The six branches of Vedic science, included under the term Vedānga, are as follows:—

1. Ś*ikshā,* or Phonetics,—The privileged position of representing this subject is assigned to a small treatise ascribed to the great

grammarian Pãnini, viz. the *Pāṇinīyā śikshā,* extant in two different (Rik and Yajus) recensions. But neither this treatise nor any other of the numerous śikshās which have recently come to light can lay claim to any very high age. Scholars, however, usually include under this head certain works, called *Prātiśākhya, i.e.* “ belonging to a certain śā*khā* or recension,” which deal minutely with the phonetic peculiarities of the several Saṃhitās, and are of great importance for the textual criticism of the

Vedic Samhitãs.

2. *Chhandas,* or Metre.—Tradition makes the *Chhandaḥ-sūtra* of Pingala the starting-point of prosody. The Vedic metres, however,

occupy but a small part of this treatise, and they are evidently dealt with in a more original manner in the

Nidāna-sūtra of the Sāmaveda,and in a chapter of theRik-pratisãkhya. For profane prosody, on the other hand, Pingala’s treatise is rather valuable, no less than 160 metres being described by him.

3. *Vyākaraṇa,* or Grammar.—Pāṇini’s famous grammar is said to be *the* Vedãnga; but it marks the culminating point of grammatical research rather than the beginning, and

besides treats chiefly of the post-Vedic language.

4. *Nirukta,* or Etymology.—Yaska’s *Nirukta* is the traditional representative of this subject, and this important work certainly

deals entirely with Vedic etymology and explanation. It consists, in the first place, of strings of words in three chapters: (1) synonymous words; (2) such as are purely or chiefly Vedic; and (3) names of deities. These lists are followed by Yāska’s commentary, interspersed with numerous illustrations. Yāska, again, quotes several predecessors in the same branch of science; and it is probable that the original works on this subject consisted merely of lists of words similar to those handed down by

him∙

5. *Jyotisha,* or Astronomy.—Although astronomical calculations are frequently referred to in older works in connexion with the

performance of sacrifices, the metrical treatise which has come down to us in two different recensions under the title of Jyotisha, ascribed to one Lagadha, or Lagata, seems indeed to be the oldest existing systematic treatise on astrono­mical subjects. With the exception of some apparently spurious verses of one of the recensions, it betrays no sign of the Greek influence which shows itself in Hindu astronomical works from about the 3rd century of our era; and its date may therefore be set down

**as** probably not later than the early centuries after Christ

6. *Kalpa,* or Ceremonial.—Tradition does not sîngIe out any special work as the Vedãnga in this branch of Vedic science; but

the sacrificial practice gave rise to a large number of systematic sütra-manuals for the several classes of priests. The most important of these works have come down to us, and they occupy by far the most prominent place among the literary productions of the sūtra-period. The Kalpa-sūtras, or rules of ceremonial, are of two kinds: (1) the *Srauta-sütras,* which are based **on** the sruti, and teach the performance of the great sacrifices, requiring three sacrificial fires; and (2) the *Smārta-sūtras,* or rules based on the smṛiti or tradition. The latter dass again includes two kinds of treatises: (1) the *Gṛihya-sūtras,* or domestic rules, treating of ordinary family rites, such as marriage, birth, name- giving, &c., connected with simple offerings in the domestic fire; and (2) the *Sāmayāchārika-* (or *Dharma-*) *sütras,* which treat of customs and temporal duties, and are supposed to have formed the chief sources of the later law-books. Besides, the Srauta-sütras of the Yajurveda have usually attached to them a set of so-called *Śulva-sūtras, i.e.* “ rules of the cord,” which treat of the measurement by means of cords, and the construction, of different kinds of altars required for sacrifices. These treatises are of special interest as supplying important information regarding the earliest geometrical operations in India. Along with the Sutras may be classed a large number of supplementary treatises, usually called *Pariéishta* (ταpαλi7r0μepα), on various subjects connected with the sacred texts and Vedic religion generally.

After this brief characterization of the various branches of Vedic literature, we proceed to take a rapid survey of the several Vedic collections.

A. *Rigveda.@@*1—The *Ṛigveda-saṃhitā* has come down to us in the

recension of the Sãkala school. Mention is made of several other versions; and regarding one of them, that of the Bãshkalas, we have some further information, according to which it seems, however, to have differed but little from the Sākala text The latter consists of 1028 hymns, including eleven so-called *Vālakhilyas,* which were probably introduced into the collection subsequently to its completion. The hymns are composed in a great variety of metres, and consist, on an average, of rather more than 10 verses each, or about 10,600 verses altogether. This body of sacred lyrics has been subdivided by ancient authorities in a twofold way, viz. either from a purely artificial point of view, into eight *ashṭakas* of about equal length, or, on a more natural principle, based on the origin of the hymns, and invariably adopted by European scholars, into ten books, or *maṇḍalas,* of unequal length. Tradition (not, however, always trustworthy in this respect) has handed down the names of the reputed authors, or rather inspired “ seers ” (*ṛishi*), of most hymns. These indications have enabled scholars to form some idea as to the probable way in which the Ṛik-saṃhitā originated, though much still remains to be cleared up by future research.

Maṇḍalas ii.-vii. are evidently arranged on a uniform plan. Each of them is ascribed to a different family of rishis, whence they are usually called the six “family-books”: ii., the Gṛitsamadas; ifi., the Viśvāmitras or Kuśikas; iv., the Vãmadevyas; v., the Atris; vi., the Bharadvãjas; and vii., the Vasishṭhas. Further, each of these books begins with the hymns addressed to Agni, the god of fire, which are followed by those to Indra, the Jupiter Pluvius, whereupon follow those addressed to minor deities—the Viśve Devāḥ (“ all-gods ”), the Maruts (storm-gods), &c. Again, the hymns addressed to each deity are arranged in a descending order, according to the number of verses of which they consist.

Maṇḍala i., the longest in the whole Saṃhitā, contains 191 hymns, ascribed, with the exception of a few isolated ones, to sixteen poets of different families, and consisting of one larger (50 hymns) and nine shorter collections. Here again the hymns of each author are arranged on precisely the same principle as the “ family-books.” Maṇḍalas viii. and ix., on the other hand, have a special character of their own. To the Sãmaveda-sarphitã, which, as we shall see, consists almost entirely of verses chosen from the Ṛik for chanting purposes, these two maṇḍalas have contributed a much larger proportion of verses than any of the others. Now, the hymns of the eighth book are ascribed to a number of different ṛishis, mostly belonging to the Kāṇva family. The productions of each poet are usually, though not always, grouped together, but no other principle of arrangement has yet been discovered. The chief peculiarity of this maṇḍala, however, consists in its metres. Many of the hymns are composed in the form of stanzas, called *pragātha* (from *gā,* "to sing ”), consisting of two verses in the *bṛihatī* and *satobrihatī* metres; whence this book is usually known under the designation of Pragã- thās. The other metres met with in this book are likewise such as were evidently considered peculiarly adapted for singing, viz. the *gāyatrī* (from *gā,* “ to sing ’ ) and other chiefly octosyllabic metres. It is not yet clear how to account for these peculiarities; but further research may perhaps show either that the Kāṇvas were a family of udgãtars, or chanters, or that, before the establishment of a common system of worship for the Brãhmanical community, they were accustomed to carry on their liturgical service exclusively by means of chants, instead of using the later form of mixed recitation and chant. One of the ṛishis of this family is called Pragãtha Kāṇva; possibly this surname “ pragãtha ” may be an old, or local, synonym of udgātar, or perhaps of the chief chanter, the so-called *Prastotar,* or precentor. Another poet of this family is Medhãtithi Kãnva, who has likewise assigned to him twelve hymns in the first and largest groups of the first book. The ninth maṇḍala, on the other hand, consists entirely of hymns (114) addressed to *Soma,* the deified juice of the so-called “moon-plant” (*Sarcostemma viminale,* or *Asclepias acida*), and ascribed to poets of different families. They are called *pavamānī,* “ purificational,” because they were to be recited by the hotar while the juice expressed from the soma plants was clarifying. The first sixty of these hymns are arranged strictly according to their length, ranging from ten down to four verses; but as to the remaining hymns no such principle of arrangement is observable, except perhaps in smaller groups of hymns. One might, therefore, feel inclined to look upon that first section as the body of soma hymns set apart, at the time of the first redaction of the Samhitä, for the special purpose of being used as *pavamānyas,—*the remaining hymns having been added at subsequent redactions. It would not, however, by any means follow that all,

@@@1 The Rigveda has been edited, together with the commentary of Sāyaṇa (of the 14th century), by Max Müfler (6 vols., London, 1849- 1874; 2nd ed., 4 vols., 1890-1892). The same scholar has published an edition of the hymns, both in the connected (*saṃhitā*) and the disjoined (*pada*) texts, 1873-1877. An edition in Roman transliteration was published by Th, Aufrecht (Berlin, 1861-1863, 2nd ed. 1877). Part of an English translation (chiefly based on Sāyaṇa’s interpretation) was brought out by the late Professor H. H. Wilson (vols. i.-iii., 1850-1857) and completed by Professor E. B. Cowell (vols. iv.-vi., 1866-1888). We have also the first volume of a translation, with a running

commentary, by M. Mullet, containing 12 hymns to the Maruts or storm-gods (1869). These were reprinted, together with the remaining hymns to the Maruts, and those addressed to Rudra, Vāyu and Vāta, Vedic Hymns I. in *S.B.E*., vol. xxxii. (1891); where (vol. xlvi.) H. Oldenberg has also translated the hymns to Agni, in maṇḍalas 1-5. A metrical English translation was published by R. H. T. Griffith (2 vols., Benares, 1896-1897). Complete German translations have been published, in verse, by H. Grassmann (1876-1877) and, in prose, with comm., A. Ludwig (1876- 1888). Cf. also Kaegi, *The Rigveda* (Eng. trans. by Arrowsmith, Boston, 1886).