

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In 1850 Professor WILSON authorized the late Mr. ASHER, of Berlin, to publish a new edition of his Sanskrit and English Dictionary, the second edition having been out of print for many years. As the illustrious author, however, was prevented by his various duties from devoting the requisite time to preparing this edition, I was invited to carry out the intended plan.

According to this plan, the second edition of the Dictionary was to be reprinted in its original form, while I was to superintend the impression, and make such corrections, alterations and additions as might seem advisable. But as a leading object with the publisher was to supply the work within the shortest possible time, it was urged that the additions, in order not to cause any great delay, were not to exceed the materials I might happen already to possess or which might present themselves incidentally during the progress of the work.

Had this plan been adhered to on my part, it might, no doubt, long since have been easily accomplished. Yet when I resolved on a protracted residence in London, and thus found it in my power to turn to account printed and unprinted books which could not be had on the continent, I thought it incumbent on me to improve the opportunity and to advise the publisher to forego considerations of speed for what I believed to be a more lasting service to the student of Sanskrit literature and philology. I proposed therefore not merely to embody in the intended work the materials I possessed and which, having been collected for different purposes, would not always suffice for the requirements of lexicography, but to extend them, to enlarge the substance of the second edition within its own sphere, and also to introduce into it matter from those portions of Sanskrit literature which Professor WILSON had not deemed it necessary to resort to at the time he published his work. I was informed, it is true, that causes over which I had no control, would not allow me to go beyond certain limits of space or to alter the character of the previous Dictionary by making references to the original authorities from which the information was derived, and therefore that I could not incorporate in the results of my labour more complete indices of special works than were absolutely requisite; still I believed that in spite of these limitations, it might be possible to adapt the intended work to the more pressing actual wants of the Sanskrit philologist.

That these alterations were sanctioned by Professor WILSON himself, it is almost needless to say. But I owe it to the memory of the late Mr. ASHER to state that he readily waived the advantages derivable from a more expeditious publication for the literary considerations which I had suggested.

Circumstances, however, intervened which caused a still greater delay than I had anticipated. It was obvious that to correct in the second edition such errors as could not but be expected in a work of this magnitude, and to do so on my own responsibility, no other course was open to me than to examine the Dictionary word for word and meaning for meaning, in other terms, to trace its entire contents as far as possible to the sources from which they were taken. Unfortunately the Indices prepared in India by Professor WILSON were, with few exceptions, no longer available; I was obliged therefore to give additional time to collecting the materials required for a proper discharge of my duty in this respect. Another circumstance must be adverted to. In the existing editions of his Dictionary Professor WILSON has excluded, on principle, words relating to the Vaidik literature, more especially to those works which bear the technical name of Vedas. Notwithstanding the extension I proposed to give to his work, I still approved of this principle also for the new Dictionary; I may add that the first pages of my MS. were written in accordance with it. Subsequent experience, however, of the treatment which this portion of the literature has undergone in other quarters, has imposed upon me the moral obligation of allotting even to words of the Vaidik period a large share in the present work and, as a consequence, to increase materials I possessed, but on which it was not originally intended to bestow special labour and time. I now propose, in the Dictionary and *its Supplement*, to provide the student with the interpretation of the principal Vaidik words that may be desired for the perusal of the Vaidik hymns and the chief works of the oldest literature. Those alone will remain excluded the meaning of which could not be given on safe grounds as, in general, it did not seem expedient to me, to admit into a Dictionary devoid of quotations, words the sense of which could not be ascertained satisfactorily.