

excite the reverence and generosity of good Hindās by shewing them the sacred mark.

J. WILSON in *P. N. and Q.* 1883.

A RELIC OF HUMAN SACRIFICE.

MARI MAI, the goddess of cholera, is propitiated in the Kāngrā district by the Pachbalā and Satbalā ceremonies. At the Pachbalā ceremony a pumpkin (*péthā*), a male buffalo, a cock, a ram, and a he-goat are offered to the goddess at

some selected spot. The animals must be decapitated at one blow with a sharp sword before the goddess is appeased. If more than one blow is necessary the goddess is not propitiated, and the ceremony fails. The Satbalā ceremony is not now in use, for it consisted of the above with a man and a woman added, being in fact human sacrifice; *balā* = (?) sacrifice, cf. *bal jānd*, to sacrifice one's self.

R. C. TEMPLE in *P. N. and Q.* 1883.

BOOK-NOTICE.

PROFESSOR WEBER'S ANNIVERSARY.

PROFESSOR A. WEBER, of Berlin, the distinguished Sanskritist, was in a position to celebrate last year, in good health, the fiftieth anniversary of the day on which he took his degree of Ph.D. in the University of Breslau. In commemoration of the day, a *Festgabe* has been published, under the editorship of Prof. Kuhn, which contains learned papers by thirty friends and pupils of Prof. Weber. We subjoin a list of the several heads under which it will perhaps be permitted to arrange the subjects treated in the thirty papers, with the names of the authors added in brackets; viz., Vedic Studies (Delbrück, Garbe, Geldner, Leumann, R. von Roth, L. von Schröder, Sieg), Tales and Folklore (Eggeling, Kern, Kuhn, E. Müller, Windisch), Biography of Sanskrit Writers (Clenm, Fische), Dramatic Literature (Cappeller, Zachariä), Geography (Huth, Stein), History of Writing (Ludwig, Pertsch), Metrics (Jacobi, Oldenberg), Sanskrit Grammar (Heller, Kielhorn), Comparative Philology (Schmidt, Zimmer), Pāli Lexicography (Franke), Siamese (Frankfurter), Singhalese (Geiger), Sanskrit Law (the present writer). The variety of the topics discussed in the papers is even greater than what might be inferred from the foregoing enumeration, and corresponds to the wide range of Prof. Weber's own investigations. The universality of his studies and the importance of his distinguished achievements in the entire field of Indo-Aryan Philology has been well brought in a Dedicatory Preface to the present volume by Prof. Bühler. We join heartily in the wish that Prof. Weber may be spared for many years to come to enjoy his eminent position in the learned world and to add to the lustre of Sanskrit Philology by his scientific work.

Würzburg. J. JOLLY.

SOME RECENT RESEARCHES CONCERNING THE MAHABHARATA.

PROFESSOR HOLTSMANN'S four volumes on the *Mahābhārata* in the East and West have

been succeeded very quickly by Dr. Dahlmann's book on the *Mahābhārata* viewed as an epic and as a lawbook.<sup>1</sup> This is a very remarkable work, and the author, an industrious and clever pupil of Prof. Bühler's, has worked out his new theory regarding the rise and origin of the great epic with great care and skill. Starting upon the hints thrown out by Prof. Bühler, in his well-known *Contributions to the History of the Mahābhārata*, to the effect that the *Mahābhārata* certainly was a *smṛiti* or compendium of the sacred law from A. D. 300, and similar in contents to the now extant works about 500 A. D., Dr. Dahlmann has examined the references to the *Mahābhārata*, and the legends related in it, in the *Jātakas*, the *Dharmakathā* of the Jains, *Aśvaghōsha's Buddhacharita*, *Āśvalāyana's Gr̥hyasūtra*, Pāṇini and Patañjali. He thus arrives at the result that an epic little differing in size and character from the present work must have existed as early as the fifth century B. C. This is a somewhat startling proposition, and it may be questioned whether Dr. Dahlmann has not overrated the value of some of the evidence collected by himself. He is quite right, no doubt, in assuming that *Aśvaghōsha* was acquainted with the *Mahābhārata*, and his lucid discussion of the difficult texts in question, in collecting which he has received much valuable assistance from Prof. Bühler, is among the most remarkable parts of his work.

The early date which Dr. Dahlmann has thus endeavoured to make out for the great epic concerns the whole of it, the theory of a gradual rise of the *Mahābhārata* in successive ages being vigorously contested by him. Indeed, it is his principal aim to prove that the *Mahābhārata* is and has always been a moral tale, and that it is impossible to separate the didactic portion from the narrative without destroying the latter. The main plot of the poem, Dr. Dahlmann argues, is intended to illustrate the persecution of the just by the unjust and the final triumph of innocence.

<sup>1</sup> *Das Mahābhārata als Epos und Rechtsbuch.* Von Joseph Dahlmann, S. J. Berlin: 1895.

The poor orphaned Pāṇḍava brothers are cheated of their hereditary right by the wicked Duryōdhana. They are obliged in the end to have recourse to the sword, and after a long struggle their just cause proves victorious. The unity of the main plot corresponds with the unity of style and language which pervades the whole work. Nor are the numerous episodes and intermezzos (amounting to three-fourths of the *Mahābhārata*) a later outgrowth and superfluous embellishment. Thus the famous history of Nala is quoted by way of analogy, in order to console the principal hero of the epic about his hard fate. In the same way, the *Rāmopākhyāna* is introduced for the purpose of consoling Yudhishthira of the forcible abduction of Draupadi. Many other tales are intended to inculcate special rules of the sacred law, the Gāndharva and Āsura forms of marriage being illustrated by the tales regarding Śakuntalā and Mādri, Svayamvara by the instance of Ambā, Niyōga by the cases of Satyawatī and Kuntī. The philosophical doctrines scattered throughout the epic, and the sectarian worship of Viṣṇu and Śiva, belong likewise to the original elements of the *Mahābhārata*.

It is impossible to do full justice to Dr. Dahlmann's elaborate theories without entering into details. Suffice it to mention that they appear to be well substantiated in the main, and that he has certainly succeeded in refuting the old theory of several successive layers still discernible in the body of the epic, which were supposed to represent the social condition of several widely different epochs. The alleged anti-Kaurava tendency in particular, which was conjectured to be due to an innovation on the part of the adherents of the reigning Pāṇḍava dynasty, has never existed. Indeed that theory, which has again been advocated in Prof. Holtzmann's above-mentioned work, has hardly any other foundation to rest upon than a mistaken derivation of the name of Duryōdhana which does not denote 'a bad fighter,' but 'one who is hard to overcome.' On the other hand, there can be no doubt that Dr. Dahlmann has carried his didactic theory too far, thus, *e. g.*, it is difficult to agree with him that the extraordinary marriage of Draupadi with the five Pāṇḍava brothers is a mere allegorical illustration of the community of property in an undivided family. The tabular synopsis of the sons, natural and adopted, according to eight authorities, is useful and instructive, but Dr. Dahlmann seems to

have overlooked the fact that an analogous table based on the statements of fourteen authors has been given in Mayne's *Hindu Law and Usage*. The numerous Sanskrit quotations from the *Mahābhārata* are well selected and have been correctly given as a rule. Slight mistakes or misprints occur in the quotations at pp. 69, 108, 116, 145, 148, 153, 169, 183, 203, 255, 256, 258, 274, etc. The difficult but important question as to the commentaries of the *Mahābhārata* has been left aside by Dr. Dahlmann. The earliest commentary extant, as pointed out by Prof. Bühler, belongs to the fourteenth century A. D., and it is clear enough that the external evidence bearing on the condition of the *Mahābhārata* is much weaker than, *e. g.*, in the case of the Code of Manu, of which a continuous series of commentaries exists from the ninth century downwards. It is no matter of surprise, therefore, that, *e. g.*, the last twenty-three chapters of the *Āśvamedhika Parvan* are deficient in all printed editions of the great epic, and have been discovered but recently by Paṇḍit Vāman Śāstri Islāmpurkar<sup>2</sup> in an old Malayālam copy of the *Mahābhārata* and in the so-called *Smṛiti* of Vṛiddha-Gautama. As to the weakness of the historical element in the great epic, Dr. Dahlmann agrees with the views advanced by Prof. Ludwig in 1884. The latter scholar has published very recently a paper on the mythical basis of the *Mahābhārata*,<sup>3</sup> in which the main incidents of the plot are explained allegorically. The Pāṇḍava brothers are the seasons, and Draupadi, their common wife, is the earth. Bhīma represents the spring season. Duryōdhana, the cruel pursuer of the Pāṇḍavas, is the deity of winter. The long and manifold struggles described in the epic correspond to the incessant conflict between the successive seasons of the year. The dice are the stars, the winning stars are those constellations the rise of which marks the beginning of winter.

The question as to the date of the *Mahābhārata* has been incidentally treated in Prof. Jacobi's recent paper on the origin of Buddhism.<sup>4</sup> He considers the second or third century B. C. to be the very latest date, on the ground that the Śakas and Yavanas are not referred to in the epic as nations inhabiting the Pañjāb, and that neither Buddhism nor the Persian sway over the Pañjāb is mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*.

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<sup>2</sup> The *Parāśara Dharma Saṁhitā*, Vol. I., p. 7 (Bombay Sanskrit Series, 1893).

<sup>3</sup> *Über die mythische Grundlage des Mahābhārata*. Prag, 1895.

<sup>4</sup> *Der Ursprung des Buddhismus aus dem Sākhya-Yoga*.