

Our Hour with the Editor

TOURS

Within a century from the death of Mohammed, the sway of Islam extended in a great crescent from the Pyrenees on the west to the Oxus on the east, a sweep of at least five thousand miles. The Visigoths, whose prowess in war had been such as to threaten the destruction of the Eastern Empire, and whose western progress under Alaric was almost a continuous triumph, were unable to resist successfully the Saracens when they invaded Spain, coming across the Strait of Gibraltar and at other points nearby to the number of 35,000 or perhaps 50,000. The comparative ease with which they overran that country forms no part of this story. In 710 El-Haur-ben-Abdul-Rhaman determined to extend the Moslem power over Gaul, and leading an army across the Pyrenees, laid siege to Toulouse. Eudes, Duke of Aquitaine, called the people of Southern Gaul to join in repelling the invader, and they did so to such good purpose that the Saracen force was overwhelmed. The victors claimed that they slew 375,000 Moslems, but there is little doubt that this is a great exaggeration, the whole Moslem army probably not having exceeded 45,000 men. Whatever the number may have been, there seems to be no doubt that not one of the invaders survived the day's fighting. For twelve years Gaul was free from the Saracens, but in 731, Abi-Nessa, a Berber chief, sought to make himself independent of the Kaliphs, and for that purpose formed an alliance with the Duke of Aquitaine, whose daughter, a girl of rare loveliness, he married. Abdul-Rhaman, who had not been present at the fight before Toulouse, and had been made governor-general of Spain, advanced against Abi-Nessa and defeated him in a fierce fight. Nessa threw himself from a rock to escape being taken prisoner, but not until after he had killed with his own hands seventeen of the enemy. His wife was taken and sent to the Kaliph at Damascus, for such was her beauty that Abdul-Rhaman said no other man was worthy of her. Another fight followed, and the Aquitanians were defeated with great slaughter, after which Bordeaux was taken, and so great was the booty that the Saracen chronicler says: "The most insignificant soldier had for his share plenty of topazes, jacinths and emeralds, to say nothing of gold, a somewhat vulgar article under these circumstances."

Laden with their plunder, the Saracens continued their northern march, overrunning all the country and going almost as far as the English Channel. Rhaman's cupidity, however, proved fatal to his plans. Hearing of the great wealth of the Abbey of Tours, he resolved to possess himself of it. Meanwhile, Charles, mayor of the palace, and virtually King of the Franks, marched with a great army to the support of the Aquitanians. He met the enemy in the open country between Tours and Poitiers. We are without any very clear account of the battle which ensued. We know that the armies faced each other for seven days, neither seemingly wishing to try conclusions with the other. The attack seems to have been made by the Saracens. The best account of the battle is by an Arab historian. He says: "Near the river Ouar (Loire) the two great hosts of the two languages and the two creeds were set in array against each other. The hearts of Abdul-Rhaman, his captains and his men were filled with wrath and pride, and they were the first to begin the fight. The Moslem horsemen dashed fiercely and frequently against the battalions of the Franks, who resisted manfully, and many fell dead on either side until the going down of the sun. Night parted the two armies, but in the grey of the morning the Moslems renewed the fight. Their cavalry had soon hewn their way to the centre of the Christian host. But many of the Moslems were fearful for the safety of the spoil, which they had stored in their tents, and a false cry arose in their ranks that some of the enemy were plundering their camp; whereupon several squadrons of the Moslem horsemen rode off to protect their tents. But it seemed as if they fled, and the whole host was troubled; and while Abdul-Rhaman strove to check their tumult and to lead them back to battle, the warriors of the Franks came around him, and he was pierced through with many spears, so that he died. Then all the host fled before the enemy and many died in the fight."

The battle of Tours was of immense importance, and Charles Martel deserves all the fame which it has conferred upon him. How many men were engaged in it is not known. Arab writers say not more than 80,000 on their side, although the monks claimed that the Moslem host numbered hundreds of thousands. There seems to be no way of arriving at the number under the command of Charles. They did not form an army in the proper sense of the term, but merely a collection of bodies of men having no special organization and bound together only by their common hatred of the Saracens and their common confidence in Charles. The victory was a decisive one. It put an end to all the hopes of overcoming the Franks, and the Kaliphs never directed another invasion of Gaul. It is perhaps correct to say that the fate of Western Europe, and perhaps of Christianity and modern civilization, was at stake on that eventful day. Gibbon remarks that if the Saracens had not been defeated at Tours, "perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mohammed." The German historian Schlegel

says: "The army of Charles Martel saved and delivered the Christian nations of the West from the deadly grasp of all-destroying Islam." The battle was a turning point in history. It not only checked the Moslem advance, but it consolidated the Frankish people and prepared the way for the career of Charlemagne. The Seventh Century is the darkest in the history of the world, and the great victory of Tours in the earlier part of the Eighth Century was the beginning of better things.

SUN-WORSHIP

There is not, and as far as any one knows, there never was a universal religion; but Sun-worship very nearly approaches it: for it has been undoubtedly the most widespread of all religions among aboriginal tribes. Very many forms of idolatry can be traced to the worship of the great Orb of Day. Persons familiar with the Old Testament will not need to be reminded that the great opposition to the worship of Jehovah came from the worshippers of Baal. The name Baal itself only means a great chief, and doubtless Baal-worship became greatly corrupted but it appears first in history associated intimately with the worship of the Sun and other heavenly bodies. The worship of the Sun extended all over Asia and Europe, and reached its most elaborate development in Peru. Fire-worship was only a corrupted form of the original cult. Mithras, who was regarded by fashionable Rome at the time of Christ as the greatest deity was associated with the Sun. His birthday was said to have been December 25, which corresponds approximately with the end of the Winter Solstice. The Yuletide festival of the Northern races is another indication of the widely extended vogue of the Solar Cult.

There is not very much literature regarding Sun-worship, for the reason that it antedates all literature, and when it begins to appear in the writings of the ancient poets, it had already been so varied and so intermixed with other matters, that to arrive at a trustworthy appreciation of its origin is quite impossible. The explanation usually offered, that primitive man would naturally worship the Sun as the source of all life, presupposes an extent of scientific knowledge on the part of primitive man that he could hardly have possessed. We do not find races, which are now in something resembling primitive conditions, worshipping the Sun, and this seems to be prima facie evidence that such races never did. A more reasonable suggestion seems to be that Sun-worship is a variation from a very ancient practice of mankind in an era of the world's history, when the so-called movements of the Sun played a more noticeable part in the affairs of the world than they now do. If we assume, as there seems to be good geological and traditional reasons for believing was the case, that the earliest home of the human race was around the North Pole, we have our race existing under conditions, when the Summer and Winter Solstices, the Vernal and Autumnal Equinoxes would appear as events of very great interest and importance. Two of these, the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox, would be especially noticeable; the former because at that time the Sun would begin his return from his apparent Southern journey, and the midnight of the Arctic would be passed; the latter because at that time the growth of vegetation would begin its greatest activity. Hence the possible origin of the Yuletide and the Festival of Eostre, whence have come our Christmas and Easter, the former being in the course of time consecrated to the birth of the Redeemer, the latter to His Resurrection. If we assume, as seems probable, that the era, when the circumpolar regions were the chief seat of population, was terminated by the Ice Age or the Glacial Period of the geologists, the reign of the Frost Giants of Scandinavian mythology, it is not difficult to understand that the survivors of that terrible epoch would preserve the memory of these solar festivals, and as the horrors of the cold began to be alleviated under the influence of the Sun, would hail the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox with rejoicings. From these beginnings to the development of a religious cult in which the Sun would play an important part, the evolution would be easy and natural, and naturally in different races different religious ideas would arise under local and personal influence, and yet the Solar festivities would form more or less of a part in all of them, we can, without violence to common sense, reach a tenable explanation of the existence of Sun-worship as apparently the substratum of nearly all religions. Personal influence has been referred to as modifying the various religions. We know from many examples how effective this influence is. Leaving Christianity out of the question, we find in Mohammedanism a striking illustration of the manner in which an individual may impress his personality upon the thoughts of millions of people through hundreds of years. There is nothing at all improbable in a suggestion that possibly Baal may have been a man of commanding ability, who in some day, long before the dawn of history, established a religion with which he associated the Sun festivals, as the Christian Fathers associated them with Christianity—a religion which subsequently became corrupted and changed until it assumed forms as widely diverse as the cruel worship of Moloch and the strange combination of intelligence and sensuality shown in the worship of Mithras.

Moses felt the necessity of warning the Israelites against Sun-worship, and we read

in Deuteronomy, a caution against being led, when seeing "the sun, and the moon and the stars and all the host of heaven," to worship, and serve them. The practice, which the great Hebrew lawgiver thus forbids was almost identical with those followed in Peru in the time of the Incas, when worship was accorded to the different heavenly bodies, although not to all in the same degree. The death penalty was imposed upon such of the Israelites as became Sun-worshippers. We are told in the Second Book of Kings that Josiah took out of the Temple the horses and burnt the chariots that had been consecrated to the Sun—in which consecration one may discover a suggestion of the old Greek legend of Phœbus and the Chariot of the Sun. We read of Job's saying: "If I beheld the sun when it shined or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart had been secretly enticed or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge, for I should have denied the God that is above." In the Book of Numbers, chapter xxv, we read how the Israelites at the solicitation of the Midianites, "joined themselves to Baal-peor," that is, became Sun-worshippers. The name Baal appears in various connections. The most conspicuous instance is in the name of the ancient city of Baalbec, a Syrian town, the foundations of which were laid long before the beginning of history. The Greeks called it Heliopolis, "the City of the Sun." Some of its monuments bear inscriptions showing them to be 4,000 years old, but the city existed long antecedent to that period. In Baalbec the Sun apparently occupied a subordinate place, for the temple erected in its honor was very much smaller than the temple of Baal. This suggests that the people of that city looked upon Baal as distinct from the Sun and superior to it. We also find the name in the title Baalzebub, which name, slightly changed, was applied by the Jews to the prince of evil spirits, and is thought by many people today to be the actual name of Satan. As a matter of fact, it is the title which the Babylonians gave to the divinity who was supposed to rule insect life. These incidents and others of a similar nature might be multiplied many times. They all serve to confirm the suggestion advanced in the opening sentences of this article, that while there may be no such thing as a universal religion, what is called Sun-worship is the nearest approach to it.

The Birth of the Nations

(N. de Bertrand Lugrin.)

THE HINDUS

II.—The Maha-Bharata.

In the early times the Hindus were much addicted to gambling, and Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, following the counsel of his uncle, Sakuni, an unprincipled man with a reputation for throwing loaded dice, invited Yudhishthira, the eldest of the Pandavas, to play.

So the Pandavas, accompanied by Draupadi, went to Hastinapur. They played in a pavilion near the palace, and Sakuni threw the dice for his nephew Duryodhana, though much against the wishes of the Pandavas: Yudhishthira, however, felt that it would be too cowardly a thing to refuse to play, and continued the game, though he kept constantly losing. By and by he grew desperate and gambled recklessly, staking one of his possessions after another. His younger brothers dared not interfere though they watched the game progress vowed vengeance upon Sakuni and Durdhava who were endeavoring to ruin Yudhishthira. The latter gambled away his cattle, and those of his brothers, all his goods, all his money. Then he gambled away their Raj, and finally to the horror of Arjuna and the others he staked the beautiful Draupadi, Arjuna's wife, and lost her to the wicked Duryodhana.

Duryodhana sent to the palace for Draupadi, but when the princess learned the truth she was very angry and refused to go. "Did Yudhishthira gamble himself away first?" she asked. "He did," was the reply. "He and all of his brothers. They are to become the slaves of their enemy." "And a slave cannot stake a free woman," cried Draupadi. But they seized her by her long black hair and dragged her to the feet of Duryodhana. She stretched out her arms to her husband and his brothers and besought them weeping to save her from the shame, but they dared not interfere, they were no longer free men. Duryodhana lifted Draupadi to his knee, but seeing him lay his hands upon her drove the Pandavas to a frenzy and Bhima, the strongest of them, fell upon Duryodhana. What the outcome would have been no one can tell had not the blind Maharaja at that moment entered the pavilion, and having been told how matters stood, and being a peaceable man, he bade his attendant separate the combatants. He then told his son that he would not allow his cousins to become his slaves, but instead he would banish them again, they and Draupadi, and they must remain in exile for ten years. At the end of that period they might return secretly and dwell in whatever city they chose for one year. If anyone discovered their identity during that time they would lose their half of the Raj. If they kept their secret until the final year

was over all their possessions should be restored to them.

So once more, sorrowfully enough, the Pandavas departed to the jungles, but before Bhima quitted Hastinapur he swore that the time would come when he should break the knees of Duryodhana at which Draupadi had been forced to kneel, and drink the blood of the man who had dragged her to the pavilion. As for Draupadi, when she followed her brothers into exile, she loosened her beautiful hair and vowed that it should remain unconfined until Bhima had fulfilled his oath. The Pandavas went to Virata where they served the Raja of that place, and Draupadi became lady-in-waiting to the Rani. But Draupadi was so beautiful that wherever she went she attracted all men by her wonderful charms. At that time many people believed that the spirits of the dead could return to the earth and hold communication with their loved ones. So Draupadi, in order to save herself from the importunities of would-be suitors, said she was beloved by five ghosts who would not tolerate a rival among men. Her statement was ridiculed by many, but some believed, and the story soon spread throughout the Raj. It did not prevent one Kichaka, brother-in-law of the Rani, from pursuing her, however, and he vowed that, spirits or no spirits, Draupadi should be his wife. Draupadi besought the Raja to aid her, but he was afraid of Kichaka and refused. Again Bhima, who certainly seemed much more chivalrous than Arjuna, saved her from the persecutions of a lover. One night when Kichaka had gone to the music pavilion, hoping to surprise Draupadi there and carry her away by force, Bhima met him instead of the lady. They fought together and the giant Pandava was successful in breaking every bone in Kichaka's body. He managed to make his escape long before the body was discovered and when at last the servants arrived upon the scene and saw the terribly mutilated corpse they set up a great cry that the spirit lovers of Draupadi had killed Kichaka. Draupadi was therefore seized and borne along with the corpse to the funeral pile, there to be burnt. Her screams of despair called the gallant Bhima once more to the rescue. He drew his hair over his face that no one should recognize him, and pulling up a tree by its roots he fell upon Draupadi's captors and slew every one, once more making his escape before anyone could learn his identity. As before the people thought Draupadi had been saved through supernatural agency and this time they dared not attempt to harm her.

When the end of the thirteenth year arrived the Pandavas and their followers sent a challenge to the Kauravas and as a result a terrible battle took place between the two rival factions. After much bloodshed and many hand to hand conflicts, the Pandavas were successful. Bhima killed the man who had dragged Draupadi from the palace to the pavilion and drank his blood as he had sworn to do. In a fierce encounter with Duryodhana he broke the latter's knees and left him dying upon the field. Then with his hands wet with blood he tied up the hair of Draupadi.

The five Pandavas became great conquerors and in time ruled over the whole of India, but not until the Kauravas had taken a certain amount of revenge, for they attacked the camp one night when only Draupadi and her women and her sons were in possession, the warriors all having gone away to a festival. Draupadi's sons were all slain.

Fifteen years after the widows and mothers of those slain in the battle went to the bank of the Ganges to weep and mourn for their lost ones. Vyasa, the Brahman sage, who frequently appears throughout the narrative, came to console them. He called upon the waters to give up their dead, and all the departed heroes appeared in great beauty and magnificence. But there was no enmity any more, wives and mothers and daughters were united to those they loved, and there was great rejoicing among all. The spirits remained until morning and then at the command of Vyasa they disappeared once more beneath the waters followed by the widows to whom permission had been given to join their husbands.

The foregoing is a necessarily curtailed account of the story contained in the epic of the Maha-Bharata. All that is of a religious nature has been omitted and many details which seem uncouth and horrible to the mind of one other than an Oriental have not been gone into. The Maha-Bharata is supposed to have been written fifteen hundred years ago.

SOME LITERARY NOTES

"A King in Khaki," by Richard Kitchell Webster, the Copp, Clarke Co., publishers, Toronto, is an interesting story. The scene is laid on an imaginary island near Trinidad, and the hero is a young New York newspaper man, who develops great business ability. The girl is daughter of the financial magnate, who is chief owner of the enterprise of which the hero is manager. The father has a plan on foot to freeze out the small shareholders, which the hero circumvents, and in the course of doing so wins the heart of the girl. The interest is admirably sustained throughout; the plot is very smoothly worked out with a very clever element of surprise in it. Altogether a capital novel, without anything in it that ought to have been left out.

"Cyclopedia of Agriculture" Completed.—No publication relating to agriculture in America, or probably in any other country, has ever brought together the knowledge and counsel of such an array of practical experts,

scientific investigators, and original, sensible and helpful thinkers, as has the Cyclopedia of American Agriculture, edited by Professor L. H. Bailey, of Cornell University, the fourth and last volume of which has just been published. This great work is as far in advance of all predecessors as a carefully written book is of a newspaper paragraph. It is not a compilation, but an original, thoroughgoing, up-to-date and fruitful treatise, from cover to cover, produced and backed up by the best talent in the world. The men who know the most, whose judgment is soundest, on the theory and practice of agriculture in any one or more of its phases, have been sought out, and induced to put upon paper what they know, and believe important, of matters likely to be interesting and valuable to a farmer or his family. Each of these contributions is signed, and the names are those of men who have reached to acknowledged eminence in their several lines, by reason of the fullness of their learning. Years of preparation, commanding influence and much money, have been necessary to procure their carefully considered contributions.

Volume one opens with a general survey of the agricultural regions of the United States and Canada, which makes it possible to select farming territory according to choice of the characteristics and products of different sections. All of the information is interesting, much of it novel and informing. The chapter on tropical agriculture, by F. S. Earle and others, outlines conditions and opportunities in Porto Rico, Hawaii, the Philippines, etc., in regard to which information in general is difficult to obtain.

The sections by George T. Powell and W. J. Spillman on the planning and laying out of a farm will enlighten many a man who has never guessed that one reason for ill-success might be in a poor arrangement of his fields with reference to roads, drains, etc. Fred W. Card writes an article on the best distribution of capital in farm management, which is followed by practical, detailed estimates of the cost of different branches of farming, and of farm machinery, farm buildings, fences and defences, sanitation and water supply, etc.

Such authorities as G. P. Merrill, of the U. S. National Museum; E. W. Hilgard, author of the standard work on "Soils" Frank K. Cameron, specialist in the analysis of soils; F. H. King and Elwood Mead, the great irrigation expert, are the writers of the final section of this volume, the value of which is already established beyond question.

In volume two, plant nature, structure and relations generally, the enemies of plants and their diseases, are the subjects of introductory chapters preparing for the valuable paper on the breeding of plants by Dr. J. H. Weber, one of the greatest plant-breeders in the world. Crop management, growing plants under cover, seeding, planting and testing yields, are fully treated by A. M. Ten Eyck and others. The manufacture of farm products describes the canning industry, home preserving, the making of grape and fruit juices, etc. But the bulk of this volume consists of a detailed account of all American field crops, fully illustrated and alphabetically arranged with average planting dates for different sections of the country and minute details of the best methods of culture and marketing.

Volume three opens with a general account of the structure, nature and necessary care of farm live stock—cattle, horses, swine, sheep, poultry and various lesser creatures. The principles of breeding, the diseases of live stock, the utilization and preservation of animal products and a hundred other subjects are written on by T. F. Hunt, of the Cornell Experiment Station; F. B. Mumford, of the Missouri Agricultural College; H. P. Ormsby, of the Pennsylvania State College; W. H. Caldwell, of the American Guernsey Club; G. E. Day, the Canadian writer on the hog, etc.

The fourth volume is in many ways the most important of all, taking the broad view of the farm in its relation to the community. David Kinley, of the University of Illinois, among others, contributes to the discussion of the far-reaching changes brought about by shifts of population, and new methods of transporting agricultural products. Elwood Mead and Gifford Pinchot write of the natural resources of agriculture, and of the dangers of waste and depletion. Every farmer is desirous of handling his crops in a businesslike way, so as to obtain the greatest profit for his money, and will appreciate the articles on farm accounting, the cost of producing crops, the profitable handling and sale of perishable food crops, etc. The editor-in-chief contributes freely to this volume material which it would be impossible for the general reader to acquire from any of the accessible sources.

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