The Sanskrit alphabet consists of the following sounds :—

(a) Fourteen vowels, viz.:—

Ten simple vowels : *a â, i* î, *u û, r* *r,* *l* (*l*); and Four diphthongs : *6 di, 6 du.*

(*b*) Thirty-three consonants, viz.:—

Five series of mutes and nasals :

guttural: *k kh g gh n* palatal: *c ch j jh ñ* lingual: *t th d dh n* dental: *t th d dh n* labial: *p ph b bh m;*

Four semivowels : *y r I v* (*w*);

Three sibilants : palatal *s,* lingual *sh*, dental *s* ; and A soft aspirate : A.

(*c*) Three unoriginal sounds, viz.:—

*visarga* (*h*), a hard aspirate, standing mostly for original

*s* or *r* ; and two nasal sounds of less close contact than the mute-nasals, viz., *anusvâra* (*m*) and *anumâsika (m).*

As regards the vowels, a prominent feature of the language is the prevalence of *a*-sounds, these being about twice as frequent as all the others, including diphthongs, taken together (Whitney).

The absence of the short vowels *ě* and *ǒ* from the Sanskrit alpha­bet, and the fact that Sanskrit shows the *a*-vowel where other vowels appear in other languages,—*e.g., bharantam = φίροντα, ferentem ; janas — ytvos, genus,—*were formerly considered as strong evidence in favour of the more primitive state of the Sanskrit vowel system as compared with that of the sister languages. Recent research has, however, shown pretty con­clusively from certain indications in the Sanskrit language itself that the latter must at one time have possessed the same, or very nearly the same, three vowel-sounds, and that the differentiation of tho original «-sound must, therefore, have taken place before tho separation of the languages.

The vowels *t* and *6,* though apparently simple sounds, are classed as diphthongs, being contracted from original *di* and *du* respectively, and liable to be treated as such in the phonetic modifications they have to undergo before any vowel except *d.*

As regards the consonants, two of the five series of mutes, the palatal and lingual series, are of secondary (the one of Indo-Iranian, the other of purely Indian) growth.

The palatals are, as a rule, derived from original gutturals, the modification being generally due to the influence of a neighbouring palatal sound *i* or *y,* or if (a) : *e.g., carati* = Lat. *currit; janu = yovu, genu,* knee. The surd aspirate cA, in words of Indo-Germanic origin, almost invariably goes back to original *sk*: *e.g., chid· (chind-)= scindo, σχίζω* ; chaya = σκιά.

The palatal sibilant i (pronounced *sh)* likewise originated from a guttural mute *k,* but one of somewhat different phonetic value from that represented by Sanskrit *k* or c. The latter, usually designated by A\* (or *q),* is frequently liable to labialization (or dentalization) in Greek, probably owing to an original pronunciation *kw (qu): e.g., katara = ποτϵρος, uter* ; while the former (*k*1) shows invariably κ in Greek, and a sibilant in the Letto-Slavic and the Indo-Iranian languages: *e.g., svan (sun) = κύων* (κνν), *canis,* Germ, *hund; daian=SeKa, decern,* Goth, *taihun.*

The non-original nature of the palatals betrays itself even in Sanskrit by their inability to occur at the end of a word,—*e.g.,* acc. vacam = Lat. *vocem,* but nom. *vdk = vox,—*and by otherwise frequently reverting to the guttural state.

The linguals differ in pronunciation from the dentals in their being uttered with the tip of the tongue turned up to the dome of the palate, while in the utterance of the dentals it is pressed against the upper teeth, not against the upper gums as is done in the English dentals, which to Hindus sound more like their own linguals. The latter, when occurring in words of Aryan origin, are, as a rule, modifications of original dentals, usually accompanied by the loss of an *x* or other adjoining consonant; but more commonly they occur in words of foreign, probably non-Aryan, origin, of regular occurrence in tho language, however, is the change of dental *n* into lingual *n,* and of dental *s* into lingual *sh,* when preceded in the same word by certain other letters.

The sonant aspirate A is likewise non-original, being usually derived from original sonant aspirated mutes, especially *gh: e.g., hamsa = xhv* (for χανς), *anser,* Germ, *gans ; aham = ϵγών, ego,* Goth. *ik.*

The contact of final and initial letters of words in the same sen­tence is often attended in Sanskrit with considerable euphonic modifications ; and we have no means of knowing how far the prac­tice of the vernacular language may have corresponded to these phonetic theories. There can be no doubt, however, that a good deal in this respect has to be placed to the account of grammatical reflexion ; and the very facilities which the primitive structure of the language offered for grammatical analysis and an insight into the principles of internal modification may have given the first impulse to external modifications of a similar kind.

None of the cognate languages exhibits in so transparent a

manner as the Sanskrit the cardinal principle of Indo-Germanic word-formation by the addition of inflexional endings—either case- endings or personal terminations (themselves probably original roots)—to stems obtained, mainly by means of suffixes, from mono­syllabic roots, with or without internal modifications.

There are in Sanskrit declension three numbers and seven cases, not counting the vocative, viz., nominative, accusative, instru­mental, dative, ablative, genitive and locative. As a matter of fact, all these seven cases appear, however, only in the singular of «-stems and of the pronominal declension, other noun-stems have only one case-form for the ablative and genitive singular. In the plural, the ablative everywhere shares its form with the dative (except in tho personal pronoun, where it has the same ending as in the singular), whilst the dual shows only three different case- forms—one for the nominative and accusative, another for the instrumental, dative, and ablative, and a third for the genitive and locative.

The declension of a-stems, corresponding to the first and second Latin declensions, is of especial interest, not so much on account of its being predominant from the earliest time, and becoming more and more so with the development of the language, but because it presents the greatest number of alternative forms, which supply a kind of test for determining the age of literary productions, a test which indeed has already been applied to some extent by Professor Lanman, in his excellent *Statistical Account of Noun Inflexion in the Veda.* These alternative case-forms are :—

1. *dsas* and *ds* for tho nominative plural masc. and fern.: *e.g., asvasas* and *asvas = cqui (equae).* The forms in *dsas,—*explained by Bopp as the sign of the plural *as* applied twice, and by Schleicher as the sign of the plural *as* added to the nominative singular,— occur to those in *ds (i.e.,* the ordinary plural sign *as* added to the a-stem) in the Rigveda in the proportion of 1 to 2, and in the peculiar parts of the Atharvaveda in that of 1 to 25, whilst the ending *ds* alone remains in the later language.
2. *d* and *dni* for the nominative and accusative plural of neuters : as *yugd, yugdni* = ζυγά, *juga.* The proportion of the former ending to the latter in the Rik is 11 to 7, in the Atharvan 2 to 3, whilst the classical Sanskrit knows only the second form.
3. *ebhis* and *dis* for the instrumental plural masc. and neuter: *e.g., devebhis, devais.* In the Rik the former forms are to the latter in the proportion of 5 to 6, in the Atharvan of 1 to 5, while in the later language only the contracted form is used. The same contraction is found in other languages ; but it is doubtful whether it did not originate independently in them.
4. *d* and *du for* the nominative and accusative dual masc.: *e.g.,*

*ubhd, ubhdu =* In the Rik forms in *d* outnumber those in *du*

more than eight times; whilst in tho Atharvan, on the contrary, those in *du* (the only ending used in the classical language) occur five times as often as those in *d.*

1. *d* and *cna (end)* for the instrumental singular masc. and neut.: as *ddnd, ddnena = dono.* The ending *ena* is the one invariably used in the later language. It is likewise the usual form in the Veda; but in a number of cases it shows a final long vowel which, though it may be entirely due to metrical requirements, is more probably a relic of the normal instrumental ending *d,* preserved for prosodic reasons. For the simple ending *d,* as compared with that in *ena,* Prof. Lanman makes out a proportion of about 1 to 9 in the Rigveda (altogether 114 cases); while in the peculiar parts of the Atharvan he finds only 11 cases.
2. *din* and *dndm for* the genitive plural: *e.g., (asvam), asvanam = Ticiruv, equum (cquorum).* The form with inserted nasal (doubt- less for *andm,* as in Zend *aspanam),* which is exclusively used in the later language, is also the prevailing one in tho Rik. There are, however, a few genitives of «-stems in original *dm* (for *a-dm),* which also appear in Zend, Prof. Lanman enumerating a dozen instances, some of which are, however, doubtful, while others are merely conjectural.

The Sanskrit verb system resembles that of the Greek in variety and completeness. While the Greek excels in nicety and definite- ness of modal distinction, the Sanskrit surpasses it in primitiveness and transparency of formation. In this part of the grammatical system there is, however, an even greater difference than in the noun inflexion between the Vedic and the classical Sanskrit. While the former shows, upon the whole, the full complement of modal forms exhibited by the Greek, the later language has prac­tically discarded the subjunctive mood. The Indo-Aryans never succeeded in working out a clear formative distinction between the subjunctive and indicative moods.; and, their syntactic requirements becoming more and more limited, they at last contented themselves, for modal expression, with a present optative and imperative, in addition to the indicative tense-forms, and a little-used aorist optative with a special “precative” or “ benedictive” meaning attached to it.

Another part of the verb in which the later language differs widely from Vedic usage is the infinitive. The language of the old hymns shows a considerable variety of case-forms of verbal abstract nouns with the function of infinitives, a certain number of which