

with one of the great problems of this perplexing time, deserves the serious consideration of Christian and philosophic minds. It may be admitted, that, at their best estate, the Aryan faiths, as we now know them, were but as broken rays, soon to grow hazy in the darkness. Still, to the eye of faith, they yet glow with some sparks of the Divine effulgence they possessed when first, like every perfect gift, they descended "from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

To appreciate the sacred writings of the East, we must first divest our minds of the prejudices which European contact with modern Hinduism has naturally excited. We must forget the modern institution of Suttee, the worship of juggernaut and other kindred abominations and go back to "the infancy of the Hindu nationality, at the dawning time of Hindu culture, before the origin of caste, before the birth of Civa, Vishnu or Brahma, before the rise of the ceremonialism, the pantheism, the superstition and idolatry of later times." Bearing this in mind, we have "enough to attach a high and universal interest to these books—that as, in point of time, they are probably the most ancient existing literary records of our race, so, at any rate, in the progression of literary development, they are beyond dispute the earliest we possess, the most perfect representation of the primitive lyrical period" for the form of the Vedas is that of lyrical poetry. Prof. Whitney gives an interesting view of each of the four Vedas which constitute the *mantra* of the Hindu theology. His second paper, devoted to the "Vedic doctrine of a future life" is exceedingly interesting. For over two thousand years past, the doctrine of metempsychosis has prevailed in India; but this was not countenanced in the Vedas. Here we have a simple faith and ceremonial, based upon a firm trust in the immortality of the soul:—"Yama hath found for us a passage; that's no possession to be taken from us, whither our Fathers of old time departed, thither their offspring, each his proper pathway." "Death was the kindly messenger of Yama, and hath thus sent his soul to dwell among the Fathers"—"they who within the sphere of earth are stationed, or who are settled in the realms of pleasure." The parallel passages in Scripture will readily occur to the reader, and even "the fore-heaven as the *third* heaven is styled, there where the Fathers have their seat,"—revealed in trance to St. Paul, finds mention in Hindu verse.

We ought now to proceed to a consideration of the Avesta,—or Zend-avesta, as they are sometimes, incorrectly termed—the Persian sacred writings, with which the name of Zoroaster, the Moses of the Iranian race, is intimately associated. Those who

call to mind the connection which subsisted between the conquerors of Babylon and the Jewish race, restored by them from captivity, will readily recognize the interest of the subject; our limits, however, forbid even a slight sketch of this important portion of the work under review.

In the remaining papers, Prof. Whitney discusses the origin and development of language—a subject too vast to be hastily noticed here. We should like to have been able to give them unqualified commendation; but they are largely controversial, and the discussion is not conducted, unfortunately, in a temperate and becoming spirit. It is deeply to be regretted that, in treating of a purely scientific question, national jealousy and self-sufficiency should be permitted to insinuate themselves. Our American friends ought not to mistake the pursuit of knowledge for its attainment as Prof. Whitney is prone to do. Especially do we protest against the rude and unscholarlike attack upon so respected a name as that of Max Müller. In some parts of this volume the author is prodigal in the Oxford professor's praise; in others, he is as coarsely vituperative. Indeed we have a shrewd suspicion that the New Englander owes the European scholar more than he is willing to acknowledge, and that, as sometimes happens, the abuse is but a measure of the felt, but unacknowledged, obligation. One of Max Müller's unpardonable sins is that he is the supreme authority in England on philological subjects—a sufficient reason, it would appear, for an attack hardly less bitter than St. Bernard's onslaught upon Abélard and the Nominalists. Continental scholars are treated with a little more courtesy, but they are also the victims of what Max Müller terms Prof. Whitney's "over confident and *unsuspecting* criticism." Bleek and the Simious (!) Theory, Schleicher and the Physical Theory, and Steinthal and the Psychological Theory are all astray, and are likely to continue so until they espouse the "scientific theory" which, of course, is that of the professor himself. An English sergeant-at-law once remarked, "that the oftener he went to the West, the better he understood how the wise men came from the East." It is to be feared the saying will receive a wider application, unless our American friends cultivate in season the humility which characterizes sound learning all the world over.

These pugnacious manifestations somewhat mar Prof. Whitney's work; but they are not fatal blemishes. As an introduction to the subject of which it treats we commend it with pleasure to our readers. It will serve a good purpose if it only directs the student to the rich treasures of Oriental literature.