

doubts whether Sanskrit had a written literature at all much before the time of Buddha, that is, about 600 years before Christ. The oldest Sanskrit writing known to European scholars is on palm leaves in Japanese Buddhist monasteries. They were brought by Buddhist missionaries from China to Japan, and are said to be more than 1000 years old. Young Buddhist priests of one of the more liberal sects, who were studying Sanskrit at Oxford, induced their friends in Japan to search the monasteries there for Sanskrit texts, when these palm leaves and several old manuscripts were found, and copies sent to Oxford. I have here one of these texts, printed under the care of Max Muller and his Japanese friends three years ago. It is said there is no manuscript of the Vedas in existence older than the fifteenth century of our era. These facts, however, it is contended, in no way militate against the antiquity of these hymns, as the Brahmins, like the Druids, orally imparted to their pupils the knowledge of their sacred mysteries. In fact that method obtains to the present day, and there are said to be thousands of Brahmins in India who know the Vedas by heart, and who from memory could detect the slightest error, even of accent, in a Vedic manuscript. The young student of the Rig-Veda has to spend eight years in the house of his Guru or teacher, and must during that time learn by heart not only the Vedic hymns but nine other books, making altogether 30,000 lines. For a knowledge of the Vedas it is to Colebrooke again, indebtedness has to be acknowledged; for his papers, published in 1805, "on the Vedas," gave the first modern account of these remarkable writings, of any value. How boldly and with what fidelity that first sketch was drawn, may be seen in the republished edition of Colebrooke's works, edited by Prof. Cowell eleven years ago. For that edition Prof. Whitney, who ranks first amongst English speaking Vedic scholars, supplied the essays "on the Vedas," with notes to keep them abreast of modern scholarship; and there is scarcely a note added but is a tribute to Colebrooke's genius. It was from Colebrooke's manuscripts also that Rosen, in 1830, printed his *Rig-Vedic Specimen*. Rosen was a student under Bopp, and for a few years of his short life he was professor of oriental literature at the London University. In 1838, the whole of the first Book of the Rig-Veda, in both the *sanhita* and *pada* texts, was published, with a Latin translation by Rosen, whose death at the