching north and west as far as the ocean, and obliged to cross the redoubtable mountains of Northern Persia, of Armenia, of the Caucasus; where first one of them, Prometheus, a representative man, was to be bound and nailed to a rock, and exposed to the cruel talons of the vulture.

In how many places did they not stop and attempt a settlement? How often, after immense labors, were they not obliged to give up the hope of finding a new country in a place which at first appeared desirable? But the forests, the interminable forests were everywhere in their way. Then, perhaps, they would move on, in the hope of lighting on some more promising spot for a settlement, only to find the same difficulties renewed.

Mr. E. Pococke, in "India in Greece," represents the movements of those immense armies of emigrants under a very different aspect. If we are to believe him, they went on in an uninterrupted stream from their starting-point to their ultimate destination, without difficulty, without a moment of hesitation, without a shadow of obstacle. They appear to have been directed, as the Ethiopians were, according to Herodotus, by "the voice of the oracle;" and they stopped only when they reached the spot indicated by the "divine commandment." No sooner arrived, than they began by mapping out their new country exactly on the pattern of their old one; and they gave to rivers, mountains, lakes, etc., the names of similar geographical fea-

tures in their former dwelling-place. Thus it happens that Mr. Pococke could write "India in Greece," with two maps; one of the north of Hindostan, the other of Hellas itself, with corresponding names and indications, making the nomenclature of the two territories almost exactly alike.

But evidently he had not been one of the primitive travellers; he had not even come to North America to see how these things are generally done; but he quite forgot to picture to himself the world as it must have been at the time of the old migration of the sons of Japhet, or, if you choose, of the "Aryan tribes;" and has, consequently, produced a work, which, however full of curious erudition, is fantastic and visionary in the highest degree. He maintains, for example, that those "Aryan tribes" were at the same time "Buddhist;" and has been compelled to make the brilliant Athenians, the descendants of the "Attock," a gloomy *Buddhist* community of the Punjab!! although Buddhism originated more than a thousand years later. Yet with all the strangeness and incongruities of the book, with its false conclusions and absurd theories, it shows conclusively that the "Hellenes" must have been formerly deeply connected with the Hindoos; and no man of any understanding and knowledge would at this time contradict this position.

The circumstance mentioned above, however, namely, the incredible hardships sustained by the emigrants from Northern Hindostan to the West, must be insisted upon, as it gives so evident and satisfactory a reason of the state of barbarism in which, according to all ancient authors, the first inhabitants of Greece were plunged. Had not Prometheus, according to Æschylus, speaking the language of universal tradition (Prometh. vincetus), "to *invent* for them the senses of sight and of hearing? To bring them out of their caves and teach them how to build wooden houses? To make them first observe the difference of seasons, of hard winter, and flowery spring, and fruitful

summer? To discover for them numbers, and the combinations of letters, and even memory, the effective mother-nurse of all arts?"

From the traditions of Greece, this narrative of the primitive state of man was handed down as the first page of the annals of all Europeans. In their long ramblings through the wilds of the western continent the wretched emigrants from Asia had well-nigh forgotten the comparatively brilliant state enjoyed by all in their former country. And can we wonder that religious doctrines had been in the main forgotten like all things else conducive to their comfort and civilization?

But here the inquiry naturally presents itself, Were the first settlers in the country we now call Greece, Hellenes? Were they not rather PELASGIANS? What of them?

### III.

Certainly Pelasgic tribes—thus were they called—dwelt in very early times all over Greece, chiefly in Thrace at the north of it, and in many districts of Western Asia, and of Southern Italy, and in the islands of the Mediterranean Sea; in fact, wherever the Greek tribes latterly spread themselves and their language ultimately prevailed. In spite of profound researches in all the annals of antiquity which yet remain in our hands, in spite of the ingenuity of modern critics, and of the light thrown recently over many particularities of the life of nations until this time unknown, no satisfactory solution has yet appeared of this question, Who were the Pelasgians? We will not attempt to discuss it, as it does not lie directly in our way. It is generally believed that the extraordinary ancient buildings, known as Cyclopean, whose ruins are yet found all over the above-mentioned countries, were their work. They were at the same time an agricultural and warlike people, but more the



former than the latter. They were constantly moving, often crossing the sea, yet not given over to trade, like the Phœnicians, who came after them. These characteristics seem pretty well ascertained, and are generally admitted by all writers. But what relations had they to the Hellenes? For a long time the two races were contemporaneous. Herodotus says that their language was "barbarous,"—that is to say, "foreign" to the Greeks; but this does not suppose a totally different tongue. A dialect not easily understood at first would suffice for the epithet. Homer sometimes speaks of both nations as belonging to the same race. At other times he distinguishes them and seems not to agree with himself. But, without quoting ancient authorities, which have been sufficiently examined by modern investigators, the opinion of those who, in our days, think that the Pelasgians gradually passed into the Hellenes, and these last insensibly came from the first, is respectable and seems to us the most probable, precisely from the indistinctness of the difference, even in the eyes of those who admit a difference. Both, moreover, can be reconciled, by admitting that the "Javans"—Javanas in Sanscrit—did not migrate all at once from Central Asia, but that the first migratory band took the name of Pelasgians, and the second one that of Hellenes. For certainly all must admit now, after the labors of Müller and others, that both came from the same original centre.

It is the religion of those migrating tribes, however, which chiefly concerns our investigations. And here a great uncertainty prevails, as in the case of Egypt, chiefly on account of the want of documents, arising from the uncivilized state to which they were necessarily reduced by all the circumstances of their migration.

We learn from Herodotus (Euterpe, 52), that "Formerly the Pelasgians sacrificed all sorts of victims to the gods with prayers, as I was informed at Dodona; but they gave no surname or name to any of them, for they had not yet heard of them; but

they called them gods—Theoi, because they had set in order and ruled over all things. In course of time, they heard the names of the other gods that were brought from Egypt, and after some time that of Dionysus. On this question they consulted the oracle of Dodona, for this oracle is accounted the most ancient of those that are in Greece, and was then the only one. When, therefore, the Pelasgians inquired at Dodona whether they should receive the names that came from the barbarians, the oracle answered, that they should. From that time, therefore, they gave names to the gods in their sacrifices, and the Grecians afterwards received them from the Pelasgians."

This is a most important passage, as it explains very naturally the origin of idolatry in Greece. The Pelasgians had left Central Asia before the worship of elements had introduced polytheism. Indra, Agni, Cuhu, etc., were not yet individualized. They were merely aspects of nature calling back the mind to God; and were known, probably, under the general name of "devatâs." The Pelasgians, in their new country, called them "Theoi," in general. When they heard of the individual names given by the Egyptians to their gods, they inquired of the oracle at Dodona, which their growing superstition had already established, and the "lying oracle" deceived them. Hence their acceptance of individual names for their gods; that is to say, of idolatry, which they passed over to the Hellenes.

A discovery made by modern collectors of Pelasgic antiquities, not long since, still further illustrates this part of our subject. A curious piece of sculpture, of undoubted Pelasgic origin, was ascertained to be a *Ξόανον*, or Divine Image of Orpheus; showing that this more than half-mythic personage was truly Pelasgic, and must be referred to the Ante-Hellenic period.

A reflection of Heeren will help us to the conclusion we would draw from these two facts. It is taken from his

“Ancient Greece,” Chap. iii. : “The feelings of religion can be unfolded, and thus the character of our existence ennobled, even before a high degree of knowledge has been attained. It would be difficult, and, perhaps, impossible, to find a nation which can show no vestiges of religion ; and there never yet has been, nor can there be, a people for whom the reverence paid to a superior being was but the fruit of refined philosophy.”

There can, certainly, be no doubt that God spoke to the patriarchs before philosophy systematized human knowledge. The language of divine revelation cannot contradict that of reason, yet is superior to it ; first, because it unfolds truths which reason could not attain ; and, secondly, because the truths demonstrable by human reason, as the existence of God, His unity, etc., are much more safely guarded and secured to mankind when they form a part of a religion coming from heaven. On this account God, full of love for man, and always doing for him more than is strictly necessary, gave him from the beginning a deposit of religious truths, which can be said to be anterior to reflection, in the sense that man had not yet used his reason to reflect on them ; and thus the words of the Göttingen Professor expresses a fact, extremely important for us, since they give to divine revelation a place assigned to it, we may say, historically. It is not named, it is true, but it is evidently supposed in the words above quoted.

As Greece is undoubtedly the country where philosophical systems have most flourished, as subtlety of reasoning was there the peculiar character of the people—as no metaphysical subject, indeed, can be adequately investigated without a thorough acquaintance with what the Greeks have said on the matter—it becomes of extreme importance to examine if the monotheism taught by Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, and so many others, was merely a philosophical conclusion, or if it was not the handing down of primitive doctrines left to the race by

mystagogues, as they were called, who were merely the channel of a belief revealed to the first men by the God "who spoke to the fathers." And this question is more important in the case of the Hellenes than in that of any other nation of antiquity, for the following reasons :

If there is one country where the doctrine of progress appears to be proved by actual facts, it is certainly Greece. We have heard Æschylus describing the state of its primitive inhabitants as that of savages living in caves, without the senses of sight and hearing, unable to discern the difference of seasons, etc.; and we see them, in the course of centuries, reaching the highest civilization and culture, and proving, rationally and metaphysically, the existence of a Supreme God and the immortality of the human soul. We must endeavor to show that this "progress" was not really of the character indicated; that, at the beginning of the series, humanity possessed, in fact, all the truths which long afterwards appeared to have been discovered; and that, in the words of the Professor of Gottingen, speaking of Greece, "There never yet has been, nor can there be, a people for whom the reverence paid to a superior being was but the fruit of refined philosophy."

Did the Pelasgians, and after them the Hellenes, bring nothing from Central Asia where they had left such heaven-taught ancestors? or did these two migrating armies lose entirely, in the hardships of the way, the traditions and belief handed down to them?

Cadmus, it is said, brought the first alphabet to Greece, and he was a Phœnician, and established himself in Bœotia. The Pelasgians dwelt chiefly in Thrace and Thessaly, far from the land adopted by Cadmus, and do not appear to have profited by the boon which he brought to Greece. They may, however, have had an alphabet of their own, and, if so, probably they had brought it from Asia. Yet no Pelasgian inscription, that we know of, has been discovered. How can we know

what were their religious ideas? Herodotus, who had heard it from the priests of Dodona in Thessaly, affirms that they did not worship at first individual gods, but merely superior beings, without names, whom they called "Theoi;" and Thrace and Thessaly was precisely the country where Orpheus flourished. He must have been one of them. We are confirmed in that supposition by the *Ξόανον*, or Divine Image preserved to this day, and sculptured by Pelasgic hands thousands of years ago. The great question, for us, therefore, is merely, Who was Orpheus? and did Pythagoras, and Plato, and other philosophers of the same school receive anything from him? and had the doctrine of Orpheus any analogy with that of Central Asia?

## IV.

We have all heard what the fable relates of Orpheus, the son of Apollo and Calliope, the great inventor of harmony, on whom Apollo, his father, bestowed the gift of the lyre; to whose songs men and beasts, the birds of the air and the fishes of the sea, nay, the trees and the rocks, were not insensible; who accompanied the Argonauts in their expeditions, and secured their success by lulling monsters to sleep, and checking overhanging rocks in their impetuous fall; who finally brought back Euridice from the lower regions, and, at last, perished, miserably torn to pieces by the Menades.

But here, as usual, Hellenic imagination has buried the primitive myth under such richness of exaggerated details, that it is impossible to separate the wheat from the chaff, and the whole of it deserves to be rejected. It is worthy of note, however, that Suidas pretends that Orpheus was not a single individual, but that the deeds of several heroes were attributed to one, as was frequently the case among the ancients. And it is probable, in our opinion, that they were all of them Pelasgians,

that is to say, belonged to the first emigration of Javans from Central Asia. One only of them, it is true, seems to have had the name of Orpheus whilst living; for modern Sanscrit scholars think they find him mentioned in the Vedas under the name of *Arbhu*, whose pronunciation comes very near to that of *Orpheu*; other orientalists had, long ago, pointed out that *Arif*, in Arabic, means a learned man, a *savant* (Hoffmann, Lex. Univ). The coincidence is remarkable, although the Arabic, a Semitic tongue, seems to have few common features with the Sanscrit. All this, nevertheless, points out to the East as the primitive country of the initiator of the Greeks in religious doctrines and mysteries, for such was always Orpheus thought to be.

It is true, the opinion of Aristotle that Orpheus never existed, and that the doctrines attributed to him were not so ancient as was pretended, has been admitted by modern writers of note. Yet it must be said that Aristotle was the only one of the ancients who thought so. All the others, without exception, believed in the existence of the celebrated Thracian mystagogue, and thought him as great in religious inspiration, as mythology made him in strange adventures and artistic gifts. And this opinion of the ancients was shared by the Fathers of the Church of the first centuries. So that around the name of Orpheus we see the same ideas gather in Greece, which we have already remarked to have gathered in Egypt around that of Hermes. He was said to be a divine bard in the service of Zagreus, the horned child of Zeus and Persephone—a kind of mystic Dionysus half buried in obscurity. He was not only the first to use the lyre, but he had initiated the men of his time and country into the rites of expiation, teaching them how to appease the wrath of the gods; and he had explained to them the art of divination, as well as the art of letters and of poetry. According to Pausanias (in Bœot.), he was the first to teach a whole system of universal theology; he

had written on the reciprocal action of the elements, on the force of love (or of attraction) in natural things, on the observation of auguries, on the interpretation of dreams, on signs and wonders, how to conjure their fatal prognostications.

Lactantius (*Divine Institutes*) called him "the most ancient of the poets," and thought that "he spoke of the true and great God as the first born (*πρωτόγονον*). He also said that Orpheus "called God Thanos (*φάνητα*)."—*the appearer*—because when as yet there was nothing, He first appeared and came forth from the infinite." A doctrine evidently Vedic as well as Egyptian.

When we stated that Orpheus was, like Hercules, a type to which many events of particular lives were referred, we could not corroborate our assertion by any facts, as things and men are necessarily confused and mixed together in so high an antiquity. Yet a coincidence, remarkable certainly in many points of view, comes here to our rescue, and deserves to be noted. The name of Orpheus, in ancient writers, is nearly always accompanied with two other names more obscure yet than his own: those of Musæus and Linus. Who were these? They must have belonged to the same age, although some critics doubt if they were not posterior to Homer. The mass of evidence, however, is against this last opinion. Musæus is said to have been an Athenian, Linus a Theban. They were not certainly from Thrace, like Orpheus; but at the time, all Greece, as well as the circumjacent countries, was Pelasgic. We know very little of Musæus, and less yet of Linus. Diogenes Laertius, however, has preserved of both a short fragment of some importance. He asserts that Musæus had said: "ἐξ ἑνὸς τὰ πάντα γενέσθαι, καὶ εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν ἀναλύεσθαι," namely: "that from One all things had proceeded; and into the same One all should be resolved or return." Sir William Jones would call this the substance of the Hindoo gayatri. As to Linus, Laertius says that, having written a book on the generation of animals

and plants, he placed at the head of it the following line : *Ἦν ποτέ τοι χρόνος οὗτος ἐν ᾧ ἅμα πάντ' ἐπεφύκει.* "There was a time when at once all things were created." This refers evidently to the "sleep and dream of Brahma" when all creation suddenly appeared.

To come back to Orpheus himself, we have no doubt that it would make a good size volume, if all the fragments attributed to him by the Fathers of the three or four first centuries were collected together and printed with a few pages of comment. But it is objected that the "enormous Orphic literature," which retained its ancient authority as far down as the last generation, that is to say, thirty years ago, has been "irrefutably proved to be, in its main bulk, as far as it has survived the production of those very third and fourth centuries, raised upon a few scanty, primitive snatches." We must, at the very beginning of the discussion, make some remarks on this assertion, and show that it is of a far too sweeping character, and that it leads to an altogether false conclusion.

Our readers will remember that the very same objection was raised against the Hermetic books, and that long ago the right answer to it has been given, namely : if the books published under the name of Hermes by Neoplatonic, and Christian authors, were not really the production of Thoth, yet they contained really his ideas—*δόξας*. The same answer precisely can be given here. But how do we know that they were, in the present case, the ideas of Orpheus? By a very simple process. Those who published that "enormous Orphic literature" in the third and fourth centuries, knew, certainly, absolutely nothing of Hindoo lore and Vedic philosophy and religion; and if they had some idea of Egyptian cosmogony, they did not perceive its connection with the Orphic literature which they published. Yet what was then written under the name of Orpheus is full of both Indian and Egyptian ideas, showing the almost complete identity of both. It must, therefore, have been origin-



ally derived from a source connected with Asia or Africa, as Orpheus—or, if our readers prefer—as Pelasgic writers—must certainly have been, if the labors of modern Sanscrit scholars, particularly Max Müller, have not been in vain. And it is to be remarked that the authors of the “imposture” under discussion, if it deserves so harsh a name, were precisely the same who had also circulated with such a success an “enormous Hermetic literature” in the same countries, namely: both Neoplatonic philosophers and Christian apologists.

To prove our assertion, our readers need not be afraid that we shall launch into a sea of erudition, and quote a long, dry series of passages from Greek and Latin authors. We may be satisfied with two of them, which, however, may be regarded as an epitome of all. Our authorities shall be St. Clement of Alexandria for the Greeks, and Lactantius for the Latins, both unexceptionable in their way. The first is undoubtedly with Origen, the most erudite Greek Father of the Church in the third century. The same may be said of Lactantius on the Latin side.

The former in his *Stromata*, Book v., after having quoted the following passage of one of the tragedies of Sophocles, which we have lost, thus:

“When the whole world fades,  
And vanished all the abyss of ocean’s waves,  
And earth of trees is bare; and wrapt in flames,  
The air no more begets the winged tribes;  
Then He, who all destroyed, shall all restore.”

—This is certainly Vedic—he adds: “We shall find expressions similar to these also in the Orphic hymns, written as follows:

“For having *hidden* all, (He) *brought them again*  
*To gladsome light, forth from His sacred heart,*  
*Solicitous.*”

And a little farther, he himself proceeds: "That respecting God, Orpheus had said that He was *invisible*, and that He was known to but one, a Chaldean by race."

"But in great heaven, He is seated firm  
 Upon a throne of gold, and 'neath His feet  
 The earth. His right hand round the ocean's bound  
 He stretches; and the hills' foundations shake  
 To the centre by His wrath . . . . .  
 . . . . . He all celestial is,  
 And all things finishes upon the earth.  
*He, the Beginning, Middle is, and End.*  
 But Thee I dare not speak. In limbs  
 And mind I tremble. He rules from on high."

And again:

"Ruler of Ether, Hades, Sea and Land,  
 Who with thy bolts Olympus' strong built home  
 Dost shake. Whom demons dread, and whom the throng  
 Of gods do fear . . . . .  
 . . . . . O deathless one  
*Our mother's sire!* whose wrath makes all things reel.  
 . . . . Deathless Immortal, capable of being  
 To the immortals only uttered! Come,  
*Greatest of gods, with Strong Necessity.*  
 Dread, invincible, great, deathless one,  
*Whom Ether crowns."*

And, again, with more appropriateness:

"*One Might, the great, the flaming heavens, was  
 One Deity. All things one Being were, in whom  
 All these revolve, fire, water, and the earth."*

Finally, after having quoted a passage wherein he speaks of one God in the finest style of the upanishads of the Vedas, and passed gradually to another, wherein there is an evident transition to pantheism, St. Clement gives one line more, which cannot be surpassed by the harshest doctrine of the puranas: "Nor is there any other (thing) except the Great King."

We have underlined several passages which certainly recall as many Hindoo doctrines. If, in the above quotations, God is called "the deathless One, our mother's Sire," the expression is certainly equivalent to the Ermaic doctrine of the "World being the Son of God, and the Second God," and to the Vedic teaching of "creation emanating from the sleeping Brahma."

Many more passages of the same kind could be adduced, collected by Cudworth in his "Systema Intellectuale;" but we have promised to confine ourselves to quotations of St. Clement of Alexandria among the Greek Fathers. A few passages of Lactantius will stand for the opinion of the Latin Doctors. Cudworth did not see their Indian and Egyptian analogies.

In the first book of the "Divine Institutes," Chap. v., we find a passage attributed to Orpheus, which seems an exact reproduction of many texts out of the dialogue "Asclepius," among the writings of Hermes: "Orpheus . . . speaks of the true and great God as the first-born (*πρωτόγονον*), because nothing was ever produced before Him, but all things sprung from Him. He also calls him Phanes, the appearer, because when, as yet, there was nothing, He first appeared and came forth from the infinite. And since he (Orpheus) was unable to conceive in his mind the origin and nature of this Being, he said that He was born from the boundless air: 'The first-born Phaeton, son of the extended air.' He affirms that this Being is the parent of all the gods, on whose account He framed the heavens, and provided for his children, that they might have a habitation and place of abode in common; 'He built for immortals an imperishable home.'"

No one will, we hope, deny that this theology, which is, of course, erroneous, is yet very superior to the celebrated mythology which prevailed during the "enlightened" period of Greece, and that, consequently, the "progress" in that "progressive" land was far from an improvement, and may be

said to have there also, on the whole, "progressed" backwards.

But, unnecessary as we think it to quote more at length what the Neoplatonists and the Christian writers of the third and fourth centuries have said and believed of the writings of Orpheus, we must answer the objection alluded to above, namely, that nothing certain can be said about it, and that no sound criticism is able to make any use of this "enormous Orphic literature."

In the time of Pythagoras, if not even before, the same importance was ascribed to a certain body of Orphic doctrines, as in the third and fourth centuries after Christ, although the nature of the doctrines is now unknown. But they could not have been the "enormous Orphic literature, which has been ascertained to have been the production of these very third and fourth centuries of our era," and which, consequently, could not have existed at the time of Pythagoras. To Karl Otfried Müller we owe the certain knowledge of several facts on the subject, which give a great probability to our own theory. This eminent Hellenist scholar thought, it is true, that the old Orphic literature was, "like Orpheus' own biography, the darkest point in the entire history of early Greek poetry;" yet he established clearly the fact of a very "early literature of that kind." He showed conclusively that a universal tradition in Greece pointed to it. Orpheus formed the brightest link of a whole chain of poets earlier than Hesiod and Homer: Olen, Linus, Philammon, Eumolpus, Musæus, and other legendary singers of prehistoric Greece. Fragments of Orpheus' writings were current in old Hellas; and if the thought of collecting and publishing them arose only in the age of the Peisistratidæ, the same is true, likewise, of the Homeric poems. Onomacritus undertook the task; and a remarkable passage of Herodotus shows that "prophecies" formed, at least, a part of the Orphic legends. We quote from ("Polymnia," vi.): "Ono-

macritus was an Athenian, a soothsayer, and dispenser of the oracles of Musæus—a branch of Orphic lore. The Peisistratidæ went up to Susa (with him), having first reconciled their former enmity. For Onomacritus had been banished from Athens by Hipparchus, son of Peisistratus, having been detected by Lasus the Hermionian in the very act of interpolating among the oracles of Musæus, one importing that the islands lying off Lemnos would disappear beneath the sea; wherefore Hipparchus banished him, although he had before been very familiar with him. But at that time, having gone up (to Susa) with them, being reconciled, whenever he came into the presence of the King (Xerxes), as the Peisistratidæ spoke of him in very high terms, he recited some of the oracles. If, however, there were among these oracles, any that portended misfortunes to the barbarians, of these he made no mention; but selecting such as were most favorable, he said it was fated that the Hellespont should be bridged over by a Persian, describing the march. Thus he continually excited the king, rehearsing oracles, as did the Peisistratidæ and Aleuadæ, in support of their opinions.”

This passage alone would suffice to prove that, long before Herodotus, there were poems, hymns, oracles, attributed to Musæus. It is certain now that Orpheus' poems formed the best part of the collection. If Onomacritus, the editor, could be guilty of interpolating those ancient writings, there were, at the time, critics who could find out the literary forgery; and the forgery itself shows the real existence of earlier writings, the actual subject of interpolation.

The nature of these poems is, moreover, revealed yet further by the well-established relation of Orphic and Pythagorean doctrines and associations. Both brotherhoods of Orpheus and Pythagoras continued to flourish down to a comparative late age. The fragments collected by Onomacritus were used in the reunions and festivities of both. The doctrine of metem-

psychosis was admitted fully in both. And as the Pythagoreans are known to have professed opinions on the subject of the Godhead far in advance of their polytheistic age, we do not see how the same could be denied of Orphic doctrine. It is true that the Thracian bard is strongly suspected of having given rise to the subsequent mythology of the Greeks; so that, should these suspicions be founded, Homer and Hesiod would not have been the first poets "to give names to the gods," as Herodotus thought. But it is known that the profession of belief in one Supreme God could be allied in those early times with a superstitious leaning towards inferior deities. The Vedas themselves became impregnated with monstrous errors, which gave rise to the degrading polytheism of the actual Hindoos. Hence originated, as we have before stated, the reform originated by Zoroaster in Bactriana.

The most remarkable analogy between Orpheus and Pythagoras is the institution of *mysteries* in the associations they founded. Orpheus, whom Pythagoras merely followed, was, in fact, chiefly a mystagogue. He taught men to believe that expiation was required by sinful human nature, and initiation into his secret rites was the proper means of expiation. These rites he was said to have brought from abroad, probably from Egypt; and he was thus considered by many as the real founder in Greece of the Eleusinian mysteries. Much uncertainty prevails, however, on this subject, in spite of the many researches which have been pursued in this century and the last. Nevertheless it seems to be certain that the Egyptian and Greek *orgies* exerted, at first, a salutary influence on morality, by giving more distinctness to the dogma of the soul's immortality; and, for many ages, men imagined they could not "secure their salvation," as we should say, and acquire a safe and easy conscience, without undergoing the process of initiation. We know, it is true, that the whole of these mysterious ceremonials degenerated into a mass of corruption; and the

Fathers of the first three centuries, St. Clement of Alexandria chiefly, spoke with due emphasis on the subject. This was not, however, the case for a long time, and the only objection Cicero could make in his age against the Elusinian mysteries, which he highly praised, was their celebration *at night*, on account of the moral danger incurred by women and young girls in the promiscuous crowd of people admitted to witness the exoteric ceremonies. But it is clear how Orpheus contributed powerfully to form the primitive religion of Greece; and how, at first, that religion partook of a character akin to that of eastern and southern countries.

Of his travelling into Egypt, Diodorus Siculus speaks positively (Book iv., Chap. 25); and the passage has so instructive a bearing on our present argument, that we think we cannot do better than quote it:

“Orpheus, already an adept in science, and instructed chiefly in theological lore, went into Egypt, where he increased his stock of knowledge, so that he became the first among Grecians, in point of ability, in expiatory rites and theological science, as he was already the most expert in poetry and music.”

And in Book i., Chap. 23, the same author gives some more details on the subject, not unimportant to the subject we have in hand:

“Those who pretend that the god Osiris—the Greek Dionysus—was born at Thebes in Bœotia from Jove and Semele, are mistaken; for it is in Egypt that Orpheus received himself the rites of initiation, and participated in the mysteries of Dionysus—Osiris; and being friendly to the race of Cadmus (settled in Bœotia), he transferred there the history of this god, and the rites of expiation connected with his mysteries, in order to please them. And the vulgar, ignorant of these facts, wished merely to make the god one of their own race, and thus rushed to be initiated in ceremonies which they thought were native to their country.”

Of the prophetic and mantic art attributed to the Thracian bard, we have already spoken; and we narrated how Onomacritus subsequently tried to interpolate the Orphic prophecies and was punished for it. This establishes a new analogy between Orpheus and the Egyptian Hermes, whose books contained likewise predictions, one of which announcing that, "at some future day, the bones of martyrs would take possession of the empty temples consecrated at first to the Egyptian gods," was believed by St. Augustine to have been a true prophecy, uttered by the genius of evil against its own inclination.

The conclusion, at all events, to be drawn from the facts thus ascertained by Karl Ottfried Müller is, that the Orphic books are far earlier than the third and fourth centuries of our era; and that, long previous to the absurd mythology of the bright period of Greece, a religious system existed in the country which the noble minds of Pythagoras and his associated brethren made the groundwork of their own worship and philosophy. Unfortunately, that system merged very early in pantheism, and tainted the highest conceptions of the oldest sages with the all-absorbing errors of the "Great Pan"—the Great-All. But this is another resemblance with both Hindostan and Egypt, and a new proof of an ancient connection between the three countries. And it supplies another confirmatory testimony of the statement of the Book of Wisdom so often alluded to.

In the time of Plato anthropomorphist mythology was so prevalent, that even this great man could scarcely understand the archaic language of Orpheus, of whom he speaks frequently. He quotes him in the "Cratylus" as one of the first inventors of the "generation of the gods" out of the Ocean. In "Ion" he treats chiefly of his talent as a musician and a rhapsodist. In "The Laws" (Book viii., Chap. 1), when it is question of the education of youth, he deprecates the custom of having the



works of all sorts of poets placed in their hands, to be learned by heart and sung. He requires a strict choice to be made of such poetic compositions; and he would like that only sacred poems, dedicated to the gods, scattering justly blame and praise, with moderation, on the actions of men—such as those of Thamyris and Orpheus—should be used for such a holy purpose as educating the young. Every one knows how, in “The Republic” (Book iii., Chap. 9), he refuses to admit those authors who excite the interest of readers for what is evil as well as for what is good. “The author,” he says, “who is able by his talent to become everything and picture everything, if he was to come to our State, and wish to circulate among us his poems, we should respect him as a wonderful and pleasant person, but should refuse to allow him to stay with us; and, taking him by the hand, we should lead him on his way to some other city, after having poured scented oil on his head, and crowned him with a chaplet of flowers.”

Commentators have agreed in considering Homer himself to have been the poet alluded to. But about Orpheus, Plato, as we saw, entertained very different sentiments. We do not know if it was from the Orphic books, or from the conversations he certainly had with Egyptian priests, that the friend of Socrates received several points of doctrine contained in his celebrated “Timæus;” one in particular, adverted to in several passages of the dialogue, but expressed with emphasis at its close: “Our discourse about the Universe has reached its conclusion. We have seen it not only containing, and full of, mortal and immortal animals, but itself forming a visible animal, embracing things perceived by our sight, a sensible god, image of the intelligible, the greatest, best, and most perfect—this one only-begotten Cosmos.” This, our readers know, is purely Egyptian, and a somewhat crude repetition of a much more poetical idea of the Vedas. Did it come, we repeat again, from Orpheus? Plato has not positively said where he bor-

rowed the idea, which certainly contains nothing purely Hellenic.

## V.

The reader will not fail to have observed the difficulties which surround the question under consideration. The links which connect Greece with the East appear so often entangled, confused, and even broken, that the elucidation of the primitive religion of the Greeks seems often a hopeless task; and we ought not to think it strange, since the Hellenes themselves perceived it, felt it, and were unable to account for it. There is, on this subject, a well-known passage in the "Timæus," often quoted in part by modern writers, although its full significance cannot be gathered except from the entire passage. It is as follows. We give the far too literal translation of Henry Davis, in Bohn's edition :

"In Egypt, in the Delta, at the summit of it, is the Saitic nome whose chief city is Sais . . . . It has a presiding divinity, whose name in Egyptian is Neith, which, they say, corresponds with the Greek *Athenē*; and the people profess to be great friends of the Athenians . . . . Solon said, that, on his arrival thither, he was honorably received; and especially on his inquiring about old times of those priests who possessed superior knowledge in such matters, he perceived that neither himself nor any of the Greeks (so to speak), had any antiquarian knowledge at all. And once desirous of inducing the priests to narrate their ancient stories, he undertook to describe those events which had formerly happened among us in days of yore—those about the first Phoroneus and Niobe, and again after the deluge of Deucalion and Pyrrha (as described by the mythologists) . . . . paying due attention to the different ages in which these events are said to have occurred — on which one of the oldest priests exclaimed, "Solon, Solon, you Greeks are always children, and

aged Greeks there are none." Solon, on hearing this, replied, "How can you say this?" To whom the priest, "You are youths in intelligence; for you hold no ancient opinions derived from remote tradition, nor any system of discipline that can boast of a hoary old age: and the cause of this is the multitude and variety of destructions that have been, and will be, undergone by the human race; the greater indeed arising from fire and water, others of less importance from ten thousand other contingencies. The story, for instance, that is current among you, that Phaëton, the offspring of the Sun, attempting to drive his father's chariot, and not being able to keep the right track, burnt up the surface of the earth, and perished himself, . . . . in point of fact refers to a declination of the heavenly bodies revolving round the earth, and indicates that, at certain long intervals of time, the earth's surface is destroyed by mighty fires. When this occurs, then those who dwell either on mountains, or in lofty and dry places, perish in greater numbers than those dwelling near rivers, or on the seashore: whereas, to us the Nile is not only our safeguard from all other troubles, but liberates and preserves us also from this in particular. And, again, when the gods, to purify the earth, deluge its surface with water, then the herdsmen and shepherds on the mountains are preserved in safety, while the inhabitants of your cities are hurried away to the sea by the impetuosity of the rivers . . . . Besides all the noble, great, or otherwise distinguished achievements, performed either by ourselves, or by you, or elsewhere, of which we have heard the report—all these have been engraven in our temples in very remote times, and preserved to the present day; while on the contrary, with you and all other nations, they are only just committed to writing, and all other modes of transmission which states require—when again, at the usual period, a current from heaven rushes on them like a pestilence, and leaves the survivors among you destitute of literary annals . . . . and thus you be-

come young again as at first, knowing nothing of the events of ancient times, either in our country or yours."

The old Egyptian priest had certainly stated a most evident fact: "That the Greeks held no ancient opinions derived from remote traditions." They were not a traditional people, but rationalistic. The reason he gave for this will scarcely satisfy the modern reader; yet owing to its quaintness and plausibility for an Egyptian, we have given it here a place. But if such was really the case in the early age of Solon—this absence of traditions—how much more was it true of more recent times? In the time of Plato, everything ancient, we may say, had vanished; or only precious fragments handed down by the Orphic School and the Pythagorean Society remained, whose meaning was altogether forgotten, buried as it was beneath the rubbish of mythology. Rubbish we mean, not in a literary point of view; but as compared with the sublime, rational, and consistent scheme of revealed religion. As a product of the imagination, it was anything but rubbish. To the Greeks, the mythology born of the imagination of Homer had such a fascinating power, that they were bound fast in the brilliant folds of that splendid superstition. The witchery of it is so charming that even Christian writers have felt its power; and we shall presently find men of note speaking of it as the true cause of all Greek culture, and shall have to reply to their arguments.

Meanwhile, we have a few more considerations to urge on the part of our subject which has already for some time occupied our attention.

There is no doubt, that if it is enveloped yet in still greater obscurity to us than to the Hellenes of the age of Plato and even of Solon, nevertheless, the ingenuity, deep researches, and profound criticism of modern investigators, such as Karl Ottfried Müller, have thrown on those primitive times a light which they did not possess. We are, at least, obliged to admit, for that early period, a real superiority in point of strong intel-

lect and morality over the ages that followed. Religion, manners, domestic institutions present many traits similar to those of India and ancient Egypt. The Pelasgians were, above all, agriculturists, as were the early Hindoos. They spread, like their progenitors, over continents, and were not much addicted to the sea, which they merely crossed for the purpose of colonization. They had the Vedic "Arbhu" (Orpheus) for their initiator in the rites of expiation, as the Hindoos had the Brahmins for a like initiation as described in the Institutes of Menu. We have seen his "sacred image," (Orpheus) sculptured by Pelasgic hands and preserved to our very days. Wherever they spread, the Hellenic race, which replaces them, spread likewise: In Asia Minor, in Southern Italy, in the territories around the Euxine, and even north of it, as well as in Attica, Bœotia, and the whole of Hellas. Max Müller, and all modern Sanscrit scholars, tell us that they came from Central Asia, that they are the *Javanas* of the Vedic literature, and we say that they are the *Javans* of Genesis. They must, therefore, have brought to their new country the idea of "Brahma" (neuter), indistinct, it is true, and scarcely to be recognized, owing to the incredible hardship of their migration; yet finally taking a shape, announced by Orpheus as the "Deathless One," "our mother's sire," etc., who, in Hellenic times, became Zeus, not the son of Chronos, but the Zeus anterior to mythology, of whom Plato spoke thus in his "Cratylus": "In reality the name of Zeus is, as it were, a sentence; and persons dividing it into two parts, some of us make use of one part, and some of another; for some call him Ζῆν, and some Δίς. But these parts united into one, exhibit the nature of the God, which, as we have said, a *name* ought and should be able to do. For there is no one who is more the cause of living (Ζῆν), both to us and everything else, than He who is the Ruler and King of all. It follows, therefore, that this God is rightly named, through whom life is present to all living beings."

The translator of the dialogue, George Burges, adds in a note: "From this passage of Plato were *perhaps derived* the Pseudo-Orphic verses, quoted by Joannes Diaconus, etc: 'Zeus is the beginning of all things. For Zeus has given and generated animals, and men call him Ζῆν, and also Δίς; because all things were fabricated through Him; and He is the one Father of all things, both beasts and men.'"

On this we remark, and the investigation of this passage is most important:

1st. The translation here given is scarcely pointed enough; the verses of the *Pseudo-Orphic* hymn are in Greek:

Ἔστιν δὴ πάντων ἀρχὴ Ζεὺς, Ζεὺς γὰρ ἔδωκε,  
 Ζῶά τ' ἐγέννησεν καὶ Ζῆν' αὐτὸν καλέουσι,  
 Καὶ Δία τ' ἦδ', ὅτι δὴ διὰ τοῦτον ἅπαντα τέτυκται.  
 Εἷς δὲ πατὴρ οὗτος πάντων, θηρῶν τε βροτῶν τε.

"Zeus is the beginning of all things. For Zeus has given,  
 And generated living beings; thus men call him Ζῆν.

They call Him also Δίς, since through Him (διὰ τοῦτον) all things are made.

He is the One Father of all, both beasts and men."

The importance of these corrections is obvious.

2d. We cannot understand how the above-quoted hymn was perhaps derived, as Mr. Burges remarks, from the previous passage of Plato. We think, rather, that the text of the great and good friend of Socrates was *positively derived* from this very Orphic hymn. And for the following reasons: Plato, after having said that "the name of Zeus is a sentence, and people dividing it into two parts, some made use of one part and called him Ζῆν, and some of another, and call him Δίς," seems to announce that he will give the meaning of both, because "these parts united into one, exhibit the nature of the God." Yet he quite forgets to explain the second part, Δίς. He is diffuse on the first, Ζῆν; and, on reading his "Cratylus,"

the reader is surprised to find, that, in what follows, not a word is said of the meaning of the second: *Δίς*. But, among the immense number of fragments of ancient lore, kept and preserved by more modern writers, a poem of Orpheus is found, quoted by Joannes Diaconus, in which the same object is professed, namely: to explain the meaning of Zeus; and the omission of Plato is fully supplied by a precious line giving the meaning of *Δίς*. What can be the conclusion for a critic? This, certainly: Plato shows everywhere a very slight acquaintance with the true Orpheus, although he often mentions his name. He meets, however, with a few words which strike him; they are incomplete, and, as he never had the good fortune to see the whole poem of the old bard, he comments on these few words. But, as the line including the explanation of the meaning of *Δίς* is wanting in the *snatch* which he possesses, he does not dare, through religious feeling, to furnish an interpretation of his own. Had it not been the name of Zeus, he might have thought himself competent, of his own authority, to explain it. Had it been the name of some inferior god, he might have treated the subject with levity; as he did, directly after, in the same dialogue, when it was question only of the names of Hera, of Poseidon, of Pluto, and of all the others, on which he took an evident delight in pouring ridicule and contempt. But he would have considered it sacrilegious to speak in the same strain of "Him who is the Ruler and King of all," as he expressed it. Thus the omission in Plato, shows him, in our opinion, to have lived at a later period than the Orphic verses which he alludes to in part.

3d. Plato, in explaining the name of Zeus, and discussing the first part of it, *Zῆν*, says only that He is thus called, because "through Him life is present to all living beings." But the Greek of Orpheus has a much stronger meaning. It is, *ἐγέννησε τὰ ζῶα*,—*he generated living animals*; and we say that the author of the Orphic verses could not have *derived* this

from the passage of Plato, but that, more probably, Plato took it from some imperfect copy of the verses. The words of the founder of the Academy do not make any mention of "generation," but merely assert that Zeus is "present" to all living beings. No interpreter could be so bold as to introduce the meaning contained in *ἐγέννησε*.

Plato, on the contrary, in the supposition that he possessed some of the Orphic lines, had a strong reason for toning down their expressions, and giving them an Hellenic aspect. He did so by the phrase he used. His readers could not possibly have understood the direct "generation" of the visible world from the supreme and immaterial God; hence he had to bring his words to the intellectual capacity of his readers. Orpheus, on the contrary, had the whole cosmogonic system of Egypt, and even that of India, in support of his meaning. To render this clearer still, we will remind our readers of the concluding passage of the "Timæus," quoted above. We have already remarked on it that Plato certainly took the idea from the Egyptians—the whole dialogue is supposed to express the Egyptian explanation of creation. But in the passage alluded to, which is certainly one of the strongest, if not altogether the strongest, in all the works of Plato, as redolent altogether of Oriental opinion and imagery, the wise Greek philosopher has considerably altered the Egyptian doctrine. This made the "visible world" positively "the son" of the Creator; Plato makes it only its "image" (*εἰκὼς*). And if, in the last words of the passage, he calls the Cosmos "the greatest, best, most perfect, the one only-begotten"—*μονόγενῆ*,—it is clear that the phrase is metaphorical, because the writer had advertently avoided the only word which could have made it literal, *ἰὸν*—son,—which is the correlative of *μονόγενῆ*.

These observations supply a convincing proof that many modern mythologists are mistaken in establishing an essential distinction between the Greek Zeus and the Roman Jupiter.



“It is only,” they say, “when the Romans began to know the religion and literature of Greece, that they foolishly sought to identify their own noble, majestic, and gravely upright Jupiter with the slippery, lustful, and immoral Zeus of the Greeks.” We answer that this Zeus was the god of the degenerate Hellenes, not that of the immediate successors of the Pelasgians. There is no doubt that the original Jupiter of the Romans was altogether different from the Zeus of subsequent mythology. He was, as Pluvius, as Tonans, as Fulminator, as Servator, all-powerful over the elements; He was all-knowing, all-providing, the highest and the best, Optimus Maximus. As such, he could not be guilty of the crimes insanely attributed to him by mythology. Hence the idea of Jupiter was altogether a moral one, and he was properly thought to be the avenger of those vices which later ages were to condone and even to render attractive by making them the ordinary actions of their chief god. Thus the primitive Jupiter of the Romans was really the Supreme, the Eternal, the Omnipotent. But such was likewise the primitive Zeus of the Greeks. From whom did the Romans receive the idea of their great Jupiter? Undoubtedly from the Etruscans, those Pelasgians of Italy. And this supposed difference between Jupiter and Zeus is thus shown to have been merely the work of time, and the effect of ever-advancing degeneracy, ending in the most wretched degradation.

We hope, therefore, that we have established to the satisfaction of the reader, that the Orphic literature cannot truly be called *pseudo* in any sense. And it follows from this that monotheism appears at the religious origin of Greece, affording thus another confirmation of the remarkable words of Professor Heeren: “It would be difficult, and perhaps impossible, to find a nation which can show no vestiges of religion; and there never yet has been, nor can there be, a nation in which the reverence for a superior being was but the fruit of refined

philosophy." For religion came to us from God by exterior revelation.

There is, however, yet a slight qualification to proffer of what we have advanced. If we have, as is the case, really strong reasons for believing the passage in question to be truly Orphic and not Pseudo-Orphic, we have no intention of maintaining that the "phraseology" is undoubtedly the work of the Thracian bard. We speak only of the sense of the passage. The "verses" may have been arranged by a subsequent "littérateur." The thoughts have the redolence of the genuine antique, and are evidently older than Plato. This is all we have intended to assert.

But if purity of religion does not suppose necessarily a great advance in knowledge and what is called culture, it does suppose, in our opinion, a primitive revelation. And purity of religion is altogether incompatible with barbarism; and the nations which have received such an incomparable boon, are necessarily intelligent, refined in feeling, in possession of a great control over nature; in fine, truly civilized. But according to the common opinion, the Hellenes of the heroic age were mere barbarians. The Pelasgians, especially, who preceded them, were uncouth savages. It was, as they say, "the age of Cyclops and Polyphemusses." Homer himself has described those frightful cannibals of Sicily and the surrounding islands.

We assert that, however general such an opinion may be, it is an altogether mistaken one; and in the same way as we have established, conclusively, the fact that the Hindoos of the Vedic times were, from the very beginning, a great and refined race, do we now propose to demonstrate that the original Hellenes—we believe them to have been Pelasgians—were not, at all events, savages, but were far advanced in social life, and endowed with noble and elevated feelings, although remarkable for their truly patriarchal simplicity and unartificial mode of

living. This was precisely the character of the primitive Hindoos; and we say that these are the "notes" of "primitive man," wherever documents have been left to know and describe him.

The Pelasgians have left after them no traces whatever, except huge buildings and enormous ruins, in the opinion of those who make them a race altogether distinct from the Hellenes. According to their theory, a powerful nation, spread over a great part of Europe, besides a slice of Asia, has suddenly disappeared to make room for another, without any struggle, at least, corresponding with the magnitude of the event. Is it probable? Is it possible? We confess that we do not believe it is. Those who do, endeavor to establish their point by a reference to the fact of the disappearance of many nations in a similar manner. They argue that, even in our days, the phenomenon is still manifesting itself in many countries. They allude evidently to the Poles, the Turks in Europe, etc.; and, in the Western Hemisphere, to the North American Indians. We answer, that none of these facts can explain the disappearance of the Pelasgians; and that the whole of history, ancient and modern, may be ransacked in vain to find anything similar.

None of the nations, now in process of disappearance, have been reduced to their actual state without long ages of a protracted struggle well known to history. And some of those named have not yet disappeared, nor are likely to for a long time to come, at all events. We defy anyone to find a case parallel to the Pelasgic phenomenon. We admit that a race can pass gradually into another by a true process of assimilation. But then the two races must not be altogether antagonistic. And when this happens readily, we may be sure that they belonged originally to the same stock, which was, we imagine, the case with the Pelasgians and the Hellenes. To speak, therefore, of the social state of the first—as we do not

possess any direct document concerning them—we must have recourse to the early documents of the second. Thus the question resolves itself into an investigation of the heroic age of Greece. We assert that this age was Pelasgic as well as Hellenic. Thus also thought Homer, who, as we have seen, sometimes makes the two races identical, sometimes seems to admit a difference. We remarked likewise that, most probably, Orpheus was a Pelasgic Thracian hero, of whom we yet possess the “sacred image,” one of a very few relics of Pelasgian art.\* We pass on, therefore, to the subject of Heroic Greece.

\* Few authors have shown as much industry and care in collecting all the passages of ancient writers, chiefly of Homer, having reference to the Pelasgians, as Mr. Gladstone did in his “*Juventus Mundi*.” He confirms the general opinion entertained of the race with respect to its wandering habits, to its agricultural pursuits, to its peaceful disposition, and to its extension over Greece, Italy, and Asia Minor. Perhaps objection could be taken to the total want of warlike spirit ascribed to it; inasmuch as the universal test adopted by the Right Hon. author to determine if a given tribe was Pelasgic or not, is to ascertain if, in the mention made of it by the ancients, it was unsuccessful in any conflict; this being a sure mark, according to Mr. Gladstone, that it belonged to the Pelasgic. But as we are chiefly concerned with the religious leanings of the race, it is almost exclusively to his remarks on this subject, contained in the “*Juventus Mundi*,” that our attention must be directed.

Mr. Gladstone supposes that the Pelasgians worshipped the “Nature-Powers,” as he calls them. He is, no doubt, perfectly right, so far as his subject limited his investigations to the time of the Trojan war and of Homer. The title of the book is evidently a misnomer, if it is meant to indicate really primitive ages. Yet some valuable admissions are contained in the scraps of earlier erudition occasionally met with. Thus in distinguishing the old Pelasgic Zeus from the more recent Olympian, created by Homer, he is on the right road to truth. He had already said (page 222), in speaking of this last *anthropomorphic* deity, that “He is the depository of the principal remnants of monotheistic and providential ideas.” And, having stated just before, that “Zeus is the meeting-point of the Pelasgic with the Olympian system of religion,” the natural consequence is, that the former God was at the head of a “monotheistic and providential” system, and that the “Olympian,” or Hellenic, system contained real “remnants” of it. This is all we are contending for; and

it may thus be asserted that the old Pelasgians did not worship only "Nature-Powers."

But the author of "Juventus Mundi" is particularly skillful in showing how the "Olympian Zeus" of Homer had received, from the Pelasgic, attributes which later did not remain to Him, so that the belief of the Hellenes went on deteriorating from age to age. Thus as he says: "To Zeus, as Providence, belong both a number of separate ascriptions, and a general position, which underlies the whole action of the Iliad. The grandeur of his attributes transcends every other composition. He is identified, in perhaps an hundred places of the poems, with the word *theos*, in its more abstracted signification, as Providence, or the moral governor of the world. He is the arbiter of war; and he exhibits in the sky, on great occasions, the scales in which are weighed contending fates. He is the source of governing authority, and he shows his displeasure when it is abused. He is the distributor in general of good and evil among mortals. . . . He has the care of the guest, the suppliant, and the poor; and thus his name becomes the guarantee for three relations, which were and are fundamental to the condition of mankind, considered with reference to social existence. Indeed, in this character he is himself a Source of Destiny, as we find from the remarkable phrase—*Διὸς αἰσα*—the fate proceeding from Zeus."

These were the grand ideas which Homer took from the former belief of the Pelasgians in their Supreme God. Would to Heaven the poet had always kept up the character of the Pelasgic Deity, and his imagination had not degraded such a Being by all possible human vices, as he does in "an hundred places of his poems."

Of the deteriorating process "progressing" subsequently for centuries, a remarkable passage ought to be quoted, as it expresses so exactly what we have all along been endeavoring to establish. It is found at page 182 of the Boston Ed., 1869. The author is treating of the "Olympian system of Homer": "Its character continually altered; and altered for the worse. It has features which are sublime, and features which are debased. But the sublime features of the Olympian characters became, with the lapse of generations, less and less observable; the debased ones grew more and more prominent. And the profoundly interesting specialities of the several deities, indicating their respective origins, at length became apparently imperceptible even to the Greeks themselves. No one can closely and carefully examine the system of Homer without a deep interest; no one can find much ground for such an interest in the theological part of the religion of the historic period. Only its ethical ideas, and the highly poetic ideas connected with destiny, retain any attractive power; and from the mythology these ideas are, in the later stages of the Olympian system, almost wholly dissociated."

Another most interesting point of difference between the Pelasgic and Olympian religions, mentioned by Mr. Gladstone, is the existence of a real priesthood in the first, which is no more visible in the second.

From the poems of Homer themselves, we learn that the Pelasgic temples had all a *τέμενος*, or glebe for the priests. It is, in fact, a feature common to all primitive nations. It is only the Greeks, led, it would seem, by the Ionian bard himself, who did not, in ancient times, adopt the custom, which—we may mention it incidentally—is, at this moment, discarded, more or less, by all modern so-called Christian nations, in spite of the protests of the Catholic Church. But a glebe supposes a system of ministers of religion ordained for the purpose, and set apart for the service of God. The Hellenes, from the time of Homer downwards, forgot entirely so necessary a provision for the stability of religion, although the Pelasgians, their ancestors, had brought the custom from Asia.

Consequently, says Mr. Gladstone again (page 182, 183): “The wonder, indeed, is, not that the Olympian religion should have failed to resist the corrosion of change, but that it should have been able, in any manner, to retain its identity. Devoid, as it was, of all authority, and even of the allegation of authority, for its origin, and not only unsustained, but belied, by the witness of surrounding nations, it probably had little less of unity than such as it derived from the great bard of the nation and from its imaginative splendor; while it had none of the guarantees, real, even if partial, which are afforded either by books known and recognized as sacred, or by a compact and permanent hierarchy, dating, or professing to date, from the beginning of the system. . . . Neither was the priest, as such, a significant personage in Greece at any period, nor had the priest of any one place or deity, any organic connection with the priest of any other; so that, if there were priests, yet there was not a priesthood.”

A last observation, but a very important one, is derived from the list of words which must be Pelasgic, and of which Mr. Gladstone furnishes abundant examples. As no Pelasgic inscription that we know of has so far been found, the Right Hon. author justly remarks, that the Latins being surely derived originally from the race, the words common both to the Latin and Greek languages must come from the primitive source, and be Pelasgic, excepting the few Greek words introduced in course of time, and well known to philologists. But it is extremely remarkable that, except the vocable *θεός* and one or two others which belong both to the Latin and Greek, all the words expressing religious ideas are completely distinct in both idioms. From which very strange fact Mr. Gladstone concludes, that “in one case, or in both, there must have been a great displacement of the Pelasgic vocabulary. And as the Roman religion

was far more Pelasgian than the Greek, it is probable that this displacement, if it occurred in one only of the two peninsulas, occurred in Greece."

The question naturally arises, after reading this astounding statement, Was Homer, the founder and absolute maker of Hellenism, guilty of changing the language of the Pelasgians, in order to pervert more easily their religion? We could not venture to answer this question in the affirmative without further proofs, as the charge of expression in religious matters might have happened before him.

## CHAPTER VI.

### INTRODUCTION OF IDOLATRY IN HEROIC GREECE.

#### I.

WE are met at the very threshold of our investigations in this new portion of our subject, by the almost universal opinion of writers on Greece, at least of those immediately preceding our age, that the heroic times of Hellas were barbarous. How many horrible facts have not the semi-fabulous annals of Pelops, of Atreus, of Laius, left on record? Was not the age of Hercules an age of monsters? The Greeks themselves, in their writings of a later age, have taken an apparent delight in proving that their ancestors were worse than barbarians. The dramatists, particularly, have found, in the old annals of their race, horrors enough to fill their poems. To present the same old subjects on our modern stage, the best poets of France and of Italy have had to tone down considerably the dark colors of the picture left by Hellenic authors. No refined audience could now tolerate an exact reproduction of the great masterpieces of Greece. The attempt has, we believe, been made in Germany; we do not know with what success. But as nothing has been said of the project for many years past, we presume that the Germans are no greater admirers of Greek mythic horrors than the rest of mankind.

We propose to show that the Heroic age of Hellas was not the barbarous age it has been represented as being by its own writers, as well as by modern authors; and that these produc-



tions of the Greek stage do not give us the real picture of those primitive times.

Where can we find that true picture? In the long poems of Homer, chiefly his *Odyssey*; in many fragments of old poets, which have reached us through more modern authors; in numberless passages of the first historians of Greece, where the simplicity of primitive manners is yet preserved in many charming anecdotes, and long stories of enchanting artlessness. The dramatists *intended* to strike terror, and *invented* circumstances which were only creatures of their imagination. They took, moreover, a few facts which they painfully elaborated into monstrous legends of crime and horror. It is not thus we can obtain a true delineation of the manners of those times. Let us try to find out what was in fact the moral and social situation of Greece at the time of the Heraclidæ and the Argonauts.

We are met at the very outset of our inquiry by the important objection: Are Homer and Herodotus, on whose testimony we intend chiefly to rely, safe guides in a cool and matter-of-fact research? Is not the first a "poet," that is to say, an inventor of things which never happened? And is not Herodotus a composer of legends, a gossiping historian, fit only for children in the nursery? Homer is altogether untrustworthy when he speaks of religion and cosmogony. As he understood nothing of either, he *invented* what he did not know, and was, by his inventions, the chief cause of the subsequent errors of his countrymen. But when he speaks of things which he knew, either by eye-sight or by sure tradition, can a safer author be found, in ancient or modern times? Who has ever described more truly the phenomena of nature, or the marvels of art which he saw? Is not every word a true pencilling, and the whole thing a picture? As the rising and the setting of the sun, the howling of the tempest, and the warbling of birds, the colors of the rainbow, and the darkness of night, are to us the same as they were to him, do we not always admire the

fidelity to Nature as well as the graphic power with which he describes natural phenomena? And when it is question of things, social and domestic, which he witnessed in his time among his countrymen; when he speaks, for instance, of the occupations of women in a Pelasgic or in a Hellenic house, of the sitting of judges at the gates of cities, of the public games, the wrestling of athletes, the swift running of chariots, the trappings of horses; when he describes the public acts of religion and the festivities of citizens, the details of sacrifices, the dancing and music, etc., etc., are we not sure that all those things happened exactly as he delineated them?

So, too, when it is question of facts happening in his time, or well ascertained by tradition, he must be acknowledged as an historian, for his definite object was to record facts. He is not an epic "poet," like Virgil, who, living in an artificial age, and after Aristotle had given the artistic rules of a work of "fiction," wrote his *Æneid* as a novelist in our age writes his fanciful tale.

It in nothing resembles a historic novel. Indeed, in the time of Homer nothing of the kind can be supposed. Probably no one yet among the Greeks had ever written in prose. Verse was the only means of conveying intelligence by writing; and whenever an author wrote in verse, he intended to state what he thought was true, and not what he "fancied." Hence, Homer was considered by the ancients as a true historian. Strabo, in the two first books of his geography, endeavors to show that he was a most reliable historian, geographer, and naturalist. And so, indeed, he was for his age, and those which immediately followed it. We are sure, consequently, that when he describes manners and social customs, they were those of his time, and he merely published what he saw. And as no writer ever equalled him in point of accuracy in his descriptions, we can altogether rely on him as on the most faithful delineator of those early ages.

The same now must be said of Herodotus, of whom, however, Strabo entertained a very different opinion. For a long time the "Father of History" was considered only as a wonder-monger, hunting up ridiculous stories, to idealize them in his imperishable style, and catch gullible people, as children are caught by fairy-tales. But after the long labors of critics and investigators after truth, it is no longer possible to think thus of the enchanting Halicarnassian. All now admit that what he "saw," he faithfully described; that things happening in his age, or immediately before, found in him an exact annalist; that what any respectable tradition handed down as true, he transmitted to us in its native simplicity; and that when he "misleads" us, it is not through any intention of "deceiving," but because he was himself misled by the "tale-bearers" of his day. Nay, many of his assertions which seemed incredible at first, and were, for that reason, alleged by many as proofs of his untrustworthiness, have since been verified. We are confident, therefore, that whenever Herodotus describes any event, impregnated with the perfume of patriarchal antiquity, he is but passing on to us the sweet fragrance of primitive times. And he could not do this unless he had received from previous enchanters the aroma of an age which had, already, in his time, passed away for ever.

## II.

The first phenomenon which strikes us, when we take a cursory glance over Greek territory, is similar to that which presented itself in India and Egypt. Indeed, the division of the territory is yet a deal more remarkable in the former than in the latter. We find, in the heroic age, the country cut up into an infinite number of small States, each with its peculiar physiognomy, yet enjoying all the same opinions, customs to a great extent, and chiefly social and domestic

manners. Homer, in his descriptions, represents all the tribes as equal in point of civilization. We do not remark between the eastern and western parts of Hellas, between Attica, for instance, and Ætolia, the difference so remarkable in a later age, when the Athenians were so polished and the Ætolians so rude. According to him, the Thessalian differs in nothing from the inhabitant of Laconia. They all speak the same language, have the same dress, the same weapons, the same domestic customs—are, in short, evidently the same people; yet they are each strongly marked with broad special clan characteristics. Thessaly is divided, in the time of Homer, into ten different small States, each with its own ruler; and the inhabitant of each boasts of his own small country as if it was the greatest in the world. In the Peloponnesus we find five different *kingdoms*, besides Arcadia; and one of them, Elis, is governed by no less than four *provincial kings*, as an Irish annalist would say. Hellas itself, the centre of Greece, is a perfect hot-bed of principalities. They are as numerous as the cities themselves; and among them the Athenians do not claim any superior right of preëminence to that of the most insignificant of those obscure clans. As to the islands of the Ægean, and other seas, how could the smallest rock emerging from the deep do less than enjoy its own king or ruler? Ulysses was a most powerful prince, because, besides his native Ithaca, he claimed a right over Zacynthus and Cephallene. So completely was *division in clans* an established institution among them that when the Ionians left Achaia in Peloponnesus, driven away by new invaders who took the name of Achæans, and established themselves on the western coast of Asia Minor, they naturally “formed themselves into twelve cities,” as Herodotus relates (I. 145), “and refused to admit more; because when they dwelt in Peloponnesus, there were twelve divisions of them, as now there are twelve divisions of the Achæans who drove away the Ionians.” This short

passage of the Father of History lets considerable light into those early times, and proves conclusively that men had not yet arrived at the modern notion that to be happy and prosperous, a nation must consist of at least fifty millions of people.

This fact of the Ionian colonization of Asia Minor is not exceptional. Herodotus, throughout his first book (Clio), shows it to have been a common one in those ages. Thus in § 149 he enumerates eleven cities founded in Asia Minor by the Æolians as centres of new tribes, the twelfth, Smyrna, having been taken away from them. The number twelve seems to have been a sacred number in those days. It is another evidence of the extent to which the spirit of clanship was carried amongst them that they were slow even to form confederacies of clans. They were satisfied with building a temple; the one used by the Ionians was called *Panionium*, where they sent their deputies once a year to regulate the general affairs of the tribes. But Thales, as Herodotus relates (I. 170), having "advised the Ionians to constitute one general (permanent) council in Teos, which stands in the centre of Ionia, and that the rest of the inhabited cities should nevertheless be governed as independent States," his advice was rejected. It is as interesting as strange to hear a philosopher like Thales, the oldest in Greece, propose a government exactly similar to that of the United States, and to find his proposition rejected, probably as opposed to the rights of the States (or cities), which might be infringed upon by this kind of Washington government at Teos. Yet if they were jealous of their rights, they were not "republicans." They were strong "monarchists." They could not understand any government but that of one man. Hence, Homer expressed but the general opinion of the heroic age when he made Ulysses exclaim :

“ Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη · εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω,  
 Εἷς βασιλεὺς, ὃ δῶκε Κρόνον παῖς ἀγκυλομήτεω  
 Σκῆπτρόν τ' ἠδὲ θέμιστας, ἵνα σφίσιον ἐμβασιλεύη.”

“Away with democracy! let there be one ruler,  
One king, to whom the son of deep-scheming Kronos  
Has handed over the sceptre and right, that he may govern others.”

Thus the doctrine of the “divine right” is not a modern notion, and did not originate with King James I. We must not be supposed, however, to be advocating that doctrine. We merely describe the sentiment of the patriarchal times of which we treat. It is certainly remarkable that Greece, which, later on in her history, originated every conceivable form of democratic government, and was the first to proclaim—in Athens chiefly—the rule of the many, was, in the earliest period of her history, so strongly wedded to the idea of monarchy, whose sway, however, it is true, extended only over the contracted limits of a territory a few miles square. “We meet then,” as Heeren says (Ancient Greece, Heroic age), “with no governments but those of princes and kings; there were then no republics; and yet republicanism was eventually to decide the political character of Greece. These monarchical constitutions, if that name may be applied to them, were rather the outlines of constitutions than regular, finished forms of government. They were the consequence of the most ancient condition of the nation, when either ruling families sprung up in the several tribes, or the leaders of foreign colonies had known how to secure to themselves and their posterity the government over the natives.”

We must, however, generalize these explanations of the Professor of Gottingen, and say that “they were the consequence of the primitive state of man, who began by a family, and passed directly to the condition of tribe under the rule of the patriarch.” Thus the clan becomes a sure sign of “primæval man,” because, as we have before stated, “mankind began by clanship;” and the origin of Greece furnishes another proof of the axiom. But the following remarks of Heeren, a page farther down, are worthy of note, as they seem to de-

scribe to the letter the Ireland of Ante-Scandinavian times: "Esteem for the ruling families (say for the heads of the Septs) secured to them the government; but their power was not strictly hereditary. Princes were not much more than the first among their peers. . . . The son had commonly the precedence over others in the succession; but his claim was measured by his personal qualifications for the station. It was his first duty to lead in war; and he could not do this unless he was himself distinguished for courage and strength. His privileges in peace were not great. He called together the popular assembly, which was chiefly, if not exclusively, composed of the older and more distinguished citizens. Here the king had his own seat; the ensign of his dignity was a sceptre or staff, etc. . . . His superiority (in material circumstances) consisted in a piece of land, and a larger part of the booty. Excepting this, he derived his support from his own possessions and the produce of his fields and herds. The preservation of his dignity required an almost unbounded hospitality, etc." Thus the clan system appears to be so natural, and, on that account, precise, that it presents absolutely the same features in all countries, all climates, and all times.

But in such state of society was not man an ignorant, rude, and uncouth barbarian; and is not this the general opinion scholars have ever had of the heroic age of Greece? No true scholar can entertain such an opinion. The precise and numerous details contained in classic authors, which testify to a high state of knowledge, and suppose a happy and tranquil social condition, make it impossible.

Take, for example, the excessively numerous and prosperous populations which existed in those times. The intelligent reader of Homer is struck by what the poet says of the numberless cities which then embellished Greece. And these were not open hamlets, composed of a few huts for a far-scattered population. They had walls; the gates were generally adorned

with towers; the houses formed streets, well laid out and broad; yet the dwellings were not contiguous and crowding on each other, but they had in front a court, and a garden in the rear. All that our modern ideas of comfort have since realized in the rural towns of our most prosperous States, existed already in Hellas. The faithful delineations of the old wandering bard, who had visited most of the countries he described, or knew by report what took place before him, cannot leave us any doubt of the correctness of his sketches. Later on, in the refined age of Pericles, there were, no doubt, finer buildings, more exquisite works of art, a greater abundance of metallic or marble statues. There was not, we are sure, more prosperity and real comfort. In each city a large market square, adorned with porticos and simple Doric columns, was the common place of meeting for the citizens. There they lived in the open air, and spent the greater part of the day; not yet meddling in the affairs of the commonwealth intrusted to the care of the chieftain; not yet all eagerly busying themselves to receive the first news of the day, as later on, at the time of Demosthenes; but full already of the spirit of gossip, taking their first lessons in dialectics and argument, preparing for their race a long era of rationalism, philosophy, and discussion; or listening eagerly to the first strains of that enchanting poetry and music, which was to last forever, and to re-echo in future ages wherever the name of Greece should reach, and the works of her oldest poets should be read.

### III.

In our false ideas of primitive history, man was first a hunter, a tearer of the flesh of his enemies, a rude warrior, and a blood-thirsty savage. Nothing is more opposed to the first pictures of the state of man as modern researches have spread



them before our astonished vision. Nimrod was a hunter in the plains of Babylon and on the shores of the Persian gulf; but he was an exception; and hence he destroyed clanship in the countries which he devastated, and established the first centralized empire. But wherever man was allowed to settle quietly and follow the natural inclinations of his race, the first state of society was undoubtedly idyllic, pastoral, and agricultural.

It is Herodotus himself who remarks, at the very beginning of his work, that Asia and Europe had, from the beginning, lived quietly apart, without any mutual disturbance, until the rapes of Io, of Europa, and of Helen, kindled for the first time war between the two continents. This assertion of the Father of History is confirmed by some writer whose name now escapes us, and who remarks, with great justice and force, that the preparations for the Trojan war, all over Greece and Asia Minor, show conclusively that those countries had, until that time, enjoyed a long period of quiet and peace, and had reached, in happiness and contentment, a high state of prosperity. There can be no doubt of this in the mind of any thoughtful reader perusing the pages of Homer and of Hesiod, chiefly the "Opera et Dies."

And on this subject we cannot but refer with amazement to the opinion of some modern critics, who, finding the great work of the Bœotian poet (Hesiod) too peaceful and bucolic for their ideas of those *blood-thirsty* ages, imagine the two bards—the Ionian and the Bœotian—to have been the heads of two schools of poets: the Homeric, full of fury, of wars, and rumors of war; the Hesiodic, intent only on rural peace, as a *protest against the general savagery of the period*. This thought may be ingenious, but it is not true. Homer does not sing only of war. His *Odyssey* is as idyllic and pastoral as the "Opera et Dies" of Hesiod; and even his "Iliad" is full of sweet descriptions of agricultural and pastoral scenes, showing

the general bias of the time to have been peaceful and home-loving. The very shield of Achilles, forged by Vulcan, represented on its convex surface more scenes of husbandmen's life than of warriors. Yes, the very Trojan war itself, with all its immense preparations, supports our argument.

Another, and not unimportant, confirmation of what we have alleged, is to be found in the description of an Hellenic private house at that period. It was always large and spacious, cool and airy, as the climate required. Around an open court ran shaded galleries, to which succeeded, much later on, the "atriums" of the Romans, and later still, the "cloisters" of our mediæval monasteries. Bed-chambers were prepared for the men around these lower galleries, and, from the court itself, a large entrance conducted the men to the "hall," where they met for conversation. At the back of the whole building stood the "hearth," where the lady of the house was usually to be found. A flight of steps was constructed for her especial use, leading to an upper gallery, around which were arranged the women's apartments. Everywhere painted woods, even then ornamented with the brush and pencil, gave a cheerful appearance to the interior; and polished metals—brass, chiefly—reflected, in the evenings, the light of the blazing fire of the hearth, or of the lamps suspended around. Was this the castle of a mediæval Norman, or rather the elegant dwelling of civilized people? It is true there was somewhere a room apart where arms were kept. We know how they were used in Ithaca against the obstreperous lovers of Penelope. But as we do not read anywhere that public arsenals had yet been built to deposit the arms required in time of war, or for the hunt, it was but natural that such necessary articles should be deposited in the houses of private citizens.

These were the dwellings of the inhabitants. All around were erected large stables for their numerous horses, or for the well-fed cattle. Capacious barns stood ready to receive, in the

autumn, the produce of the fields; for the inhabitants were all of them agriculturists. Everywhere the soil was cultivated with the greatest care; all the cereals known to us were then in use; the grape-vine flourished, and was laden, in due season, with its rich purple clusters; fruit-trees of every kind abounded; and the pruning-knife, reaping-hook, scythe, and the plough, all the ordinary implements, indeed, used by our farmers and gardeners, were constantly in the hands of the primitive Hellenes, although "modern genius" had not yet invented for them the sowing, reaping, and thrashing machines, or the steam-ploughs. Any one acquainted with the agricultural details contained in the most ancient authors, may well doubt if the Greece of after ages was ever better cultivated; nay, if in our boasted days, many nations practice agriculture with the same success. The Hellenes of our times are certainly, in that regard, far behind their Pelasgic progenitors.

A few paragraphs above, we have spoken of metals, of brass chiefly, used in private houses together with fine woods. There is a very general impression, in these days, that metals were scarcely known, and very sparingly used, before our age. We have, however, only to read Homer attentively to find that the houses of rich people—and many of them were rich—were positively filled with metallic implements of every description. Our most wealthy mansions cannot compete with them in this regard. Polished brass was certainly seen everywhere; but what an idea of the splendor of the interior of Pelasgic houses does it give us, to read, that in the dining-hall of Alcinous there was a row of "gold statues of young men carrying in their hands lighted torches, to shed a brilliant light on the well-built walls and the high ceilings?" (*Odyssey*, vii., 100). Yet the manners of the inhabitants of this splendid palace were so simple, that Nausicaa, the daughter of the Phæacian King, used to go to wash the linen of the family in the stream running at the foot of the next meadow. Homer, it is true, may not have had

the intention to state an historical fact with respect to these statues of Alcinous; yet he would not certainly have mentioned it if he had not himself witnessed some fact of the kind, or heard of it on good authority. He always described what he saw or knew. But how many other details given by the poet prove the mineral wealth of those people? The walls, covered with metallic ornaments; the seats of brass or iron; the ewers for washing the hands in gold; the basins of silver; everything, in fact, except the house itself, in metal. Let the reader imagine all the wooden utensils seen in our houses; all the plate used by us, of earthenware, of common china, as it is called, all the chairs and seats spread in our parlors, to be made of brass, gold, or silver, and he will have a faithful representation of the interior of a Greek dwelling in the heroic age. The Phœnicians, and the Arabs before them, as testified by Job, had already carried the mining art as far as it is carried now.

Herodotus, an eye witness (vi., 46), mentions in particular the gold mines of Thasos: "The most wonderful of them," he says, "are those discovered by the Phœnicians, when led by Thasus they colonized the island. These mines are opposite Samothrace, between Ænyra and Cœnyra: a large mountain has been thrown upside down in the search." From these words of the Father of History, gold was there obtained by washing. We know that the Phœnicians extracted it also from quartz.

If people in those times had not yet come to the point of producing lumps of metal, equal in bulk to the enormous masses which now issue daily from our modern huge factories and iron mills, yet what they produced was much more highly elaborated, and, with them, art replaced bulk. If the reader should require further evidence of a similar purport, let him consult Herodotus, where he tells us of the metallic wealth of Crœsus in Lydia, who lived in an age not very far removed

from that high antiquity which occupies us; the immense treasures of ancient Hellenic sanctuaries, particularly of the celebrated one of Delphi, etc.

But as our scope does not require more convincing proofs, we will merely ask ourselves in concluding this interesting subject: Still, it may be objected, what about the Cyclops and the Polyphemusses, and the Geryons of the Greek heroic age? Is it not by such highly-wrought descriptions of barbarism and savagery, that we ought to judge of that ancient period of Hellas? To this we reply, that all those wonderful tales were narrated of far distant countries. Geryon was a monster flourishing at the western extremity of Spain, at the very last limit of the then known world. The Cyclops and Polyphemusses lived in desert islands, and ate the flesh only of strangers stranded on their shore. The Griffins, who fought so ardently against the foreign people who came to steal their gold, were supposed to flap their wings and sharpen their claws in the frozen atmosphere of the far north. And so of the others. It is just what travellers used formerly to relate of the strange countries they *alone* had visited. Hence the French proverb: "A beau mentir qui vient de loin," etc. We cannot conclude without a word or two on the morality of these primitive ages. It was then that "suppliants"—*supplices*—enjoyed an inviolable character; that the sanctity of an oath was universally respected; that "hospitality" was not only a name, but a great fact, so that strangers were treated almost as sacred beings, except in a few spots on the borders of hostile countries, as in Tauris, where Greeks, having often acted as pirates, were openly treated as enemies and sacrificed to Diana. The horrors of the old Greek drama have been often insisted upon as positive proofs of barbarism. Yet even in it there are many exculpatory circumstances which militate against such a conclusion. Œdipus, for instance, was never guilty of voluntary incest; yet he treated himself, and was treated by fate, as if he had been a

willing criminal. Who, in our age, thinks that adultery ought to be punished as it was on Clytemnestra and her whole family? The "feast" of Thyestes was evidently a myth, intended to explain the long misfortunes of the Atridæ. For people then believed that a great crime required a great expiation, and this conviction cannot but be a strong basis of morality. Those very "horrible" facts themselves, instead of indicating a state of barbarism, do, on the contrary, when we study them more profoundly, supply a convincing evidence of the intense vitality of human conscience in those ages.

#### IV.

We have asserted that the period of pure religion in Greece must have been short, and must soon have given way to pantheism. We must now examine the "backward progress" of the Hellenes, as we have already done in the case of Hindostan and Egypt. It is remarkable that all ancient authors attribute the first great step in error to Orpheus, the almost-inspired and divine bard. He preached openly pantheism, and even, according to many, he was, conjointly with Homer and Hesiod, who appeared long after him, the author of positive idolatry, by "giving names to the gods," so that he must have been one of those Pelasgians mentioned by Herodotus in a passage we have previously quoted.

It is evident that no single man, chiefly a man of genius, could have played so many and opposite characters. Orpheus, in many things, is a generic name, and includes a succession of several men. But the fact of all being included in one, shows that the decline in pure doctrine must have been rapid, and the result of a short period of time.

The reader will find in Cudworth's "Systema Intellectuale" many passages of ancient authors attributing to Orpheus the

belief that "God was everything," and "that everything was God." The same is contained in the passage of St. Clement of Alexandria, given by us, in which God is said to be "the beginning, the middle, and the end" of all things. Several hymns attributed to Orpheus contain not only the broadest pantheism, but indicate a step nearer to the "elementary" worship mentioned in the "Book of Wisdom," by attributing divine attributes to the sun, the stars, the earth, the elements in general and in particular. Our readers remember the passage of the inspired writer we quoted at the beginning of this work. The element-worship of Orpheus is another illustration of it. This, in our opinion, must have been the religion of the Pelasgians for a long time of their existence as a race, although we have scarcely any proof to offer in support of it. We could, nevertheless, besides the general religious and moral complexion of the times, give, as an argument on our side, the well-known primitive worship of the Etruscans—Pelasgians according to the most common opinion, supported by Niebuhr and Ottfried Müller—and certainly, at first, worshippers of the elements and forces of nature, undoubtedly great diviners, augurers, and conjurers, as the element-worshippers must always be. Every one knows how they studied the phenomena of "fulguration," the flight of birds, the sudden appearance of "monsters," etc. Their complex ritual was the natural consequence of the complexity of divinized natural phenomena; everything, in fact, goes to prove that the Etruscans, Pelasgians originally, brought to Tyrrhenia the awe-inspiring pantheism of the adorers of "disordered" Nature.

Another, and perhaps stronger, support of this opinion is taken from the passage of Herodotus on the Pelasgians, quoted at the beginning of the preceding chapter. If they did not at first give names to the gods (*θεοις*), they, however, worshipped them. But what can be the meaning of such a worship if it is not individualized, at least, by the sight, since it is not by

the speech? They must have worshipped what they saw, since absent beings absolutely require names to be remembered by. Apollo and Athenē, in the opinion of an Hellene, not falling under the sight of the worshipper, must have an individual name to be known by. But the forked lightning, the coruscating meteor, the speaking ox, the eagles flying swiftly in pairs, etc., need not be named when they are seen; and it is then alone that they are adored—they are called “*θεοί*.”

However this may be, such a religion existed certainly in Greece, and something like it was attributed, by many ancient authors, to Orpheus. But when the imagination of the Hellenes began to unfold its wings under the pure, clear sky of their country, they felt the need of a more cheerful religion, and the poets came to their aid by inventing “*mythology*.” Of this now we have to speak somewhat more extensively, as, on this subject, many false opinions are entertained, which a Christian ought closely to examine and sternly to reject.

## V.

The word “*myth*” did not primarily mean “*fable*” in Greek; it meant originally an “*explanation of common speech*,” either by allegory or by an historical fiction. This last sense is the most natural one. In the East chiefly, where imagination predominates, a speaker, to render truth more attractive to the minds of his hearers, covers it with an emblem, or with a supposed history; and the hearers, accustomed to such mental operations, detect instantaneously the object of the speaker, are pleased with his ingenuity, and retain more easily in their memory the truths hidden under the brilliant fiction. To us the same rhetorical artifice is merely a metaphor; to an Oriental, it is a myth. A myth, however, is subject to an abuse which metaphors and other similar figures of



speech are not. If myths had been only metaphorical, or even allegorical, as the parables of the New Testament, or the fables of Æsop, they would have led into error only extremely stupid people. Every one who reads the "Parable of the Sower" in the gospel, immediately perceives it to be an allegory, and endeavors to discover the explanation. But a myth, purely historical, although apparently of more easy comprehension, will, precisely on account of this facility of understanding, lead ordinary people to imagine that the fictitious history is everything, and thus they take the husk for the kernel, the ingenious covering for the hidden truth. When the Egyptian priest related to Herodotus that one day Hercules hearing Jupiter, wished, and asked to see him. But, as the Supreme God must remain invisible even to a hero, and as Jupiter was, nevertheless, desirous of gratifying Hercules, he took the hide of a ram, with the horns on it, and covering himself entirely with it, allowed the son of Semele thus to see him. When this myth, we say, was related by an Egyptian priest to Herodotus, with the remark that this was the reason why Amun (Jupiter) is represented with the head of a ram, we do not know precisely what the good Halycarnassian may have thought of it, since he does not attempt to acquaint us with his ideas on the subject; but it is certain that the majority of the people who heard the story thought only of Amun, and of Hercules, and of the head and hide of a ram. The great idea of a supreme and invisible God becoming perceptible to our sight by the creation of the Universe, represented here by the sun entering the zodiacal sign of the ram, altogether escaped them. The allegorical history had taken the place of the meaning conveyed by it. The religious doctrine had fallen entirely into oblivion. Truth had become a myth, and religion had become changed into "mythology."

Nor was it only intellectual and religious doctrines which thus assumed the form of myths, but physical events of every-

day occurrence, or scientific facts, as we of this age call them, were also subjected to the same process. Every atmospheric change, for instance, was *explained* by a myth; and soon there were as many gods as meteoric phenomena. The same took place in the wonderful development of vegetation; in the hidden current of life in all its stages; in the mysteries concealed under the waves of the ocean, as well as in the immensity of celestial space. Myths everywhere; and thus gods everywhere. The life of man, that most mysterious of beings, could not remain independent of the same mythical appreciation; and St. Augustine tells us humorously, but with truth, in his great work, "De Civitate Dei," Book vi., Chap. 9: "In the union of man and wife, the god Jugatinus must intervene; we have no objection to this. But when the bride is to be taken to her new home, the god Domiducus must be there to conduct her; that she may like to stay at home, is the office of the god Domitius; that she may not separate from her husband, the goddess Manturna must see to it. What more is wanted? Let the pudor of the bride be spared. . . . . Why is the room filled with gods and goddesses when the grooms and bridesmaids leave it? . . . . What need is there of the goddess Virginiensis? of the god Subigus? Is not the husband enough?"

And when the child is born: "If a father of family employed two nurses, one to give the baby food and the other drink, would not people say that he is crazy, and wants to turn his house into a scene of comedy; yet these 'theologians' must invent for the child the goddesses Educa and Potina."

"Varron," says again St. Augustine, "unfolds a long list of gods from the conception of man, beginning by Janus; and the incredible series ends only at the death of the decrepit old stager; closing the interminable procession by the goddess Nœnia, who is after all only the song chanted at the end of the funeral of old people."

As every accident of human life was thus placed under the care of some supernatural being, the natural consequence was, that man himself, especially if a prince or a hero, became god-like, and after his death was ranked among the gods. Thus a new source of inextricable confusion arose in "mythology!" Real historical facts, the events, namely, of some important human life, became mythic; and often could scarcely be distinguished from older and more solemn myths. Thus Hercules, Mercury, etc., became types of altogether different mythological personages.

It is into this complication of absurdities that modern antiquarians have tried to introduce order. But as most of these have been systematic men, they have succeeded in clearing away only a few difficulties, whilst the exclusiveness of their systems have introduced new sources of error and obscurity. Thus to the primitive idea of some old Greek philosophers, chiefly Epicharmus and Empedocles, for whom the gods were merely the types of physical phenomena, Jove being only the Upper Sky, Apollo the Sun, and so forth; to the bold teaching of more modern Greek authors, like Euhemerus, who saw in gods and goddesses only deified men and women; to the more dignified opinion of many Christian writers who have attempted to explain mythology as only the corruption of revealed truth, have succeeded in our days sometimes the learned, severe, and convincing criticism of a few, sometimes the most ridiculous assumptions of a larger number of German and French authors, the English scarcely daring to take such bold flights of fancy.

There is a plain assertion of Herodotus in Book ii., 53, making the following important statement: "Whence each of the gods sprung, whether they existed always, and of what form they were, was, so to speak, unknown till yesterday. For, I am of opinion, that Hesiod and Homer lived four hundred years before my time, and not more, and these poets framed a theogony for

the Greeks, and gave names to the gods, and assigned to them honors and arts, and declared their several forms . . . . What I have stated above (with respect to the Pelasgians), is derived from the Dodonean priestesses; but the last assertion, which relates to Hesiod and Homer, I say on my own authority."

It was only, therefore, four centuries before the Father of History that real idolatry began in Greece. For there could be no idolatry properly so called, before the gods had names and forms, after whose likeness images and idols could be made to be worshipped; and this is attributed, as a well-known fact, to Hesiod and Homer. To be sure, German critics have raised serious doubts about the personality of these two poets. But this does not touch the question. For, admitting even that the critics are right, and that the *Iliad*, for instance, is the composition of a number of rhapsodists, the poem, at least, cannot be older than the time assigned to it by Herodotus, since he asserted it positively, on his own authority, and he is a better authority on this subject than any modern critic. We do not, however, for our part, propose to take away from Homer the authorship of his masterpiece, whatever may be said of the *Odyssey*, which was certainly written later. It is the individual Homer to whom we shall refer, and not unknown rhapsodists.

What, then, is the special work which must be assigned to the great Ionian bard? It is *the anthropomorphism* of the gods. He gave them shapes, forms, individualities. He was their creator, and he gave them names. He was thus the chief author of idolatry in Greece. But were they not derived from previous myths? Most certainly; at least as far as regards those divinities whose worship preceded the age of the poets. For it seems certain to us, that the imagination of the bards created many of those fanciful beings whom the Hellenes worshipped at a later period. But the gods known to the nation before detailed biographies were written of them, before "Ho-

mer invented their names and forms," were certainly mythical. Of this number, Apollo was undoubtedly one of the first; either as representing the sun issuing young, blooming, and glorious from the hands of the creator, his father; or even with a higher and more sacred meaning, as typifying the future revealer of the will of Jove, by his oracles; the Son of Zeus born on earth to restore our humanity to its former ideal; for Apollo was certainly for the Greeks the ideal of humanity. We can only conjecture this, as nothing can be positively determined on the subject. All we assert is, that myths, in the sense we have explained, were the original foundation of the subsequent mythological conceptions of the poets. But these brilliant and imaginative wooers of the Muses so completely obscured them, that it is perfectly useless, in our age, to attempt to disembody them. Their meaning known at first, has entirely disappeared. The fair form has for ever concealed the inner soul.

The result of this baneful operation was to "humanize" God himself—what we have called just now "anthropomorphism." And not only did God took the shape of man, but He took also his passions and vices. It is quite a mistake to suppose that there was in it something of the great and consoling truth of the "Incarnation" in the Christian sense. In Greek anthropomorphism there was not even the slightest reminiscence of this great and holy dogma, promised to the first man and woman after their fall. Nay more; it was a great deal below even that of the avatars of Vishnu in Hindoo mythology.

When we read the acts and the words of the gods in the Iliad of Homer, we are astonished at the puerility, wantonness, and gross immorality which the narrative supposes. The poet, so truly great, and often sublime, who could represent the whole of heaven grinning lewdly at the capture of Venus and Mars in the net of Vulcan, had evidently lost the most elemental ideas of religion. And, yet, such was the man who was to be the religious teacher of a great and most influential nation;

to lay the foundation of a literature lasting more than twelve hundred years, and impregnating with its spirit so many other literatures which were to follow! The only wonder is, that moral decomposition did not proceed more rapidly; and that the people trained by such a master did not die out a thousand years before it did in fact. It is in our opinion an evidence that the Hellenic nature during the heroic age had imbibed principles of nobleness, simplicity, and natural virtue, able to bear up for a long period of time against the most powerful incentives to corruption.

## VI.

Yet writers, Christian writers, have maintained that the Greek mythology was a great source of culture, and literally civilized the nation. Prof. Heeren writes as follows: "The more a nation conceives its gods to be like men, the nearer does it approach them, and the more intimately does it live with them. According to the earliest views of the Greeks, the gods often wandered among them, shared in their business, requited them with good or ill, according to their reception, and especially to the number of presents and sacrifices with which they were honored. Those views decided the character of religious worship, which received from them, not only its forms, but also its life and meaning. How could this worship have received any other than a cheerful, friendly character? The gods were gratified with the same pleasures as mortals. . . . With such conceptions, how could their holidays have been otherwise than joyous ones? And as their joy was expressed by dance and song, both of these necessarily became constituent parts of their religious festivals.

"It is another question: What influence must such a religion have had on the morals of the nation? The gods were, by no means, represented as pure moral beings, but as beings

possessed of all human passions and weaknesses. But, at the same time, the Greeks never entertained the idea that their divinities were to be held up as models of virtue; and hence the injury done to morality by such a religion, however warmly the philosophers afterwards spoke against it, could hardly have been so great as we, with our prepossessions, should have at first imagined. If it was not declared a duty to become like the gods, no excuse for the imitation could be drawn from the faults and crimes attributed to them. . . .

“By the transformation of the Grecian divinities into moral agents, an infinite field was open for poetic invention. By becoming human, the gods became peculiarly beings for the poets. . . . The great characteristics of human nature were expressed in them; they were exhibited as so many definite archetypes. The poet might relate of them whatever he pleased, but he was never permitted to alter the original characters. . . . Thus the popular religion of the Greeks was thoroughly poetical. There is no need of a long argument to show that it also decided the character of Grecian art, by affording an inexhaustible supply of subjects.”

The main idea contained in these reflections is that Hellenic polytheism became a source of true culture for the nation, because from it naturally followed cheerful festivals, a well-spring of poetical invention, and a high scope of art; yet as true culture cannot be supposed without morality, a word is said to excuse the real profligacy of the religion. We are glad to meet such a thesis expressed in such terms, because the true idea of civilization and progress enters deeply into our subject, and we can find no better opportunity to treat of it. Already, in a previous chapter, we have remarked that the period of the introduction of real idolatry in India, in Egypt, and in Greece, was an epoch of great material refinement, and of an immense development of the fine arts. We will grant, therefore, to Professor Heeren, and to those who think with him,

more than they ask, since we generalize the phenomenon and show its universality and its almost ubiquitous extension. In Hindostan, in Egypt, in Greece, later in Italy, as soon as real idolatrous polytheism appears, immense and splendid buildings are constructed, prodigious sculptures, showing a rich invention and a most artistic taste, cover immense walls, where their stupendous relics still astonish the traveller. We learn from history that, at the same epoch, extraordinary festivals and sacrifices often took place, in the midst of the most exuberant joy of innumerable multitudes; and the universal myth of Bacchus, Dionysus, or whatever name that god was known by along the Ganges and the Nile, constituted the inspiration of this uproarious hilarity. Long and splendid poems, likewise, with lyric songs and musical harmony, reflect on those ages a vivid light of poetry and art. Is not, after all, polytheism a glorious thing for our sad and down-trodden humanity? What if morality suffers a little? It is fortunately inscribed in the heart, and exterior religion has nothing to do with it. This is, we think, the thought of Professor Heeren and of his school, and we have only expressed it in stronger terms than any one of them has ventured to do.

There is no doubt that, when the principle of virtue is uprooted, the day has come for the triumph of the senses. But to eulogize a religion precisely because it favors the latter at the expense of the former, is certainly a strange position for a Christian to take. Yet it is exactly what the above quotation does. Joy, poetry, and art are very fine words; but they require great qualification in order to be estimated at their true worth. Not every kind of joy means happiness; not every kind of poetry commends itself to the human conscience; art itself is a corrupter when the hand that holds the chisel or the brush is impure; and as all contributes to what is called culture or civilization, we may infer that not everything bearing that name deserves admiration, the same as not everything that glitters is gold.



A nation fed only on these husks could not but end in rottenness, because all these *sources of culture* are material, sensual, promotive of passion and chiefly of lust; and for true progress man requires that his immortal soul should be the first cultivated, and that her mastership over the senses should be at all times vindicated. When the true philosophers, who appeared long after the beginning of this intoxicating period of poetry and art, perceived the false direction that the progress of the nation had taken, they tried to bring it back to first principles. The school of Socrates and of Plato, in particular, insisted on ethics, and on the superiority of the spiritual and intellectual part of man over the sensible and perishable one. But it was already too late; so late, in fact, that even the best among them did not see the greatest danger for the future, and the real cause of the degeneracy which was already, in their time, but too apparent. They attributed it chiefly to the Sophists, as they called them; and they thought that the peril lay principally in an unbridled rationalism, which already denied the most clear principles of sound philosophy. They themselves partook, to a great degree, of the universal artistic fanaticism. They were Greeks, and lovers of the "beautiful." And although Plato made a sublime distinction between Venus Urania and the voluptuous mother of Cupid, his distinction was, unfortunately, impotent against moral corruption, and could not stop it in its devastating career. Hence, even amongst ourselves "Platonic love" has become synonymous with "impossible love," and the object of a great deal of harmless ridicule.

But, in spite of this moral blindness, the philosophers of whom we speak saw that the danger of the nation lay in the neglect of the immortal part of man. And they endeavored to convince their countrymen that the tendency of such neglect was to pure materialism, and, consequently, to *brutalization*, if we may be allowed to coin a word. But what was the cause

of it? Not alone the insane rationalism of the Sophists; not alone the ridiculous pretensions of the dialecticians, who promised to teach young men how to "make the worse appear the better," or "the better appear the worse;" but originally, and at all times, and chiefly, the predominance given to the senses by the prevailing materialistic polytheism. And this had certainly arisen from degrading the gods to the level of humanity, endowing them with the same aims, and passions, and vices; in short, from the pure and simple "anthropomorphism" of the religion. Even had the philosophers perceived this, they would not have dared to assert it openly. They had to respect the "religion of the State." It was one of the great accusations against Socrates that he believed in other gods than "those of the State." Happy he if, before drinking the hemlock, he had openly acknowledged the issue between himself and his accusers, and announced that the "gods of the State" were immoral beings, unworthy not only of adoration, but of the most common respect! He would have died a martyr to the doctrine of the true and living God! Plato, in his "Cratylus," shows openly enough that this was in his mind; yet neither he, nor Socrates his master, dared openly avow it.

And, to speak only of the language of art and literature, leaving aside that of religion, what could be the culture promoted by Greek art and poetry? The answer is plain: that of the beautiful. But which beautiful? only the material and sensible—there can be no other answer. Hence, all the object the Hellenes could aim at was to depict, either on canvas, or in marble and bronze, or in imperishable verse, the exterior objects of creation, chiefly the noble or soft features of man and woman. This was for them the "ideal" of humanity; and in this they certainly reached perfection. No other people, since their time, has ever been able to attain such perfection of aesthetic beauty in art, as did the Greeks. But the "ideal" of human beauty must comprise more than the form. It must

reach the soul and depict the passions. What ideal of the kind could there be for the Greeks? No higher one certainly than that of the gods. Even in the supposition of Prof. Heeren, that they were never intended to be imitated morally—a proposition we will shortly discuss—at least their passions, either noble or vile, were the true “ideal” of painter, sculptor, and poet among the Greeks. Could this be a high “ideal?” Let any man, if he be a Christian at all, peruse the greatest work of Homer, the *Iliad*, to satisfy himself on this point, and we have no fear of the answer he will return. But the admirers of the beautiful in the Hellenic sense, will say that a reader of the *Iliad* in our days ought to pass lightly over the passages where the gods are described—“It is too childish to be adverted to.” We insist that these very passages ought to be seriously read and studied, if we wish to know what was the real “ideal” of Hellenic art and poetry, since this is the question.

And the writers we now oppose are Christian men, who know full well what has been, since Christianity, the “ideal” of our painters, sculptors, and poets. They have no doubt stood often in admiration before their master-pieces; they have no doubt felt, and have probably themselves not been wholly insensible to, the heavenly inspirations which gave them birth. What if the human shape, under their brush, their chisel, or their pen, is not depicted with such anatomical perfection as distinguished the works of Phidias, or Polygnotus, or Praxiteles, or Homer? The divine soul that breathes everywhere in modern productions, shows how infinitely higher is the Christian ideal than the pagan one; and to attribute to the works of antiquity the Hellenic culture and civilization is, after all, merely to say that both must have been infinitely under our own, and that the civilization they brought with them was an inferior one. It must be remarked, however, that the “love of the beautiful”—culture consequently among the Greeks—did not come from

their religion; but, rather, that their religion, all material and sensual as it was, came from their love of the "sensible beautiful," which must have been a characteristic of the race before their polytheism. Both were perhaps developed at once. But their absurd religion had very little to do with the love they felt for the beautiful. That was in them when they were born.

One characteristic, however, of their art must be ascribed to their religion, their fondness, namely, for the nude human forms. And this deserves at least a passing notice.

It is, we think, Herodotus who remarks that the Eastern nations, the Persians particularly, felt it a shame, even in men, to let any part of their body appear, except the face and hands; but that the Greeks felt no such scruple on the subject. This is the thought. We have forgotten the precise words. The remark is an important one, as it shows that for primitive man the body was a mysterious temple to be kept constantly in the "shade of the sacred enclosures and the groves," as they spoke at the time. The cynics of our days treat the question too flippantly, when they object, that covering, clothes consequently, are required in cold climates, not in warm, and still less in hot ones; and when they point triumphantly to the different clothing of the savages living under the tropics from the Esquimaux who live within the Arctic circle. This may be true of savages who have lost the sense of all the mysteries with which our humanity is sacredly surrounded. We have, only, in reply, to point to the Syrians, Persians, Arabs, Indians, and Chinese, who invariably, in the hottest weather, and in their own burning climes, cover their bodies with what may appear to be a superfluous and even ridiculous care. And it is not woman only who is always religiously covered, but in those countries man himself would feel it a shame, as Herodotus said more than twenty centuries ago, to let any part of his body appear except his face and hands. This shows that the care with which women are veiled is not, as people somewhat carelessly conclude, the

effect of an unnatural jealousy on the part of the men; but that horror of nudity is in the blood of those races who seem still to possess the modesty which became a part of human nature after the fall. And it originated in the consciousness of the corruption which had seized our senses; so that we could no more be allowed the simple freedom of look enjoyed during the period of innocence. For savages the danger is not so great, as their senses even, and especially their imagination, are blunted by their want of intellectual development. But cultivated man is bound by the laws of decency.

The Hellenes were the first of polished nations who, on account of their love of the beautiful, threw aside the restraint imposed by modesty; and, not only the wrestler, the athlete, and the racer, laid aside their dress to give, in the open day, an exhibition of their respective arts, enhanced by the sight of their natural beauty; but woman herself, at least in the public squares of Sparta, shared with man the odious privilege of barefacedness.

Religion certainly was, in great measure, the cause of this remarkable difference between the Hellenes and other ancient nations. We cannot say, however, that they stood alone in this unenviable peculiarity. The Egyptians had even anticipated them; among whom the dancing-girls and female musicians were, perhaps, the first to break through the rules of decency. We say that religion—yes, the religion of Homer and his followers—was the chief cause of the immodesty of the Greeks; since, after him, the gods could no more be represented in the severely modest garb of ancient statues; but sculptors and painters were at liberty to picture them as simple men and women that they were. It is the custom, on this subject, to congratulate the Greeks on having dared to “break through the dead formulas of old myths,” by giving to their gods the freedom of movement and the elegance of form which the “ideal of humanity” requires. We insist upon it again, that

by "breaking through the dead formulas of myths," they merely renounced all participation in the religious knowledge contained originally in the myths; and they became, as the old Egyptian priest says in the *Timæus*, "only children, without any tradition of old times." As to giving to the gods "freedom of movement and elegance of form," they merely placed them naked under the eyes of all; and so accustomed themselves to lose all feelings of modesty with respect to their own bodies and to that of others.

And we ought not to imagine that, for them, everything was so enchanting, so harmonious, so well-proportioned, that they could look on the lines, as on so many beautiful geometrical or even astronomical figures, without any reference to the senses. To think thus would be to forget, or belie, entirely human nature. Any one who has read the productions of even old Greek authors, who were far more chaste than those who succeeded them in after ages, knows full well how intense in them was, what we call in modern tongue, *sensuality*. It inspires nearly every line of their writings.

The guilt of the Hellenes on this subject was not confined to their own age and country. From them the evil spread through all European nations, and, perhaps, for all time. It is from them that the Romans, so grave at first, so chaste, so thoroughly masters over their senses, became, in time, through Grecian art, poetry, and religious festivals, ardent followers of Epicurus, altogether given to sensual pleasures, great admirers of nudity, and, at last, thoroughly vicious and degraded. It is from them that modern nations have imbibed the same spirit; so that there is scarcely any considerable art-collection without Grecian nudities. And we have the strange spectacle, everywhere in Europe, of Christian people collecting in the same edifices sacred to art, the sublime and pure pictures and statues inspired by the virtues of Faith and Chastity, together with base imitations of the universal subjects

treated by old Greek painters and sculptors. From this, likewise, the whole of Europe rejected, as ridiculous, the solemn garb of eastern men and women, so well adapted to their religion and climate, and made the alluring sight of sensual, living beauty the constant theme of fashion, and, we may say, the chief object of every social gathering.

In attributing to the far-Orient solemnity of dress and modesty of bearing, we are aware that our statement requires some qualification. It was, certainly, the rule; but there have been exceptions. Our readers will remember our description of the rock temples of the neighborhood of Bombay, where edifices, dedicated to the worship of Siva, shock the sight of the least scrupulous travellers by the spectacle of intolerable obscenities. We explained, at the time, the cause of so extraordinary a phenomenon.

## VII.

The religion of the Hellenes—idolatrous polytheism—cannot, therefore, be said to have been for them a *source of culture*, except in the sense of material, sensual culture; and, consequently, could not introduce true civilization, but only a false glitter covering real corruption. Yet it is insisted upon that, “as it was not declared a duty to the Greeks to become like the gods, no excuse for following their example could be drawn from the faults and crimes attributed to them. And, moreover, that these stories were esteemed, even by the vulgar, only as poetic inventions, and there was little concern about their truth or their want of truth. There existed, independently of those tales, the fear of the gods as higher beings who, on the whole, desired excellence, and abhorred, and sometimes punished, crime. This punishment was inflicted in this world, etc.”

The obligation to imitate God was not, certainly, so posi-

tively enjoined as a positive precept on the Greeks as it is on Christians, although, if we remember rightly, it was a duty on which great stress was laid by one of the seven wise men. Yet the principles of morality are so strict and universal that, in the opinion of all nations, they must extend to their gods if they are obligatory on man, and any violation of them by *superior beings* cannot but weaken, nay, deaden the human conscience. Even in the case of those who do not know that they are bound to imitate God, at least this imitation cannot be a crime; and every one, even the most rude and uncultivated, cannot but flatter himself that he has not been guilty of so heinous an offense, since he has but followed the example of *higher beings*, a great deal more perfect than man can be. Temptation is always more irresistible to weak humanity than to those who share in divine privileges and honors; and even in the opinion of moralists, temptation, if violent, diminishes the responsibility and renders the fault more excusable.

That these reflections acted on the pagan Greeks cannot be denied by any one acquainted with the nation. Aristophanes has clearly expressed it in his "Clouds," in the discussion between the two strange personages called *λόγος δίκαιος* and *ἄδικος*. The extent to which the thought influenced the moral acts of the people cannot be absolutely estimated, because our conscience, from which we are inclined to form our judgment, is far more instructed and sensitive than that of pagans could be; yet it is certain that conscience was not dead within them, and that, until they had practically destroyed it by their excesses, it spoke within them. Naturally their minds tried to find excuses for the gratification of their passions; and, in such cases, no doubt the *example of the gods* was one of the most successful arguments to suppress every qualm of conscience which might arise. That those stories were supposed, even by the vulgar, to be only poetic inventions, we are far from admitting. It is more probable that most of those who believed really in



the gods did not doubt the genuineness of the stories. Had they not the authority of Homer? And was not Homer a theologian, as well as an historian, geographer, and poet?

There can be little doubt that, in the innermost depths of the Grecian soul, the fear—not of the gods, but—of God, spoke even louder than the sophism we are now discussing; and that, on this account, they were morally guilty when they sinned in imitating their gods. Yet every one must admit, that, in their case, conscience ought to have been much less susceptible when the fear of God spoke on the one side, and the example of the gods drew them on the other.

We ought not to be surprised, therefore, that moral corruption increased fearfully from the age of Pericles downward. The comedies of Aristophanes are a sufficient proof of it, and if the works of other dramatists, his contemporaries, had not perished, we should probably possess a much more powerful proof of the assertion. Independently of any other testimony, the universality of a single open and degrading passion, such as is well known to those acquainted with Greek literature, would sufficiently attest our assertion. The Grecian is the only nation which did not blush to avow it. And when the sense of the most common decency is so openly outraged there can be no doubt that society is thoroughly degraded, in spite of exterior appearances. It took a long time, however, to disorganize everything; because with such openly avowed vices, there was always in the nation a great activity of mind, and a strong development of physical exertion by colonization and trade. These saved the Greeks for many ages. They were too busy for society to fall into speedy decomposition. And this also accounts for the preservation and great apparent progress of some modern nations in the midst of the most rapidly disorganizing corruption. There was, besides, in Hellenic manners, in spite of their rationalism, and at times cynic disposition, a great simplicity, moderation, and opposition to excess,

which preserved their correct taste and their artistic perfection for long ages after the decadency began. This simplicity of manners, which continued chiefly in their diet and apparel, and preserved them at all times from the excesses of Roman patri- cians under the Empire, was certainly derived from the golden guilelessness of the heroic age, whose touching stories of Cleobis and Biton, as related by Solon to Cræsus (Herod., i., 31); of the twin sons of Aristodemus, King of Sparta (vi., 52), and many others found in ancient authors, were so well calculated to refine and ennoble the character of the people. The simple Doric customs of the primitive Spartans, whom Lycurgus spoiled later by his barbarous laws (vi., 58, 59, 60,) explain also the long-continuance of that nation, in spite of such loose morality. For it is a fact strongly corroborative of what we aim at demonstrating, that the farther back we go in the history of man, the higher morality do we find in human society united with guilelessness, a noble simplicity, and, in spite of ignorance of books, profounder appreciation of the mysteries surrounding God and man. We find also a strong faith, strong in the Creator and ruler of the universe, a thorough conviction of His incomprehensibility as a basis of adoration and worship, a dependence on Him at all the moments of their life, a clear perception of the superiority of the soul over the body, a contempt for the flimsy glitter of merely exterior appearances, and the keenest relish of whatever is substantial and worthy of human aim. Hence food, dress, dwelling, all the surroundings of a patriarchal sage, show the solid greatness of the true master of creation; but his submission to the ineffable laws of God, which are written in his heart, and impressed on his nature to the very marrow of his bones, proves his acquaintance with the higher world whence he came and where he is to go back. In the presence of such facts, who dares speak of the brute as the progenitor of man? Is it not true, that in the first Brahmins of India, in the first inhabitants of Ethiopia and Egypt, in the

primitive Bactrians, in the Hellenes of the heroic age, as well—although in a far superior degree—as in the Hebrew patriarchs, the same spectacle is offered us of true heroes, real sages, great souls lodged in noble bodies, living on earth as in a dwelling of a few days, yet with all the simple enjoyments that the earth can bestow on mortals? If they were obliged, in burning climes, to dwell in caves, they adorned those stupendous excavations with all the devices of art, which the traveller admires still in the far-Orient. If flocks fed them, it was in immense droves of splendid cattle that they showed their wealth. If many of them dwelt in tents, it was to be more free to move on a free earth; and to show they were masters of the immense pastures where they could roam at will. Who can suppose that in all these circumstances there are proofs of a low, grovelling spirit akin to that of the brute? Who can see there the mere animal emerging into consciousness? But they pretend that the “primitive” man of whom they speak, lived many ages before the epoch we describe; that, in the patriarchal period, man had already reached a high degree of civilization; but it was by his own efforts and by many gradual steps that it had been attained. How is it then, that, having reached such a height of civilization, he began immediately to retrograde as we have shown he did? If man’s culture came from himself, and if it is his law to develop it, why did he stop at all, and did he not go on constantly improving? For in the theory we allude to, man is left to himself, and is perfectly able to take care of himself. He can have no master, but his own mastership is sure. We answer that his own mastership is not sure, as history proves abundantly; and if his privileges are gifts from a superior master, as we contend, as the generality of men have always believed and will, it is certain, continue to believe, then what we assert is the only rational hypothesis. Let them prove first that immense series of unsuccessful attempts ending in positive results at last; let them prove their

suppositions by stronger arguments than those they use ; let them bring out facts better ascertained and more telling on the question. Their great discoveries can be explained in a hundred ways better than the one they assume ; yet we may say that they have not placed yet on a solid footing the first step in their long progress of pretended demonstrations, and the origin and change of species is yet as great a mystery as when they began their researches ; at least many eminent naturalists, not over-loaded with Christian scruples, refuse yet to adopt their opinion. And we may confidently affirm that to satisfy all conscientious doubts about it, to convince of its truth the many learned men in natural sciences who remain incredulous, they will have to perfect their system, enter boldly their laboratories, and with the help of all the modern improvements and apparatus, which they know so well how to use, produce at last a new species whose existence cannot be gainsaid, and thus renew the old prodigies attributed to their first ancestor, the Caucasian Prometheus. Until that time we are afraid their theories will remain mere speculations, and people at last may turn them into merited ridicule.

### VIII.

From this necessary digression we return to the direct treatment of our subject. Hellenic polytheism, we saw, became positive idolatry, that is, the worship of "idols," of "the works of man." And if this was true of any country, it was true of Greece. The description of the carpenter who, according to the inspired writer, selects the most useless part of a piece of wood to make a god of it, is generally considered as an ironical exaggeration. But it is not so. It was strictly true.

Already long before, in Egypt, where art was much less cultivated for its own sake, where the myth remained always

much more pre-eminent than in Greece, we find this low and absurd kind of idolatry in full vogue, in the most strict sense, so as really to astonish the reader. We have the proof of it in Herodotus, and no one that we know has quoted the remarkable passage. Yet it deserves, indeed, to be quoted. It is taken from Euterpe, 172 :

“Apries being dethroned, Amasis, who was of the Saitic district, reigned in his stead ; the name of the city from which he came was Siuph. At first the Egyptians despised him, as having been formerly a private person, and of no illustrious family ; but he conciliated them by his address and his want of stateliness. He had an infinite number of objects of art, and among them a golden foot-pan, in which Amasis himself and all his guests were accustomed to wash their feet. Having afterwards broken this in pieces, he made from it the statue of a god, and placed it in the most conspicuous part of the city. Directly the Egyptians, flocking to the image, paid it the greatest reverence. As soon as Amasis was informed of the success of the new worship, he called the Egyptians together, and thus explained the matter to them : ‘The statue was made out of the foot-pan in which the Egyptians formerly vomited and washed their feet ; yet since it had been made a god, they paid it an unbounded respect. Why not,’ he proceeded to say, ‘act towards him as they did toward the foot-pan ?’ He was, indeed, before a private person, yet he had become their king, and they ought, therefore, to honor and respect him as such.’ This artifice won completely the Egyptians over to him ; and from henceforth they obeyed his decrees and respected him as their king.”

Undoubtedly, if the Egyptians had not believed that a change had taken place in the *foot-pan*, by being made the statue of a god, and probably by receiving the usual rites of consecration, the ingenious device of Amasis would have been altogether lost on them. But what change could be supposed

to have happened when the image of a god was made, and chiefly after it had received consecration? The theory of Iamblichus, who lived much later, it is true, but whose object was to prove that idolatry was at all times holy, reasonable, and true, that theory so strange to us, yet so natural to a pagan, must have been at the bottom of the reasoning faculty of all idolaters, when they prostrated themselves before their images. Iamblichus asserted that the god himself, or, at least, some emanation of his spirit, came to dwell in the image; so that it was, in very deed, a god. It was thus literally true that the last stage of idolatry was, as the Book of Wisdom expressly stated it, the adoration of the works of man. And their artistic perfection, under the chisel or the brush of Grecian sculptors and painters, increased, in the eyes of an imaginative people, their sacredness. The works of Phidias, of Praxiteles, of Polygnotus, were, according to public opinion, *divine works*. The epithet had been given at the first sight of their beauty. When they were carried in gorgeous processions, placed on their high pedestals, surrounded with a large array of priests and ministers of religion; when chiefly victims were led before them to be sacrificed, and the perfumes of Arabia were lavishly consumed in their presence, who could refuse his assent to their real divinity? Hence they might be, in some sense, representative signs of higher beings; they were infinitely more, namely, the gods themselves; and it would have been sacrilegious to treat them not only with disrespect, but without the honor due to the rulers of the world.

But we have not yet expressed in sufficiently clear language the strange idolatrous theory we are discussing. St. Augustine does it fully in his work, "De Civitate Dei" (Book VIII., Chaps. xxiii., xxiv.), where he replies to arguments in the dialogue "Aselepius," already known to our readers. It was ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus, but is known to have been published anonymously by some Platonist philosopher, per-

haps Apuleius. It expressed certainly the doctrine of this school.

“Hermes Trismegistus,” says the great African doctor, “has spoken of them (the dæmones) differently from Apuleius. This last author denies that they are gods; yet, placing them as mediators between gods and men, so that they become indispensable to the man who wishes to communicate with the gods, it is clear that he does not distinguish their worship from that of the higher gods. But the Egyptian Thoth says expressly ‘that there are gods created by the Supreme One, and others created by man.’ Any one hearing these last expressions will imagine that he speaks of images only which are truly the work of human hands. But he does more; he asserts that the material images which are seen and touched, and thus fall under our senses, are, as it were (*velut*), the bodies of the gods. Inside of these reside, by invitation, certain spirits endowed with the power either of harming or of benefiting those who render them divine honors and worship. For man to possess the art of uniting together invisible spirits with material substances, so that the images (*simulacra*) become, so to say, bodies animated by the spirits to whom they have been dedicated and subjected, is, according to Trismegistus, to create really gods, and thus man has received the great and admirable power of giving existence to gods.”

The same crude language is used repeatedly in the same Hermetic dialogue. One single passage more shall render the repulsive doctrine more striking and clear :

“As the Father and Lord of all,” says Hermes, “has made eternal gods to His own image, thus our humanity has figured its own gods to its own likeness and resemblance.” “You speak here of statues, oh, Trismegistus!” exclaims Asclepius; and Hermes answers: “Statues, indeed, oh, Asclepius! thy eyes can see; but why shouldst thou hesitate to believe? They are animated statues, full of a divine spirit, and endowed with

a powerful energy ; they are statues which can foretell events, and declare them by the casting of lots, or by the inspiration of the seer, or in dreams, or in many other ways ; statues which can bring to men diseases or cure them, and thus cause joy or sadness."

There was not, therefore, any exaggeration in the text of the inspired writer, whose tale of the carpenter and his work naturally brings a smile on the lips of the reader. For it is clear, from the above quotation, that, in the opinion not of the vulgar alone, but of philosophers, educated men, and pretended sages, the statues and pictures adored by pagans were true gods in the estimation of the worshippers.

This was at last the religion of refined, philosophical, artistic Greece ; and if on account of the universal taste of the people there was generally, in the exterior ceremonies, an appearance of decency, of propriety, of æsthetic culture, different certainly from the tumult and uproarious noise of the monstrous processions of Egypt, or of modern Hindostan, we ought not to think that everything was poetical, tasteful, enchanting. What was in Sparta the worship of Diana Orthia, at whose altar Plutarch testifies that "he had *seen* many boys expire under the lash ?" Yet it is pretended that Lycurgus had, by his laws, substituted a simple flagellation for the immolation of human victims. The gossiping philosopher of Chæronea, when he wrote this in his "Life of Lycurgus," boasted of the refinement of his age which had abolished all previous barbarous customs ; and he lived to see the second age of Christianity, which he does not seem to have known ; yet how many other senseless and monstrous rites existed still, and continued to exist, until they were put an end to by a pure religion ? It is known that Iamblichus and many other Neoplatonists were great partisans of magic ; and the magic of those days was like that of the modern tantras of Hindostan, the bloody, satanic handmaid of the Evil one. Horace has described it in



one of his poems (Epod. v.) ; and Julian, the apostate, worthy follower of Nero in this particular, thought\* also that future events could be read in the living entrails of expiring human victims. These words may be the expression of an indignant feeling ; but it is a fair and righteous one, in the presence of these undeniable and horrible facts.

But what we would chiefly call the attention of our readers to on this subject, is the extent to which divisions were introduced amongst mankind by these idolatrous rites. Religion was no more national ; it had become purely local. And although there has been, we hope, no deviation in our train of thoughts, although the main subject we proposed for our investigations has been steadily kept in view, and no side issue has been at any time allowed to interfere with it ; yet we must be allowed, at the moment of considering the state to which Greece and, we may say, the whole of Europe, was reduced at last, to recall to our mind the religious state of the world as it was at first, as God intended it should remain. It was, we saw, a truly Catholic religion which the primitive revelation established. All nations had received the same truths, the same traditions, the same hopes, and the same worship. The earth itself had been created for that object, and mankind, on its surface, could have remained one family. But their pride and their passions interfered with the divine plan. Gradually the unity and brotherhood of mankind was exchanged for divisions, continually increasing, until religion itself was rent into fragments, and from universal it became national. Pantheism, taking a different shape in different tribes, lent to each a particular scheme of creation, and introduced as many cosmogonies as there were peoples. Polytheistic idolatry supervening everywhere, rendered religion everywhere national, and it became invariably an affair of the State. Thus wars between nations became really wars between gods ; and treaties of alliance or of common defence, became compacts between the

deities of the contracting parties. No one thought he could worship the gods of another race; and the idea was rather, everywhere, one of hostility against all foreign religions. The Romans were the first, as we shall see, to proclaim a spirit of toleration or at least non-interference; and this happened just on the eve of the preaching of Christianity. The well-known animosity, for instance, of the Persians against the gods of Egypt and of Greece, which was their chief motive for destroying their temples and their statues; the constant clannish wars, in Egypt itself, of city against city, certainly occasioned in many cases by the mutual hatred against their respective divinities; the well-known fact that in the opinion of all ancient peoples their national gods took side for them against all foreign tribes, who received help likewise from their own divinities, many other details of the annals of antiquity supply incontestible evidence of the truth of our hypothesis; which may thus be considered an axiom of ancient history.

Greece, likewise, in the course of time, came to have a national religion. Homer made it, and it was then coëxtensive with the race. But it soon showed a tendency to become local, and, at last, arrived at the last state of decomposition in becoming individual.

That the national religion in Greece had, from the beginning, a tendency to become local, is evident from the great number of gods of the same name which came finally to be adopted as special deities in various Hellenic localities. It would require a long dissertation on the various divinities known as Zeus, Hercules, Apollo, Hermes, Aphrodite, Artemis, Athene, etc., to assign to each their several local districts. Such was not the intention of Homer, the founder of the brilliant superstition. There is in his great poem only one Zeus, one Hercules, one Apollo, etc. But it can not be doubted that, in course of time, great and essential differences came to be admitted in the various personages who bore those names.

Not to tire our readers with erudite details, which could not be, after all, but incomplete, we prefer, as usual, to copy a very remarkable passage of St. Clement of Alexandria, whose list of such gods is certainly incomplete, but which, from its graphic character, cannot but make a lasting impression on the mind of the reader. It is taken from his "Exhortation to the Heathen," Chap. ii. The great Alexandrian doctor, it is true, in this passage, selects his facts to suit the system of Euhemerus, of which he declares himself a strong partisan; and which, after all, was unable to give an account of all myths. Still the facts quoted here are undoubted, and they are sufficient for our purpose. He says:

"Agamemnon is said by Staphilus to be worshipped as a Jupiter in Sparta; and Phanocles, in his book of the 'Brave and Fair,' relates that Agamemnon, King of the Hellenes, erected the temple of Argennian Aphrodite, in honor of Argennus, his friend. An Artemis, named the Strangled, is worshipped by the Arcadians, as Callimachus says in his 'Book of Causes;' and at Methymna another Artemis had divine honors paid her, viz., Artemis Condylitis. There is also the temple of another Artemis—Artemis Podagra (the gout)—in Laconica, as Sosibius says. Polemo tells of an image of a yawning Apollo; and again of another image, revered in Elis, of a guzzling Apollo. Then the Eleans sacrifice to Zeus, the averter of flies; and the Romans sacrifice to Hercules, the averter of flies; and to Fever, and to Terror, whom also they reckon among the attendants of Hercules. I pass over the Argives, who worshipped Aphrodite, the opener of graves. The Argives and Spartans reverence Artemis Chelytis, or the cougher, from *χελύττειν*, which in their speech signifies to cough.

"Do you imagine from what sources these details have been quoted? Only such as are furnished by yourselves are here adduced; and you do not seem to recognize your own writers, whom I call as witnesses against your unbelief. Poor wretches

that ye are, who have filled with unholy jesting the whole compass of your life—a life in reality devoid of life!

“Is not Zeus, the bald-headed, worshipped in Argos; and another Zeus, the avenger, in Cyprus? Do not the Argives sacrifice to Aphrodite Peribaso (the protectress), and the Athenians to Aphrodite Hetæra (the courtesan), and the Syracusans to Aphrodite Callipygos, whom Nicander has somewhere called Calliglutos?”—the pun cannot be translated—“I pass over in silence just now Dionysus Choiropsales. The Sicyonians reverence this deity, whom they have constituted the god of the *muliebria*—the patron of filthiness—and religiously honor as the author of licentiousness. Such, then, are their gods; such are they also who make mockery of the gods, or rather mock and insult themselves. How much better are the Egyptians, who, in their towns and villages, pay divine honors to irrational creatures, than the Greeks, who worship such gods as these?”

This passage is all-sufficient to show how the former national gods of Greece had gradually become local deities. A whim, a caprice, a trivial circumstance, induced the population of a city, a town, a village, to erect a temple to some divinity which had taken their fancy. The building arose. When the question of the name came to be considered, the particular designation of some well-known god presented itself, but coupled with an epithet, a paraphrase, a specification, which rendered altogether local some hitherto national god. And these designations were, in general, accompanied with such ridiculous, or even infamous, particularities that, as St. Clement said: “The Egyptians did better, who, in their towns and villages paid divine honors to irrational creatures, than the Greeks who worshipped such gods as these.” To which he added, to explain better his meaning—and it offers an appropriate commentary on what, throughout this work, we are endeavoring to establish—“For if the Egyptian deities are beasts, they are not adulterous and libidinous, and seek pleasure in nothing that is contrary to nature....

But if the Egyptians are said to be divided in their objects of cult; if the Syenites worship the braize-fish, and if the maiote—this is another fish—is worshipped by those who inhabit Elephantine; if the Oxyrinchites likewise adore a fish which takes its name from their country; if, again, the Heraclitopolites worship the ichneumon, the inhabitants of Sais and of Thebes a sheep, the Leucopolites a wolf, the Cynopolites a dog, the Memphites Apis, the Mendesians a goat, etc.; you, who are altogether better than the Egyptians (I shrink from saying worse), who are never done laughing every day of your lives at the Egyptians, what are some of you, too, with respect to brute beasts? Of your number the Thessalians pay divine homage to storks, in accordance with ancient custom; and the Thebans to weasels, for their assistance at the birth of Hercules. And again, are not the Thessalians reported to worship ants, since they have learned that Zeus, in the likeness of an ant, had intercourse with Eurymedusa, the daughter of Clitor, and begot Myrmedon? Polemo, too, relates that the people who inhabit the Troad worship the mice of the country, which they call Sminthoi, because they gnawed the strings of their enemies' bows, and from those mice Apollo has received his epithet of Sminthian. Heraclides, in his work, 'Regarding the Building of Temples in Acarnania,' says, that at the place where the promontory of Actium is, and the Temple of Apollo of Actium, they offer to the flies the sacrifice of an ox. Nor must I forget the Samians; these, as Euphorion says, reverence the sheep; nor the Syrians, who inhabit Phœnicia, of whom some revere doves, and others fishes, with as excessive veneration as the Eleans do Zeus."

These details prove abundantly what had become, at last, of the religion of the Hellenes. It had become split up into endless divisions, and localized. Old, respectable traditions, containing real myths, intended at first to convey solemn truths, had been long before replaced by other traditions which could,

no doubt, have been traced historically to the whole race, or at least to some great Hellenic tribes. These, in their turn, had given way to local tales, perhaps still connected with local history. And, finally, the whole ended in ridiculous fables admitted as truth in some particular spot, village, township, hamlet; and of these at last the religion of the Greeks almost everywhere consisted.

## IX.

But there was yet a still lower descent, although that seems, indeed, to be scarcely possible. This was the decomposition of religious feeling into merely individual emotion. We of these days can readily understand it, because Protestantism produces everywhere something very similar in the universal decomposition of belief, and in the complete disintegration of sects, everything being reduced to individual feeling.

The Hellenes were a profoundly reflecting people. They pretended to be always guided by reason. But human reason could not admit the fables into which the exterior religion had resolved itself. Hence, for a great number of them, religion had lost all its power over their mind. To the uneducated people, the popular worship, on account of its absurdities, became finally a gross superstition. Everything, consequently, came to be worshipped by them, and every one must have his own particular belief. The educated part of the race, more able to systematize their thoughts, impressed yet with religious feelings, since man cannot exist without them, were reduced to form to themselves religious theories of their own, and to worship the beings who, in their ideas, were the real rulers of the world. These men, therefore, so proud of their science, of their literary attainments, of their artistic culture, were, of necessity, as superstitious as the common people, although in a different way. Thus, in all alike, religion became degraded to

an irrational and grovelling superstition. But superstition cannot be anything else than an individual disease of the soul. This certainly happened to the Greeks.

A similar process took place amongst the Romans of the same epoch ; and the phenomenon has been described with such graphic power and such force by Mr. F. de Champagny in his "Antonins," that we cannot do better than transfer to our pages a short passage of this admirable work (Livre, vi., Ch. iii.) : "Some philosophers were then trying (under Marcus Aurelius) to close against man all the doors leading to God ; but other philosophers knew how to vindicate the rights of the human soul, attested by its needs : 'Atrocious sentence !' cried Apuleius (de Deo Socratis), 'must men remain separated for ever from the communion with immortal beings, imprisoned in the hell of this life, deprived of all communication with the gods ! No celestial guide to watch over them as the shepherd over his flock ! . . . No superior being to curb their passions, alleviate their sufferings, and relieve their poverty !' . . . This outcry of the human conscience, which no philosophy will ever be able to repress, broke forth, then as ever, from the breast of all.

"More than this ; instead of being smothered, as it is generally to-day, by an abnormal and morbid philosophy, religion, that absolute need of man, over-excited by the impure atmosphere which surrounded it, went rather too far, and overstepped the proper limits. The idea of God remaining obscure to the soul, the soul looked outside of God himself for something which it could adore, hope in, submit and pray to . . . What it adored, ran after, dreaded, did not even receive the name of God ; it was Nature, Elements, Force, Fate, Necessity ; under the name of *Fatum*, the soul divinized whatever is inert, unintelligent, insensible. The soul, certainly, did not know the object of its adoration ; yet admitting some supernatural agency, without inquiring what it was, it went in all directions,

trying to find by its looks and its prayers a secret force, an unknown power, corporal rather than intellectual, worldly rather than heavenly, superhuman, but not divine.

“Thus, to tell the truth, no one believed, and all were superstitious; no one had any religious conviction: all felt a real religious passion. Every one followed that course with as much more impetuosity, as there was no more any dogma to trace the way. The moral disease which had produced polytheism was as active as ever, although thus reduced to individualism; and every successive day of the pagan world generated a new paganism in human souls.”

From this passage we ought not to conclude that there was a complete separation between the superstitions of the enlightened and those of the vulgar. “The atheist himself,” says the same author, somewhere else, “was not above the fear of magic, dreams, astrology. The epicurean Cæsar had his talismans. Tiberius, an open atheist, despised so much more the gods, says Suetonius, as he believed the more in his astrolabe. Pliny the Elder denies the soul and insults God; but he does not think he derogates to his dignity of a free-thinker by having faith in magical incantations to cure bodily sores. Tacitus denies Providence; yet he speaks of omens, dreams, prodigies, without any apparent hesitation or doubt. . . . Juvenal laughs boldly at mythological traditions about the ‘time when Juno was yet a little girl, and Jupiter a simple citizen dwelling in the caves of mount Ida.’ Still, when one of his friends is saved from shipwreck, Juvenal offers a hind in sacrifice to Juno, and a young bull to Jupiter, because he feels the need of thanking somebody, and does not know how to do it otherwise.”

Have we not shown, too, how in the dialogue “Asclepius”—published by Neoplatonists, and circulated by them as a rational explanation of polytheism—Hermes instructs his disciple about those “consecrated statues, full of a Divine energy,



directing the casting of lots, speaking in dreams, inspiring the predictions of seers, and showing their divinity in many other ways?"

Hence philosophers, as well as the common people, went still to consult oracles; they stretched themselves, at night, in the temples, on the bleeding hide of the bull or of the roe, which had been immolated at their expense, trying to sleep and to have dreams, which would certainly be the expression of the will of the gods. For they still read Homer frequently, and Homer has repeated several times: "*καὶ γὰρ τ' ὄναρ ἐκ Δίος ἔστι.*"

Were we to quote all the passages of the Fathers of the Church in the three first centuries, and all the remarkable texts of pagan authors during the same ages, containing proofs of the totally rotten superstition of Hellenism at the time, and chiefly of its completely local and individual character, we should fill volumes of quotations. We have, however, stated enough for our purpose. It only remains that we recall to the memory of the reader, what we have proved of the primitive religion of the race, chiefly of its monotheism and respectable traditions coming evidently from a primitive revealed doctrine, in order to compare it with the senseless fables which composed the whole religious belief of the nation at the end.

Such had been the result of the "culture," as it is called, introduced by the polytheism of Homer. All the artistic perfection, the literary excellence, the philosophical acumen of the race, had brought only religious disorganization and mythical absurdity. The same had been the case in Hindostan, in Egypt, in all Oriental countries. We must admit, consequently, that the progress had only been backwards: that a brilliant civilization is not always the best; that human society requires more than the glare of what is called "refinement," to have happiness insured, truth really developed, and the imprescriptible needs of the human soul forever secured.

Yet we ought not to imagine that what had been transmitted from patriarchal times had altogether perished ; that no trace whatever remained of the primitive revelation ; and that this inestimable gift of God, after having blessed mankind in Europe for a short period at first, had been snatched away, or wantonly dissipated, without a shadow of remembrance. We are quite convinced that something of it always remained, although the great mass of the people was altogether unconscious of it ; and to this we must ascribe the fervor, yes, the real enthusiasm with which the Hellenic race admitted Christianity. All the Greek Fathers of the Church are unanimous in finding, in their old authors, innumerable fragments of truth, for which Eusebius coined an admirable word when he said it was *præparatio evangelica*. To be sure, many of those texts adduced by the primitive fathers would not be so readily admitted by a sound modern criticism. Yet many are certainly striking ; and modern scholars have, in their learned investigations, discovered others which had escaped the Fathers of the Church themselves, unacquainted as they were with Hindoo and Egyptian antiquities. To know thoroughly Gentilism, to appreciate its real value, apart from the mass of errors and superstitions into which it finally degenerated, we must try to sift the golden grain from the chaff and the baneful seeds, and collect together something, at least, of that treasure so abundant and so rich at first, so scanty and so insignificant at last, still always precious, and bearing yet the impress of its divine origin. This we will endeavor to do in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER VII.

### HELLENIC PHILOSOPHY AS A CHANNEL OF TRADITION.

#### I.

THE precious fragments of a primitive revelation are found scattered through the writings of nearly all ancient Greek and Latin authors, and it would require an immense labor to collect them together. We can only select a few of them. And the plan we propose is to adduce first those that have been preserved and transmitted by philosophers, and pass from them to the poets, more rich yet in tokens of this heavenly treasure.

Philosophy, now called Science, was born in Greece. The Oriental and Southern nations never knew it in the sense we attach to the word. The Hindoo Sânkhya drew its doctrines as much from religious tradition as from pure reason. But the Greek philosophers, with the exception of the traditionalist branch—Pythagoreans and Platonists—left entirely aside what had been handed down from primitive times, and proposed to themselves to study the exterior world and human nature merely from the data of their own mind or senses. Thus pure rationalism started on its career, destined to invade the whole of Europe, and to give to the Japhetic or Aryan races the character peculiar to them of scientific investigators or physicists.

Whoever enters on philosophic studies, soon realizes that, when he is provided with the necessary preliminaries, namely, language and logic, he has to examine first the principles of

things (ontology and pure metaphysics); then the Author of the World, whoever he may be (Theodiceæ and Cosmogony); and, finally, coming to man himself, he has to inquire into his nature, and chiefly find out, if he can with his reason alone, what is the great object of human life (the *summum bonum*) which must lay at the bottom of ethics. These studies are anterior and far superior to the mere observation of exterior phenomena, which is the great object of physics in all its branches, beginning by mathematics—the necessary means of investigation—which stands for this material branch of inquiry in lieu of logic and philology for the previous one.

The Greeks, at first, did not propose to themselves so vast an amount of mental work. But their very first efforts required that, in course of time, they should go through the whole. Two mighty considerations, however, engrossed their attention on the very threshold of inquiry: these were the origin of the universe (cosmogony) and the *summum bonum*; of these alone are we bound to speak.

The same had taken place in Hindostan; but the Vedas had anticipated the solution. According to them, the world had emanated from Brahma, and man was to return to the source of his being. The Sânkhya, or Hindoo philosophy, must admit these as first principles, and only give its own solution, or rather explanation. In Greece, no authoritative voice had spoken. The philosopher was free to direct his investigations as he chose, and publish to the world what his reason alone had demonstrated. Hence a perfect avalanche of systems was immediately let loose on the country. Most of them, if not all, were completely atheistic. Brahma, Zeus, Amun, or whatever was the name by which the Supreme Being was known, had evidently taken no part in the creation of the world. The world had made itself. The only question was to know which was the first element, Water? or Air? or Fire?

As soon as the first link of the chain was found, the whole chain unfolded itself majestically.

When, later on, ethical subjects came under consideration, the same strange phenomena took place in Greece with respect to the *summum bonum*, the foundation of all ethics. Was man made for knowledge, or for virtue, or for pleasure? This was the theoretical question, which was always decided without any reference to the Eternal Lawgiver, who nevertheless speaks to all through human conscience. Evidently rationalism was early in the field, and promised to Europe long ages of fine-spun theories and well-balanced systems. Yet the question here presents itself, Had not the Greeks then a religion? Did they not believe in the gods, if not in a supreme one? What did the religious authorities of the race say—those who had the guardianship of religion? What did even the people, always fervently religious in Greece, say and do when such atheism was professed?

To give to these questions an answer altogether satisfactory is difficult. Yet we must try to suggest, at least, the one which seems to us the most probable and sufficient. The concrete principle which, in our opinion, renders all this less shocking and inexplicable is this—*State religion*. A great change had taken place among the Hellenes in the ages immediately preceding Thales and the other philosophers. From the heroic Pelasgic age the world had passed over to the purely republican and Hellenic; and in the change, *State religion* had been established everywhere—State religion which considered only the exterior worship as everything, the doctrine as nothing, or next to nothing. Let us examine this a little more in detail.

Our readers remember what was said of the extraordinary difference existing in Greece between the people described by Homer and the people we see inhabiting sometime after Hellenic cities: government, manners, customs, ideas, conse-

quently all, is changed. And, unfortunately, as nearly all the works of the writers of the intervening period have perished, we have not the least means of judging how the change was effected. We only see that, in the first period, all the tribes live apart, each with its own chieftain governing the sept as a true monarch; and, in the second, many tribes have coalesced to form States with republican institutions. In the first, religion is intrusted to bards and seers, who sing to the people long poems containing the former traditions, enveloped in myths, it is true, yet conveying often great truths, and proclaiming a relatively pure moral law; in the second, religion is altogether a State affair, with State rites, State gods, and really no priesthood; the whole concerned about completely exterior worship, without any dogmatic teaching and moral exhortation. In the first, we see the simple manners of an agricultural and pastoral people, abounding in all things which make life easy, but with no settled system of trade and colonization; building already cities with tasteful edifices and dwellings, yet never concentrating their efforts in close agglomerations of men, and preferring still to breathe the free air of the open country. In the second, we have the great mass of the population intent chiefly on trade, colonization, war, city life, and art. It looks as if it was question of two races altogether different. Yet we saw that, most probably, the Pelasgic race had gradually passed into the Hellenic, and this one was the second part of a series begun by the first.

These considerations render it more easy to understand the freedom of inquiry, unaffected by religious feeling of any kind which prevailed in the second period from its beginning. They spoke constantly of liberty, complete freedom; no law prevented them from embracing the various careers of commerce, of agriculture, of study, of art, of propagandism of their ideas. Provided they *conformed* to the *State religion*, they had satisfied all that piety to the gods required; and we

have no doubt that at the very time Epicurus was publicly lecturing on his atomic theory, or worse still, on his *summum bonum*, he was most exact in paying his duties to the temples, and offering victims, probably, to the deities he did not believe in. It is, indeed, surprising how soon the doctrine of the *State god* had penetrated the Greek mind, not only among the fanatic Spartans, but among all other tribes, chiefly in refined and rationalistic Athens. It was not Lycurgus alone who preached it to his rude Lacedemonians, and succeeded in making it the chief, or rather the only, belief of the nation ; but, in all other parts of Greece, the same had taken place, we do not know precisely how. Socrates himself was so fully persuaded of the necessity of the doctrine, that he admitted it, even when the measures enacted by it were evidently unjust and barbarous. And he was consistent even against his own interest, since knowing that he had been unjustly condemned, yet he remained in prison, resolved to die, although he could have escaped, because "a citizen must obey even an unjust decree." If a man is bound to submit to death unjustly, when he can escape without any injury to a third person, he will be bound likewise to obey the State in whatever he is commanded to do. Since obedience to the State is thus placed above any right, human and divine, he will have to worship what he knows is not god, if the State pronounces it to be god ; but the worship will be sufficient if it be merely exterior, and without the assent of the mind. In this system there is no truth, there is no right, there is only the omnipotence of the State. To this state had Greece already arrived ; and the strange anomaly of philosophers teaching in fact atheism, when they professed outwardly the belief of the State, has nothing which need surprise us. Hence Epicurus could tell his hearers that "the fear of the gods" is the great error which renders human life intolerable ; and that, by striking at this superstition and freeing men forever from such a bugbear, he was their benefactor ;

yet by submitting in appearance to the "established faith," by admitting gods in name, although denying them in reality, he placed himself above the possibility of a suspicion of atheism, and could continue to teach peaceably what destroyed, in fact, all religion. And Epicurus was not alone. He was not the first. He was only one among many. He merely applied practically the doctrines of his predecessors, chiefly of Anaxagoras and Democritus. In fact, the fanciful dreams of Hellenic philosophers, chiefly of the physical school, were already as numerous and as deadly as the systems of our days which succeed each other so rapidly, and would soon spread atheism broadcast over the world, if mankind, having possessed truth traditionally for so many ages, was not too profoundly impressed with the consciousness of it, to surrender its inward belief in God at the dictation of learned sophists or brilliant writers. Yes, the Hellas of twenty-five centuries ago was already the Babel of our system-mongers. It would, however, appear at first sight, that what we are now insisting on is completely opposed to the object we have in view, which is to show that the primitive doctrines transmitted to the Hellenes by their Eastern ancestors, were never altogether dead or inefficient, even in the worst times of idolatry and unbelief. This has not escaped us. But it occurred to us, that, if we directed attention to the innate spirit of rationalism so early developed in the race, and destined to spread so far and so wide, it might serve to bring out in stronger relief what we are now about to urge, since with such an early inclination to practical atheism and materialism, we see in Greece a long line of great men intent on a completely different object.

\* We mean to speak of traditionalist philosophers, and we have mentioned the Pythagorean and Platonic systems—namely, the Italic and the Academic schools. To a consideration of these, then, we now proceed.



## II.

In the midst of those numerous philosophical sects in Greece, founded merely on individual reason,—even in the domain of religious truth; all appealing to it as to the standard of belief, all warring with each other, yet all proclaiming the paramount claims of human intellect to the possession of absolute certainty with respect to the things of heaven and earth,—it is consoling to find two great and influential bodies of men agreeing with the others as to the power given to the human mind of apprehending truth and discerning it from mere sophism, yet proclaiming aloud that man has not been left without any other guide than his reason; that there are eternal, divine principles, attainable by human intellect, yet which it will never reach unless they are revealed from above; that primitively heaven spoke, and the divine word was not given to be immediately lost in the universal confusion of human speech; but that some men have fortunately received it and kept it, more or less perfectly; that the only important affair is to find those depositaries of divine wisdom, and when they have been found, to gain access to them, and learn from their lips what otherwise we should never discover, namely, the true origin of this universe and the real *summum bonum* of human life.

If all this series of reasoning is not textually expressed in the belief of the Italic and Academic schools, it is undoubtedly sufficiently apparent from the history of their founders, and the doctrines they taught. Both Pythagoras and Plato did not think that they could alone find out the truth on such important subjects of inquiry. Both travelled extensively, and Pythagoras at least went certainly to Egypt, and most probably to India, if not to the Celtic countries, to interrogate the wise men of the most ancient nations, who were more likely to pos-

sess the divine utterances at the very origin of man. Both finally brought from those foreign countries doctrines more or less pure, but which they both superadded to the teachings of their own reason. Hence we call them traditionalist philosophers; not implying that they set aside and despised what their own intellect saw clearly; but that they thought there was, for some questions, a light superior to that of their own mind, which it was the duty of the wise man to consult.

If we consider Pythagorism and Platonism apart, the first is certainly remarkable for a well-known and perfectly well-ascertained fact; namely, that all the disciples were bound to submit to the *ipse dixit* of the master, who had himself received several of his dogmas from other men. This alone would put the real stamp of traditionalism on the Italic school. But besides this important feature, it is likewise well known that the Pythagoreans, after the example of their master, considered of great moment the various Orphic traditions then floating all over Greece. They collected them, preserved them, and compared them together, thus trying to connect their own time with antiquity, and to prevent the disintegration of all ancient doctrines by the ever-moving agitation of mythological diversity going on under their eyes. We are sure that the poor fragments of Orphic lore which remained in the time of Plato, and which have been preserved to our very days, were the result of this particular care of the Italic school. Hence when Pythagorism, after more than a century of almost total disappearance in Italy and Greece, revived about two hundred years before Christ, Orphic societies rose up at the same time, in the same countries; and this well-known fact has not been sufficiently dwelt upon even by modern investigators, to show the true character of the sect of Pythagoras. It was, in fact, a real protest, in the name of antiquity, against the deluge of philosophical absurdities which the ever-gushing source of Hellenic rationalism poured constantly over the devoted field of

Europe. Unfortunately the Pythagoreans were too few in numbers; for they limited their society chiefly to the aristocratic class, which was soon overwhelmed by the flood of democracy that finally prevailed in Greece.

Our readers, we hope, will not understand us to say that everything was pure in the Italic school, that no error crept into it, and that Pythagoras himself had brought from his travels the real outpouring of the primitive revelation. Nothing is farther from our thoughts. Egypt and India had strangely degenerated, even in his own time, and Orpheus himself, that multiform personage, spoke as glowingly of the Homeric gods as of Zeus; deriving His name from Ζην and from Δίς. Pythagoras brought from Egypt or India his doctrine of metempsychosis, as a system of expiation, and thus tried to engraft on the Western tree the most flourishing branch of superstition blooming in the East. His celebrated speculations on numbers must have been brought from Egypt likewise, and were not derived from any respectable antiquity; although their chief significance, as admitted by modern interpreters, namely, the *even* and the *odd*, unity and duality, the single and the multiple, appears to have been fundamentally the great primitive Hindoo and Egyptian doctrine of the world coming forth from the Supreme, and may consequently have been a system of cosmogony, erroneous indeed, yet entirely opposed to the insensate theories of Greek physical philosophers, and far superior to them. There is no doubt that the primitive traditions had been already, to a great degree, obscured, when the philosopher of Croton, in Southern Italy, wished to make them the basis of his system. Hence, his philosophy could not save the Greek world. He himself taught his disciples to conform exteriorly to the prevalent polytheism, although it is sure that he did not believe in it. For, if many false theories and ideas were by him propagated, and upheld by the authority of his great name, it is certain that his esoteric disciples believed in One God, the

Creator and Ruler of the world, infinitely above all inferior gods and demons. Hence, on creation and the *summum bonum* the teaching of Pythagoras may be said to have been on the side of the truth; and, if not completely, at least far more so than were the atheistical and materialist doctrines of the philosophers of his time. Thus, again, is confirmed the proposition with which we started, namely, that if we trace back the history of mankind in any part of the globe, as near to his origin as it is possible for us to do, we find invariably the great and saving dogma of One God, Creator and Ruler of the universe, together with simple, noble, and comparatively pure morals, as were those of the Pythagoreans; and if we retrace our steps backwards towards later times, the more corrupt, absurd, and revolting become the religion, institutions, and social customs of all nations, until we reach the period just before the advent of the true Redeemer, when debasement had, we may say, reached its lowest depths. So true is it that the progress of mankind has ever been in a downward direction; and more particularly in the ancient world.

### III.

These few words must suffice for the Italic school. We come now to the Academy; we mean the old Academy, not the caricature invented by Carneades, but the real foundation of Plato, the great disciple of Socrates. We have said that it is a second branch of traditionalist philosophy, and we must now explain fully our meaning. We are far from pretending that everything in Platonic doctrines was derived from tradition, for that could not be said even of Pythagorism. Such a powerful mind as that of the founder of the Academy could not but have thoughts of its own; and these thoughts were most brilliant and profound. Much that he wrote was the

genuine, unassisted offspring of his own intellect; and there was in his character, as a writer, a striking originality. He united in his own person, more, perhaps, than any other author of ancient or modern times, a most dazzling imagination with the deepest reasoning faculty; so that the reader scarcely knows which to admire the most, his brilliancy or his depth. Even in what he did not invent, he was truly original by making it his own. He had certainly received from others, as we shall see, the great idea of the unity of the Godhead. But he proved it as no one else had done before him; chiefly from the innate sense of the beautiful. As one of his most recent biographers, unknown to us, has justly said: "With Plato the foundation of beauty is a reasonable order, addressed to the imagination through the senses—*i. e.*, symmetry in form, and harmony in sounds, the principles of which are as certain as the laws of logic, mathematics, and morals—all equally necessary products of eternal intellect, acting by the creation, and by the comprehension of well-ordered forms, and well-harmonized forces, in rich and various play through the frame of the universe; and the ultimate ground of this lofty and coherent doctrine of intellectual, moral, and æsthetical harmonies lies with Plato, where alone it can lie, in the unity of a Supreme, reasonable, self-existent intelligence, whom we call God, the fountain of all force, and the Creator of all order in the universe; the sum of whose most exalted attributes, and the substantial essence of whose perfection may, as contrasted with our finite and partial aspects of things, be expressed by the simple term *Τὸ ἀγαθόν*—the Good."

We do not, therefore, call Plato a traditionalist philosopher, because of his being merely a copyist and collector of texts. He is indeed exactly the reverse. He seldom quotes his authorities. He never says: "Such a man has said so and so, therefore we ought to believe him." He acknowledges the infirmity of the human intellect, and asserts that many things must

remain unknown or doubtful to us, until a teacher from heaven comes to take the spiritual guidance of mankind; and this does not exhibit much reliance on previous testimony. Yet, he undoubtedly consulted at all times what had been said or written before him; and wherever he found truth he took it and made it his own by giving it a Platonic aspect, if we may use the expression. He was far, therefore, from rejecting tradition; but on the contrary, he collected the golden coin scattered by it here and there, and made it henceforth a treasure for mankind; for those at least anxious to profit by it. But we must here enter somewhat more into detail as the subject is of some importance, and requires to be clearly understood.

By comparing what St. Augustine and Diogenes Laertius say of the Platonic philosophy, we find that, essentially and on the whole, there was nothing completely original in it, and that its founder borrowed outlines and hints from others. The great Doctor of the West (*De Civ. Dei.*, Lib. viii., cap. 4.) says that "Plato made three distinct parts of philosophy: the first, Ethics (moralem), whose object is to regulate human actions; the second, Physics (naturalem), intent on the contemplation of the universe; the third, Intellectual, by which the true is distinguished from the false." Diogenes Laertius states positively in his "Life of Plato," that he "united in his philosophy the doctrines of Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Socrates. In Physics (*τὰ γὰρ αἰσθητά*), he followed Heraclitus; in the things of the Intellect (*τὰ δὲ νοητά*), Pythagoras; in Ethics (*τὰ δὲ πολιτικά*), Socrates." St. Augustine himself, a few sentences before the one we have quoted, says, what all men know, that he followed in morals the "discipline" of Socrates; and that in Italy, where he travelled, "he had easily comprehended all the tenets of the Italic school, under the tuition of its most eminent teachers." And what is still more to our purpose, Apuleius (in *Platonem*), says expressly that, "although he had composed the body of his philosophy with members acknowledging a various origin"

—we translate literally this very pretentious author—“the natural part from Heraclitus, the intellectual from Pythagoras, and the moral from Socrates; yet he had made an homogeneous body of the whole, as if he had given it birth himself.” The reader will forgive the unseemly metaphor on account of the perfectly just idea it conveys. Did Plato, however, really adopt the physical theory of Heraclitus? St. Augustine does not say a word of this *cosmical* theorist, as having had anything to do in the formation of the system of the first Academy; but he alludes to Socrates and Pythagoras as having had a great influence in imparting to Plato their respective doctrine on ethics and metaphysics. It seems certain, it is true, that the founder of the Academy, when quite a young man, studied physical science under Cratylus, the disciple of Heraclitus, and even listened to the lesson of Hermogenes, a teacher of the atheistic tenets of Parmenides, who pretended that “creation is impossible,” because it supposes previous non-existence, and non-existence is simply inconceivable. But we know well that, fortunately, young students do not admit all the vagaries of their teachers, and that when they happen to have done it, in after-life they modify often what they had heard, should they happen to have any mind of their own. The imaginative Plato may have had all his life a great idea of fire or caloric, as a noble and active element; but he did not certainly attribute to it all the marvels of creation without the intervention of God, which was the doctrine of Heraclitus.

But we may well here set aside whatever Plato might have received from Heraclitus and Socrates, to speak only of the doctrines which the Pythagorean school handed down to him. For, as we saw, this school had collected many tenets held by more ancient sages, and which formed a great part of what we call here “old traditions.” There was nothing of the kind in the physical teaching of Heraclitus, and scarcely anything properly traditional in the moral discussions of Socrates, who

always called the attention of his hearers to their own consciousness, as the principles of right or wrong are inscribed in the hearts of all.

If there is anything certain in the life of Plato, it is his constant intercourse with the philosophers of the Italic school. In Sicily, where he sojourned three different times, he became acquainted at the court of Dionysius—both the elder and the younger—with the most celebrated Pythagoreans of his time. He made similar acquaintances in Italy, where he also resided for a time, although a few modern critics have doubted it against the testimony of all antiquity.

He received from these various teachers the doctrine of transmigration, or metempsychosis, which he certainly upholds; that of numbers, to which he often alludes; the general spiritualistic tendency of his teaching, in opposition to the thorough materialism and realism of the Sophists; and, finally, no doubt, the striking affirmation so often repeated in his writings of the unity of the Godhead. Even, strange to say, his doctrine on “ideas,” which seems to be so purely Platonic, is proved to be derived from the Pythagorean Epicharmus, as stated in the life of Plato by Diogenes Laertius; so that there was really less originality and inventive genius in the mind of Plato than there seems to be at first sight. In reading the verses of the great Pythagorean poet, Epicharmus, preserved in the “Lives of the Philosophers,” and placed by the author in juxtaposition with the very text of Plato, it looks occasionally like downright plagiarism; and the modern reader is surprised to find that it was in a *comic* poet that the friend of Socrates found many links of his pet theory on “ideas.” But it must be allowed that Epicharmus was a comic poet very different from the subsequent Aristophanes, and even from Menander. It must have been something more than mere wit which Plato did not hesitate to place on a par with the high thoughts of Homer himself.



The importance of the matter, left almost entirely aside by all modern writers on the founder of the Academy, obliges us to insist yet longer on the intimate connection which existed at all times between this philosopher and the Pythagoreans of the same age. It is alluded to by Cicero as well as by St. Augustine. He writes (*De finibus*, v. 29): "We all wish to live happy"—to know, consequently, the *summum bonum*—"we have, therefore, to see if we can find it in the doctrine of philosophers. They certainly promise it to us. If they did not, what motive acted upon Plato when he travelled through Egypt to receive from foreign priests the doctrine of numbers and of things divine? Why did he go later to Tarentum to see Archytas? Why to Locri to hear the Pythagoreans, Echebrates, Timæus, Acrion? Was it not in order to consult Pythagoras, after Socrates? etc." St. Jerome, likewise, is eloquent on the subject, and confirms admirably what was previously said on the traditionalist character of the friend of Socrates: "Thus Plato" (*Ad Paulinum*, Epist. liii.) "performed a laborious pilgrimage to Egypt, and to Tarentum, and all along that shore of Italy called *Magna Græcia*, in order that, being a master and full of influence at Athens, where the halls of the Academy resounded with his eloquence, he might become a pilgrim and a disciple; and he preferred to learn modestly the doctrine of others rather than to teach imprudently his own. While thus engaged in the pursuit of philosophy through the whole globe, he was caught by pirates, sold to a cruel tyrant; but though a captive, bound with chains, and obliged to work like a slave, he was, in fact, greater than the one who bought him, because he was a philosopher."

Isaac Casanbon, in his notes on Diogenes Laertius, remarks also that Proclus (*in Timæum*) often shows the identity of the doctrine of Plato with that of Pythagoras; and the details he gives are quite convincing.

But we find in the very letters of Plato himself, and in other

texts of ancient authors, interesting details still further confirming our allegation.

Of all the correspondence of Plato, only thirteen letters have been preserved. Of these the first is from his friend Dion, and the genuineness of the two last has been contested, we do not see, indeed, for what reason. Their main object has reference only to the relations of the Athenian philosopher with Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse. Yet we may say that, in these few scraps of literary intercourse, there are abundant proofs of Pythagorean influence over the mind of the writer. Two of the letters are addressed to Archytas of Tarentum, and in the others, chiefly in the seventh, the longest and most important, frequent mention is made of the Tarentine philosopher, one of the most celebrated characters of that period, and one of the most ardent friends of Plato. It is known that Archytas was not only a great mathematician, one of the most celebrated of antiquity, and a discoverer of several most interesting theorems, as well as of practical applications of mathematics to art; not only a statesman, as all Pythagoreans were, more or less, who raised to a high pitch the prosperity of his native city; but that he was also a fervent adherent to the doctrines of the Italic school; the chief of it, in fact, in his time; and thus he made Tarentum the headquarters of this noble sect of philosophers. He is seldom mentioned in the letters of Plato without some allusion to his friends, who formed a society with him, as all Pythagoreans did.

Archytas was, in fact, the head of the Italic school at that epoch. He once saved the life of Plato, whom Dionysius had made up his mind to kill. And although the Athenian philosopher was not always on the best terms with many of his friends, and even quarrelled occasionally with those with whom he was the most intimate, as he did once with his bosom friend Dion, there is not a word intimating that throughout his intercourse with Archytas, there ever existed the least coldness or altera-

tion of friendship between them. If the whole correspondence of Plato had been preserved, we should have, no doubt, more positive proofs on the subject. Yet there are, in one of the letters, some indications that, on both sides, inquiries were going on about earlier traditions, or, as the letter calls them, "some memorials." It is the twelfth, and as it is short, we give it entire on account of its importance: "Plato to Archytas of Tarentum—prosperity." "With what wonderful delight did we receive the memorials which came from you, and admired ardently everything of the writer's. To us he appeared a man worthy of his celebrated ancestors. For they are said to have been ten thousand in number; and they were, as the story handed down declares, the best of all those Trojans, who during the reign of Laomedon removed themselves from their native land.

"With respect to the memorials in my possession, about which you have sent to me, they are not yet in the shape I would wish them to be. Such as they are, however, I send them to you. As to the care to take of them, we are of one mind, so that there is no need of exhortation."

This is certainly obscure, but it becomes clear when we read the letter of Archytas to which this of Plato was an answer. It is given by Diogenes Laertius, and confirms everything we suspected:

"It is well of you to have recovered from your sickness; for this we have heard not only from your own letter, but also from the friends of Damiscus. We have not failed to fulfil your intentions with respect to the memorials: we went ourselves to the Lucanians, and found there the grand-children of Ocellus. We have in our possession the existing documents on his laws, on his manner of government, on the holiness of his time, and the whole genealogy of the Sept. We send you some of them; if we can find more, you shall receive them."

This is certainly a very important document; and we have

a right to wonder that no one, to our knowledge, has remarked it and commented upon it. Ocellus Lucanus was a celebrated Pythagorean author, of whom we possess yet a work on cosmogony. Plato had evidently read it, and probably other books of the same writer which have perished. He inquired about it from his friend Archytas, who received from the posterity of Ocellus documents which concerned him personally as a chief of tribe, as a lawgiver, and a worshipper of the deity, for we cannot find any other meaning in the letter quoted above; the word "holiness," *ἁσιότης*, is to be remarked.

We see the interest Plato took in these investigations. He made use of them certainly in the composition of his last works, the Republic, the Laws, the Timæus. It was not, therefore, his original ideas he unfolded in these great compositions; although he gave them a touch of his genius, and made them his own by the originality of his accessory thoughts, and the brilliancy of his imagination. We can imagine with what ardor the warm-hearted Plato threw himself into those antiquarian researches, and what rich discoveries he made in those unexplored Pelasgic fields. For it was really Pelasgic lore that fell into his hands. He speaks himself of the times of Laomedon, anterior to Priam; he speaks of a single tribe of the clan of Ocellus, to the number of ten thousand emigrating to a foreign land, probably to Lucania in Southern Italy; he speaks of the holiness then prevailing, when Ocellus was giving laws to the people of Magna Græcia. Others gave laws at the same time and in the same country; the name of Zaleucus and Charondas are well known as legislators in Southern Italy; that of Ocellus, who published these enactments spoken of here, has never come to us, except in this fragment, as a lawgiver. But it was chiefly holiness—*ἁσιότης*—a word whose meaning includes both moral purity and the right worship of God, which was of a nature to attract the great mind of the friend of Socrates.

A short phrase of Laertius confirms this: "Some authors relate—and Satyrus is one of them—that he wrote to Dion, in Sicily, to buy for him from Philolaus, three books of Pythagoras, at the price of a hundred minæ."

Plato was rich, although not excessively so, as few Greeks ever were; and he shows in many passages of his writings, chiefly in his letters to Dionysius, that he took good care of his own, and did not like to be imposed upon by those from whom he purchased. Yet there was that greedy Philolaus, who possessed three short works of Pythagoras himself, and wanted a price, which in our days would be called over-extravagant—nearly five hundred pounds sterling. There was evidently a long negotiation going on on the subject, ending by Plato giving in, and consenting to the exorbitant price demanded by the owner. The fact is certain; for not only Laertius gives these short details, but Aulu Gellius relates the same fact from other authorities, and gives a slightly altered price; he makes it "ten thousand denarii."

Plato, surely, intended to make use of these books and documents, which he bought at so dear a price, and at such an evident inconvenience of his friends; and the use he would make of them, would be to read them, collect extracts from them, and shape his thoughts in conformity with those extracts.

But in addition to Plato and the Pythagoreans, there were a host of sages and writers who evidently did not propagate their own individual thoughts, but formed a large school to whose charge seemed to be entrusted the deposit of old truths communicated ages before to mankind at large. Thus, the assertion we made is abundantly proved, that, in spite of the complete disintegration of pure dogmas by a totally corrupt and individualized polytheism, truth itself had not perished, but remained scattered in the teachings of many men belonging to the Italic school and the Academy.

## IV.

Had they not, besides, "sacred accounts of the olden times," different from both schools, yet containing holy doctrines forgotten by the majority of their contemporaries, but which they cherished and tried to preserve and propagate? In the seventh letter of Plato we find the following: "In things inanimate, there is nothing either good or evil worthy of mention; but good or ill will happen to each soul, either existing with the body or separated from it. It is on this account most important to trust powerfully (*ὄντως*) to the *sacred accounts of the olden times*, which inform us that the soul is immortal, and has judges of its conduct, and suffers the greatest punishments after it is liberated from the body. Hence every one must be persuaded that it is a lesser evil to suffer from, than to do, the greatest sins and injuries. This, indeed, the man who is fond of money and poor in soul does not hear; and should he hear, he laughs it down, thinking it wise to take his fill, like a wild beast, of food and drink, or to delight in servile and disgraceful carnal pleasures. Being blind, he is not able to see that *evil, ever united to each act of wrong*, follows him in his insatiate cravings for what is unholy, and that he has to drag along with himself the long chain of his wrong-doings, both while he is moving along upon earth, and when he shall take, under the earth" (we would say to hell), "an endless journey of dishonor and frightful miseries."

This was the style suggested by these "sacred accounts of the olden time," and we doubt if a Christian orator could express himself in fitter terms and more glowing language. We are, indeed, surprised to find it under the pen of a writer who lived in the midst of the moral rottenness of the brilliant age of Pericles; but to understand it without difficulty, we

have merely to remember that it was *an echo, yet vibrating, of a divine voice, uttered many ages before.*

There is occasionally in the Athenian philosopher a Christian sense which is inexplicable, except on the above hypothesis. For it is not only in the letter above quoted that we find it so strangely and powerfully expressed. In the "Republic," for example (Chap. v.), where is discussed the question, Which is the happier life, that of the just man persecuted as a criminal, or of the unjust man honored, and apparently successful in all his undertakings? "There will be no difficulty," said Glaucon, in ascertaining what life will be the lot of either. "It shall be told, then; and even if it should be told with more than unusual bluntness, think not that it is I who tell it, Socrates, but those who prefer injustice to justice. These, then, will say, that the just man thus situated" (considered as a criminal), "will be scourged, tortured, fettered, have his eyes burnt out, and, lastly, suffering all manner of evil, will be crucified; and he will know, too, that, in the common opinion, a man should desire not *to be*, but *to appear*, just. . . . The other, on the contrary, holds the magistracy in the State, . . . marries into whatever family he pleases, . . . forms agreements, and joins in partnership with whom he likes, succeeds in all his projects for gain, because he scruples not to commit injustice; . . . and to the gods, as respects sacrifices and offerings, he not only sufficiently, but magnificently, both sacrifices, and makes offerings, serving far better than the just man, the gods themselves, of whom, consequently, he ought to be a greater favorite." These are the reasons of those who prefer injustice to justice. And after discussing the question at length, Plato states (Chap. ix.) that "a man must be able to show what has been asserted so far as true, to be false, and fully know and acknowledge that *justice is best*," even in the extreme case previously supposed.

It is known that some Greek Fathers of the Church have

concluded, from the description of the just man under persecution, that Plato had read the prophecies of Isaiah and the other Hebrew seers. We do not think that it can be justly inferred; but there is certainly in the passage a perfume of pure and perfect morality, so akin to the Christian feeling, that it is hard to understand how Plato or Socrates himself could have drawn it from his own understanding, so that it seems very likely that they had derived it from those "sacred accounts of olden time" mentioned above.

In the same category may be placed the following quotation of Hesiod, and the short comment on it given by our author (Chap. vii.):

"How vice at once and easily we choose!  
The way so smooth; its dwelling, too, so nigh!  
Toil before virtue . . . ."

—"and a certain road," adds Plato, "both long and steep!" He alludes evidently to some ancient writer beside Hesiod; and we know how the same thought is expressed in the Gospel in nearly the same words: "How narrow and hard is the road . . . ."

But what is more wonderful still, is that the most arduous of all Christian precepts, and certainly the most unintelligible to the mere reason of man—the forgiveness of injury—is so clearly stated in the "Crito," that the first reading of it is simply startling to any one accustomed to pagan ethics, so as to induce him to read, again and again, the passage, to find out if he had not mistaken the meaning.

"*Socrates.* Is injustice, on every account, both evil and disgraceful to him who commits it? Do we admit this or not?"

"*Crito.* We do admit it.

"*Socr.* On no account, therefore, ought we to act unjustly.

"*Cri.* Surely not.

"*Socr.* Neither ought one who is injured to return the injury,



as the multitude thinks, since it is on no account right to act unjustly.

“ *Cri.* It appears not.

“ *Socr.* What, then? Is it right to do evil, Crito, or not?

“ *Cri.* Surely it is not right, Socrates.

“ *Socr.* But what? To do evil in return when one has been evil-entreated, is that right or not?

“ *Cri.* By no means.

“ *Socr.* For to do evil to men differs in no respect from committing injustice.

“ *Cri.* You say truly.

“ *Socr.* It is not right, therefore, to return an injury, or to do evil to any man, however one may have suffered from him. But take care, Crito, that in allowing these things, you do not allow them contrary to your own opinion. For I know, that to some few only those things appear to be true. These men, consequently, and they to whom they do not seem true, have no sentiment in common, and must needs despise each other, while they look to each other's opinions. Consider well, then, whether you coincide and think with me; and whether we can begin our considerations from this point, that it is never right, either to do an injury, or to return an injury, or when one has been evil-entreated to revenge oneself by doing evil in return, or do you dissent from and not coincide in this principle? It has been my conviction for a long time, and it is still so now; but if you, in any respect, think otherwise, say so, and inform me. Should you persist in your former opinion, which is mine, hear what follows.

“ *Cri.* I do persist in it, and think with you. Speak on, then.

We ought not thus to be surprised, if such was the doctrine not only of Socrates, but of Plato his disciple, to hear him assert that a man who knows he is to be ‘judged after his death,’ ought to reflect often on the morality of his actions, in order

to prevent the future judgment by that of his own conscience; teaching thus clearly the practice of the daily examen, so well known to Christians. The real text, and the very passage where it is to be found, escapes us for the moment, but it is certainly expressed as clearly as we assert.

Should any reader require more convincing proofs of the spirit of traditional inquiry in some, at least, of the philosophical sects of Greece, he will find a large number of them in the fourteenth chapter of the fifth book of the *Stromata* of St. Clement, which has for its heading: "The Greek Plagiarisms from the Hebrews." He will find there that Thales, being asked, "If a man could elude the knowledge of the Divine Being while doing aught?" He answered: "How could he, who cannot do so while thinking?" And "the Socratic Antisthenes, paraphrasing that prophetic utterance, 'To whom have ye likened me?' says that 'God is like to no one; wherefore no one can come to the knowledge of Him from an image.'"

St. Clement may, in this long chapter, have attributed too uncritically a knowledge of the Bible to Greek philosophers; but many of their utterances are so repugnant to the general opinions of their time, and in many cases to their own ordinary ideas, that we cannot indeed explain many of them, except on the supposition that they came from an older and holier source, whose stream in its wanderings had at last reached them.

## VI.

But this very fact of St. Clement of Alexandria attributing to the Hebrew traditions, as a source, many of the thoughts and maxims of Hellenic philosophers, seems to be clashing with our general assertion referring them to an original primitive revelation. Yet, both derivations, instead of contradicting,

really confirm each other. In comparing together the primitive belief of Hindostan, Egypt, and Greece, and finding so many points of agreement, we conclude that the traditions of these three races came from a time previous to their separation, an epoch, now sufficiently well ascertained, possibly long before the Mosaic dispensation, at least before the period when it became capable of influencing other nations; and that the truths common to those great races came from the very origin of mankind, and must be referred, altogether, to the patriarchal epoch. But nothing could be farther from our thoughts than to deny the subsequent moral and religious influence of the Hebrew books and traditions on the Gentile nations of antiquity. In order that the Jewish people and religion should have such an influence, God placed it in the centre of the world, and willed that its life should ebb and flow in the very eddies of pagan life, so that Assyria, Chaldæa, Persia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome should know practically the great, consistent, and ever-accessible monotheistic people of antiquity, as an auxiliary means of preserving truth.

But the Mosaic revelation, instead of being antagonistic to the patriarchal teaching, was only a development of it, and a more definite preparation for the Redeemer. One thing is sure, however, that whatever came to Greece from Hindostan could not have passed through Judea, as there is not the least proof, or probability even, of communication between both countries; and the Hindoo myths must have been derived from a higher antiquity. On the other hand, whatever is found in Hellenic philosophers as evidently taken from the Bible and later Hebrew traditions, could not have come from India; since the Pelasgians and Hellenes, after their primitive migration, never kept any intercourse whatever with their Aryan ancestors. And it is proper that at the end of this chapter a word should be said of this last kind of *plagiarism*, as St. Clement calls it.

(a). First, it is well known that he was not the only Father of the Church who believed in that intercourse of Gentile nations with the Hebrews, so that they—the nations—had received many great religious truths and historical traditions from them. Most of the Greek Fathers were of the same opinion. Eusebius of Cæsarea, in particular, enumerates in his “*Propaideia, or Præparatio Evangelica,*” an immense number of instances, some of which are certainly very striking, more so, according to our thinking, than most of those quoted by Clement of Alexandria. Natalis Alexander, in his “*Historia Eccles. Vet. Test.*” (*Dissertatio X., Prop. ii.*), remarks with justice that the reflections of Eusebius, in his Eleventh Book, Chap. xxvii., etc., are in truth forcible and even convincing; and that any one who reads those chapters with attention, cannot but believe that much of what the “divine” Plato has said on the immortality of the soul, on creation, on the end of the world, on the resurrection of the dead—of which he gives an example such as we read in our Lives of the Saints—and lastly on “judgment,” must have been in the main taken from our Holy Scripture.

(b.) In the second place, there can be no doubt that many pagan myths were mere allegories containing Biblical facts, or at least alluding to them and supposing them.

Father Guérin Durocher, in his “*Histoire véritable des Temps Fabuleux,*” comments at length on many of them. If, too often, his conclusions may be called rather fanciful, it is certain that in many points he convinces his readers of the truth of his explanations.

(c). More singular still, the thinkers of our age begin to come back again to those exegetist interpretations which appeared to have been abandoned for ever; and Mr. Gladstone, in Chap. vii. of his “*Juventus Mundi,*” not only refers to them with approval, even as high up in time as Homer himself, but tries to explain the process as it took place in antiquity, which no previous author, to our knowledge, had done.

Zeus—he justly remarks—in his Olympian personality is, with respect to morality, far below Apollo and Athenè, but “as the traditional representative of providence and the Theistic idea,” he is far above them. Thus, the twofold character of Zeus in Greek mythology is accepted by Mr. Gladstone, as it seems to be by the generality of writers in our age; and as Olympian, son of Kronos, he does not correspond to the ideal of God in the Bible anything near so precisely as Apollo and Athenè do. The following are his words: “Many elements of the Hebrew traditions recorded in the Holy Scriptures, or otherwise preserved among the Jews down to later times, appear in the Olympian court of Homer. But they are not found in all the personages that compose the assemblage; nor even in all those deities whom, from various kinds of evidence in the Poems, we perceive to have been fully recognized as objects of national worship. Further, in the characters where the features corresponding with Hebrew traditions mainly appear, there is a peculiar elevation of tone, and a remarkable degree of reverence is maintained towards them, so as to separate them, not indeed by an uniform, but commonly by a perceptible and broad line, from the remainder of the gods.

“Besides the idea of a Deity which in some sense is three in one, the traditions traceable in Homer, which appear to be drawn from the same source as those of Holy Scripture, are chiefly these:—(1.) A Deliverer, conceived under the double form, first of the ‘seed of a woman’—a Being at once Divine and human;”—Mr. Gladstone understands this of Apollo; “secondly, of the Logos, the Word or Wisdom of God,” meaning no doubt Athenè. (2.) “Next, the woman whose seed this Redeemer was to be”—Lèto. (3.) “Next, the rainbow considered as a means, or a sign, of communication between God and man—Iris. And, finally, the traditions of an Evil Being, together with his ministers working under the double form of . . . ‘open war,’ and of ‘wiles;’ as a rebel,

and as a tempter. This last tradition is indeed shivered into fragments, such as the giants precipitated into Tartarus, and as Atè roaming on the earth . . . . The other four traditions appear to be represented in the persons of Apollo, Athenè, Lèto, and Iris . . . . If, in the progress of time, and with the mutations which that system gradually underwent, the marks of the correspondence with the Hebrew records became more faint, the fact even raises some presumption that, were we enabled to go yet further back, we should obtain yet fuller and clearer evidence of their identity of origin in certain respects."

A few pages back the same author had already made the same assertion, perhaps even in stronger terms, and had tried to explain the process of transmission from the "Hebrew records," as he calls them, to the Hellenic primitive mythology.

"The features" he had mentioned, "in the case of the two first-named deities particularly"—Apollo and Athenè—"impart to the pictures of them an extraordinary elevation and force, such as to distinguish them broadly from the delineations of other gods, in whom these particular features are wanting. The features themselves are in the most marked correspondence with the Hebraic traditions, as conveyed in the books of Holy Scripture, and also as handed down in the auxiliary sacred learning of the Jews. But while it seems impossible to deny the correspondence without doing violence to facts, on the other hand we are not able to point out historically the channel of communication through which these traditions were conveyed into Greece, and became operative in the formation of the Olympian scheme."

Yet Mr. Gladstone attempts it, and although with much diffidence he supposes "that the Phœnician navigators offered the natural and probable explanation of any such phenomena. Because, on the one hand, we know, from the historic books of Scripture, that the Phœnicians were at an early date in habits of intercourse with the Jews; while on the other hand, they

not only were in like habits with the Achaians of Homer, but also, as far as we can discern, no other nation had a sensible amount of intercourse with Greece, or if there were such, it passed under the Phœnician name."

And the writer endeavors to give greater force to his ideas by bringing forward the myth of Bellerophon, which he tries to prove to have been originally Phœnician, and which, in his opinion, is a legend of Joseph, since he says, "there is a striking similarity between Bellerophon, solicited by the wife of Proitos, and Joseph, by the wife of Potiphar."

Whatever strength may be granted to this last supposition—and, in our opinion, there is very little probability in it, since the two stories of Joseph and Bellerophon are completely at variance with each other in all the other details—yet the hypotheses of Mr. Gladstone respecting Apollo, Athenè, Lèto, and Iris, chiefly on the two first, are at once new and startling. His subject confined his researches to the poems of Homer, and the very idea of finding in the Iliad and Odyssey, analogies with the Bible, appears at first sight almost a fantastic one. Yet, if the author has not carried his theory to a real demonstration, he has at least presented it with so much plausibility as to make it probable and serious; a result which would not be so successfully attained, if in our day the theory were applied to long-subsequent Hellenic authors. The little we have said may be considered as strictly sufficient; yet we have availed ourselves only of the labor of ancient authors, and we could not treat the subject in extenso. The learned Huet, Bishop of Avranches, is, we think, the last who did it, at least in an exhaustively erudite manner for his time, in his "*Démonstration Evangélique.*" But, since Huet, many discoveries have been made in the field of philosophy, with respect to classical Greek and Latin writers, as well as to Christian authors of the first centuries. The same subject treated exhaustively in our days, with the help furnished by the German, French, and English

editors of classics, and by the numerous additions made to the authentic works of the Fathers of the Church, and of profane writers of antiquity, by such men as Angelo Mai, would surely bring the argument so near to a demonstration, that all would be obliged to admit that, either from the remnants of primitive revelation, or from intercourse with the Jews and the knowledge of Holy Scripture, the Gentiles of Greece and Italy were acquainted with many primitive truths which polytheism was not able wholly to obliterate.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE GREEK AND LATIN POETS AS GUARDIANS OF TRUTH.

#### I.

HELLENIC traditional philosophy counteracted to a great extent the evil consequences of an unbridled rationalism, which in Greece threatened, from the first, to make atheism and materialism everywhere prevalent. Either the primitive traditions on the unity of God, on the immortality of the human soul, on the eternity of rewards or punishments after death, on the sinfulness of man, and the necessity of expiation, etc., etc.; or the same truths and many others contained in the "Hebrew records," as Mr. Gladstone has it, became the heirloom of Europe, as they had been previously of Hindostan, Bactriana, and Egypt; and this chiefly through Pythagorism and Platonism. Thus, something at least of the primitive universality or Catholicism, as we expressed it, of the patriarchal religion, continued to subsist in the western part of the old world, as it did formerly in the central or eastern part of it. Yet—and Mr. Gladstone remarks it—the primitive brightness of the truth gradually grew dimmer, and error became more and more prevalent; so that, according to him—and we agree with him perfectly on the subject—the higher up our researches extend in antiquity, the more pure do we find the belief of mankind, and the more resembling our own. "If in the progress of time, and with the mutations which that (the Homeric) system underwent, the marks of the correspondence with the Hebrew records became more faint, the fact even raises some presump-

tion that, were we enabled to go yet further back (than Homer), we should obtain yet fuller and clearer evidence of their identity of origin in certain respects." (p. 211.)

This chapter in its entirety will be devoted to showing how that the poets, who were, in the main, guilty of introducing idolatry in Europe, were nevertheless the true preservers of the greatest number of old traditions handed down to the very times of our Lord. For Poetry is truly a divine gift, and cannot exist without a kind of inspiration, as Plato proves in one of his dialogues, and with justice did Raphael, in representing her on the walls of the Vatican, give her wings, which he refused to Philosophy. We have no doubt that, if Plato, who was constantly looking into the surviving fragments of old philosophers and lawgivers, had condescended to do the same for the bards of "olden time," and of his own age, he would not have been so severe in excluding the poets from his city, conducting them, it is true, with respect to the limits of its territory, and there sending them on their way, crowned with chaplets of flowers, and loaded with expressions of the highest regard. He might have permitted them to remain; but with the injunction of cultivating ancient lore, and refraining from inventing false tales.

Of Orpheus and his numerous school, enough has been said. But the tragic dramatists alone could furnish us with a long list of passages strikingly illustrating our thesis. We will select a few of these. The most remarkable of them is, undoubtedly, the strange poem of "Prometheus bound." Many interpretations of it have been given. Which is the surest? No one can say. The old mythologists themselves did not agree; and the modern critics content themselves with an abstract of the various old myths supposed to be contained in it, to which they append their comments, often as fanciful as the legends themselves, if not more so. Baron von Humboldt saw in it merely a record of Phœnician colonization. Others

saw in it the embodiment of the first struggles between the primitive Pelasgic pantheism and the more recent Olympian system of idolatry represented by Zeus. We have already observed that it might represent the constant and cruel hardships of the long migrations of Pelasgians or Hellenes from India to Greece, and, especially, when they reached the almost impassable heights of the Caucasus. But the poem of Æschylus contains many details which cannot be possibly explained by such realistic and common-place interpretations. The great tragic writer relates several incidents as no other traditional narration has reported them. Yet his version of it is full of inconsistencies. It is evident that he had some ancient documents, perhaps the most ancient of all, and he has inserted them in his poem almost at random; without failing, however, to infuse into them a plentiful admixture of his own thoughts. But in many of them there is intrinsic evidence that he could not have invented them, but must have taken them from some ancient source. Being a pagan Greek, he could not understand the myth; and in order to give an exuberant life to his poem, he has inserted in it the notions polytheism gave him of Zeus, Hephaistos, Hermes, etc.; and the grand figure of Prometheus has suffered from it. The consequence is, that it is impossible to make a consistent tale of the whole poem, and we have to endeavor to find in it what is really ancient, and could not have issued at all from the imagination of the poet. In the course of such an investigation we shall fall on the most extraordinary and sublime traditions, far superior to any of those preserved by Orpheus, Pythagoras, and Plato. We must, however, start from the supposition that Christianity is true; and that the fall and the then future redemption of man, in spite of the opposition of Satan, are two great facts kept in the remembrance of all ancient nations. Voltaire himself has acknowledged it.

## II.

A very erudite and clever writer of three most interesting articles on the "Prometheus bound," in the "Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne"—Mr. C. Rossignol—places Æschylus first of the three great Greek dramatists, because he is "more true to the old traditions, more severe in his style, larger in his mind and views, and far more majestic in all his conceptions" than Sophocles, and still more than Euripides, whom the critic "willingly gives up to the wrath of Aristophanes and of Plato." William Schlegel says, that "the other fictions of Greek tragic writers are merely shreds of tragedy, but the Prometheus bound of Æschyles is Tragedy itself in all its primitive and glorious splendor."

All modern critics admit that Æschylus, in this poem, did not give merely the invention of his own fancy, but embodied in them old traditions handed down to him, and preserved in his time by many authors.

But the question is, What were those traditions? And what was the true character of Prometheus, according to them? Mr. C. Rossignol, in his second article, states that "several passages of the poem"—he quotes only one, and that not by any means the most striking—"have filled with stupor some men of intellect by reminding them of Christ, who suffered for the redemption of man." He does not name them, and we were before totally ignorant of the fact that such an interpretation had been given to this tragedy. This hypothesis he altogether rejects, because Prometheus often displays in the poem "a deep pride and a concentrated rage" utterly opposed to the character of the Redeemer. He then adduces several passages which display the contrast existing between Prometheus and Christ. In his opinion the bound "Titan" is Adam after his fall, and he brings forward a considerable body of proof in support of it.

We think, however, that Mr. Rossignol has not rendered sufficient justice to the opinion he condemns, and that a number of remarkable passages can be quoted from the poem to substantiate it; so that after all Æschylus may have jumbled together several traditions in his possession; and, being a pagan and not understanding them, he may have unknowingly given to the character of Prometheus, features altogether inconsistent and antagonistic. We are glad to find that the writer in the "Annales de Philosophie" admits fully the double character of Zeus as existing in the poem of Æschylus—Zeus the Supreme, *pater Deorum hominumque*, and Zeus, the son of Kronos, the Olympian husband of Juno. This naturally creates some confusion in the myth, and the distinction ought to be carefully kept in view. We say, then, that the Olympian god whom Prometheus opposed in heaven is Satan himself, the enemy of the human race. And on this supposition, based on the drama itself, we proceed.

First, in two remarkable passages of the poem, Prometheus is stated to know all future things, and to have been aware of the consequences of his opposition to Zeus, when he took pity on the misfortunes of mankind. This has escaped the notice of many commentators; and Mr. Rossignol himself seems to think that the "hero" was ignorant of his fate, and consequently cannot be the One we love to call the Redeemer.

The first passage is taken from verses 101 κ. τ. λ, and reads thus:

πάντα προὔξεπίσταμαι  
σκεθρῶς τὰ μέλλοντ', οὐδέ μοι ποταίνον  
πῆμ' οὐδέν ἤξει.

The literal Latin translation is:

"omnia prænovi  
accurate quæ futura sunt, neque mihi inopinata  
ulla calamitas adveniet."

The literal English translation given by T. A. Buckley is: "I know beforehand all futurity exactly, and no suffering will (have) come upon me unlooked for." These are the very words of Prometheus himself. There are here two very distinct propositions; the first asserts his general foreknowledge which embraces everything, which he must have possessed in heaven, as well as on the rock on which he was bound; the second refers to the evils yet in store for him. And, as in the same passage, a few lines before, he calls himself a God, he is certainly, in the opinion of Æschylus, far above the Olympian gods, above the son of Kronos himself, whose foreknowledge is so limited that he does not know his future fall, announced everywhere in the poem. Satan, likewise, did not know that Christ was the Son of God, and that he would put an end to his power. Hence the temptation related in the gospel.

The other passage is taken from the verses 26δ, κ. τ. λ.

ἐγὼ δὲ ταῦθ' ἅπαντ' ἠπιστάμην  
 ἐκῶν ἐκῶν ἡμαρτον, οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι,  
 θνητοῖς δ' ἀρήγων αὐτὸς εὐρόμην πόνους.

The literal Latin reads:

"ego vero hæc omnia non ignorabam.  
 volens, volens deliqui, non infitiabor;  
 mortalibus opitulando ipse ærumnas nactus sum."

And the literal English: "But I knew all these things; willingly, willingly I erred, I will not gainsay it; and in doing service to mortals I brought sufferings upon myself."

The majority of commentators assign to the word ἡμαρτον, an interpretation completely wrong. They make Prometheus confess here that he had *sinned* in opposing Zeus; and in refusing to repent of his sin and become reconciled with the god, he shows only obstinacy and rage. The nymphs of the chorus had already, a few lines back, used the word ἡμαρτες, and the same

commentators understood it of sin likewise, and pretend that the friends of the suffering hero exhort him to repent. But the verb *ἀμαρτάνω* has generally quite another meaning beside sinning. The first and most obvious one is, to make a mistake, to be wrong in judgment, to err in consequence of it, and here it is obviously the meaning of the poet. The nymphs of the chorus had used the word *ἡμαρτες*, "thou hast been wrong or foolish," as we say colloquially; and Prometheus applies the same word to himself because it had been used by the nymphs, his friends: "Yes," he says, "I have been foolish enough for my own interest to oppose Zeus; but I did it willingly, although I knew that my pity for mankind would bring these sufferings on me."

It is true that, directly after, Prometheus adds, "Yet, not at all did I imagine that, in such a punishment as this, I was to wither away upon lofty rocks, and to find myself bound to this desolate, solitary crag." This is not certainly in accordance with the previous assertion that "all futurity" was open to the eye of the God. Æschylus thought, probably, that to make any god so precise in his foreknowledge, as that such inferior details as a "solitary crag" should be unveiled to him would be unworthy of Deity. He had not found this certainly in the traditions he possessed, and he merely contradicts what he had previously asserted.

The next passage we shall quote, commences from the 235th line. We will not give it in Greek, as its meaning is not, as far as we know, disputed. It reads: "These schemes" of Zeus, "no one opposed except myself. But I dared: I ransomed mortals from being utterly destroyed, and going down to Hades," namely, to hell. The two previous passages are in these few phrases explained thoroughly, so that no critic can put their true meaning in doubt. They are the words of the Redeemer.

Another argument in support of the opinion of those who see in Prometheus an image or type of the Saviour, is derived

from the character of Io in the poem. Mr. Rossignol himself sees in her the plain features of Eve after her sin, and it is proper to refer to his ideas on the subject in order to understand the character and office of the hero of the drama. Mr. A. Nicholas, also, in his "Etudes Philosophiques sur le Christianisme," sees in Io the first mother of mankind; as, in Prometheus, he acknowledges Adam or the human race.

"Io," says Mr. Rossignol, "bears all the characteristics of the unfortunate Eve; like her prototype, she is under a curse, miserable, a wanderer, followed by the heavenly wrath from country to country; the earth is bathed by her tears, and echoes to her groans. But the picture is yet more true when it embraces the fate of all women before the coming of the Messiah. They are happy and respected nowhere; their dignity is misunderstood, outraged . . ." Mr. Nicholas speaks almost in the same terms.

But what does Io herself, in the poem, expect from Prometheus? what does she see in him? what does she think of him? Had the hero been merely Adam—although we do not deny that the poem bears also this interpretation in many passages—how different would have been the meeting of the two forlorn sufferers!

"*Io* . . . Clearly define to me what remedy there is for my disease; speak, if at all thou knowest; speak, and tell it to the wretched roaming damsel.

"*Prom.* I will tell thee clearly everything which thou desirest to learn . . . in plain language, as it is right to open the lips to *friends*. Thou seest him who bestowed fire on mortals, Prometheus.

"*Io.* O, thou that didst confer such a benefit on mankind, wretched Prometheus, tell me for what offence thou art undergoing such a terrible penance?

"*Prom.* I have just ceased lamenting *my own* pangs.

"*Io.* Say who it was that bound thee fast in this cleft?



"*Prom.* The decree of Zeus, but the hand of Hephaistos.

"*Io.* And for what offences art thou paying the penalty?

"*Prom.* Thus much alone is all that I can clearly explain to thee."

Was the document on which Æschylus based his tragedy reticent on the answer to such an important question? Or, having the answer plain before his eyes, and being unable to understand its import, did he fall back, as was usual among Egyptians and Greeks, on the necessity of keeping secret the mysteries? We are inclined to accept this last interpretation. Thus Æschylus did not dare to write: "For *thy* offences I am paying the penalty!"

### III.

But we must not suppose that the other tragedies of the great Eleusinian poet contain nothing of a similar import. Among those which have survived the injuries of time, there is only one entire "trilogy," embracing the *Agamemnon*, the *Coephori*, and the *Eumenides*. It is the story of Orestes, from the original cause of his matricide, to his expiation. In the opinion of many modern critics, it is the greatest tragic composition in existence; and as it is complete, it can give us, they say, a more exact idea of the Greek stage than any other poem we possess. Our subject, however, is not concerned with its artistic merits. It is the echoes of tradition we must endeavor to detect in it. It is, in fact, another exposition of moral truth, such as is contained in the book of Job and in the prophecies of Ezechiel. And as, confessedly, the Hebrew poems of both inspired writers are among the grandest conceptions of the Old Testament, it is not a little striking to find some resemblance to them in a Greek writer only a little older than Pericles. Æschylus, in fact, lived to see the great man who gave his name to the golden age of Greek literature. But

he sternly opposed his innovations in religion, politics, and even art. In the words of Mr. E. H. Plumptre: "He found on his return (from Sicily) new men, new measures, a new philosophy, a new taste in poetry. . . . Men who could claim no connection with Eupatrid descent were pressing forward to the foremost place of power. The institutions which were held most sacred as the safeguard of Athenian religion were criticised and attacked. The court of Areiopagos, which had exercised an awful and undefined authority in all matters connected, directly or indirectly, with the religious life of the State, was covertly attacked under the plea of reforming its administration. Oracles and divinations no longer commanded men's reverence and trust. There were whispers that men were beginning to say that there was no God; or that the old name of Zeus was to pass away before those of a Supreme Intelligence, or a measureless vortex. And the leader of the movement, in all its bearings upon religion, politics, art, and thought, was one who inherited the curse of the Alcæonidæ, against whom the aristocratic party had revived the memory of that curse, who had been suspected himself of sacrilege and scepticism on account of his connection with Anaxagoras" (namely, Pericles).

These were the feelings which prompted Æschylus to write his celebrated trilogy. In it, consequently, we have his inmost thoughts on all those great subjects; and as he wrote it only three years before his death, when he was already sixty, we find in it the most mature reflections of this great mind on human life, the soul, moral evil, its punishment, and possible expiation. It does not contain, consequently, like the Prometheus bound, traditions of primitive history, but the thoughts of antiquity on all those most interesting topics; and our task will, later on, consist in discovering, as far as possible, how Æschylus found them; if they were the product of his own imagination, or if they had not been proclaimed long

before, so that he might have obtained a knowledge of them.

The great tragic poet was, undoubtedly, a writer eminently *conservative* of old traditions. He was certainly inclined towards whatever was truly ancient. He preferred the old Chthonian gods, with their dim light of Hades' sun, to the new divinities of this sublunary world of earthly light; and he shows it both in his Prometheus and in this Oresteian trilogy. He stood firm for the old Areiopagos against the new reformers of Justice. He leaned even towards the harsh Erinnyes, and would not have their worship abolished in his city of Athens. Yet he protested loudly, in this very last poem, against the terrible and extreme doctrines that had prevailed for long ages before him in Greece; and he announced the necessity of employing the good offices of the new gods—Apollo and Athenè chiefly—for a reform of the former unnatural severity.

What had been until his time the doctrine of Greece on sin and its expiation, on the curse uttered against races and families, on the most frequent causes of the wrath of Zeus, and the invariable and pitiless character of the punishment inflicted on those who incurred the wrath of the gods? It had carried harshness to absurdity; and yet it was only a too sweeping conclusion drawn from true and heavenly-revealed premises. Any great crime—murder, adultery, the violation of hospitality by lust or other outrage, parricide chiefly, and the murder of infants, as in the case of Atreus—were thought to be absolutely irreparable crimes, which no amount of repentance and expiation could wash away from the soul or the body. Nay, more, the guilt passed directly to the posterity of the culprit, until the whole race was finally destroyed. Then only were the Furies satisfied. Œdipus was not guilty of wilful incest and parricide; yet not only was he awfully punished, but his children perished by their own hands as an atonement for the crime of their father. Agamemnon was killed by his own

wife on account of the atrocious misdeed of Atreus, his father ; and so of many others. As Rev. W. Lucas Collins expresses it in his "Æschylus" (Ancient Classics for General Readers), page 133 : "We are so much accustomed to regard each man as responsible for his own sins, and these only, that we are inclined to forget how much is to be said for a different view—to forget that children bear the iniquity of their parents. Now here is a nation—the Hellenic—full of the joy of life, and full also of careful and wondering reflection—just like a child, in fact, in both ; and this nation gives us . . . as its experience, that a man is not entirely responsible for his own deeds, but is impelled by temptation, which comes on him in punishment of his father's crimes. The moral unit, so to speak, is a house, not a man. A family sins, and a family is punished. The gods, then, are just, though their course of action presses harshly on the individual."

This is an exact exposition of the case, except that the writer does not say enough, since he does not state that, in many instances, the crime was thought by the Hellenes to be incapable of expiation, even did the posterity of the guilty embrace a virtuous life. In this, evidently, the old Greek religion erred by excess.

But how were the Hellenes induced to adopt such extreme doctrines ? No reason can be found for it, unless we go back to the origin of mankind, and hear the voice of heaven crying out to the sinful father of the human race, "Quia audisti vocem uxoris tuæ, et comedisti de ligno ex quo præceperam tibi ne comederes, maledicta terra in opere tuo, etc." They had heard from tradition that the sin of the first man had brought a curse on the earth itself, and on his posterity, and they concluded that the sin of a father passed to his children ; and all other nations of antiquity drew the same conclusion. But they went further. They first attributed the same frightful effects to sins of ignorance, as we call them ; taking into account only the material

act, and supposing the guilt, when in fact there could be no responsibility. And, further, as they had not heard of a Redeemer, and of the treasures of mercy opened through Him for the repentant sinner, they supposed that the destruction of the whole race or family could alone expiate the crime. It was chiefly murder which took such awful proportions, and brought such frightful consequences; because they had heard probably from the traditions of their ancestors that the first murderer had received for his sentence an absolute curse without any qualification, "Maledictus eris super terram quæ . . . suscepit sanguinem fratris tui de manu tua." They had more probably yet heard that the second father of mankind, directly after the deluge, of which they certainly knew, had uttered these awful words without a word of attenuation and explanation: "Quicumque effuderit humanum sanguinem, fundetur sanguis illius; ad imaginem quippe Dei factus est homo." We say that all this had *probably* come to the knowledge of the Hellenes, because if they knew nothing of it, the fixedness of their belief in the extreme punishment due to murder, even of material murder, is inexplicable.

But the Greek error went yet farther. According to it, God often punished men and races of men when there had been no crime committed, when only an uninterrupted prosperity offended Him, and excited His wrath. He was a jealous God, not in the sense of the Old Testament, jealous of His honor, and chastising those who transferred to false gods the worship due only to Himself; but in the sense that man is envious of the prosperity of his neighbor. This strange hallucination, transferring to the Almighty the low passions of His creatures, was universal, not only among the Greeks, but likewise among other ancient nations, and especially among the Egyptians. Herodotus relates several strange stories based on this error. That of Polycrates of Samos is known to everybody. As he had never met with any reverse of fortune, with even any dis-

appointment during his whole life, Amasis of Egypt wrote to him: "Your good fortune frightens me; if you value my friendship, deprive yourself of something dear to you, which may appease the anger of a jealous God." And he threw into the sea a ring of great value, to which he was much attached; but the day after, a fish was brought to him in which the ring was found; and Amasis hearing of it, would not have any more intercourse with the too fortunate Polycrates. Shortly after, *therefore*, he was betrayed into the hands of a Persian satrap, his enemy, who put him to death with most exquisite tortures. Other examples of the same kind, true or false, can be read in the work of the Father of History. At least they give us an idea of what the Greeks thought of God. Æschylus himself has expressed it in his "Agamemnon," (v. 727):

"There lives an old law, framed in ancient days  
 In memories of men, that high estate,  
 Full-grown, brings forth its young, nor childless dies;  
       But that from good success  
 Springs to the race a woe unsatiable."

The consequence of all these errors of the Greeks is well expressed by Mr. Plumptre, as follows (Life of Æschylus, page 72): "Was there a righteous government of the universe? Was the ruler of gods and men capricious like the kings of earth? Was he enslaved by some higher law of destiny which moved on its way in a darkness that none could penetrate, and to which even He was subject? It has often been said that this was the theory of the universe which Æschylus embraced; that the underlying thought in all Greek tragedy, is that of a curse cleaving causelessly to a given race, generation after generation, against which man struggles vainly, each effort to escape only riveting the chains more firmly. If any explanation is at hand of the dark mystery of evil, it is that prosperity, as such, makes men obnoxious to the jealous wrath of the gods or of their Ruler.

“It would be far truer, I believe, to say that this is precisely the theory of the divine government which Æschylus lived to denounce and protest against . . . . Against such a theory the heart of Æschylus revolted. He craved for a *theodikeia*, and came forward in the spirit, one might almost say, of an *Athanasius contra mundum*, to attack the prevailing creed.”

## IV.

And to come to the various details of error enunciated above, we begin by this last. Æschylus did not, however, accept this error; which was altogether derogatory to the divine character, and is unsupported by any primitive revelation even misunderstood and misrepresented. For immediately after the lines we quoted from the tragedy of Agamemnon, we read the following protest:

“But I, *apart from' all,*  
*Hold this my creed, alone:*  
 For, impious act it is that offspring breeds  
 Like to their parent stock;  
 For still in every house  
 That loves the right, their fate for evermore  
 Hath issue good and fair.”

“If prosperity seemed to be followed by disaster, it was, in the thought of Æschylus, because men yielded to the temptations which it brought with it, and became wanton, haughty, and reckless. The sequence of evil might always be traced to the fountain-head of some sin which might have been avoided, but which, once committed, went on with accelerating force . . . . The woes of Atreus' line, the curse that rested on the house of Œdipus, the misery of Troy, are all referred to a root-sin which remained unrepented of and unatoned for.”

But in the second place the assertion that the guilt of every

sin can be washed away by expiation, is repeatedly insisted upon in the Oresteian trilogy, and thus Æschylus rejects the harsh belief of the heroic age. Orestes exclaims (Eum., v. 423):

“I am not now defiled; no curse abides  
 Upon the hand that on thy (Athenè's) statue rests;  
 And I will give thee proof full strong of this.  
 The law is fixed the murderer should be dumb,  
 Till at the hand of one who frees from blood,  
 The purple stream from yeanling swine run o'er him.  
 Long since, at other houses, these dread rites  
 We have gone through, slain victims, flowing streams;  
 This care then I can speak of now as gone.”

The chorus in Agamemnon (verse 1541), having asserted that “the doer bears his deed,” that “this is heaven's decree,” and consequently that “the brood of curses cannot be driven from the kingly house,” because “the house to Atè cleaves,” Clytemnestra answers forcibly, and as a truth which must be now recognized, that, Agamemnon having suffered for the crime of his father, “her house is now free from fratricidal hate.”

The whole trilogy attests the value of expiation to wash away even the crime of matricide. In the last drama (Eum., v. 227), Orestes, addressing Athenè, says pointedly:

“Do thou receive me graciously,  
 Sin-stained though I have been; no guilt of blood  
 Is on my soul, nor is my hand unclean.”

He repeats it in answer to the Furies themselves (verse 265). But we should have to quote almost the whole play, if we were to record all the passages of a similar tendency.

Indeed, more than sixty years before the birth of Æschylus, Epimenides, the prophet of Crete, had been called by the Athenians to purify their city afflicted by the plague and discord. The Athenians, it seems, already growing more polished, un-



derstood that there must be under a merciful God means of reconciliation with Heaven. The old harsh belief appeared to be thus giving way to a more just conception of the Deity.

But did the theory of expiation advocated by Æschylus require "a contrite heart," what we call true sorrow for sin? In the case of Orestes, this "sorrow" did not exist, since he always asserted that he had committed no sin in killing his mother. But his case was peculiar. He rested his defence on the plea that he had acted on the positive command of "Apollo and the Oracle." He was, therefore, not only justified in doing "the deed," but he would have been guilty of disobedience to a "divine command," had he refused. His expiation was consequently merely an exterior one, such as we are apt to think *expiation* always was among the Greeks. Blood shed by his hand required that the blood of victims should wash it away.

Yet the general opinion on the subject, just mentioned, is not correct. Œdipus, certainly, to judge by the Greek drama, was deeply afflicted for his double crime, although done in ignorance. And many other similar instances will be recollected by the reader. No one can imagine that the Hellenes could have been so dead to every sting of conscience as not to know that the first condition of reconciliation with God required "a contrite heart," as Scripture says. In the words of Mr. Plumptre: "It is enough to note the fact that in the theology of Æschylus, as in the ritual which the Cretan prophet had introduced, and which was propagated by the Orphic and other mystic brotherhoods, the sufferer who groans under the burden of guilt needs, over and above the discipline of suffering and a life ruled by law, purification and atonement; that the purification must be wrought by blood poured or sprinkled on the man who sought it; that he needs the mediation of another in order that the purification may be accomplished; that to render this office is the greatest kindness which a friend can show to a friend, or host to suppliant guest; that when this is done, he

may once more draw near, 'with contrite heart,' 'harmless and pure,' to the temples of the gods."

There remains, finally, on this subject, to consider the opinion of the Hellenes on the transmission of guilt from father to son; we have said that there was exaggeration in this belief, as it made it inevitable, so that a really virtuous posterity had to suffer on account of a guilty ancestor. Æschylus, certainly, in several passages of the trilogy, places the responsibility of crime on "the doer," and on no other. "Doer must suffer" is a pretty frequent axiom with him. In this Æschylus shared in the doctrine of Ezechiel (xviii. 2, 4, etc.) The discussion of this most obscure and difficult doctrine of the divine government of the universe does not enter into the plan of this work. But we are naturally brought, by the mere mention we make of it, to consider how the Greek poet came to adopt, with such firmness of opinion, moral decisions of such high import, and so different from the previous belief of his countrymen.

We have seen how *probably* the Hellenes were induced to consider great crimes, such as murder, as inexpiable. The words of God to Adam, to Cain, to Noah, were emphatic and absolute, and did not appear to admit of any mitigation. The ancestors of the Pelasgians and Greeks must have heard something at least of the words of Noah speaking in the name of God, since they knew so well the traditions of the flood. Their extraordinary opinion is naturally explained by such tradition, and becomes otherwise almost inexplicable. The same may be said of the belief in the transmission of guilt from father to son, which the Hellenes and other nations must have derived from the doctrine of an original sin on the part of the parents of the human race, or every conjecture is at fault.

But the Hebrew people, long before Æschylus, had received a more clear, precise, and detailed revelation through Moses and the prophets, which did away with many difficulties involved in the axiomatic character of the first. Moses, trans-

mitting to the people of Israel the law of God, had stated with precision the various cases of homicide, and assigned the penalty for each case. Involuntary homicide required no expiation whatever, but cities of refuge were appointed for those who had been unhappy enough to kill another unwillingly. Sins of ignorance required an expiation, as "Leviticus" testifies. The transmission of guilt from father to son remained always clear and undeniable with respect to the first offence of the father of our race; but with respect to subsequent individual cases, other than that of Adam, the utterances appeared to be various, because the cases, admitting such transmission or not, were various likewise. On this subject, the opinions of the long-subsequent Fathers of the Church, chiefly commenting on the eighteenth chapter of Ezechiel, may be consulted with profit in the works of more modern exegetists of approved capacity. But the question is, Could Æschylus have been induced to adopt milder solutions of those great problems by the knowledge communicated to him, by means unknown to us, of the more precise explanation of the divine law contained in the Hebrew Scriptures? And what might have been those means?

It is certain that his emphatic declarations in the Oresteian trilogy bear often a striking analogy with many passages of the Old Testament. Mr. Plumptre, in his "Life of Æschylus," does not undertake to decide the question absolutely. He says: "Whether the phenomenon be one of parallelism in religious feeling which often meets us in races that have had no contact with each other, or be due to the influence of Semitic thought passing from Syria to the 'Isles of Chittim,' and so through Epimenides to Greece, we need not now discuss." Yet he later admits that the belief of Æschylus on these momentous questions is "every way analogous to that which is dominant in the Old Testament." We need no more than this admission.

## V.

We have not, however, yet exhausted the subject. The most important, perhaps, as well as the most striking part of it, remains to be developed. We shall endeavor to do this with all the brevity possible. The doctrine of the great Greek poet, in his Oresteian trilogy, contains axioms—we may call them so—on the divine government of the world, which are found nowhere else in Hellenic philosophy and poetry, and which raise it to an elevation approaching that of some of the most solemn utterances of Holy Scripture. The great questions, Why is there evil in the world? and why does God permit evil at all? are, no doubt, the most difficult of ethical theology. Æschylus attempts to solve them, and he does it as no other Greek writer ever did.

First, he admits the great law of suffering for all :

“ Save the Gods,  
Who free from suffering lives out all his life ?”—(Agam., 536.)

There is, especially, in the same play, beginning verse 346, a full description by the Chorus, beginning, “ O Zeus, our King ! ” of all the woes endured by the Trojans, as well as by the Greeks during the war, so generalized, although full of details, so heart-rending and bitter, that it looks as an effusion of Pascal when speaking of the miseries of our humanity. The following short quotation will give the reader some idea of it. After having described the woes of Ilion, the poet turns to the Hellenes :

“ From Hellas' ancient shore  
A sore distress that causeth pain of heart  
Is seen in every house.  
Yea, many things there are that touch the quick :  
For those whom each did send  
He knoweth ; but, instead

Of living men, there comes to each man's home  
 Funereal urns alone,  
 And ashes of the dead.  
 For Ares, trafficking for golden coin  
 The lifeless shapes of men,  
 And in the rush of battle holding scales,  
 Sends now from Ilium,  
 Dust from the funereal pyre."

But how does the poet look on this universal spectacle of gloom? Is Zeus blind? And does he afflict mortals without any other object than inflicting suffering? Æschylus could not, if he would, think thus of Him whom he acknowledges in the same drama as the Supreme, and, we may say, only God (v. 158):

"O Zeus—whatever He be,  
 If that Name please Him well,  
 By that on Him I call:  
 Weighing all other names, I fail to guess  
 Aught else but Zeus, if I would cast aside  
 Clearly, in very deed,  
 From off my soul this weight of vaguest care."

Why is it that this God, on account of whose Name "every one ought to cast aside the weight of care," has established all over the world this law of universal suffering? The answer of Æschylus is plain, unmistakable. In many cases, by "suffering" the sins of many men are punished, and not only in this life, but likewise hereafter; for, speaking of Hades, he says:

"There, as men relate, a second Zeus  
 Judges men's evil deeds, and to the dead  
 Assigns their last great penalties."—(Suppl. 226.)

And (in Eumen., v. 168) Erinnys declares of the sinner:

"Though 'neath the earth he flee, he is not freed,  
 For he, blood-stained, shall find upon his head  
 Another after me,  
 Destroyer foul and dread."

Again (v. 325):

“Nor shall death set him free.”

This is but a specimen of many other passages we might have quoted. But there are cases when we, at least, cannot perceive that any crime has been committed worthy of those “great penalties,” and yet they are inflicted. The poet supposes, even, that sometimes man may suffer in this life without having really deserved it. How is this? Can we justify the government of Zeus? His answer partially unfolds a doctrine often repeated in the trilogy, chiefly in “Agamemnon,” and which sheds a halo of almost Christian light around the enigma. Then, says Æschylus, *παθήματα* become *μαθήματα*; suffering brings knowledge, wisdom, and, consequently, gain:

“Zeus who leadeth men in wisdom’s way,  
And fixeth fast the law,  
Wisdom by pain to gain.”—(V. 170.)

Again (v. 241):

“Justice turns the scale  
For those to whom through pain  
At last comes wisdom’s gain.”

And in “Eum.” (v. 491):

“There are with whom it is well  
That awe should still abide,  
As watchmen o’er their souls;  
Calm wisdom, gained by sorrow, profits much.”

Thus, in Æschylus, we find the recognition of a moral discipline by which men

“May rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.”

This last reflection we find in Mr. Plumptre’s “Life of

Æschylus," from whom also we took the last quotations. Indeed, we mostly use his translation of the Greek poet, as it is admitted to be the best we now possess in English.

This remarkable doctrine of Æschylus is derived, it seems, from that "Orphic literature" of which we have already said so much. From which also are derived several other expressions of the tragic poet which appear in his works in the garb of proverbial and traditional sayings, such as the extraordinary phrase used long after as addressed to St. Paul: "It is useless to kick against the pricks." We have already discussed the probable origin of the Orphic poetry; and we will here merely invite the reader's attention to the above as an additional proof of what we have all along maintained, namely, that it was not the spurious product of Christian writers of the third or fourth century who clothed in a new garb the previous writings of Plato; since an Hellenic author, who flourished before Plato, knew that old poetry and profited by it.

## VI.

The same Æschylus, as given by Justin Martyr (in *Monarchia*) sets forth the power of God (in one of his lost tragedies) in the following splendid outburst of poetry:

"Place God apart from mortals; and think not  
That He is, like thyself, corporeal.  
Thou knowest Him not. Now He appears as fire,  
Dread force! as water now; and now as gloom;  
And in the beasts is dimly shadowed forth,  
In wind, and cloud, in lightning, thunder, rain;  
And minister to Him the seas and rocks,  
Each fountain and the water's floods and streams.  
The mountains tremble, and the earth, the vast  
Abyss of sea, and towering height of hills,  
When on them looks the Sovereign's awful eye:  
Almighty is the glory of the Most High God."

28

Is not this another proof of our so-often-repeated assertion : that the higher we go in time, the more *orthodox* are the ancient writers, and the more like they appear to the true inspired prophets of God? Æschylus, it is known, is the *oldest* great tragic writer of Greece.

Sophocles, almost his contemporary, is likewise full of grand thoughts, worthy of a remote age. A most remarkable passage of one of his lost poems, has been preserved by Hecataeus, and is quoted by St. Clement of Alexandria (Stromata) :

“One in very truth, God is one,  
 Who made the heaven and the far-stretching earth,  
 The Deep’s blue billow, and the might of winds.  
 But of us mortals, many erring far  
 In heart, as solace for our woes, have raised  
 Images of gods—of stone, or else of brass,  
 Or figures wrought of gold or ivory ;  
 And sacrifices and vain festivals  
 To these appointing, deem ourselves devout.”

The old Greek comic poets, who flourished before Aristophanes, have also often rendered testimony to the superior orthodoxy of early literature. Unfortunately we possess only a few fragments of their works. We have already spoken of Epicharmus, whom Plato was fond of consulting. A passage of Diphilus, quoted by St. Clement, is remarkable for the precise notion he entertained of a future judgment :

“Thinkest thou, O Niceratus, that the dead,  
 Who in all kinds of luxury in life have shared,  
 Escape the Deity, as if forgot ?  
 There is an eye of justice, which sees all.  
 For two ways, as we deem, to Hades lead—  
 One for the good, the other for the bad.  
 But if earth hides *both* for ever, then,  
 Go plunder, steal, rob, and be turbulent.  
 But err not. For in Hades judgment is  
 Which God the Lord of all will execute,  
 Whose name too dreadful is for me to name,



Who gives to sinners length of earthly life.  
 If any mortal thinks that day by day,  
 While doing ill, he eludes the gods' keen sight,  
 His thoughts are evil; and when justice has  
 The leisure, he shall then detected be  
 So thinking. Look, whoever you be that say  
 That there is not a God. There is, there is.  
 If one, by nature evil, evil does,  
 Let him redeem the time; for such as he  
 Shall by and by due punishment receive."

We have before remarked that Plato also had very precise and clear ideas of a future judgment; not before the tribunal of Minos, but before that of God. Did he take them from the works of the comic poets (strange comic poets indeed)? or from the fragments left of old philosophers or lawgivers?

We will conclude our quotations by a short passage from Aratus, who lived in the third century before Christ, and whom St. Paul honored by a quotation. Our readers may like to see something more explicit of the text out of which the great apostle of the Gentiles took the phrase, "*Ipsius enim genus sumus.*" It is taken from the "Phænomena" of Aratus:

"With Zeus let us begin; Whom let us ne'er,  
 Being men, leave unexpressed. All full of Zeus,  
 The streets and throngs of men, and full the sea,  
 And shores, and everywhere we Zeus enjoy.  
 . . . . . For *we also are*  
*His offspring*; . . . . Who bland to men,  
 Propitious signs displays, and to their tasks  
 Arouses. For these signs in heaven He fixed,  
 The constellations spread, and crowned the year  
 With stars; to show to men the seasons' tasks,  
 That all things may proceed in order sure.  
 Him ever first, Him last too they adore:  
 Hail Father, marvel great—great boon to men!"

A great number of such texts can be found in Eusebius' "Præparatio Evangelica," in Clement of Alexandria, in St. Jus-

tin Martyr "de Monarchia," and in many other Fathers of the Church.

Hence St. Clement of Alexandria could say in general of the question which occupies us (Strom., Book v.): "No race anywhere of tillers of the soil, or nomads, and not even of dwellers in cities, can live without being imbued with the faith of one superior Being. Wherefore, every eastern nation, and every nation touching the western shores, or the north, or towards the south—all have one and the same preconception of Him who hath appointed the government of the universe; since the most universal of His operations equally pervade all. Much more did the philosophers among the Greeks, devoted to investigation, *starting from the barbarian philosophy*, attribute providence to the invisible, and sole, and most powerful, and most skilful, and supreme cause of all things."

## VII.

Knowing, as we do, how Latin literature became early impressed with the Hellenic form, and adopted not only the polish and exterior elegance of Greek poetry, but chiefly the thoughts and even phraseology of that brilliant nation, we cannot be surprised that the same phenomenon, the study of which has occupied us so long as far as regards the east of Europe, should have been equally remarkable in the west; so that the Roman philosophers, mere copyists of those of Hellas, became the apostles of the old traditions among their countrymen, and imparted to them a faint flush of the light of primitive *barbarian philosophy*, as St. Clement of Alexandria calls it, or rather of the primitive divine revelation imparted to mankind, as we would prefer to say.

But it is chiefly among the Latin poets that this becomes remarkable; although many passages of Cicero might be quoted

in support of our position. If one of them—Lucretius—devoted his immense talent to the propagation of atheism and materialism, and to the denial of the great truths so prevalent still in his time, all the others, even those from whom it was least to be expected, such as Ovid, have invariably proclaimed those noble conceptions of ancient seers and poets, relative to creation, the golden age, the first sin, its punishment, the flood, and the promise of happier days, committed finally to immortal verse by Virgil himself, as the “renovation of ages,” and the renewal of the “reign of Virgin Astræa,” or Justice.

When we read the beginning of the first book of the “*Metamorphoses*” of Ovid, we are surprised to see so many points of coincidence with revealed truth in *Genesis*; and although paganism had certainly tainted many of those great original traditions, yet so much of them remain that we wonder how they could have been so well preserved in the midst of such a multitude of absurd myths and fables. The exception of Lucretius’ poem increases still more our surprise; since it was only an exception; and the Romans of the time knew that to be so. Hence it was opposed with a kind of horror by all those who had not admitted the doctrines of Epicurus. The fact, also, that a great polemic writer of the seventeenth century, Cardinal Polignae, thought he would render a service to religion by writing a refutation of Lucretius in Latin verse, shows that those times of the Augustan age were very like our own, when the flood of light poured upon mankind by the revelation of the Gospel is dimmed by the faint equivocations of adversaries, and has to be kept in its brightness by renewed and definite affirmations of the truth. At the epoch, therefore, of the greatest moral corruption in Rome, the truth was known, or at least suspected, by many; and only a comparatively few rejected it, in order to introduce false theories and disorganizing utopias; much as we witness in our age.

It must be particularly remarked, that the Latin poets did

not proclaim it as a modern discovery of philosophers, as a bright result of individual inquiry. They sang of it as a "precious deposit" handed down to us from ancestors, as a derivation, in fact, of a heavenly voice addressed to man from the beginning. The opposing systems—those flippant theories of atheism and unbelief—were openly declared to be *new*; they had been found out by the *deep* minds of philosophers of latter times; and the very course they advocated was the rejection of *old tales*, as they called them, for the pure doctrine of modern philosophy. Would it be possible for us to find a more cogent argument in support of our thesis?

It is unnecessary to burden our pages with a number of quotations from the Latin poets, as all those who are likely to be our readers are quite familiar with them. A glance at them in order to elicit their significance in relation to our subject will be sufficient. Who has not been struck with the strange anomaly of a long series of authors, poets principally, whose chief source of inspiration is the prevalent and popular mythology, brilliant on the surface, it is true, but in reality absurd, irrational, and immoral; yet occasionally startling one by concepts of the highest order, involving of necessity a deep knowledge of things human and divine, and speaking of the highest concerns of the soul, almost as an enlightened Christian would in a refined age? And, we may add, that, when those great and immortal writers venture to touch on those sublime topics, they invariably tell us that it is ancient wisdom which speaks through them; that they are merely the mouth-pieces of old seers and prophets; and that it is the deep poetry of the most ancient times from which they draw their inspiration.

Thus, in Greece and Rome, we see two great streams of religion and ethics running parallel to each other; most distinct, and in every respect opposite; yet, watering the same countries, feeding the same soil, and nourishing apart, but in the same fields, flowers and fruits on one side, and baneful poisons

on the other. Unfortunately one of these streams was the only one apparent to the multitude, the only one from which mankind received its "culture," as it is called, the only one to mould men, and give them a shape. This was polytheism. The other running, as it were, under ground; well known to a few, because deep knowledge was then possible only to a few, and these few were afraid of communicating to the multitude doctrines which they were not prepared to receive.

Hence, in order to make ourselves of these modern ages acquainted with the existence of that hidden stream in antiquity, we have to search with untiring industry into the varied lore of those old times, and to avail ourselves of all the aid our Christian criticism and appreciation can afford us. And although the "ancients" have been known and studied, not only from the "revival" in the fifteenth century, but from the very formation of modern nations after the overflow of barbarism, yet it is only in our days that the true knowledge of the tendency and manifold bearings of the literature of Greece and Rome has begun to be truly known and appreciated.

It may be even said that in the opinion of many, even living authors, the noble river flowing from the primitive ages, and enriching the literature of Eastern and Central Europe during pagan times, is not considered as sufficiently ascertained to be altogether relied upon; and these men see only in polytheist Greece and Rome a mass of absurd tales and conceits impossible to be systematized. Thus the author of "Gentile and Jew," writing of Gentilism, brings forward the treasure of a vast erudition, but fragmentary, confused, incapable of being reduced to any approved whole. It is the chaos of a disconnected polytheism, whose limbs, broken and disjointed, lay before you in a maze of confusion; from the study of which you rise up not one whit more enlightened than when you sat down to its perusal. As to the other hidden stream flowing silently from remote ages, and bearing the testimony of primitive wis-

dom and true culture, not a word is said of it; probably because, in the opinion of the author, it would have been *unscientific*—this is the word now used—start what to him appeared a mere problematic theory, since, forsooth, the “ancients” did not positively announce it in so many words, or only rarely, and it is thus to be deduced from diligent investigation, erudite reasoning, and exhumation of a long-buried literature. For the same reason, most probably, the same writer, in speaking of Judaism, and pretending to unfold the true religion of the “people of God,” does not mention, even once, so far as we remember, the typical character of their worship, which was in fact the chief one. No allusion is made to the temporary, figurative, and shadowy nature of a religion whose only object was twofold: to keep more securely, and with more purity, the deposit of the old traditions than the Gentiles could do, and to prepare the world for a universal belief and worship, at whose appearing the special mission of Judaism would cease. Hence, all the splendid interpretations of the Mosaic law and customs, given by all the Fathers of the Church, without exception, either Greek or Latin, are thrown aside as unworthy, it would seem, of the exegesis of our enlightened age; as if Origen particularly, the great interpreter of Judaic myths and figures, was altogether a childish exegetist of Scripture, in comparison with the numerous array of German naturalistic expounders of the Bible!

To our thinking, on the other hand, the existence in Greece and Rome, of a mighty undercurrent of what we call the primitive revelation, is a well-ascertained fact, although undoubtedly the great mass of Romans and Greeks was completely unaware of it; and even those writers in whose noble productions the sacred fragments of this tradition are yet now found, were often themselves unable to appreciate them thoroughly. Pythagoras and Plato, the last one chiefly, seem to have been the two men who were the most fully imbued with the holiness

of the ancient doctrine; and who spoke of it with a respect, a conviction, and a noble simplicity worthy of the subject. In the Latin world it had become, we may say, a mere literary *fire-bug*, good for an exhibition of poetic talent, and to strike the beholder with amazement and surprise. Ovid, probably, saw in those great thoughts of ancient time, only a means of turning agreeable and pointed verses; and he must have read over many times with a secret, but well-pleased vanity, the lines in which he described the noble and erect standing of man in the midst of grovelling and low-born animals: "*Os homini sublimè dedit . . .*" As to Virgil, it is enough to say that in the Eclogue, where he seems to be a translator of Isaiah, he had most probably in view only to celebrate the birth of a *promising boy* to his friend Pollio.

Yet, in spite of all this, the fact is indubitable that in the midst of idolatry, there was then in pagan Europe a faint remembrance of holier doctrines and promises; and this is all we have to establish.

### VIII.

But of the other stream, it may be said to have been overwhelming and devastating. We have endeavored to impart some faint idea of it. To convey anything like an adequate conception would require a volume of much larger bulk than we should like to impose on the patience of our readers. It would require a condensation of all that the Fathers of the Church in the four or five first centuries have said of the foolishness, absurdity, immorality, and universal demoralization of polytheism. It would require a solid array of passages scattered through a large number of volumes, and unknown, for the most part of them, to our generation, to whom the taste is wanting of going through the simple enumeration of those absurdities. Yet it is a sad fact that these "absurdities" were the "daily

bread" of great and apparently enlightened nations ; that they formed, we may say, the staple of their life ; and that for millions of human beings, during many ages, there was no other religion ; indeed, no other poetry, art, ancient history, current literature, nor source of ethics, or national aspirations, but what was derived from the senseless and immoral legends of those gods and goddesses. And even the few noble minds who had sense enough to despise and abominate the whole corrupt mass, found themselves under the necessity of speaking with respect of it ; yea, of practising outwardly the ridiculous nonsense of the national religion, and to become fools among fools, and dotards among children.

But what ought to attract our attention chiefly, is the ultimate disintegration which those senseless rites brought among nations submitted to them. We saw it existing, to a certain extent, in Hindostan, and to a great degree in Egypt, where we particularly remarked it, in speaking of animal-worship along the Nile. We observed the same in Greece, described in a bold sketch, although in a few words, by St. Clement of Alexandria. Religion, which ought to be the bond of nations, had become the source of endless divisions ; and if the Greeks had not had their common language, their common taste for art, their ardent love of liberty, and their primitive spirit of coalition in forming confederacies, their religion would have carried among them disintegration down to the last social element—the village or the hamlet. Then they would not have had to say only, "Hera is worshipped at Samos, Apollo at Delos, Athenè at Athens, Artemis Orthia at Sparta, Venus at Gnidos and Cythera, Zeus at Olympia, and so of the others." They would have had to complete the list which St. Clement of Alexandria only began ; and the whole would have been a perfect picture of a complete decomposition of polytheism itself. Prof. Heeren—whom we have already quoted so frequently, and whom we like to quote on account of the lucidity of his



ideas, the general sobriety of his views, and his thorough knowledge of antiquity—is obliged to use the following language (Ancient Greece, Ch. 7th): “Unlike the religions of the East, the religion of the Hellenes was supported by no sacred books, was connected with no peculiar doctrines; it could not, therefore, serve like the former to unite a nation by means of a common religion. . . . . As the nation had no caste of priests, nor even a united order of priesthood, it naturally followed, that though individual temples could in a certain degree become national temples, this must depend, for the most part, on accidental circumstances; and where everything was voluntary, nothing could be settled by established forms like those which prevailed in other countries.” Heeren, it is true, afterwards pretends that in spite of these adverse circumstances, two or three temples became really national, on account of the oracles connected with them; he names those of Dodona and Delphi, which he thinks formed, through the oracles, the connecting link between politics and religion; and he says that: “Their great political influence, especially in the States of the Doric race, is too well known from history to make it necessary to adduce proofs of it.” But finally he confesses—and this is worthy of attention—that “Their great political influence became less after the Persian war . . . . . When the reciprocal hatred of the Athenians and Spartans excited them to the fury of civil war, how much suffering would have been spared to Greece, if the voice of the gods had been able to avert the storm!”

This quotation from the Gottingen Professor offers a strong confirmation of our argument; since he himself does not see any national temple and national religion in Greece, except through oracles, which originally were counted to the number of three or four, gradually were reduced to that of Delphi alone, and finally this last, *not long after the Persian war*, became silent. That silence had been already of a long duration

when Plutarch wrote his treatise: *De oraculorum defectu*. Hence we ought not to be surprised, especially after perusing these remarks of Heeren, that in the time of St. Clement of Alexandria, long after the disappearance of all oracular priestesses, religion was reduced to the state he so graphically described.

The Greek nationality was never compact ; it was always, in fact, an aggregation of small tribes, each with its customs, traditions, and tales. Plutarch is called a *gossiping* writer ; but on that account, precisely, he was eminently Grecian. And Herodotus himself shines particularly with that amiable quality of what the French call "un conteur." All the great Hellenic writers, not excepting the tragic dramatists, show the same idiosyncrasy. We may call it the clannish spirit, fond of village tales. In a word, the supposed powerful confederacy of Grecian States was merely an aggregation of clans, constantly changing their respective attitude by forming or dissolving their alliances or feuds. And this is so remarkable, that anyone who labors under the almost universal mistake of supposing a strong cohesion among them, owing to what is called their patriotism, is, or ought to be, altogether unsettled in his belief, when he reads in the great work of the "Father of History," that the only Greeks who fought at Marathon were "some thousand Athenians, and a few hundred Plataeans ;" and that when Xerxes with his millions of men invaded Hellas, even before he left Persia, all the Greek States had granted him "earth and water," except the Spartans who perished at the Thermopylae to the number of "three hundred," and the Athenians who left their city to obey "the oracle" and repaired on their "wooden ships" to wander about the ocean whilst the enemy burned Athens. We have no wish to detract from the glory attached to the great names of Leonidas, Miltiades, and Themistocles. Their memory is immortal, and the fortitude alone with which, at the head of a few thousand brave

warriors, they encountered the mighty armaments of the Persians, would of itself render them for ever glorious. But it would be folly to think that the innumerable troops led on by Mardonius and Xerxes were defeated only by the diminutive forces which met them at Thermopylæ and Marathon; and even by the Athenian fleet in the Ægean sea. What would become, in that case, of the memorable saying of Napoleon, that success is attached to "*les gros bataillons*"? The fact is, that the Persians were chiefly defeated by their own huge bulk. They were too unwieldy to manœuvre, and too numerous to feed.

The great Persian war, therefore, is no proof of a strong nationality among the Greeks. All the events of the contest prove the contrary. The Persian hosts, as they rolled on Greece, met a few tribes, standing resolutely before them; and as might have been expected, they melted away in a few months in the plains and around the mountains of a country where they could not be recruited, and could not live after having "drank the rivers" and devoured the "produce of the fields" of the year previous.

But how is it that there was no compact nationality among the Greeks? They appeared made to form a great nation. They all had strong aspirations after the same form of government—the republican; they loved their country, spoke the same language, were great organizers, mighty colonizers; they all had the same tastes of simplicity of living, apparel, and dwelling. With the exception of those barbarians of Sparta, they carried elegance and good taste farther than it has ever been carried by any other race on earth; they were brave, well instructed, well made, strong of body, acute of mind, etc., etc. How is it, we repeat again, that they never formed a great nation? The reason is plain, many will say: "They could not coalesce to form a large State, through their love of liberty, and thus they remained wedded to their fragmentary exist-

ence." This, we confess, cannot satisfy us. They could have remained free, even in a different state of agglomeration. Great organizers as they were, they could have introduced the free institutions common to all the tribes, into a larger organism than that of the city. They never thought of it; and Plato himself, in writing his description of an imaginary republic, supposes it confined to a few villages and one larger city. And when there was question of establishing it in fact, he relied on the promise of Dionysius, the Tyrant of Syracuse, to give him a few miles of territory in Sicily. Within thus narrow a range were limited the views of the Greeks as to the constitution of States. What was the cause of this? The true explication is to be found in the following axiom: To expand the ideas, and to raise the mind up to the level of so great a subject as that of the permanent constitution of civil society, religion must be the preponderating term. Hence Rome, in order to extend and consolidate her power, had to spread her religious ideas by *admitting* the gods of the nations she conquered. It was an unsatisfactory solution of the question, and could not succeed in the long run; but something of the kind had to be done, and this, at least, she did.

Greece never attempted anything of the same nature, with the exception of the two or three oracular temples she built, which, in time, disappeared, and left her to the desolation of "individualism." Here is to be found the true explanation of the clannish political views of the Greeks, even of their ablest writers on political philosophy. The disorganization of religious thought amongst the Hellenes was the true source of their complete social and political disorganization. Heeren himself saw a great difference, which he especially noticed, between the religious worship of Hellas and that of India or Egypt, with respect to nationality or universality of belief. Yet, as was seen, disintegration entered deeply, in course of time, into the cult of these two great races. Neither India nor Egypt

were so well known in the time of the Gottingen Professor as they are now. It is now ascertained much more clearly than it was forty years ago, that a deep "sectarian" strife, introduced chiefly by the rank idolatry of the *tantras*—although many ages before Buddhism had already produced the same result—agitated Hindostan and divided it into fragments, in spite of the pretended national religion, of which Heeren speaks. And, as to the Egyptians of Pharaonic times, we think we have proved sufficiently the great difference in homogeneity of thought throughout the country, between the old dynasties previous to the eighteenth, and the last ones during which Anasis and Psammeticus flourished. The opposition of north and south, city and city, hamlet and hamlet, appears principally in the later times; and it must have been so, owing to the ever-increasing division in worship and customs.

At the very outset of the human race, it is true that the division among men appears, at first sight, to have been as great as it ever was afterwards; for then clanship was flourishing everywhere. The whole globe was covered with tribes. The patriarchal epoch was eminently an epoch of septs. Does not this settle the question? Have we not defeated ourselves? Not in the least. First, the tribal state in mankind subsisted many ages after the patriarchal period had ceased; and, as we have before observed, the work of Strabo is the most irrefragable proof of our assertion. Let any one open it anywhere at random, he will find that his geography is a mere tribal geography. Yet Strabo lived under Augustus. Thus the Roman Empire itself had not changed this state of things, nor had it destroyed the primitive septs. It had only done what all previous empires had effected. It had aggregated living tribal organizations into a huge administrative system. In fact, we repeat, in going through the pages of universal history, the reader has to come down to our own days before he reaches

the great epoch of the absorption of tribes into huge bodies called "nationalities," yea, more, centralized nationalities.

We know how Napoleon III. thought he had discovered a great fact—and had immortalized himself by the discovery—when he threw the word before Europe and mankind. The fact is, the word was scarcely used before. Certainly it was not understood in this its new sense; and we conclude that the latter times of polytheism had no advantage, in that regard, over the patriarchal period. Tribal division existed in both cases; but this is not the question we are discussing. The real question is of *mental* division, *doctrinal* antipathy, *religious* animosity. There was nothing of the kind in primitive times. All the tribes originally worshipped One God; had the same moral principles, the same traditions on creation, providence, sin, expiation, aspirations towards a future which would repair the evil. Pantheism, polytheism, idolatry, are not coeval with the origin of man, in spite of what the new "leaders of thought" may say. They came afterwards, and brought on "sectarianism;" that is, antagonism in mind, strife in belief, division in hopes, confusion in worship, anarchy in the spiritual world of man, and as the ultimate conclusion, the frightful appearance of mere "individualism," which is rising again in our days, after having been exorcised by Christianity.

Thus the physical globe itself, by which we began these considerations, and to which we return at the end of them, was altogether diverted from the primitive plan of God. The seas, the rivers, the mountains, the deserts did not continue to be mere geographical limits, to be subsequently overcome, and to become—some of them, at least—a powerful means of intercommunication. These limits did no more separate communities united in faith, and accepting—all—the same social and religious principles, showing the unity of their origin by the admission of the same great truths which lay at the bottom of all minds. They, now, divided races dissociated by mutual

antipathies, religious, political, and social. They made the globe, which we call "our Earth," intended, at first, to be the dwelling of a universal family, having the same worship, the same hopes and fears, the same eternal destiny and temporal happiness—they made it—what? An agglomeration of distinct "small parks," each inclosed with a strong fence; each containing a peculiar kind of wild beasts, growling at the barbarians outside, and intent finally on devouring each other, after having tried to enslave or devour the "foreigners." And this horrible state of things was caused chiefly by a frightful departure from a primitive common faith, and by the adoption of separate and degrading superstitions, all evidently originating from the Evil One, the great adversary of God and man, wishing to be worshipped by senseless admirers, and to introduce on earth the anarchy of hell.

And to show how the configuration of the globe, so evidently made for an altogether different purpose, was taken advantage of by him, to divide and sub-divide mankind, we have only to turn a moment to the physical geography of Greece, since it is of Greece we are now speaking.

Look first at the southern peninsula called Peloponnesus, a kind of miniature Switzerland, with its small central plateau, celebrated under the name of Arcadia. The very word evokes ideas of peaceful pastoral life, rural happiness, and never-failing abundance. Yet, from this central paradise radiate seven short chains of mountains, which will divide effectually as many tribes, if not more, all hostile to one another. The Taygetus, one of them, will interpose its rude peaks and impracticable valleys between the Laonians and Messenians. In spite of the apparently insurmountable obstacle, a relentless war will be waged between the two tribes. And if, for many centuries, the Messenians are reduced to "helotism," the spirit of mutual hatred will never be extinguished, and Epaninondas, much later, will think himself immortalized by a final revenge in

favor of the Messenians in vindicating the rights of his own Bœotia.

Argolis, towards the east, will be so completely separated from the rest of the peninsula by huge rocks, but chiefly by the sea, that after the great renown of its primitive heroes—the Atridæ—it shall literally sleep for centuries in an inglorious isolation from the rest of the world. The dramatic stage, however, will take good care to remind all posterity that the land of Argos was stained at first by frightful crimes, the feast of Atreus and Thyestes, the adultery of Clytemnestra, the murder of Agamemnon by this she-wolf, dying herself finally under the dagger of her own son, Orestes. With such an unenviable renown, the Argives did well not to engage any more in strife. But their subsequent obscurity is a strong proof of their complete isolation, favored by an almost insular position on the sea, and a complete want of intercourse with their nearest Peloponnesian neighbors.

Elis, in the west of the peninsula, formed an exception therein, and remained at peace, owing to its sacred character, which made it, really, with Delphi, the only spot of Greece where the Hellenes really thought they had a common religion; and on this account Elis enjoyed happiness.

But with the Achæans, on the north-west, begin again the spectacle we have already depicted. If there was anywhere among the Hellenes a small compact body animated with the feeling of opposition to all mankind, it was certainly to be found in Achaia. This egotistical disposition is admirably rendered by the name of *League*—the Achæan league—a combination of twelve cities against all the rest. A great effort indeed of the spirit of brotherhood! To be able to combine twelve small communities isolated from the rest of mankind by rocks on the south, and the sea on the north, and to succeed in persuading them that it was their interest—all Ionians as they were surrounded by Dorians—to form a *league* against the predominant



Doric race! This is, indeed, a true picture of what we have been all along insisting upon. This "league," however, must not be confounded with the celebrated one, formed against the power of Macedonia, and of Rome, and which embraced cities outside of the small limits of Achaia. We speak of the primitive and ancient league, composed only of the Ionian cities, spread along the gulf of Corinth, and which is said to have been first formed as early as eleven hundred years before Christ. It was a compact of twelve towns—Patras and Dyme were the most important—to stand together against the surrounding world, and to threaten with retaliation anyone bold enough to attack any one of them. It was the only means they had of procuring for themselves quiet during a thousand years; for this was about the length of duration of the "league." It is a perfect picture of what the world then was; each small community entrenched behind high mountains, large rivers, or the sea. Was it for such a purpose that these bold land-marks had been drawn on the surface of our globe?

Finally, the whole Peloponnesian system of egotism culminated in the single city of Corinth, which formed a state by herself, and bid defiance to both sides of the isthmus. Her "Acropolis" blocked the land to the south; and the waves of the sea chafed at her feet, all around to the north.

This short sketch of the smallest part of Greece—its southern peninsula—is sufficient for our purpose. The same might be done with respect to a similar geographico-historical description of Hellas. Thessaly, and its northernmost district, Macedonia, would bring us to the same conclusion; but it would scarcely render the picture more striking. Out of all, issues in unmistakable character, that "individualism" of which we spoke previously with regard to Rome, quoting a remarkable passage of the "Antonins" of Mr. Franz de Champagny. This last effect of the disintegration of religion amongst mankind in antiquity, deserved more than a passing notice, since

it is the last and invariable step of the downward progress of nations in their religious degeneracy, which it has been our chief object to demonstrate. Besides, as that "individualism," after producing the deplorable religious results which have been all along the main subject of our investigations, was likewise the cause of national and civil disintegration, it was important to consider this apart for a moment, and to show it as an outward symbol of a deep-seated and far worse interior evil. It was for this reason we adduced this single illustration of the whole subject. And that the more so, because it has become, likewise, the great bane of our age, and threatens really modern society with that social decomposition which would inevitably be our lot, as it was that of the nations of antiquity, if Christianity were not always in our midst to counteract the mighty evil. It was foretold by some profound thinkers at the very first outburst of Protestantism, and the terrible phantom at last stares us in the face, so that no one but one resolutely blind can fail to recognize its features.

The "London Westminster Review," if we may judge from its number of October, 1873, does not appear to share our horror of "individualism." They even consider it as a *blessing*; and would deprecate the "cohesion" produced by "dogmatic teaching" as an obstacle, probably, to expansion of thought, and to the independence of the human mind. At last these gentlemen are consistent, and proclaim openly what their immediate predecessors would have shrunk from recognizing, that the result of "modern thought," as of "ancient polytheism," is to reduce mankind to "individuals," and to throw the minds of all into revolt and anarchy. Would to God that the mass of sensible people could perceive the tendency of this monstrous admission! We observe likewise that the same "advanced thinkers" would not find it very reprehensible if open persecution was declared against such a retrograde body of men as the Catholic Church appears to be in their eyes.

They consent, however, to be generous enough to grant to the Church the "undeserved" advantage of a liberal "toleration." The Church ought certainly to be thankful for such magnanimous forbearance. One reflexion, nevertheless, might open their eyes to see where true strength is to be found. As they proclaim openly "individualism," in this number at least, if not in others, and thus confess they are reduced to it; and as unnumbered multitudes of the Catholic Church will always form one "body," owing to her "dogmatic teaching," the same Church will always be stronger than they are, abstracting even from the promises of her Founder. Her faith will never cease from among men, even though the number of members should be reduced to something less than her actual two hundred millions. Whilst the doctrine of the supporters of "individualism," from their own confession, and from the very nature of the principle they advocate, cannot ever be one; must ever be multitudinous, inorganic, disorderly, and weak; never agreeing with themselves, they must remain in the state of disconnected atoms.

## CHAPTER IX.

### SUPPLEMENTARY.

#### I.

ALL the nations that have hitherto passed in review before us belong to the Aryan or Japhetic and to the Hamitic races. Some of these last, as the Phœnicians, and the whole Semitic branch of the human family, have been unnoticed, and contributed nothing to our conclusion. In the absence of these, can we claim to have sustained our thesis? We think we can. Because if the history of the best known and most important portions of mankind completely demonstrates it, we may fairly infer that that of the less important and less known will do the same. Yet it will be good to say at least a word on the subject. We will, therefore, conclude our undertaking with a slight and brief investigation of what is known of this last-named branch of the human family. It must, necessarily, be only slight and brief, because the materials for investigation are scanty, and do not supply us with anything like the copious and varied materials afforded by the history of the descendants of Japhet and Ham. Yet we may, perhaps, discover some traces, even amongst the former, of a religion originally monotheistic and pure; and evidence sufficient to support the high probability of our general thesis, that amongst them, too, as well as amongst the other races, it was only in subsequent ages that it degenerated into the mass of corruption which we know surpassed in horror the foul dissoluteness of all other idolatries.

The chief of these races are those which have dwelt from time immemorial in Mesopotamia, Syria, Phœnicia, Palestine, and

Arabia. The presence of the posterity of Abraham—of the true “people of God,” the depository of the old traditions, and the recipient of a new revelation, the most enlightened of all ancient nations in religious matters—in the midst of the most superstitious, idolatrous, and morally impure of all peoples of antiquity, will certainly surprise us, and furnish us with considerations of no common interest.

It seems very probable that pantheism and idolatry prevailed among those tribes, before it did anywhere else. And from what the traditions of Asiatic nations tell us of Nimrod, so soon after the dispersion of mankind, the period of pure worship, on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris, must have been of a short duration; and thus our task becomes serious and difficult. Yet we do not think it is hopeless.

It will assist the object we have in view, to consider briefly the mythology of those races and try to discover if there is any similarity or analogy between them; as we found it to be the case between the Hindoos, the Bactrians, the Egyptians, and the Greeks. And here we are met at the outset with a striking fact, namely, that their polytheistic system—when they reached polytheism—appears to be copied from a common pattern, and must have come originally from the same source. The religion of the Chaldeans, Assyrians, Babylonians, Syrians, and Phœnicians, such as it was at the time of their splendor, had common traits which argued clearly the same origin. There exists a serious difficulty with regard to the primitive religion of the Arabians, of which we shall have to speak. Yet the few Arabic inscriptions which have been preserved from those ancient times, seem to point to the same conclusion.

The small influence which the pure and perfect monotheism of the Jews obtained over those anciently civilized, but extremely corrupt, nations, must ever be a subject of wonder. Yet, we believe we shall be able to ascertain a real action of the kind more effective than is generally supposed.

## II.

The most ancient of the Semitic peoples were certainly the Chaldæans, who, at least, were first thought to belong to the Semitic stock. Sir George Rawlinson, in his "First Monarchy," has, we believe, sufficiently proved that they were Chushites, and consequently the posterity of Ham. Their race spread itself not only in Southern Mesopotamia, and around the head of the Persian Gulf, but also all through Southern Persia, as far as the Indus; but the Empire of Chaldæa embraced only the countries along the Euphrates and the Tigris southward, and at the head of the Persian Gulf. Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord, was the founder of this monarchy, and the first of the Babylonian kings. This goes back to the 23d or 24th century before Christ, and history does not penetrate further. A large empire was thus early founded; and it must have been on the ruins of clans. Consequently, neither in Southern Mesopotamia, in Assyria, nor even in Syria and Phœnicia, do we see, in the highest antiquity, the primitive simple manners of septs and tribes; and this constitutes an exception to the history of all other ancient countries. Yet to protest, as it were, against the establishment of a cruel despotism, patriarchal manners remained firmly rooted amongst the posterity of Abraham in Palestine, a great part of south-western Chaldæa proper, and in the whole immense peninsula of Arabia, where it still prevails.

But, apart from these general considerations, we must examine briefly the primitive Chaldæan religion.

Sir George Rawlinson says (page 110, and sec. 9), that "From the earliest times to which the monuments carry us back, it was, in its outward aspect, a polytheism of a very elaborate character." But he tells us likewise that "the subject is but partially worked out by cuneiform scholars; the difficulties

in the way of understanding it are great ; and in many portions to which special attention has been paid, it is strangely perplexing and bewildering." The meaning evidently is that the "polytheism" itself is extremely obscure, and nothing certain can yet be said of it.

But, in coming to page 112, the same learned writer begins the grouping of the principal Chaldæan deities as follows: "At the head of the Pantheon stands a god, *Il* or *Ra*, of whom but little is known." Then Mr. Rawlinson enumerates Triad after Triad "better known," we suppose, because the Supreme God having been early forgotten and set aside, the false gods set up in His place became in course of time the only divinities of the nation who consequently knew them alone.

The important question for us, therefore, is to consider who is that *Il* or *Ra*? And we are prompted to ask it precisely because He is "little known." We must first discard the name *Ra*, for this very reason, that Sir G. Rawlinson (page 114) states "that it represents probably the native Chaldæan name of this deity, while *Il* is the Semitic equivalent. The Chaldæans were *not* Semites—the very erudite author of the "Five Monarchies" is fully persuaded of it—yet, on their monuments the name of their *first* god is *Il* (a Semitic expression), as often surely, and perhaps oftener—we have no means of ascertaining it—than *Ra*, the Chaldæan word. What does it mean? In our opinion this surely: that the idolatrous Chushites of Chaldæa had retained a single golden thread of the primitive traditions better preserved by their brethren of the Semitic race, and this thread was the true name of God, to which they tried to find an equivalent in their language, and so they called Him *Ra*. But for us, as we said previously, the word *Il* is of extreme importance, and we shall soon be convinced of it.

"*Il*, of course," says Rawlinson, "is but a variant of *El*, the root of the well-known Biblical *Elohim*, as well as of the Arabic Allah. It is this name which Diodorus represents

under the form of *Elus* (Ἐλος), and Sanchoniaton, or rather Philo-Byblius, under that of *Ilus* (Ἴλος). The meaning of the word is simply 'God,' or, perhaps, 'the god' emphatically. *Ra*, the Chushite equivalent, must be considered to have had the same force originally. . . . It formed an element in the native name of Babylon, which was *Ka-ra*, the Chushite equivalent of the Semitic *Bab-il*, an expression signifying 'the gate of God.'"

In these few words, Sir G. Rawlinson has satisfactorily proved that, originally, the Chaldæans were monotheists; and as he is certainly an unexceptionable witness, we rest satisfied with his testimony, and pass on. For we do not intend to enter into an examination of the abominable *naturalism* which soon became prevalent at Babylon, although it would be a striking example of a rapid degeneracy, more rapid certainly than among any other people of antiquity.

The next nation coming under our observation is the Assyrian, comprised likewise in the Chaldæan Empire, having a mythology in appearance somewhat different from that of Chaldæa, yet, in fact, almost identical. Mr. F. Lenormant ("Ancient History of the East," tom. i., p. 462) will tell us in a few words in what it consisted: "The skilful explorations of the last twenty-five years in the countries bordering on the Tigris and Euphrates, have given us much more correct ideas on the subject of the Assyro-Babylonian mythology than had been handed down by the Greeks. Nevertheless many points still remain in obscurity as to the religion common, with a few exceptions, to the two great Semitic cities of Mesopotamia. . . . When we penetrate beneath the surface of gross polytheism it had acquired from popular superstition, and revert to the original and higher conceptions, we shall find the whole based on the idea of the unity of the Deity, the last relic of the primitive revelation, disfigured by and lost in the monstrous ideas of pantheism. . . ."



“The Supreme God, the first and sole principle from whom all other deities were derived, was *Ilu*, whose name signifies God by excellence. Their idea of Him was too comprehensive, too vast, to have any determined, external form, or, consequently, to receive in general the adoration of the people. . . . At Nineveh, and generally throughout Assyria, He received the peculiar national name of *Asshur* (whence was derived the name of the country, *Mat Asshur*); and this itself seems derived from the Aryan name of the Supreme Deity, *Asura*. With this title He was the great God of the land, the especial protector of the Assyrians, and gave victory to their arms. The inscriptions designate Him as ‘Master, or Chief of the Gods.’”

Mr. F. Lenormant may be mistaken in the derivation of the name. That of the Supreme God in Central Asia was *Ahura*, not *Asura*, although we think that occasionally *Asura* is used. But what is fatal to such a derivation, is that there is *Ashur*, or *Assur*, a man certainly who, according to Genesis (x. 11), “ædificavit Niniven, et plateas civitatis, et Chale.” But whatever may have been the real derivation of the word *Asshur*, its identification with *Ilu* or *Il*, the Supreme God of the Chaldæans, appears certain. The two mythologies of Chaldæa and Assyria were almost identical; they were composed of the same Triads almost, and each Triad originated almost identical deities, etc.; the starting-point of the two systems must have been the same, and thus *Asshur* was certainly the same as *Il*.

Rawlinson admits that “each of the systems . . . commences with the same pre-eminence of a single deity; which is followed by the same groupings of identically the same divinities; and, after that, by a multitudinous polytheism, which is chiefly of a local character.”

According to the same distinguished author, the usual titles of *Asshur* are “the great Lord,” “the King of all the

Gods," "He who rules supreme over the Gods." . . . "His place is always first in invocations. . . . He places the monarchs upon their thrones, etc., etc." We wonder, after this, at his assertion that this religious system was "without any real monotheism." We wonder particularly at the reason he gives for it in a note. "Though Il in Chaldæa," he says, "and Asshur in Assyria, were respectively *chief* gods; they were in no sense *sole* gods. Not only are the other deities viewed as really distinct beings, but they are, in many cases, self-originated, and always supreme in their several spheres."

This certainly was the case in after ages, subsequently to the corruption of the primitive religion. But the immense distance which always in Chaldæa and Assyria separated Il and Asshur on one side, from the gods on the other, shows that evidently, in primitive times, these were far inferior gods; not self-originated, but created; not supreme, but delegated, as our Angels and Archangels. Their distinctness from the Supreme Being, recognized by Rawlinson, proves, at least, that there was originally no pantheism; and thus the very words of the author of the "Five Monarchies" are so many proofs of our conclusions.

Passing on to Phœnicia and Palestine, inhabited originally by the Canaanites, and remembering that both peoples belonged to the same race and were Hamites, we are struck by the remarkable fact that their religion—which was, perhaps, the most corrupt and barbarous of all ancient religions—had evidently a monotheistic origin, even more clearly than that of Chaldæa and Assyria. For besides Moloch, and Baal, and the other demons to whom they sacrificed human beings with the most atrocious rites, they admitted, over and far above these infernal deities, a Superior Being, called by them sometimes *El*, "the God," and occasionally *Iaoh*, "the being," "the eternal;" both names absolutely the same with those of

Elohim and Jehovah, the God of the Bible, the true and supreme God of Jews and Christians.

It is true that, according to Mr. F. Lenormant, these two appellations "were of a mysterious character, and rarely used; the usual name, and the one generally employed was Baal, 'the lord.'" But this mystery about the name of the true God was a universal fact among all other nations of antiquity; and we know that the Jews themselves never dared to pronounce the "ineffable" name, "Jehovah."

There is only a word to add on Arabia and the Arabs, whose real religion in ancient times has been, until our days, almost entirely unknown. Few researches have yet been made to throw light on the subject, on account of the almost absolute impossibility of penetrating the country, and the entire absence of monuments, except in the mountains of the north bordering on Syria and Mesopotamia. The late investigations of Comte de Vogué, however, have first, now in our own days, begun to penetrate the thick darkness which obscures the religious state of this country in ancient times; and all the discoveries made so far establish an almost literal identity of it with Syria and Chaldæa. This seems to be true, not only of Arabia Petræa, but even of the Hedjaz and Yemen. *Al* or *El* in Arabia Petræa, *Allah* in Hedjaz, and *Ilu* or *Il* in Yemen, was, in the highest antiquity that we can reach, the name of God in the three great divisions of the peninsula; and in many parts of it the religious polytheist system which followed the first monotheistic epoch, bears a close analogy with that of Chaldæa and Syria. This short sketch must suffice in the incipient stage of our knowledge on the subject. But the testimony of all those countries is so alike, indeed unanimous, that it is not possible that subsequent discoveries should change substantially the result. It is more probable that they will serve only to confirm the previous conclusions, and carry them finally to a complete demonstration.

After this compendious account of the primitive religion of all the countries we now examine, and which form so distinct a group, different in appearance from that of Aryan nations, yet identical in the conclusions resulting from it, we shall be better able to appreciate the observations of Max Müller on the same subject, as they are given in his "Lectures on the Science of Religion."

"The Semitic languages, like the Aryan, possess a number of names of the Deity in common." Mr. Müller, we think, classifies the Phœnicians with the Semites—"which must have existed before the Southern or Arabic, the Northern or Aramaic, the Middle or Hebraic branches became permanently separated, and which, therefore, allow us an insight into the religious conceptions of the once united Semitic race, long before Jehovah was worshipped by Abraham, or Baal was invoked in Phœnicia, or Bel in Babylon." Then follows a long dissertation on those various names of God, which Mr. Müller concludes in these words: "Whether we include or exclude the name of Jehovah"—we do positively exclude it for the present—"we have, I think, sufficient witnesses to establish what we wished to establish, namely, that there was a period during which the ancestors of the Semitic family had not yet been divided, whether in language or in religion. That period transcends the recollection of every one of the Semitic races in the same way as neither Hindoos, Greeks, nor Romans have any recollection of the time when they spoke a common language, and worshipped their Father in heaven by a name that was as yet neither Sanscrit, nor Greek, nor Latin. But I do not hesitate to call this prehistoric period historical in the best sense of the word. It was a real period, because unless it was real, all the realities of the Semitic languages, and the Semitic religions, such as we find them after their separation, would be unintelligible. Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic point to a common source, as much as Sanscrit, Greek, and Latin; and unless we

can bring ourselves to doubt that the Hindoos, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Teutons derived the worship of their principal deity from their common Aryan sanctuary, we shall not be able to deny that there was likewise a primitive religion of the whole Semitic race, and that El, 'the strong one in Heaven,' was invoked by the ancestors of all the Semitic races, before there were Babylonians in Babylon, Phœnicians in Sidon and Tyre, before there were Jews in Mesopotamia or Jerusalem. The evidence of the Semitic is the same as that of the Aryan languages; the conclusion cannot be different." The deduction from all these considerations is clear, and no further discovery can shake it.

### III.

But we have excluded the Hebrew evidence for several strong reasons. First, it is an evidence quite apart from all the others; it stands by itself; inasmuch as that people were, throughout their history, under the direct action of divine Providence, who guided them, chastised them, or rewarded them; governed them, in short, as their king and ruler. The Jewish people, consequently, can be compared to no other. Their national history has a special significance of its own; and remains always far above as it is essentially different from all other facts of history.

Secondly, it looks like desecration to rank the Mosaic religion amongst the other cults of antiquity, because they all soon became so corrupt as to provoke the abhorrence of every one of only decent propriety of morals. Especially is this true of those of Chaldæa, Syria, and Phœnicia, whose degrading rites must be ascribed to the direct influence of the Evil one. To state, without a clear explanation, that the God of the Jews was the same, originally, as the god of the Tyrians, might lead the unwary to imagine that all religions are alike, and deserve

the like commendation from all. Nothing could be further from the thought of a Christian.

Thirdly, the constant distinctness of the pure monotheistic idea among the Jews, during so many ages of their national existence, was positively intended by Almighty God as a permanent protest against the corrupt worship and abominable rites of all the surrounding nations, sunk, during all that time, in the mire of a devilish idolatry; and we have the whole of the Old Testament for vouchers of this assertion.

It is proper, therefore, to consider alone, and apart from all other religions, the grand individuality of the Mosaic theology, at least with respect to the belief in one God, as the typical form which all cults would have assumed if they had not deviated from their original purity; and these considerations will appropriately close our protracted investigations on the subject of Gentilism.

And first, the name given to Almighty God in the Bible is the most exact, the least subject to false interpretations, the completest in every respect, that can be imagined; we mean *the tetragrammaton*. It is true that, besides this ineffable name, there were, according to St. Jerome (Epist. 136, ad Marcellam), quoted by Corn. a Lapide (Ex. vi.), ten other appellations to denominate God. And it is remarkable that those various names of the Deity never became, among the Jews, an occasion of idolatry, as was certainly the case among other nations, whose polytheism was often the result of the different terms used to express their idea of the divine nature. The reason was probably the pre-eminence in Judea of that other name which the Israelites knew expressed most perfectly the essence of the Deity. Numbers of dissertations have been written on it. We will merely refer to two involved in them: The four letters composing it are *jod, he, vau, and jod*. Many see in their combination the meaning of the latin words: *Qui erat, est, et erit*; and among other reasons, bring forward the passage

of the Apocalypse, where God is said to be: *Qui erat, qui est, et qui venturus est*. We know that in Hindostan and Egypt the knowledge of this attribute of the Supreme Being led the people to believe that not only He included in His essence all times, but likewise all things; and thus it became a fertile cause of pantheism among them. Yet, as believed in by the Jews, nothing of the kind ever happened. Even this meaning, therefore, proved harmless in Judea. But the greatest number of Catholic exegetists understand the *tetragrammaton* very differently. Cornelius à Lapide, who refers to them at length (in Exodum), and likewise (in Apocalypsim) shows that the real meaning is simply *Qui est*, indicating the self-existence of God, and showing Him to be the First Cause of all things; and he concludes a long dissertation by these remarkable words: “Dico hoc nomen tetragrammaton Jeheva”—thus he spells it—“significare essentiam Dei, ipsam que essentiæ divinæ abyssum, et pelagus immensum; hoc enim significat nomen *qui est*.” In a second place, it is easy to prove that from this name of God all the divine attributes strictly follow. The unity of essence is certainly included in it, since the reality of being belonging only to God, if a second God, different from the first, possessed it, the other could not be said to have it entire, and consequently in a god-like manner, that is to say, to have it at all. It follows likewise, from it, that God must be all-perfect, most simple, infinite, independent, immutable, eternal, omnipotent, the Cause of all things which exist, which shall exist, which are possible, etc., etc. Never any name so comprehensive, exact, complete, has been given to the Supreme Being by the religious belief of any other people.

But among the Jews the unity of God was especially insisted on, because, when once its sacredness was in the least infringed upon, immediately the flood of polytheism, to which all nations were so powerfully inclined, broke through and brought with it the most devastating errors and delusions. Thus it was not

only this divine name which kept the Jews from idolatry, but also to render its effect more sure, the great and terrible voice heard from Mount Sinai proclaiming the divine law, amidst thunder and lightning: "*Non habebis deos alienos coram me. Non facies tibi sculptile . . . Non adorabis ea neque coles: Ego sum Dominus tuus fortis, Zelotes, etc.*"

Thus was polytheism most effectually warded off. But how is it that the Jews, so often inclined to pure idolatry, never showed the least tendency to pantheism, which was everywhere else the beginning of error? The reason is plain: From the very first page of their sacred books, and from so many utterances of their prophets and wise men, they knew that He was the Creator in the very sense we attach to the word. The error of emanation could not occur even to their mind, after having been distinctly taught how the visible world had come into existence. It was not in a state of unconsciousness, and during sleep, that the author of all things had generated the exterior world, as the writers of the Vedas and of the Hermetic books had dreamed. It was in all the majesty of the Godhead that He had uttered His great *Fiat*; and His creation, although immense, brilliant, apparently without limits, was to remain for ever not only distinct from, but infinitely below, Him.

We begin already to understand how the monotheism of the Jews differed from that of the Hindoos and the Egyptians. How much more profoundly would this phenomenon impress us could we go through all the effusions of the truly inspired writers of that sublime book we call the Bible. Could we bring forward all the texts in which the *holiness* of the Lord is proclaimed, together with His *providence*, His *love* for man, requiring love in return; and asking in positive terms to be loved by His intelligent creatures! The guardianship of the dogmas was thus given over to the sacredness of love; and man felt the necessity of never deviating from truth in his worship, precisely because he was bound to love Him, and could not des-



pise the One he loved, by communicating His attributes to any other. “*Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota fortitudine tua*” (Deut. vi., 5). No other religious code ever spoke with that plainness and pointedness; although St. Clement of Alexandria thought the Egyptians were enjoined the same kind of worship through love, and expressed it by giving to the Sphinx the face of a woman. Supposing his interpretation true—which in our opinion is very problematical—is it possible to place both proclamations of the same divine law on the same footing? Yet the Mosaic dispensation was designed rather to inspire fear than promote love. And this is chiefly visible in the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, which is full of threats, and foretells to the Jewish people the most fearful evils as the punishment of any future rebellion and idolatry. In the same chapter, however, what a picture of the tender predilection of God for his “people!” “*Invenit eum in terra deserta, in loco horroris et vastæ solitudinis: circumduxit eum et docuit; et custodivit quasi pupillam oculi sui. Sicut aquila provocans ad volandum pullos suos, et super eos volitans, expandit alas suas, et assumpsit eum, atque portavit in humeris suis, Dominus solus dux ejus fuit, et non erat cum eo Deus alienus.*” These were the noble and love-breathing ideas which the true religion gave to the Jews of the God they were to worship. The sublime mission of Moses in announcing them, proclaiming them, and giving them their sanction, shows itself infinitely superior to the self-imposed task of those Hindoo rishis, the authors of the finest upanishads of the Vedas. This fact alone affords confirmatory evidence that his authority could only have been derived but from God. It is this which places the Hebrew monotheism far above the purest belief of other nations, unless we go back to their very origin, of which we have no certain record, when they received it from God himself speaking to Noah and his children.

But it is time we should try to discover the influence of this sublime doctrine on surrounding nations. This requires of us to examine the relations the Jews had; 1st. With the great nations of antiquity; 2d. With their immediate neighbors in Palestine and Syria; and we shall find that this influence was far greater than is generally imagined.

I. It is remarkable that, throughout the time of their long history, the Jews had intimate relations with the various peoples who had successfully swayed the destinies of mankind, namely, with the Assyrians and Chaldæans, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans; relations of social and religious intercourse, of war, of alliances, of commerce even and interchange of commodities. Of no other nation of antiquity can the same be said to the same extent. In the Old Testament we see all these complications of interests between Israel and the Gentiles brought forward, sometimes mentioned briefly, occasionally with many details. This testimony of Holy Scripture has often been derided, and the "people of God" have been contemptuously represented as an insignificant, rude, and almost barbarous tribe. It has, however, been amply vindicated, in these days of inquiry, by the learned men who have studied deeply the antiquities of Assyria, Chaldæa, Egypt, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The Jews cannot be any more treated with ridicule, and their sacred books ignored or disowned, after the labors of so many interpreters of cuneiform inscriptions, and hieroglyphic or demotic papyri as well as of classical writers.

But, at first sight, it seems that this long-continued intercourse of the Israelites with the various Gentile empires or republics, had very little influence on the religious thoughts of these foreign nations. The universal flood of idolatry and superstition does not seem to have been checked in the least by all the sublime truths revealed in the books of the Old Testament. We do not hear of a single village having renounced its gods,

to embrace the worship of the Supreme and Sole God of the Jews. When Naaman, the Syrian, converted by his miraculous cure, embraced Judaism and became a proselyte, he did not appear to hope that he could bring any of his nation to the same belief; and he merely asked of the prophet, if he could in conscience accompany his master to an idolatrous temple, whenever requested to do so as a requirement of his office. When the Moabite Ruth consented to renounce Chamos of Moab, to adore the God of Noemi, she did not speak of trying to bring to her new religion any of her former friends and fellow-idolaters.

Yet we cannot suppose that the presence of the Jews in the midst of so many Gentile peoples, during so many ages, had no influence whatever in checking idolatry, and inspiring many men with the thought of a holier belief and a purer morality. We might take, for example, at the very outset, the instance of the patriarch of the nation, Abraham, and show what influence he must have had not only in Chaldæa, where he was born, not only in Mesopotamia, where he spent the greatest part of his life, but likewise in Egypt, where he travelled, and became intimately acquainted with the Pharaoh himself. Much might be written on the wonderful story of Joseph in Egypt. But a most remarkable fact, long subsequent to Abraham, is sufficient to correct in our minds many false ideas on the subject under consideration. It is the preaching of Jonah in Nineveh. The whole of this strange narrative looks, indeed, like a primitive example of any successful mission by a Catholic apostle even in our modern times. Does not Jonah among the Ninevites appear like a Francis Xavier in Marava or in Japan? And can we imagine that it was an altogether exceptional case, never repeated by any other prophet or man of God? The Old Bible does no more contain everything that happened in those times, than the New Testament relates all the events of the life of our Lord.

The Assyrian captivity of the Samaritans under Salmanasar, is another fact on which men do not sufficiently reflect. The kingdom of Israel, it is true, was already in great part idolatrous; yet many families preserved faithfully the true worship of God; and all, without exception, maintained a due respect for the Pentateuch, which certainly they carried with them to Assyria and Media. The simple, idyllic, and so truthful history of Tobias shows us that the zeal for the spread of the true religion among infidels had not altogether died out. The words of the holy man are clear (Tob. xiii. 4): "*Dispersit vos (Deus) inter gentes, quæ ignorant eum, ut vos enarretis mirabilia ejus, et faciatis scire eos, quia non est alius Deus omnipotens præter eum.*" What Tobias himself thought, must have likewise been impressed on the minds of many of his countrymen, of all pious people, in fact. And can we calculate the effect of so many words of instruction and exhortation on the pagans of Northern Mesopotamia and Armenia?

But we see this more clearly still in the Babylonish captivity; when not Samaritans only, men of the ten separated tribes, but true Jews of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, were transferred to Babylon and the neighborhood of the Persian Gulf. We should have to quote many prophecies of Ezechiel and all the history of Daniel, and allude, at least, to the position he occupied in the palace of the king, to give the reader some idea of the influence he must have exerted on the corrupt worship and the most corrupt manners of the Babylonians. He could not, certainly, prevent the catastrophe impending on the dynasties of the second Chaldæan Empire. It cannot be believed, however, that such a powerful interpreter of the oracles of God as Daniel certainly was, did not produce any impression on the idolaters of Babylon, since they believed so implicitly his interpretations, even when contrary to all their interests and hopes.

But it is chiefly under the Persian dynasty which immedi-

ately succeeded, that the religious and moral influence of the Jews appears pre-eminent. Cyrus' edict for their return to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the temple, is the most remarkable proof of it. Why is it that not only the great founder of the Persian Empire, but all his immediate successors, furnished pecuniary and military aid for the restoration of the great edifice, erected from the beginning, and continuing through ages as a proclamation to the whole world of the existence of One only God, worshipped in one only place, and by unique rites and sacrifices? In all the other countries which the Persian armies either annexed to Iran or devastated and ravaged, their first care was to wage war on religion, to disperse the priesthoods, burn the temples, and break to pieces the idols. This Cambyses did in Egypt and Xerxes in Greece. In Jerusalem alone did they show their respect for the God worshipped within its walls. They inaugurated the great custom continued afterwards under all the political powers on which Judea depended; for after the Persians, the Macedonians, under the leadership of Alexander, the Greek successors of the youthful hero, the Romans even afterwards appropriated a yearly tribute to the ceremonies and sacrifices appointed by the Mosaic law for the service of the true God. Some Syrian tyrants alone, like Antiochus, not only refused the tribute, but proscribed the worship, closed or injured the edifices, and persecuted the nation. With this single exception, it is a very strange, yet absolutely undeniable, fact, that, from the family of the Achemenidæ down to Pompey, and, later, Titus, all the various political powers holding Palestine under their sway followed the practice introduced by the Persian kings, and wished that the true God should be invoked in their behalf every day, morning and evening, by sacrifice and prayer. Can a stronger proof be given that the true and only revealed religion of antiquity possessed a great moral influence over the pagan mind of the period?

But this is not all. Whatever may have been the circumstances which brought about the translation of the Holy Scriptures in Greek, it is certain that the Septuagint version existed from the fourth century before Christ, since the most probable opinion, supported by St. Clement of Alexandria, attributes it to the care of Ptolemy Lagus, the first king of Egypt after Alexander. The translation was intended for the library of Alexandria, which then became, we may say, the intellectual centre of the world. The revealed word of God, containing the principles of the true religion, together with the annals of mankind, and the private records of the Jewish nation, then became accessible to all, as they were no more hidden under the Hebrew text, which so few could read, but were exposed to the knowledge of all in the Hellenic idiom, the most universally spread at the time, and intelligible from the Atlantic Ocean to the confines of India. Printing, it is true, could not multiply the copies, yet we know how extensively manuscripts circulated among educated people.

We have alluded to only a few well-known facts, in order to show that the Hebrew monotheism must have exerted a powerful influence all over the ancient world. We have not been able to more than touch upon a subject which, fully developed, would be full of interest. It remains to make a few remarks on the more direct action of the true religion on the people immediately surrounding the Jews in Palestine.

II. It is a truth, as curious as sad, that the Semitic race, which was not alone to keep the truth, and worship the only God, but to give, in fact, the Saviour to mankind, went almost altogether astray in the matters of religion and morality, and exhibited the greatest debasement in worship, and the blindest superstition in manners and customs. Many branches of that great race, for which chiefly the Old Testament was written, were, from a very early age, addicted to all the vices naturally fostered by the most direful errors. We cannot penetrate the

special designs of Providence in placing the Jews in the midst of Phœnicians, Canaanites, and Syrians, all of them, at the time, worshipping, in fact, the Satanic powers under the name of gods and goddesses, and given over to the most brutalizing immorality and superstition. The more the details of that abominable worship are studied and become known through the deep researches of orientalist in our days, the more we cease to wonder at the mission clearly given to the Israelites in the Pentateuch, to destroy them if they refused to give up their idolatry, and to occupy a territory long before promised to Abraham. We see the struggle fully described in the Book of Judges and in the first of Kings. The sure key to the proper understanding of this part of Holy Scripture is the comparison between the gloomy idolatry of the Canaanites, and the purity of the Mosaic religious law which was to replace it in Palestine. The Israelites are always defeated when they forget the admonitions of the divine law, and always successful when they return to it. The Canaanites are their enemies because they are, by their idolatry, the enemies of the Lord. It is throughout a religious conflict between the worship of One true God and the impious rites of barbarous divinities.

But after this protracted struggle, after the short reign of Saul, the first Jewish king, comes the long one of David, who, by many battles and nearly as many victories, conquered peace at last, and restored to his nation the possession of a land given first to Abraham, pointed out by Moses, conquered at first by Joshua, but, after this first of the Judges, disputed a long time by many idolatrous nations, until it was at last, as we have said, conquered by David, who at length bestowed the peaceful possession of it on his people. But how? If we look to the mere narrative of events, David is simply a skilful and successful general, who gains his kingly crown by the greatness of his mind and the strength of his arm. But should we stop at this interpretation of his powerful individuality, we should not truly

understand it. The key to his history and to that of his people is contained in his Psalms. And what do those sublime productions proclaim? The greatness of God and the utter depravity of polytheism. It was impossible to denounce with more power the abominable rites celebrated all around him; impossible to assert more forcibly the success of God against Satan in his own victories. With justice and conscious unworthiness he exclaimed: "Non nobis, Domine, non nobis; sed nomini tuo da gloriam."

But it is a fact that, when he wrote his psalms, and had them chanted before the tabernacle by thousands of human voices, the language in which they were written was not intelligible to his people alone, but to all those very tribes which he had conquered, over which he had triumphed. Could a better way have been devised of impressing them with the glory of the God of Israel? How many idolaters were converted by those sublime hymns, we have no means of ascertaining. But to suppose that they converted nobody, and that the surrounding idolatry was not influenced for good by the circulation of those divine melodies, would be to misunderstand altogether human nature. Especially when under the son and successor of David, the magnificent Temple of the true God rose on the hill of Sion, when, under its majestic architecture, the noble rites of the only true worship of the Deity performed on earth were consummated in the presence of so many Gentiles, to whom an extensive area inside of the building was assigned, who will be bold enough to say that no previous worshipper of Baal, no adorer of Melitta, no sacrificer to Astaroth, was impressed so as to surrender his superstition, and proclaim himself a true proselyte of the divine law promulgated on mount Sinai, and given to Moses with such awful solemnity?

But besides the conversion of many individuals, there can be no doubt that the degradation of polytheism, such as it was practised previously in Palestine, was arrested by the presence



of the faithful Israelites in the midst of the country, and instead of sinking deeper, and deeper, and deeper, as it did in other parts of the world, in Hindostan, in Egypt, in Greece, the Syrian superstitions were in a great measure mitigated and modified by the near presence of the Holy of Holies, and the constant spectacle of the solemn ceremonies of a pure worship.

Palestine, it is true, whatever may be the cause of it, has always been a hot-bed of errors, and a gloomy field of contending superstitions or heresies. It is so even in our time; and there is scarcely a spot on earth where, at this moment, may be seen more contention and strife in religious matters. The august presence of the only true Temple of God, in former ages was, and the moving spectacle of the sepulchre of our Lord, in our times, still is, unable to produce harmony among men, and bring all to be of one mind and one heart. Yet, since our present investigations have been limited to a long-past epoch, what has been urged will, we trust, go far towards convincing the reader that the Mosaic monotheism must have not been without a great influence on the surrounding errors.

It is true, therefore, that divine Providence always left to former pagan nations many means of acknowledging the Supreme God, and of coming back to Him, after having so long wandered in the labyrinth of false religions. And the Mosaic law, given only to a small nation, was thus able to serve to many as a means of reflection and salvation. We do not speak here of its typical character, so remarkable certainly, and so well calculated to satisfy all the cravings of the heart for a future restoration of true religion upon earth; cravings and anticipations which we know did exist, and to which many myths, poems, legends, or real prophecies bear witness. Our subject did not admit of our touching, even, on that most interesting topic. But the little we have said on the monotheism of the Jews was absolutely required in treating of what was real in the monotheism of the Gentiles.

## IV.

The early documents of the Semitic, as well as of the Aryan races, have been proved to agree in representing mankind at first civilized, monotheistic, and morally pure. If the annals of the posterity of Sem are not so abundant and decisive as those of the children of Japhet, they have on the other side a superiority over these, by embracing within their ethnologic precincts the wonderful posterity of Abraham. With respect to the Hebrew people, there can be no hesitation, no possible contradiction. The patriarchal system is evidently the origin of their social state; the belief in one God is emphatically their creed; the morality they professed was contained in the decalogue, which has always been justly considered as the clear and undisturbed source of the purest ethical codes ever adopted. If the other branches of the Semitic family offer us in their subsequent history the very reverse of this picture: despotism in society, rank idolatry in religion, debasement in moral principles—it could not have been so at the origin, since they had enjoyed the privilege of claiming the same ancestral patriarchs as those of the Hebrew people, the same belief in one God, the same pure law certainly anterior to that of Mount Sinai.

But it seems that, after all, our demonstration is not complete. There is that great, universal, primeval Turanian race, of which not a word has been said, and to which, nevertheless, must be awarded the priority in human history. Is it not in that wonderful *Σκνθισμός*, so celebrated among the most reliable writers of ancient Asiatic history, that we will find that archaic barbarism which all modern researches bring forward as the first state of man on earth? The spread of that degraded family of races, as extensive as the globe itself, the uncouth manners, so emphatically expressed in the very word *σκνθισμός*,

the total absence of any religious emblems among the scattered relics which remain to us of that far-distant age; everything, in fact, seems to proclaim that mankind did not begin by the golden age, but, on the contrary, by an undoubtful inferiority and debasement.

It is, in fact, surprising that the earnest advocates of early barbarism have not yet entoned a pæan of triumph on the occasion of the late discoveries in this field of ethnology. It is already more than forty years ago that Dr. Prichard showed the wide-spread existence of what he called the "Allophylian races." Several modern ethnologists of high renown have studied this question, in which they saw the germ of great and interesting findings. Geo. Rawlinson, among others, has, in a few solid pages, brought to bear an immense erudition on the subject. All the great leaders in true science are agreed that the Allophylian, or Turanian, or Hamitic family of nations spread anteriorly to the Semitic or Aryan branches of mankind, and were of a type far inferior to the more favored races which followed them. Yet nothing has been said of this by those modern authors who are all along taking advantage of the least important items of information tending to prove that man was at first a brute. Nay, more, if these same writers speak of it, it is with a marked diffidence, as did lately some unknown contributor to the "Westminster Review." Those gentlemen seem to hesitate; they are afraid of committing themselves, being fully aware that Prichard, Rawlinson, Max Müller, Quatrefages, and other authors of the same school, are not precisely in favor of assigning the gorilla as the true ancestor of man. They are perfectly wise, and, with justice, our Saviour called them "*prudentiores filiis lucis in generatione sua.*" There is visible, in fact, in the way they speak and write on the subject, a kind of awe and fear, lest, by raising the question, they burn their fingers and have to drop it instantly as too hot for their flimsy, dry, and combustible theories.

Has not Rawlinson already hinted that in the Aryan, Semitic, and Turanian families we can perceive the posterity of the three sons of Noah? And, indeed, we are confident the same shall be proved before long, as so many other biblical facts have been ascertained by independent inquirers after truth. A few words have been said anteriorly on the subject in our second chapter, to which we refer. It suffices us to repeat that two consequences are to be undoubtedly derived from the great fact of *σκηθισμός*, namely, first, that its anteriority was one of expansion, not of origin; second, that it ought to be included within the historic period, and cannot be made to support the theory of prehistoric times; and thus the belief in primeval barbarism cannot find any help in the subject under consideration. Nay, as hinted previously, the Turanian race being evidently identical with the Hamitic, and the best ethnographers of our age seeming more and more disposed to adopt this conclusion, the whole bent of the question leans only to the admission of the debasement of the children of Ham, including *the curse*, the most unpalatable, certainly, of all biblical assertions. All this being duly considered, there is no great reason to be surprised that the supporters of the new theories hesitate in taking advantage of the Allophylian system of races.

But it is time to come to the religious and moral question in this most obscure subject, and to ask ourselves if we can prove, at least by implication, that the old Turanians led a patriarchal life, and believed in one God, like their Aryan and Semitic brethren.

First, there is, the great, we may say stupendous, fact of the trilingual inscriptions found still everywhere in Asia, whose most remarkable details are referred to by Rawlinson. They are written in cuneiform characters, and consequently must be ascribed to the earliest times of the settlement of man in those countries. They are called *trilingual* because they invariably

proclaim the same facts in three different tongues—the Semitic, Aryan, and Turanian dialects. Many of them were certainly engraved under the Persian kings of the Achemenidæ family; and as Herodotus informs us that in his own time there were yet a large Scythian population spread in Asia among the more recent and cultivated races which then ruled the country, it becomes evident that all over that great continent the posterity of the three sons of Noah lived together, but spoke different dialects, reducible to three original languages, which our modern philologists can now read in the precious inscriptions we are for the moment discussing.

No complete list of them has been made, as far as we are informed. It is very probable that a few only are known, and the great majority of them are lost to civilized man over those rude steppes of Central Asia. In the supposition, consequently, that in the few inscriptions that have reached us nothing is said that would convey to us a sufficiently clear information of the Turanian religion in those primitive ages, it cannot be concluded that these people had no knowledge of God or were merely degraded fetichists. In fact, no conclusion whatever can be drawn; and the best for us would seem to be to wait until more monuments of the kind have been discovered and deciphered.

Still what is already known is not without its value. The mere insertion of the Turanian line in those documents engraved on the hard rocks, prove that the Persian or Median kings considered their Turanian subjects as real men, not as pure slaves; they were evidently reckoned as an integral part of the commonwealth; they could read, certainly, since, undoubtedly, it was for their particular benefit that the third line existed in those inscriptions. They were not, therefore, barbarians, and must be considered as sharing in the civilization of their more favored brethren living among and ruling over them.

Our friend Zarathustra speaks, it is true, of Turàn as of a country of darkness, in opposition to Iràn, the country of light; and the very name indicates the races on which we now are expatiating. But the details given by the friend of Gustasp in his "Vendidad" show conclusively enough that the people of Turàn were not savages. Against the people of the south, the great Bactrian reformer complained of idolatry; they had introduced the worship of the devas in a primitively pure religion; they had abjured the monotheism of their ancestors to fall prostrate at the feet of inferior beings. This was for Zarathustra a cause of unrelenting war. He had nothing of the kind to allege against the people of Turàn. The great complaint Zarathustra makes of them is, that they did not lead a sedentary life like the happy subjects of the good and great Gustasp; they did not apply themselves to agriculture, to the planting of gardens, or *paradises*, as they were called later on in Persia. Those beings, truly wretched in the estimation of the author of the Gâthas, were mere *nomads*, travelling from place to place with immense herds and flocks, considering as their own property all the pasture-grounds they met on their way; and thus, when they ventured south of the fortieth parallel, the well-cultivated plantations of Gustasp's country suffered somewhat from the roving habits of the Turanians. That is all!

But this, indeed, is a great deal! It shows that the Turanians led the life of Abraham, of Jacob, of the Arabian Job, of many Hindoo Rishis, and Pelasgian rovers. These habits have a strange perfume of patriarchal manners; and if the Turanians had left us some of their books, as we now possess some of those of Zarathustra, it is very possible that we would have heard a different story; and the rude, nomadic manners of the north might have met with some indulgence on our part, since, to us, modern people, belongs evidently the right of judging and deciding on everything connected with barbarism or civilization. The speech of the "paysan du Danube," in

the celebrated fable of Lafontaine, is certainly pointed enough, and shows some of the fallacies of an overgrown culture, at the same time that it establishes forcibly the claims of a simple and inoffensive freedom for the most unsophisticated part of mankind. But that "paysan" is just a Scythian, a Turanian, an Allophylian, anything you choose, except a refined Aryan or Semite. The author of the fable, it is true, supposes him to be a German and an agriculturist; but Lafontaine lived in an age when ethnology was unknown; had he been born a couple of centuries later, he would have made him come from Turàn, and extoll the advantages of a nomadic life, as a true Cossack of the Danube or the Don is in duty bound to do.

But pleasantry apart, it is seriously true that the roving habits of the ancient Scythian race, as it was called by the Greek authors, did not suppose a state of barbarism and savagery. We see in Persian history, when their country was invaded by Darius, how coolly, systematically, and successfully they opposed an army of seven hundred thousand men by the only strategy which could defeat the enemy. They did exactly what the Russians did in our age to overthrow Napoleon. They retired into the interior of their wild country, driving back their herds before them, destroying all the crops which could furnish food to the Persians, and filling up the wells where the enemy could have obtained pure water. In a few months, Darius, the Medé, had to return with a poor remnant of his former splendid and numerous troops, and, perhaps, not one of his soldiers would have returned if the Athenian general, left in charge of the bridges over the Danube, had not kept faith with the Persian monarch, and waited, according to promise, for the falling back of the defeated army. In this occurrence the Turanian races of Northern Europe—the least advanced of all the tribes of the same stock, according to public opinion—showed a foresight, a sturdy energy, a well-sustained perseverance worthy only of very civilized people.

After agriculturist nations, the pastoral tribes are certainly to be accounted the most civilized ; they are, in that regard, far in advance of the hunting and fishing hordes. Every ethnologist admits this view of the matter, and classifies the races of mankind according to this standard. But in the estimation of all well-informed men, the Turanian tribes are mostly included among the pasture-graziers, stock-raising, and cattle-feeding people. They were primitively all nomads ; and if some of them have been agriculturists for many ages—as the Chinese, who certainly belong to that class of nations—the great majority of them, to the present day, are yet nomad and pastoral people. All the Tartar nations, so numerous and far-spread in point of territory, are of this category. The Arabs, almost without exception, were formerly of the same character, and many Arabian tribes continue to be the same to this day. The Turanians, therefore, even those of the earliest age, partook of the general characteristics of many Semitic tribes ; and we know that Baron Larrey considers the Syro-Arabian type of man as the highest in existence, placing it, as he does, directly above the Hellenic and Caucasian. To be sure, the physical characters of all Semites are of a higher order than the same features of any Turanian stock ; but the habits of both classes of men being essentially the same, namely, pastoral and rural, indicate almost the same degree of civilization.

The conclusion to be drawn from all these considerations is plain and forcible : the Turanians have never been savages, and many of them have attained a high state of culture. But we must come to the real difficulty, included in the very simple question, What of their religion ?

For the solution of it we have no books, sacred or profane, belonging to the whole race ; no general traditions current among them—except, undoubtedly, flood traditions—no narrative of migrations connecting them with higher races ; nothing that can be extracted from their language which is of a quite



different character from that of the Aryans or Semites. Nay, their tongues are rather a real stumbling-block in our way, since they never had an alphabet, and scarcely ever rose to the hieroglyphic character, or, worse still, to picture-writing. How can we hope to know which God they worshipped, which code of morality they followed, what social principles they had primitively adopted? There is only one way left us to come out of this labyrinth; but it is, after all, a simple and easy one. It will directly open itself to us if we merely ask the secondary question: Are there yet Turanian nations in existence, and what are they in point of religion and morality? Their present status may unveil to a great extent their mysterious origin.

All the ethnographers of our age are agreed upon this: that the Chinese belong to the universally-spread Turanian race. This seems to be a settled point; and this finally clears up a great deal of the mystery which, till our days, hung as a thick mist on the origin of this extraordinary nation. There are other actual races of men which likewise can claim the same starting-point; among them the pure Tartars, and the Siberian tribes; but as their history is less known than that of the native inhabitants of the Celestial empire, and as we are limited in the space left us for these last investigations, we must confine ourselves to the single line of inquiry suggested by the real antiquities of China.

It may be considered as certain that the same race of inhabitants has lived in this extreme part of Asia since the first migration of man from his original centre. They must have come from the West; and if the general opinion about them is correct, and they are Hamites, they must have started either from Africa or from that part of western Asia which is contiguous to it. They have annals going back to the year 2637 before Christ; but the followers of Lao-tseu speak of interminable dynasties reaching, finally, up to the first monarch, Pankou,

whose surname, Hoen-tun (primordial chaos), indicates the purely mythological character of the history. It is known, moreover, that the spread of the Hamites was anterior to that of the Aryans and Semites.

In order to determine their primitive religion—the only thing of real importance here—the first step must be to consider their public worship since the Europeans became in contact with them. At the time of the landing of the Portuguese on their coast—the beginning of the sixteenth century—the religious aspect of the country was precisely what it is at this moment, with the exception of a few hundred thousand Christians existing at present, who have been with great difficulties converted to the true faith. The great mass of the common people was then, and is yet, Buddhist; and as the founder of the sect, Gautama, is not older than six hundred years before Christ, we cannot consider this system of atheistic idolatry as having any connection with the primeval worship of the Chinese. This element ought, therefore, to be set aside, and there is no need of making any future allusion to it. The remainder of the population is composed of followers of Lao-tseu, and of Confucius, and it is among these two branches of religious opinion that we may be able to discover the original worship of the Chinese. The first of these philosophers was born in 604 before Christ, half a century previous to Confucius. He founded the religion of the Tao (supreme reason), which, he pretended, is anterior to, and the source of, the divinities I, Hi, Wei. But he did not reject the worship of these divinities. He, on the contrary, taught openly the belief in the existence of a spiritual world, giving rise to spiritual manifestations among men, and connected with a whole system of migration of souls after death. The religion of Lao-tseu, therefore, is not altogether an atheistic system; far from it; and, consequently, a great number of common people in China still follow it. Its priests live in temples and small communities with

their families, "deriving," it is said, "a precarious livelihood from the sale of charms."

The sect of Confucius, who appeared directly after Lao-tseu, is of a very different character. It embraces only rich men, or officials of the government called Mandarins. It is merely a system of moral philosophy clothed in a fantastical symbolism; the four cardinal virtues: piety, morality, justice, and wisdom, coming into combination with mere physical beings or attributes of matter, such as moistness, fire, winds, water, mountains, thunder, earth. *Heaven* and *earth* with *man* become, as it were, the heads of three series, called kingdoms. The only question is to know if *Heaven—Tien*, or *Shanti*—is merely the material heaven, or the God of heaven. Everyone is acquainted with the long controversy which arose in China last century among the Catholic missionaries; a controversy which ended by a Pontifical decree forbidding to allow the Chinese converts to use the native rites, chiefly to *Tien*, or *Shanti*; as evidently in the modern Chinese religion, the direct object of those rites is only what is generally called "the vault of heaven," and not God himself. The system of Confucius is, therefore, positively an atheistic system; and it is not in it that we can find the primeval religion of China, if it was monotheistic. Our only hope, consequently, must turn toward the actually despised religion of Tao, to which belongs a great number of people of the lowest class.

A remark, however, on what has just been said of Confucius' system, cannot be deprived of interest. We find in it, together with cardinal virtues, physical entities which are not entirely foreign to our previous acquaintance with Hindostan. *Moistness* is probably the moist atmosphere, and must be the *Indra* of the Vedas; *fire* is certainly *Agni*; *winds* must be the *meruts* of India, etc. Who knows if primitively Heaven was not Brahma neuter, or the invisible God; and Earth, Brahma male, or the visible universe? For the Pontifical decision

of the question affected only actual times and circumstances; the object of Rome was to prevent actual Chinese Christians from performing really superstitious, if not positively idolatrous, rites. But the consideration of the primitive religion of China did not, and could not enter into the mind of the Supreme Pontiff. We are at liberty, therefore, to ask ourselves if originally the religious ideas of the Chinese were not very different from what they are actually, and if there has not been a decline in their belief, as it has been found out was the case with the Indians, Egyptians, and Greeks? And on the threshold of this investigation we are surprised to see the nomenclature of Confucius' preternatural beings coincide in many points with that of the Vedic devatas.

It is, however, in the primitive system of Lao-tseu that we are more likely to find what interests us at this moment; and we must consider more closely what is called the Tao religion in China. G. Pauthier and Abel de Rémusat in France have, it may be said, profoundly studied the question. The first published a "Mémoire on the origin and propagation of the doctrine of Tao," and illustrated it with a commentary drawn from Sanscrit books, and from the *Tao-te-king* of Lao-tseu; the whole followed by the translation of two Vedic Upanishads, having a visible reference to the Tao doctrine. The book appeared in Paris in 1831.

From the publication of this important work, it became evident that the primeval belief of the Chinese was not completely isolated from that of other primitive races; and a new and important link was established between the Turanian family of nations and their Aryan brethren. But it is chiefly the text itself of the Chinese author which was found full of philosophical and religious considerations which few men indeed could have expected. The general opinion of all those who are acquainted with modern China is, that apart from the Buddhist votaries given over to the senseless superstitions re-

placing for the vulgar the open atheism advocated by the chiefs of the sect, apart, we say, for the degrading idolatry of the worshippers of Fo or Buddha, the remainder of the nation, the upper classes of society in particular, are left absolutely without a religion of any kind, except the worship of ancestors; do not believe neither in a personal God, nor in the immortality of the soul; live brutally in this world, and die with a complete indifference, as expecting no other. This is the universal, and for aught we know, the correct opinion of all well-informed people.

But the books called *Kings* come here counter to that idea, and certify that it has not always been so in that devoted country. Before the age of Lao-tseu, the *Y-King* existed already, and was attributed to Fo-hi, identified by many learned men with Noah himself. But whatever may be thought of this pretension, it is sure that in the *Y-King* there is question of a real God appearing at the origin of this visible creation, the corner-stone of it, and evidently its regulator at least; since He is called *Ly* and *Tao*, that is, Law and Reason. This is, indeed, as cold and dry as the Chinese character; and the exuberance of fancy of other cosmologists, chiefly in Hindostan and Greece, is poorly replaced at the extreme end of the Asiatic continent; yet *Ly* and *Tao* is, at least, as imaginative as the *primum mobile* of Aristotle; and the writer of the *Y-King* intended certainly to strike the mind of his readers and call their attention to the mighty Governor of the world.

But we must carefully examine the chief supernatural expressions contained in the *Kings* attributed to Lao-tseu; for this philosopher wrote several of them, particularly one of great importance. Those which are supposed to be the work of Confucius would poorly reward us for our trouble, as the great moralist of China seems not to have had the least idea of a real God; and, on this account, have we already set aside his doctrine; which we leave without regret to the meditations of the

Mandarins. The *Tao-te-King* seems to be really the work of Lao-tseu ; and it will be sufficient to confine our investigations within the circle of this extraordinary work. Since the "Memoir" published by Pauthier in 1831, Stanislas Julien, another French *sinologue*, gave from the manuscripts of his *confrère* a translation of the whole *Tao-te-King*, which appeared in Paris in 1842.

The word *Tao* itself is somewhat obscure. Taken materially it means only a way, a road. But Lao-tseu was a metaphysical and religious writer, and from the context of the whole book it is clear that it means *a road to lead to reason* ; and the word *reason*, from the same context, must receive a high interpretation, and designates certainly primordial reason, the mind which created the world, and which governs it as the soul governs the body. It is thus somewhat akin to the *Λόγος* of the Greek schools, with, it is true, something of the pantheism of the Hindoo "Universal Soul."

From the investigations of Pauthier and of Rémusat, the word *Tao* has, in fact, three significations, which Lao-tseu embraced, or rather supposed were contained, at the same time, in this short expression. It means, first, *reason*, properly so called ; then, *speech* ; finally, the Supreme Reason of God ; exactly as *Λόγος* in Greek, which also is susceptible of these three meanings.

In a celebrated passage of the *Tao-te-King*, it is said that this "reason has no name, in some respect, and in another respect, it has a name ;" and a Chinese commentator on these words of Lao-tseu expresses himself in this wise : "By itself and in its essence *Reason* cannot have a name, since it existed previous to all beings (before names were required to distinguish them) ; but when primordial motion began, and *being* succeeded to *no-being*, it could receive a name."

It is impossible not to remark here almost an identity with the Vedas of Hindostan and the Hermaic books of Egypt.

In the twenty-first chapter of the Tao-te-King there is mention made of a kind of cosmogony; when to the indistinctness of primordial chaos, in which all beings were confused, imperceptible, indefinite—invisible, consequently—succeeded their actual state of order, perceptibility, explicitness, and, in consequence, visibility. This is, no doubt, the Egyptian doctrine of the visible Universe, son of the invisible God; but in the doctrine of Lao-tseu, the very first expression is pure pantheism. This ought not to surprise, since, at that very epoch, the sixth century before Christ, it was thus likewise in Egypt.

The forty-second chapter contains the following remarkable apophthegm: "*Reason* produced one; one produced two; two, three; three, everything. The Universe is based on an obscure principle (matter); it is embraced by a lucid principle (heaven); a tepid *afflatus* harmonizes the whole." Out of this vague and indefinite sentence Christian truths can be deduced, as well as pantheistic and Neoplatonist errors.

But the most remarkable passage, perhaps, of the whole book, is the following: "What you look at and do not see, is I; what you listen to and do not hear, is HI; what you try to touch and cannot is WEI—three beings which cannot be understood and form but One. The first of them is neither brighter nor more obscure than the last. . . . Whoever can conceive a right idea of the primitive state of *reason* (the non-existence of beings before creation) can know the principle, and holds in his hand the chain of reason."

Many Catholic missionaries saw in these words an almost clear expression of the Trinity. This holy dogma is certainly more positively asserted in this passage than in any Platonist sentence which the Fathers of the Church understood as containing it. The most striking part of it is undoubtedly the nomenclature of the successive letters I, H, V, which reproduce almost exactly the Hebrew tetragrammaton IHV—Jehova—and which many learned men have recognized in the Iao of

the Greeks, the Jov. of the Latins, and the Jub. or Juba of the Mauritanians.

The individual life of Lao-tseu presents many analogies with that of Pythagoras. He is said to have travelled in the west, towards Hindostan consequently; he pretended also to have passed through several successive transformations. His doctrine is as redolent of Pythagorism, and of Platonism in theory, as of Stoicism in ethics. All these particularities are, no doubt, totally unknown to his actual votaries in China, who belong to the most ignorant classes of society; nay, the priests of the sect he founded, who are known chiefly in this age for their vulgarity, and the sordid inclination which prompts them to sell charms, and live at the expense of the people, know probably nothing of the elevated doctrines of the *Tao-te-King*; yet the book exists, and Europe is indebted for the knowledge of it to Pauthier, Julien, and Rémusat. To these gentlemen we owe the advantage of a positive acquaintance with primitive China, and consequently with more than half the Turanian world. Owing to this we have acquired the certainty that the ancient *Σκνθισμός* was not a state of barbarism. All the details which have just passed under review prove, on the contrary, that, as with respect to the Aryan and Semitic families of nations, so likewise with regard to these, the higher we go in point of time the more enlightened the Turanians were; and we have a right to assert that as the *Tao-te-King* of Lao-tseu was a compilation of only the sixth century before Christ, it was not the very text of the books which existed anteriorly, and out of which the founder of the *Tao-ssé* formed his system. The original work must have been much more clear and emphatic in regard to the Unity, Infinity, Almightyness of the Creator, chiefly in regard to His personality and Infinite power over the world. A new proof, if it were needed, that at the beginning all races of men enjoyed a high religious and moral knowledge.



Another very important remark is derived from the palpable and most evident character of the Tao-te-King. It is altogether a dry and metaphysical composition. It almost reproduces in China the peculiarities of the Sânkya philosophy in Hindostan. As the writers of this Indian school indulged in abstruse theoretical speculations, which changed altogether the scope of the elevated compositions of the Vedas, and introduced a thorough and consistent pantheism, whilst in the previous upanishads this error was contained only in germ, and was counteracted by many clear and emphatic utterances of the primitive doctrine, so likewise the work of Lao-tseu presents to our intellect a series of most abstract apophthegms and considerations, all merging in a dry pantheism, as absolute and rigorous as that of the Sânkya philosophy. There is not, therefore, any rashness in supposing that this erroneous and strict system of the Chinese philosopher was derived from a previous, far superior doctrine, of which the human mind had not been the sole expounder, but which can be, by analogy at least, attributed to that primitive revelation whose vestiges we have encountered everywhere in the ancient world. From all previous considerations the idea that all ancient religions began by pantheism must by this time be exploded.

The few discoveries lately made in Turanian antiquities have not thus been altogether barren of interesting results. It is a field which has just been opened these last few years. When more is known of it, and men of true science and impartial mind, like Prichard and Rawlinson, have collected new facts, analyzed and classified them, the conclusions which we begin to foresee, and which already, to a certain extent, can be deduced and enunciated, will be much more precise, and, in our firm conviction, complete the demonstration which, at the present time, can be but given with some diffidence and hesitation. It is, however, already a strict conclusion from facts lately known, that the most primitive times of mankind were not

universally given over to barbarism, and to manners akin to those of the brute. This, at least, is strictly deduced from what is positively known of those early times.

A last reflection on China as an index of the Turanian period, is naturally inferred from the government and social state of this extraordinary country. It subsists yet under the patriarchal polity; and although the Emperor is in fact a despot, he preserves at least, *pro forma*, in all his decrees, the original language of a father. A multitude of details in legislation, social customs, and inveterate habits, find their best explanation in the origin of government on the clan pattern. Henry Sumner Maine has lately demonstrated that the laws of ancient Rome, and those of modern England, are clearly referable to the same source; but he might have found a still more striking example of his theory in modern China. The book on "Ancient Law" deserves, however, to be read by all men desirous of obtaining an exact knowledge of primitive times.\* And nothing more appropriate and confirmatory of the views advocated all along by us, could have been published at this time. We only regret not to have known the book except at this last moment of our present writing.

It is evidently one of the most important branches of archaeological study, to dive in the few remains existing in Asia and northern Europe, of what has been called the Turanian period. Inscriptions, monuments, fragments of the human body, skulls particularly, such as those studied by Dr. Pruner-Bey in the north of France, everything even of the least importance apparently, ought to be collected with care, compared, examined attentively, and explained with respect to their bearings on the religion, customs, and civilization of those primitive times. This is, in our opinion, the most sure means of dispelling and exorcising the phantom of barbarism, evoked with such perse-

\* In Appendix II., at the end of this volume, the reader will find some reflections on Mr. Maine's "Ancient Law."

verance by a multitude of modern writers. If our first progenitors were barbarians we will surely find the proofs of it in Turanian relics. But let the inquirer ascertain first, that whatever he chooses for the basis of his investigations is really ancient and primeval; let him not, like Sir John Lubbock, look eagerly after the fish-hooks, stone-hatchets, oaken clubs of some modern degraded islanders, and conclude forthwith that these were the tools of primitive man; let him not collect all the senseless tales, obscene details, and brutish narratives related by travellers of actually living tribes on the extreme verge of poor degraded humanity, and exclaim at once that this is always the first phase of human history, and the first inklings of "early civilization." But let the impartial inquirer ascertain positively that whatever he has found and collected, is of a real antiquity, appertains to the primitive Turanian epoch, can be proved to be referable to the early *σκυθισμός* of Epiphanius and Herodotus; and the sure conclusion will be that even then men were civilized, adored the true God, and had a code of morality akin to ours.

The circle at last is, we think, completed, the curve is closed, and no link is missing in the long chain. The Aryan family of nations has spoken with unanimity, in an unmistakable language, and has appeared before us in its native grandeur and solemn aspect. The Semitic races seemed at first to frustrate our hopes, and stand in judgment against our conclusions; but a more close attention has brought even them in accord with their Japhetic brethren, and the Hebrew branch of that great family has made amends for previous misconceptions, and given back to the whole stock the precious boon which they seemed to have lost. Nothing could give a stronger confirmation to the assertions of our first chapter, and bring more in relief the primitive plan of God in the creation of the human species.

The Turanians, finally, although still somewhat doubtfully, are gradually brought back to a dignified level with their more favored brethren; and this uncertain utterance in their voice agrees precisely with what we conceive to be the necessity of the case with respect to the descendants of Ham, the inheritors of the curse of Canaan.

But, together with the primeval unanimity of the whole human race in expressing the same truths, and exhibiting the same conscientious morality, the subsequent history of all the branches of mankind has manifested with clearness, and with an unfortunate accord, the great law of degeneracy which can be pointed out everywhere on earth during the thousands of years which preceded Christianity. Hindostan, Central Asia, Egypt, Greece, Italy, and the whole anterior Turanian world have spoken the same language, and demonstrated the same fact. Only, it is true, a few broad and bold features of it have been brought forward, and formed the chain of the argument. But to this were we reduced by the limits of our plan. The reader must be, by this time, persuaded that an indefinite number of details could easily be adduced to strengthen the same conclusions. Volumes of notes, taken from the annals of ancient nations, and scarcely ever contradicted by other facts of a dissimilar character, could without difficulty be printed—culled in reading, with pen in hand, from the innumerable books which daily issue from the press of all nations, in all languages, and of all schools, even of the one most opposed to our view of the case.

This ancient law of degeneracy must, by this time, be considered as strictly demonstrated, and it is to be wondered at that there are yet assertors of the “continuous progress” of mankind.

Yet a strong objection meets us here with regard to the entire tone of this volume, an objection which unfortunately becomes every day more emphatic and outspoken, although it

saps the foundation of society, and opposes, with its stern resolve, all the leanings of the human race in all ages, if we except the small band of materialists, and atheists more active now than ever.

The objection is this: The plan of history you draw supposes in your primitive revelation a direct intervention of God which is not proved, and you are reduced to represent man as unable to develop his own destiny by his own efforts, constantly in struggle with his Master, yet finally conquering even Him, to fall directly a prey to his own degraded passions. In our age science requires that the moral world should be explained without a *deus ex machina*, but merely by the play of human agency and human power.

This is the proud and, we may say, awful *dictum* of many writers of our age, in the opinion of whom God, if He exists, does not condescend to care for His creatures, but leaves them to their fate, even in the supposition that He gave them existence. Apuleius himself would have explained: "Can we be left without the thought, and the hope of heaven?" To declare that everything supernatural ought to be rejected at once, by the very fact that it is above nature; to disconnect consequently the history of man from the designs of a Creator and Master; to abandon us to an unknown destiny, and condemn us to a perpetual ignorance of our origin and our end, is the most terrible sentence which can be pronounced against humanity. With numberless aspirations towards a supreme happiness, and owing to this, always dissatisfied with what the earth can afford, claiming by all the aims of our soul kindred with God himself, and in our inmost consciousness infinitely superior to the whole earth on which we tread, we are told that all these longing desires are deceptions, and that this irresistible attraction towards heaven is a folly. The whole of mankind protests against this condemnation to self-abasement, and a condemnation, too, pronounced by a few theorists who pretend that their only aim is

to restore to mankind its rights. Away with such rights which end in dishonor and nothingness! We know better, since the hand of God has imprinted in our very hearts, together with His law, the promise of the reward due to its observance, namely, the possession of heaven and of Himself.

Who is base enough to advise us to reject what our nature aspires to with all its energy, and embrace what cannot be but loathsome to a noble soul? Yet all this pretension, that science must set God and His revelation aside, in order to have our mind enlightened with regard to our origin and destiny, comes finally to this: that we are not placed on a higher level than the beasts of the field, and like them are destined to perish for ever. Since if you take away our heavenly aspirations and call them folly, you *take away* our title-deeds, and leave us deprived of inheritance, the most forlorn and miserable of mere animals fated to enjoy life a moment and sink down for ever into nothingness. But, indeed, this is to ignore completely our very nature; and thus to remove from us the sphere of the supernatural is to deny the highest prerogatives of human kind.

Nay, we cannot remain even here, and be satisfied with so sufficient an answer to the pretended objection previously recorded. We answer again with more emphasis: Our assertion—with respect to a primitive communication of heaven with man—we have proved by facts and texts, and the same facts and texts have disproved yours. If the history of man is not such as we described, it may be, we confess, such as you depict. But is there a line in this volume which does not contradict your positions? and is the whole amount of facts it contains assailable by anything you can bring forward? More, you falsely pretend that you have science on your side; it is on ours undoubtedly; for nearly all, if not all, the facts recorded in these pages, are either the direct result of impartial scientific inquiry into the annals of primitive nations, or the evident consequences drawn from those inquiries. The supernatural question is, therefore, de-

cided even scientifically; and the more these questions into the origin of man will be studied, the nearer will the conclusion come to our Bible records; then there will be a perfect agreement—as it is proper it should be—between science and revelation.

But, besides these individual researches of some learned men of great erudition and impartiality, our own decision of the question, such as we have briefly attempted it, rests likewise on the universal assent of all nations, among whom the great dogma, that God created man, spoke to him, directs him, is the fountain of truth, and the rewarder of virtue, has, primitively at least, been admitted everywhere. This book, after all, is but the humble index of the thoughts of mankind. In it man himself speaks and acts; and humanity has always rejected with scorn any religion which is not supernatural. Men have said that it was a *human* religion, and this was sufficient for its condemnation. It was reserved to our age to proclaim religion as not coming from God; and to reject whatever bears His holy name, as unscientific — unscientific, because permitting us to explain the existence of the world by a superhuman agency; as if it were not the height of folly to pretend to give the reason of it without a Maker and a Master, that is, without a Cause and a Lawgiver!

But if such a pretension is, and has always been, considered as the abjuration of common sense; if it is a strong proof, on the contrary, of a well-balanced mind, to acknowledge that this world must have had a Creator, and man a Heavenly Father; then the assertion of a primitive revelation is but a natural consequence of this belief, and the very fact of it must be considered as proved. For how can we *prove* that God has spoken to man, except, first, by the unanimous consent of mankind on the subject; second, by the doctrine itself communicated to man primitively, and evidently worthy of God; third, by the innate consciousness of each of us, that if God has made us,

He must take care of us, and intimate to us His holy will that we may not go counter to it? Our arguments are directed here to non-Christians; the children of the Church have the word of their Mother.

But the objection states further, that, in this case, man, unable to develop his own destiny by his own efforts, is constantly and naturally engaged in a struggle with his Master, yet finally conquers Him, to fall directly a prey to his own degraded passions. This, as usual with rationalistic thinkers, represents human history under a false light by merely giving an absurd correlation to the two great agents of its development.

Undoubtedly there are two real *agents* in it, God and Man. The rationalist and evolutionist philosophers suppress one of the terms, God, and think they have admirably simplified the problem, and given to the second term, Man, a sublime position on earth, making him independent of any Master, and the only manager of his own destiny. We have sufficiently spoken of this "proud elevation." But we complain that God and man are spoken of by the evolutionists as if we made them equal agents in the history of the world, and each independent of the other; struggling together, alternately victorious or conquered. This is not the view we have taken of human history in this volume.

Man, in our mind, has a sublime position on earth. He is, even after his fall, the true king of creation, and has yet dominion over all inferior creatures; he is, moreover, a free agent; and the consciousness of this eminent prerogative obliges him to call himself constantly to a strict accountability for all his actions. For both his dominion over the world, and his high endowment of a free will, he must own himself indebted to a Superior Being, with whom it would be sacrilegious in him to claim any sort of equality. His own conscience teaches him that he will have to give an account of himself,



and show what use he made of his own superiority over other creatures, and of his freedom of choice in all his actions. Both are immense prerogatives granted him by his Maker; they give him an almost absolute power over the world, and by them, we may say, the history of this globe and of its inhabitants is left to him. When he follows the will of God in the proper use of these two eminent attributions, he rises in true civilization, and preserves the gifts he had originally received. Should he, on the contrary, abuse his power, he is not 'victorious over God,' who always remain infinitely above him; but he only 'resists God,' and in doing so he degrades himself, and would fall gradually to the level of the brute, if God had not pity of him and did not raise him again every time he stumbles.

Thus the Creator had been infinitely good to him at the beginning, and continues to help him all along, even when he least deserves it. This help the theologians call *divine grace* which is never denied in this life, and which is derived for us from the merits of a Redeemer who died for all, even for those that lived before His coming, or who refuse His help.

This is the only "struggle" we can admit between God and Man in the drama of human history; a struggle of infinite mercy on one side, of repeated ingratitude on the other; ending always in a higher boon on the part of God, when man has reached the lowest depth of misery. This was seen first after the flood, when the patriarchal religion and civilization were granted anew to the only human family that remained; secondly, at the call of Abraham, when a nation was taken apart to preserve intact the great truths required absolutely for the existence of man as a superior being. The Mosaic law was given later to last until a more profound degeneracy should require a more potent remedy. This, fourthly, brought from heaven the only One to whom the inheritance of the nations had been promised from the beginning.

This is the way Christians have always understood the action of both God and Man in the world ; and this action supposes, necessarily, a supernatural relation between both ; supernatural, we mean, on the part of man who had, from his own, no title to such a favor, to a divine help so constant, so universal, so adequate to all his needs.

*Gentilism* has proved this with respect to the original mercy of God in granting to all men the really supernatural boon of true religion and morality. And it has proved it, likewise, with respect to the law of degeneracy, as we called it, on the part of man, unable or unwilling to keep in their purity the primitive gifts he had received, and constantly falling down deeper and deeper, until real religion almost disappeared, and moral corruption nearly totally destroyed human conscience.

Then, indeed, the need of heavenly help was greater than ever ; and it was given also more abundantly than at any previous epoch. If the all-merciful action of God on human history was undeniable in the facts recorded in these pages, it became at once overwhelmingly manifest in the establishment of Christianity and the sudden destruction of idolatry. Considered only as a turning-point in human history, Christianity cannot be explained without an influence far higher than that of man. In the supposition that this world has been left altogether to human agency, that no action of a superior being is required to understand the totality of its annals, that science ought to clear up every difficulty, and to show independently of a heavenly power how every change has taken place on earth, at any period of its history, it can be maintained that the task would be perfectly hopeless when it is question of the conversion of mankind to God. What contributes to deceive people in this regard, is that they imagine the character of Christ can be reduced to the level of a merely human character. All those who have undertaken to do so have falsified the history of the Incarnate Son of God. His divinity is as clear as

the mid-day sunlight, and from it the mission of His apostles and their success becomes undeniable and really supernatural. But this is not the place to develop these few thoughts. All that needs be said is that the divine action in the primitive revelation granted to man is evident from the long subsequent revelation of God through Christ; for both are so intimately connected as to form a perfect whole, whose parts cannot be dissociated.

If the traditions so often mentioned in this volume, as universal among all primitive nations, had any value, and belonged to the history of the race, they recorded facts, dating from the very beginning of mankind; among others, a fall from original innocence, a state of sin and bondage inducing a *curse* from which man could not be disenthralled, except by a future liberator; and all this was to come from the infinite mercy of God. The bonds of union between the Creator and man, as revealed in those traditions, had been violently broken asunder, and the links of the chain could not be bound up together again except by a heavenly intervention. All nations, at the time of Christ, were in truth waiting for a Redeemer, and their expectation included an interposition from above. In the copy of those ancient records which Virgil possessed, it was Virgin Astræa who would come down from heaven, and bring back on earth the former golden age. It is evident that this last state would be supernatural, and raise man to a higher position than he could ever have expected, if left to his own earthly condition. The end of the series, supposing thus the intervention of God, the whole of it belonged to a world higher than this; and consequently the essential character of the primitive traditions was of a supernatural nature, and cannot be inclosed within the limits of what is now called *science*. But what is more, the objection raised against the scheme of revelation, could thus be turned against the *scientists* with a tenfold greater force, and we might tell them: Your knowledge of

man supposes only physics and zoology to explain his origin and destiny; yet all the annals, traditions, beliefs of the race proclaim a much higher range of qualities for both, and all its aspirations protest against such a low estimate of its worth as this. Without a heavenly term at the beginning of the series, and a much brighter one at the end, *man* remains an enigma, and cannot be explained at all. Therefore, by the very act of rejecting the supernatural in taking a serious account of him, you commit suicide as scientists, and deprive yourselves of the only means of judging rightly of our humanity.

This is so evident that it is an easy task to compare patriarchal religion, as we have called it, with Christianity, and to see the perfect analogy of both, on account precisely of their supernatural character, without which both the ancient and modern history of the race remain inexplicable.

First, the primitive religion of mankind was, in essentials, the same for all nations, and would have kept the human family united, if pantheism and idolatry had not supervened, and multiplied to the last degree the seeds of division already sown by diversity of language, of race, and of private interests. Unity in religion, if it had lasted, would have counteracted all the other sources of contention among men; at least, they would never have forgotten altogether that they were the children of common parents, had they continued to worship at the same altars, and to adore the same God. This primitive unity of belief, such as it was, prevented, at least for many ages, the flood of moral corruption, and of dark superstition from deluging the world; and it was only when division had been carried to its last limits that the total dissolution of society was threatened by the excess of the evil then existing. This has been proved.

In our modern times we see the Church, universal also, and prescribing to her children the same faith and the same rites. We thus contemplate a strict moral society in which men are united more strongly than by the bonds of politics or temporal

interests. The various nations which compose the population of the globe furnish to the true faith a greater or a smaller number of firm adherents, so as to exhibit the elements of a really universal society, and fulfilling to a certain degree the promises of old seers who have announced the reconstruction of primitive unity in the human family. Catholicity, or universality, becomes thus a characteristic mark of regenerated humanity, both in the patriarchal period and in our Christian times. But in the one as in the other this *mark* partakes of a supernatural character, and cannot be even imagined if man is left to his own efforts, without the co-operation of heaven. It is, in fact, by this co-operation alone that it is secured.

Secondly, in those ancient times, which it has been a pleasure for us to study, we have universally admired a pure morality so constant, and exalted, that it has become a part of public opinion—if we may use that expression—to attach to a patriarchal state of society the idea of purity of manners and holiness of life. In the Christian Church, likewise, we admire the gift of sanctity which all the calumnies of men cannot take away from her. But this also supposes, on the part of God, a supernatural assistance, to keep up constantly the character of Holiness. This the history of the Church can prove.

Finally, in a third place, a struggle, constant, terrible, pregnant with the most serious consequences for humanity, has been witnessed going on in the patriarchal period, between Truth as coming from God and derived from heaven, and Error as suggested by the Evil One, and embraced by deluded idolaters. In the modern Church a constant hostility, also, is remarked as developed throughout all ages, showing the Church standing in front of a hostile world, and conquering the more that she is the more assailed. The parallel between both periods could not be perfectly sustained, as the first had not received any promise of sure victory. But it has been granted to the Christian Church, which thus enjoys the privilege of

perpetuity. In both certainly, as long as the struggle lasts, the intervention and help of heaven is required; and thus in whatever aspect we may look at the question, the supernatural character comes uppermost, and refuses to be separated from it. This, of course, would require most ample considerations and developments.

Nothing, however, is so manifest as the truth that human history is enacted by a *mechanism* which requires a double spring of action, that of God and that of man. Take away either of them, human history is impossible to narrate. Take away God for instance, and this world is reduced almost to a puppet-show. The strings, no doubt, are not merely made of hemp or wire; they belong really to the native energy of the puppets who act from their own impulse, and seem to be enacting a powerful drama. But, be sure of it, dear reader, only those who propose to themselves to do the will of their Father in heaven, who act in conformity with it, and place themselves altogether under His guidance, are real men, and not puppets. For, the drama in reality is planned in the upper regions, and God himself directs it. He has not left this little globe to the mercy of mad people or of fools. He has given free will to these, it is true, and allows them to play occasionally so as "to make angels weep," as a great poet has said. But when they go too far in their absurd antics, He knows how to bring them to reason. He sends the Goths or the Tartars on their devastating career, and a new, and bright, and truly civilized world comes out of the ashes of the previous corrupt one. And the old Egyptian priest was not, after all, altogether wrong when he said that "when the gods, to purify the earth, deluge its surface with water . . . then cities are hurried away to the sea by the impetuosity of the waters . . ." And sometimes, "periodically, a current from heaven rushes on nations like a pestilence, which at once destroys them and their annals."

# APPENDIX I.

ON THE SIMILARITY OF THE INSTITUTIONS IN PRIMITIVE HINDOSTAN AND  
THE FORMER CELTIC COUNTRIES REFERRED TO AT PAGE 79.





## APPENDIX I.

ON THE SIMILARITY OF THE INSTITUTIONS IN PRIMITIVE HINDOSTAN AND THE FORMER CELTIC COUNTRIES, REFERRED TO AT PAGE 79.

It is extremely curious and pregnant with a deep interest to consider two countries so wide apart as Hindostan, and the extreme west of Europe, yet existing for many ages under the same institutions, although the peoples themselves differed so totally in character. The conclusion forces itself directly upon the mind that mankind must have been *one* at first, chiefly when a deeper study still shows that the intervening nations exhibited in ancient times a great approach to the same social state.

And, first, the three superior castes in India, namely: the Brahmins, the Cshastriyas, and the Vaysias, present themselves at once as the prototypes of the Druids, the warrior class, and the common clansmen in Celtic countries. The Sudras in Hindostan, were evidently, chiefly in old times, real outcasts not belonging strictly to the nation because not regenerated, and answering, to a certain extent, to the slaves of the Celts. The Pariahs were then called Chandalas, the most degraded of human beings, excluded almost from the thoughts of the Hindoos.

But this general outlook might be the result of chance, and would not suffice certainly to establish a general theory on the primitive social state of man. It must be worked out in detail to bring conviction; and this we intend to do, as briefly as possible, in this short Appendix.

Our chief authority for the side of the picture which con-

cerns Hindostan, shall be the venerable Institutes or Laws of Menu; the other side is naturally supplied by the knowledge now universal almost of the social state of the Celts.

As some of our readers may be altogether unacquainted with the Menu Code, it is proper to say first a few words on the subject. The Hindoos firmly believed that the work was the production of Menu—generally it is now spelt Manu; we keep the orthography to which we have been for a long time accustomed. This great lawgiver is said, of course, by the Hindoos to have been the son or grandson of Brahma, the first of created beings, a god himself, and the progenitor of mankind. Manu in fact means man. We may consider him—if we wish to identify ourselves with Hindoo feeling—as Adam, the father of the human race. It is of course a mistake on the part of the Indians; Menu, the author of the Code, is not so ancient. Sir William Jones examines, if he is not the same as the fabulous Minos of Crete, or the Egyptian Mneues, the first lawgiver according to Diodorus.

That the book is of great antiquity there can be no doubt. It is written in the archaic Sanscrit of the first three Vedas; and it is supposed by modern critics to have been composed a few centuries after those celebrated books. Sir William Jones makes it 300 years posterior to the Yajur Veda, which he thinks may have been written 1580 years before Christ. But Hindoo chronology has been found to be perfectly unsafe; and those conjectures are now discarded. The English translation, published at the beginning of this century by the founder of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta, is still considered as sure and reliable, and we will use it.

The caste, or rather *class*, of Brahmins, as it is called by Menu, had, at least in primitive times, so many characters alike to those of the Druids in Gaul and Britain, and of the Ollamhs in Ireland, that with the least acquaintance with both of these, one is struck at once as if they were almost identical.

1st. To become a Druid or an Ollamh, required from sixteen to twenty years; let us now hear Menu, Chap. III, 1 :

“The discipline of a student (for the Brahminical order) may be continued for thirty-six years in the house of his preceptor; or for half that time (eighteen years), or for a quarter of it.” Many other passages concur with this.

2d. The Celtic student had to receive the oral teaching of an *ordained* Druid or Ollamh, as the sacred books in Celtic countries were not written, but committed to memory and transmitted through tradition. In primitive Hindostan the law of Menu declared, II., 116 :

“The student who shall acquire a knowledge of the Vedas without the assent of his preceptor, incurs the guilt of stealing the Scriptures.” The result in both cases was the same: authorized teaching, safety from heterodox interpretation.

3d. The attestation of “purity” in various things required of an Ollamh, or of a learned man in an inferior degree, is well known to any one versed in Celtic lore. In the Code of Menu nothing is so remarkable as the insistence on the moral purity of every degree required of a Brahmin, or of a student for the Brahminical order, II. 88 : “In restraining the organs, which run wild among ravishing sensualities, a wiseman”—it is question here of Brahmins—“will apply diligent care, like a charioteer in managing restive horses.” What are those organs? The author explains in the following paragraphs that they are those of sense—the five senses of the body—and those of action, besides the heart. Then he goes on to say : 97 : “To a man contaminated by sensuality neither the Vedas, nor liberality, nor sacrifices, nor strict observances, nor pious austerities, ever procure felicity;” and 100 : “Having kept all his members of sense and action under control, and obtained also command over his heart, he will enjoy every advantage, even though he reduce not his body by religious austerities.” 104 : “Near pure water, with his organs holden under control, and

retiring to some unfrequented place, let him pronounce the *gayatri*, performing daily ceremonies." The reader will remember that the Ollanh in Ireland, had to prove for himself purity of mouth, purity of hand, purity of conjugal union, and purity of body.

4th. What was the course of studies for the Brahmin, and was it analogous to that of the Celtic Druid? Many passages of the laws of Menu conclusively show that it was comprised in the "universal" Vedas. These included the *mantras* and *brahmanas*, an immense collection of many diversified rites and prayers for the worship of God; the *upanishads*, long treatises of cosmology and philosophy; and the *Vedangas*, or books on grammar, prosody, astronomy, mathematics, etc. These last, it is true, did not belong to the Vedas properly so called: yet they were as ancient as these, and formed also an essential part of the studies of Brahmins, since the laws of Menu, II., 105, say: "In reading the *Vedangas*, or even such parts of the Vedas as ought constantly to be read, there is no prohibition of particular days, nor obligation to pronounce the texts appointed for oblations to fire." It may, therefore, only be said, that they were not of so sacred a character as the parts of the holy books, which could not be read on certain days, nor during storms, etc. We know from J. Cæsar that the *curriculum* of the Druidic schools in Gaul was exactly the same, although certainly the religious rites were not so various and minute, and the prayers probably were not so long and diversified. The copy of the Vedas preserved in the British Museum forms eleven very large volumes, brought from India by the Swiss Col. Polier. The text delivered, orally, by the Druid teachers to their pupils may not have been so voluminous, but it comprised exactly the same course of studies: religion, cosmogony, physics, astronomy, and grammar.

The comparison could be carried on further, and a great deal more could be said on the authority both the Brahmins and the

Druids had in the State, chiefly on account of their influence, through religion, over the rulers and kings. Many very striking texts of the laws of Menu could be brought forward, and the conviction of the reader would be thereby strengthened, but our limits forbid it; and we must be content, on this first point, to remark in general that the genius of oriental and southern people, being so different from that of western and northern races, an immense number of details contained in Hindoo literature appear on the surface completely at variance with what we know of the old Celtic stock; but the difference lies only on the surface; a deeper insight into the thing itself cannot but strike an intelligent reader and show him a large number of analogies which certainly prove an almost identity of primitive institutions. One of the most remarkable differences, however, must be mentioned in a few words, and can easily be proved not to conclude in the least against our position. It is this: The Celts had a great number of historians from the oldest times, and their poetry itself was history in verse; the Hindoos never had a single historian, but all their writers may be said to have been poets. Yet the truth is, the Hindoos thought they were writing history when they composed those immense epic poems of which we have spoken. Their exuberant imagination colored everything, and rendered them also incapable of attending to chronology; but both Celts and Hindoos were profoundly traditional people, and in this consists the true spirit of history. The difference, therefore, is not a real one, and our opinion remains intact.

It will become yet considerably stronger by the consideration of the Cshastriya caste compared with the analogous class in Celtic countries.

And first, the very title of the seventh chapter of the laws of Menu which treats of the subject, is extremely suggestive and appropriate. It reads: "*On Government and Public Law; or, on the Military Class.*" The clear meaning of it

is that the "government" of the people was in the hands of "the military class." Hence the first order, that of the Brahmins, had nothing to do with "government" except indirectly by their immense influence, the necessary result of their learned and religious character. The leading of the nation was, in fact, in the hands of the "warriors," called, in Hindostan, "Cshastriya." It was precisely the same in Celtic countries; the kings, rulers, chieftains, whatever the reader may please to call them, were first of all "warriors;" their duty was to defend their clan by the force of arms. The Druids, so influential in every other respect, had nothing to do with the commanding of armed troops. The chieftains chose to help them, their knights of the red branch, their Fenian warriors, the boldest and nimblest of their clansmen, and these formed the military class; the sacerdotal order remained completely outside of warlike organizations.

In Hindostan, the fact is most striking—that although the Brahmin class is everywhere represented so far above all the others, that it was said to have proceeded from the very mouth of Brahma, yet we doubt if ever a Brahmin, in full orders, ambited the high station of king and attained the object of his ambition. We know only that some few kings, after having ruled the State, left the throne through piety and asked to be received in the Brahminical order. But these very rare exceptions show the strictness of the rule. Those who ruled the nation were invariably chosen among the Cshastriya class. We never hear of a Brahmin aspiring to it. The same was certainly the case in Celtic countries.

Many details contained in the laws of Menu contribute to render the analogy more striking. At first sight it seems, from many texts, that the Hindoo Rajah, or king, was a despotic ruler, which the Celtic chieftain was not; but a closer examination shows that the difference is only apparent. Both had a great power in the State; but their authority was not despotic;

far from it—it was limited on both sides by the influence of the sacerdotal class, and likewise by the obligation, often repeated in the laws of Menu, to regard their subordinates as their “people,” never their subjects, and to “defend” it—the people—at the expense of their life. The Celtic exclamation of the clansman to his chieftain is well known: “Eat me, but defend me!”

But many prescriptions of the Hindoo law, with respect to the private life of the Rajah, place the subject yet in a stronger light. Let us hear some of them. Chapter vii. 69: “Let him—the king—fix his abode in a district of a champaign country, abounding with grain, inhabited chiefly by the virtuous, not infected with maladies, beautiful to the sight, surrounded by submissive mountaineers, foresters, or other neighbors; a country in which the subject may live at ease.” No better description could be given of the Irish *rath*. The following texts complete the description: “73. Foes hurt not a king who has taken refuge in his *durga*, or place of difficult access.” “74. One bowman placed in a wall is a match in war for a hundred enemies, etc.” “75. Let that fort be supplied with weapons, with money, with grain, with beasts, with Brahmins, with artificers, with engines, with grass, and with water.” “76. In the centre of it let him raise his own palace, well finished in all its parts, completely defended, habitable in every season, . . . surrounded with water and trees.” “80. His annual revenue he may receive from his whole dominion through his collectors; but let him in this world observe the divine ordinances; *let him act as a father to his people.*”

Is not the whole of this picture Celtic as well as Hindoo? and if these laws do not rule any more Hindostan, for how many ages did they not flourish? The “*Ramayana*,” I., 107, and III., 92, describes an Indian court filled with poets, panegyrists, Brahmins, and attendant officers of every description, and the whole of it almost could be transferred to Erin in the

brilliant times of her Ard Rights without violating any propriety.

No doubt many details of which we do not speak presented a very different aspect in each of the two countries; the climate, the wealth, the internal commerce of the immense peninsula of Hindostan could not but offer a scene with which no Celtic country could compete; but our object is to show that both were ruled primitively by the same patriarchal manners, and we think we have said enough to prove it.

A word on the two last Hindoo castes will complete the demonstration.

The Vaiysia class was composed of merchants and agriculturists. The merchants of India dealt certainly in richer commodities than those of Celtic countries. Yet it is very remarkable that in both cases their trade was altogether interior to the country; they seldom ventured on ships of their own to foreign territories. The exterior trade of Hindostan, chiefly in the primitive ages, was, according to Heeren, altogether in the hands of Arabians and Phœnicians; and it is well known that the same kind of commerce in the West of Europe was entirely carried on by Phœnicians, Carthaginians, the Greeks of Massilia, and later on the Scandinavians, never by the Celts themselves. The coincidence is truly striking.

With respect to the agriculturists and graziers, the similarity is almost perfect. There is, on the subject, a most remarkable passage in Strabo's Geography (Book xv., Chap. i., § 49), which deserves certainly to be quoted. The author derived his information from the works composed by the companions of Alexander. That information was often unreliable, on account of the short time they had remained in the country, which did not allow them to understand perfectly the institutions of a people so different from the Greeks and even the Persians. But on the present occasion it was question only of facts, patent to all, and which they witnessed everywhere in the country. There



was no need of a deep study to understand them; eye-sight was all-sufficient. Strabo says: "The caste of husbandmen constitute the majority of natives; and they are a most mild and gentle people, as they are exempted from military service, and cultivate their land free from alarm; they do not resort to cities, either to transact private business or take part in public tumults. It therefore frequently happens that, at the same time, and in the same part of the country, one body of men are in battle array, and engaged in contests with the enemy, while others are ploughing or digging in security, having these soldiers to protect them." And the sixty-sixth section contains the following remarkable words: "Among some tribes the ground is cultivated by families and in common; when the produce is collected, each takes what is sufficient for his subsistence during the year." Everybody has read exactly similar facts of old Erin.

In Celtic countries the husbandmen, as all clansmen, might be called for military service, but this was, no doubt, the exception: in general the chieftain was surrounded with his knights, his heroes, his nobles, who fought when the agriculturist ploughed, sowed, and reaped. The remainder of the description is perfect in its application to Western Europe in former times.

What is said by Strabo of *cities* requires a short and general remark. There is no doubt that, even in primitive times, Hindostan differed considerably from the West of Europe in the number, extent, and wealth of her cities. But was there not a visible cause for this difference? Could the first inhabitants of Eastern India live apart in farm-houses, with the country swarming with ferocious animals and venomous serpents? Was it not absolutely required of those who first settled in the country, to live in large groups for self-protection? Yet we see by the passage of Strabo just quoted that there was in fact, for long ages, a disinclination in the people

for city life, since in the time of Alexander's invasion *the majority of the natives* did not resort to cities even to transact business, so much did they like country life. This preference continues even to this day, as all modern travellers have remarked.

Another apparent dissimilarity must be briefly mentioned. We know that music had become in Celtic nations a State institution, and that the fourth order of Druids was composed of the *ἰμμηται*. In Hindostan, on the contrary, the love of music was considered, according to the laws of Menu, as a vice to be discouraged as well as intemperance, gambling, etc. But the reason might be only the effect naturally produced on human passions by soft music in such a climate as that of the East Indies. That such was probably the case can be inferred from the fact that the whole Third Veda—the Samana—was composed of *mantras* and *brahmanas*, to be *sung* by the officiating Brahmin. So that there was really in Hindostan a class of *ἰμμηται* as in the fourth order of Druids, and singing accompanied probably with musical instruments composed a great part of the religious service. To this day it is well known that, chiefly in the southern part of the great peninsula, where primitive usages have been less interfered with by the numerous foreign invasions, the processions, the religious festivals are always accompanied with deafening instruments, which may not be precisely agreeable to European tastes but which are said to produce real harmony for the devotees of Vishnu and of Chrishna; and the Catholic Church had to allow the introduction of such orchestras in her temples. Of the *Sudras* and men of no caste, as *Pariahs* and *Chandalas*, the only thing our space allows us to say is, that they replaced in old Hindostan the class of slaves existing in ancient Celtic countries. But they were not properly slaves, so that strict slavery and even serfdom have never formed a part of the institutions of India—the same as among Celtic tribes.

It remains now to say a word of the greatest and less easily explained dissimilarity in the institutions of both countries. In Hindostan there were strict *castes*, which continue to this day, and oppose an almost insurmountable obstacle to the identification of Hindoo manners with those of Europeans. This has never existed in Celtic countries.

What was the origin of castes in Egypt and India? Have they been in force in those countries from the very beginning? It is difficult to answer these questions. It seems there were no strict castes in Hindostan when the Vedas were written. There is only a slight indication of them in one of the last prayers of the Atharvan Veda, and it is conceded that this fourth part of the sacred Hindoo books is altogether of a different class and later written than the three first. No *castes* in the Vedic period. But the "Institutes of Menu" suppose them constantly. Their origin, consequently, must be placed in the interval between the composition of the three first Vedas and the publication of the Menu work. That interval is generally supposed to have been of three hundred years, but it might have been more.

It seems likewise that the Sanscrit word used for caste means literally "color;" color consequently must have been the chief distinction at first; it is well known that to this day the Brahmins are nearly white and the Sudras of a very dark tint, although there are exceptions to this rule. This difference in color may have been in many cases the result of their various pursuits in life, but sometimes also arose from their being of different race. It is generally supposed that the Pariahs, called Chandalas in many places, were originally a conquered race, reduced to the state of outcasts rather than to that of slaves. The Institutes of Menu often attribute a sensible degradation in the human form to a simple mixture of class; and perhaps the institution of castes may have arisen simply from the desire of keeping the blood of the nation pure. Hence the im-

mense number of enactments in the Hindoo law to regulate all the details of marriage. It looks as if all the attention of the lawgiver was directed to that exclusiveness which is likewise so visible, in modern times, in the English nation, among whom the same result is obtained by native repugnance and not by legal enactments.

In Celtic countries nothing of the kind existed, because the blood of the various septs was supposed to be of equal purity; hence the general features remained there merely clannish; in Hindostan they were impregnated with the exclusiveness of caste; but we can easily understand that each may have continued to be a primitive and patriarchal people, both having so many things in common that the remarkable difference introduced by the attention to purity of blood in one of them, may not have prevented them from living truly under primeval and in all other respects similar institutions.

## APPENDIX II.

THE PATRIARCHAL ORIGIN OF SOCIETY PROVED BY THE HISTORY OF  
JURISPRUDENCE, OR ANCIENT LAW.



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### THE PATRIARCHAL ORIGIN OF SOCIETY PROVED BY THE HISTORY OF JURISPRUDENCE, OR ANCIENT LAW.

THE very remarkable work of Henry Sumner Maine on "Ancient Law," is a powerful confirmation of our conclusions from general history. It may be said to carry them up to the height of demonstration. For the fact of the same laws governing all nations at their origin, and of their being evidently derived from the nature of the family, shows more conclusively that mankind began by clanship, than any amount of particular facts of history pointing to the same inference. Law is a most essential part of the life of nations, and proves what they were a great deal more strictly than any amount of particular circumstances from their annals or traditions. On this account the book of Mr. Maine is of extreme importance, and will render an immense service to the cause of truth, at an epoch when the most subversive doctrines on the origin of man, and on the primitive institutions that governed him, are openly advocated. When people are fully aware that, everywhere on earth, the first human societies were tribal, organized on the same pattern, and having the same laws; they will conclude naturally that mankind came from a single pair; and when, moreover, these ancient laws are shown to be of such a character that those of old Rome and of modern England can be proved to be derived from them, it must be admitted that they were not made for barbarians. Yet this is the open object of the greatest part of the book on "Ancient Law" by Mr. Maine.

There are considerations in the same work which it cannot

be our purpose to discuss ; they are addressed to lawyers, and we are not the proper judge of them. Particularly the low opinion the author seems to entertain of " canon law " is startling for us, and runs counter to some of our most settled convictions. The idea, likewise, that law did not come originally from any fixed principles, but grew gradually from the decisions of kings or chieftains, who were alone invested with the judiciary power, seems to us opposed to the opinion of the greatest thinkers of all ages on the same subject. But, we repeat it again, these discussions would be entirely foreign to our purpose ; and the author did not surely intend to adopt bluntly ideas sapping at the very foundation of any system of jurisprudence. He knew as well as any jurist of ancient or modern times that anteriorly to any law on earth there is the " eternal law " comprehending all the axioms of right, and without which all the decisions of judges would be either the blind stroke of fatality, or the irresponsible dictate of despotism. Mr. Maine intended probably to convey to his readers the exact doctrine on the subject when he said, that " When a king decided a dispute by a sentence, the judgment was assumed to be the result of direct inspiration. The divine agent, suggesting judicial awards to kings or to gods, the greatest of kings was *Themis*. The peculiarity of the conception is brought out by the use of the plural. *Themistes*, *Themises*, the plural of *Themis*, are the awards themselves, divinely dictated to the judge." Mr. Maine had thus found in Homer the right conception of the basis of law ; but he might have developed it with more details in the very first pages of his book, and thus he would have left nothing obscure on so important a subject. The " inspiration " of judges was but a metaphor.

This, however, does not lie within the purpose of our own investigations ; but when the author of " Ancient Law " comes to speak of what is really of interest to us, then there is scarcely any obscurity in his doctrine, and we have only to register down



what his great knowledge of the history of jurisprudence has found out, and left as a legacy to men less deeply informed. He seems even to us to intimate that his discovery was obtained almost reluctantly, and could not be very popular, on account of the support it affords to Christian truth. On this subject his very words must be quoted from his fifth chapter: "The effect of the evidence derived from comparative jurisprudence is to establish that view of the primeval condition of the human race which is known as the Patriarchal Theory. There is no doubt, of course, that this theory was originally based on the Scriptural history of the Hebrew patriarchs in Lower Asia; but its connection with Scripture rather militated than otherwise against its reception as a complete theory, since the majority of the inquirers who, till recently, addressed themselves with most earnestness to the colligation of social phenomena, were either influenced by the strongest prejudice against Hebrew antiquities, or by the strongest desire to construct their systems without the assistance of religious records"—let our readers remark this *naïf* acknowledgment, as a Frenchman would say:—"Even now there is perhaps a disposition to undervalue these accounts, or rather to decline generalizing from them, as forming part of the traditions of a Semitic people. It is to be noted, however, that the legal testimony comes nearly exclusively from the institutions of societies belonging to the Hindoo-European stock, the Romans, Hindoos, and Slavonians supplying the greater part of it; and indeed the difficulty, at the present stage of the inquiry, is to know where to stop, to say of what races of men it is *not* allowable to lay down that the society in which they are united was originally organized on the patriarchal model."

This is certainly a very remarkable and comprehensive statement, which, in fact, would suffice for our purpose, and allow us to consider our conclusions on the subject as perfectly demonstrated. Yet it will become of a more satisfactory character

still by entering into some details, and following the author of "Ancient Law" in his very interesting discussion; allowing ourselves, however, the liberty of appending our remarks when occasion shall require.

The description given first, of a patriarchal family, according to Holy Scripture, is so well-known that it needs not being reported *in extenso*: The eldest male parent absolutely supreme over his children as over his slaves; the relations of sonship and serfdom scarcely differing beyond the capacity of the child in blood becoming one day the head of a family; the possessions of the father held in a representative rather than in a proprietary character, equally divided at his death among his children—the eldest son receiving a double share under the name of birthright; finally, the State or commonwealth originating from the family either by the separation of two children of the same father forming two nations, as Jacob and Esau; or the families of all the children of the same father becoming one people, as it happened with respect to Jacob's posterity. Let us see, for the sake of comparison, what the history of other nations, outside of Judaism, tells us of their origin; and here we must render the very words of Mr. Maine. After having quoted three lines from the *Odyssey* of Homer, he comments upon them:

"These verses condense in themselves the sum of the hints which are given us by legal authorities. Men are first seen distributed in perfectly insulated groups, held together by obedience to the parent. Law is the parent's word, but it is not yet in the condition of those *themistes* which were analyzed in the first chapter of this work. When we go forward to the state of society in which these early legal conceptions show themselves as formed, we find that they still partake of the mystery and spontaneity which must have seemed to characterize a despotic father's commands, but that at the same time, inasmuch as they proceed from a Sovereign, they presuppose a

union of family groups in some wider organization. The next question is, What is the nature of this union and the degree of intimacy which it involves? It is just here that archaic law renders us one of the greatest of its services, and fills up a gap which otherwise could only have been bridged by conjecture. It is full, in all its provinces, of the clearest indications that society in primitive times was not what it is assumed to be at present, a collection of *individuals*. In fact, and in view of the men who composed it, it was an *aggregation of families*. The contrast may be most forcibly expressed by saying that the *unit* of an ancient society was the Family, of a modern society the Individual. We must be prepared to find in ancient law all the consequences of this difference."

Mr. Maine then shows how far these "consequences" went; and particularly how the moral elevation and the moral debasement of the individual appear to be confounded with, or postponed to, the merits and offenses of the group to which the individual belongs; and he pretends that "one step in the transition from the ancient and simple view of the matter to the theological and metaphysical explanation of later days, is marked by the early Greek notion of an inherited curse." Holy Scripture is as emphatic on this subject as any "early Greek notion," and we see clearly in the Bible that in the various primitive societies there described, the *unit* was not the Individual, but the Family; and, consequently, "the hints given us by legal authorities," in this regard, are exactly reproduced in Holy Scripture; but it is not perfectly exact to say that "the ancient and simple view of the matter" differed in the least from "the theological and metaphysical explanation of later days," since it is perfectly clear to an attentive reader of antiquity that the higher we go in it the stronger we find those "theological and metaphysical explanations," or rather suggestions; so that the "notion of an inherited curse" is not "one step down in the transition" from the ancient to the

more recent, but, in fact, is the very starting-point from which all the following "consequences" were derived. But apart from this observation which the interests of truth required of us, the statements of Mr. Maine are perfectly fair and certainly full of a deep interest. We do not know of any other author who has analyzed so exactly this feature of all ancient societies, and a few sentences which we must yet quote are certainly very remarkable, although the text itself alone can give a true idea of the whole. "Corporations," he says, "*never die*, and accordingly primitive law considers the entities with which it deals, *i.e.*, the patriarchal or family group, as perpetual and inextinguishable. This view is closely allied to the peculiar aspect under which, in very ancient times, moral attributes present themselves. . . . If the community sins, its guilt is much more than the sum of the offenses committed by its members; the crime is a corporate act, and extends in its consequences to many more persons than have shared in its actual perpetration. If, on the other hand, the individual is conspicuously guilty, it is his children, his kinsfolk, his tribesmen, or his fellow-citizens, who suffer with him, and sometimes for him."

This short passage throws a flood of light on many points of the early history of mankind, and of the Jewish people, contained in the Bible. It gives a full answer to many objections against several passages of the Pentateuch in particular, and thus the "holy" indignation of Voltaire and his imitators against the destruction of some Canaanite tribes in Palestine, is proved to be merely an effect of the profound ignorance of the notorious French writer with regard to antiquity of any kind, but particularly to religious antiquity.

But the work of Mr. Maine ought to be read attentively in that part of his fifth chapter where he treats of the old Greek, and chiefly Roman Jurisprudence. To many a student of law the Roman code particularly is full of obscurity on many points; and the commentaries of the best jurists have scarcely

helped, until this time, to clear up some of the chief difficulties. Mr. Maine has, therefore, rendered an immense service to those who wish to have a clear view of the laws of Rome, which are always, after all, at the bottom of modern legal enactments. But in our eyes the service he has rendered to ancient history, and consequently to the vindication of the right principles concerning human origin and primitive manners, is yet far more to be appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. We cannot render justice to this part of his work by a few quotations; yet it is impossible not to mention some of the chief traits of the discussion.

“In most of the Greek States,” he says, “and in Rome, there long remained the vestiges of an ascending series of groups, out of which the State was at first constituted. The Family, House, and Tribe of the Romans may be taken as the type of them, and they are so described to us that we can scarcely help conceiving them as a system of concentric circles which have gradually expanded from the same point. The elementary group is the Family, connected by common subjection to the highest male ascendant. The aggregation of Families form the Gens, or House. The aggregation of Houses makes the Tribe. The aggregation of Tribes constitutes the Commonwealth. Are we at liberty to follow these indications, and to lay down that the commonwealth is a collection of persons united by common descent from the progenitor of an original family? Of this we may, at least, be certain, that all ancient societies regarded themselves as having proceeded from one original stock, and even labored under an incapacity for comprehending any reason, except this, for their holding together in political union.”

The author then proceeds to show how *adoption* came in to replace those members of the State who had either abandoned it or been expelled from it; but adoption itself confirmed the universal idea of the family, as it was merely an extension of

it by mere incorporation. From this he explains the origin of aristocracies, much more clearly and rationally than Vico ever did in his *Scienza Nuova*; but these various branches of the subject not being of paramount importance in our actual investigations, we cannot follow Mr. Maine in his learned discussions. We cannot, even, do any justice to his high philosophical views of the constitution of the ancient family in Rome, a subject so important to us. He shows that, "older, probably, than the House and the Tribe, it left traces of itself on private law long after the House and the Tribe had been forgotten, and long after consanguinity had ceased to be associated with the composition of States. It will be found to have stamped itself on all the great departments of jurisprudence; and may be detected, I think, as the true source of many of their most important and most durable characteristics."

But it is chiefly in the long discussion on the *Patria Potestas*, and on the nature of *Agnation* and *Cognition* among the Romans, that Mr. Maine explains the whole constitution of the Family as it was understood in Rome, with the successive variations of the idea, as it was modified by circumstances, and particularly by the conquests of the republic, and the annexation of many countries to which was gradually extended the right of citizenship. We cannot attempt to analyze this learned and brilliant generalization; we would but spoil it; and it ought to be read in the book itself. But no stronger proof could be given of the truth advocated in *Gentilism*, that in primitive times the family tie is seen everywhere as the first constituent element of tribes and nations. No one, certainly, before Mr. Maine, had showed so clearly its influence over all the state and social institutions of Rome; and no one expected before the appearance of his book, to see the patriarchal state of society as influencing so powerfully the most extensive, rational, consistent, and admirable system of jurisprudence that has ever been planned by the genius of man, at any time of the

world's history. For the boast of the Latin poet, that the distinctive mark of Rome was to govern the world, *Tu regere imperio populos* (*Æn.* vi., 851), referred evidently more to her laws than to her armies; and every one is aware how far the modern codes of all European nations are impregnated with the maxims of the Roman jurisprudence.

The only thing to which we feel constrained to object is the very few words Mr. Maine thinks proper to write in dispraise of *canon law*, chiefly on the subject of marriage. But the learned author shows the small importance he attached here to his observations by the off-hand way he speaks of it, and the care he takes not to attempt any discussion of it. This discrepancy of our views, with his own, does not affect, in the least, the opinion we entertain of the author's merit with regard to the origin and history of law. It is true that in his book the details he gives concern chiefly Rome; and it was most important he should do so, since no one before had seen so clearly the patriarchal origin of Roman law; but here and there he alludes to the Hindoos, the Slavonians, and the Celts, and the few remarks he makes on the subject of those nations are always most forcible and clear. He could speak of Hindostan with authority, as he had been for a number of years "a member of the Supreme Council of India;" and his profound knowledge, not only of jurisprudence, but also of history, entitles him to be listened to when speaking of those subjects. Consequently, although he develops his ideas chiefly with respect to one great nation, he must be believed when he says that "the difficulty, at the present stage of the inquiry, is to know where to stop, to say of what races of men it is *not* allowable to lay down that the society in which they are united was originally organized on the patriarchal model."

Although this work on "Ancient Law" has already passed through five editions in London and three in the United States, it had not been our good fortune to meet with it before *Gen-*

*tilism* was more than half in types. We could not but rejoice at this new confirmation of previous well-settled ideas, and at the opportunity offered us to refer to it at the end of this volume.



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