

sufficient therefore to state here that Sanskrit literature comprises two distinct periods, Vedic and Post-Vedic, the former comprising works written in an ancient form of Sanskrit which is to the later form what the language of Chaucer is to later English.

Vedic literature begins with the <sup>o</sup>Rig-veda (probably dating from about 1200 or 1300 B.C.), and extending through the other three Vedas (viz. the Yajur, Sāma, and Atharva-veda), with their Brāhmaṇas, Upanishads, and Sūtras, is most valuable to philologists as presenting the nearest approach to the original Āryan language. Post-Vedic literature begins with the Code of Manu (probably dating *in its earliest form* from about 500 B.C.), with its train of subsequent law-books, and extending through the six systems of philosophy, the vast grammatical literature, the immense Epics<sup>1</sup>, the lyric, erotic, and didactic poems, the Niti-śāstras with their moral tales and apothegms, the dramas, the various treatises on mathematics, rhetoric, prosody, music, medicine, &c., brings us at last to the eighteen Purāṇas with their succeeding Upa-purāṇas, and the more recent Tantras, many of which are worthy of study as repositories of the modern mythologies and popular creeds of India. No one person, indeed, with limited powers of mind and body, can hope to master more than one or two departments of so vast a range, in which scarcely a subject can be named, with the single exception of Historiography, not furnishing a greater number of texts and commentaries or commentaries on commentaries, than any other language of the ancient world. To convince one's self of this one need only glance at the pages of the present Dictionary, and note the numerous works named there, which, if the catalogue were complete, would probably amount to a total number not far short of the 10,000 which the Pandits of India are said to be able to enumerate.

Nor is it their mere number that astonishes us. We are appalled by the length of some of India's literary productions as compared with those of European countries. For instance, Virgil's *Æneid* is said to consist of 9,000 lines, Homer's *Iliad* of 12,000 lines, and the *Odyssey* of 15,000, whereas the Sanskrit Epic poem called *Mahā-bhārata* contains at least 200,000 lines, without reckoning the supplement called *Hari-vaṅṣa*<sup>2</sup>. In some subjects too, especially in poetical descriptions of nature and domestic affection, Indian works do not suffer by a comparison with the best specimens of Greece and Rome, while in the wisdom, depth, and shrewdness of their moral apothegms they are unrivalled.

More than this, the Hindūs had made considerable advances in astronomy, algebra, arithmetic, botany, and medicine, not to mention their superiority in grammar, long before some of these sciences were cultivated by the most ancient nations of Europe. Hence it has happened that I have been painfully reminded during the progress of this Dictionary that a Sanskrit lexicographer ought to aim at a kind of quasi omniscience. Nor will any previous University education, such at least as was usual in my youth, enable him to explain correctly the scientific expressions which—although occasionally borrowed from the Greeks—require special explanation.

In answer then to the question: What extent of Sanskrit literature is comprehended in this Dictionary? I reply that it aims at including every department, or at least such portions of each department as have been edited up to the present date.

And here I must plainly record my conviction that, notwithstanding the enormous extent of Sanskrit literature, nearly all the most important portions of it—Vedic or Post-Vedic—worthy of being edited or translated have been already printed and made accessible in the principal public libraries of the world<sup>3</sup>.

No doubt the vast area of India's philosophical literature has not yet been exhaustively explored; but its most important treatises have been published either in India or in Europe. In England we may appeal with satisfaction to the works of our celebrated scholar Colebrooke, of the late Dr. Ballantyne, and more recently of such writers as E. B. Cowell, A. E. Gough, and Colonel Jacob, all of whom have contributed to the elucidation of this most difficult, but most interesting branch of study, while among Continental scholars the names of Deussen, Garbe, and Thibaut are most distinguished.

<sup>1</sup> See the chapters on the Epic poems in 'Indian Wisdom,' and my edition of the 'Story of Nala,' published at the Clarendon Press, and my little work on 'Indian Epic Poetry' (now scarce).

<sup>2</sup> The late Professor Bühler has shown that the inscriptions of about 500 A.D. quote the *Mahā-bhārata* and describe it as containing 100,000 verses.

<sup>3</sup> I do not mean this remark to apply to Buddhist literature, which is very extensive, and is partly in Sanskrit, and has much still unedited and untranslated. The *Divyāvadāna*, edited by Professor E. B. Cowell and Mr. Neil, is an example. It is written in Sanskrit or rather in a kind of Sanskritized Pāli, or Pāli disguised in Sanskrit garb. Other Buddhist Texts, written in Sanskrit, are now being ably edited by the well-known Tibetan traveller, Rai Śarat Candra Dās, Bahādur, C. I. E., to whom I was greatly indebted for help in my researches at Darjeeling and its

neighbourhood. Much Jaina philosophical literature, too, is still unedited, although well worthy of attention, and although only occasionally referred to in this Dictionary. It is written in Sanskrit as well as in Ardha-Māgadhī Prākṛit, for the elucidation of which Professor Leumann has done such excellent work. In fact, the Sanskrit form of Jaina philosophical literature (now being ably expounded by Mr. Virchand Ghāndhi at Chicago) still offers an almost wholly unexplored field of investigation. Furthermore, it must be admitted that in some cases better editions of pure Sanskrit works are needed. For example, a better critical edition of the *Mahā-bhārata* than those of Calcutta and Bombay is a desideratum. The Southern Recension of that immense work is I believe engaging the attention of Dr. Lüders, Librarian of the Indian Institute.