

in Europe by this conquering race. In Asia and Africa, on the other hand, though, intellectually, the results of the Arab conquest have been poor compared with what innate capacity and diligent cultivation have aided it to produce in Europe, its influences have been real and lasting.

THE ARYAN LANGUAGES.

The original home of the Aryans is supposed to have been somewhere near the sources of the Oxus and Jaxartes. Of those who in far-off times parted from the parent stock, some moved south-westward; others, south-eastward. Of the latter, a portion proceeded onward until they reached the Punjab, from which they spread themselves, chiefly as Brahmas and Rajputs, over India. The remainder of the eastward-moving band turned back westward, and became the ancestors of the Iranians and Persians. Of the early Punjab settlements, the great literary memorial is the Rig-Veda, the age of which is unknown. It has been ascertained, however, that the Vedic religion had its followers before the rise of Buddhism in the 6th century, B.C. In the early hymns the Aryans are on the north-west frontier, just starting on their long journey (see "The Indian Empire," by Dr. W. W. Hunter), but before Megasthenes visited the country at the end of the 4th century, B.C., they had spread to the verge of the Gangetic Delta. The value to European students of Sanskrit literature has been fully set forth in Prof. Max Müller's recently published and most interesting work: "India: What can it teach us?" Some idea of the wealth which its literature enshrines may be gathered from the following extract from Mr. Edwin Arnold's introduction to his translation into English verse of "A Book from the Iliad of India:" "There exist two colossal, two unparalleled epic poems in the sacred language of India, which were not known to Europe even by name till Sir William Jones announced their existence; and which, since his time, have been made public by fragments, mere specimens, bearing to those vast treasures of Sanskrit literature such small proportion as cabinet samples of ore have to the riches of a mine. Y those most remarkable poems contain all the history of ancient India so far as it can be recovered, together with such inexhaustible details of its political, social and religious life, that the antique Hindoo world stands epitomized in them. The Old Testament is not more interwoven with the Jewish race, nor the Koran with the records and destinies of Islam, than are these two Sanskrit poems with that unchanging and teeming population which Her Majesty Queen Victoria rules as Empress of Hindostan. The stories, songs, ballads, histories and genealogies, the nursery tales and religious discourses, the art, the learning, the creeds, the philosophy, the moralities, the modes of thought, the very phrases, sayings, turns of expression and daily ideas of the Hindoo people are taken from those poems. * * The value ascribed in Hindostan to those two little known epics has transcended all literary standards established in the West." The truly historical character of the Veda is proved by Prof. Max Müller through the identification of the rivers mentioned in it (such as the Kubha with the Greek Cophen, the modern Cabul). The religion of the Indo-Aryans was, according to Prof. Monier Williams, a "creed based in a vague belief in the sovereignty of unseen natural forces," and the aim of Buddha in his mission was, he believes, "to remove every merely sacerdotal doctrine from the national religion, to cut away every useless excrescence, and to sweep away every corrupting incrustation."

As to the literature and religion of the Iranic or Persian branch of the Eastern Aryans,