

watered by the Jumna and the Ganges, with its great cities—Delhi, Oude, and Benares—and its amazing fertility of soil, the lapse of centuries has brought great changes. The fertilizing rivers made them almost independent of rain, they had no call to pray for heat, the forces of nature were slowly uniform in their action, and the fecundity of the earth made them meditate on the productive power of nature. They thought and sang, as did Tukharam centuries later in the Deccan,

“For the new-born nursling who the milk prepareth ?

Mother, child—each shareth

His great mercy.

In the fierce hot season when the leaflet springeth,

Who the moisture bringeth

Which it drinketh ?”

Religion had enwrapt itself in a stately ritual, and demanded men who were minutely acquainted with the old Vedic hymns to lead the devotions. The land had been thoroughly conquered, and it was no longer necessary for every householder to be both husbandman and warrior ; he could sit under his own tamarind-tree, none daring to make him afraid. The warriors became a class distinct from the cultivator, the king's followers at home his fighters on the frontiers. The dark-skinned aborigines had become a great slave population, held in the strictest bondage, which forbade them even sharing in the religion of their masters. A people of clans *ready* to become a civilized society, but not yet a nationality.

This is the environment out of which Brahmanism slowly grew. It is almost impossible to trace the stages of growth. Early Indian literature is not historical. The criticism of documents based on internal evidence alone is extremely unproductive. The supreme canon of the higher criticism, that a document which really dates from a given period must show itself instinct with the life of that period, cannot be applied when we have no history to tell us what that life was. The Brahmins became the custodians of the old literature, and have changed and interpolated the text to suit their pretensions ; but when we come to test the extent of these interpolations, and to arrange documents in chronological order to show the gradual growth of new institutions, then we fail utterly and are very much left to conjecture. Setting aside conjectures about how it slowly evolved into existence, Brahmanism fully formed has four sides or phases, which may be called social, ritualist, philosophical, and mythological.

The *social* side is the *Caste* system. Brahmanism taught that the human race existed in four great divisions—the Brahman, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra. The Brahman came from the mouth of Brahma, and was priest and teacher. The Kshatriya came from the arm of God, to rule and defend the people. The Vaisya, who came from the thigh, was the trader and the husbandman. The Sudra, who came from the foot, was to serve the other three. These distinctions were to be per-