

TO THE DAWN. RIG-VEDA, VII, 77.

Bright as a bride, shines forth the virgin day-break,
Arousing all that lives to daily action.
Only freed by man's toil can Agni * flame forth,
The dawn brings light by striking down the darkness.

Upwards she rose, and spread, still nearer coming,
With glistening garments clad, she grew in brightness,
Of golden splendor, and of face most comely,
Parent of morning kine, † leader of day-light.

Oh! happy she, blest dawn, the God's eye, bringing
Whitest of steeds, and proudest, sleekest, leading.
In radiance draped, the ruddy morn is coming,
In treasures rich, she tracks the path for mortals.

With blessings nearing, drive hence the unfriendly.
Call forth for us the wide, protected pastures.
Hold back our foemen, blessings bring unto us,
Grant thy adorer added gifts, thou rich one.

Stream down on us thy best, thy brightest radiance.
Oh! Goddess Ushas vouchsafe us long lifetime,
And give us food, thou, who hast every blessing,
Let us abound in cattle, horses, chariots.

Oh! heaven's daughter, thou whom the Vasishthas †
With songs do praise, thou dawn, thou high-born fair one,
Give wealth to us, exalted, wide spread riches,
And all ye Gods, with all your grace, aye shield us.

In almost every hymn of that rude Vedic age, the magic influence of poetry to soften and subdue the harsh and carking cares of life is apparent; and thus from that remote past comes an additional illustration of the truth of Bornes' words: "Poetry benignantly vouchsafes to mortals what nature withholds; a golden age which does not deteriorate, a spring time that does not fade, cloudless happiness, and everlasting youth."

* Fire.

† The morning clouds.

† Name of a celebrated family, the chief of which is the reputed author of the hymns of the VII mandala of the Rig-Veda.