mind of Europe, namely, by their loving appreciation of natural beauty, their exquisite delineation of womanly love and devotion, and their tender sentiment of mercy and forgiveness.

2. *Purdnas and Tantras.—*The *Purânas* are partly legendary partly speculative histories of the universe, compiled for the purpose of promoting some special, locally prevalent form of Brahmanical belief. They are sometimes styled a fifth Veda, and may indeed in a certain sense be looked upon as the scriptures of Brah­manical India. The term *purâna,* signifying “old,” applied originally to prehistoric, especially cosmogonic, legends, and then to collections of ancient traditions generally. The existing works of this class, though recog­nizing the Brahmanical doctrine of the Trimûrti, or triple manifestation of the deity (in its creative, preservative, and destructive activity), are all of a sectarian tendency, being intended to establish, on quasi-historic grounds, the claims of some special god, or holy place, on the devotion of the people. For this purpose the compilers have pressed into their service a mass of extraneous didac­tic matter on all manner of subjects, whereby these works have become a kind of popular encyclopaedias of useful knowledge. It is evident, however, from a comparatively early definition given of the typical Purâna, as well as from numerous coincidences of the existing works, that they are based on, or enlarged from, older works of this kind, more limited in their scope, and probably of a more decidedly tritheistic tendency of belief. Thus none of the Purânas, as now extant, is probably much above a thousand years old, though a considerable proportion of their materials is doubtless much older, and may perhaps in part go back to several centuries before our era.

In legendary matter the Purânas have a good deal in common with the epics, especially the *Mahâbhârata,—*the compilers or revisers of both classes of works having evidently drawn their materials from the same fluctuating mass of popular traditions. They are almost entirely composed in epic couplets, and indeed in much the same easy flowing style as the epic poems, to which they are, however, geatly inferior in poetic value.

According to the traditional classification of these works, there are said to be eighteen *(mahâ-,* or great) *Purânas,* and as many *Upa-purânas,* or subordinate Purânas. The former are by some authorities divided into three groups of six, according as one or other of the three primary qualities of external existence—goodness, darkness (ignorance), and passion—is supposed to prevail in them, viz., the *Vishnu, Ndradiya, Bhdgavata, Garuda, Padma, Varâha, — Matsya, Kûrma, Linga, Siva, Skanda, Agni,—Brahmânda, Brahma- vaivarta, Mârkandeya, Bhavishya, Vâmana,* and *Brahma-Purânas.* In accordance with the nature of the several forms of the Trimurti, the first two groups chiefly devote themselves to the commenda- tion of Vishnu and Siva respectively, whilst the third group, which would properly belong to Brahman, has been largely appro- priated for the promotion of the claims of other deities, viz., Vishnu in his sensuous form of Krishna, Devi, Ganesa, and Surya. As Prof. Banerjea has shown in his preface to the *M&r- kandeya,* this seems to have been chiefly effected by later additions and interpolations. The insufficiency of the above classification, however, appears from the fact that it omits the *Vdyu-pur&na,* probably one of the oldest of all, though some MSS. substitute it for one or other name of the second group. The eighteen principal Puranas are said to consist of together 400,000 couplets. In Northern India the Vaishnava Purânas, especially the *Bhâgavata* and *Vishnu,@@1* are by far the most popular. The Bhagavata was formerly supposed to have been composed by Vopadeva, the grammarian, who lived in the 13th century. It has, however, been shown @@2 that what he wrote was a synopsis of the Purâna,

and that the latter is already quoted in a work by Ballala Sena of Bengal, in the lltli century.

From the little we know regarding the Upa-purdnas, their char­acter does not seem to differ very much from that of the principal Puranas. One of them, the *Brahmânda-purâna,* contains, as an episode, the well-known *Adhyâtma-Râmâyana,* a kind of spiritual­ized version of Valmiki’s poem. Besides these two classes of works there is a large number of so-called *Sthala-purânas,* or chronicles recounting the history and merits of some holy “place” or shrine, where their recitation usually forms an important part of the daily service. Of much the same nature are the numerous *Mâhâtmyas* (literally “relating to the great spirit”), which usually profess to be sections of one or other Purana. Thus the *Devî- mâhâtmya,* which celebrates the victories of the great goddess Durgâ over the Asuras, and is daily read at the temples of that deity, forms a section, though doubtless an interpolated one, of the Markandeya-purâna.

The *Tantras,* which have to be considered as a later development of the sectarian Puranas, are the sacred writings of the numerous *Sdktas,* or worshippers of the female energy *(sakti)* of some god, especially the wife of Siva, in one of her many forms (Parvati, Devi, Kali, Bhavânî, Durgâ, &c.). This worship of a female repre­sentation of the divine power appears already in some of the Purânas; but in the Tantras it assumes quite a peculiar character, being largely intermixed with magic perform­ances and mystic rites, partly, it would seem, of a grossly immoral nature. This class of writings does not appear to have been in existence at the time of Amarasimha (6th century); but they are mentioned in some of the Purfinas. They are usually in the form of a dialogue between Siva and his wife. Their number is very large; but they still await a critical examination at the hands of western scholars. Among the best known may be mentioned the *Rudra yamala, Kulârnava, Syâmâ-rahasya,* and *Kâlikâ-tantra.*

3. *Modern Epics.—*A new class of epic poems begin to make their appearance about the 5th or 6th century of our era, during a period of renewed literary activity which has been fitly called @@3 the Renaissance of Indian literature. These works differ widely in character from those that had preceded them. The great national epics, composed though they were in a language different from the ordin­ary vernaculars, had at least been drawn from the living stream of popular traditions, and were doubtless readily understood and enjoyed by the majority of the people. The later productions, on the other hand, are of a decidedly artificial character, and must necessarily have been beyond the reach of any but the highly cultivated. They are, on the whole, singularly deficient in incident and invention, their subject matter being almost entirely derived from the old epics. Nevertheless, these works are by no means devoid of merit and interest; and a number of them display considerable descriptive power and a wealth of genuine poetic sentiment, though unfortunately often clothed in language that deprives it of half its value. The simple heroic couplet has mostly been discarded for various more or less elaborate metres; and in accordance with this change of form the diction becomes gradually more complicated,—a growing taste for unwieldy com­pounds, a jingling kind of alliteration, or rather agnomina­tion, and an abuse of similes marking the increasing artificiality of these productions.

The generic appellation of such works is *kâvya,* which, meaning “poem,” or the work of an individual poet *(kavi),* is already applied to the *Râmâyana.* Six poems of this kind are singled out by native rhetoricians as standard works, under the title of *Mahâ- kâvya,* or great poems. Two of these are ascribed to the famous dramatist Kalidasa, the most prominent figure of the Indian Renaissance, and truly a master of the poetic art. He is said to have been one of the nine literary “ gems ” at the court of Vikrama- ditya, now generally identified with King Vikramaditya Harslia of Ujjayinî (Ujjain or Oujein), who reigned about the middle of the 6th century, and seems to have originated the Vikramaditya era, reckoned from 56 B.C. Of the poets whose works have come down

@@1 There are several Indian editions of these two works. The Bhagavata has been partly printed, in an *édition de luxe,* at Paris, in 3 vols., by E. Burnouf, and a fourth by M. Hauvette-Besnault. Of the Vishnup. there is a translation by H. H. Wilson, 2d ed. enriched with valuable notes by F. Hall. Several other Puranas have been printed in India; the Markandeya and Agni Puranas, in the *Bibl. Ind.,* by Prof. Banerjea and Râjendralâla Mitra respectively.

@@2 Râjendralâla Mitra, *Notices of Sansk. MSS.,* ii. 47.

@@@3 M. Müller, *India: What can it teach us?* note G.