HISTORY
OF
INDIAN ARCHITECTURE.

INTRODUCTION.

It is in vain, perhaps, to expect that the literature or the Arts of any other people can be so interesting to even the best educated Europeans as those of their own country. Until it is forced on their attention, few are aware how much education does to concentrate attention within a very narrow field of observation. We become familiar in the nursery with the names of the heroes of Greek and Roman history. In every school their history and their arts are taught, memorials of their greatness meet us at every turn through life, and their thoughts and aspirations become, as it were, part of ourselves. So, too, with the Middle Ages: their religion is our religion; their architecture our architecture; and their history fades so insensibly into our own, that we can draw no line of demarcation that would separate us from them. How different is the state of feeling, when from this familiar home we turn to such a country as India! Its geography is hardly taught in schools, and seldom mastered perfectly; its history is a puzzle; its literature a mythic dream; its arts a quaint perplexity. But, above all, the names of its heroes and great men are so unfamiliar that, except a few of those who go to India, scarcely any ever become so acquainted with them, that they call up any memories which are either pleasing or worth dwelling upon.

Were it not for this, there is probably no country—out of Europe at least—that would so well repay attention as India: none, where all the problems of natural science or of art are presented to us in so distinct and so pleasing a form. Nowhere does nature show herself in such grand and such luxurious

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1 The last thirty years have added greatly to the number and quality of the text-books on Indian history, and the general reader has no longer a valid excuse for ignorance of it.
features, and nowhere does humanity exist in more varied and more pleasing conditions. Side by side with the intellectual Brähman caste, and the chivalrous Rājput, are found the wild Bhitī and the naked Gond, not antagonistic and warring one against the other, as elsewhere, but living now as they have done for thousands of years, each content with his own lot, and prepared to follow, without repining, in the footsteps of his forefathers.

It cannot, of course, be for, one moment contended that India ever reached the intellectual supremacy of Greece, or the moral greatness of Rome; but, though on a lower step of the ladder, her arts are more original and more varied, and her forms of civilisation present an ever-changing variety, such as are nowhere else to be found. What, however, really renders India so interesting as an object of study is that it is now a living entity. Greece and Rome are dead and have passed away, and we are living so completely in the midst of modern Europe, that we cannot get outside to contemplate it as a whole. But India is a complete cosmos in itself; bounded on the north by the Himālayas, on the south by the sea, on the east by jungles inhabited by rude tribes, and only on the west having one door of communication, across the Indus, open to the outer world. Across that stream, nation after nation have poured their myriads into her coveted domain, but no reflex waves ever mixed her people with those beyond her boundaries.

In consequence of all this, every problem of anthropology or ethnography can be studied here more easily than anywhere else; every art has its living representative, and often of the most pleasing form; every science has its illustration, and many on a scale not easily matched elsewhere. But, notwithstanding all this, in nine cases out of ten, India and Indian matters fail to interest, because they are to most people new and unfamiliar. The rudiments have not been mastered when young, and, when grown up, few men have the leisure or the inclination to set to work to learn the forms of a new world, demanding both care and study; and till this is attained, it can hardly be hoped that the arts and the architecture of India will interest many European readers to the same extent as those styles treated of in the volumes on ancient and mediæval architecture.¹

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, it may still be possible to present the subject of Indian architecture in such a form as to be interesting, even if not attractive. To do this, however,

¹ 'History of Architecture in all Countries from the Earliest Times.' By the late Jas. Fergusson, C.I.E., D.C.L.,
the narrative form must be followed as far as is compatible with such a subject. All technical and unfamiliar names must be avoided wherever it is possible to do so, and the whole accompanied with a sufficient number of illustrations to enable its forms to be mastered without difficulty. Even if this is attended to, no one volume can tell the whole of so varied and so complex a history. Without preliminary or subsequent study it can hardly be expected that so new and so vast a subject can be grasped; but one volume may contain a complete outline of the whole, and enable any one who wishes for more information to know where to look for it, or how to appreciate it when found.

Whether successful or not, it seems well worth while that an attempt should be made to interest the public in Indian architectural art; first, because the artist and architect will certainly acquire broader and more varied views of their art by its study than they can acquire from any other source. More than this, any one who masters the subject sufficiently to be able to understand their art in its best and highest forms, will rise from the study with a kindlier feeling towards the nations of India, and a higher—certainly a corrector—appreciation of their social status than could be obtained from their literature, or from anything that now exists in their anomalous social and political position.

Notwithstanding all this, many may be inclined to ask, Is it worth while to master all the geographical and historical details necessary to unravel so tangled a web as this, and then try to become so familiar with their ever-varying forms as not only to be able to discriminate between the different styles, but also to follow them through all their ceaseless changes?

My impression is that this question may fairly be answered in the affirmative. No one has a right to say that he understands the history of architecture who leaves out of his view the works of an immense portion of the human race, which has always shown itself so capable of artistic development. But, more than this, architecture in India is still a living art, practised on the principles which caused its wonderful development in Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries; and there, consequently, and there alone, the student of architecture has a chance of seeing the real principles of the art in action. In Europe, at the present day, architecture is practised in a manner so anomalous and abnormal that few, if any, have hitherto been able to shake off the influence of a false system, and to see that the art of ornamental building can be based on principles of common sense; and that, when so practised, the result not only is, but must be, satisfactory. Those who
have an opportunity of seeing what perfect buildings the uneducated natives of India produce, will easily understand how success may be achieved, while those who observe what failures the best educated and most talented architects in Europe frequently perpetrate, may, by a study of Indian models, easily see why this must inevitably be the result. It is only in India that the two systems can be seen practised side by side—the educated and intellectual European falling because his principles are wrong, the feeble and uneducated native as inevitably succeeding because his principles are right. The Indian builders think only of what they are doing, and how they can best produce the effect they desire. In the European system it is considered more essential that a building, especially in its details, should be a correct copy of something else, than good in itself or appropriate to its purpose: hence the difference in the result.

In one other respect India affords a singularly favourable field to the student of architecture. In no other country of the same extent are there so many distinct nationalities, each retaining its old belief and its old feelings, and impressing these on its art. There is consequently no country where the outlines of ethnology as applied to art can be so easily perceived, or their application to the elucidation of the various problems so pre-eminently important. The mode in which the art has been practised in Europe for the last three centuries has been very confusing. In India it is clear and intelligible. No one can look at the subject without seeing its importance, and no one can study the art as practised there without recognising what the principles of the science really are.

In addition, however, to these scientific advantages, it will undoubtedly be conceded by those who are familiar with the subject that for certain qualities the Indian buildings are unrivalled. They display an exuberance of fancy, a lavishness of labour, and an elaboration of detail to be found nowhere else. They may contain nothing so sublime as the hall at Karnak, nothing so intellectual as the Parthenon, nor so constructively grand as a mediæval cathedral; but for certain other qualities—not perhaps of the highest kind, yet very important in architectural art—the Indian buildings stand alone. They consequently fill up a great gap in our knowledge of the subject, which without them would remain a void.

**History.**

One of the greatest difficulties that exist—perhaps the greatest—in exciting an interest in Indian antiquities arises
from the fact, that India has no history properly so called, before the Muhammadan invasion in the 13th century. Had India been a great united kingdom, like China, with a long line of dynasties and well-recorded dates attached to them, the task would have been comparatively easy; but nothing of the sort ever existed within her boundaries. On the contrary, so far as our knowledge extends, India has always been occupied by three or four different races of mankind, who have never amalgamated so as to become one people, and each of these races has been again subdivided into numerous tribes or small nationalities nearly, sometimes wholly, independent of each other—and, what is worse than all, not one of them ever kept a chronicle or preserved a series of dates commencing from any well-known era.1

The absence of any historical record is the more striking, because India possesses a written literature equal to, if not surpassing in variety and extent, that possessed by any other nation, before the adoption and use of printing. The Vedas themselves, with their Upanishads and Brāhmanas, and the commentaries on them, form a literature in themselves of vast extent, and some parts of which are as old, possibly older, than any written works that are now known to exist; and the Purāṇas, though comparatively modern, make up a body of doctrine mixed with mythology and tradition such as few nations can boast of. Besides this, however, are the two great epics, surpassing in extent, if not in merit, those of any ancient nation, and a drama of great beauty, written at periods extending through a long series of years. In addition to these we have treatises on law, on grammar, on astronomy, on metaphysics and mathematics, on almost every branch of mental science—a literature extending in fact to many thousand works, but in all this not one book that can be called historical. No man in ancient India, so far as is known, ever thought of recording the events of his own life, or of repeating the previous experience of others, and it was not till shortly before the Christian Era that they thought of establishing eras from which to date deeds or events.

All this is the more curious because in Ceylon we have, in the 'Dipawansa,' 'Mahāwansa,' and other books of a like nature,

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1 The following brief résumé of the principal events in the ancient history of India has no pretensions to being a complete or exhaustive view of the subject. It is intended only as such a popular sketch as shall enable the general reader to grasp the main features of the story to such an extent as may enable him to understand what follows. In order to make it readable, all references and all proofs of disputed facts have been here avoided. They will be found in the body of the work, where they are more appropriate. But without some such introductory notice of the political history and ethnography, i.e. artistic history would be nearly, if not wholly unintelligible.
a consecutive history of that island, with dates which, with
certain corrections, may be depended upon within certain
limits of error, for periods extending from about B.C. 250
to the present time. At the other extremity of India, we
have also in the ‘Rājatarangini’ of Kashmir, a work of the
12th century, which Professor Wilson characterised as “the
only Sanskrit composition yet discovered to which the title
of History can with any propriety be applied.”¹ It hardly
helps us, however, to any ancient historical data, its early
chronology being only traditional and confused; but from the
beginning of the 9th Christian century, its materials are of
great value.²

In India Proper, however, we have no such guides as even
these, but for written history are almost wholly dependent on
the Purāṇas. They furnish us with a list of kings’ names, with
the length of their reigns, so apparently truthful that they may,
within certain limits, be of use. They are only, however, of one
range of dynasties—probably also sometimes contemporary
—and extend only from the accession of Chandragupta—the
Sandrokottos of the Greeks—about B.C. 320, to the decline of
the Andhra dynasty, about the beginning of the 3rd century A.D.
It seems possible we may yet find sufficient confirmation of
these lists as far back as the 6th century B.C., so as to include
the period marked by the life and labours of Śākyamuni—the
last Buddha—in our chronology, with tolerable certainty. All
chronology before that period is as yet merely conjectural.
From the period of the Gupta dynasty in the 4th century
onwards, when the Purāṇas began to be put into their present
form, in consequence of the revival of the Brahmanical religion,
instead of recording contemporary events, they purposely
confused them so as to maintain their pretended prophetic
character, and prevent the detection of the falsehood of their
claim to an antiquity equal to that of the Vedas.

For Indian history after the 5th century we are consequently
left mainly to inscriptions on monuments or on copper-plates, to
coins, and to the works of foreigners for the necessary informa-
tion with which the natives of the country itself have neglected
to supply us. Inscriptions fortunately are more abundant in
India than, perhaps, in any other country, and nearly all of
them contain historical information; and, thanks to the great
advances made in epigraphy during the last thirty-five years,
we are now able to piece together a tolerably accurate historical

² Kalhana’s ‘ Rājatarangini ’ has been
very carefully translated and edited with
a valuable commentary and notes by
Dr. A. M. Stein, 2 vols. (London,
1900).
OUTLINE OF THE COURSE OF EVENTS FROM THE 3RD CENTURY B.C. This is more especially the case for the Dekhan and the north of India; in the Tamil country so much has not yet been done, but this is more because there have been fewer labourers in the field than from want of materials. There are literally thousands of inscriptions in the south which have not been copied, and of those that have been collected only a portion have yet been translated; but they are such as to give us assurance that, when the requisite amount of labour is bestowed upon them, we shall be able to fix the chronology of the kings of the south with a degree of certainty sufficient for all ordinary purposes.

It is a far more difficult task to ascertain whether we shall ever recover the History of India before the time of the advent of Buddha. Here we certainly will find no coins or inscriptions to guide us, and no buildings to illustrate the arts, or to mark the position of cities, while all ethnographic traces have become so blurred, if not obliterated, that they serve us little as guides through the labyrinth. Yet on the other hand there is so much literature—such as it is—bearing on the subject, that we cannot but hope that, when a sufficient amount of learning is brought to bear upon it, the leading features of the history of even that period may be recovered. In order, however, to render it available, it will not require industry so much as a severe spirit of criticism to winnow the few grains of useful truth out of the mass of worthless chaff this literature contains. But it does not seem too much to expect even this, from the severely critical spirit of the age. Meanwhile, the main facts of the case seem to be nearly as follows, in so far as it is necessary to state them, in order to make what follows intelligible.

ARYANS.

At some very remote period in the world's history the Aryas or Aryans—a people speaking an early form of Sanskrit—

1 The chronological results have been systematically arranged in that useful handbook.—Duff's 'Chronology of India' (London, 1890).

2 Almost the only person who had done anything in this direction till forty years ago was the late Sir Walter Elliot. Since 1872 the labours of Drs. Fleet, Bühler, Kielhorn, R. G. Bhandarkar and others have thrown a flood of light on the history of southern as well as northern India; and within the last twenty years Dr. Hultsch's work among the Tamil inscriptions of Madras has yielded very important chronological and historical information for the south of the peninsula. The Mysore Government has also issued the great 'Epigraphia Carnatica,' under the direction of Mr. Lewis Rice.

3 We have the word in the 'Aria' and 'Ariana' of the Greek writers, applied to the country lying to the north-east of Persia adjoining Baktriana. The early Zoroastrians called their country 'Aryanvaējō'—the Arya home, and in the Behistun inscriptions it is styled 'Ariya.' See Lassen, 'Indische Alterthumskunde,' Bd. i. Ss. 5ff.
entered India across the Upper Indus, coming from Central Asia. They were a fair complexioned people as compared with the Aborigines, and for a long time they remained settled in the Panjâb, or on the banks of the Sarasvati, then a more important stream than now, the main body, however, still remaining to the westward of the Indus. If, however, we may trust our chronology, we find them settled 1500 to 2000 years before the Christian Era, in Ayodhyâ and then in the plenitude of their power. Naturally we look for some light on their early history in the two great Indian epics—the Râmâyana recording the exploits of Râma, King of Ayodhyâ, of the Solar race, and in much later times regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu; and the Mahâbhârata celebrating the contest between the Kurus and Pândus, of the Lunar family. Both are steeped in Brahmân doctrines, almost certainly inserted in later ages among the original legends. It thus becomes very difficult to separate what belongs to the original spirit and aim of the works from the interpolated materials. The Râmâyana is so largely allegorical and cast in the form it has reached us so long after the period to which it refers that it is doubtful whether we can draw any inference with safety from its contents, except that it relates to the spread of Aryan civilisation—which had probably then occupied most of the country north of the Vindhyan range—into southern India, and as far as Ceylon.¹ From a very early period the Aryans had, doubtless, become mixed with aboriginal races, and could not be regarded as pure at this period. But whether they formed settlements in the Dekhan or not, it was opened up to them, and by slow degrees imbibed that amount of Brahmanism which eventually pervaded the south. By B.C. 700, or thereabouts, they had begun to be tolerably well acquainted with the whole of the peninsula.

The events that form the theme of the western epic—the Mahâbhârata—may have occurred almost as early as, or even several centuries later than the times of Râma. It opens up an entirely new view of Indian social life. If the heroes of that poem were Aryans at all, they were of a much less pure type than those who composed the songs of the Vedas, or are depicted in the verses of the Râmâyana. Their polyandry, their drinking bouts, their gambling tastes, and love of fighting, mark them as a very different race from the peaceful shepherd immigrants of the earlier age, and point much more distinctly towards a Tartar, trans-Himalayan origin, than to the cradle of

¹ For some account of the probable spread of the Aryas southwards, see Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar's 'Early History of the Dekhan,' in Bombay Gazetteer (1895), vol. i. pt. ii. pp. 132ff.
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the Aryan stock in Central Asia. We are tempted to ask whether the Pândavas, who conquered in the great strife, were not a confederacy of hostile tribes, headed by a band of warriors of mixed or non-Aryan descent. Their helper and counsellor, Krishnâ, is a divinity unknown to the early Aryans, and with him as an incarnation of Vishnu, the Siva, and Brahma, of modern Hindûism, take the place of the older gods. As if to mark the difference of which the warriors themselves felt the existence, they distinguished themselves, by name, as belonging to a Lunar race, distinct from, and generally antagonistic to, the Solar race, which was the proud distinction of the purer and earlier Aryan settlers in India.¹

By about B.C. 700, we again find a totally different state of affairs in India. The Aryans no longer exist as a separate nationality, and neither the Solar nor the Lunar race are the rulers of the earth. The Brâhmans have become a priestly caste, and share the power with the Kshatriyas, a race of far less purity of descent. The Vaisyas, as merchants and husbandmen, have become a power, and even the Sudras are acknowledged as a part of the body politic; and—though not mentioned in the Scriptures—the Nâgas, or Snake people, had become an influential part of the population. They are first mentioned in the Mahâbhârata, where they play a most important part in causing the death of Parikshit, which led to the great sacrifice for the destruction of the Nâgas of Takshasilâ by Janamejaya, which practically closes the history of the time. Destroyed, however, they were not, for we find Nâga dynasties ruling in various parts of Central India and Râjputâna from the 7th century B.C., till at least the 4th century A.D.²

Although Buddhism was first taught probably by one belonging to the Solar race, and of Aryan blood, and though its first disciples were Brâhmans, it had as little affinity with the religion of the Vedas as Christianity had with the Pentateuch, and its fate was the same. The one religion was taught by one of Jewish extraction to the Jews; but it was ultimately rejected by them, and adopted by the Gentiles, who had no affinity of race or religion with the inhabitants of Judæa. Though meant originally, no doubt, for Aryans, the Buddhist religion was ultimately rejected by the Brâhmans, who were consequently eclipsed and superseded by it for nearly a thousand years; and we hear little of them and their religion till they rise again at the court of the great Gupta

¹ Orientalists have expressed very varying opinions as to the historical teachings of the epics. See Weber, 'On the Râmâyana,' etc. ² The Nâga or Kârkota dynasty of Kashmir ruled as late as from about the beginning of the 7th till the middle of the 9th century.
kings in the 4th century A.D., when their religion began to assume that strange shape which it now still retains in India. In its new form it is as unlike the religion of the Vedas as it is possible to conceive one religion being to another; unlike that, also, of the older portions of the Mahābhārata; but a confused mess of local superstitions and imported myths, covering up and hiding the Vedantic and Buddhist doctrines, which may sometimes be detected as underlying it. Whatever it be, however, it was invented by and for as mixed a population as probably were ever gathered together into one country—a people whose feelings and superstitions it only too truly represents.

**DRAVIDIANS.**

Although, therefore, as was hinted above, there might be no great difficulty in recovering the main incidents and leading features of the history of the Aryans, from their first entry into India till they were entirely absorbed into the mass of the population some time before the Christian Era, there could be no greater mistake than to suppose that their history would fully represent the ancient history of the country. The Dravidians are a people who, in historical times, seem to have been probably as numerous as the pure Aryans, and at the present day form one-fifth of the whole population of India. They belong, it is true, to a lower intellectual status than the Aryans, but they have preserved their nationality pure and unmixed, and, such as they were at the dawn of history, so they seem to be now.

Their settlement in India extends to such remote pre-historic times, that we cannot feel even sure that we should regard them as immigrants, or, at least, as either conquerors or colonists on a large scale, but rather as aboriginal in the sense in which that term is usually understood. Generally it is assumed that they entered India across the Lower Indus, leaving the cognate Brahui in Baluchistán as a mark of the road by which they came, and, as the affinities of their language seem to be with the Ugrians and Northern Turanian tongues, this view seems probable. But they have certainly left no trace of their migrations anywhere between the Indus and the Narbâdâ, and all the facts of their history, so far as they are known, would seem to lead to an opposite conclusion. The hypothesis that would represent what we know of their history most correctly would place their original seat in the extreme south, somewhere.

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1 Dr. Caldwell, the author of the most trustworthy advocate of this 'Dravidian Grammar.' is the greatest view.
probably not far from Madurâ or Tanjor, and thence spreading fan-like towards the north, till they met the Aryans in the northern Dekhan. The question, again; is not of much importance for our present purposes, as we do not know to what degree of civilisation they had reached anterior to the Christian Era, or when they were first able to practise the arts of civilised life with such success as to bring them within the scope of a work devoted to the history of art.\(^1\)

It may be that at some future period, when we know more of the ancient arts of these Dravidians than we now do, some fresh light may be thrown on this very obscure part of history. Geographically, however, one thing seems tolerably clear. If the Dravidians came into India in historical times it was not from Central Asia that they migrated, but from Persia, or some southern region of the Asiatic continent.

**DASYUS.**

In addition to these two great distinct and opposite nationalities, there exists in India a third, which, in pre-Buddhist times, was as numerous, perhaps even more so, than either the Aryans or the Dravidians, but of whose history we know even less than we do of the two others. Ethnologists have not agreed on a name by which to call them. I have suggested Dasyus,\(^2\) a slave people, as that is the name by which the Aryans designated them when they found them there on their first entrance into India, and subjected them to their sway.\(^3\) Possibly they were partly of Mongol-Tibetan origin, and partly they may have been a mixed race allied to the Dravidians, and now represented by Gonds, Santâls, Bhils, etc.

The Dasyus, however, were not mere barbarians; for they had towns, and traces of at least a partial civilisation; they had leaders or chiefs possessed of strong fortified retreats, and they possessed treasures of gold and rich jewels.\(^4\) Whoever they were they seem to have been a people of less intellectual capacity, less muscular, and less united than their invaders. When the Aryans first entered India they seem to have found them occupying the whole valley of the Ganges — the whole

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1 In the 'Râmâyana' the monkey-soldiers are directed to the countries of the Andhras, Pândyas, Cholas, and Keralas, in the south, and are told they will there see the gate of the city of the Pândyas adorned with gold and jewels.
2 'Tree and Serpent Worship,' pp. 244-247.
3 'Dasyu' probably meant 'provincial,' 'aboriginal,' and was used much as 'Gentiles,' 'Pagans,' 'Barbarians,' in early times. They are also termed Yâdvas, of which we may have a survival in the 'Jats.'
4 Vivian de Saint Martin's 'Étude sur la Géographie et les populations primitives du Nord-ouest de l'Inde, d'après les Hymnes védiques.'
country in fact between the Vindhya and the Himalaya Mountains. At present they are only found in anything like purity in the mountain ranges that bound that great plain. There they are known as Bhils, Gonds, Kandhs, Mundas, Oraons, Hos, Kols, Santals, Nagas, and other mountain and forest tribes. But they certainly form the lowest underlying stratum of the population over the whole of the Gangetic plain. So far as their affinities have been ascertained, they are with the trans-Himalayan population, and it either is that they entered India through the passes of that great mountain range, or it might be more correct to say that the Tibetans are a fragment of a great population that occupied both the northern and southern slope of that great chain of hills at some very remote pre-historic time.

Whoever they were, they were the people who, in remote times, were apparently the worshippers of Trees and Serpents;¹ but what interests us more in them, and makes the enquiry into their history more desirable, is that it was where the people were largely of this aboriginal stock that Buddhism seems to have been most readily adopted, and it is largely among allied races that it is still adhered to. In Ceylon, Tibet, Burma, Siam, and China—wherever a people allied to the Mongol or Tibetan family exists, there Buddhism flourished and still prevails. But in India a revival of Brahmanism abolished it.

Architecturally, there is no difficulty in defining the limits of the Dasyu province: wherever a square tower-like temple exists with a perpendicular base, but a curvilinear outline above, such as that shown in the woodcut (No. 1), there we may feel certain of the existence, past or present, of a people of Dasyu extraction. No one can accuse the pure Aryans of introducing this form into India, or of building temples at all, or of worshipping images of Siva or Vishnu, with which these temples are filled, and they consequently have little title to confer their name on the style. The Aryans had, however, become so impure in blood before these temples were erected, and were so mixed up with the aboriginal tribes whose superstitions had so influenced their religion and their arts that they accepted their temples with their gods. Be this as it may, one thing seems tolerably clear, that the regions occupied by the Aryans in India were conterminous with those of the Dasyus, or, in other words, that the Aryans conquered the whole of the aboriginal or native tribes who occupied the plains of northern India, and ruled over them to such an extent as materially to

¹ See 'Indian Antiquary,' vol. iv. pp. 5f.
influence their religion and their arts, and also very materially to modify even their language. So much so, indeed, that after some four thousand years of domination we should not be surprised if we have some difficulty in recovering traces of the original population, and could probably not do so, if some fragments of the people had not sought refuge in the hills on the north and south of the great Gangetic plain, and there have remained fossilised, or at least sufficiently permanent for purposes of investigation.

Hindū Temple, at Bahulārā, near Bānkurā.

SAISUNĀGA DYNASTY, ABOUT B.C. 650 TO 318.

Leaving these, which must, for the present at least, be considered as practically pre-historic times, we tread on surer ground when we approach the period when Buddha was born, and devoted his life to solve the problem of suffering and transmigration. There seems little reason for doubting that he was born about the year 560, taught during the reign of Bimbisāra, the fifth king of the Saisunūga dynasty, and died B.C. 480, at the age of eighty, in the eighth year of Ajātashatru, the sixth king. New sources of information regarding these

1 Dr. J. F. Fleet, in ‘Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,’ 1906, pp. 984f. places the death of Nirvāṇa of Buddha in B.C. 482, with other connected dates in accordance with it. For our purpose the dates given are quite near enough.

2 The ‘Matsya Purāṇa’ alone inserts the reigns of Kanvāya—nine years—and Bhūmimitra—fourteen years—between Bimbisāra and Ajātashatru.
times are opening out, and we may before long be able to recover a fairly authentic account of the political events of that period, and as perfect a picture of the manners and the customs of those days. It is too true, however, that those who wrote the biography of Buddha in subsequent ages so overlaid the narrative of his life with fables and absurdities, that it is now difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff; but we have sculptures extending back to within three centuries of his death, at which time we may fairly assume that a purer tradition may have prevailed. From what has already occurred, we may hope to creep even further back than this, and eventually to find early illustrations which will enable us to exercise so sound a criticism on the books as to enable us to restore the life of Buddha to such an extent as to place it on a basis of credible historicity.

Immense progress has been made during the last fifty or sixty years in investigating the origin of Buddhism, and the propagation of its doctrines in India, and in communicating the knowledge so gained to the public in Europe. More, however, remains to be done before the story is complete, and divested of all the absurdities which subsequent commentators have heaped upon it. Still, the leading events in the life of the founder of the religion are simple, and now sufficiently well ascertained for all practical purposes.¹

The founder of this religion was claimed by tradition as one of the last of a long line of kings, known as the Solar dynasties, who, from a period shortly subsequent to the advent of the Aryans into India, had held paramount sway in Ayodhya—the modern Oudh. About the 12th or 13th century B.C. they were superseded by another race of much less purely Aryan blood, known as the Lunar race, who transferred the seat of power to capitals situated in the northern parts of the Doab. But the tradition of the royal birth of Sākyamuni can hardly be sustained historically. He seems to have been born at Kapilavastu, at the foot of the Himālayas, as the son of

¹ The most pleasing of the histories of Buddha, written wholly from a European point of view, is that of Barthelemy St. Hilaire, Paris. Of those partially native, partly European, are those of Bishop Bigandet, from the Burmese legends, and the 'Romantic History of Buddha,' translated from the Chinese by the Rev. S. Beal. The 'Lalita Vistāra,' translated by Foucaux, is more modern than these, and consequently more fabulous and absurd. In more recent years a large literature has appeared on the subject. Prof. H. Oldenberg's 'Buddha: his Life, his Doctrine, his Order,' translated from the German by W. Hoey (1882) supplies an able critical estimate of the teacher. Dr. H. Kern's 'History of Buddhism in India' has been translated into French by G. Huet (Paris, 1901-1903); and W. W. Rockhill's 'Life of Buddha, and the Early History of his Order,' 1884, are also valuable works.
a petty chief. For twenty-nine years he is represented as enjoying the pleasures, and following the occupations, usual to the men of his rank and position; but at that age, becoming painfully impressed by the misery incident to human existence, he determined to devote the rest of his life to an attempt to alleviate it. For this purpose he forsook his parents and wife, abandoned friends and the advantages of his position, and, for the following fifty years, devoted himself steadily to the task he had set before himself. Years were spent in the meditation and mortification supposed to be necessary to fit him for his mission; the rest of his long life was devoted to wandering from city to city, teaching and preaching, and doing everything that gentle means could effect to disseminate the doctrines which he believed were to regenerate the world, and take the sting out of human misery.

He died, or, in the phraseology of his followers, entered Nirvāṇa or Parinirvāṇa—was absorbed into nothingness—at Kusinārā, in the eightyith year of his age, about 480 years B.C.

With the information that has accumulated around the subject, there seems no great difficulty in surmising why the mission of Sākyamuni was so successful as it proved to be. He was born in an age when the purity of the Aryan races, especially in eastern India, had become so deteriorated by intermixture with aborigines, and with less pure tribes coming from the north, that their power, and consequently their distinctive influence was fading away. At that time, too, the native and mixed races had acquired such a degree of civilisation as led them to claim something like equality with their Aryan masters. In such a condition of things the preacher was sure of a willing audience who ignored caste, and taught that all men, of whatever nation or degree, had an equal chance of reaching happiness, and ultimately Nirvāṇa, by the practice of virtue: in a word—to be delivered from the wearisome bondage of ritual or caste observances and the depressing prospect of interminable transmigration. Aboriginal or Turanian Dasyus, perhaps even more readily than the mixed Aryans, would hail him as a deliverer, and by the former the new religion was specially adopted and propagated, whilst that of the Brahman Aryans was, for a time at least, overshadowed and obscured.

It is by no means clear how far Buddha was successful in converting the multitude to his doctrines during his lifetime. At his death, the first synod or council was held at Rājagriha, and five hundred monks of a superior order, it is said, were...
assembled there on that occasion,\(^1\) and if so they must have presented a great multitude. But the accounts of this, and of a second convocation, said, by the southern Buddhists, to have been held one hundred years afterwards at Vaisali, are of doubtful authenticity. Indeed, the whole annals of the Saisunaga dynasty from the death of Buddha till the accession of Chandragupta, cir. B.C. 320, are about the least satisfactory of the time. Those of Ceylon were falsified in order to make the landing of Vijaya, the alleged first conqueror from Kalinga, coincident with the date of Buddha’s death, while a period of some length elapsed between the two events.\(^2\) We have annals, and we may possibly recover inscriptions\(^3\) and sculptures belonging to this period, and though it is most improbable we shall recover any architectural remains, there are possibly materials existing which, when utilised, may suffice for the purpose.

The kings of this dynasty seem to have been considered as of a low caste, and were not, consequently, in favour either with the Brahman or, at that time, with the Buddhist; and no events which seem to have been thought worthy of being remembered, except the second convocation—the fact of which is doubtful—are recorded as happening in their reigns, after the death of the great Ascetic—or, at all events, of being recorded in such annals as we possess.

**Maurya Dynasty, B.C. 320 to 180.**

The case was widely different with the Maurya dynasty, which was certainly one of the most brilliant, and is fortunately one of the best known, of the ancient dynasties of India. The first king was Chandragupta, the Sandrokottos of the Greeks, to


\(^2\) There is an error of about sixty years in the usual date—B.C. 543, derived from the Singhalese chronicles, which is elsewhere corrected. The revised date may not be precisely correct, but it must be approximately so.

\(^3\) We have no very early Hindu coins; the earliest are square or oblong punch-marked pieces, which seem to date from about a century before Alexander, and supply no historical data. The late Mr. Ed. Thomas supposed a coin, bearing the name of Amoghabhuti, a Kuninda, belonged to one of the nine Nandas with whom this dynasty closed (‘Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,’ N.S., vol. i. pp. 447ff.). It is now known that such coins do not belong to a date earlier than about B.C. 100. The earliest coins of historical value for India are those of the Greco-Baktrians and their contemporaries or successors on the northwest frontier.
INTRODUCTION.

whom Megasthenes was sent as ambassador by Seleukos, the successor of Alexander in the western parts of his Asiatic empire. It is from his narrative—now unfortunately lost—that the Greeks acquired almost all the knowledge they possessed of India at that period. The country was then divided into 120 smaller principalities, but the Maurya residing in Palibothra (Pātaliputra) —the modern Pātīna—seems to have exercised a paramount sway over the whole. It was not, however, this king, but his grandson, the great Asoka (B.C. 262 to 225), who raised this dynasty to its highest pitch of prosperity and power. Though utterly unknown to the Greeks, we have from native sources a more complete picture of the incidents of his reign than of any ancient sovereign of India. The great event that made him famous in Buddhist history was his conversion to that faith, and the zeal he showed in propagating the doctrines of his new religion. He did, in fact, for Buddhism, what Constantine did for Christianity, and at about the same distance of time from the death of the founder of the faith. From a struggling sect he made it the religion of the State, and established it on the basis on which it lasted supreme for nearly 1000 years. In order to render his subjects familiar with the doctrines of his new faith, he caused a series of edicts embodying them to be engraved on rocks near Peshāwar, in Gujarāt, in the valley of the Dūn under the Himālayas, in Hazāra, in Katak and Ganjām, in Mysore, and other places. He held a great convocation or council of the faithful in his capital at Pātaliputra, and, on its dissolution, missionaries were sent to spread the religion in the Yavana country, whose capital was Alexandria, near the present city of Kābul. Others were despatched to Kashmir and Gandhāra; one was sent to the Himavanta—the valleys of the Himālaya, and possibly part of Tibet; others were despatched to the Mahāratta country, and to Mysore, to Vanavāsi in Kanara, and to Aparāntaka or the north Konkan. Two missionaries were sent to Suvarnabhūmi, now known as Thatun on the Sitang river, in Pegu, and, tradition says, his own son and daughter were deputed to Ceylon. All those countries, in fact, which might be called foreign, were then sought to be converted to the faith. He also formed alliances with Antiokhos the Great, Antigonos, and with Ptolemy Philadelphos, Alexander of Epeiros, and Magas of Cyrene.

1 For this period, see M'Crindle’s ‘Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian’ (1877); the ‘Invasion of India by Alexander the Great’ (1896); and ‘Ancient India as described in Classical Literature’ (1901).

2 All these particulars, it need hardly be said, are taken from the 12th and 15th chapters of the ‘Mahāwansa’ which relates the traditions of a time six centuries and more before its composition.
for the establishment of hospitals and the protection of his
>religionists in their countries. More than all this, he built
innumerable topes or stupas and monasteries all over the
country; and, though none of those now existing can positively
be identified as those actually built by him, there seems no
reason for doubting that the sculptured rails at Bodh-Gayâ
and Bharaut, the caves at Barâbar in Bihâr, some of those at
Udayagiri in Katak, and the oldest of those in the Western
Ghâts were all erected or excavated during the existence of this
dynasty, if not under himself. These, with inscriptions and
such histories as exist, make up a mass of materials for a picture
of India during this dynasty such as no other can present; and,
above all, they offer a complete representation of the religious
forms and beliefs of the kings and people, which render any
mistake regarding them impossible. It was Buddhism, but
without a deified Buddha, and with Tree and Serpent worship
cropping up in every unexpected corner.

There is certainly no dynasty in the whole range of ancient
Indian history that would better repay the labour of an
exhaustive investigation than that of these Maurya kings.
Not only were they the first in historical times who, so far
as we know, united nearly the whole of India into one great
kingdom, but they were practically the first who came in contact
with European civilisation and Western politics. More than
even this, it is probably owing to the action of the third king
of this dynasty that Buddhism, from being the religion of an
obscure sect, became, at one time, the creed of so large a
proportion of the human race, and influenced the belief and the
moral feelings of such multitudes of men in Asia.

It is to this dynasty, and to it only, that must be applied all
those passages in classical authors which describe the internal
state of India, and they are neither few nor insignificant. Though
the Hindûs themselves cannot be said to have contributed much
history, they have given us, in the 'Mudrâ-Râkshasa,' a poetical
version of the causes of the revolution that placed the Mauryas
on the throne. But, putting these aside, their own inscriptions
supply us with a perfectly authentic contemporary account of
the religious faith and feelings of the period; while the numerous
bas-reliefs of the rails at Bodh-Gayâ and Bharaut afford a
picture of the manners, customs, and costumes of the day, and a
gauge by which we can measure their artistic status and judge
how far their art was indigenous, how far influenced by foreign

1 For fuller information about Asoka reference may be made to Edm. Hardy's 'Konig Asoka,' and V. A. Smith's 'Asoka, the Buddhist Emperor of India.'
elements. The dates of the kings of this dynasty are also approximately known, and the whole framework of their history depends so completely on contemporary native monuments, that there need be no real uncertainty regarding any of the outlines of the picture when once the subject is fairly grasped and thoroughly handled.

It is the firmest standpoint we have from which to judge of Indian civilisation and history, whether looking to the past or to the future, and it is one that gives a very high idea of the position at which the Hindūs had arrived before they came practically into contact with the civilisation of the West.

**Sunga Dynasty, B.C. 180 to 70.**

**Kānvāyana Dynasty, B.C. 70 to 36.**

History affords us little beyond the lengths of the kings' reigns for the next two dynasties, and we are obliged to trust to the general correctness with which these are recorded in the Purāṇas, and by degrees we are collecting inscriptions, and we know of caves that belong to their time, so that we may hope to breathe life into what has hitherto appeared only a dry list of names. Possibly the Kānvās had usurped the power of the Sungas, so that the two families may have been nominally contemporary during the period assigned to the latter, and that both came to an end about 40 B.C. Anyhow we know that the Andhras had risen to power on the decline of the Mauryas. These dynasties were not, however, apparently known to the Greeks, and possibly, being Buddhist, are passed over in comparative silence in the Purāṇas. It is thus only from their monuments that we can hope to recover their history. Up to the present time, the most important inscription discovered is that of a prince Dhanabhūti who "in the time of the Sungas" erected a gateway at the Bharaut stūpa.

**Andhra Dynasty, about B.C. 170 to A.D. 220.**

The dynasty that ruled the Dekhan at least, contemporary with these Rōis fainéants is — after the Mauryas — the most important of all those about this period of Indian history. To the classical authors they are known as the Andræ, in the Purāṇas as Andhrabhṛtyas, and in the inscriptions as Sātakarnis or Sātavāñānas; but under whatever name, notwithstanding occasional periods of depression, they played a most important part in the history of India, during more than four centuries. They were a South-Indian dynasty, first mentioned in a
Khandagiri inscription about B.C. 150. Their capital was at Dhânyakataka, on the lower Krishnâ, close to Amarâvatî; but, at a later date, they had a second capital at Paithan on the upper Godâvarî. They ruled over Mâlîvâ and the Dekhan from sea to sea, but about the end of the 1st or beginning of the 2nd century the provinces north of the Narbadâ seem to have been conquered by Saka satraps, who were overthrown about A.D. 125, by Gautamâputra Sâtakarni, who raised the dynasty to the height of its power. The kings of this race have, however, left many and most interesting inscriptions in the western caves, and traces of their existence occur in many parts of India.

Architecturally, their history begins with the gateways of the Tope at Sânchi; the southern of these was almost certainly erected during the reign of the first Sâtakarni about the middle of the 2nd century before our era—and the other three in the course of that century. It ends with the completion of the rail at Amarâvatî, which was probably commenced in the 1st century, and completed before the end of the 2nd.

Between these two monuments there is no great difficulty in filling up the architectural picture from the caves, at Nâsik, Kanheri and Ajantâ, and other places in western India, and more materials may still eventually be discovered.

The history of this dynasty is more than usually interesting for our purposes, as it embraces nearly the whole period during which Buddhism reigned almost supreme in India. It became a State religion, it is true, somewhat earlier under Asoka, but there is no reason for believing that the Vedic religion or Brahmanism then vanished. During four or five centuries, however, after the Asoka Era we have not a trace of a Hindû building or cave, and, so far as any material evidence goes, it seems that Buddhism at the time was the predominant religion of the land. It is not, of course, to be supposed that the Hindû cult was wholly obliterated, but it was dormant, and in abeyance, and, to use a Buddhist expression, the yellow robes shone over the length and breadth of the land.

It was during the rule of these Andhras, though not by them, that the fourth convocation was held by Kanishka, in the north of India, and the new doctrine, the Mahâyâna,
introduced by Nāgārjuna—a change similar to that made by Gregory the Great when he established the Church, as opposed to the primitive forms of Christianity, at about the same distance of time from the death of the founder of the religion. This convocation was probably held about B.C. 40. Certain at least it is, that it was about, or very soon after, that time that Buddhism was first practically introduced into China, Tibet, and Burma, and apparently by missionaries sent out from this as they were from the Asoka convocation.

KSHATRAPAS OF KĀTHIĀWĀR, A.D. 120 TO 388.
GUPTAS, 320 TO ABOUT 535.
VALABHIS, ABOUT 600 TO 770.

The Andhras disappear from history early in the 3rd century; the Kshatrapas of Gujarāt held sway in the west for a century and a half longer, when they were superseded by the Gupta dynasty who, at the end of the 4th century of our era, seem to have attained to the position of lords paramount in northern India. They date their inscriptions, which are numerous and interesting, from an era established by the Gupta king, Chandragupta I., dating 242 years after the Saka era of A.D. 78, or in 320; but it was not apparently till under the third king, Samudragupta, about 380, that they really obtained the empire of northern India, which they retained till the death of Skandagupta, about the year 465, or it may be a little later.¹

It was during the reign of the Guptas that Fah Hian visited India (A.D. 400). As his objects in doing so were entirely of a religious nature, he does not allude to worldly politics, nor give us a king's name we can identify; but the picture we gather from his narrative is one of peace and prosperity in so far as the country is concerned, and of supremacy generally for his religion. Heretics are, it is true, mentioned occasionally, but they are few and far between. Buddhism was then the religion of the north, especially in the north-west of India; but even then there were symptoms of a change in the central provinces and outlying parts of the country.

It is during their rule that we first perceive in high places the germs of that change which was gradually creeping over the religious system of India. That the Guptas were not inimical to Buddhism may be inferred from the gifts that Amarakardava, an officer of Chandragupta II., made to the

¹ The Guptas and their inscriptions have been dealt with by Dr. J. F. Fleet. In his work, 'Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings,' Corp. Inscr. Ind., vol. iii.
stūpa at Sānchi in the year A.D. 412, and recorded on the rail of that Monument, but their other inscriptions, on the lâts at Allahabad, Junâgadh; and Bhitarî, show a decided tendency towards Hinduism of the Vaishnava form, but which was still far removed from the wild extravagances of the Purânas. There seems little doubt that the boar at Eran, and the buildings there, belong to this dynasty, and are consequently among the earliest if not the very oldest temples in India, dedicated to the new religion, which was then raising its head in defiance to Buddhism.

From their coins and inscriptions, we may feel certain that the Guptas possessed, when in the plenitude of their power, the whole of northern India with the province of Gujarât, but how far the boasts of Samudragupta (370-380) on the Allahabad pillar were justified is by no means clear. If that inscription is to be believed, the whole of the southern country as far as Ceylon, together with, or up to the borders of Asâm and Nepál, were subject to their sway. However brilliant it may have been, their power was of short duration. Gujarât, with Kathiâwâr, from about A.D. 500, was held by the Maitrakas of Valabhi, at first as feudatories of the Guptas, but, as the paramount power declined, the Valabhi chiefs gradually assumed independence, and founded a separate kingdom, which sometimes included western Mâlwâ, and lasted into the middle of the 8th century.

Although it was evident in the time of the Guptas that a change was creeping over the religious belief of India, it was not then that the blow was struck which eventually proved fatal, but by a dynasty which succeeded them in Central India.

THE SIXTH CENTURY AND AFTER.

The Gupta power seems to have given way before the inroads of Sakas or Huns, chiefly under Toramâna and his son Mihirakula, who succeeded him about 515, and was a bitter persecutor of the Buddhists in the North-West. A coalition was formed against him, and under Yâsodharman of Ujjain he was totally defeated about 530. At this period the ‘Râja-tarangini’ describes Vikramâditya-Harsha of Ujjain as sole sovereign of India, the destroyer of the Sakas, and patron of poets, who placed Mahârâgupta on the throne of Kashmir. It is possible that this Yâsodharman and Vikramâditya are only birudas or titles of the same sovereign, who may have ruled till 550 or thereabouts. Further, the period seems to suggest

Târânâtha states that Vikramâditya-Harsha abolished the teaching of the Mlechchhas, massacring them at Multân, and was succeeded by Śila. The Man-
that this may have been that Vikramāditya, who, by his liberality and magnificence, acquired a renown among the Hindūs, only second to that obtained by Solomon among the Jews. By his patronage of literature and his encouragement of art, his fame spread over the length and breadth of the land, and to this day his name is quoted as the symbol of all that is great and magnificent in India. What is more to our present purpose, he was an undoubted patron of the Brahmanical religion, and no tradition associates his name directly or indirectly with anything connected with Buddhism. Unfortunately we have no buildings which can be attributed to him. But the main fact of a Brahmanical king reigning and acquiring such influence in Central India at that time may be significant of the declining position of the Buddhist religion at that period.

His successor, Pratāpāśila-Silāditya’s reign would fall about the end of the 6th century, and he is spoken of by Hiuen Tsiang as a patron of Buddhism. But it was usual with Hindū kings to show favour to the various sects among their subjects indiscriminately, and the Chinese pilgrim’s statement that during his long reign of about sixty years he honoured the Buddhists and their doctrines, is no proof of his personal religious creed.

In the beginning of the next century, after a short period of anarchy, we find another Silāditya, Harsha-varddhana, seated on the throne of Kanauj, and, during a prosperous reign of about forty years (606-646), exercising supreme sway in that country. It was during his reign that the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsiang visited India, and gave a much more full and graphic account of what he saw than his predecessor Fah Hian. Nothing can be more characteristic of the state of religious feeling, and the spirit of toleration then prevailing, than the fête given by this king at Prayāga or Allahabad in the year 643, at which the kings of Valabhi and Kāmarupa (Āsām) were present. The first days of the festival were devoted to the distribution, among the followers of Buddhism, of the treasures accumulated during the previous five years, and then came the turn of the Brāhmans, who were treated with equal honour and liberality; then followed the fête of the other sects, among whom the Jains appear conspicuous. All were feasted and

dasor inscriptions of A.D. 532 - 534, describe Vasodharman as one who ruled from the Brahmaputra to the western ocean, and to whom even Mihrakula paid homage. King Bhoga, the patron of Kālidāsa and others, may be the same prince under a third name; and Ballālamitra says he reigned for fifty-five or fifty-six years.

feted, and sent away laden with gifts and mementoes of the magnificence and liberality of the great king.

Pleasant as this picture is to look upon, it is evident that such a state of affairs could hardly be stable, and it was in vain to expect that peace could long be maintained between a rising and ambitious sect, and one which was fast sinking into decay; apparently beneath the load of an overgrown priesthood. Accordingly we find that ten years after the death of Harsha troubles supervened as prophesied,¹ and the curtain soon descends on the great drama of the history of northern India, not to be raised again for nearly three centuries. It is true, we can still follow the history of the Valabhis for some time longer, and it would be satisfactory if we could fix the date of their destruction with precision, as it was the event which in the Hindu mind is considered the closing act of the drama. If it was destroyed by a foreign enemy, it must have been by the Moslim—perhaps by some expedition under Amru ibn Jamāl, the general of Hashām, ibn Amru al Taghlabī, who was ruler of Sindh about 757 to 776.² Valabhi was a flourishing city in 640, when visited by Hiuen Tsiang, and from that time, till the end of next century, the Moslims were in such power on the Indus, and their historians tell us the events of these years in such detail, that no other foreigner could have crossed the river during that period. If it perished by some internal revolution of convulsion, which is probable, it only shared the fate that overtook all northern India about this period. Strange to say, even the Moslims, then in the plenitude of their power during the Khalifat of Baghdad, retired from their Indian conquests, as if the seething cauldron were too hot for even them to exist within its limits.

The more southern dynasty of the Western Chalukyas seem to have retained their power down to about 757, and may, up to that time, have exercised a partial sway to the north of the Narbadā, but after that we lose all sight of them for more than two centuries till 973 when the dynasty was restored under Taila II.; while, as a closing act in the great drama, the ‘Rājatarangini’ boastfully represents the king of Kashmir—Lalitāditya Muktāpida (cir. 725-762)—as defeating Yasovarman of Kanauj, conquering India from north to south, and subjecting all the five kingdoms, into which it was nominally divided, to his imperious sway.

We need not stop now to enquire whether this was exactly

¹ ‘Vie et Voyages de Hiouen Thsang,’ trans. by Stanislas Julien, tom. i. p. 215; ² Elliot and Dowson’s ‘History of India,’ vol. i. p. 444.
or Beal, ‘Life of Hiuen Tsiang,’ p. 156.
what happened or not. It is sufficient for present purposes to know that about the middle of the 8th century a dark cloud settled over the north of India, and that during the next two centuries she was torn to pieces by internal troubles, which have left nothing but negative evidence of their existence. During that period the Rāshtrakūta kings in the Dekhan, having overthrown the Western Chālukyas, extended their dominions from the Vindhyas to the Tungabhadrā and Krishnā rivers, if not even farther south, waging war with the Cholas. But after fully two centuries of successful domination, they were overthrown in 973 by the later Chālukyas of Mahārāshtra. In the north were a number of smaller kingdoms as the Chandellas in Bundelkhand, the Kalachuris of Chedi, the Paramāras of Mālwa, the Pālas of Bengal, etc.

When light again appears in the middle of the 10th century the scene is wonderfully changed. Buddhism had practically disappeared in the north and west at least, though it still lingered on in Bengal, and Jainism had supplanted it in most places; but the mass of the people had become followers of Vishnu or Śiva. New dynasties had arisen which, though they try to trace their lineage back to the troublous times when Valabhī fell, were new to Indian history. Old India had passed away, and the history of modern India was about to open. The old dynasties had become extinct, and the Rājput races were gaily stepping forward to assume their places — too soon, alas! to be engaged in a life or death struggle with the most implacable foe to their race and religion that India has ever known. It was a cruel Nemesis that their victories over the Buddhists should soon have been followed by the fatal siege of Somnāth in 1025, and the fight on the banks of the Ghaghar in 1193, which practically laid India at the feet of the Moslim invader, and changed the whole course of her subsequent career. But, as hinted above, with the appearance of the Moslim on the scene, our chronological difficulties cease, and the subject need not therefore be further pursued in this introduction.

IMMIGRATIONS.

From the above brief sketch of ancient Indian history it may be gathered that it is doubtful whether we shall ever be able to clothe with solid flesh the skeleton of history which is all we possess anterior to the advent of Buddha. It is also possible that pious frauds may have so confused the sequence of events between his death and the rise of the Mauryas, that
there will be great difficulty in restoring that period to anything like completeness. But for the thousand years that elapsed between "the revenge of Chanakya" and the fall of Valabhi the materials are ample, and when sufficient industry is applied to their elucidation there is little doubt that the whole may be made clear and intelligible. It does not fall within the scope of this work to attempt such a task; but it is necessary to endeavour to make its outlines clear, as, without this being done, what follows will be utterly unintelligible; while, at the same time, one of the principal objects of this work is to point out how the architecture, which is one important branch of the evidence and the best aid we can have to the teaching of history, may be brought to bear on the subject.

No direct evidence, however, derived only from events that occurred in India itself, would suffice to make the phenomena of her history clear, without taking into account the successive migrations of tribes and peoples who, in all ages, so far as we know, poured across the Indus from the westward to occupy her fertile plains.

As mentioned above, the great master fact that explains almost all we know of the ancient history of India is our knowledge that two thousand years or more before the birth of Christ a Sanskrit-speaking nation migrated from the valleys of the Oxus and Jaxartes. They crossed the Indus in such numbers as to impress their civilisation and their language on the whole of the north of India, and this to such an extent as practically to obliterate, as far as history is concerned, the original inhabitants of the valley of the Ganges, whoever they may have been. At the time when this migration took place the power and civilisation of Central Asia were concentrated on the lower Euphrates, and the Babylonian empire never seems to have extended across the Karmanian desert to the eastward. The road, consequently, between Baktria and India was open, and nations might pass and re-pass between the two countries without fear of interruption from any other people.

If any of the ancient dynasties of Babylonia extended their power towards the East, it was along the coast of Gedrosia, and not in a north-easterly direction. It is, indeed, by no means improbable, as hinted above, that the origin of the Dravidians may be found among some of the Turanian peoples who occupied southern and eastern Persia in ancient times, and who may, either by sea or land, have passed to the western shores of India. Till, however, further information is available, this is mere speculation, though probably in the direction in which truth may hereafter be found.

When the seat of power was moved northward to Nineveh,
the Assyrians seem to have occupied the country eastward of the Caspian in sufficient force to prevent any further migration. At least, after—say B.C. 1000—we have no further trace of any Aryan tribe crossing the Indus going eastward, and it seems mainly to have been a consequence of this cutting off of the supply of fresh blood that the purity of their race in India was so far weakened as to admit of the Buddhist reform taking root, and being adopted to the extent it afterwards attained.

During the period of the Akhæmenian sway (B.C. 558-334) the Persians certainly occupied the countries about the Oxus in sufficient strength to prevent any movement of the peoples. So essentially indeed had Baktria and Sogdiana become parts of the Persian empire, that Alexander was obliged to turn aside from his direct route to conquer them, as well as the rest of the kingdom of Darius, before advancing on India.

Whether it were founded for that purpose or not, the little Greek kingdom of Baktria was sufficiently powerful, while it lasted, to keep the barbarians in check; but when, about or after B.C. 160, the Yue-chi and other cognate tribes invaded Sogdiana—driving out the Sakas, who next invaded Baktria, and finally, about half a century later, the Yue-chi conquered the whole of Baktria, they opened a new chapter in the history of India, the effects of which are felt to the present day.

It is not yet quite clear how soon after the destruction of the Baktarian kingdom these Turanian tribes conquered Kâbul, and occupied the country between that city and the Indus. Certain it is, however, that they were firmly seated on the banks of that river before the Christian Era, and under the great king Kanishka of the Kûshana tribe had become a. Indian power of very considerable importance. The date of this king is, unfortunately, one of those puzzles that still remain to be finally solved. It has been held that he was the founder of the Saka Era, A.D. 78, and that his reign must be placed in the last quarter of the 1st century of our era. But this era is only employed generally in the south and east; and it now seems almost certain that Kanishka’s reign began in B.C. 58—the epoch of what was once known as the ‘Mâlava era,’ and later as the ‘Vikrama Samvat,’ the reckoning in common use in northern India.

It also appears certain that the power of these Kushan kings spread over the whole of the Panjâb, and extended as far at least as Mathurâ on the Jumnâ, before the commencement of the Christian Era. Apparently the last of them was Vâsudeva, who ruled at least till A.D. 42. Soon after him we meet with the name of a king Guduphara or Gondophernês, which appears also in the legend of the Apostle Thomas: an inscription of the 26th year of his reign is dated in the 103rd of the era, or A.D. 47—when his rule must have extended into the north of the Panjâb. Next there followed two (if not three) kings named Kadphises, who may have ruled till the end of the century, after which northern India was divided into separate kingdoms and tribal governments till the rise of the Guptas in the 4th century.

Before the end of the first century another horde, known to us only from coins and inscriptions in which they call themselves Kshaharâtas or Kshatrapas, occupied the whole of the province of Gujarât; one of the first of them—Nahapâna, for whom we have dates about A.D. 119 and in 124—extended his power over part of Mâlwa and the Nâsik district. He was overthrown by the Andhra king, Gautamiputra Sâtâkarni, and deprived of the districts south of the Narbadâ. Soon after, we find another Kshatrapa, named Chashtana, ruling in Mâlwa, and his successors founded a kingdom of their own. They date their coins and inscriptions from the Saka Era, A.D. 78, and the series extends from about 140 to 388 A.D. It thus happens that this dynasty of Kshatrapas were only finally disposed of by the rise of the Guptas.

The whole external history of northern India, from the time of Kanishka to that of Ahmad Shâh Durâni (1761) is a narrative of a continuous succession of tribes of Skythian origin, pouring across the Upper Indus into India, each more Turanian than the one that preceded it, till the whole culminated in the Mughal conquest of India, in the 15th century, by a people as distinct in blood from the Aryans as any that exist.

Of the older races, it seems probable that the Yavanas must be distinguished from the Turanians. They were not Greeks, though their name may be merely a mispronunciation of Ionian. The term seems to have been applied by Indian authors to any foreign race coming from the westward who did not belong to one of the acknowledged kingdoms known to them. The Kambojas seem to have been a people inhabiting the country between Kandahar and Kâbul, who, when the tide was setting

Grînwedel, 'Buddhist Art in India.' English ed. p. 84.
eastward, joined the crowd, and sought settlements in the more fertile countries within the Indus.

The Sakas were well known to classical authors as the Sacae, or Skythians. They were pressed on at first by the Yue-chi, and became apparently most formidable during the earlier centuries of the Christian Era.

Another important horde were the Ephthalites or White Huns, who came into India apparently in the 5th century, and one of whose kings, named Gollas, if we may trust Cosmas Indicopleustes, was the head of a powerful state in northern India, about the year 530. They, too, seem to have been conquered about the same time by the Hindūs, and, as the Sakas, if not the Hūnas, were Buddhists, it may have been their destruction that first weakened the cause of that religion, and which led to its ultimate defeat a little more than a century afterwards.

During the dark age, 750 to 950, we do not know of any horde passing the Indus. The Muhammadans were probably too strong on the frontier to admit of its being done, and after that age they—and they only—conducted the various invasions which completely changed the face and character of northern India. For seven centuries they were continued, with only occasional interruptions, and at last resulted in placing the Muhammadan power supreme, practically, over the whole of India, but only to fall to pieces like a house of cards, before the touch of Western civilisation. All this, however, is written, and written so distinctly, in so many books, that it need not be recapitulated here.

SOUTHERN INDIA.

If the records of the ancient history of northern India are unsatisfactory and untrustworthy, those of the southern part of the peninsula are much more so. The Dravidians have no ancient literature like that of the Vedas. They have no traditions which point to any seat of their race out of India, or of their having migrated from any country with whose inhabitants they can claim any kindred. So far as they know, they are indigenous and aboriginal. The utmost extent to which even their traditions extend is to claim for their leading race of kings—the Pāṇḍyas—a descent from Arjuna, one of the heroes of

1 'Christian Topography of Cosmas,' translated by Dr. J. W. M'Crindle (Hakluyt Soc.), pp. 370-371. This Gollas seems probably the same as Mihirakula or Mihiragula.

2 We can hardly hope to discriminate among these foreign invaders between Hūnas, Turushkas, Sakas, Śāhīs, Daivaputras, etc., and may regard them together as Indo-Skythians.
the Mahâbhârata. He, it is said, when on his travels, married a princess of the land, and she gave birth to the eponymous hero of their race, and hence their name. But in later times all the dynastic families got genealogies framed to trace their descent from gods and early heroes. It is true, indeed, that they produce long lists of kings, which they pretend stretch back till the times of the Pândavas. These were examined by the late Professor Wilson in 1836, and he conjectured that they might extend back to the 5th or 6th century before our era. But all that has since come to light has tended to show that even this may be an over-estimate of their antiquity. If, however, “the Choda, Pada, and Keralaputra” of the second edict of Asoka represent the Cholas, Pândyas, Cheras, of more modern times, this triarchy existed in the 3rd century B.C. In fact, all we really do know is that, in classical times, there was a “Regio Pandionis” in the country afterwards known as the Pândyan, kingdom of Madhurâ, and it has been conjectured that the king who sent an embassy to Augustus in B.C. 27 was not a Porus, which would indicate a northern race, but this very king of the south. Be this, however, as it may, we do know, by the frequent mention of this country by classical authors, that it was at least sufficiently civilised in the early centuries of our era to carry on a considerable amount of commerce with the western nations, and there is consequently no improbability that one or more powerful dynasties may then have been established in the south. If one, that dynasty was certainly the Pândyan. The Chola and the Chera became important states only at a later date—preceded by the Pallavas.

The discovery in 1892, by Mr. L. Rice, of a copy of the Asoka inscriptions so far south as Mysore, indicates that even in the 3rd century B.C., the Kanarese country was in communication with, and subject to, the Maurya empire; and the civilisation of the north must even then have penetrated into the south.

When we turn to their literature we find little to encourage any hope that we may penetrate further back into their history than we have hitherto been able to do. Dr Caldwell ascribes the oldest work in the Tamil, or any southern language, to the 8th or 9th century of our era, and it undoubtedly belongs to the Jains, who are originally a
northern sect. According to the same authority, it was super-
seeded by a Vaishnava literature about the 12th or 13th century,
and that again made way for one of Saiva tendency about the
latter date. There is no trace left of any Buddhist literature
in the south, and but little, consequently, that would enable us
to connect the history of the south with the chronology of
Ceylon or northern India, nor am I aware of the existence
of ancient Buddhist monuments south of the Krishnâ river
which would help us in this difficulty.¹

Not having passed through Baktria, or having lived in
contact with any people making or using coins, the Dravidians
had none of their own, and consequently that source of informa-
tion is not available. Whatever hoards of ancient coins have
been found in the Madras Presidency have been of purely
Roman origin, brought there for the purpose of trade, and
buried to protect them from spoliation.

The inscriptions, which are literally innumerable all over the
Presidency, are the one source from which we can hope that
new light may be thrown on the history of the country, but,
with the exception of the edicts of Asoka found in Mysore,
none of these inscriptions hitherto brought to light go further
back than the 5th or 6th century, and it is not clear that
earlier ones may be found.² It is, at all events, the most
hopeful field that lies open to future explorers in these dark
domains; and, by the labours of epigraphists within the last
thirty years, most important light has been derived from them
for the medieval history of southern India. Those on the raths
of Mâmallapuram and the caves at Bâdámi, are in Sanskrit,
and consequently look more like an evidence of the northern
races pushing southward than of the southern races extending
their influence northward.

From a study of the architecture of the south we arrive at
the same conclusions as to the antiquity of Dravidian civilisation
that Dr Caldwell arrived at from a study of their literature.
The most important Buddhist monument yet discovered in the

¹ The Buddhist tower at Negapattam, destroyed in 1867, will be noticed in
² The Government of Mysore, with
audable beneficence, employed Mr. L.
Rice with a staff of pandits for many
years, collecting and publishing the
inscriptions found in the state. The
results fill twelve volumes, forming the
‘Epigraphia Carnatica’ (1856-1903), and
when properly studied and analysed,
these must yield valuable results. For
Madras, Dr. E. Hultsch was engaged
in 1886 to collect the Tamil, Kanares, and
Telugu inscriptions of the Presi-
dency, and the results of his work
were published in six fasciculi of ‘South
Indian Inscriptions’ (3 vols. 1890-1903),
and; partly — with numerous Sanskrit
records from the other presidencies,—in
the ‘Epigraphia Indica,’ vol. iii. et seqq.
Previous to 1894, many Sanskrit and
Kanarese inscriptions were published in
the ‘Indian Antiquary’ (vols. i. xxiii.),
and in the ‘Epigraphia Indica,’ vol. i.
and ii.
Presidency is that at Amarâvatî, on the Krishnâ; and from that vicinity northwards to Orissa there are remains showing that there must have been flourishing communities there both of Buddhists and Jains in early times. Whether the prevalence of such structures in this region was due to a colony or settlement formed by the northern Buddhists, at or near their port of departure for Java and their eastern settlements, may be doubted. The Andhras who ruled over the districts, were either Buddhists or very liberal patrons of the sect. At Guntupalle in the Godâvari district have been found a group of rock-cut caves, a structural chaitya, and a stûpa, whilst at Chezarla, in the Nellor district, another chaitya has been discovered almost entire, though now used as a Hindû shrine. And remains of stûpas have been excavated in the Kistna district—at Jaggayyapeta, Bhattiprolu, Gudîvâda, Guntupalle and Ghantasâlâ; unfortunately they have been utterly destroyed—some within living memory.

The rock-cut temples at Bâdâmi and Mâmallapuram are the works of Hindûs in the 6th and 7th centuries, and the structural temples of Kailâsanâth and Vaikunthaperumâl at Conjivaram are of nearly the same age, and, with some others, they help materially to illustrate the history of the style till the 8th century. From that time forward their building activity was enormous. The style culminated in the 16th and 17th centuries, to perish in the 18th.

When the history of the south does acquire something like consistency it takes the form of a triarchy of small states. The eldest and most important, that of Madurâ—so called after Mathurâ (or Muttra) on the Jamnâ—was also the most civilised, and continued longest as a united and independent kingdom.

The Cholas rose into power on the banks of the Kâveri, and to the northward of it, about the year 1000, though no doubt they existed as a small state about Conjivaram for some centuries before that time. The third, the Chera, were located on the west coast, extending from the Tulu country southwards, and including Malabar and most of Travankor. Tradition assigns to them a dynasty of kings called Perumâls which ended in the 9th century. Chola and Chalukya inscriptions speak of their being frequently defeated, but we have no inscriptions of any

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1 See below Book I. chap. v. p. 166. These very interesting structures were surveyed several years ago, but the results have not yet been fully published. The caves are Buddhist of an early type.


3 The Gudîvâda and Bhattiprolu stûpas, were demolished by the Public Works officers about thirty-six years ago, for bricks to use in road-making, and the marbles of the latter were built into the walls and floor of the Vellâtûri stûca, or burnt for lime.—'Madras Government Orders,' No. 1620, of 1st Nov. 1878.
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Chera sovereign and, as yet, know very little for certain of their history. With the other southern states, they were, however, superseded, first by the Cholas, about A.D. 1000, and finally eclipsed by the Hoysala Ballâlas, a century or so afterwards. These last became the paramount power in the south, till their capital—Halebûd—was taken, and their dynasty destroyed by the Muhammadans, in the year 1310.

With the appearance of the Muhammadans on the scene the difficulties of Indian chronology disappear in the south, as well as in the north. From that time forward the history of India is found in such works as those written by Firishra or Abul Fazl, and has been abstracted and condensed in numerous books in almost every European language. There are still, it must be confessed, slight discrepancies and difficulties about the sequence of some events in the history of the native principalities.1 These, however, are not of such importance as at all to affect, much less to invalidate, any reasoning that may be put forward regarding the history or affinities of any buildings, and this is the class of evidence which principally concerns what is written in the following pages.

SCULPTURE.

In order to render the subject treated of in the following pages quite complete, it ought, no doubt, to be preceded by an introduction describing first the sculpture and then the mythology of the Hindûs in so far as they are at present known to us. There are in fact few works connected with this subject more wanted at the present day than a good treatise on these subjects. When Major Moor published the 'Hindû Pantheon' in 1810, the subject was comparatively new, and the materials did not exist in this country for a full and satisfactory illustration of it in all its branches. When, in 1832, Coleman published his 'Mythology of the Hindûs,' he was enabled from the more recent researches of Colebrooke and Wilson, to improve the text considerably, but his illustrations are very inferior to those of his predecessor. Moor chose his from such bronzes or marbles as existed in our museums, and from an important private collection he formed principally in western India.2 Coleman's were generally taken from modern drawings, or the tawdry plaster images made for the Durgâ puja of Bengali Bâbûs.3 By the aid of photography

1 Much information on the history of these states will be found in Elliot and Dowson's 'History of India,' and in other recent works.
2 His collection, brought from Bombay a century ago, is still preserved by his descendants in Suffolk.
3 Similarly the small work—'Hindû Mythology, Vedic and Puranic,' by W. J. Wilkins (Calcutta, 1893), is illustrated solely from modern bazar pictures.
any one now attempting the task would be able to select perfectly authentic examples from Hindū temples of the best age. If this were done judiciously, and the examples carefully reproduced, it would not only afford a more satisfactory illustration of the mythology of the Hindūs than has yet been given to the public, but it might also be made a history of the art of sculpture in India, in all the ages in which it is known to us.

From its very nature, it is evident that sculpture can hardly ever be so important as architecture as an illustration of the progress of the arts, or the affinities of nations. Tied down to the reproduction of the immutable human figure, sculpture hardly admits of the same variety, or the same development, as such an art as architecture, whose business it is to administer to all the varied wants of mankind, and to express the multifarious aspirations of the human mind. Yet sculpture has a history, and one that can at times convey its meaning with considerable distinctness. No one, for instance, can take up such a book as that of Cicognara,¹ and follow the gradual development of the art as he describes it, from the first rude carvings of the Byzantine school, till it returned in the present day to the mechanical perfection of the old Greek art, though without its ennobling spirit, and not feel that he has before him a fairly distinct illustration of the progress of the human mind during that period. Sculpture in India may fairly claim to rank, in power of expression, with mediæval sculpture in Europe, and to tell its tale of rise and decay with equal distinctness; but it is also interesting as having that curious Indian peculiarity of being written in decay. The story that Cicognara tells is one of steady forward progress towards higher aims and better execution. The Indian story is that of backward decline, from the sculptures of the Bharaut and Amarâvatî tope5, to the illustrations of Coleman’s or Wilkins’s ‘Hindū Mythology.’

When Hindū sculpture first dawns upon us in the rail at Bodh-Gayā, and Bharaut B.C. 200 to 250, it is thoroughly original, almost without a trace of foreign influence, but quite capable of expressing its ideas, and of telling its story with a distinctness that never was surpassed—at least in India. Some animals, such as elephants, deer, and monkeys, are better represented there than in any sculpture known in any part of the world; so, too, are some trees, and the architectural details are cut with an elegance and precision which are very admirable. The human figures, too, though very different from our standard of beauty and grace, are truthful to nature, and, where grouped together, combine to express the action intended with singular felicity.

¹ Storia della Scultura, dal suo risorgimento in Italia sino al secolo di Napoleone. Venezia, 1813.
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For an honest purpose-like pre-Raphaelite kind of art, there is probably nothing much better to be found elsewhere.

The art had apparently begun to decline when the gateways at Sānchi were executed somewhat later; but whether this was not mainly due to the more refractory character of the stone, and a different school of workmen, it is hard to say. They may then have gained a little in breadth of treatment, but it had lost in delicacy and precision. Its downward progress was, however, arrested, apparently by the rise, in the extreme north-west of India, of a school of sculpture strongly impregnated with the traditions of classical art. The Græco-Baktrians, driven out by the Yue-chi, continued to hold some sort of domination in Afghanistan till not very long before our era, and a vast interchange of ideas was, at that period, carried on between the east and west by means of newly-opened highways. Thus Greek models and art became familiar, and when once a demand arose for such workmanship, a school of art would appear. For the present it is sufficient to know that a quasi-classical school of sculpture did exist in the Panjâb, and to the west of the Indus during the first four centuries after Christ, and it can hardly have flourished there so long, without its presence being felt in India.¹

Its effects were certainly apparent at Amarâvatî in the 1st and 2nd centuries, where a school of sculpture was developed, partaking of the characteristics of both those of Central India and of the west. Though it may, in some respects, be inferior to either of the parent styles, the degree of perfection reached by the art of sculpture at Amarâvatî may probably be considered as the culminating point attained by that art in India.

When we meet it again in the early Hindû temples, and later Buddhist caves, it has lost much of its higher æsthetic and phonetic qualities, and frequently resorts to such expedients as giving dignity to the principal personages by making them double the size of less important characters, and of distinguishing gods from men by giving them more heads and arms than mortal man can use or understand.

All this is developed, it must be confessed, with considerable vigour and richness of effect in the temples of Orissa and of Mysore, down to the 13th or 14th century. After that, in the north it was checked by the presence of the Moslims; but, in the south, some of the most remarkable groups and statues—and they are very remarkable—were executed after this time,

¹ For some account of Buddhist art in Gandhāra and of early Indian sculpture, see Grünwedel's 'Buddhist Art in India,' Eng. translation (Quaritch, 1901). A work on 'Indian Sculpture and Painting,' by Mr E. B. Havell, has recently been published by Mr Murray.
and continued to be executed, in considerable perfection, down to the middle of the 18th century.

As we shall see in the sequel, the art of architecture continues to be practised with considerable success in parts of India remote from European influence; so much so, that it requires a practised eye to discriminate between what is new and what is old. But the moment any figures are introduced, especially if in action, the illusion vanishes. No mistake is then possible, for the veriest novice can see how painfully low the art of sculpture has fallen. Were it not for this, some of the modern temples in Gujarát and Central India are worthy to rank with those of past centuries; but their paintings and their sculptured decorations excite only feelings of dismay, and lead one to despair of true art being ever again revived in the East.

To those who are familiar with the principles on which these arts are practised, the cause of this difference is obvious enough. Architecture being a technic art, its forms may be handed down traditionally, and its principles practised almost mechanically. The higher phonetic arts, however, of sculpture and painting admit of no such mechanical treatment. They require individual excellence, and a higher class of intellectual power of expression, to ensure their successful development. Architecture may, consequently, linger on amidst much political decay; but, like literature, the phonetic arts can only be successfully cultivated where a higher moral and intellectual standard prevails than, it is feared, is at present to be found in India.

**Mythology.**

Whenever any one will seriously undertake to write the history of sculpture in India, he will find the materials abundant and the sequence by no means difficult to follow; but, with regard to mythology, the case is different. It cannot, however, be said that the materials are not abundant for this branch of the enquiry also; but they are of a much less tangible or satisfactory nature, and have become so entangled, that it is extremely difficult to obtain any clear ideas regarding them; and it is to be feared they must remain so, until those who investigate the subject will condescend to study the architecture and the sculpture of the country as well as its books. The latter contain a good deal, but they do not contain all the information available on the subject, and they require to be steadied and confirmed by what is built or carved, which alone can give precision and substance to what is written.

It is remarkable that, with all the present day activity in every branch of Sanskrit research, so very little has been done for the illustration of mythology, which is so intimately
connected with the whole literature. It would be a legitimate part of the duty of the Archæological Surveys to collect materials on a systematic plan for this object; and the production of illustrations has now become so easy and inexpensive that photographs from original materials of a satisfactory class might readily be published to supply this most pressing desideratum. The details of the emblems and symbols of the numerous divinities of the pantheon could also be collected, along with the delineations, by those familiar with such symbols. All this could easily be accomplished, and it is consequently hoped it may before long be attempted.¹

Much of the confusion of ideas that prevails on this subject no doubt arises from the exaggerated importance it has been the fashion to ascribe to the Vedas, as explaining everything connected with the mythology of the Hindûs. It would, indeed, be impossible to over-estimate the value of these writings from a philological or ethnological point of view. Their discovery and elaboration have revolutionised our ideas as to the migrations of races in the remote ages of antiquity, and established the affiliation of the Aryan races on a basis that seems absolutely unassailable; but it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the Aryans are a race of strangers in India, distinct from the Indian peoples themselves. They may, as hinted above, have come into India some three thousand years before Christ, and may have retained their purity of blood and faith for many generations; but with the beginning of the political Kaliyug—or, to speak more correctly, at the time of the events detailed in the Mahâbhârata, say 1200 years B.C.—they had lost much of both; while every successive wave of immigration that has crossed the Indus during the last three thousand years has impaired the purity of their race. From this cause, and from their admixture with the aborigines, it may probably be with confidence asserted that there is not now five per cent.—perhaps not one—of pure Aryan blood in the present population of India, nor, consequently, does the religion of the Vedas constitute one-twentieth part of the present religion of the people.²

With the Vedas, however, we have very little to do in the present work. The worship they foreshadow is of a class too purely intellectual to require the assistance of the stonemason and the carver to give it expression. The worship of the

¹ Numerous excellent illustrations exist among the materials already accumulated by the Archæological Surveys in Southern and Western India and in the Calcutta Museum—but, at present, there seems little prospect of their publication.

² For the mythology of the Vedas, see Professor A. A. Macdonell’s ‘Vedic Mythology’ in the ‘Grundriss der indoirischen Philologie und Altertumskunde,’ in Bd. iii. A useful general handbook is Dowson’s ‘Dictionary of Hindu Mythology.’
Aryans was addressed to the sun and moon; the firmament and all its hosts; the rain-bearing cloud; the sun-ushering dawn. All that was beautiful in the heavens above or beneficent on earth, was sung by them in hymns of elevated praise, and addressed in terms of awe or endearment as fear or hope prevailed in the bosom of the worshipper.\(^1\) Had this gone on for some time longer than it did, the objects worshipped by the Aryans in India might have become imaged as gods, like those of Greece and Rome, endowed with all the feelings and all the failings of humanity. In India it was otherwise; the deities were dethroned, but were not degraded. There is no trace in Vedic times, so far as at present known, of Indra or Varuna, of Agni or Ushas, being represented in wood or stone, or of their requiring houses or temples to shelter them. It is true indeed that the terms of endearment in which they are addressed are frequently such as mortals use in speaking of each other; but how otherwise can man express his feeling of love or fear, or address his supplication to the being whose assistance he implores?

The great beauty of the Veda is, that it stops short before the powers of nature are dwarfed into human forms, and when every man stood independently by himself, and sought through the intervention of all that was great or glorious on the earth, or in the skies, to approach the great spirit that is beyond and above all created things.

Had the Aryans been a numerical majority in India, and able to preserve their blood and caste in tolerable purity, the religion of India could hardly ever have sunk so low as it did, though it might have fallen below the standard of the Veda. What really destroyed it was, that each succeeding immigration of less pure Aryan or of Turanian races rendered their numerical majority relatively less and less, while their inevitable influence so educated the subject races as to render their moral majority even less important. These processes went on steadily and uninterruptedly till, in the time of Buddha, the native religions rose fairly to an equality with that of the Aryans, and afterwards for a while eclipsed it. The Vedas were only ultimately saved from absolute annihilation in India, by being connected with the Vaishnava and Saiva superstitions, where their inanimate forms may still be recognised, but painfully degraded from their primitive elevation.

When we turn from the Vedas, and try to investigate the origin of those religions that finally absorbed the Vedas in

their abominations, we find our means of information painfully scanty and unsatisfactory. As will appear in the sequel, all that was written in India that is worth reading was written by the Aryans; what was built was built by Turanians and Dravidians. But the known buildings extend back only to the 3rd century B.C., while the books may be ten centuries earlier, and, as might be expected, it is only accidentally and in the most contemptuous terms that the proud Aryans even allude to the abject Dasys or their religion. What, therefore, we practically know of them is little more than inferences drawn from results, and from what we now see passing in India.

Notwithstanding the admitted imperfection of materials, it seems to be becoming more and more evident, that we have in the north of India one great group of native religions, which we know in their latest developments as the Buddhist, Jaina, and Vaishnava religions. The first named we only know as it was taught by Sâkyamuni before his death about 480 B.C., but no one I presume supposes that he was the first to invent that form of belief, or that it was not based on some preceding forms. The Buddhists themselves, according to the shortest calculation, admit of four preceding Buddhas—according to the more formal accounts, of twenty-four. A place is assigned to each of these, where he was born, and where he died, the father and mother’s name is recorded, and the name, too, of the Bodhi-tree under whose shade he attained Buddhahood. The dates assigned to each of these are childishly fabulous, but they may have been real personages, whose dates extended back to a very remote antiquity.¹

The Jains, in like manner, claim the existence of twenty-four Tirthankars, including Mahâvîra the last. Their places of birth and death, ages and numbers of converts, are equally recorded, all are in northern India, though little else is told of them; but, from their fabulous ages, stature, and the immeasurable periods of the past when they are said to have lived—they can only be looked on as purely fabulous. The series ends with Mahâvîra, who was the contemporary of Sâkyamuni, and is said to have died before him at Pâwâ in Bihâr.

The Vaishnava series is shorter, consisting of only ten Avatârs; but it, too, closes at the same time, Buddha himself being the ninth, whilst the last is yet to come. Its fifth

¹ A list of the twenty-four Buddhas, with these particulars, is given in the introduction to Turnour’s ‘Mahâwansa,’ introd. p. 32. See also Spence Hardy’s ‘Manual of Buddhism,’ 2nd. ed. pp. 96ff. Representations of six or seven of their Bodhi-trees, with the names attached, have been found at Bharaut and Ajantâ, showing at least that more than four were recognised.
Avatār takes us back to Rāma, who, if our chronology is correct, may have lived B.C. 2000; the fourth—Narasimha, or the man lion—may possibly point to the time the Aryans entered India. The three first deal with creation and events anterior to man’s appearance on earth. In this respect the Vaishnava list differs from the other two. They only record the existence of men who attained greatness by the practice of virtue, and immortality by teaching the ways of emancipation from rebirths. The Vaishnavas brought their god to earth, to mix and interfere in mundane affairs in a manner that neither the earlier Aryan nor the Buddhist dreamt of, and so degraded the earlier religion of India into the monstrous system of idolatry that now prevails in that country.

No attempt, so far as I know, has been made to explain the origin of the Saiva religion; it was, however, most probably an aboriginal superstition assimilated by the Brāhmans. The earliest authentic written allusion to it seems to be that of the Indian ambassador to Bardisanes (cīr. A.D. 220), who described a cave in the north of India which contained an image of a god, half-man, half-woman.¹ This is beyond doubt the Ardhanārīśa form of Siva, so familiar afterwards at Elephanta and in every part of India. The earliest engraved representations of this god seem to be those on the coins of Kadphises II. (about 80 to 90 A.D.), where the figure with the trident and the Bull certainly prefigure the principal personage in this religion.² Besides all this, it seems now tolerably well ascertained, that the practice of endowing gods with a multiplicity of limbs took a much greater development in Tibet and the trans-Himalayan countries than in India, and that the wildest Tantric forms of Durgā and other divinities or demons are more common and more developed in Nepal and Tibet than they are even in India Proper.³ If this is so, it seems pretty clear, as the evidence now stands, that Saivism is an aboriginal or northern superstition—possibly introduced into India by some of the northern hordes who migrated into India long before the Christian Era.

It is also only too true that no attempt has yet been made to ascertain what the religion of the Dravidians was before they adopted either the Jaina or the Vaishnava or Saiva forms of religion. It is possible that among the Pāṇdu Kallus, and other forms of ‘Rude Stone Monuments’ that are found every-

³ Compare Grünwedel’s ‘Mythologie des Buddhismus in Tibet und der Mongolei.’ Buddhist figures have been subjected to the same treatment as the Hindū gods: to make them demoniac.
where in the south, we may find the fossil remains of the old Dravidian religion before they adopted that of the Hindūs. These monuments, however, have not been examined with anything like the care requisite for the solution of a complex problem like this, and till it is done we must rest content with our ignorance.\(^1\)

In the north we have been somewhat more fortunate, and enough is now known to make it clear that, so soon as enquirers apply themselves earnestly to the task, we may know enough to make the general outline at least tolerably clear. When I first published my work on 'Tree and Serpent Worship,' in 1869, no one suspected, at least no one had hinted in type, that such a form of religion existed in Bengal. Since that time, however, so much has been written on the subject, and proofs have accumulated with such rapidity, that few will now be bold enough to deny that Trees were worshipped in India in the earliest times, and that a Nāga people did exist, especially in the north-west, who had a strange veneration for snakes. In the Buddhist legends, Buddha is constantly represented as converting Nāgas, and whilst a superhuman character is ascribed to them, they doubtless represent people of Turanian descent.\(^2\) Further, snake worship is prevalent still, especially among the lower castes, and, though to a less extent, yet somehow connected with it, is the veneration of trees.\(^3\) It is also quite certain that underlying Buddhism we everywhere find evidence of a stratum of Tree and Serpent Worship. Sometimes it may be repressed and obscured, but at others it crops up again, and, to a certain extent, the worship of the Tree and the Serpent, at some times and in certain places, almost supersedes that of the founder of the religion himself.

The five, or seven, or thousand-headed Nāga is everywhere

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1 A book was published in 1873 by the late Mr. Breeks, of the Madras Civil Service, on the Primitive Tribes of the Nilagiris, which gives a fuller account of these "rude stone monuments" than any other yet given to the public. It can hardly, however, be accepted as a solution of the problem, which requires a wider survey than he was able to make. See also Ferguson's 'Rude Stone Monuments' (1872), pp. 455-499.

2 In Malabar, "a clump of wild jungle trees luxuriantly festooned with graceful creepers is usually found in the south-west corner of the gardens of all respectable Malayālī Hindūs. The spot is left free to nature to deal with as she likes; every tree and bush, every branch and twig is sacred. This is the 'vishādīta kāla' (poison shrine) or 'nāga kōta' (snake shrine). Usually there is a granite stone (chitra kuta kāla) carved after the fashion of a cobra's hood set up and consecrated in this waste spot."—Logan's 'Malabar,' vol. i. p. 185. For some account of Trees worshipped in Western India, see Bombay Gazetteer, vol. ix. pt. i. pp. 382-388.

3 The Nāgbanis of Chutia Nāgpur, who appear to have come from about Gorakhpur in northern Bihār, are evidently of an early Nāga or snake-worshipping race.
present in the temples of the Jains, and pervades the whole religion of the Vaishnavas. In the great act of creation the Nāga performs the principal part in the churning of the ocean, and in almost every representation of Vishnu he appears either as supporting and watching over him, or as performing some subsidiary part in the scene. It is, in fact, the Nāga that binds together and gives unity to this great group of religions, and it is the presence of the Tree and Serpent worship underlying Buddhism, Jainism, and Vaishnavism that seems to prove almost incontestably that there existed a people in the north of India, whether we call them Dasyus, Koliarians, or by any other name, who were Tree and Serpent worshippers, before they adopted any of the later Hindu forms of faith. Nothing can be more antagonistic to the thoughts and feelings of a pure Aryan race than such forms of worship, and nothing more completely ante-Vedic than its rites. We seem, then, almost forced to assume that it was an aboriginal superstition in the north of India, and it was the conversion of the people to whom it belonged that gave rise to that triarchy of religions that have competed with each other in the north during the last two thousand years.

This solution of the difficulty has the further advantage that it steps in at once clearly to explain what philology is only dimly guessing at, though its whole tendency, as well as that of ethnology, now seems in the same direction. If this view of the mythology be correct, it seems certain that there existed in the north of India, before the arrival of the Aryans, a people whose affinities were all with the Tibetans, Burmese, Siamese, and other trans-Himalayan populations, and who were not Dravidians, though they may have been intimately connected with one division at least of the inhabitants of Ceylon.

Both the pre-Aryan races of India belonged to the

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1 Snake worship may have been introduced into the south from the north; and it has been remarked that snake images are very frequent about Jain temples in Mysore and Kanara. At Negapatam is a temple dedicated to Nāgānāth, and at Subrahmanya in South Kanara, at Nāgarkoil, at Manarkhāl in Travankor, and elsewhere, are also snake temples much resorted to. No Brāhmaṇ ever officiates in a Nāga temple. See also Thorstom, 'Ethnographic Notes in Southern India,' 1906, pp. 283-293.

2 Though Siva is always represented with a black snake as one of his symbols there does not seem to be any very close connection between Snake worship and Saivism, though there are some coincidences that may point that way; in Kanara, Nāga images are set up facing the east, under the shade of two pāpal trees—a male and female growing together and married with proper rites. Beside them grow a margosa and bilva tree as witnesses; now these latter trees are more or less consecrated to Siva. On the other hand no trace of Tree-worship seems to be mingled with the various forms of adoration paid to this divinity. The tulasi or basil is sacred to Vishnu.
 INTRODUCTION.

Turanian group; but, as hinted above, the Dravidians belonged to a different and more westerly branch of that great family of mankind.

These, however, are speculations which hardly admit of proof in the present state of our knowledge, and would consequently be quite out of place here, were it not that some such theory seems indispensable to explain the phenomena of the architectural history of India. That of the north is so essentially different from that of the south that they cannot possibly belong to the same people. Neither of them are Aryan; and unless we admit that the two divisions of the country were occupied by people essentially different in blood, though still belonging to the building races of mankind, we cannot possibly understand how they always practised, and to the present employ, styles so essentially different. Until these various ethnographical and mythological problems are understood and appreciated, the styles of architecture in India seem a chaos without purpose or meaning. Once, however, they are grasped and applied, their history assumes a dignity and importance far greater than is due to any merely æsthetic merits they may possess. Even that, however, is in many respects remarkable, and, when combined with the scientific value of the styles, seems to render them as worthy of study as those of any other people with whose arts we are acquainted.

STATISTICS.

It would add very much to the clearness of what follows if it were possible to compile any statistical tables which would represent with anything like precision the mode in which the people of India are distributed, either as regards their religious beliefs or their ethnographical relations. The late census of 1901 has afforded a mass of material for this purpose, but the information is distributed through some thirty folio volumes, in such a manner as to make it difficult to abstract what is wanted so as to render it intelligible to the general reader. Even, however, if this were done, the result would hardly, for several reasons, be satisfactory. The uneducated masses have hazy ideas even with regard to their religion, and can hardly be expected to know to which of the larger sections of Hinduism their particular sect belongs. Hence, in the tables we are given the enumeration of the members of numerous Hindu sects, not classified under Saiva, Vaishnava, etc., though these larger groups are the most interesting for us.
The census results for all India may be briefly stated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Provinces in India</td>
<td>221,409,000</td>
<td>75½ per cent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>10,490,000</td>
<td>3½ ”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native States</td>
<td>62,462,000</td>
<td>21½ ”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>294,361,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notwithstanding difficulties or defects, it may be useful to state here that the population of the whole of India, inclusive of Burma—when arranged by religions—was found to stand as follows:

- Hindūs of all sects: 207,147,000, or 7-10ths
- Musalmāns: 62,458,000, or fully 1-5th
- Buddhists—mostly in Burma: 9,477,000, scarcely 1-30th
- Primitive or Animistic: 8,584,000, about 1-34th
- Christians: 2,923,200, about 1-99th
- Sikhs: 2,195,300, about 1-134th
- Jains: 1,334,200, about 1-220th
- Parsis, Jews, and others: 242,300, about 1-1200th

The tables of this census also afford us some information with regard to the distribution of races among the people, though it could not be expected that the ethnological survey should yet be able to organise a satisfactory census of the races, though the distribution of languages helps us somewhat. Here, however, it is to be borne in mind that, especially in northern India, many aboriginal or non-Aryan tribes have changed their language for one of the Sanskritic family spoken by their neighbours. Hence we must regard the Indo-Aryan group of languages as including a vast number of people of Turanian and mixed descent. The tables show that upwards of 221,000,000 speak Indo-Aryan tongues—including Baloch, Pashtu, Marāthi, Bengāli, etc.—that is about three-fourths of the entire population, whilst close on 60,000,000 or a fifth are Dravidians and Kolarians, Gonds, Brahuis, etc., which the census has grouped together as a Dravida-Munda group. Lastly, the Indo-Chinese and Malayan, including Tibetan, Burmese, etc., number 11,720,000, or about four per cent. of the whole.

The first linguistic group includes, of course, the Muhammadans; but we know that many of the Moslems of India were recruited from slaves purchased and brought up in the creed of their masters. In Bengal especially, where they are most numerous, they are Bengalis pure and simple, many perhaps most, of whom have adopted that creed quite recently from motives it is not difficult to understand or explain.
Though there may consequently be 62,458,000 of Musalmāns in India at the present day, we may feel quite certain that not one-half of this number are immigrants or the descendants of emigrants who entered India during the last eight centuries. The same is probably true of the Turanian races, who entered India in the first ten centuries after our era. It is scarcely probable that they were sufficiently numerous to be the progenitors of thirty millions of people, and, if they were so, the mothers, in nine cases out of ten, were most probably natives of India.

Of the Aryans we know less; but, if so great a number as forty millions can trace anything like a direct descent from them at the present day, the amount of pure Aryan blood in their veins must be infinitesimally small. Yet, though their blood may be diluted, the influence of their intellect remains so powerfully impressed on every institution of the country that, had they perished altogether, their previous presence is still an element of the utmost importance in the ethnic relations of the land.

Another census may enable us to speak with still more precision with regard to these various divisions of the mass of the people of Hindustan, but meanwhile the element that seems to be most important, though the least investigated hitherto, is the extent of the aboriginal race. It has been so overlooked, that putting it at a hundred millions may seem an exaggeration. Its intellectual inferiority has kept it in the background, but its presence everywhere seems to me the only means of explaining most of the phenomena we meet continually, especially those connected with the history of the architecture of the country. Except on some such hypothesis as that just shadowed forth, I do not know how we are to account for the presence of certain local forms of buildings we find in the north, or to explain the persistence with which they were adhered to.

When from these purely ethnographic speculations we turn to ask how far religion and race coincide, we are left with still less information of a reliable character. As a rule, the Dravidians are Saivas, and Saiva in the exact proportion of the purity of their blood. In other words, in the extreme south of India they are immensely in the majority. In some districts of the Madras Presidency they are as 6 or 7 to 1 of the followers of Vishnu, and generally in the south, 2 to 1; but as we proceed northward they become equal, and in some of the northern districts of the Madras Presidency the proportions are reversed.

In Bengal, and wherever Buddhism once prevailed, the
Vaishnava sects are, as might be expected, the most numerous. Indeed if it were not that so much of the present Hindû religion is an importation into the south, and was taught to the Dravidians by Brâhmans from the north, it would be difficult to understand how the Vaishnava religion ever took root there, except in succession to Buddhism itself, which existed to a considerable extent, but where it, too, was an importation. If, however, it be correct to assume that Saivism had its origin to the northward of the Himâlayas, among the Tartar tribes of these regions, there is no difficulty in understanding its presence in Bengal to the extent to which it is found to prevail there. But, on the other hand, nothing can be more natural than that an aboriginal Nâga people, who worshipped trees and serpents, should become Buddhists, as Buddhism was originally understood, and, being Buddhists, should slide downwards into the corruptions of the present Vaishnava form of cult, which is that most fashionable and prevalent in the north of India.

One of the most startling facts brought out by the census, is that about one-third of the population of Eastern Bengal are Muhammadan—25,500,000, out of 74,750,000—while in the United Provinces the Muhammadans are scarcely more than 1-6th—4,567,000 among 25,430,000; and in Madras little more than 1-15th. It thus looks more like a matter of feeling than of race; it seems that as the inhabitants of Bengal were Buddhists, and clung to that faith long after it had disappeared in other parts of India, they came in contact with the Moslim religion before they had adopted the modern form of Vaishnavism, and naturally preferred a faith which acknowledged no caste, and freed them from the exactions and tyranny of a dominant priesthood. The Muhammadan religion is in fact much more like Buddhism than are any of the modern Hindû forms, and when this non-Aryan casteless population came in contact with it and they were free to choose, after the mysterious evaporation of their old beliefs, they adopted the religion most resembling that in which they had been brought up. It is only in this way that it seems possible to account for the predominance of the Moslim religion in Lower Bengal and in the Panjâb, where the followers of the Prophet outnumber the Hindûs, in the proportion of 3 to 2, or as 14,000,000 in a population of 20,300,000.

1 In Bihâr and West Bengal, the Muhammadans number 4,050,000, or less than 14 per cent. of the population, whilst in Central, North, and East Bengal, they number 20,870,000 or quite 60 per cent., and in East Bengal alone, there are 66 per cent. of Moslims or 11,220,000; in several of the districts they form quite three-fourths of the population.
INTRODUCTION.

Where Saivism held its place or crept in was apparently among those races who were Dravidians or Turanians, or had affinities with the Tartar races, who immigrated from the north long before the Muhammadan conquest.

To most people these may appear as rash generalisations, and at the present stage of the enquiry would be so in reality, if no further proof could be afforded. After reading the following pages, I trust most of them at least will be found to rest on the basis of a fair induction from the facts brought forward. It might, consequently, have appeared more logical to defer these statements to the end of the work, instead of placing them at the beginning. Unless, however, they are read and mastered first, a great deal that is stated in the following pages will be unintelligible, and the scope and purpose of the work can be neither understood nor appreciated.¹

¹ For a fuller statement of the author’s views on Ethnography as applied to Architectural art, see his ‘History of Architecture in all Countries,’ 3rd ed. vol. i. introd. pp. 52-85.

2. Nāga people worshipping the Triratna emblem of Buddha, on a fiery pillar. (From a bas-relief at Amarāvatī.)
3. Srl or Gaja Lakshmi, seated on a Lotus, with two Elephants pouring water over her. (From a modern sculpture from Indor.)