

ent sentiments and the different characters introduced in the several sections into which we have divided it. In the first section the Supreme divinity is Vāsudeva, a name unknown in the other sections, and never occurring on the various occasions on which different heroes invoked their several objects of faith, reverence, or fear. In the second section we do not notice any effort to magnify a particular divinity, although fearful torments are described as awaiting the revilers of gods, Brahmins, and Vedas. This was probably one among many attempts made by the Brahmins to resist the influence of Buddhism or prevent a relapse on the part of those whom they had reclaimed. The third section is principally devoted to chronology, history, and geography, and the supreme divinity that appears in it is no other than ancient Brahmá. This section appears to us to be the oldest part of the Purāṇa. It may be, for aught we know to the contrary, very old. The Deví-máhátmya which is our fourth section, is as we have already said evidently an interpolation. The fifth section is, like the third, chiefly historical.

To what extent these historical annals contain any thing that is true is a question of no small difficulty. Authentic history of course there is none. That is out of the question here. There is nothing in any of the Purāṇas to which we can give credence on the *authority* of the narrators. The accounts are far more incredible, and have far less authenticity, than the most incredible portions of early Roman history. Still the question is whether these incoherent and extravagant annals were absolute fabrications, or whether any facts may be found embedded in them.