



WISDOM OF THE EAST, HINDU GODS AND HEROES, STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE RELIGION OF INDIA

LIONEL D. BARNETT

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PREFACE

The following pages are taken from the Forlong Bequest lectures which I delivered in March last at the School of Oriental Studies. Owing to exigencies of space, much of what I then said has been omitted here, especially with regard to the worship of Siva; but enough remains to make clear my general view, which is that the religion of the Aryans of India was essentially a worship of spirits--sometimes spirits of real persons, sometimes imaginary spirits--and that, although in early days it provisionally found room for personifications of natural forces, it could not digest them into Great Gods, and therefore they have either disappeared or, if surviving, remain as mere Struldbrugs. Thus I am a heretic in relation to both the Solar Theory and the Vegetation Theory, as everyone must be who takes the trouble to study Hindu nature without prejudice.

L. D. B.

May 29, 1922.

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