

ertain about their mythical or historical character, it is necessary to keep in view that the books which profess to derive their authority from those Rshis are composed sundry thousands of years after the supposed age of the sages. For shortness sake one may say Garga instead of the book bearing his name, where no ambiguity can be the result.

To begin with Parāçara, he is a prominent figure in some Purāṇas. Some information about him is gathered in Wilson's translation of the Vishṇu-purāṇa (ed. F. E. Hall, p. 8.) In the Mahā-Bhārata (I. Ch. 176) his name is S'aktiputra;* Varāha-Mihira in the Br̥h. Jāt. VII. I. calls him S'aktipūrva. Both names convey the same meaning, S'aktiputra being "the son of strength," the latter "originating in, or resulting from strength." Weber† remarks that Parāçara is considered to be the most ancient of Hindu astronomers, and that the second in order of time is Garga. Upon what this notice is based, I do not know, but he is certainly not generally so represented. All those mythical astronomers derive their knowledge immediately from Pitāmaha or Br̥haspati, and it is far from the intention of the epic poems, I dare say, to distinguish the Rshis in time. Where poets ascribe to their Rshis or other personifications a life of many thousand years, they think or care little about chronology. This much is certain, if one wishes to classify Parāçara, Garga, the sun, &c., according to the time at which they are fancied to have lived, one must acknowledge Pitāmaha as the first astronomer, he being the fountain head of the science. That the name of Parāçara has become in Sanskrit literature prominent above other Rshi astronomers is due to his being a proclaimer of Purāṇas. The frequency of his name in the writings of scholars who have occupied themselves with Hindu astronomy is due to Utpala. The latter in commenting upon the passage Br̥h. Sanh. III. 1, where Varāha-

* F. E. Hall, (l. c.) remarks that S'akti is "hardly the name of a male." As if a male were intended! S'akti is the heavenly power of Indra-Agni.

† Indische Liter. p. 225.