

CHAPTER 15

Brahmins Versus Kshatriyas

This manuscript consists of 43 foolscap typed pages. All the loose pages are tagged. The original title, 'Brahmins and Kshatriyas and the Counter-Revolution' has been modified in Dr. Ambedkar's hand-writing as 'Brahmins Versus Kshatriyas' on the title page. The essay seems to be complete.—Editors.

The sacred literature of the Hindus contains many cases of conflicts between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas and even of sanguinary wars between the two.

The first case reported was that of the King Vena. Vena was a Kshatriya King. His conflict with the Brahmins has been referred to in various authorities. The following account is taken from the Harivansa.

“¹There was formerly a Prajapati (lord of creatures), a protector of righteousness, called Anga, of the race of Atrai, and resembling him in power. His son was the Prajapati Vena, who was but indifferently skilled in duty, and was born of Sunitha, the daughter of Mrityu. This son of the daughter of Kala (Death), owing to the taint derived from his maternal grand-father, threw his duties behind his back, and lived in covetousness under the influence of desire. This king established an irreligious system of conduct; transgressing the ordinances of the Veda, he was devoted to lawlessness. In his reign men lived without study of the sacred books and without the Vashatkara, and the gods had no some-libations to drink at sacrifices.”

No sacrifice or oblation shall be offered,—such was the ruthless determination of that Prajapati, as the time of his destruction approached. ‘I, he declared, ‘am the object, and the performer of sacrifice, and the sacrifice itself; it is to me that sacrifice should be presented, and oblations offered.’ This transgressor of the rules of duty, who arrogated to himself what was not his due, was then

¹ Muir Vol. I. p. 302-303.

addressed by all the great Rishis, headed by Marichi: "We are about to consecrate ourselves for a ceremony which shall last for many years; practise not unrighteousness, of Vena; this is not the eternal rule of duty. Thou art in every deed a Prajapati of Atri's race and thou hast engaged to protect thy subject.' The foolish Vena, ignorant of what was right, laughingly answered those great Rishis who had so addressed him: "Who but myself is the ordainer of duty ? or whom ought I to obey ? Who on earth equals me in sacred knowledge, in process, in austere fervour, in truth? Ye who are deluded and senseless know not that I am the source of all beings and duties. Hesitate not to believe that I, if I willed, could turn up the earth, or deluge it with water, or close up heaven and earth.' When owing to his delusion and arrogance Vena could not be governed, then the mighty Rishis becoming licensed, seized the vigorous and struggling king, and rubbed his left thigh. From this thigh, so rubbed, was produced a black man, very short in stature, who, being alarmed, stood with joined hands. Seeing that he was agitated, Atri said to him 'Sit down' (Nishida). He became the founder of the race of the Nishadas, and also progenitor of the Dhivaras (Fishermen), who sprang from the corruption of Vena.'

The second case is that of Pururavas. Pururavas is another Kshatriya King, son of Ila and grandson of Manu Vaivasvata. He came in conflict with the Brahman's the following account of which appears in the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata:

"Subsequently the wise Pururavas was born of Ila who, as we have heard was both his father and his mother. Ruling over thirteen islands of the ocean, and surrounded by beings who were all superhuman, himself a man of great renown, Pururavas, intoxicated by his prowess, engaged in a conflict with the Brahmins, and robbed them of their jewels, although they loudly remonstrated. Sanatkumara came from Brahma's heaven, and addressed to him an admonition, which however, he did not regard. Being then straightway cursed by the incensed Rishis, he perished, this covetous monarch, who, through piece of power, had lost his understanding."

The third and a somewhat serious conflict was that between King *Nahusha* and the Brahmins. *Nahusha* is the grandson of Pururavas. The story is told in two places in the Mahabharata once in the Vanaparvan and a second time in the Udyogaparvan. The following account is taken from the Udyogaparvan of the Mahabharata:

"After his slaughter of the demon Vritta, Indra became alarmed at the idea of having taken the life of a Brahman (for Vritta was

¹ Muir Vol. I, p. 307.

² Muir Vol. I, p. 310-313.

regarded as such) and hid himself in the waters. In consequence of the disappearance of the king of the gods, all affairs, celestial as well as terrestrial, fell into confusion. The Rishis and gods then applied to Nahusha to be their king. After the first excusing himself on the plea of want of power, Nahusha at length, in compliance with their solicitations, accepted the high function. Upto the period of his elevation he had led a virtuous life, but he now became addicted to amusement and sensual pleasure, 'and even aspired to the possession of Indrani, Indra's wife, whom he had happened to see. The queen resorted to the Angiras Vrihaspati, the preceptor of the gods, who engaged to protect her. Nahusha was greatly incensed on hearing of this interference; but the gods endeavoured to pacify him, and pointed out the immorality of appropriating another person's wife. Nahusha, however, would listen to no remonstrance, and insisted that in his adulterous designs he was no worse than Indra himself."

"The renowned Ahalya, a rishi's wife, was formerly corrupted by Indra in her husband's lifetime. Why was he not prevented by you? And many barbarous acts, and unrighteous deeds, and frauds were perpetrated of old by Indra; Why was he not prevented by you?" The gods, urged Nahusha, then went to bring Indrani; but Vrihaspati would not give her up. At his recommendation, however, she solicited Nahusha for some delay, till she should ascertain what had become of her husband. This request was granted." Indrani now went in search of her husband; and by the help of Upasruti (the goddess of night and revealer of secrets) discovered him existing in a very subtile form in the stem of a lotus growing in a lake situated in a continent within an ocean north of the Himalayas. She made known to him the wicked intentions of Nahusha, and entreated him to exert his power, rescue her from danger, and resume his dominion. Indra declined any immediate interposition on the plea of Nahusha's superior strength; but suggested to his wife a device by which the usurper might be hurled from his position. She was recommended to say to Nahusha that "if he would visit her on a celestial vehicle borne by Rishis, she would with pleasure submit herself to him."

"I desire for thee, king of the gods, a vehicle hitherto unknown, such as neither Vishnu, nor Rudra, nor the Asuras, nor the Rakshases employ. Let the eminent Rishis, all united, bear thee, lord, in a car: this idea pleases me." Nahusha receives favourably this appeal to his vanity, and in the course of his reply thus gives utterance to his self-congratulation: "He is a personage of no mean prowess who makes the Munis his bearers. I am a fervid devotee of

great might, lord of the past, the future, and the present. If I were angry the world would no longer stand; on me everything depends..... Wherefore, O goddess, I shall, without doubt, carry out what you propose. The seven Rishis, and all the Brahman-rishis, shall carry me. Behold, beautiful goddess, my majesty and my prosperity.” The narrative goes on: “Accordingly this wicked being, irreligious, violent, intoxicated by the force of conceit, and arbitrary in his conduct, attached to his car the Rishis who submitted to his command, and compelled them to bear him.” Indrani then again resorts to Vrihaspati, who assures her that vengeance will soon overtake Nahusha for his presumption, and promises that he will himself perform a sacrifice with a view to the destruction of the oppressor, and the discovery of Indra’s lurking place. Agni is then sent to discover and bring Indra to Vrihaspati; and the latter, on Indra’s arrival, informs him of all that had occurred during his absence. While Indra, with Kuvera, Yama, Soma and Varuna was devising means for the destruction of Nahusha, the sage Agastya came up, congratulated Indra on the fall of his rival, and proceeded to relate how it had occurred:

“Wearied with carrying the sinner Nahusha the eminent divine-rishis, and the spotless Brahman-rishis, asked that divine personage Nahusha (to solve) a difficulty; “Dost thou, O Vasava, most excellent of conquerors, regard as authoritative or not those Brahmana texts which are recited at the immolation of kine?” ‘No’, replied Nahusha, whose understanding was enveloped in darkness. The Rishis rejoined: ‘Engaged in unrighteousness, thou attainest not unto righteousness: these texts, which were formerly uttered by great Rishis, are regarded by us as authoritative.’ Then (proceeds Agastya) disputing with the Munis, Nahusha, impelled by unrighteousness, touched me on the head with his foot. In consequence of this the king’s glory was smitten and his prosperity departed. When he had instantly become agitated and oppressed with fear, I said to him, ‘Since thou, O fool, contemnest that sacred text, always held in honour, which has been composed by former sages, and employed by Brahman-rishis, and has touched my head with thy foot, and employest the Brahma—like the irresistible Rishis as bearers to carry thee,—therefore, shorn of thy lusture, and all thy merit exhausted, sink down, sinner, degraded from heaven to earth. For ten thousand years thou shalt crawl in the form of a huge serpent. When that period is completed, thou shalt again ascend to heaven.’ So fell that wicked wretch from the sovereignty of the gods. Happily, O Indra, we shall now prosper, for the enemy of the

Brahmans has been smitten. Take possession of the three worlds, and protect their inhabitants, O husband of Sachi (Indrani) subduing thy senses, overcoming thine enemies, and celebrated by the great Rishis.”

The fourth case is of King Nimi. Nimi was one of the sons of Ikshvaku. The facts of his conflict with the Brahmans are related in the Vishnu Purana which says:

“¹Nimi had requested the Brahman Rishi Vashistha to officiate at a sacrifice, which was to last a thousand years. Vashistha in reply pleaded a pre-engagement to Indra for five hundred years, but promised to return at the end of that period. The king made no remark, and Vashistha went away, supposing that he had assented to his arrangement. On his return, however, the priest discovered that Nimi had retained Gautama (who was, equally with Vashistha, a Brahmin-rishi) and others to perform the sacrifice; and being incensed at the neglect to give him notice of what was intended, he cursed the king, who was then asleep, to lose his corporeal form. When Nimi awoke and learnt that he had been cursed without any previous warning, he retorted by uttering a similar curse on Vashistha, and then died. Nimi’s body was emblamed. At the close of the sacrifice which he had begun, the gods, were willing, on the intercession of the priests, to restore him to life, but he declined the offer; and was placed by the deities, according to his desire, in the eyes of all living creatures. It is in consequence of this that they are always opening and shutting (nimisha means “The twinkling of the eye”).

The fifth case relates to the conflict between Vashishtha and Vishvamitra. Vashishtha was a Brahmin priest. Vishvamitra was a Kshatriya. His great ambition was to become a Brahmin. The following episode reported from the Ramayana explains the reasons why he became anxious to become a Brahmin.

“²There was formerly, we are told, a king called Kusa, son of Prajapati, who had a son called Kusanabha, who was father of Gadhi, the father of Vishvamitra. The latter ruled the earth for many thousand years. On one occasion, when he was making a circuit of the earth, he came to Vashishtha’s hermitage, the pleasant abode of many saints, sages, and holy devotees, where, after all first declining, he allowed himself to be hospitably entertained with his followers by the son of Brahma. Vishvamitra, however, coveting the wonderous cow, which had supplied all the dainties of the feast, first

¹ Muir Vol. I, pp. 316.

² Muir Vol. I, pp. 397-400.

of all asked that she should be given to him in exchange for a hundred thousand common cows, adding that "she was a gem, that gems were the property of the King, and, therefore, the cow owes his by right." On this price being refused, the King advances immensely in his offers, but all without effect. He then proceeds very ungratefully, and tyrannically, it must be allowed—to have the cow removed by force, but she breaks away from his attendants, and rushes back to her master, complaining that he was deserting her. He replies that he was not deserting her, but that the king was much more powerful than he. She answers, 'Men do not ascribe strength to a Kshatriya: the Brahmins are stronger. The strength of Brahmins is divine, and superior to that of Kshatriyas. Thy strength is immeasurable. Vishvamitra, though of great vigour, is not more powerful than thou. Thy energy is invincible. Commission me, who have been acquired by thy Brahmanical power, and I will destroy the pride, and force, and attempt of this wicked prince.' She accordingly by her bellowing creates hundred of Pahalvas, who destroy the entire host of Vishvamitra, but are slain by him in their turn. Sakas and Yavanas, of great power and valour, and well armed, were then produced, who consumed the king's soldiers, but were routed by him. The cow then calls into existence by her bellowing, and from different parts of her body, other warriors of various tribes, who again destroyed Vishvamitra's entire army, foot soldiers, elephants, horses, chariots, and all. A hundred of the monarch's sons, armed with various weapons, then rushed in great fury on Vashishtha, but were all reduced to ashes in a moment by the blast of that sage's mouth. Vishvamitra, being thus utterly vanquished and humbled, appointed one of his sons to be regent, and travelled to the Himalaya, where he betook to austerities, and thereby obtained a vision of Mahadeva, who at his desire revealed to him the science of arms in all its branches, and gave him celestial weapons with which, elated and full of pride, he consumed the hermitage of Vashishtha, and put its inhabitants to flight. Vashishtha then threatens Vishvamitra and uplifts his Brahmanical mace. Vishvamitra, too, raises his fiery weapon and calls out to his adversary to stand. Vashishtha bids him to show his strength and boasts that he will soon humble his pride. He asks: "What comparison is there between a Kshatriya's might and the might of a Brahman? Behold, thou contemptible Kshatriya, my divine Brahmanical power.' The dreadful fiery weapon uplifted by the son of Gadhi was then quenched by the rod of the Brahman, as fire is by water." Many and various other celestial missiles, as the nooses of

Brahma, Kala (Time), and Varuna, the discuss of Vishnu, and the trident of Shiva, were hurled by Vishvamitra at his antagonist, but the son of Brahma swallowed them up in his all-devouring mace. Finally, to the intense consternation of all the gods, the warrior shot off the terrific weapon of Brahma; but this was equally ineffectual against the Brahmanical sage. Vashishtha had now assumed a direful appearance. "Jets of fire mingled with smoke darted from the pores of his body; the Brahmanical mace blazed in his hand like a smokeless mundane conflagration, or a second sceptre of Yama." Being appeased, however, by the munis, who proclaimed his superiority to his rival, the sage stayed his vengeance; and Vishvamitra exclaimed with a groan: "Shame on a Kshatriya's strength: the strength of a Brahman's might alone is strength; by the single Brahmanical mace all my weapons have been destroyed."

No alternative now remains to the humiliated monarch, but either to acquiesce in this help less inferiority, or to work out his own elevation to the Brahmanical order. He embraces the latter alternative: "Having pondered well this defeat, I shall betake myself, with composed senses and mind, to strenuous austere fervour, which shall exalt me to the rank of a Brahman." Intensely vexed and mortified, groaning and full of hatred against his enemy, he travelled with his queen to the south, and carried his resolution into effect. At the end of a thousand years Brahma appeared, and announced that he had conquered the heaven of royal sages (rajarshis): and, in consequence of his austere fervour, he was recognised as having attained that rank."

The conflict seems to have begun in the reign of King Sudas who belonged to the line of Ikshavaku. Vashishtha was the hereditary priest of King Sudas. For some reason which is not very clearly stated Sudas appointed Vishvamitra as his family priest. This brought about a conflict between Vishvamitra and Vashishtha. This conflict once started raged on for a long time.

The conflict between the two took a peculiar turn. If Vishvamitra was involved in a dispute Vashishtha came into the fray and sided with his opponent. If Vishvamitra was involved in dispute Vashishtha entered into fray and sided with Vishvamitra as opponent. It was a case of one persecuting the other.

The first such episode is that of Satyavrata otherwise called Trishanku. The story as told in the Harivamsha is as follows:

"¹Meanwhile Vashishtha, from the relation subsisting between the King (Satyavrata's father) and himself, a disciple and spiritual

¹ Muir Vol. I. pp. 177-378.

preceptor, governed the city of Ayodhya, the country, and the interior apartments of the royal palace. But Satyavrata, whether through folly or the force of destiny, cherished constantly an increased indignation against Vashishtha, who for a (proper) reason had not interposed to prevent his exclusion from the royal power by his father. 'The formulas of the marriage ceremonial are only binding,' said Satyavrata, 'when the seventh step has been taken, and this had not been done when I seized the damsel: still Vashishtha, who knows the precepts of the law, does not come to my aid.' Thus Satyavrata was incensed in his mind against Vashishtha, who however, had acted from a sense of what was right. Nor did Satyavrata understand (he propriety of) that silent penance imposed upon him by his father..... When he had supported this arduous rite, (the supposed that) he had redeemed his family position. The venerable muni Vashishtha did not, however, (as has been said) prevent his father from setting him aside, but resolved to install his son as King. When the powerful prince Satyavrata had endured the penance for twelve years, he beheld, when he was without flesh to eat, the milch cow of Vashishtha which yielded all objects of desire; and under the influence of anger; delusion, and exhaustion, distressed by hunger, and failing in the ten duties he slew..... and both partook of her flesh himself, and gave it to Vishvamitra's sons to eat. Vashishtha hearing of this, became incensed against him", and imposed on his the name of Trisanku as he had committed three sins. On his return home, Vishvamitra was gratified by the support which his wife had received, and offered Trisanku the choice of a boon. When this proposal was made, Trisanku chose the boon of ascending bodily to heaven. All apprehension from the twelve year's drought being now at an end, the muni (Vishvamitra) installed Trisanku in his father's kingdom, and offered sacrifice on his behalf. The mighty Kaustka then, in spite of the resistance of the gods and of Vashishtha,¹ exalted the king alive to heaven."

2. As stated in the Harivamsa:

"²In consequence of the wickedness which had been committed, Indra did not rain for a period of twelve years. At that time Vishvamitra had left his wife and children and gone to practise austerities on the sea-shore. His wife, driven to extremity by want, was on the point of selling her second son for a hundred cows, in

¹ As stated in another place in the Harivamsa Trisanku had been expelled from his home by his father for the offence of carrying off the young wife of one of the citizens under the influence of a criminal passion and Vashishtha did not interfere to prevent his banishment. It is to this that the text refers.

² Muir Vol. I. pp. 376-77.

order to support the others; but this arrangement was stopped by the interventions of Satyavrata, who liberated the son when bound, and maintained the family by providing them with the flesh of wild animals; and according to his father's injunction, consecrated himself for the performance of a silent penance for twelve years."

The next episode in which they appear on opposite sides is that of Harishchandra the son of Trisanku. The story is told in the Vishnu Purana and in the Markendeya Purana. This is how the story runs:

"On one occasion, when hunting the king heard a sound of female lamentation which proceeded, it appears, from the sciences who were becoming mastered by the austere fervid sage Vishvamitra, in a way they had never been before by anyone else; and were consequently crying out in alarm at his superiority. In fulfilment of his duty as a Kshatriya to defend the weak, and inspired by the god Ganesha, who had entered into him, Harishchandra exclaimed, "What sinner is this who is binding fire in the hem of his garment, white, I, his lord, am present, resplendent with force and fiery vigour?" He shall to-day enter on his long sleep, pierced in all his limbs by arrows, which, by their discharge from my bow, illuminate all the quarters of the firmament." Vishvamitra was provoked by this address. In consequence of his wrath the Sciences instantly perished, and Harishchandra, trembling like the leaf of an Asvattha tree, submissively represented that he had merely done his duty as a king, which he defined as consisting in the bestowal of gifts on eminent Brahmins and other persons of slender means, the protection of the timid, and war against enemies. Vishvamitra hereupon demands a gift as a Brahman intent upon receiving one. The king offers him whatsoever he may ask: Gold, his own son, wife, body, like kingdom, good fortune. The saint first requires the present for the Rajasuya sacrifice. On this being promised, and still more offered, he asks for the empire of the whole earth, including everything but Harishchandra himself, his wife and son, and his virtue which follows its posses or wherever he goes." "Harishchandra joyfully agrees. Vishvamitra then requires him to strip off all his ornaments, to clothe himself in the bark of trees, and to quit the kingdom with his wife Saviya (Taramati) and his son. When he is departing the sage stops him and demands payment of his yet unpaid sacrificial fee. The king replies that he has only the persons of his wife, his son, and himself left. Vishvamitra insists that he must nevertheless pay; and that "unfulfilled promises of gifts to Brahmins bring destruction." The unfortunate prince, after being threatened with a curse, engages to make the payment in a month;

and commences his journey with a wife unused to such fatigues, amid the universal lamentations of his subjects. While he lingers, listening to their affectionate remonstrances against his desertion of his kingdom, Vishvamitra, comes up and being incensed at the delay and the King's apparent hesitation, strikes the queen with his staff, as she is dragged on by her husband. Harishchandra then proceeded with his wife and little son to Benares, imagining that this divine city, as the special property of Siva, could not be possessed by any mortal. Here he found the relentless Vishvamitra waiting for him, and ready to press his demand for the payment of his sacrificial gift, even before the expiration of the full period of grace. In this extremity Saivya the queen suggests with a sobbing voice that her husband should sell her. On hearing this proposal Harishchandra swoons, then recovers, utters lamentations, and swoons again, and his wife, seeing his said condition, swoon also. While they are in a state of unconsciousness, their famished child exclaims in distress, "O father, father, give me bread; O mother, mother give me food: hunger overpowers me and my tongue is parched." At this moment Vishvamitra returns, and after recalling Harishchandra to consciousness by spinkling water over him, again urges payment of the present. The king again swoons, and is again restored. The sag threatens to curse him if his engagement is not fulfilled by sunset. Being now pressed by his wife, the King agrees to sell her ading, however, "If my voice can utter such a wicked word, I do not what the most inhuman wretches cannot perpetrate." He then goes into the city and in selfacusing language offers his queen for sale as a slave. A rich old Brahman offers to buy her at a price corresponding to her value, to do his household work. Seeing his mother dragged away, the child ran after her, his eyes dimmed with tears, and crying 'mother'. The Brahman purchaser kicked him when he came up; but he would not let his mother go, and continued crying 'mother, mother.' The queen then said to the Brahman, "Be so kind, my master, as to but also this child, as without him I shall prove to thee but a useless purchase. Be thus merciful to me in my wretchedness, unite me with my son, like a cow to her calf." The Brahman agrees: "Take this money and give me the boy." After the Brahman had gone out of sight with his purchases, Vishvamitra again appeared and renewed his demands; and when the afflicted Harishchanda offered him the small sum he had obtained by the sale of his wife and son, he angrily replied, "If, miserable Kshatriya, thou thinkest this a sacrificial gift befitting my deserts, thou shalt soon beheld the transcendent power of my ardent austere fervour, of my spotless

Brahmanhood of my terrible majesty, and of my holy study. Harishchandra promises an additional gift, and Vishvamitra allows him the remaining quarter of the day for its liquidation. On the terrified and afflicted prince offering himself for sale, in order to gain the means of meeting this cruel demand, Dharma (Righteousness) appears in the form of a hideous and offensive Chandala, and agrees to buy him at his own price, large or small. Harishchandra declines such a degrading servitude, and declares that he would rather be consumed by the fire of his persecutor's curse than submit to such a fate. Vishvamitra however again comes on the scene, asks why he does not accept the large sum offered by the Chandala; and, when he pleads in excuse his descent from the solar race, threatens to fulminate a curse against him if he does not accept that method of meeting his liability. Harishchandra implores that he may be spared this extreme of degradation, and offers to become Vishvamitra's slave in payment of the residue of his debt; whereupon the sage rejoins, "If thou art my slave, then I sell thee as such to the Chandala for a hundred millions of money."

"The Chandala, delighted, pays down the money, and carries off Harishchandra, bound, beaten, confused and afflicted, to his own place of abode. Harishchandra is sent by the Chandala to steal grave clothes in a cemetery and is told that he will receive two-sixths going to his masters, and one-sixth to the King. In this horrid spot, and in this degrading occupation, he spent in great misery, twelve months, which seemed to him like a hundred years. He then falls asleep and has a series of dreams suggested by the life he had been leading. After he awoke, his wife came to the cemetery to perform the obsequies of their son, who had died from the bite of a serpent. At first the husband and wife did not recognize each other, from the change in appearance which had been brought upon them by their miseries. Harishchandra however, soon discovered from the tenor of her lamentations that it is his wife, and falls into a swoon; as the queen does also when she recognizes her husband. When consciousness returns, they both break out into lamentations, the father bewailing in a touching strain the loss of his son, and the wife the degradation of the King. She then falls on his neck, embraces him, and asks "whether all this is a dream, or a reality, as she is utterly bewildered", and adds, that "if it be a reality, then righteousness is unavailing to those who practise it." After hesitating to devote himself to death on his son's funeral pyre without receiving his master's leave, Harishchandra resolves to do so, braving all the consequences, and consoling himself with the hopeful

anticipation: "If I have given gifts, and offered sacrifices and gratified my religious teachers, then may I be reunited with my son and with thee (my wife) in another world." The queen determines to die in the same manner. When Harishchandra, after placing his son's body on the funeral pile, is meditating on the Lord Shri Narayan Krishna, the supreme spirit, all the gods arrive, headed by Dharma (righteousness), and accompanied by Vishvamitra. Dharma entreats the king to desist from his rash intention; and Indra announces to him that he, his wife, and son have conquered heaven by their good works. Amrosia, the antidote of death, and flowers are rained by the god from the sky; and the king's son is restored to life and the bloom of youth. The king, adorned with celestial clothing and garlands, and the queen, embrace their son. Harishchandra, however declares that he cannot go to heaven till he has received his master the Chandala's permission, and has paid him a ransom. Dharma then reveals to the king that it was he himself who had miraculously assumed the form of a Chandala. The king next objects that he cannot depart unless his faithful subjects, who are shares in his merits, are allowed to accompany him to heaven, at least for one day. This request is granted by Indra; and after Vishvamitra has inaugurated Rohitasva the king's son to be his successor, Harishchandra, his friends and followers, all ascend in company to heaven. Even after this great consummation, however, Vashishtha, the family-priest of Harishchandra, hearing, at the end of a twelve years' abode in the waters of the Ganges, an account of all that has occurred, becomes vehemently incensed at the humiliation inflicted on the excellent monarch, whose virtues and devotion to the gods and Brahmans he celebrates, declares that his indignation had not been so great roused even when his own hundred sons had been slain by Vishvamitra, and in the following words dooms the latter to be transformed into crane. Wherefore that wicked man, enemy of the Brahmans, smitten by my curse, shall be expelled from the society of intelligent beings, and losing his understanding shall be transformed into a Vaka." Vishvamitra reciprocates the curse, and changes Vashishtha into a bird of the species called Ari. In their new shapes the two have a furious fight, the Ari being of the portentous height of two thousand yojanas = 18,000 miles, and the Vaka of 3090 yojanas. The first assail each other with their wings; then the Vaka smites his antagonist in the same manner, while the Ari strikes with his talons. Falling mountains, overturned by the blasts of wind raised by the flapping of their wings, shake the whole earth, the waters of the ocean

overflow, the earth itself, thrown off its perpendicular slopes downwards patala, the lower regions. Many creatures perish by these various convulsions. Attracted by the dire disorder, Brahma arrives, attended by all the gods, on the spot, and command the comptants to desist from their fray. They were too fiercely infuiriated to regard this injunction; but Brahma put an end to the conflict by restoring them to their natural forms, and conselling them to be reconciled.

The next episode in which they came in as opponents is connected with *Ambarish* King of Ayodhya.

¹The story relates that Ambarisha was engaged in performing a sacrifice, when Indra carried away the victim. The priest said that this ill-omened event had occurred owing to the king's had administration, and would call for a great expiation, unless a human victim could be produced. After a long search the royal rishi (Ambarisha) came upon the Brahman-rishi Richika, a descendent of Bhrgu, and asked him to sell one of his sons for a victim, at the price of a hundred thousand cows. Richika answered that he would not sell his eldest son; and his wife added that she would not sell the youngest: eldest sons" she observed, "being generally the favourites of their fathers, and youngest sons of their mothers." The second son, Sunassepna, then said that in that case he regarded himself as the one who was to be sold, and desired the king to remove him. The hundred thousand cows, with ten millions of gold pieces and heaps of jewels, were paid down, and Sunassepa carried away. As they were passing through Pushkara Sunassepa beheld his maternal uncle Vishvamitra who was engaged in austerities there with other rishis, threw himself into his arms, and implored his assistance, urging his orphan friendless, and helpless state, as claims on the sage's benevolence.

"Vishvamitra soothed him: and pressed his own sons to offer themselves as victim in the room of Sunassepa. This proposition met with no favour from Madhushyanda and the other sons of the royal hermit, who answered with haughtiness and derision: "How is that thou sacrificest thine own sons, and seekest to rescue those of others ? We look upon this as wrong, and like the eating of one's own flesh." The sage was exceedingly wroth at this disregard of his injunction, and doomed his sons to be born in the most degraded classes, like Vashishtha's sons, and to eat dog's flesh, for a thousand years. He then said to Sunassepa: "When thou art bound with hallowed cords, decked with a red garland, and annointed with unguents, and fastened to the sacrificial post of Vishnu, then address thyself to Agni, and sing these two divine verses (gathas), at the

¹Muir Vol. I. pp. 405-407.

sacrifice of Ambarisha; then shalt thou attain the fulfilment.” Being furnished with the two gathas, Sunassepa proposed at once to king Ambarisha that they should set out for their destination. When bound at the stake to be immolated, dressed in a red garment, “he celebrated the two gods, Indra and his younger brother (Vishnu), with the excellent verses. The thousand-eyed (Indra) was pleased with the secret hymn, and bestowed long life on Sunassepa.”

The last episode recorded in which the two appear as opponents is connected with King *Kalmashapada*. The episode is recorded in the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata.

“Kalmashapada was a King of the race Ikshvaku. Vishvamitra wished to be employed by him as his officiating priest; but the king preferred Vashishtha.” It happened, however, that the king went out to hunt, and after having killed a large quantity of game, he became very much fatigued, as well as hungry and thirsty. Meeting Saktri, the eldest of Vashishtha’s hundred sons, on the road, he ordered him to get out of his way. The priest civilly replied: “The path is mine, O King; this is the immemorial law; in all observances the king must cede the way to the Brahman.” Neither party would yield, and the dispute waxing warmer, the king struck the muni with his whip. The muni, resorting to the usual expedient of offended sages, by a curse doomed the king to become a man eater. “It happened that at that time enmity existed between Vishvamitra and Vashishtha on account of their respective claims to be priest to Kalmashapada.” Vishvamitra had followed the king; and approached while he was disputing with Saktri. Perceiving, however, the son of his rival Vashishtha, Vishvamitra made himself invisible, and passed them, watching his opportunity. The king began to implore Saktri’s clemency: but Vishvamitra wishing to prevent their reconciliation, commanded a Rakshasa (a man-devouring demon) to enter into the king. Owing to the conjoint influence of the Brahma-rishi’s curse, and Vishvamitra’s command, the demon obeyed the injunction. Perceiving that his object was gained, Vishvamitra left things to take their course, and absented himself from the country. The king having happened to meet a hungry Brahman, and sent him, by the hand of his cook (who could procure nothing else), some human flesh to eat, was cursed by him also to the same effect as by Saktri. The curse, being now augmented in force, took effect, and Saktri himself was the first victim, being eaten up by the King. The same fate befell all the other sons of Vashishtha at the instigation of Vishvamitra. Perceiving Saktri to be dead, Vishvamitra again and

again incited the Rakshasa against the sons of Vashishtha; and accordingly the furious demon devoured those of his sons who were younger than Saktri as a lion eats up the small beasts of the forest. On hearing of the destruction of his sons by Vishvamitra, Vashishtha supported his affliction, as the great mountain sustains the earth. He meditated his own destruction, but never thought of exterminating the Kausikas. This divine sage hurled himself from the summit of Meru, but fell upon the rocks as if on a heap of cotton. Escaping alive from his fall, he entered a glowing fire in the forest; but the fire, though fiercely blazing, not only failed to burn him, but seemed perfectly cool. He next threw himself into the sea with a heavy stone attached to his neck; but was cast up by the waves on the dry land. He then went home to his hermitage; but seeing it empty and desolate, he was again overcome by grief and went out; and seeing the river Vipasa which was swollen by the recent rains and sweeping along many trees torn from its banks, he conceived the design of drowning himself into its water, he accordingly tied himself firmly with cords, and threw himself in, but the river severing his bonds, deposited him unbound (vipasa) on dry land; whence the name of the stream, as imposed by the sage. He afterwards saw and threw himself into the dreadful Satadru (Sutlej), which was full of alligators, etc., and derived its name rushing away in a hundred directions on seeing the Brahman brilliant as fire. In consequence of this he was once more stranded; and seeing he could not kill himself, he went back to his hermitage."

There are only particular instances of their general enmity towards each other. This general enmity was of a mortal kind so much so that Vishvamitra wanted even to murder Vashishtha. This is related in the Shalyaparva of the Mahabharata. Says the author of the Mahabharata:

"¹There existed a great enmity, arising from rivalry in their austerities, between Vishvamitra and the Brahman rishi Vashishtha. Vashishtha had an extensive hermitage in Sthanutirtha, to the east of which was Vishvamitra's.....These two great ascetics were every day exhibiting intense emulation in regard to their respective austerities. But Vishvamitra, beholding the might of Vashishtha, was the most chagrined; and fell into deep thought. The idea of this sage, constant in duty (!) was the following: 'This river Sarasvati will speedily bring to me on her current the austere Vashishtha, the most eminent of all mutterers of prayers. When that most excellent Brahman has come, I shall most assuredly kill him.' Having thus

¹Muir Vol. I, pp. 420-422.

determined, the divine sage Vishvamisra, his eyes reddened by anger, called to mind the chief of rivers. She being thus the subject of his thoughts, became very anxious, as she knew him to be very powerful and very irascible. Then trembling palid, and with joined hands, the Sarasvati stood before the chief of munis. Like a woman whose husband has been slain, she was greatly distressed; and said to him, 'What shall I do?' The incensed muni replied, 'Bring Vashishtha hither speedily, that I may slay him.' The lotus-eyed goddess, joining her hands trembled in great fear, like a creeping plant agitated by the wind"..... Vishvamisra, however, although he saw her condition, repeated his command. "The Sarasvati, who knew how sinful was his design, and that the might of Vashishtha was unequalled, went trembling, and in great dread of being cursed by both the sages, to Vashishtha, and told him what his rival had said. Vashishtha seeing her emaciated, pale, and anxious, spoke thus: 'Deliver thyself, O chief of rivers; carry me unhesitatingly to Vishvamisra, lest he curse thee'. Hearing these words of the merciful sage, the Sarasvati considered how she could act most wisely. She reflected, 'Vashishtha has always shown me great kindness; I must seek his welfare.' Then observing the Kausika sage praying and sacrificing on her brink, she regarded that as a good opportunity, and swept away the bank by the force of her current. In this way the son of Mitra and Varuna (Vashishtha) was carried down; and while he was being borne along, he thus celebrated the river: 'Thou, O Sarasvati, issuest from the lake of Brahma, and pervadest the whole world with thy excellent streams. Residing in the sky, thou dischargest water into the colouds. Thou alone art all waters. By these we study.' 'Thou art nourishment, radiance, fame, perfection, intellect, light. Thou art speech; thou art Svaha; this world is subject to thee. Thou, in fourfold form, dwellest in all creatures'.....

Beholding Vashishtha brought near by the Sarasvati, Vishvamisra searched for a weapon with which to make an end of him. Perceiving his anger, and dreading lest Brahmanicide should ensue, the river promptly carried away Vashishtha in an easterly direction; thus fulfilling the commands of both sages, but eluding Vishvamisra. Seeing Vashishtha so carried away, Vishvamisra, impatient, and enraged by vexation, said to her: 'Since thou, O chief of rivers, hast eluded me, and hast receded, roll in waves of blood acceptable to the chief of demons,' (which are fabled to gloat on blood). "The Sarasvati, being thus cursed, flowed for a year in a stream mingled with blood.... Rakshasas came to the place of pilgrimage, where Vashishtha had been swept away, and revealed in drinking to satiety

the bloody stream in security, dancing and laughing, as if they had conquered heaven." Some rishis who arrived at the spot some time after were horrified to see the blood-stained water, and the Rakshasas quaffing it, and "made the most strenuous efforts to rescue the Sarasvati."

The foregoing cases relate to individual conflicts between a particular Brahmin and a particular Kshatriya. The cases which follow are cases of class or communal conflicts between Brahmins on the one hand and the Kshatriyas on the other. They are not mere conflicts. Nor is it correct to say that they were like communal riots. They were class wars undertaken by one community with the avowed intention of exterminating the other root and branch. Two such class wars of extermination have been recorded in the Mahabharat. The first is a war of the Haihaya Kshatriyas on the Bhargava Brahmins. It occurred in the reign of the Haihaya King Kritavirya. The following is the description of this war in the Adiparvan of the Mahabharat.

"¹There was a king named Kritavirya, by whose liberality the Bhrigu, learned in the Vedas, who officiated as his priest, had been greatly enriched with corn, and money. After he had gone to heaven, his descendants were in want of money, and came to beg for a supply from the Bhrigus, of whose wealth they were aware. Some of the latter hid their money under ground, others bestowed it on Brahmins, being afraid of the Kshatriyas, while others again gave these last what they wanted. It happened, however, that a Kshatriya, while digging the ground, discovered some money buried in the house of a Bhrigu. The Kshatriyas then assembled and saw this treasure, and, being incensed, slew in consequence all the Bhrigus, whom they regarded with contempt, down to the children in the womb. The widows, however, fled to the Himalaya mountains. One of them concealed her unborn child in her thigh. The Kshatriyas, hearing of its existence from a Brahmini informant, sought to kill it; but it issued forth from its mother's thigh with lustre, and blinded the persecutors. After wandering about bewildered among the mountains for a time, they humbly supplicated the mother of the child for the restoration of their sight; but she referred them to her wonderful infant Aurva into whom the whole Veda, with its six Vedangas, had entered, as the person who (in retaliation of the slaughter of his relatives) had robbed them of their eye-sight, and who alone could restore it. They accordingly had recourse to him, and their eye-sight was restored. Aurva, however, meditated the destruction of all living creatures, in revenge for the slaughter of the

¹ Muir Vol. I. pp. 448-449.

Bhrigus, and entered on a course of austerities which alarmed both gods, asuras, and men; but his progenitors (Pitris) themselves appeared, and sought to turn him from his purpose by saying that they had no desire to be revenged on the Kshatriyas: It was not from weakness that the devout Bhrigus overlooked the massacre perpetrated by the murderous Kshatriyas. When we became distressed by old age, we ourselves desired to be slaughtered by them. The money which was buried by someone in a Bhrigu's house was placed there for the purpose of exciting hatred, by those who wished to provoke the Kshatriyas. For what had we, who were desiring heaven, to do with money?" They add that they hit upon this device because they did not wish to be guilty of suicide, and concluded by calling upon Aurva to restrain his wrath; and abstain from the sin he was meditating, "Destroy not the Kshatriyas, O son, nor the seven worlds. Suppress thy kindled anger which nullifies the power of austere-fervour." Aurva, however, replies that he cannot allow his threat to remain unexecuted. His anger, unless wreaked upon some other object, will, he says, consume himself. And he argues on grounds of justice, expediency, and duty, against the clemency which his progenitors recommend. He is, however, persuaded by the Pitris to throw the fire of his anger into the sea, where they say it will find exercise in assailing the watery element, and in this way his threat will be fulfilled."

The second class war and which was also a war of extermination was declared by the Bhargava Brahmins on the Haihaya Kshatriyas. In this the leader of Bhargava Brahmins was one Parashuram. The story of the birth of Parashuram is described in the Vishnu Purana in the following terms:

"Gadhi's daughter Satyavati had been given in marriage to an old Brahman called Richika, of the family of Bhrigu. In order that his wife might bear a son with the qualities of a Brahman, Richika had prepared for her a dish of Charu (rice, barley, and pulse, with butter and milk) for her to eat; and a similar mess for her mother, calculated to make her conceive a son with the character of a warrior. Satyavati's mother, however, persuaded her to exchange messes. She was blamed by her husband on her return home for what she had done. I quote the words of the original:

"Sinful woman, what improper deed is this that thou has done? I beheld thy body of a very terrible appearance. Thou hast certainly eaten the Charu prepared for thy mother. This was wrong. For into that Chari I had infused all the endowments of heriosm, vigour, and

¹ Muir Vol. I. pp. 349-350.

roce, whilst into thine I had introduced all these qualities of quietude, knowledge, and patience which constitute the perfection of a Brahmin. Since thou hast acted in contravention of my design a son shall be born to thee who shall live the dreadful, martial, and murderous life of a Kshatriya and thy mother's offspring shall exhibit the peaceful disposition and conduct of a Brahman." As soon as she had heard this, Satyavati fell down and seized her husband's feet, and said, 'My lord, I have acted from ignorance; show kindness to me, let me not have a son of the sort thou hast described; if thou pleasest, let me have a grandson of that description.' Subsequently she bore Jamadagni, and her mother gave birth to Vishvamitra. Satyavati became the river called Kausiki. Jamadagni wedded Renuka, the daughter of Renu, of the family of Ikshvaku; and on her he begot a son called Parashurama."

The following additional details about Parashuram's family history is given in the Venaparvan of the Mahabharata:

"¹Jamadagni and Satyavati had five sons, the youngest of whom was the reputable Parasurama. By his father's command he kills his mother (who by the indulgence of impure desire, had fallen from her previous sanctity), after the four elder sons had refused this matricidal offer, and had in consequence been deprived of reason by their father's curse. At Parasurama's desire however, his mother is restored by his father to life, and his brothers to reason; and he himself is absolved from all the guilt of murder; and obtains the boon of invincibility and long life from his father."

This second class war took place in the reign of the Haihaya king Arjuna the son of King Kartavirya. To understand it correctly it is necessary to divide it into two parts for there are two stages in it. The trouble began with the Brahmans claiming certain prerogatives and powers exclusively for themselves and King—Arjuna scouting them in most contemptuous terms. As the Anushasanparvan of the Mahabharata puts it.

"²Then ascending his chariot glorious as the resplendent sun, he exclaimed in the intoxication of his prowess, 'Who is like me in fortitude, courage, fame, heroism, energy, and vigour?' At the end of this speech a bodiless voice on the sky addressed him: 'Thou knowest not, O fool, that a Brahman is better than a Kshatriya. It is with the help of the Brahman that the Kshatriya rules his subjects. Arjuna answers 'If I am pleased, I can create, or, if displeased, annihilate, living beings; and no Brahman is superior to me in

¹ Muir Vol. I, pp. 450.

² Muir Vol. I, pp. 454.

act, thought, or word. The first proposition is that the Brahmins are superior; the second that the Kshatriyas are superior; both of these thou hast stated with their ground, but there is a difference between them. The Brahmins are dependent on the Kshatriyas, and not the Kshatriyas on the Brahmins; and the Kshatriyas on the Brahmins; and the Kshatriyas are eaten up by the Brahmins, who wait upon them and only make the Vedas a pretence. Justice the protection of the people, has its seat in the Kshatriyas. From them the Brahmins derive their livelihood; how then can the latter be superior? I always keep in subjection to myself those Brahmins, the chief of all beings, who subsist on alms, and who have a high opinion of themselves. For truth was spoken by that female the Gayatri in the sky. I shall subdue all those unruly Brahmins clad in hides. No one in the three worlds, god or man can hurl me from my royal authority; wherefore I am superior to any Brahman."

On hearing this Vayu comes and says to Arjuna:

"Abandon this sinful disposition, and to obeisance to the Brahmins. If thou shalt do them wrong, thy kingdom shall be convulsed. They will subdue thee; those powerful men will humble thee, and expel thee from thy country' The king asks him, 'who art thou? Vayu replies, 'I Vayu, the messenger of the gods, and tell thee what is for thy benefit'. Arjuna rejoins, 'Oh thou displayest to-day a great warmth of devotion to the Brahmins. But say that a Brahman is like (any other) earth-born creature. Or say that this most excellent Brahman is something like the wind. But fire is like the waters, or the sun, or the sky.'

Vayu then adduces various instances in which the superiority of the Brahmins has been manifested. Arjuna then drops his hostility against the Brahmins and becomes their friend. In the Anushasanparva he is reported to have said:

"I live altogether and always for the sake of the Brahmins. I am devoted to the Brahmins, and do obeisance to them continually. And it is through the favour of Dattatreya (A Brahman) that I have obtained all this power and high renown, and that I have practised righteousness."

¹ Muir Vol. I. pp. 454.

² Muir Vol. I. pp. 473

It is in the second stage that Parashuram comes on the scene and exterminates the Kshatriyas. The story is told in the Shantiparvan in the following terms:

“¹Being of a meek, pious, kind and charitable turn of mind, the valiant Arjuna thought nothing of the curse; but his sons, who were of an arrogant and barbarous disposition, became the cause of its resulting in his death. Without their father’s knowledge they took away Jamadagni’s calf; and in consequence Parasurama attacked Arjuna and cut off his arms.” His son retaliated by killing Jamadagni. Parashurama incensed at the slaughter of his father, having vowed in consequence to sweep away all Kshatriyas from the earth, seized his weapons; and slaying all the sons and grandsons of Arjuna, with thousands of the Haihayas, he turned the earth into a mass of ensanguined mud. Having thus cleared the earth of Kshatriyas, he became penetrated by deep compassion and retired to the forest. After some thousands of years had elapsed, the hero, naturally irascible, was taunted by Paravsu, the son of Raibhya and grandson of Vishvamitra, in a public assembly in these words: ‘Are not these virtuous men, Pratardana and the others, who are assembled at the sacrifice in the city of Yayati,—are they not Kshatriyas? Thou hast failed to execute thy threat, and vainly boastest in the assembly. Thou has withdrawn to the mountain from fear of those valiant Kshatriyas, while the earth has again become overrun by hundred of their race.’ Hearing these words, Rama seized his weapons. The hundreds of Kshatriyas who had before been spared had now grown powerful kings. These, however, Parasurama now slew with their children, and all the numerous infants then unborn as they came into the world. Some, however, were preserved by their mothers.”

Those who are curious to know the subsequent history of the Kshatriyas might be interested in the following extract from the Adiparvan.

“²Having one and twenty time swept away all the Kshatriyas from the earth, the son of Jamadagni engaged in austerities on Mahendra the most excellent of mountains. After he had cleared the world of Kshatriyas, their widows came to the Brahmans, praying for offspring. The religious Brahmans, free from any impulse of lust cohabited at the proper seasons with these women, who in consequence became pregnant, and brought forth valiant Kshatriya boys and girls, to continue the Kshatriya stock. Thus was the Kshatriya race virtuously begotten by Brahmans on Kshatriya

¹ Muir Vol. I, pp. 454-455.

² Muir Vol. I, pp. 451-452.

women, and became multiplied and long-lived, thence arose four castes inferior to the Brahmins."

These instances of enmity were accompanied by challenges from one side to the other which shows how high were the tempers running on both sides. The conduct of king Nimi in yoking the Brahmins to his chariot and making them drag it like horses show how determined the Kshatriyas were to humiliate the Brahmins. The challenges uttered by Arjuna Kartavirya against the Brahmins indicates his determination to level them down. The Brahmins on their side were not slow to take up this challenge and send counter challenges to the kshatriyas not to provoke the Brahmins. This is very clear from the way Vayu the messenger or Ambassador of the Brahmins talks to Arjuna Kartavirya after he had issued his challenge to the Brahmins. Vayu tells Arjuna how the Brahmins Atri made sea water saltish by urinating in it, how Dandakas were overthrown by the Brahmins, how the Kshatriyas of the Talajaughas were destroyed by a single Brahmin Aurva; The striking power of the Brahmins is not only superior to that of the Kshatriya it is superior to that of the Devas and Vayu proceeds to tell Arjuna some of the victories achieved by the Brahmins over the Devas. He tells him how Varuna ran away with Bhadra the daughter of Soma and the wife of the Brahman Utathya of the race of Angiras how Utathya by his curse caused the earth to be dried up and how Varuna as a consequence submitted to Utathya and returned his wife. He tells him how once the *Devas* were conquered by the Asuras and the Danavas, how deprived of all oblations, and stripped of their dignity they came to the earth went to the Brahmin Agastya and applied to him for protection and how Agastya scorched the Danavas from heaven and earth and made him fly to the South and reinstated the Devas in their dominion. He tells Arjuna how once the Adityas were performing a sacrifice and while engaged in it were attacked by Danavas called Khalims, who came in ten in thousands to slay them, how the Adityas went to Indra and how Indra himself attacked by the Daityas not being able to render help to the Adityas went to the Brahmin Vashishtha for help and how Vashishtha taking mercy on the Adityas saved them by burning the Danavas alive. He next tells Arjuna how the Danavas once fought with the Devas, how by enveloping them in dreadful darkness the Danavas slaughtered the Devas, how the Devas implored the Brahmin Atri to become the moon and dispell the glow around the sun which Atri did thereby saved the Devas from the Danavas. The last episode of Brahmin prowess which Vayu tells Arjuna is how the Brahmin Chyavana compelled Indra to admit the Ashwins to equal rank and drink Soma with them as a token of equality and

how when Indra refused he took away both the earth and heaven from them and how he created a Demon Mada and put the Devas including Indra into his mouth and how he compelled Indra to admit the Ashwins to equal rank and drink Soma with them and how Indra ultimately surrendered to Chyavana.

Vayu did not merely recount these exploits of the Brahmins. He did something more. Every time he gave Arjuna an instance of the power of the Brahmins he ended by asking Arjuna pointed questions such as "Can you tell me of any Kshatriya who was superior to him (i.e. the Brahmins hero of the story)". "Declare on your part, any Kshatriya who has been superior to him, "Tell me of any Kshatriya superior to Atri."

This class war between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas must have gone on for ages. In the light of this the attitude of Manu towards this Class War comes as very strange. Consider the following verses from the Manu Smriti:

IV. 135. "Let him who desires prosperity, indeed, never despise a Kshatriya, a snake, and a learned Brahmana, be they ever so feeble."

IV. 136. "Because these three, when treated with disrespect, may utterly destroy him; hence a wise man must never despise them."

X. 322. "Kshatriyas prosper not without Brahmins, Brahmins prosper not without Kshatriyas; Brahmins and Kshatriyas, being closely united, prosper in this (world) and in the next."

Here there is a clear attempt on the part of Manu to close the ranks. Against whom did Manu want the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas to close their ranks? Was this an attempt to forget and forgive or was the motive to combine them in a conspiracy to achieve some unholy purpose. What were the circumstances that forced Manu to advise the Brahmins to forget their age old enmity with Kshatriyas and seek the helping hand? The circumstances, must have been very hard and very pressing. For there was no room left for a reapproachment between the two. The Brahmins had hurled a terrible insult against the Kshatriyas and had wounded their pride by saying quite openly that the Kshatriyas were the illegitimate children of Brahmins begotten by them on Kshatriyas widows. The next offensive thing that the Brahmins had done to wound the feelings of the Kshatriyas was to extract from the latter a confession that the Brahmins were superior to the Kshatriyas in military prowess and had made Bhishma say:

"¹The prowess of the Brahmins can destroy even the gods. Those wise beings behold all these worlds. To them it is indifferent whether they are perfumed with sandal wood or deformed with mire,

¹ Muir Vol. I, pp. 473-474.

whether they eat or fast, whether they are clad in silk, or in sack cloth or skins. They can turn what is not divine into what is divine, and the converse; and can in their anger create other worlds with their guardians. They are the gods of the gods; and the cause of the cause. The ignorant Brahman is a god, whilst a learned Brahman is yet more a god, like the full ocean.”

All this makes this sudden climb down by the Brahmins, this stopping down to win over the Kshatriyas very mysterious. What can be the key to this mystery?

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