

of Ireland and Iceland. With this, together with the American system and the mythologic inheritance of the Slav world in Eastern Europe, we shall be able perhaps to obtain materials with which to explain the earliest epoch of Aryan thought, the epoch which corresponds in development with the world of American creation myths. In that case we shall gain a connected view of Aryan speculation and its methods from those early beginnings when there was no passion or quality apart from a person, when symbols, metaphors, and personifications were in the distant future. The whole problem is to connect the thought of this continent with that of the rest of mankind, but especially and above all with the Aryan and Semitic divisions of it.

It is to be regretted that Semitic beliefs of the primitive period have not come down to us more numerous; for example, those of the Phœnicians, the earliest Hebrews, and other kindred nations. Fortunately the Arabs, the most poetic of the race, the knightly members of it, have given us in their history one fact of great value. Just before the establishment of the new religion by Mohammed there were in Mecca more than three hundred Arabic divinities, animal, vegetable, and mineral. We can hardly doubt that the pre-Mohammedan Arabic system of religion was the one which on a time belonged to the whole Semitic race, different among some divisions of it in details, of course, but substantially the same everywhere. This statement of the Arabic condition contains a fact of immense