

more simple-minded native to the wretched shams which he has been taught to acknowledge as Justice and equitable government, and to the real character of those whose decisions he has been trained to respect and obey—consequently, to the consciousness of power to rise from his self-imposed abasement and become a free and thinking creature.

The religious drama, unlike the teaching of Western Christianity, has nothing to impart to its student *regarding himself*; nor does the sympathy evoked in his breast for the first martyrs of his Faith find vent in practical relief of the distress of his fellow-men, or cause him to give attention to his surroundings, and see whether he can suggest a remedy for their bodily wants and moral shortcomings. If Mirza Fath 'Ali's plays do not attempt high teaching, they are at least suggestive of a healthy innovation, which many Persians now living are capable of turning to good account, both for themselves and their countrymen. As to their value for English students of the language of S'adi and Ḥāfīz, I can only express my belief that nothing can approach them in usefulness for colloquial purposes among all the books hitherto recognized by the Government of India.

F. J. GOLDSMID.

The Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.

2. DERIVATION OF THE WORD "GANGA."

SIR,—I suggested in p. 542 of the present Number of the Royal Asiatic Society's Journal the possibility of there being some connection between the ancient name of Bengal, Vanga, the river Veh of the Zendavesta encircling the sacred land of the Aryans, and the goddess Ashi Vanguhi; and further pointed out that it might be possible that the Kuṣikas of Irān, when they settled in India, should have extended their sacred Veh or boundary river from the Indus to the Ganges.

It has since occurred to me that a further argument in support of this contention might be derived from the name of the sacred river Guṅgā.

The name Gaṅgā appears among a list of goddesses in Rīg-veda ii. 32. 7, in the form Guṅgū (Grassmann, Rīgveda, vol. i.

p. 223), where it is said by Sāyaṇa to mean the full moon, and again in Rigveda x. 48. 8, where Indra is said to have led the Atithigwa (a name of the Tr̥tsus) to the Guṇḡ, and here it must mean the river.

Grassmann derives Gaṅgā from "gam" to go, and the name is usually said to mean "the goer." But the termination "gu," which is a Dravidian nominal suffix, seems to point to a Dravidian origin of the name, and neither the Maghas, the sons of the great Akkadian goddess, the mother earth, nor the sons of Kuš, who were the joint rulers of the Gangetic valley, spoke an Aryan language.

The derivation of the name of the sacred river, the mother-goddess of the Hindus, from the root "gam" to go, seems unmeaning, nor is there any apparent reason why a name meaning the "goer" should be transferred to the full moon; but if we turn to Akkadian roots, which must have suggested the name given to the sacred river by the Akkadian Maghas, we find the root "gan" to enclose, which as a noun is applied in the Bible to the Garden of Eden. This, as the sacred garden of God, answers to the Vara of Yima in the Zendavesta, where the seeds of life are sown and is called Gan-Edin. The root "gan" would, with the addition of the Dravidian nominal suffix, as in Bhrigu, where "gu" is added to the root "bhri," mean the encloser, or the sacred mother who enclosed in her womb the holy land, which was first sacred to the mother of the Maghas, and afterwards to the moon-goddess, the special patron of the sons of Kuš, who was made by them the measurer of the year.

J. F. HEWITT.

The Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.