

subjects too, especially in poetical descriptions of nature and domestic affection, Indian works do not suffer by a comparison with the best specimens of Greece and Rome, while in the wisdom, depth, and shrewdness of their moral apothegms they are unrivalled. More than this, the learned Hindūs had probably made great advances in astronomy, algebra, arithmetic, botany, and medicine, not to mention their admitted superiority in grammar, long before any of these sciences were cultivated by the most ancient nations of Europe. Hence it has happened that I have been painfully reminded during the progress of this Dictionary that a Sanskrit lexicographer ought to aim at a kind of quasi omniscience. Nor will any previous classical education, such at least as has been hitherto usual, enable him to explain correctly the scientific expressions which—not borrowed from the Greeks—are liable to be brought before him. To pretend therefore that the present work, although probably containing nearly three times as much matter as any other Sanskrit Dictionary yet published (excepting of course the great Thesaurus of Professors Böhtlingk and Roth, and that of Rādhākānta-deva), is competent to satisfy the student in every branch of Sanskrit literature, would manifestly display either ignorance or conceit. Perhaps the departments in which it must be admitted to be weakest are those of the Veda and philosophy with their respective native commentaries. Still an attempt has been made to supply what has hitherto been almost entirely neglected by English lexicographers.

In truth, I have felt that no modern Lexicon ought to exclude Vedic words, important as these are in their philological bearings. I must nevertheless plainly confess that the interpretation of these words is often so doubtful—often so purely tentative—that I have been sorely perplexed in my efforts to furnish the student with trustworthy renderings. Of course with the Veda, as with every other profoundly obscure subject, there is a natural craving for an infallible guide. At the same time no priestly infallibility is here thought to be attainable; for although the great Brāhman and Ācārya, Sāyaṇa, lived about five hundred years ago at Vijaya-nagara, an ancient Indian capital and seat of learning, yet this eminent authority has been altogether put out of court by modern philological critics. When, however, it is found that modern scholars themselves frequently differ as much from each other as they do from that once trusted and certainly most learned Brāhman, it seems hopeless to expect security from error in any particular sect or section of modern critics and philologists. Notwithstanding these perplexities, I cannot express too strongly my appreciation of what German scholars have effected in this difficult field of research, and my gratitude for the aid received from the interpretations of Professors Böhtlingk and Roth. The authority of these scholars has been generally followed by me, though I have been careful to give, in addition, the renderings of Sāyaṇa (according to Professor Max Müller's edition*), feeling, as I do, rather enthusiastically that this great native commentator, even if he occasionally misleads, ought never to be ignored.

The foregoing sketch of the nature of Sanskrit literature will, I trust, explain the impossibility of covering its vast area by any Dictionary in one volume. It will also explain my non-admission into my pages of the ample store of examples made over to me by my predecessor, the late Professor H. H. Wilson. These would, at least, have swelled out my one compact volume to an inconvenient size, if they had not expanded it into two. For the same reason I have been obliged, as a rule, to forego authenticating my meanings by more than a few scattered references either to passages in

* It should be mentioned, however, that for the latter part of the Ṛig-veda I have not had the advantage of Professor Max Müller's editorial skill. The first volume of his edition of this work, with Sāyaṇa's commentary, was brought out under the patronage of the East India Company in 1849. Three other volumes have since appeared, completing as far as the end of the eighth Maṇḍala. For the remainder I have been obliged to

trust to an imperfect MS. of Sāyaṇa's commentary in the Wilsonian Collection belonging to the Bodleian Library. This is the only Ṛig-veda MS. of any value that I have had it in my power to employ, as I have not been able to consult the excellent MSS. belonging to the India Office Library, which others had a greater right to use than myself. I am informed that a fifth volume of the Ṛig-veda is about to appear.