lar lyrics that was accessible to the collectors, or seemed to them worthy of being preserved. The question as to the exact period when the hymns were collected cannot be answered with any approach to accuracy. For many reasons, however, which cannot be detailed here, scholars have come to fix on the year 1000 B.C. as an approximate date for the collection of the Vedic hymns. From that time every means that human ingenuity could suggest was adopted to secure the sacred texts against the risks connected with oral transmission. But, as there is abundant evidence to show that even then not only had the text of the hymns suffered corruption, but their language had become antiquated to a considerable extent, and was only partly understood, the period during which the great mass of the hymns were composed must have lain considerably further back, and may very likely have extended over the earlier half of the second millenary, or from about 2000 to 1500 B.C.

As regards the people which raised for itself this imposing monu- ment, the hymns exhibit it as settled in the regions watered by the mighty Sindhu (Indus), with its eastern and western tributaries. The land of the five rivers forms the central home of the Vedic people ; but, while its advanced guard has already debouched upon the plains of the upper Gangâ and Yamuna, those who bring up the rear are still found loitering far behind in the narrow glens of the Kubhâ (Cabul) and Gomati (Gomal). Scattered over this tract of land, in hamlets and villages, the Vedic Aryas are leading chiefly the life of herdsmen and husbandmen. The numerous clans and tribes, ruled over by chiefs and kings, have still constantly to vindicate their right to the land but lately wrung from an inferior race of darker hue ; just as in these latter days their kinsmen in the Far West are ever on their guard against the fierce attacks of the dispossessed red-skin. Not unfrequently, too, the light-coloured Aryas rage internecine war with one another,—as when the Bliaratas, with allied tribes of the Panjab, goaded on by the royal sage Visvamitra, invade the country of the Tritsu king Sudas, to be defeated in the “ten kings’ battle,” through the inspired power of the priestly singer Vasishtha. The priestly office has already become one of high social importance by the side of the political rulers, and to a large extent an hereditary profession; but it does not yet present the baneful features of an exclusive caste. The Aryan housewife shares with her husband the daily toil and joy, the privilege of worshipping the national gods, and even the triumphs of song-craft, some of the finest hymns being attributed to female seers.

The religious belief of the people consists in a system of natural symbolism, a worship of the elementary forces of nature, regarded as beings endowed with reason and power superior to those of man. In giving utterance to this simple belief, the priestly spokesman has, however, frequently worked into it his own speculative and mystic notions. Indra, the stout-hearted ruler of the cloud-region, receives by far the largest share of the devout attentions of the Vedic singer. His ever-renewed battle with the malicious demons of darkness and drought, for the recovery of the heavenly light and the rain-spending cows of the sky, forms an inexhaustible theme of spirited song. Next to him, in the affections of the people, stands Agni (ignis), the god of fire, invoked as the genial inmate of the Aryan household, and as the bearer of oblations, and mediator between gods and men. Indra and Agni are thus, as it were, the divine representatives of the king (or chief) and the priest of the Aryan community ; and if, in the arrangement of the Sarnhitâ, the Brahmanical collectors gave precedence to Agni, it was but one of many avowals of their own hierarchical pretensions. Hence also the hymns to Indra are mostly followed, in the family collections, by those addressed to the Viśve Devâh (the “all-gods”) or to the JIaruts (Mavors, Mars), the warlike storm-gods and faithful com­panions of Indra, as the divine impersonation of the Aryan free- men, the *viś* or clan. But, while Indra and Agni are undoubtedly the favourite figures of the Vedic pantheon, there is reason to believe that these gods had but lately supplanted another group of deities who play a less prominent part in the hymns, viz., Father Heaven (Dyaus Pitar, Zϵύς πατήρ*,* Jupiter); Varuna (ουρανος), the all- embracing firmament; Mitra (Zend. Mithra), the genial light of day; and Savitar (Saturnus) or Sfirya *(ήϵλιος),* the vivifying sun.

Of the Brahmanas that were handed down in the schools of the *Bahvrichas (i.e.,* “possessed of many verses”), as the followers of the Rigveda are called, two have come down to us, viz., those of the Aitareyins and the Kaushitakins. The *Aitarcya-brdhmana @@1* and the *Kaushîtaki-* (or *Sânkhâyana-) brâhmana* evidently have for their groundwork the same stock of traditional exegetic matter. They differ, however, considerably as regards both the arrange- ment of this matter and their stylistic handling of it, with the exception of the numerous legends common to both, in which the discrepancy is comparatively slight. There is also a certain amount of material peculiar to each of them. The Kaushîtaka is, upon the whole, far more concise in its style and more systematic in its arrangement—merits which would lead one to infer that it

is probably the more modern work of the two. It consists of thirty chapters *(adhyâya)*; while the Aitareya has forty, divided into eight books (or pentads, *panchakd,* of five chapters each). The last ten adhyayas of the latter work are, however, clearly a later addition,—though they must have already formed part of it at the time of Pânini (c. 400 B.C. ?), if, as seems probable, one of his grammatical sfitras, regulating the formation of the names of Brahmanas, consisting of thirty and forty adhyayas, refers to these two works. In this last portion occurs the well-known legend (also found in the Śânkhâyana-sûtra, but not in the Kaushitaki- brahmana) of Śunahśepa, whom his father Ajigarta sells and offers to slay, the recital of which formed part of the inauguration of kings. While the Aitareya deals almost exclusively with the Soma sacrifice, the Kaushitaka, in its first six chapters, treats of the several kinds of *haviryajna,* or offerings of rice, milk, ghee, &c., whereupon follows the Soma sacrifice in this way, that chapters 7-10 contain the practical ceremonial and 11-30 the recitations *(śastra)* of the hotar. Sayana, in the introduction to his com­mentary on the work, ascribes the Aitareya to the sage Mahidâsa Aitareya (son of Itara), also mentioned elsewhere as a philosopher ; and it seems likely enough that this person arranged the Brahmana and founded the school of the Aitareyins. Regarding the author­ship of the sister work we have no information, except that the opinion of the sage Kaushîtaki is frequently referred to in it as authoritative, and generally in opposition to the Paingya—the Brahmana, it would seem, of a rival school, the Paingins.

Each of these two Brahmanas is supplemented by a “ forest- portion,” or Aranyaka. The *Aitareyâranyaka. @@2* is not a uniform production. It consists of five books *(âranyaka),* three of which, the first and the last two, are of a liturgical nature, treating of the ceremony called *mahâvrata* or great vow. The second and third books, on the other hand, are purely speculative, and are also styled the *Bahvricha-brâhmana-upanishad.* Again, the last four chapters of the second book are usually singled out as *the Aitareyopanishad, @@3* ascribed, like its Brahmana (and the first book), to Mahidasa Aitareya ; and the third book is also referred to as the *Samhitâ- upanishad.* The fourth and fifth books are doubtless of later origin, being composed in sutra-form. Even native authorities exclude them from the sacred canon, and ascribe them to Asva layana and Saunaka respectively, of whom more further on. As regards the *Kaushîtaki-dranyaka,* our MS. material is not yet sufficient to enable us to determine its exact extent and arrange­ment. It would, however, seem that there are two different recensions of this treatise, a shorter one, consisting of nine, and a longer one of fifteen, adhy&yas. Four of these, variously placed at the beginning or end, or after the second adhyaya, constitute the highly interesting *Kaushîtaki- (brâhmana·) upawishad, @@4* of which we possess two different recensions. The remaining portions of the Aranyaka seem to correspond, to some extent, to the cere­monial sections of the Aitareya-âranyaka.

Of *Kalpa-sûtras,* or manuals of sacrificial ceremonial, composed for the use of the liotar prjest, two different sets are in existence, the *Âśvaldiyana-* and the *Sânkhâyana-sûtra.* Each of these works follows one of the two Brahmanas of the Rik as its chief authority, viz., the Aitareya and Kaushitaka respectively. Both consist of a *Śrauta*- and a *Grihya-sûtra.* Âśvalâyana seems to have lived about the same time as Panini,—his own teacher, Saunaka, who com- pleted the Rik-prâtiśâkhya, being probably intermediate between the great grammarian and Yaska, the author of the Nirukta. Saunaka himself is said to have been the author of a Srauta-sfitra (which was, however, more of the nature of a Brahmana) and to have destroyed it on seeing his pupil’s work. A Grihya-sfitra is still quoted under his name by later writers. The Asvalayana Srauta-sûtra @@ 5 consists of twelve, the Grihya 5 of four, adhyayas.

Regarding Śankhayana still less is known ; but he, too, was doubtless a comparatively modern writer, who, like Asvalâyana, founded a new school of ritualists. Hence the Kausliitaki-brahmana, adopted (and perhaps improved) by him, alsogoes under his name, just as the Aitareya is sometimes called Asvalayana-bralimana. The Śankhayana Śrauta-sûtra consists of eighteen adhyayas. The last two chapters of the work are, however, a later addition, @@7 while the two preceding chapters, on the contrary, present a com- paratively archaic, brahmana-like appearance. The Grihya-sûtra7 consists of six chapters, the last two of which are likewise later appendages. The *Sâmbavya Grihya-sûtra,* of which a single MS.

@@@1 Edited, with an English translation, by M. Haug, 2 vols., Bombay, 18G3. An edition in Roman transliteration, with extracts from the commentary, has been published by Th. Aufrecht, Bonn, 1879.

@@@2 Edited, with Säyana’s commentary, by Räjcndralftla Mitra, in the *Bibliotheca Indica,* 1875-76. The first three books have been translated by F. Max Miiller in *Sacred Books of the East,* vol. i.

@@@3 Edited and translated by Dr Röer, in the *Bibl. Ind.* The last chapter of the second book, not being commented upon by Sâyana, is probably a later addition.

@@@4 Text, commentary', and translation published by E. B. Cowell, in the *Bibl*. *Ind.* Also a translation bv F. Max Müller in *Sacred Books of the East,* vol. i.

@@@5 Both works have been published with the commentary of Gftrgya Nârâyana, by native scholars, in the *Bibl. Ind.* Also the text of the Grihya, with a German translation by A. Stenzler.

@@@6 See A. Weber’s analysis, *Ind. Studien,* ii. p. 288 *sq.* This work, with its commentaries, is only accessible in manuscript.

@@@7 Edited, with a German translation, by H. Oldenberg *(Ind. Stud.,* vol. xv.), who also gives an account of the S&mbavya Grihya.