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FOR CONSULTATION ONLY

# ELEVEN DISCOURSES

BY

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SIR WILLIAM JONES, KNIGHT,

ONE OF THE JUDGES OF HER MAJESTY'S LATE SUPREME COURT, FORT  
WILLIAM, BENGAL. FOUNDER AND FIRST PRESIDENT  
OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL.

CONTAINING HIS

ANNIVERSARY ADDRESSES ON HISTORY, CIVIL AND  
NATURAL, THE ANTIQUITIES, ARTS, SCIENCES  
AND LITERATURE OF ASIA.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

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A  
DISCOURSE  
DELIVERED AT A MEETING

OF THE  
ASIATIC SOCIETY IN CALCUTTA, ON THE 22ND MAY 1794.

BY THE  
HONOURABLE SIR JOHN SHORE, BART\*  
PRESIDENT.

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GENTLEMEN,



F I had consulted my competency only, for the station which your choice has conferred upon me, I must without hesitation have declined the honour of being the President of this Society; and although I most cheerfully accept your invitation, with every inclination to assist, as far as my abilities extend, promoting the laudable views of your association, I must still retain the consciousness, of those disqualifications, which you have been pleased to overlook.

It was lately our boast to possess a President, whose name, talents, and character, would have been honourable to any institution; it is now our misfortune to lament, that Sir William Jones exists, but in the affections of his friends, and in the esteem, veneration, and regret of all.

I cannot, I flatter myself, offer a more grateful tribute to the Society, than by making his character the subject of my first address to you; and if in the delineation of it, fondness or affection for the man should appear blended with my reverence for his genius and abilities, in the sympathy of your feelings I shall find my apology.

To define with accuracy the variety, value and extent of his literary attainments, requires more learning than I pretend to possess.

\* Since Lord Teignmouth.



and I am therefore to solicit your indulgence for an imperfect sketch, rather than expect your approbation for a complete description of the talents, and knowledge, of your late and lamented President.

I shall begin with mentioning his wonderful capacity for the acquisition of languages, which has never been excelled. In *Greek* and *Roman* literature, his early proficiency was the subject of admiration and applause; and knowledge, of whatever nature, once obtained by him, was ever afterwards progressive. The more elegant dialects of modern *Europe*, the *French*, the *Spanish*, and the *Italian*, he spoke and wrote with the greatest fluency and precision; and the *German* and *Portuguese* were familiar to him. At an early period of life his application to Oriental literature commenced; he studied the *Hebrew* with ease and success, and many of the most learned *Asiatics* have the candour to avow, that his knowledge of *Arabic* and *Persian* was as accurate and extensive as their own; he was also conversant in the *Turkish* idiom, and the *Chinese* had even attracted his notice, so far as to induce him to learn the radical characters of that language, with a view perhaps to farther improvements. It was to be expected, after his arrival in *India*, that he would eagerly embrace the opportunity of making himself master of the *Sanscrit*; and the most enlightened professors of the doctrines of BRAHMA confess with pride, delight, and surprise, that his knowledge of their sacred dialect was most critically correct and profound. The *Pandits*, who were in the habit of attending him, when I saw them after his death, at a public *Durbar*, could neither suppress their tears for his loss, nor find terms to express their admiration at the wonderful progress he had made in their sciences.

Before the expiration of his twenty-second year, he had completed his Commentaries on the Poetry of the *Asiatics*, although a considerable time afterwards elapsed before their publication; and this work, if no other monument of his labours existed, would at once furnish proofs of his consummate skill in the Oriental dialects, of his proficiency in those of *Rome* and *Greece*, of taste and erudition far beyond his years, and of talents and application without example.

But the judgment of Sir William Jones was too discerning to consider language in any other light than as the key of science, and he would have despised the reputation of a mere linguist.





Knowledge and truth, were the object of all his studies, and his ambition was to be useful to mankind ; with these views, he extended his researches to all languages, nations, and times.

Such were the motives that induced him to propose to the Government of this country, what he justly denominated a work of national utility and importance, the compilation of a copious digest of *Hindu* and *Mahommedan* Law, from *Sanscrit* and *Arabic* originals, with an offer of his services to superintend the compilation, and with a promise to translate it. He had foreseen, previous to his departure from *Europe*, that without the aid of such a work, the wise and benevolent intentions of the legislature of *Great Britain*, in leaving, to a certain extent, the natives of these provinces in possession of their own laws, could not be completely fulfilled ; and his experience, after a short residence in *India*, confirmed what his sagacity had anticipated, that without principles to refer to, in a language familiar to the judges of the courts, adjudications amongst the natives must too often be subject to an uncertain and erroneous exposition, or wilful misinterpretation of their laws.

To the superintendence of this work, which was immediately undertaken at his suggestion, he assiduously devoted those hours which he could spare from his professional duties. After tracing the plan of the digest, he prescribed its arrangement and mode of execution, and selected from the most learned *Hindus* and *Mahommedans* fit persons for the task of compiling it ; flattered by his attention, and encouraged by his applause, the *Pandits* prosecuted their labours with cheerful zeal, to a satisfactory conclusion. The *Molavees* have also nearly finished their portion of the work, but we must ever regret, that the promised translation, as well as the meditated preliminary dissertation, have been frustrated by that decree, which so often intercepts the performance of human purposes.

During the course of this compilation, and as auxiliary to it, he was led to study the works of *Ment*, reputed by the *Hindus* to be the oldest, and holiest of legislatures ; and finding them to comprize a system of religious and civil duties, and of law in all its branches, so comprehensive and minutely exact, that it might be considered as the Institutes of *Hindu* law, he presented a translation of them to the Government of *Bengal*. During the same period, deeming no labour excessive or superfluous that tended,





any respect, to promote the welfare or happiness of mankind, he gave the public an *English* version of the *Arabic* text of the *SIRAJIYAH*, or *Mahommedan* Law of Inheritance, with a Commentary. He had already published in *England*, a translation of a Tract on the same subject, by another *Mahommedan* Lawyer, containing, as his own words express, "a lively and elegant epitome of the law of Inheritance, according to *ZAID*."

To these learned and important works, so far out of the road of amusement, nothing could have engaged his application, but that desire which he ever professed, of rendering his knowledge useful to his nation, and beneficial to the inhabitants of these provinces.

Without attending to the chronological order of their publication, I shall briefly recapitulate his other performances in *Asiatic* Literature, as far as my knowledge and recollection of them extend.

The vanity and petulance of ANQUETIL DU PERRON, with his illiberal reflections on some of the learned members of the University of *Oxford*, extorted from him a letter, in the *French* language, which has been admired for accurate criticism, just satire, and elegant composition. A regard for the literary reputation of his country, induced him to translate, from a *Persian* original into *French*, the life of *NADIR SHAH*, that it might not be carried out of *England*, with a reflection, that no person had been found in the British dominions capable of translating it. The students of *Persian* literature must ever be grateful to him, for a grammar of that language, in which he has shown the possibility of combining taste, and elegance, with the precision of a grammarian; and every admirer of *Arabic* poetry, must acknowledge his obligations to him, for an *English* version of the seven celebrated poems, so well known by the name of *Moallakat*, from the distinction to which their excellence had entitled them, of being suspended in the temple of *Mecca*: I should scarcely think it of importance to mention, that he did not disdain the office of Editor of a *Sanscrit* and *Persian* work, if it did not afford me an opportunity of adding, that the latter was published at his own expence, and was sold for the benefit of insolvent debtors. A similar application was made of the produce of the *SIRAJIYAH*.

Of his lighter productions, the elegant amusements of his leisure hours, comprehending hymns on the *Hindu* mythology, poems consisting chiefly of translations from the *Asiatic* languages,



and the version of *SACONTALA*, an ancient *Indian* drama, it would be unbecoming to speak in a style of importance which he did not himself annex to them. They show the activity of a vigorous mind, its fertility, its genius, and its taste. Nor shall I particularly dwell on the discourses addressed to this Society, which we have all perused or heard, or on the other learned and interesting dissertations, which form so large, and valuable a portion of the records of our Researches; let us lament, that the spirit which dictated them is to us extinct, and that the voice to which we listened with improvement, and rapture, will be heard by us no more.

But I cannot pass over a paper, which has fallen into my possession since his demise, in the hand-writing of Sir William Jones himself, entitled *DESIDERATA*, as more explanatory than any thing I can say, of the comprehensive views of his enlightened mind. It contains, as a perusal of it will show, whatever is most curious, important, and attainable in the sciences and histories of *India, Arabia, China, and Tartary*; subjects, which he had already most amply discussed in the disquisitions which he laid before the Society.

### DESIDERATA.

#### INDIA.

- 1.—The Ancient Geography of India, &c. from the Puranas.
- 2.—A Botanical Description of Indian Plants, from the Coshas, &c.
- 3.—A Grammar of the Sanscrit Language, from Panini, &c.
- 4.—A Dictionary of the Sanscrit Language, from thirty-two original Vocabularies and Niructi.
- 5.—On the Ancient Music of the Indians.
- 6.—On the Medical Substances of India, and the Indian Art of Medicine.
- 7.—On the Philosophy of the Ancient Indians.
- 8.—A Translation of the Veda.
- 9.—On Ancient Indian Geometry, Astronomy, and Algebra.
- 10.—A Translation of the Puranas.
- 11.—A Translation of the Mahabbarat and Ramayan.
- 12.—On the Indian Theatre, &c. &c. &c.
- 13.—On the Indian Constellations, with their Mythology, from the Puranas.
- 14.—The History of India before the Mahomedan conquest, from the Sanscrit-Cashmir Histories.





## ARABIA.

- 15.—The History of Arabia before Mahommed.
- 16.—A Translation of the Hamasā.
- 17.—A Translation of Hariri.
- 18.—A Translation of the Facahatul Khulafa.  
Of the Casiah.

## PERSIA.

- 19.—The History of Persia from Authorities in Sanscrit, Arabic, Greek, Turkish, Persian, ancient and modern.  
Firdausi's Khosrau nama.
- 20.—The five Poems of Nizami, translated in prose.  
A Dictionary of pure Persian. Jehangire.

## CHINA.

- 21.—A Translation of the Shi-king.
- 22.—The text of Can-fu-tsu verbally translated.

## TARTARY.

- 23.—A History of the Tartar Nations, chiefly of the Moguls and Othmans, from the Turkish and Persian.

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WE are not authorised to conclude, that he had himself formed a determination to complete the works which his genius and knowledge had thus sketched ; the task seems to require a period, beyond the probable duration of any human life ; but we, who had the happiness to know Sir William Jones, who were witnesses of his indefatigable perseverance in the pursuit of knowledge, and of his ardour to accomplish whatever he deemed important ; who saw the extent of his intellectual powers, his wonderful attainments in literature and science, and the facility with which all his compositions were made, cannot doubt, if it had pleased Providence to protract the date of his existence, that he would have ably executed much, of what he had so extensively planned.

I have hitherto principally confined my discourse to the pursuits of our late President in Oriental literature, which, from their extent, might appear to have occupied all his time ; but they neither precluded his attention to professional studies, nor to science in general : amongst his publications in *Europe*, in polite literature, exclusive of various compositions in prose and verse, I find a translation of the speeches of *Isæus*, with a learned comment ; and, in law, an Essay on the law of Bailments :





upon the subject of this last work, I cannot deny myself the gratification of quoting the sentiments of a celebrated historian : " Sir William Jones has given an ingenious and rational essay on the law of Bailments. He is perhaps the only lawyer equally conversant with the year books of *Westminster*, the commentaries of *ULPIAN*, the Attic pleadings of *ISÆUS*, and the sentences of *Arabian* and *Persian Cadhis*."

His professional studies did not commence before his twenty-second year, and I have his own authority for asserting, that the first book of *English* jurisprudence which he ever studied, was *FORTESCUE*'s essay in praise of the laws of *England*.

Of the ability and conscientious integrity, with which he discharged the functions of a Magistrate, and the duties of a Judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature in this settlement, the public voice and public regret bear ample and merited testimony. The same penetration which marked his scientific researches, distinguished his legal investigations and decisions ; and he deemed no inquiries burthensome, which had for their object substantial justice under the rules of law.

His addresses to the jurors, are not less distinguished for philanthropy, and liberality of sentiment, than for just expositions of the law, perspicuity, and elegance of diction ; and his oratory was as captivating as his arguments were convincing.

In an epilogue to his commentaries on *Asiatic* poetry, he bids farewell to polite literature, without relinquishing his affection for it ; and concludes with an intimation of his intention to study law, expressed in a wish, which we now know to have been prophetic.

Mihi sit, oro, non inutilis toga,  
Nec indiserta lingua, nec turpis manus !

I have already enumerated attainments and works, which, from their diversity and extent, seem far beyond the capacity of the most enlarged minds ; but the catalogue may yet be augmented. To a proficiency in the languages of *Greece*, *Rome*, and *Asia*, he added the knowledge of the philosophy of those countries, and of every thing curious and valuable that had been taught in them. The doctrines of the *Academy*, the *Lyceum*, or the *Portico*, were not more familiar to him than the tenets of *Vedas*, the mysticism of the *Sufis*, or the religion of the ancient *Persians* ; and



whilst with a kindred genius he perused with rapture the heroic, lyric, or moral compositions, of the most renowned poets of *Greece*, *Rome*, and *Asia*, he could turn with equal delight and knowledge, to the sublime speculations, or mathematical calculations, of *BARROW* and *NEWTON*. With them also, he professed his conviction of the truth of the *Christian* religion, and he justly deemed it no inconsiderable advantage, that his researches had corroborated the multiplied evidence of revelation, by confirming the *Mosaic* account of the primitive world. We all recollect, and can refer to, the following sentiments in his eighth anniversary discourse.

"Theological inquiries are no part of my present subject ; but I cannot refrain from adding, that the collection of tracts, which we call from their excellence the Scriptures, contain, independently of a divine origin, more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass from all other books, that were ever composed in any age, or in any idiom. The two parts, of which the Scriptures consist, are connected by a chain of compositions, which bear no resemblance in form or style to any that can be produced from the stores of *Grecian*, *Indian*, *Persian*, or even *Arabian* learning ; the antiquity of those compositions no man doubts, and the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief, that they were genuine predictions, and consequently inspired."

There were in truth few sciences, in which he had not acquired considerable proficiency ; in most, his knowledge was profound. The theory of music was familiar to him ; not had he neglected to make himself acquainted with the interesting discoveries lately made in chymistry ; and I have heard him assert, that his admiration of the structure of the human frame, had induced him to attend for a season to a course of anatomical lectures delivered by his friend, the celebrated *HUNTER*.

His last and favourite pursuit, was the study of *Botany*, which he originally began under the confinement of a severe and lingering disorder, which with most minds, would have proved a disqualification from any application. It constituted the principal amusement of his leisure hours. In the arrangements of *LINNÆUS* he discovered system, truth, and science, which never failed to captivate and engage his attention ; and from the proofs which he has





exhibited of his progress *Botany*, we may conclude that he would have extended the discoveries in that science. The last composition which he read in this Society, was a description of select *Indian* plants, and I hope his Executors will allow us to fulfil his intention of publishing it, as a number in our *Researches*.

It cannot be deemed useless or superfluous to inquire, by what arts or method he was enabled to attain to a degree of knowledge almost universal, and apparently beyond the powers of man, during a life little exceeding forty-seven years.

The faculties of his mind, by nature vigorous, were improved by constant exercise ; and his memory, by habitual practice, had acquired a capacity of retaining whatever had once been impressed upon it. To an unextinguished ardour for universal knowledge, he joined a perseverance in the pursuit of it, which subdued all obstacles ; his studies began with the dawn, and during the intermissions of professional duties, were continued throughout the day ; reflection and meditation strengthened and confirmed what industry and investigation had accumulated. It was a fixed principle with him, from which he never voluntarily deviated, not to be deterred by any difficulties that were surmountable, from prosecuting to a successful termination, what he had once deliberately undertaken.

But what appears to me more particularly to have enabled him to employ his talents so much to his own and the public advantage, was the regular allotment of his time to particular occupations, and a scrupulous adherence to the distribution which he had fixed ; hence, all his studies were pursued without interruption or confusion : nor can I here omit remarking, what may probably have attracted your observation as well as mine, the candour and complacency with which he gave his attention to all persons, of whatsoever quality, talents, or education ; he justly concluded, that curious or important information, might be gained even from the illiterate ; and wherever it was to be obtained, he sought and seized it.

Of the private and social virtues of our lamented President, our hearts are the best records ; to you, who knew him, it cannot be necessary for me to expatiate on the independance of his integrity, his humanity, probity, or benevolence, which every living creature participated ; on the affability of his conversation and manners, or his modest unassuming deportment : nor need I remark, that he was totally free from pedantry, as well as from arrogance and self-sufficiency, which sometimes accompany and disgrace the greatest abilities ;





presents was the delight of every society, which his conversation exhilarated and improved; and the public have not only to lament the loss of his talents and abilities, but that of his example.

To him, as the founder of our institution, and whilst he lived, its firmest support, our reverence is more particularly due; instructed, animated, and encouraged by him, genius was called forth into exertion, and modest merit was excited to distinguish itself. Anxious for the reputation of the Society, he was indefatigable in his own endeavours to promote it, whilst he cheerfully assisted those of others. In losing him, we have not only been deprived of our brightest ornament, but of a guide and patron, on whose instructions, judgment, and candour, we could implicitly rely.

But it will, I trust, be long, very long, before the remembrance of his virtues, his genius, and abilities, lose that influence over the members of this Society, which his living example had maintained; and if previous to his demise he had been asked, by what posthumous honours or attentions we could best show our respect for his memory? I may venture to assert he would have replied, "By exerting yourselves to support the credit of the Society;" applying to it, perhaps, the dying wish of father PAUL, "*esto perpetua!*"


In this wish we must all concur, and with it, I close *this address to you.*



A  
DISCOURSE  
ON THE  
INSTITUTION OF A SOCIETY,  
FOR INQUIRING INTO THE  
HISTORY, CIVIL AND NATURAL,  
THE ANTIQUITIES, ARTS, SCIENCES, AND LITERATURE,  
OF  
ASIA.

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GENTLEMEN,

HEN I was at sea last August, on my voyage to this country, which I had long and ardently desired to visit, I found one evening, on inspecting the observations of the day, that *India* lay before us, and *Persia* on our left, whilst a breeze from *Arabia* blew nearly on our stern. A situation so pleasing in itself, and to me so new, could not fail to awaken a train of reflections in a mind, which had early been accustomed to contemplate with delight the eventful histories and agreeable fictions of this eastern world. It gave me inexpressible pleasure to find myself in the midst of so noble an amphitheatre, almost encircled by the vast regions of *Asia*, which has ever been esteemed the nurse of sciences, the inventress of delightful and useful arts, the scene of glorious actions, fertile in the productions of human genius, abounding in natural wonders, and infinitely diversified in the forms of religion and government, in the laws, manners, customs, and languages, as well as in the features and complexions, of men. I could not help remarking, how important and extensive a field was yet unexplored, and how many solid advantages unimproved; and when I considered, with pain, that, in this fluctuating, imperfect, and





limited condition of life, such inquiries and improvements could only be made by the united efforts of many, who are not easily brought, without some pressing inducement or strong impulse, to converge in a common point, I consoled myself with a hope, founded on opinions which it might have the appearance of flattery to mention, that, if in any country or community, such an union could be effected, it was among my countrymen in *Bengal*, with some of whom I already had, and with most was desirous of having, the pleasure of being intimately acquainted.

You have realized that hope, gentlemen, and even anticipated a declaration of my wishes, by your alacrity in laying the foundation of a society for inquiring into the history and antiquities, the natural productions, arts, sciences, and literature of *Asia*. I may confidently foretel, that an institution so likely to afford entertainment, and convey knowledge, to mankind, will advance to maturity by flow, yet certain, degrees ; as the Royal Society, which at first was only a meeting of a few literary friends at *Oxford*, rose gradually to that splendid zenith, at which a *Halley* was their Secretary, and a *Newton* their President.

Although it is my humble opinion, that, in order to ensure our success and permanence, we must keep a middle course between a languid remissness, and an over zealous activity, and that the tree, which you have auspiciously planted, will produce fairer blossoms, and more exquisite fruit, if it be not at first exposed to too great a glare of sunshine, yet I take the liberty of submitting to your consideration a few general ideas on the plan of our society ; assuring you, that, whether you reject or approve them, your correction will give me both pleasure and instruction, as your flattering attentions have already conferred on me the highest honor.

It is your design, I conceive, to take an ample space for your learned investigations, bounding them only by the geographical limits of *Asia* ; so that, considering *Hindustán* as a centre, and turning your eyes in idea to the North, you have on your right, many important kingdoms in the Eastern peninsula, the ancient and wonderful empire of *China* with all her *Tartarian* dependencies, and that of *Japan*, with the cluster of precious islands, in which many singular curiosities have too long been concealed : before you lies that prodigious chain of mountains, which formerly perhaps were a barrier against the violence of the





sea, and beyond them the very interesting country of *Tibet*, and the vast regions of *Tartary*, from which, as from the *Trojan* horse of the poets, have issued so many consummate warriors, whose domain has extended at least from the banks of the *Ilissus* to the mouths of the *Ganges* : on your left are the beautiful and celebrated provinces of *Iràn* or *Persia*, the unmeasured, and perhaps unmeasurable deserts of *Arabia*, and the once flourishing kingdom of *Yemen*, with the pleasant isles that the *Arabs* have subdued or colonized ; and farther westward, the *Asiatic* dominions of the *Turkish* sultans, whose moon seems approaching rapidly to its wane. —By this great circumference, the field of your useful researches will be inclosed ; but, since *Egypt* had unquestionably an old connection with this country, if not with *China*, since the language and literature of the *Abyssinians* bear a manifest affinity to those of *Asia*, since the *Arabian* arms prevailed along the *African* coast of the *Mediterranean*, and even erected a powerful dynasty on the continent of *Europe*, you may not be displeased occasionally to follow the streams of *Asiatic* learning a little beyond its natural boundary ; and if it be necessary or convenient, that a short name or epithet be given to our society, in order to distinguish it in the world, that of *Asiatic* appears both classical and proper, whether we consider the place or the object of the institution, and preferable to *Oriental*, which is in truth a word merely relative, and, though commonly used in *Europe*, conveys no very distinct idea.

If now it be asked, what are the intended objects of our inquiries within these spacious limits, we answer, MAN and NATURE ; whatever is performed by the one, or produced by the other. Human knowledge has been elegantly analysed according to the three great faculties of the mind, *memory*, *reason*, and *imagination*, which we constantly find employed in arranging and retaining, comparing and distinguishing, combining and diversifying, the ideas, which we receive through our senses, or acquire by reflection ; hence the three main branches of learning are *history*, *science*, and *art* : the first comprehends either an account of natural productions, or the genuine records of empires and states ; the second embraces the whole circle of pure and mixed mathematics, together with ethics and law, as far as they depend on the reasoning faculty ; and the third includes all the beauties of imagery and the charms of invention, displayed in modulated language, or represented by color, figure, or sound.



## THE PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

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Agreeably to this analysis, you will investigate whatever is rare in the stupendous fabric of nature, will correct the geography of *Asia* by new observations and discoveries; will trace the annals, and even traditions of those nations, who from time to time have peopled or desolated it; and will bring to light their various forms of Government, with their institutions civil and religious; you will examine their improvements and methods in arithmetic and geometry, in trigonometry, mensuration, mechanics, optics, astronomy, and general physics; their systems of morality, grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic; their skill in surgery and medicine, and there advancement, whatever it may be, in anatomy and chemistry. To this you will add researches into their agriculture, manufactures, trade; and, whilst you inquire with pleasure into their music, architecture, painting, and poetry, will not neglect those inferior arts, by which the comforts and even elegances of social life are supplied or improved. You may observe, that I have omitted their languages, the diversity and difficulty of which are a sad obstacle to the progress of useful knowledge; but I have ever considered languages as the mere instruments of real learning, and think them improperly confounded with learning itself: the attainment of them is, however, indispensably necessary; and if to the *Persian, Armenian, Turkish, and Arabic*, could be added not only the *Sanscrit*, the treasures of which we may now hope to see unlocked, but even the *Chinese, Tartarian, Japanese*, and the various insular dialects, an immense mine would then be open, in which we might labor with equal delight and advantage.

Having submitted to you these imperfect thoughts on the *limits and objects* of our future society, I request your permission to add a few hints on the *conduct* of it in its present immature state.

LUCIAN begins one of his satirical pieces against historians, with declaring that the only true proposition in his work was, that it should contain nothing true; and perhaps it may be advisable at first, in order to prevent any difference of sentiment on particular points not immediately before us, to establish but one rule, namely, to have no rules at all. This only I mean, that, in the infancy of any society, there ought to be no confinement, no trouble, no expense, no unnecessary formality. Let us, if you please, for the present, have weekly evening meetings in this hall,





for the purpose of hearing original papers read on such subjects, as fall within the circle of our inquiries. Let all curious and learned men be invited to send their tracts to our Secretary, for which they ought immediately to receive our thanks; and if towards the end of each year, we should be supplied with a sufficiency of valuable materials to fill a volume, let us present our *Asiatic miscellany* to the literary world, who have deprived so much pleasure and information from the agreeable work of *Kæmpfer*, than which we can scarce propose a better model, that they will accept with eagerness any fresh entertainment of the same kind. You will not perhaps be disposed to admit mere translations of considerable length, except of such unpublished essays or treatises as may be transmitted to us by native authors; but, whether you will enroll as members any number of learned natives, you will hereafter decide, with many other questions as they happen to arise; and you will think, I presume, that all questions should be decided on a ballot, by a majority of two thirds, and that nine members should be requisite to constitute a board for such decisions. These points, however, and all others I submit entirely, gentlemen, to your determination, having neither wish nor pretension to claim any more than my single right of suffrage. One thing only, as essential to your dignity, I recommend with earnestness, on no account to admit a new member, who has not expressed a voluntary desire to become so; and in that case, you will not require, I suppose, any other qualification than a love of knowledge, and a zeal for the promotion of it.

Your institution, I am persuaded, will ripen of itself, and your meetings will be amply supplied with interesting and amusing papers, as soon as the object of your inquiries shall be generally known. There are, it may not be delicate to name them, but there are many, from whose important studies I cannot but conceive high expectations; and, as far as mere labour will avail, I sincerely promise, that, if in my allotted sphere of jurisprudence, or in any intellectual excursion, that I may have leisure to make, I should be so fortunate as to collect, by accident, either fruits or flowers, which may seem valuable or pleasing, I shall offer my humble *Nazar* to your society with as much respectful zeal as to the greatest potentate on earth.



THE SECOND  
ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED 24TH. FEBRUARY, 1785.

GENTLEMEN,

**I**F the Deity of the *Hindûs*, by whom all their just requests are believed to be granted with singular indulgence, had proposed last year to gratify my warmest wishes, I could have desired nothing more ardently than the success of your institution ; because I can desire nothing in preference to the general good, which your plan seems calculated to promote, by bringing to light many useful and interesting tracts, which, being too short for separate publication, might lie many years concealed, or, perhaps, irrecoverably perish: my wishes are accomplished, without an invocation to CA'MDHĒNU ; and your Society, having already passed its infant state, is advancing to maturity with every mark of a healthy and robust constitution. When I reflect, indeed, on the variety of subjects, which have been discussed before you, concerning the history, laws, manners, arts, and antiquities of *Asia*, I am unable to decide whether my pleasure or my surprise be the greater ; for I will not dissemble, that your progress has far exceeded my expectations ; and, though we must seriously deplore the loss of those excellent men, who have lately departed from this Capital, yet there is a prospect still of large contributions to your stock of *Asiatic* learning, which, I am persuaded, will continually increase. My late journey to *Benares* has enabled me to assure you, that many of your members who reside at a distance, employ a part of their leisure in preparing additions to your archives ; and, unless I am too sanguine, you will soon receive light from them on several topics entirely new in the republic of letters.

It was principally with a design to open sources of such information, that I long had meditated an expedition up the *Ganges* during the suspension of my business ; but, although I had the satisfaction of visiting two ancient seats of *Hindû* superstition and





literature, yet, illness having detained me a considerable time in the way, it was not in my power to continue in them long enough to pursue my inquiries; and I left them, as ÆNEAS is feigned to have left the shades, when his guide made him recollect *the swift flight of irrevocable time*, with a curiosity raised to the height, and a regret not easy to be described.

Whoever travels in *Asia*, especially if he be conversant with the literature of the countries through which he passes, must naturally remark the superiority of *European* talents: the observation, indeed, is at least as old as ALEXANDER; and, though we cannot agree with the sage preceptor of that ambitious Prince, that "*the Asiatics are born to be slaves*," yet the *Athenian* poet seems perfectly in the right, when he represents *Europe* as a *Sovereign Princess*, and *Asia* as *her Handmaid*: but, if the mistress be transcendently majestic, it can not be denied that the attendant has many beauties, and some advantages peculiar to herself. The ancients were accustomed to pronounce *panegyrics* on their own countrymen at the expense of all other nations, with a political view, perhaps, of stimulating them by praise, and exciting them to still greater exertions; but such arts are here unnecessary; nor would they, indeed, become a society, who seek nothing but truth unadorned by rhetoric; and, although we must be conscious of our superior advancement in all kinds of useful knowledge, yet we ought not therefore to contemn the people of *Asia*, from whose researches into nature, works of art, and inventions of fancy, many valuable hints may be derived for our own improvement and advantage. If that, indeed, were not the principal object of your institution, little else could arise from it but the mere gratification of curiosity; and I should not receive so much delight from the humble share, which you have allowed me to take, in promoting it.

To form an exact parallel between the works and actions of the Western and Eastern worlds, would require a tract of no inconsiderable length; but we may decide on the whole, that reason and taste are the grand prerogatives of *European* minds, while the *Asiatics* have soared to loftier heights in the sphere of imagination. The civil history of their vast empires, and of *India* in particular, must be highly interesting to our common country; but we have a still nearer interest in knowing all former modes of ruling *these inestimable provinces*, on the prosperity of which so much of our national welfare, and individual benefit, seems to depend. A minute



geographical knowledge, not only of *Bengal* and *Bahár*, but, for evident reasons, of *all the kingdoms bordering on them*, is closely connected with an account of their many revolutions: but the *natural* productions of these territories, especially in the *vegetable* and *mineral* systems, are momentous objects of research to an *imperial*, but, which is a character of equal dignity, a *commercial*, people.

If *Botany* may be described by metaphors drawn from the science itself, we may justly pronounce a minute acquaintance, with *plants*, their *classes*, *orders*, *kinds*, and *species*, to be its *flowers*, which can only produce *fruit* by an application of that knowledge to the purposes of life, particularly to *diet*, by which diseases may be avoided, and to *medicine*, by which they may be remedied: for the improvement of the last mentioned art, than which none surely can be more beneficial to mankind, the virtues of *minerals* also should be accurately known. So highly has medical skill been prized by the ancient *Indians*, that one of the *fourteen Ratnas*, or *precious things*, which their Gods are believed to have produced by churning the ocean with the mountain *Mandara*, was a *learned physician*. What their old books contain on this subject, we ought certainly to discover, and that without loss of time; lest the venerable but abstruse language, in which they are composed, should cease to be perfectly intelligible, even to the best educated natives, through a want of powerful invitation to study it. *BERNIER*, who was himself of the Faculty, mentions approved medical books in *Sanscrit*, and cites a few aphorisms, which appear judicious and rational; but we can expect nothing so important from the works of *Hindú* or *Musalmán* physicians, as the knowledge, which experience must have given them, of *simple* medicines. I have seen an *Indian* prescription of *fifty-four*, and another of *sixty-six*, ingredients; but such compositions are always to be suspected, since the effect of one ingredient may destroy that of another; and it were better to find certain accounts of a single leaf or berry, than to be acquainted with the most elaborate compounds, unless they too have been proved by a multitude of successful experiments. The noble deobstruent oil, extracted from the *Eranda* nut the whole family of *Balsams*, the incomparable stomachic root from *Columbo*, the fine astringent ridiculously called *Japan* earth, but in truth produced by the decoction of an *Indian* plant, have long been used in *Asia*; and who can foretel what glorious discoveries of other oils, roots,





and salutary juices, may be made by your society? If it be doubtful whether the *Peruvian* bark be *always* efficacious in this country, its place may, perhaps, be supplied by some indigenous vegetable equally antiseptic, and more congenial to the climate. Whether any treatises on *Agriculture* have been written by experienced natives of these provinces, I am not yet informed; but since the court of *Spain* expect to find useful remarks in an *Arabic* tract preserved in the *Escorial*, on the cultivation of land in that kingdom, we should inquire for similar compositions, and examine the contents of such as we can procure.

The sublime science of Chemistry, which I was on the point of calling *divine*, must be added, as a key to the richest treasures of nature; and it is impossible to foresee how greatly it may improve our manufactures, especially if it can fix those brilliant dyes, which want nothing of perfect beauty but a longer continuance of their splendour; or how far it may lead to new methods of *fluxing and compounding metals*, which the *Indians*, as well as the *Chinese*, are thought to have practised in higher perfection than ourselves.

In those elegant arts, which are called *fine* and *liberal*, though of less general utility than the labors of the mechanic, it is really wonderful how much a single nation has excelled the whole world: I mean the ancient *Greeks*, whose *Sculpture*, of which we have exquisite remains both on gems and in marble, no modern tool can equal; whose *Architecture* we can only imitate at a servile distance, but are unable to make one addition to it, without destroying its graceful simplicity; whose *Poetry* still delights us in youth, and amuses us at a maturer age; and of whose *Painting* and *Music* we have the concurrent relations of so many grave authors, that it would be strange incredulity to doubt their excellence. *Painting*, as an art belonging to the powers of the imagination, or what is commonly called *Genius*, appears to be yet in its infancy among the people of the East: but the *Hindu* system of music has, I believe, been formed on truer principles than our own; and all the skill of the native composers is directed to the great object of their art, the *natural expression of strong passions*, to which melody, indeed, is often sacrificed: though some of their tunes are pleasing even to an *European* ear. Nearly the same may be truly asserted of the *Arabian* or *Persian* system; and, by a correct explanation of the best books on that subject, much of the old *Grecian* theory may probably be recovered.



The poetical works of the *Arabs* and *Persians*, which differ surprisingly in their style and form, are here pretty generally known; and, though tastes, concerning which there can be no disputing, are divided in regard to their merit, yet we may safely say of them, what ABULFAZL pronounces of the *Mahābhārat*, that, "although they abound with extravagant images and descriptions, they are in the highest degree entertaining and instructive." Poets of the greatest genius, PINDAR, ÆSCHYLUS, DANTE, PETRARCA, SHAKESPEAR, SPENSER, have most abounded in images not far from the brink of absurdity; but, if their luxuriant fancies, or those of ABULOLA, FIRDAUSI, NIZAMI, were pruned away at the hazard of their strength and majesty, we should lose many pleasures by the amputation. If we may form a just opinion of the *Sanscrit* poetry from the specimens already exhibited, (though we can only judge perfectly by consulting the originals), we cannot but thirst for the whole work of VYASA, with which a member of our society, whose presence deters me from saying more of him, will in due time gratify the public. The poetry of *Mathurā*, which is the *Parnassian* land of the *Hindus*, has a softer and less elevated strain; but, since the inhabitants of the districts near *Agra*, and principally of the *Duab*, are said to surpass all other *Indians* in eloquence, and to have composed many agreeable tales and love-songs, which are still extant, *Bhāshā*, or vernacular idiom of *Vraja*, in which they are written, should not be neglected. No specimens of genuine *Oratory* can be expected from nations, among whom the form of government precludes even the idea of popular eloquence; but the art of writing, in elegant and modulated periods, has been cultivated in *Asia* from the earliest ages: the *Vēdas*, as well as the *Alcorān*, are written in measured prose; and the compositions of ISOCRATES are not more highly polished than those of the best *Arabian* and *Persian* authors.

Of the *Hindu* and *Musalman* architecture there are yet many noble remains in *Bahar*, and some in the vicinity of *Malda*; nor am I unwilling to believe, that even those ruins, of which you will, I trust, be presented with correct delineations, may furnish our own architects with new ideas of beauty and sublimity.

Permit me now to add a few words on the *Sciences*, properly so named; in which it must be admitted, that the *Asiatics*, if compared with our Western nations, are mere children. One of the most sagacious men in this age, who continues, I hope, to improve





and adorn it, SAMUEL JOHNSON, remarked in my hearing, that, "If NEWTON had flourished in ancient Greece, he would have been worshipped as a divinity?" how zealously then would he be adored in *Hindustan*, if his incomparable writings could be read and comprehended by the *Pandits* of *Cashmir* or *Benares*! I have seen a mathematical book in *Sanscrit* of the highest antiquity; but soon perceived from the diagrams, that it contained only simple elements: there may, indeed, have been, in the favorable atmosphere of *Asia*, some diligent observers of the celestial bodies, and such observations, as are recorded, should indisputably be made public; but let us not expect any new *methods*, or the analysis of new *curves*, from the geometricians of *Iran*, *Turkistan*, or *India*. Could the works of ARCHIMEDES, the NEWTON of *Sicily*, be restored to their genuine purity by the help of *Arabic* versions, we might then have reason to triumph on the success of our scientific inquiries; or could the successive improvements and various rules of *Algebra* be traced through *Arabian* channels, to which CARDAN boasted that he had access, the modern History of *Mathematics* would receive considerable illustration.

The Jurisprudence of the *Hindus* and *Musalmáns* will produce more immediate advantage; and, if some standard *law-tracts* were accurately translated from the *Sanscrit* and *Arabic*, we might hope in time to see so complete a Digest of *Indian Laws*, that all disputes among the natives might be decided without *uncertainty*, which is in truth a disgrace, though satirically called a *glory*, to the forensic science.

All these objects of inquiry must appear to you, Gentlemen, in so strong a light, that bare intimations of them will be sufficient; nor is it necessary to make use of *emulation* as an incentive to an ardent pursuit of them: yet I cannot forbear expressing a wish, that the activity of the *French* in the same pursuits may not be superior to ours, and that the researches of M. SONNERAT, whom the court of *Versailles* employed for seven years in these climates, merely to collect such materials as we are seeking, may kindle, instead of abating, our own curiosity and zeal. If you assent, as I flatter myself you do, to these opinions, you will also concur in promoting the object of them; and a few ideas having presented themselves to my mind, I presume to lay them before you, with an entire submission to your judgment.

No contributions, except those of the literary kind, will be requisite for the support of the society; but, if each of us were



occasionally to contribute a succinct description of such manuscripts as he had perused or inspected, with their dates and the names of their owners, and to propose for solution such questions as had occurred to him concerning Asiatic Art, Science, and History, natural or civil, we should possess without labor, and almost by imperceptible degrees, a fuller catalogue of Oriental books, than has hitherto been exhibited, and our correspondents would be apprised of those points, to which we chiefly direct our investigations. Much may, I am confident, be expected from the communications of *learned natives*, whether lawyers, physicians, or private scholars, who would eagerly, on the first invitation, send us their *Mekâmât* and *Risâlahs* on a variety of subjects; some for the sake of advancing general knowledge, but most of them from a desire, neither uncommon nor unreasonable, of attracting notice, and recommending themselves to favor. With a view to avail ourselves of this disposition, and to bring their latent science under our inspection, it might be advisable to print and circulate a short memorial, in *Persian* and *Hindi*, setting forth, in a style accommodated to their own habits and prejudices, the design of our institution; nor would it be impossible hereafter, to give a medal annually, with inscriptions, in *Persian* on one side, and on the reverse in *Sanscrit*, as the prize of merit, to the writer of the best essay or dissertation. To instruct others is the prescribed duty of learned *Brâhmans*, and, if they be men of substance, without reward; but they would all be flattered with an honorary mark of distinction; and the *Muhomedans* have not only the permission, but the positive command, of their law-giver, to *search for learning even in the remotest parts of the globe*. It were superfluous to suggest, with how much correctness and facility their compositions might be translated for our use, since their languages are now more generally and perfectly understood than they have ever been by any nation of *Europe*.

I have detained you, I fear, too long by this address, though it has been my endeavour to reconcile comprehensiveness with brevity: the subjects, which I have lightly sketched, would be found, if minutely examined, to be inexhaustible; and, since no limits can be set to your researches but the boundaries of *Asia* itself, I may not improperly conclude with wishing for your society, what the Commentator on the Laws, prays for the constitution, of our country, that it may be PERPETUAL.





THE THIRD  
ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE,  
ON THE HINDUS,

DELIVERED 2ND. FEBRUARY, 1786.

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**I**N the former discourses, which I had the honor of addressing to you, Gentlemen, on the *institution* and *objects* of our Society, I confined myself purposely to general topics; giving in the first a distant prospect of the vast career, on which we were entering, and, in the second, exhibiting a more diffuse, but still superficial, sketch of the various discoveries in History, Science, and Art, which we might justly expect from our inquiries into the literature of *Asia*. I now propose to fill up that outline so comprehensively as to omit nothing essential, yet so concisely as to avoid being tedious; and, if the state of my health shall suffer me to continue long enough in this climate, it is my design, with your permission, to prepare for our annual meetings a series of short dissertations, unconnected in their titles and subjects, but all tending to a common point of no small importance in the pursuit of interesting truths.

Of all the works, which have been published in our own age, or, perhaps, in any other, on the History of the Ancient World, and *the first population of this habitable globe*, that of Mr. JACOB BRYANT, whom I name with reverence and affection, has the best claim to the praise of deep erudition ingeniously applied, and new theories happily illustrated by an assemblage of numberless converging rays from a most extensive circumference: it falls, nevertheless, as every human work must fall, short of perfection; and the least satisfactory part of it seems to be that, which relates to the derivation of words some *Asiatic* languages. Etymology has, no doubt, some use in historical researches; but it is a medium of proof so very fallacious, that, where it elucidates one fact, it obscures a thousand, and more frequently borders on the ridiculous, than leads to any solid conclusion: it rarely carries with it any



power of conviction from a resemblance of sounds or similarity of letters ; yet often, where it is wholly unassisted by those advantages, it may be indisputably proved by *extrinsic* evidence. We know *à posteriori*, that both *fitz* and *hijo*, by the nature of two several dialects, are derived from *filius* ; that *uncle* comes from *avus*, and *stranger* from *extra* ; that *jour* is deducible, through the *italian*, from *dies* ; and *rossignol* from *luscinia*, or the *singer in groves* ; that *sciuro*, *écureuil*, and *squirrel* are compounded of two *Greek* words descriptive of the animal ; which etymologies, though they could not have been demonstrated *à priori*, might serve to confirm, if any such confirmation were necessary, the proofs of a connection between the members of one great Empire ; but, when we derive our *hanger*, or *short pendent sword*, from the *Persian*, because ignorant travellers thus mis-spell the words *khanjar*, which in truth means a different weapon, or *sandal-wood* from the *Greek*, because we suppose, that *sandals* were sometimes made of it, we gain no ground in proving the affinity of nations, and only weaken arguments, which might otherwise be firmly supported. That *Cut* then, or, as it certainly is written in one ancient dialect, *Cut*, and in others, probably, *Ca's*, enters into the composition of many proper names, we may very reasonably believe ; and that *Algeziras* takes its name from the *Arabic* word for an *island*, cannot be doubted ; but, when we are told from *Europe*, that places and provinces in *India* were clearly denominated from those words, we cannot but observe, in the first instance, that the town, in which we now are assembled, is properly written and pronounced *Calicàt* ; that both *Càt* and *Cùt* unquestionably mean *places of strength*, or, in general, any *inclosures* ; and that *Gujaràt* is at least as remote from *Jezirah* in sound, as it is in situation.

Another exception (and a third could hardly be discovered by any candid criticism) to the *Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, is, that the *method* of reasoning and arrangement of topics adopted in that learned work are not quite agreeable to the title, but almost wholly *synthetical* ; and, though *synthesis* may be the better mode in pure *science*, where the principles are undeniable, yet it seems less calculated to give complete satisfaction in *historical* disquisitions, where every postulatam will perhaps be refused, and every definition controverted : this may seem a slight objection, but the subject is in itself so interesting, and the full conviction of all reasonable men so desirable, that it may not be lost





labor to discuss the same, or a similar theory in a method purely analytical, and, after beginning with facts of general notoriety or undisputed evidence, to investigate such truths, as are at first unknown or very imperfectly discerned.

The *five* principal nations, who have in different ages divided among themselves, as a kind of inheritance, the vast continent of *Asia*, with the many islands depending on it, are the *Indians*, the *Chinese*, the *Tartars*, the *Arabs*, and the *Persians*: *who* they severally were, *whence*, and *when* they came, *where* they now are settled, and *what advantage* a more perfect knowledge of them all may bring to our *European* world, will be shown, I trust, in *five* distinct essays; the last of which will demonstrate the connection or diversity between them, and solve the great problem, whether they had *any* common origin, and whether that origin was *the same*, which we generally ascribe to them.

I begin with *India*, not because I find reason to believe it the true centre of population or of knowledge, but, because it is the country, which we now inhabit, and from which we may best survey the regions around us; as, in popular language, we speak of the *rising sun*, and of his *progress through the Zodiac*, although it had long ago been imagined, and is now demonstrated, that he is himself the centre of our planetary system. Let me here premise, that, in all these inquiries concerning the history of *India*, I shall confine my researches downwards to the *Mahammedan* conquests at the beginning of the *eleventh* century, but extend them upwards, as high as possible, to the earliest authentic records of the human species.

*India* then, on its most enlarged scale, in which the ancients appear to have understood it, comprises an area of near *forty* degrees on each side, including a space almost as large as all *Europe*; being divided on the west from *Persia* by the *Arachosian* mountains, limited on the east by the *Chinese* part of the farther peninsula, confined on the north by the wilds of *Tartary*, and extending to the south as far as the isles of *Java*. This trapezium, therefore, comprehends the stupendous hills of *Potyid* or *Tibet*, the beautiful valley of *Cashmir*, and all the domains of the old *Indoscythians*, the countries of *Nepal Bhutan*, *Camrup* or *Asam*, together with *Siam*, *Ava*, *Racan*, and the bordering kingdoms, as far as the *China* of the *Hindus* or *Sin* of the *Arabian* geographers; not to mention the whole western peninsula with the celebrated island of *Sinhala*



or *Esion-like men*, at its southern extremity. By *India*, in short, I mean that whole extent of country, in which the primitive religion and languages of the *Hindus* prevail at this day with more or less of their ancient purity, and in which the *Nāgarī* letters are still used with more or less deviation from their original form.

The *Hindus* themselves believe their own country, to which they give the vain epithets of *Madhyama* or *Central*, and *Punya-bhūmī*, or the *Land of Virtues*, to have been the portion of *BHARAT*, one of *nine* brothers, whose father had the dominion of the whole earth; and they represent the mountains of *Himalaya* as lying to the north, and, to the west, those of *Vindhya*, called also *Vindian* by the *Greeks*; beyond which the *Sindhu* runs in several branches to the sea, and meets it nearly opposite to the point of *Dwārīka*, the celebrated seat of their Shepherd God: in the *south-east* they place the great river *Saravatya*; by which they probably mean that of *Ava*, called also *Airāvati* in part of its course, and giving perhaps its ancient name to the gulf of *Sabara*. This domain of *Bharat* they consider as the middle of the *Jambudwīpa*, which the *Tibetians* also call the Land of *Zambu*; and the appellation is extremely remarkable; for *Jambu* is the *Sanscrit* name of a delicate fruit called *Jaman* by the *Musalmāns*, and by us *rose-apple*; but the largest and richest fort is named *Amrita*, or *Immortal*; and the Mythologists of *Tibet* apply the same word to a celestial tree bearing *ambrosial fruit*, and adjoining to *four* vast rocks, from which as many sacred rivers derive their several streams.

The inhabitants of this extensive tract are described by Mr. LORD with great exactness, and with a picturesque elegance peculiar to our ancient language: "A people, says he, presented themselves to mine eyes, clothed in linen garments somewhat low descending, of a gesture and garb, as I may say, maidenly and well nigh effeminate, of a countenance shy and some what estranged, yet smiling out a glozed and bashful familiarity." Mr. ORME, the Historian of *India*, who unites an exquisite taste for every fine art with an accurate knowledge of *Asiatic* manners, observes, in his elegant preliminary Dissertation, that this "country has been inhabited from the earliest antiquity by a people, who have no resemblance, either in their figure or manners, with any of the nations contiguous to them," and that, "although conquerors have established themselves at different times in different parts of *India*, yet the original inhabitants have lost very little of their





original character." The ancients, in fact, give a description of them, which our early travellers confirmed, and our own personal knowledge of them nearly verifies ; as you will perceive from a passage in the Geographical Poem of DIONYSIUS, which the Analyst of Ancient Mythology has translated with great spirit:

" To th' east a lovely country wide extends,  
INDIA, whose borders the wide ocean bounds;  
On this the sun, new rising from the main,  
Smiles pleas'd, and sheds his early orient beam.  
Th' inhabitants are swart, and in their locks  
Betray the tints of the dark hyacinth.  
Various their functions; some the rock explore,  
And from the mine extract the latent gold;  
Some labor at the woof with cunning skill,  
And manufacture linen; others shape  
And polish iv'ry with the nicest care :  
Many retire to rivers shoal, and plunge  
To seek the beryl flaming in its bed,  
Or glitt'ring diamond. Oft the jasper's found  
Green, but diaphanous ; the topaz too  
Of ray serene and pleasing ; last of all  
The lovely amethyst, in which combine  
All the mild shades of purple. The rich soil,  
Wash'd by a thousand rivers, from all sides  
Pours on the natives wealth without control."

Their sources of wealth are still abundant even after so many revolutions and conquests; in their manufactures of cotton they still surpass all the world; and their features have, most probably, remained unaltered since the time of DIONYSIUS; nor can we reasonably doubt, how degenerate and abased so ever *Hindus* may now appear, that in some early age they were splendid in arts and arms, happy in government, wise in legislation, and eminent in various knowledge : but, since their civil history beyond the middle of the *nineteenth* century from the present time, is involved in a cloud of fables, we seem to possess only *four* general media of satisfying our curiosity concerning it; namely, first, their *Languages* and *Letters* ; secondly, their *Philosophy* and *Religion*; thirdly, the actual remains of their old *Sculpture* and *Architecture*; and fourthly, the written memorials of their *Sciences* and *Arts*.



I. It is much to be lamented, that neither the *Greeks*, who attended ALEXANDER into *India*, nor those who were long connected with it under the *Bactrian* Princes, have left us any means of knowing with accuracy, what vernacular languages they found on their arrival in this Empire. The *Mahommedans*, we know, heard the people of proper *Hindustan*, or *India* on a limited scale, speaking a *Bhāshā*, or living tongue of a very singular construction, the purest dialect of which was current in the districts round *Agrā* and chiefly on the poetical ground of *Mathurā*; and this is commonly called the idiom of *Vraja*. Five words in six, perhaps, of this language were derived from the *Sanscrit*, in which books of religion and science were composed, and which appears to have been formed by an exquisite grammatical arrangement, as the name itself implies, from some unpolished idiom; but the basis of the *Hindustānī*, particularly the inflections and regimen of verbs, differed as widely from both those tongues, as *Arabic* differs from *Persian*, or *German* from *Greek*. Now the general effect of conquest is to leave the current language of the conquered people unchanged, or very little altered, in its ground-work, but to blend with it a considerable number of exotic names both for things and for actions; as it has happened in every country, that I can recollect, where the conquerors have not preserved their own tongue unmixed with that of the natives, like the *Turks* in *Greece*, and the *Saxons* in *Britain*; and this analogy might induce us to believe, that the pure *Hindi*, whether of *Tartarian* or *Chaldean* origin, was primeval in Upper *India*, into which the *Sanscrit* was introduced by conquerors from other kingdoms in some very remote age; for we cannot doubt that the language of the *Vēdas* was used in the great extent of country, which has before been delineated, as long as the religion of *Brahmā* has prevailed in it.

The *Sanscrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologist could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists: there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the *Gothic* and the *Celtic*, though blended with a very different idiom, had





the same origin with the *Sanscrit*; and the old *Persian* might be added to the same family, if this were the place for discussing any question concerning the antiquities of *Persia*.

The *characters*, in which the languages of *India* were originally written, are called *Nāgarī*, from *Nagara*, a City, with the word *Dēva* sometimes prefixed, because they are believed to have been taught by the Divinity himself, who prescribed the artificial order of them in a voice from heaven. These letters, with no greater variation in their form by the change of straight lines to curves, or conversely, than the *Cusice* alphabet has received in its way to *India*, are still adopted in more than twenty kingdoms and states, from the borders of *Cashgar* and *Khoten*, to *Rāma's* bridge, and from the *Sindhu* to the river of *Siam*; nor can I help believing, although the polished and elegant *Dēvanāgarī* may not be so ancient as the monumental characters in the caverns of *Jarāshindhū*, that the square *Chaldaic* letters, in which most *Hebrew* books are copied, were originally the same, or derived from the same prototype, both with the *Indian* and *Arabian* characters: that the *Phœnician*, from which the *Greek* and *Roman* alphabets were formed by various changes and inversions, had a similar origin, there can be little doubt; and the inscriptions at *Canarhā*, of which you now possess a most accurate copy, seem to be compounded of *Nāgarī* and *Ethiopic* letters, which bear a close relation to each other, both in the mode of writing from the left hand, and in the singular manner of connecting the vowels with the consonants. These remarks may favor an opinion entertained by many, that all the symbols of *sound*, which at first, probably, were only rude outlines of the different organs of speech, had a common origin: the symbols of *ideas*, now used in *China* and *Japan*, and formerly, perhaps, in *Egypt* and *Mexico*, are quite of a distinct nature; but it is very remarkable, that the order of *sounds* in the *Chinese* grammars corresponds nearly with that observed in *Tibet*, and hardly differs from that, which the *Hindūs* consider as the invention of their Gods.

II. Of the *Indian* Religion and Philosophy, I shall here say but little; because a full account of each would require a separate volume: it will be sufficient, in this dissertation to assume, what might be proved beyond controversy, that we now live among the adorers of those very deities, who were worshipped under different names in old *Greece* and *Italy*, and among the professors of those



philosophical tenets, which the *Ionic* and *Attic* writers illustrated with all the beauties of their melodious language. On one hand we see the trident of NEPTUNE, the eagle of JUPITER, the satyrs of BACCHUS, the bow of CUPID, and the chariot of the *Sun*; on another we hear the cymbals of RHEA, the songs of the *Muses*, and the pastoral tales of APOLLO NOMIUS. In more retired scenes, in groves, and in seminaries of learning, we may perceive the *Bráhmans* and the *Sarmanes*, mentioned by CLEMENS, disputing in the forms of *logic*, or discoursing on the vanity of human enjoyments, on the immortality of the soul, her emanation from the eternal mind, her debasement, wanderings, and final union with her source. The *six* philosophical schools, whose principles are explained in the *Darsana Sastra*, comprise all the metaphysics of the old *Academy*, the *Stoa*, the *Lyceum*; nor is it possible to read the *Védanta*, or the many fine compositions in illustration of it, without believing, that PYTHAGORAS and PLATO derived their sublime theories from the same fountain with the sages of *India*. The *Scythian* and *Hyperborean* doctrines and mythology may also be traced in every part of these eastern regions; nor can we doubt, that WOD or ODEN, whose religion, as the northern historians admit, was introduced into *Scandinavia* by a foreign race, was the same with BUDDH, whose rites were probably imported into *India* nearly at the same time, though received much later by the *Chinese*, who soften his name into Fó.

This may be a proper place to ascertain an important point in the Chronology of the *Hindús*; for the priests of BUDDHA left in *Tibet* and *China* the precise epoch of his appearance, real or imagined, in this Empire; and their information, which had been preserved in writing, was compared by the *Christian Missionaries* and scholars with our own era. COUPLET, DE GUIGNES, GIORGI, and BAILLY, differ a little in their accounts of this epoch, but that of *Couplet* seems the most correct: on taking, however, the medium of the four several dates, we may fix the time of BUDDHA, or the ninth great incarnation of VISHNU, in the year one thousand and fourteen before the birth of CHRIST, or two thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine years ago. Now the *Cashmirians*, who boast of his descent in their kingdom, assert that he appeared on earth about two centuries after KRISHNA the *Indian* APOLLO, who took so decided a part in the war of the *Mahabharat*; and, if an Etymologist were to suppose, that the *Athnians* had embellished





their poetical history of PANDION's expulsion and the restoration of ÆGEUS with the *Asiatic* tale of the PA'NDUS and YUDHISHTIR, neither of which words they could have articulated, I should not hastily deride his conjecture: certain it is, that *Pandumandel* is called by the *Greeks* the country of PANDION. We have, therefore, determined another interesting epoch, by fixing the age of KRISHNA near the *three thousandth* year from the present time; and, as the three first *Avatàrs*, or descents of VISHNU, relate no less clearly to an Universal Deluge, in which eight persons only were saved, than the *fourth* and *fifth* do to the *punishment of impiety* and the *humiliation of the proud*, we may for the present assume, that the *second*, or *silver*, age of the *Hindús* was subsequent to the dispersion from *Babel*; so that we have only a dark interval of about a *thousand* years, which were employed in the settlement of nations, the foundation of states or empires, and the cultivation of civil society. The great incarnate Gods of this intermediate age are both named RA'MA but with different epithets; one of whom bears a wonderful resemblance to the *Indian* BACCHUS, and his wars are the subject of several heroic poems. He is represented as a descendent from SURYA, or the SUN, as the husband of SITA, and the son of a princess named CAUSELYA: it is very remarkable, that the *Peruvians*, whose *Incas* boasted of the same descent, styled their greatest festival *Ramasitoo*; whence we may suppose, that *South America* was peopled by the same race, who imported into the farthest parts of *Asia* the rites and fabulous history of RA'MA. These rites and this history are extremely curious; and, although I cannot believe with NEWTON, that ancient mythology was nothing but historical truth in a poetical dress, nor, with BACON, that it consisted solely of moral and metaphysical allegories, nor with BRYANT, that all the heathen divinities are only different attributes and representations of the Sun or of deceased progenitors, but conceive that the whole system of religious fables rose, like the *Nile*, from several distinct sources, yet I cannot but agree, that one great spring and fountain of all idolatry in the four quarters of the globe was the veneration paid by men to the vast body of fire, which "looks from his sole dominion like the God of this world;" and another, the immoderate respect shown to the memory of powerful or virtuous ancestors, especially the founders of kingdoms, legislators, and warriors, of whom the *Sun* or the *Moon* were wildly supposed to be the parents.



III. The remains of *architecture* and *sculpture* in *India*, which I mention here as mere monuments of antiquity, not as specimens of ancient art, seem to prove an early connection between this country and *Africa*: the pyramids of *Egypt*, the colossal statues described by PAUSANIAS and others, the sphinx, and the HERMES *Canis*, which last bears a great resemblance to the *Varahavatar*, or the incarnation of VISHNU in the form of a *Boar*, indicate the style and mythology of the same indefatigable workmen, who formed the vast excavations of *Candarah*, the various temples and images of BUDDHA, and the idols, which are continually dug up at *Gayá*, or in its vicinity. The letters on many of those monument appear; as I have before intimated, partly of *Indian*, and partly of *Abyssinian* or *Ethiopic*, origin; and all these indubitable facts may induce no ill-grounded opinion, that *Ethiopia* and *Hindustàn* were peopled or colonized by the same extraordinary race; in confirmation of which, it may be added, that the mountaineers of *Bengal* and *Bahàr* can hardly be distinguished in some of their features, particularly their lips and noses, from the modern *Abys-sinians*, whom the *Arabs* call the children of CUSH: and the ancient *Hindús*, according to STRABO, differed in nothing from the *Africans*, but in the straitness and smoothness of their hair, while that of the others was crisp or woolly; a difference proceeding chiefly, if not entirely, from the respective humidity or dryness of their atmospheres: hence the people who received the first light of the rising sun, according to the limited knowledge of the ancients, are said by APULEIUS to be the *Arü* and *Ethiopians*, by which he clearly meant certain nations of *India*; where we frequently see figures of BUDDHA with curled hair apparently designed for a representation of it in its natural state.

IV. It is unfortunate, that the *Silpi Sástra*, or collection of treatises on *Arts* and *Manufactures*, which must have contained a treasure of useful information on *dying*, *painting*, and *metallurgy*, has been so long neglected, that few, if any, traces of it are to be found; but the labors of the *Indian* loom and needle have been universally celebrated; and *fine linen* is not improbably supposed to have been called *Sindon*, from the name of the river near which it was wrought in the highest perfection: the people of *Colchis* were also famed for this manufacture, and the *Egyptians* yet more, as we learn from several passages in scripture, and particularly from a beautiful chapter in EZEKIAL containing the most authentic deli-





vention of ancient commerce, of which *Tyre* had been the principal mart. Silk was fabricated immemorially by the *Indians*, though commonly ascribed to the people of *Serica* or *Tancût*, among whom probably the word *Sér*, which the *Greeks* applied to the silk-worm signified *gold*; a sense, which it now bears in *Tibet*. That the *Hindûs* were in early ages a commercial people, we have many reasons to believe; and in the first of their sacred law-tracts, which they suppose to have been revealed by *MENU* many millions of years ago, we find a curious passage on the legal interest of money, and the limited rate of it in different cases, with an exception in regard to adventures at sea; an exception, which the sense of mankind approves, and which commerce absolutely requires, though it was not before the reign of *CHARLES I.* that our own jurisprudence fully admitted it in respect of maritime contracts.

We are told by the *Grecian* writers, that the *Indians* were the wisest of nations; and in moral wisdom, they were certainly eminent: their *Niti Sastra*, or *System of Ethics*, is yet preserved, and the *Fables of VISHNUSERMAN*, whom ridiculously call *Pilpay* are the most beautiful, if not the most ancient, collection of apoloques in the world: they were first translated from the *Sanscrit*, in the sixth century, by the order of *BUZERCHUMHR*, or *Bright as the sun*, the chief physician and afterwards *Vezir* of the great *ANUSHIREVAN*, and are extant under various names in more than twenty languages; but their original title is *Hitopadesa*, or *Amicable Instruction*; and, as the very existence of *Aesop*, whom the *Arabs* believe to have been an *Abyssinian*, appears rather doubtful, I am not disinclined to suppose, that the first moral fables, which appeared in *Europe*, were of *Indian* or *Ethiopian* origin.

The *Hindus* are said to have boasted of three inventions, all of which, indeed, are admirable, the method of instructing by apoloques, the decimal scale adopted now by all civilized nations, and the game of *Chess*, on which they have some curious treatises; but, if their numerous works on Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Music, all which are extant and accessible, were explained in some language generally known, it would be found, that they had yet higher pretensions to the praise of a fertile and inventive genius. Their lighter Poems are lively and elegant; their Epic, magnificent and sublime in the highest degree; their *Puran's* comprise a series of mythological Histories in blank verse from the Creation to the supposed incarnation of *BUDDHA*; and their *Vedas*, as far as we can



ledge from that compendium of them, which is called *Upanishad*, abound with noble speculations in metaphysics, and fine discourses on the being and attributes of God. Their most ancient medical book, entitled *Charaka*, is believed to be the work of SIVA; for each of the divinities in their *Triad* has at least one *sacred* composition ascribed to him; but, as to mere human works on *History* and *Geography*, though they are said to be extant in *Cashmir*, it has not been yet in my power to procure them. What their *astronomical* and *mathematical* writings contain, will not, I trust, remain long a secret: they are easily procured, and their importance cannot be doubted. The Philosopher, whose works are said to include a system of the universe founded on the principle of *Attraction* and the *Central* position of the sun, is named YAVAN ACHARYA, because he had travelled, we are told, into *Ionia*: if this be true, he might have been one of those, who conversed with PYTHAGORAS; this at least is undeniable, that a book on astronomy in *Sanscrit* bears the title of *Yavana Jatica*, which may signify the *Ionian* Sect; nor is it improbable, that the names of the planets and *Zodiacal* stars, which the *Arabs* borrowed from the *Greeks*, but which we find in the oldest *Indian* records, were originally devised by the same ingenious and enterprising race, from whom both *Greece* and *India* were peopled; the race, who, as DIONYSIUS describes them,

——— 'first assayed the deep,

And wafted merchandise to coasts unknown,

Those, who digested first the starry choir,

Their motions mark'd, and call'd them by their names.'

Of these cursory observations on the *Hindus*, which it would require volumes to expand and illustrate, this is the result: that they had an immemorial affinity with the old *Persians*, *Ethiopians*, and *Egyptians*, the *Phenicians*, *Greeks*, and *Tuscans*, the *Scythians* or *Goths*, and *Celts*, the *Chinese*, *Japanese*, and *Peruvians*; whence, as no reason appears for believing, that they were a colony from any one of those nations, or any of those nations from them, we may fairly conclude that they all proceeded from some *central* country, to investigate which will be the object of my future Discourses; and I have a sanguine hope, that your collections during the present year will bring to light many useful discoveries; although the departure for *Europe* of a very ingenious member, who first opened the inestimable mine of *Sanscrit* literature, will often deprive us of accurate and solid information concerning the languages and antiquities of *India*.





THE FOURTH  
ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE,  
ON THE ARABS,

DELIVERED 15TH. FEBRUARY, 1787.

GENTLEMEN,

**I**HAD the honor last year of opening to you my intention, to discourse at our annual meetings on the *five* principal nations, who have peopled the continent and islands of *Asia*; so as to trace, by an historical and philological analysis, the number of ancient stems, from which those five branches have severally sprung, and the central region, from which they appear to have proceeded: you may, therefore, expect, that, having submitted to your consideration a few general remarks on the old inhabitants of *India*, I should now offer my sentiments on some other nation, who, from a similarity of *language, religion, arts, and manners*, may be supposed to have had an early connection with the *Hindus*; but, since we find some *Asiatic* nations totally dissimilar to them in all or most of those particulars, and since the difference will strike you more forcibly by an immediate and close comparison, I design at present to give a short account of a wonderful people, who seem in every respect so strongly contrasted to the original natives of this country, that they must have been for ages a distinct and separate race.

For the purpose of these discourses, I considered *India* on its largest scale, describing it as lying between *Persia* and *China*, *Tartary* and *Java*; and, for the same purpose, I now apply the name of *Arabia*, as the *Arabian* Geographers often apply it, to that extensive Peninsula, which the Red Sea divides from *Africa*, the great *Assyrian* river from *Iran*, and of which the *Erythrean* Sea washes the base; without excluding any part of its western side, which would be completely maritime, if no isthmus intervened between the *Mediterranean*, and the Sea of *Kolsom*: that country in short I call *Arabia*, in which the *Arabie* language and letters, or such as have a near affinity to them, have been immemorially current.



*Arabia*, thus divided from *India* by a vast ocean, or at least by a broad bay, could hardly have been connected in any degree with this country, until navigation and commerce had been considerably improved: yet, as the *Hindus* and the people of *Yemen* were both commercial nations in a very early age, they were probably the first instruments of conveying to the western world the gold, ivory, and perfumes of *India*, as well as the fragrant wood, called *alluwva* in *Arabic* and *aguru* in *Sanscrit*, which grows in the greatest perfection in *Anam* or *Cochinchina*. It is possible too, that a part of the *Arabian* Idolatry might have been derived from the same source with that of the *Hindus*; but such an intercourse may be considered as partial and accidental only; nor am I more convinced, than I was fifteen years ago, when I took the liberty to animadvert on a passage in the History of Prince KANTEMIR, that the *Turks* have any just reason for holding the coast of *Yemen* to be a part of *India*, and calling its inhabitants *Yellow Indians*.

The *Arabs* have never been entirely subdued; nor has any impression been made on them, except on their borders; where, indeed, the *Phenicians*, *Persians*, *Ethiopians*, *Egyptians*, and, in modern times, the *Othmàn Tartars*, have severally acquired settlements; but, with these exceptions, the natives of *Hejâz* and *Yemen* have preserved for ages the sole dominion of their deserts and pastures, their mountains and fertile valleys: thus, apart from the rest of mankind, this extraordinary people have retained their primitive manners and language, features and character, as long and as remarkably as the *Hindus* themselves. All the genuine *Arabs*, of *Syria* whom I knew in *Europe*, those of *Yemen*, whom I saw in the isle of *Hinzuan*, whither many had come from *Maskat* for the purpose of trade, and those of *Hejâz*, whom I have met in *Bengal*, form a striking contrast to the *Hindu* inhabitants of these provinces: their eyes are full of vivacity, their speech voluble and articulate, their deportment manly and dignified, their apprehension quick, their minds always present and attentive; with a spirit of independence appearing in the countenances even of the lowest among them. Men will always differ in their ideas of civilization, each measuring it by the habits and prejudices of his own country; but, if courtesy and urbanity, a love of poetry and eloquence, and the practice of exalted virtues be a juster measure of perfect society, we have certain proof, that the people of *Arabia*, both on plains and in cities,





republican and monarchical states, were eminently civilized for many ages before their conquest of *Persia*.

It is deplorable, that the ancient History of this majestic race should be as little known in detail before the time of *Dhū Yezen*, as that of the *Hindus* before *Vicramaditya*; for, although the vast historical work of *Alnuwairi*, and the *Murujuldhahab*, or *Golden Meadows*, of *Almasūdi*, contain chapters on the kings of *Himyar*, *Ghasān*, and *Hirah*, with lists, of them and sketches of their several reigns, and although Genealogical Tables, from which chronology might be better ascertained, are prefixed to many compositions of the old *Arabian* Poets, yet most manuscripts are so incorrect, and so many contradictions are found in the best of them, that we can scarce lean upon tradition with security, and must have recourse to the same media for investigating the history of the *Arabs*, that I before adopted in regard to that of the *Indians*; namely, their *language*, *letters*, and *religion*, their ancient *monuments*, and the certain remains of their *arts*; on each of which heads I shall touch very concisely, having premised, that my observations will in general be confined to the state of *Arabia* before that singular revolution, at the beginning of the *seventh century*, the effects of which we feel at this day from the *Pyrenean* mountains, and the *Danube*, to the farthest parts of the *Indian Empire*, and even to the *Eastern Islands*.

I. For the knowledge, which any *European*, who pleases, may attain of the *Arabian* language, we are principally indebted to the university of *Leyden*; for, though several *Italians* have assiduously laboured in the same wide field, yet the fruit of their labours has been rendered almost useless by more commodious and more accurate works printed in *Holland*; and, though *Pocock* certainly accomplished much, and was able to accomplish any thing, yet the *Academical* ease, which he enjoyed, and his theological pursuits, induced him to leave unfinished the valuable work of *Maidāni*, which he had prepared for publication; nor, even if that rich mine of *Arabian* Philology had seen the light, would it have borne any comparison with the fifty dissertations of *Hariri*, which the first *ALBERT SCHULTENS* translated and explained, though he sent abroad but few of them, and has left his worthy grandson, from whom perhaps *Maidāni* also may be expected, the honor of publishing the rest: but the palm of glory in this branch of literature is due to *GOLIUS*, whose works are equally profound



and elegant ; so perspicuous in method, that they may always be consulted without fatigue, and read without languor, yet so abundant in matter, that any man, who shall begin with his noble edition of the Grammar compiled by his master ERPENIUS, and proceed, with the help of his incomparable dictionary, to study his History of *Taimûr* by *Ibni Arabshâh*, and shall make himself complete master of that sublime work, will understand the learned *Arabic* better than the deepest scholar at *Constantinople* or at *Mecca*. The *Arabic* language, therefore, is almost wholly in our power ; and, as it is unquestionably one of the most ancient in the world, so it yields to none ever spoken by mortals in the number of its words and the precision of its phrases ; but it is equally true and wonderful, that it bears not the least resemblance, either in words or the structure of them, to the *Sanscrit*, or great parent of the *Indian* dialects ; of which dissimilarity I will mention two remarkable instances : the *Sanscrit*, like the *Greek*, *Persian*, and *German*, delights in compounds, but, in a much higher degree, and indeed to such excess, that I could produce words of more than twenty syllables, not formed ludicrously, like that by which the buffoon in ARISTOPHANES describes a feast, but with perfect seriousness, on the most solemn occasions, and in the most elegant works ; while the *Arabic*, on the other hand, and all its sister dialects, abhor the composition of words, and invariably express very complex ideas by circumlocution ; so that, if a compound word be found in any genuine language of the *Arabian* Peninsula, (*Zemmerdah* for instance, which occurs in the *Hamasah*) it may at once be pronounced an exotic. Again ; it is the genius of the *Sanscrit*, and other languages of the same stock, that the roots of verbs be almost universally *biliteral*, so that *five and twenty hundred* such roots might be formed by the composition of the *fifty Indian* letters ; but the *Arabic* roots are as universally *triliteral*, so that the composition of the *twenty-eight Arabian* letters would give near *two and twenty thousand elements* of the language : and this will demonstrate the surprising extent of it ; for, although great numbers of its roots are confessedly lost, and some, perhaps, were never in use, yet, if we suppose ten thousand of them (without reckoning *quadriliterals*) to exist, and each of them to admit only *five* variations, one with another, in forming *derivative nouns*, even then a perfect *Arabic* dictionary ought to contain *fifty thousand* words, each of which may receive a multitude of





changes by the rules of grammar. The derivatives in *Sanscrit* are considerably more numerous : but a farther comparison between the two languages is here unnecessary ; since, in whatever light we view them, they seem totally distinct, and must have been invented by two different races of men ; nor do I recollect a single word in common between them, except *Suruj*, the plural of *Siraj* meaning both a *lamp* and the *sun*, the *Sanscrit* name of which is, in *Bengal*, pronounced *Súrja* ; and even this resemblance may be purely accidental. We may easily believe with the *Hindus*, that not even *INDRA* himself and his heavenly bands, much less any mortal, ever comprehended in his mind such an ocean of words as their sacred language contains, and with the *Arabs*, that no man uninspired was ever a complete master of *Arabic* : in fact no person, I believe, now living in *Europe* or *Asia*, can read without study an hundred couplets together in any collection of ancient *Arabian* poems ; and we are told, that the great author of the *Kámús* learned by accident from the mouth of a child, in a village of *Arabia*, the meaning of three words, which he had long sought in vain from grammarians, and from books, of the highest reputation. It is by approximation alone, that a knowledge of these two venerable languages can be acquired ; and, with moderate attention, enough of them both may be known, to delight and instruct us in an infinite degree : I conclude this head with remarking, that the nature of the *Ethiopic* dialect seems to prove an early establishment of the *Arabs* in part of *Ethiopia*, from which they were afterwards expelled, and attacked even in their own country by the *Abyssinians*, who had been invited over as auxiliaries against the tyrant of *Yemen* about a century before the birth of *MAHOMMED*.

Of the characters, in which the old compositions of *Arabia* were written, we know but little ; except that the *Korán* originally appeared in those of *Cúsak*, from which the modern *Arabian* letters, with all their elegant variations, were derived, and which unquestionably had a common origin with the *Hebrew* or *Chaldaic* ; but, as to the *Himyaric* letters, or those which we see mentioned by the name of *Almusnad*, we are still in total darkness ; the traveller *NIEBUHR* having been unfortunately prevented from visiting some ancient monuments in *Yemen*, which are said to have inscriptions on them : if those letters bear a strong resemblance to the *Nagari*, and if a story current in *India* be true, that some



*Hindu* merchants heard the *Sanscrit* language spoken in *Arabia* the *Happy*, we might be confirmed in our opinion, that an intercourse formerly subsisted between the two nations of opposite coasts, but should have no reason to believe, that they sprang from the same immediate stock. The first syllable of *Hamyar*, as many *Europeans* write it, might perhaps induce an Etymologist to derive the *Arabs* of *Yemen* from the great ancestor of the *Indians*; but we must observe, that *Himyar* is the proper appellation of those *Arabs*; and many reasons concur to prove, that the word is purely *Arabic*: the similarity of some proper names on the borders of *India* to those of *Arabia*, as the river *Arabius*, a place called *Araba*, a people named *Aribes* or *Arabies* and another called *Sabai* is indeed remarkable, and may hereafter furnish me with observations of some importance, but not at all inconsistent with my present ideas.

II. It is generally asserted, that the old religion of the *Arabs* was entirely *Sabian*; but I can offer so little accurate information concerning the *Sabian* faith, or even the meaning of the word, that I dare not yet speak on the subject with confidence. This at least is certain, that the people of *Yemen* very soon fell into the common, but fatal, error of adoring the Sun and the Firmament; for even the *third* in descent from YOKTAN, who was consequently as old as NAHOR, took the surname of ABDUSHAMS, or *Servant of the Sun*; and his family, we are assured, paid particular honors to that luminary: other tribes worshipped the planets and fixed stars; but the religion of the poets at least seems to have been pure Theism; and this we know with certainty, because we have *Arabian* verses of unsuspected antiquity, which contain pious and elevated sentiments on the goodness and justice, the power and omnipresence, of ALLAH, or THE GOD. If an inscription, said to have been found on marble in *Yemen*, be authentic, the ancient inhabitants of that country preserved the religion of EBER, and professed a belief in *miracles and a future state*.

We are also told, that a strong resemblance may be found between the religions of the pagan *Arabs* and the *Hindus*; but, though this may be true, yet an agreement in worshipping the sun and stars will not prove an affinity between the two nations: the powers of God represented as *female* deities, the adoration of *stones*, and the name of the Idol WUDN, may lead us indeed to suspect, that some of the *Hindu* superstitions had found their way into





*Arabia*; and, though we have no traces in *Arabian History* of such a conqueror or legislator as the great SESAC, who is said to have raised pillars in *Yemen* as well as at the mouth of the *Ganges*, yet, since we know, that SACYA is a title of BUDDHA, whom I suppose to be WODEN, since BUDDHA was not a native of *India*, and since the age of SESAC perfectly agrees with that of SACYA, we may form a plausible conjecture, that they were in fact the same person, who travelled eastward from *Ethiopia*, either as a warrior or as a lawgiver, about a thousand years before CHRIST, and whose rites we now see extended as far as the country of *Nippon*; or, as the *Chinese* call it, *Japuen*, both words signifying the *Rising Sun*. SACYA may be derived from a word meaning *power*, or from another denoting *vegetable food*; so that this epithet will not determine, whether he was a hero or a philosopher; but the title BUDDHA, or *wise*, may induce us to believe, that he was rather a benefactor, than a destroyer, of his species: if his religion, however, was really introduced into any part of *Arabia*, it could not have been general in that country; and we may safely pronounce, that before the *Mahommedan* revolution, the noble and learned *Arabs* were Theists, but that a stupid idolatry prevailed among the lower orders of the people.

I find no trace among them, till their emigration, of any Philosophy but *Ethics*; and even their system of morals, generous and enlarged as it seems to have been in the minds of a few illustrious chieftains, was on the whole miserably depraved for a century at least before MAHOMMED: the distinguishing virtues, which they boasted of inculcating and practising, were a contempt of riches and even of death; but, in the age of the *Seven poets*, their liberality had deviated into mad profusion, their courage into ferocity, and their patience into an obstinate spirit of encountering fruitless dangers; but I forbear to expatiate on the manners of the *Arabs* in that age, because the poems, entitled *Almoallakat*, which have appeared in our own language, exhibit an exact picture of their virtues and their vices, their wisdom and their folly; and show what may be constantly expected from men of open hearts and boiling passions, with no law to control, and little religion to restrain, them.

III. Few monuments of antiquity are preserved in *Arabia*, and of those few the best accounts are very uncertain; but we are assured, that inscriptions on rocks and mountains are still seen in



various parts of the Peninsula; which, if they are in any known language, and if correct copies of them can be procured, may be decyphered by easy and infallible rules.

The first ALBERT SCHULTENS has preserved in his *Ancient Memorials of Arabia*, the most pleasing of all his works, two little poems in an elegiac strain, which are said to have been found, about the middle of the seventh century, on some fragments of ruined edifices in *Hadramut* near *Aden*, and are supposed to be of an indefinite, but very remote, age. It may naturally be asked: In what characters were they written? Who decyphered them? Why were not the original letters preserved in the book, where the verses are cited? What became of the marbles, which *Abdurrahman*, then governor of *Yemen*, most probably sent to the *Kalif* at *Bagdad*? If they be genuine, they prove the people of *Yemen* to have been 'herdsmen and warriors, inhabiting a fertile and well-watered country full of game, and near a fine sea abounding with fish, under a monarchical government, and dressed in green silk or vests of needlework,' either of their own manufacture or imported from *India*. The measure of these verses is perfectly regular, and the dialect undistinguishable, at least by me, from that of *Kuraish*; so that, if the *Arabian* writers were much addicted to literary impostures, I should strongly suspect them to be modern compositions on the instability of human greatness, and the consequences of irreligion, illustrated by the example of the *Himyaric* princes; and the same may be suspected of the first poem quoted by SCHULTENS, which he ascribes to an *Arab* in the age of SOLOMON.

The supposed houses of the people called *Thamud* are also still to be seen in excavations of rocks; and, in the time of TABRIZI the Grammarian, a castle was extant in *Yemen*, which bore the name of ALADBAT, an old bard and warrior, who first, we are told, formed his army, thence called *alkhamis*, in five parts, by which arrangement he defeated the troops of *Himyar* in an expedition against *Sandâ*.

Of pillars erected by SESAC, after his invasion of *Yemen*, we find no mention in *Arabian* histories; and, perhaps, the story has no more foundation than another told by the *Greeks* and adopted by NEWTON, that the *Arabs* worshipped URANIA, and even BACCHUS by name, which, they say, means *great* in *Arabic*; but where they found such a word, we cannot discover: it is true, that *Bebeah*





signifies a great and tumultuous crowd, and, in this sense, is the name of the sacred city commonly called *Mecca*.

The *Cabah*, or quadrangular edifice at *Mecca*, is indisputably so ancient, that its original use, and the name of its builder, are lost in a cloud of idle traditions. An *Arab* told me gravely, that it was raised by *ABRAHAM*, who, as I assured him, was never there: others ascribe it, with more probability, to *ISMAIL*, or one of his immediate descendants; but whether it was built as a place of divine worship, as a fortress, as a sepulchre, or as a monument of the treaty between the old possessors of *Arabia* and the sons of *KIDAR*, antiquaries may dispute, but no mortal can determine. It is thought by *RELAND* to have been the mansion of some ancient Patriarch, and revered on that account by his posterity; but the room, in which we now are assembled, would contain the whole *Arabian* edifice; and, if it were large enough for the dwelling-house of a patriarchal family, it would seem ill adapted to the pastoral manners of the *Kedarites*: a *Persian* author insists, that the true name of *Mecca* is *Mahcadah*, or the Temple of the Moon; but, although we may smile at his etymology, we cannot but think it probable, that the *Cabah* was originally designed for religious purposes. Three couplets are cited in an *Arabic* History of this Building, which, from their extreme simplicity, have less appearance of imposture than other verses of the same kind: they are ascribed to *ASAD*, a *Tabba*, or king by succession, who is generally allowed to have reigned in *Yemeh* an hundred and twenty-eight years before *CHRIST*'s birth, and they commemorate, without any poetical imagery, the magnificence of the prince in covering the holy temple with striped cloth and fine linen, and in making keys for its gate. This temple, however, the sanctity of which was restored by *MAHOMMED*, had been strangely profaned at the time of his birth, when it was usual to decorate its walls with poems on all subjects, and often on the triumphs of *Arabian* gallantry and the praises of *Grecian* wine, which the merchants of *Syria* brought for sale into the deserts.

From the want of materials on the subject of *Arabian* antiquity, we find it very difficult to fix the Chronology of the *Ismailites* with accuracy beyond the time of *ADNAN*, from whom the impostor was descended in the *Twenty-first* degree; and, although we have genealogies of *ALKAMAH* and other *Himjaric* bards as high as the *thirtieth* degree, or for a period of nine hundred years at least, yet we can hardly depend on them so far, as to establish a complete



Chronological system: by reasoning downwards, however, we may ascertain some points of considerable importance. The universal tradition of *Yemen* is, that YOKTAN, the son of EBER, first settled his family in that country; which settlement, by the computation admitted in *Europe*, must have been above *Three thousand six hundred* years ago, and nearly at the time, when the *Hindus*, under the conduct of RA'MA, were subduing the first inhabitants of these regions, and extending the *Indian* Empire from *Ayódhyà* or *Oude* as far as the isle of *Sinhal* or *Sylan*. According to this calculation, NUUMAN, king of *Yemen* in the *ninth* generation from EBER, was contemporary with JOSEPH; and, if a verse composed by that prince, and quoted by ABULFEDA, was really preserved, as it might easily have been, by oral tradition, it proves the great antiquity of the *Arabian* language and metre. This is a literal version of the couplet: 'When thou, who art in power, conductest affairs with courtesy, thou attainest the high honors of those, who are most exalted, and whose mandates are obeyed.' We are told, that, from an elegant verb in this distich, the royal poet acquired the surname of *Almuláfer*, or the *Courteous*. Now the reasons for believing this verse genuine are its brevity, which made it easy to be remembered, and the good sense comprised in it, which made it become proverbial; to which we may add, that the dialect is apparently old, and differs in three words from the idiom of *Hejaz*: the reasons for doubting are, that sentences and verses of indefinite antiquity are sometimes ascribed by the *Arabs* to particular persons of eminence; and they even go so far as to cite a pathetic elegy of ADAM himself on the death of ABEL, but in very good *Arabic* and correct measure. Such are the doubts, which necessarily must arise on such a subject; yet we have no need of ancient monuments or traditions to prove all that our analysis requires, namely, that the *Arabs*, both of *Hejaz* and *Yemen*, sprang from a stock entirely different from that of the *Hindus*, and that their first establishments in the respective countries, where we now find them, were nearly coeval.

I cannot finish this article without observing, that, when the King of *Denmark's* ministers instructed the *Danish* travellers to collect *historical* books in *Arabic*, but not to busy themselves with procuring *Arabian* poems, they certainly were ignorant, that the only monuments of old *Arabian* History are collections of poetical pieces and the commentaries on them; that all memorable transac-





ions in *Arabia* were recorded in verse; and that more certain facts may be known by reading the *Hamdsah*, the *Divân* of *Hudhail*, and the valuable work of *Obaidullah*, than by turning over a hundred volumes in prose, unless indeed those poems are cited by the historians as their authorities.

IV. The manners of the *Hejâzî Arabs*, which have continued, we know, from the time of *SOLOMON* to the present age, were by no means favorable to the cultivation of *arts*; and, as to *sciences*, we have no reason to believe, that they were acquainted with any; for the mere amusement of giving names to stars, which were useful to them in their pastoral or predatory rambles through the deserts, and in their observations on the weather, can hardly be considered as a material part of astronomy. The only arts, in which they pretended to excellence, (I except horsemanship and military accomplishments) were *poetry* and *rhetoric*: that we have none of their compositions in prose before the *Korân*, may be ascribed, perhaps, to the little skill, which they seem to have had in writing; to their predilection in favor of poetical measure, and to the facility, with which verses are committed to memory; but all their stories prove, that they were eloquent in a high degree, and possessed wonderful powers of speaking without preparation in flowing and forcible periods. I have never been able to discover, what was meant by their books, called *Rawdsim*, but suppose, that they were collections of their common, or customary, law. Writing was so little practised among them, that their old poems, which are now accessible to us, may almost be considered as originally unwritten; and I am inclined to think, that *SAMUEL JOHNSON*'s reasoning, on the extreme imperfection of unwritten languages, was too general; since a language, that is only spoken, may nevertheless be highly polished by a people, who, like the ancient *Arabs*, make the improvement of their idiom a national concern, appoint solemn assemblies for the purpose of displaying their poetical talents, and hold it a duty to exercise their children in getting by heart their most approved compositions.

The people of *Yemen* had possibly more *mechanical arts*, and, perhaps, more *Science*; but, although their ports must have been the emporia of considerable commerce between *Egypt* and *India* or part of *Persia*, yet we have no certain proofs of their proficiency in navigation or even in manufactures. That the *Arabs* of the desert had musical instruments, and names for the different notes,



that they were greatly delighted with melody, we know from themselves; but their lutes and pipes were probably very simple, and their music, I suspect, was little more than a natural and tuneful recitation of their elegiac verses and love-songs. The singular property of their language, in shunning compound words, may be urged, according to BACON's idea, as a proof, that they had made no progress in *arts*, 'which require, says he, a variety of combinations to express the complex notions arising from them;' but the singularity may perhaps be imputed wholly to the genius of the language, and the taste of those, who spoke it; since the old *Germans*, who knew no art, appear to have delighted in compound words, which poetry and oratory, one would conceive, might require as much as any meaner art whatsoever.

So great, on the whole, was the strength of parts or capacity, either natural or acquired from habit, for which the *Arabs* were ever distinguished, that we cannot be surprized, when we see that blaze of genius, which they displayed, as far as their arms extended, when they burst, like their own dyke of *Arim*, through their ancient limits, and spread, like an inundation, over the great empire of *Iran*. That a race of *Tâzis*, or *Coursers* as the *Persians* call them, 'who drank the milk of camels and fed on lizards, should entertain a thought of subduing the kingdom of FERIDUN' was considered by the General of YEZDEGIRD's army as the strongest instance of fortune's levity and mutability; but FIRDAUSI, a complete master of *Asiatic* manners, and singularly impartial, represents the *Arabs*, even in the age of FERIDUN, as 'disclaiming any kind of dependence on that monarch, exulting in their liberty, delighting in eloquence, acts of liberality, and martial achievements, and thus making the whole earth, says the poet, red as wine with the blood of their foes, and the air like a forest of canes with their tall spears. With such a character they were likely to conquer any country, that they could invade; and, if ALEXANDER had invaded their dominions, they would unquestionably have made an obstinate, and probably a successful, resistance.

But I have detained you too long, gentlemen, with a nation, who have ever been my favorites, and hope at our next anniversary meeting to travel with you over a part of *Asia*, which exhibits a race of men distinct both from the *Hindus* and from the *Arabs*. In the mean time it shall be my care to superintend the publication of your transactions, in which, if the learned in *Europe* have not





raised their expectations too high, they will not, I believe, be disappointed : my own imperfect essays I always except ; but, though my other engagements have prevented my attendance on your society for the greatest part of last year, and I have set an example of that freedom from restraint, without which no society can flourish, yet, as my few hours of leisure will now be devoted to Sanscrit literature, I cannot but hope, though my chief object be a knowledge of *Hindu* Law, to make some discovery in other sciences, which I shall impart with humility, and which you will, I doubt not, receive with indulgence.



THE FIFTH  
ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE,  
ON THE TARTARS,  
DELIVERED 21st. FEBRUARY, 1788.

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T the close of my last address to you, Gentlemen, I declared my design of introducing to your notice a people of *Asia*, who seemed as different in most respects from the *Hindus* and *Arabs*, as those two nations had been shown to differ from each other ; I meant the people, whom we call *Tartars* : but I enter with extreme diffidence on my present subject, because I have little knowledge of the *Tartarian* dialects; and the gross errors of *European* writers on *Asiatic* literature have long convinced me, that no satisfactory account can be given of any nation, with whose language we are not perfectly acquainted. Such evidence, however, as I have procured by attentive reading and scrupulous inquiries, I will now lay before you, interspersing such remarks as I could not but make on that evidence, and submitting the whole to your impartial decision.

Conformably to the method before adopted in describing *Arabia* and *India*, I consider *Tartary* also, for the purpose of this discourse, on its most extensive scale, and request your attention, whilst I trace the largest boundaries that are assignable to it : conceive a line drawn from the mouth of the *Obi* to that of the *Dnieper*, and, bringing it back eastward across the *Euxine*, so as to include the peninsula of *Krim*, extend it along the foot of *Caucasus*, by the rivers *kur* and *Aras*, to the *Caspian* lake, from the opposite shore of which follow the course of the *Jiahun* and the chain of *Caucasean* hills as far as those of *Imaus* : whence continue the line beyond the *Chinese* wall to the White Mountain and the country of *Yetso*; skirting the borders of *Persia*, *India*, *China*, *Corea*, but including part of *Russia*, with all the districts which lie between the Glacial sea, and that of *Japan*. M. DE GUIGNES, whose great work on the *Huns* abounds more in solid learning than in rhetorical ornaments,





presents us, however, with a magnificent image of this wide region, describing it as a stupendous edifice, the beams and pillars of which are many ranges of lofty hills, and the dome, one prodigious mountain, to which the *Chinese* give the epithet of *Celestial*, with a considerable number of broad rivers flowing down its sides : if the mansion be so amazingly sublime, the land around it is proportionably extended, but more wonderfully diversified ; for some parts of it are incrustated with ice, others parched with inflamed air and covered with a kind of lava ; here we meet with immense tracts of sandy deserts and forests almost impenetrable ; there, with gardens, groves, and meadows, perfumed with musk, watered by numberless rivulets and abounding in fruits and flowers ; and, from east to west, lie many considerable provinces, which appear as valleys in comparison of the hills towering above them, but in truth are the flat summits of the highest mountains in the world, or at least the highest in *Asia*. Near one fourth in latitude of this extraordinary region is in the same charming climate with *Greece*, and *Italy*, and *Provence* ; another fourth in that of *England*, *Germany*, and the northern parts of *France* ; but the *Hyperborean* countries can have few beauties to recommend them, at least in the present state of the earth's temperature : to the south, on the frontiers of *Iran* are the beautiful vales of *Soghd* with the celebrated cities of *Samarkand* and *Bokhara* ; on those of *Tibet* are the territories of *Cashghar*, *Khoten*, *Chegil* and *Khata*, all famed for perfumes and for the beauty of their inhabitants ; and on those of *China* lies the country of *Chin*, anciently a powerful kingdom, which name, like that of *Khata*, has in modern times been given to the whole *Chinese* empire, where such an appellation would be thought an insult. We must not omit the fine territory of *Tancût*, which was known to the *Greeks* by the name of *Serica*, and considered by them as farthest eastern extremity of the habitable globe.

*Scythia* seems to be the general name, which the ancient *Europeans* gave to as much as they knew of the country thus bounded and described ; but, whether that word be derived, as *PLINY* seems to intimate, from *Sacai*, a people known by a similar name to the *Greeks* and *Persians*, or, as *BRYANT* imagines, from *Cuthia*, or, as Colonel *VALLANCEY* believes, from words denoting navigation, or, as it might have been supposed, from a *Greek* root implying wrath and ferocity, this at least is certain, that as *India*, *China*, *Persia*, *Japan*, are not appellations of those countries in the languages of



the nations, who inhabit them, so neither *Scythia* nor *Tartary* are names, by which the inhabitants of the country now under our consideration have ever distinguished themselves. *Tàtàristàn* is, indeed, a word used by the *Persians* for the south-western part of *Scythia*, where the musk-deer is said to be common; and the name *Tàtâr* is by some considered as that of a particular tribe; by others, as that of a small river only; while *Túràn*, as opposed to *Irân*, seems to mean the ancient dominion of *AFRASIAB* to the north and east of the *Oxus*. There is nothing more idle than a debate concerning names, which after all are of little consequence, when our ideas are distinct without them: having given, therefore, a correct notion of the country, which I proposed to examine, I shall not scruple to call it by the general name of *Tartary*; though I am conscious of using a term equally improper in the pronunciation and the application of it.

*Tartary* then, which contained, according to *PLINY*, an innumerable multitude of nations, by whom the rest of *Asia* and all *Europe* has in different ages been over-run, is denominated, as various images have presented themselves to various fancies, the great hive of the northern swarms, the nursery of irresistible legions, and, by a stronger metaphor, the foundery of the human race; but *M. BAILLY*, a wonderfully ingenious man and a very lively writer, seems first to have considered it as the cradle of our species, and to have supported an opinion, that the whole ancient world was enlightened by sciences brought from the most northern parts of *Scythia*, particularly from the banks of the *Jenisea*, or from the *Hyperborean* regions: all the fables of old *Greece*, *Italy*, *Persia*, *India*, he derives from the north; and it must be owned, that he maintains his paradox with acuteness and learning. Great learning and great acuteness, together with the charms of a most engaging style, were indeed necessary to render even tolerable a system, which places an earthly paradise, the gardens of *Hesperus*, the islands of the *Macaræes*, the groves of *Elysium*, if not of *Eden*, the heaven of *INDRA*, the *Peristan*, or fairy-land, of the *Persian* poets, with its city of diamonds and its country of *Shadcam*, so named from *Pleasure* and *Love*, not in any climate, which the common sense of mankind considers as the seat of delights, but beyond the mouth of the *Obi*, in the Frozen Sea, in a region equalled only by that, where the wild imagination of *DANTE* led him to fix the worst of criminals in a state of punishment after death, and of which he could not, he says,





even think without shivering. A very curious passage in a tract of PLUTARCH on the figure in the Moon's orb, naturally induced M. BAILLY to place *Ogygia* in the north, and he concludes that island, as others have concluded rather fallaciously, to be the *Atlantis* of PLATO, but is at a loss to determine, whether it was *Iceland* or *Greenland*, *Spitzburgh* or *New Zembla* : among so many charms it was difficult, indeed, to give a preference ; but our philosopher, though as much perplexed by an option of beauties as the shepherd of *Ida*, seems on the whole to think *Zembla* the most worthy of the golden fruit ; because it is indisputably an island, and lies opposite to a gulf near a continent, from which a great number of rivers descend into the ocean. He appears equally distressed among five nations, real and imaginary, to fix upon that, which the *Greeks* named *Atlantes* ; and his conclusion in both cases must remind us of the showman at *Eton*, who, having pointed out in his box all the crowned heads of the world, and being asked by the school-boys, who looked through the glass, which was the Emperor, which the Pope, which the Sultan, and which the Great Mogul, answered eagerly, 'which you please, young gentlemen, which you please.' His letters, however, to VOLTAIRE, in which he unfolds his new system to his friend, whom he had not been able to convince, are by no means to be derided ; and his general proposition, that arts and sciences had their source in *Tartary*, deserves a longer examination than can be given to it in this discourse : I shall, nevertheless, with your permission, shortly discuss the question under the several heads, that will present themselves in order.

Although we may naturally suppose, that the numberless communities of *Tartars*, some of whom are established in great cities, and some encamped on plains in ambulatory mansions, which they remove from pasture to pasture, must be as different in their features as in their dialects, yet, among those who have not emigrated into another country and mixed with another nation, we may discern a family likeness, especially in their eyes and countenance, and in that configuration of lineaments, which we generally call a *Tartar* face ; but, without making anxious inquiries, whether all the inhabitants of the vast region before described have similar features, we may conclude from those, whom we have seen, and from the original portraits of TAIMUR and his descendants, that the *Tartars* in general differ wholly in complexion and countenance from the *Hindus* and from the *Arabs* ; an observation, which tends



in some degree to confirm the account given by modern *Tartars* themselves of their descent from a common ancestor. Unhappily their lineage cannot be proved by authentic pedigrees or historical monuments ; for all their writings extant, even those in the *Mogul* dialect, are long subsequent to the time of MAHOMMED ; nor is it possible to distinguish their genuine traditions from those of the *Arabs*, whose religious opinions they have in general adopted. At the beginning of the *fourteenth* century, *Khwarezm* RASHID, surnamed FADLULLAH, a native of *Kazvin* ; compiled his account of the *Tartars* and *Mongals* from the papers of one PULAD, whom the great grandson of HOLACU' had sent into *Tataristan* for the sole purpose of collecting historical information ; and the commission itself shows, how little the *Tartarian* Princes really knew of their own origin. From this work of RASHID, and from other materials, ABU'LGHA'ZI, King of *Khwarezm*, composed in the *Mogul* language his *Genealogical History*, which, having been purchased from a merchant of *Bokhara* by some *Swedish* officers, prisoners of war in *Siberia*, has found its way into several *European* tongues : it contains much valuable matter, but, like all MAHOMMEDAN histories, exhibits tribes or nations as individual sovereigns ; and, if Baron DE TOTI had not strangely neglected to procure a copy of the *Tartarian* history, for the original of which he unnecessarily offered a large sum, we should probably have found, that it begins with an account of the deluge taken from the *Koràn*, and proceeds to rank TURC, CHI'N, TATAR, and MONGAL, among the sons of YAFET. The genuine traditional history of the *Tartars*, in all the books that I have inspected, seems to begin with OGHUZ, as that of the *Hindus* does with RAMA : they place their miraculous Hero and Patriarch *four thousand* years before CHENGIZ KHAN, who was born in the year 1164, and with whose reign there historical period commences. It is rather surprizing, that M. BAILLY, who makes frequent appeals to Etymological arguments, has not derived OGYGES from OGHUZ and ATLAS from *Altai*, or the *Golden* mountain of *Tartary* : the *Greek* terminations might have been rejected from both words ; and a mere transposition of letters is no difficulty with an Etymologist.

My remarks in this address, gentlemen, will be confined to the period preceding CHENGIZ ; and, although the learned labours of M. DE GUIGNES and the fathers VIEDELOU, DEMAHLA, and GAUBIL, who have made an incomparable use of their *Chinese*





literature, exhibit probable accounts of the *Tartars* from a very early age, yet the old historians of *China* were not only foreign, but generally hostile, to them, and for both those reasons, either through ignorance or malignity, may be suspected of misrepresenting their transactions: if they speak truth, the ancient history of the *Tartars* presents us, like most other histories, with a series of assassinations, plots, treasons, massacres, and all the natural fruits of selfish ambition. I should have no inclination to give you a sketch of such horrors, even if the occasion called for it; and will barely observe, that the first king of the *Hyumnu's* or *Huns* began his reign, according to VISDELOU, about *three thousand five hundred and sixty years ago*, not long after the time fixed in my former discourses for the first regular establishments of the *Hindus* and *Arabs* in their several countries.

I. Our first inquiry, concerning the *languages* and *letters* of the *Tartars*, presents us with a deplorable void, or with a prospect as barren and dreary as that of their deserts. The *Tartars*, in general, had no literature: (in this point all authorities appear to concur) the *Turks* had no letters: the *Huns*, according to PROCORIUS, had not even heard of them: the magnificent CHENGIZ, whose Empire included an area of near eighty square degrees, could find none of his own *Mongals*, as the best authors inform us, able to write his dispatches; and TAIMUR, a savage of strong natural parts and passionately fond of hearing histories read to him, could himself neither write nor read. It is true, that IBNU ARAB-SHAH mentions a set of characters called *Dilberjin*, which were used in *Khàtà*: 'he had seen them, he says, and found them to consist of *forty-one* letters, a distinct symbol being appropriated to each long and short vowel, and to each consonant hard or soft, or otherwise varied in pronunciation;' but *Khàtà* was in southern *Tartary* on the confines of *India*; and, from his description of the characters there in use, we cannot but suspect them to have been those of *Tibet*, which are manifestly *Indian*, bearing a greater resemblance to those of *Bengal* than to *Dèvanagari*. The learned and eloquent *Arab* adds, 'that the *Tatars* of *Khàta* write, in the *Dilberjin* letters, all their tales and histories, their journals, poems, and miscellanies, their diplomas, records of state and justice, the laws of CHENGIZ, their public registers and their compositions of every species;' if this be true, the people of *Khàta* must have been a polished and even a lettered nation; and it may be true,



without affecting the *general* position, that the *Tartars* were illiterate ; but IBNU ARABSHAH was a professed rhetorician, and it is impossible to read the original passage, without full conviction that his object in writing it, was to display his power of words in a flowing and modulated period. He says further, that in *Jaghatai* the people of *Oighur*, as he calls them, 'have a system of *fourteen* letters only, denominated from themselves *Oighuri*; and those are the characters, which the *Mongals* are supposed by most authors to have borrowed : ABU'LGHAZI' tells us only, that CHENGIZ employed, the natives of *Eighur* as excellent penmen ; but the *Chinese* assert, that he was forced to employ them, because he had no writers at all among his natural-born subjects ; and we are assured by many, that KUBLAIKHAN ordered letters to be invented for his nation by a *Tibetan*, whom he rewarded with the dignity of chief *Lama*. The small number of *Eighuri* letters might induce us to believe, that they were *Zend* or *Pahlavi*, which must have been current in that country, when it was governed by the sons of FERIDUN ; and, if the alphabet ascribed to the *Eighurians* by M. DES HAUTESRAYES be correct, we may safely decide, that in many of its letters it resembles both the *Zend* and the *Syriac*, with a remarkable difference in the mode of connecting them ; but, as we can scarce hope to see a genuine specimen of them, our doubt must remain in regard to their form and origin : the page, exhibited by HYDE as *Khatayan* writing, is evidently a sort of broken *Cusic* ; and the fine manuscript at *Oxford*, from which it was taken, is more probably a *Mendeian* work on some religious subject than, as he imagined, a code of *Tartarian* laws. That very learned man appears to have made a worse mistake in giving us for *Mongal* characters a page of writing, which has the appearance of *Japanese*, or mutilated *Chinese*, letters.

If the *Tartars* in general, as we have every reason to believe had no written memorials, it cannot be thought wonderful, that their *languages*, like those of *America*, should have been in perpetual fluctuation, and that more than fifty dialects, as HYDE had been credibly informed, should be spoken between *Moscow* and *China*, by the many kindred tribes or their several branches, which are enumerated by ABU'LGHAZI'. What those dialects are, and whether they really sprang from a common stock, we shall probably learn from Mr. PALLAS, and other indefatigable men employed by the *Russian* court ; and it is from the *Russians*, that





we must expect the most accurate information concerning their *Asiatic* subjects : I persuade myself, that, if their inquiries be judiciously made and faithfully reported, the result of them will prove, that all the languages, properly *Tartarian* arose from one common source ; excepting always the jargons of such wanderers or mountaineers, as, having long been divided from the main body of the nation, must in a course of ages have framed separate idioms for themselves. The only *Tartarian* language, of which I have any knowledge, is the *Turkish* of *Constantinople*, which is however so copious, that whoever shall know it perfectly, will easily understand, as we are assured by intelligent authors, the dialects of *Tataristan* ; and we may collect from *ABU'LGHA'ZI*, that he would find little difficulty in the *Calmac* and the *Mogul* : I will not offend your ears by a dry catalogue of similar words in those different languages ; but a careful investigation has convinced me, that, as the *Indian* and *Arabian* tongues are severally descended from a common parent, so those of *Tartary* might be traced to one ancient stem essentially differing from the two others. It appears, indeed, from a story told by *ABU'LGHA'ZI*, that the *Virats* and the *Mongals* could not understand each other ; but no more can the *Danes* and the *English*, yet their dialects beyond a doubt are branches of the same *Gothic* tree. The dialect of the *Moguls*, in which some histories of *TAIMUR* and his descendants were originally composed, is called in *India*, where a learned native set me right when I used another word, *Turci* ; not that it is precisely the same with the *Turkish* of the *Othmanlu's*, but the two idioms differ, perhaps, less than *Swedish* and *German* or *Spanish* and *Portuguese* and certainly less than *Welch* and *Irish* : in hope of ascertaining this point, I have long searched in vain for the original works ascribed to *TAIMUR* and *BABER* ; but all the *Moguls*, with whom I have conversed in this country, resemble the crow in one of their popular fables, who, having long affected to walk like a pheasant, was unable after all to acquire the gracefulness of that elegant bird, and in the mean time unlearned his own natural gait : they have not learned the dialect of *Persia*, but have wholly forgotten that of their ancestors. A very considerable part of the old *Tartarian* language, which in *Asia* would probably have been lost, is happily preserved in *Europe* ; and if the groundwork of the western *Turkish*, when separated from the *Persian* and *Arabic*, with which it is embellished, be a branch of the lost *Oghuzian* tongue,



I can assert with confidence, that it has not the least resemblance either to *Arabic* or *Sanskrit*, and must have been invented by a race of men wholly distinct from the *Arabs* or *Hindus*. This fact alone oversets the system of M. BAILLY who considers the *Sanskrit*, of which he gives in several places a most erroneous account, as 'a fine monument of his primeval Scythians, the preceptors of mankind and planters of a sublime philosophy even in India;' for he holds it an incontestable truth, that a language, which is dead, supposes a nation, which is destroyed; and he seems to think such reasoning perfectly decisive of the question, without having recourse to astronomical arguments or the spirit of ancient institutions: for my part, I desire no better proof than that, which the language of the *Brahmans* affords, of an immemorial and total difference between the *Savages of the Mountains*, as the old *Chinese* justly called the *Tartars*, and the studious, placid, contemplative inhabitants of these *Indian* plains.

II. The *geographical* reasoning of M. BAILLY may, perhaps, be thought equally shallow, if not inconsistent in some degree with itself. 'An adoration of the sun and of fire, says he, must necessarily have arisen in a cold region: therefore, it must have been foreign to *India*, *Persia*, *Arabia*; therefore, it, must have been derived from *Tartary*.' No man I believe, who has travelled in winter through *Behâr*, or has even passed a cold season at *Calcutta* within the tropic, can doubt that the solar warmth is often desirable by all, and might have been considered as adorable by the ignorant, in these climates, or that the return of spring deserves all the salutations, which it receives from the *Persian* and *Indian* poets; not to rely on certain historical evidence, that ANTARAH, a celebrated warrior and bard, actually perished with cold on a mountain of *Arabia*. To meet, however, an objection, which might naturally be made to the voluntary settlement, and amazing population, of his primitive race in the icy regions of the north, he takes refuge in the hypothesis of M. BURTON, who imagines, that our whole globe was at first of a white heat, and has been gradually cooling from the poles to the equator; so that the *Hyperborean* countries had once a delightful temperature, and *Siberia* itself was even hotter than the climate of our temperate zones that is, was in too hot a climate, by his first proposition for the primary worship of the sun. That the temperature of countries has not sustained a change in the lapse of ages, I will by no means insist; but we can hardly reason conclusively from





variation of temperature to the cultivation and diffusion of science. If as many female elephants and tigresses, as we now find in *Bengal*, had formerly littered in the *Siberian* forests, and if their young, as the earth cooled, had sought a genial warmth in the climates of the south, it would not follow, that other savages, who migrated in the same direction and on the same account, brought religion and philosophy, language and writing, art and science, into the southern latitudes.

We are told by ABU'LGHA'ZI, that the primitive religion of human creatures, or the pure adoration of One Creator, prevailed in in *Tartary* during the first generations from YAFET, but was extinct before the birth of OGHUZ, who restored it in his dominions; that, some ages after him, the *Mongals* and the *Turks* relapsed into gross idolatry; but that CHENGIZ was a Theist, and, in a conversation with the *Mahommedan* Doctors, admitted their arguments for the being and attributes of the Deity to be unanswerable, while he contested the evidence of their Prophet's legation. From old *Grecian* authorities we learn, that the *Massagetæ* worshipped the sun; and the narrative of an embassy from JUSTIN to the *Khakan*, or Emperor, who then resided in a fine vale near the source of the *Irish*, mentions the *Tartarian* ceremony of purifying the *Roman* Ambassadors by conducting them between two fires: the *Tartars* of that age are represented as adorers of the *four elements*, and believers in an invisible spirit, to whom they sacrificed bulls and rams. Modern travellers relate, that, in the festivals of some *Tartarian* tribes, they pour a few drops of a consecrated liquor on the statues of their Gods; after which an attendant sprinkles a little of what remains three times toward the south in honor of fire, toward the west and east in honor of water and air, and as often toward the north in honor of the earth, which contained the reliques of their deceased ancestors: now all this may be very true, without proving a national affinity between the *Tartars* and *Hindus*; for the *Arabs* adored the planets and the powers of nature, the *Arabs* had carved images, and made libations on a black stone, the *Arabs* turned in prayer to different quarters of the heavens; yet we know with certainty, that the *Arabs* are a distinct race from the *Tartars*; and we might as well infer, that they were the same people, because they had each their *Nomades*, or wanderers for pasture, and because the *Turkmans*, described by IBNUARABSHAH and by him called *Tatar's*, are, like most Arabian



tribes, pastoral and warlike, hospitable and generous, wintering and summering on different plains, and rich in herds and flocks, horses and camels; but this agreement in manners proceeds from the similar nature of their several deserts and their similar choice of a free rambling life, without evincing a community of origin, which they could scarce have had without preserving some remnant at least of a common language.

Many *Lamas*, we are assured, or Priests of *BUDDHA*, have been found settled in *Siberia*; but it can hardly be doubted, that the *Lamas* had travelled thither from *Tibet*, whence it is more than probable, that the religion of the *Bauddha's* was imported into southern, or *Chinese, Tartary*; since we know, that rolls of *Tibetian* writing have been brought even from the borders of the *Caspian*. The complexion of *BUDDHA* himself, which, according to the *Hindus*, was *between white and ruddy*, would perhaps have convinced *M. BAILLY*, had he known the *Indian* tradition, that the last great legislator and God of the East was a *Tartar*; but the *Chinese* consider him as a native of *India*, the *Brāhmans* insist, that he was born in a forest near *Gaya*, and many reasons may lead us to suspect, that his religion was carried from the west and the south to those eastern and northern countries, in which it prevails. On the whole we meet with few or no traces in *Scythia* of *Indian* rites and superstitions, or of that poetical mythology, with which the *Sanscrit* poems are decorated; and we may allow the *Tartars* to have adored the sun with more reason than any southern people, without admitting them to have been the sole original inventors of that universal folly; we may even doubt the originality of their veneration for the *four elements*, which forms a principal part of the ritual introduced by *ZERATUSHT*, a native of *Rai* in *Persia*, born in the reign of *GUSHTASP*, whose son *PASHUTEN* is believed by the *Parsis* to have resided long in *Tartary* at a place called *Cangidiz*, where a magnificent palace is said to have been built by the father of *CYRUS*, and where the *Persian* prince, who was a zealot in the new faith, would naturally have disseminated its tenets among the neighbouring *Tartars*.

Of any Philosophy, except natural Ethics, which the rudest society requires and experience teaches, we find no more vestiges in *Asiatic Scythia* than in ancient *Arabia*: nor would the name of a Philosopher and a *Scythian* have been ever connected, if *ANACHARSIS* had not visited *Athens* and *Lydia* for that instruction,





which his birthplace could not have afforded him: but ANACHARSIS was the son of a *Grecian* woman, who had taught him her language, and he soon learned to despise his own. He was unquestionably a man of a sound understanding and fine parts; and, among the lively sayings, which gained him the reputation of a wit even in Greece, it is related by DIOGENES LAERTIUS, that, when an *Athenian* reproached him with being a *Scythian*, he answered: 'my country is, indeed, a disgrace to me, but thou art a disgrace to thy country.' What his country was, in regard to manners and civil duties, we may learn from his fate in it; for when, on his return from *Athens*, he attempted to reform it by introducing the wise laws of his friend SOLON, he was killed on a hunting party with an arrow shot by his own brother, a *Scythian* Chieftain. Such was the philosophy of M. BAILLY's *Atlantes*, the first and most enlightened of nations! We are assured, however, by the learned author of the *Dabistân*, that the *Tartars* under CHENGIZ and his descendants were lovers of truth; and would not even preserve their lives by a violation of it: DE GUIGNES ascribes the same veracity, the parent of all virtues, to the *Huns*; and STRABO, who might only mean to lash the *Greeks* by praising Barbarians, as HORACE extolled the wandering *Scythians* merely to satirize his luxurious countrymen, informs us, that the nations of *Scythia* deserved the praise due to wisdom, heroic friendship, and justice; and this praise we may readily allow them on his authority, without supposing them to have been the preceptors of mankind.

As to the laws of ZAMOLXIS, concerning whom we know as little as of the *Scythian* DEUCALION, or of ABARIS the *Hyperborean*, and to whose story even HERODOTUS gave no credit, I lament, for many reasons, that, if ever they existed, they have not been preserved: it is certain, that a system of laws, called *Yâsâc*, has been celebrated in *Tartary* since the time of CHENGIZ, who is said to have republished them in his empire, as his institutions were afterwards adopted and enforced by TAIMUR; but they seem to have been a common, or traditionary, law, and were probably not reduced into writing, till CHENGIZ had conquered a nation, who were able to write.

III. Had the religious opinions and allegorical fables of the *Hindus* been actually borrowed from *Scythia*, travellers must have discovered in that country some ancient monuments of them, such as pieces of grotesque sculpture, images of the Gods and



*Statues*, and inscriptions on pillars or in caverns, analogous to those, which remain in every part of the western peninsula, or to those, which many of us have seen in *Bahâr* and at *Banâras*; but (except a few detached idols) the only great monuments of *Tartarian* antiquity are a line of ramparts on the west and east of the *Caspian*, ascribed indeed by ignorant *Muselmans* to *Yajuj*, and *Mujâj*, or *Gog* and *Magog*, that is to the *Scythians*, but manifestly raised by a very different nation in order to stop their predatory inroads through the passes of *Caucasus*. The *Chinese* wall was built or finished, on a similar construction and for a similar purpose, by an Emperor, who died only two hundred and ten years before the beginning of our era; and the other mounds were very probably constructed by the old *Persians*, though, like many works of unknown origin, they are given to *SECANDER*, not the *Macedonian*, but a more ancient Hero supposed by some to have been *JEMSH'ID*. It is related, that pyramids and tombs have been found in *Tâtiristân*, or western *Scythia*, and some remnants of edifices in the lake *Saisan*; that vestiges of a deserted city have been recently discovered by the *Russians* near the *Caspian* sea, and the Mountain of Eagles; and that golden ornaments and utensils, figures of elks and other quadrupeds in metal, weapons of various kinds, and even implements for mining, but made of copper instead of iron, have been dug up in the country of the *Tshwde's*; whence *M. BAILLY* infers, with great reason, the high antiquity of that people: but the high antiquity of the *Tartars*, and their establishment in that country near four thousand years ago, no man disputes; we are inquiring into their ancient religion and philosophy, which neither ornaments of gold, nor tools of copper, will prove to have had an affinity with the religious rites and the sciences of *India*. The golden utensils might possibly have been fabricated by the *Tartars* themselves; but it is possible too, that they were carried from *Rome* or from *China*, whence occasional embassies were sent to the Kings of *Eighûr*. Towards the end of the tenth century the *Chinese* Emperor dispatched an ambassador to a Prince, named *ERSLA'N*, which, in the *Turkish* of *Constantinople*, signifies a lion, who resided near the Golden Mountain in the same station, perhaps, where the *Romans* had been received in the middle of the sixth century; the *Chinese* on his return home reported the *Eighûris* to be a grave people, with fair complexions, diligent workmen, and ingenious arti-





heers not only in gold, silver, and iron, but in jasper and fine stones; and the *Romans* had before described their magnificent reception in a rich palace adorned with *Chinese* manufactures: but these times were comparatively modern; and, even if we should admit, that the *Eighuris*, who are said to have been governed for a period of two thousand years by an *Idecut*, or sovereign of their own race, were in some very early age a literary and polished nation, it would prove nothing in favour of the *Huns*, *Turks*, *Mongals*, and other savages to the north of *Pekin* who seem in all ages, before MUHAMMED, to have been equally ferocious and illiterate.

Without actual inspection of the manuscripts, that have been found near the *Caspian*, it would be impossible to give a correct opinion concerning them; but one of them, described as written on blue silky paper in letters of gold and silver not unlike *Hebrew*, was probably a *Tibetan* composition of the same kind with that, which lay near the source of the *Irish*, and of which CASSIANO, I believe, made the first accurate version: another, if we may judge from the description of it, was probably modern *Turkish*; and none of them could have been of great antiquity.

IV. From ancient monuments, therefore, we have no proof, that the *Tartars* were themselves well-instructed, much less that they instructed the world; nor have we any stronger reason to conclude from their general manners and character, that they had made an early proficiency in *arts* and *sciences*: even of poetry, the most universal and most natural of the fine arts, we find no genuine specimens ascribed to them, except some horrible warsongs expressed in *Persian* by ALI of *Yezd*, and possibly invented by him. After the conquest of *Persia* by the *Mongals*, their princes, indeed, encouraged learning, and even made astronomical observations at *Samarkand*; as the *Turks* became polished by mixing with the *Persians* and *Arabs*, though their very nature, as one of their own writers confesses, had before been like an incurable distemper, and their minds clouded with ignorance: thus also the *Mancheu* monarchs of *China* have been patrons of the learned and ingenious, and the Emperor TIEN-LONG is, if he be now living, a fine *Chinese* poet. In all these instances the *Tartars* have resembled the *Romans*, who, before they had subdued *Greece*, were little better than tigers in war, and *Fauns* or *Sylvans* in science and art.

Before I left *Europe*, I had insisted in conversation, that the *Tuzuc*, translated by Major DAVY, was never written by TALMUT



himself at least not as CÆSAR wrote his commentaries, for one very plain reason, that no *Tartarian* king of his age could write at all ; and, in support of my opinion, I had cited IBNU ARABSHA'H, who, though justly hostile to the savage, by whom his native city *Damascus*, had been ruined, yet praises his talents and the real greatness of his mind, but adds:—"He was wholly illiterate ; he neither read nor wrote any thing ; and he knew nothing of *Arabic* ; though of *Persian*, *Turkish*, and the *Mogul* dialect, he knew as much as was sufficient for his purpose, and no more : he used with pleasure to hear histories read to him, and so frequently heard the same book, that he was able by memory to correct an inaccurate reader." This passage had no effect on the translator, whom *great and learned men in India* had assured, it seems, that the work was authentic, by which he meant composed by the conqueror himself : but the *great* in this country might have been *unlearned* or the *learned* might not have been *great* enough to answer any leading question in a manner that opposed the declared inclination of a *British* inquirer ; and, in either case, since no witnesses are named, so general a reference to them will hardly be thought conclusive evidence. On my part, I will name a *Muselman*, whom we all know, and who has enough both of *greatness* and of *learning* to decide the question both impartially and satisfactorily : the *Nawwāb* MOZAFFER JANG informed me of his own accord, that no man of sense in *Hindustān* believed the work to have been composed by TAIMUR, but that his favourite, surnamed HINDU SHA'H, was known to have written that book and others ascribed to his patron, after many confidential discourses with the *Emir*, and, perhaps, nearly in the Prince's words as well as in his person ; a story, which ALI' of *Yezd*, who attended the court of TAIMUR, and has given us a flowery panegyric instead of a history, renders highly probable, by confirming the latter part of the *Arabian* account, and by total silence as to the literary production of his master. It is true, that a very ingenious but indigent native, whom DAVY supported, has given me a written memorial on the subject, in which he mentions TAIMUR as the author of two works in *Turkish* ; but the credit of his information is overset by a strange apocryphal story of a king of *Yemen*, who invaded, he says, the *Emir's* dominions, and in whose library the manuscript was afterwards found, and translated by order of ALISHIR, first minister of TAIMUR's grandson ; and





Major DAVY himself, before he departed from *Bengal*, told me, that he was greatly perplexed by finding in a very accurate and old copy of the *Tuzuc*, which he designed to republish with considerable additions, a particular account, written *unquestionably* by TAIMŪR, of *his own death*. No evidence, therefore, has been adduced to shake my opinion, that, the *Moguls* and *Tartars*, before their conquest of *India* and *Persia*, were wholly unlettered ; although it may be possible, that, even without art or science, they had, like the *Huns* both warriors and lawgivers in their own country some centuries before the birth of CHRIST.

If learning was ever anciently cultivated in the regions to the north of *India*, the seats of it, I have reason to suspect, must have been *Eighūr*, *Casghar*, *Khàta*, *Chin*, *Tancùt*, and other countries of *Chinese Tartary*, which lie between the thirty-fifth and forty-fifth degrees of northern latitude ; but I shall, in another discourse, produce my reasons for supposing, that those very countries were peopled by a race allied to the *Hindus*, or enlightened at least by their vicinity to *India* and *China* ; yet in *Tancùt*, which by some is annexed to *Tibet*, and even among its old inhabitants, the *Seres*, we have no certain accounts of uncommon talents or great improvements : they were famed, indeed, for the faithful discharge of moral duties, for a pacific disposition, and for that longevity, which is often the reward of patient virtues and a calm temper ; but they are said to have been wholly indifferent, in former ages, to the elegant arts and even to commerce ; though FADLU'LLAH had been informed, that, near the close of the *thirteenth* century, many branches of natural philosophy were cultivated in *Cam-cheu*, then the metropolis of *Serica*.

We may readily believe those, who assure us, that some tribes of wandering *Tartars* had real skill in applying herbs and minerals to the purposes of medicine, and pretended to skill in magic ; but the general character of their nation seems to have been this :—they were professed hunters or fishers, dwelling on that account in forests or near great rivers, under huts or rude tents, or in waggons drawn by their cattle from station to station ; they were dexterous archers, excellent horsemen, bold combatants, appearing often to flee in disorder for the sake of renewing their attack with advantage ; drinking the milk of mares, and eating the flesh of colts ; and thus in many respects resembling the old *Arabs*, but in nothing



more than in their love of intoxicating liquors, and in nothing less than in a taste for poetry and the improvement of their language.

Thus has it been proved, and, in my humble opinion, beyond controversy, that the far greater part of *Asia* has been peopled and immemorially possessed by three considerable nations, whom, for want of better names, we may call *Hindus*, *Arabs*, and *Tartars*; each of them divided and subdivided into an infinite number of branches, and all of them so different in form and features, language, manners, and religion, that, if they sprang originally from a common root, they must have been separated for ages: whether more than three primitive stocks can be found, or, in other words, whether the *Chinese*, *Japanese*, and *Persians*, are entirely distinct from them, or formed by their intermixture, I shall hereafter, if your indulgence to me continue, diligently inquire. To what conclusions these inquiries will lead, I cannot yet clearly discern; but, if they lead to truth, we shall not regret our journey through this dark region of ancient history, in which, while we proceed step by step, and follow every glimmering of certain light, that presents itself, we must beware of those false rays and luminous vapours, which mislead *Asiatic* travellers by an appearance of water, but are found on a near approach to be deserts of sand.





CSL

THE SIXTH  
DISCOURSE;  
ON THE PERSIANS,  
DELIVERED 19TH FEBRUARY, 1789.

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GENTLEMEN,

**T**URN with delight from the vast mountains and barren deserts of *Turàn*, over which we travelled last year with no perfect knowledge of our course, and request you now to accompany me on a literary journey through one of the most celebrated and most beautiful countries in the world; a country, the history and languages of which, both ancient and modern, I have long attentively studied, and on which I may without arrogance promise you more positive information, than I could possibly procure on a nation so disunited and so unlettered as the *Tartars*: I mean that, which *Europeans* improperly call *Persia*, the name of a single province being applied to the whole Empire of *Iràn*, as it is correctly denominated by the present natives of it, and by all the learned *Muselmans*, who reside in these *British* territories. To give you an idea of its largest boundaries, agreeably to my former mode of describing *India*, *Arabia*, and *Tartary*, between which it lies, let us begin with the source of the great *Assyrian* stream, *Euphrates*, (as the *Greeks*, according to their custom, were pleased to miscall the *Forât*) and thence descend to its mouth in the Green Sea, or *Persian Gulf*, including in our line some considerable districts and towns on both sides the river; then coasting *Persia*, properly so named, and other *Iranian* provinces, we come to the delta of the *Sindhu* or *Indus*; whence ascending to the mountains of *Cashghar*, we discover its fountains and those of the *Jaihàn*, down which we are conducted to the *Caspian*, which formerly perhaps it entered, though it lose itself now in the sands and lakes of *Khwarezm*: we next are led from the sea of *Khazar*, by the banks of the *Cur*, or *Cyrus*, and along the *Caucasean* ridges, to the shore of the *Euxine*, and thence, by the several *Grecian* seas, to the point, whence we took our depar-



time at no considerable distance from the *Mediterranean*. We cannot but include the lower *Asia* within this outline, because it was unquestionably a part of the *Persian*, if not of the old *Assyrian* Empire; for we know, that it was under the dominion of CAIKHOSRAU; and DIODORUS, we find, asserts, that the kingdom of *Troas* was dependent on *Assyria*, since PRIAM implored and obtained succours from his Emperor TEUTAMES, whose name approaches nearer to TAHMURAS, than to that of any other *Assyrian* monarch. Thus may we look on *Iràn* as the noblest *Island*, (for so the *Greeks* and the *Arabs* would have called it,) or at least as the noblest *Peninsula*, on this habitable globe; and if M. BAILLY had fixed on it as the *Atlantis* of PLATO, he might have supported his opinion with far stronger arguments than any, that he has adduced in favour of New *Zembla*: if the account, indeed, of the *Atlantes* be not purely an *Egyptian* or an *Utopian* fable, I should be more inclined to place them in *Iràn* than in any region, with which I am acquainted.

It may seem strange, that the ancient history of so distinguished an Empire should be yet so imperfectly known; but very satisfactory reasons may be assigned for our ignorance of it: the principal of them are the superficial knowledge of the *Greeks* and *Jews*, and the loss of *Persian* archives or historical compositions. That the *Grecian* writers, before XENOPHON, had no acquaintance with *Persia*, and that all their accounts of it are wholly fabulous, is a paradox too extravagant to be seriously maintained; but their connection with it in war or peace had, indeed, been generally confined to bordering kingdoms under feudatory princes; and the first *Persian* Emperor, whose life and character they seem to have known with tolerable accuracy, was the great CYRUS, whom I call, without fear of contradiction, CAIKHOSRAU; for I shall then only doubt that the KHOSRAU of FIRDAUSI was the CYRUS of the first *Greek* historian, and the Hero of the oldest political and moral romance when I doubt that Louis Quatorze and Lewis the Fourteenth were one and the same *French King*: it is utterly incredible, that two different princes of *Persia* should each have been born in a foreign and hostile territory; should each have been doomed to death in his infancy by his maternal grandfather in consequence of portentous dreams, real or invented; should each have been saved by the remorse of his destined murderer, and should each, after a similar education among herdsmen, as the son of a herdsman, have found





means to revisit his paternal kingdom, and having delivered it, after a long and triumphant war, from the tyrant, who had invaded it, should have restored it to the summit of power and magnificence. Whether so romantic a story, which is the subject of an Epic Poem, as majestic and entire as the *Iliad*, be historically true, we may feel perhaps an inclination to doubt ; but it cannot with reason be denied, that the outline of it related to a single Hero, whom the *Asiatics*, conversing with the father of *European* history, described according to their popular traditions by his true name, which the *Greek* alphabet could not express : nor will a difference of names affect the question ; since the *Greeks* had little regard for truth, which they *sacrificed* willingly to the *Graces* of their language, and the nicety of their ears ; and, if they could render foreign words melodious, they were never solicitous to make them exact ; hence they probably formed CAMBYSES from CA'MBAKHS, or *Granting desires*, a title rather than a name, and XERXES from SHIRUYI, a prince and warrior in the *Sháhnámah*, or from SHIRSHA'H, which might also have been a title ; for the *Asiatic* Princes have constantly assumed new titles or epithets at different periods of their lives, or on different occasions ; a custom, which we have seen prevalent in our own times both in *Irán* and *Hindustán*, and which has been a source of great confusion even in the scriptural accounts of *Babylonian* occurrences : both *Greeks* and *Jews* have in fact accommodated *Persian* names to their own articulation ; and both seem to have disregarded the native literature of *Irán*, without which they could at most attain a general and imperfect knowledge of the country. As to the *Persians* themselves, who were contemporary with the *Jews* and *Greeks*, they must have been acquainted with the history of their own times, and with the traditional accounts of past ages ; but for a reason, which will presently appear, they chose to consider CAYUMERS as the founder of the empire ; and, in the numerous distractions, which followed the overthrow of DARA', especially in the great revolution on the defeat of YEZDEGERD, their civil histories were lost, as those of *India* have unhappily been, from the solicitude of the priests, the only depositaries of their learning, to preserve their books of law and religion at the expense of all others : hence it has happened, that nothing remains of genuine *Persian* history before the dynasty of SA'SA'N, except a few rustic traditions and fables, which furnished materials for the



*Saturnamah*, and which are still supposed to exist in the *Pahlavi* language. The annals of the *Pishdâdî*, or *Assyrian*, race must be considered as dark and fabulous; and those of the *Cîyani* family, or the *Medes* and *Persians*, as heroic and poetical; though the lunar eclipses, said to be mentioned by *PTOLEMY*, fix the time of *GUSHTASP*, the prince, by whom *ZERA-TUSHT* was protected: of the *Parthian* kings descended from *ARSHAC* or *ARSACES*, we know little more than the names; but the *Sâsânî's* had so long an intercourse with the Emperors of *Rome* and *Byzantium*, that the period of their dominion may be called an historical age. In attempting to ascertain the beginning of the *Assyrian* empire, we are deluded, as in a thousand instances, by names arbitrarily imposed: it had been settled by chronologers, that the first monarchy established in *Persia* was the *Assyrian*; and *NEWTON*, finding some of opinion, that it rose in the first century after the Flood, but unable by his own calculations to extend it farther back than *Seven hundred and ninety* years before *CHRIST*, rejected part of the old system and adopted the rest of it; concluding, that the *Assyrian* Monarchs began to reign about two hundred years after *SOLOMON*, and that, in all preceding ages, the Government of *Irân* had been divided into several petty states and principalities. Of this opinion I confess myself to have been; when, disregarding the wild chronology of the *Muselmâns* and *Gabrs*, I had allowed the utmost natural duration to the reigns of eleven *Pishdâdî* kings, without being able to add more than a hundred years to *NEWTON's* computation. It seemed, indeed, unaccountably strange, that, although *ABRAHAM* had found a regular monarchy in *Egypt*, although the kingdom of *Yemen* had just pretensions to very high antiquity, although the *Chinese*, in the twelfth century before our era, had made approaches at least to the present form of their extensive dominion, and although we can hardly suppose the first *Indian* monarchs to have reigned less than three thousand years ago, yet *Persia*, the most delightful, the most compact, the most desirable country of them all, should have remained for so many ages unsettled and disunited. A fortunate discovery, for which I was first indebted to *Mir MUHAMMED HUSAIN*, one of the most intelligent *Muselmâns* in *India*, has at once dissipated the cloud, and cast a gleam of light on the primeval history of *Irân* and of the human race, of which I had long despaired, and which could hardly have dawned from any other quarter.





The rare and interesting tract on *twelve different religions*, entitled the *Dabistân*, and composed by a *Mohammedan* traveller, a native of *Cashmîr*, named MOHSAN, but distinguished by the assumed surname of FANÍ, or *Perishable*, begins with a wonderfully curious chapter on the religion of HU'SHANG, which was long anterior to that of ZERATUSHT, but had continued to be secretly professed by many learned *Persians* even to the author's time; and several of the most eminent of them, dissenting in many points from the *Gabrs*, and persecuted by the ruling powers of their country, had retired to *India*; where they compiled a number of books, now extremely scarce, which MOHSAN had perused, and with the writers of which, or with many of them, he had contracted an intimate friendship: from them he learned, that a powerful monarchy had been established for ages in *Irân* before the accession of CAYUMERS, that it was called the *Mahábádian* dynasty, for a reason which will soon be mentioned, and that many princes, of whom seven or eight only are named in the *Dabistân*, and among them MAHBUL, or MAHA' BELI, had raised their empire to the zenith of human glory. If we can rely on this evidence, which to me appears unexceptionable, the *Iranian* monarchy must have been the oldest in the world; but it will remain dubious, to which of the three stocks, *Hindu*, *Arabian*, or *Tartar*, the first kings of *Irân* belonged, or whether they sprang from a *fourth* race distinct from any of the others; and these are questions, which we shall be able, I imagine, to answer precisely, when we have carefully inquired into the *languages* and *letters*, *religion* and *philosophy*, and incidentally into the *arts* and *sciences*, of the ancient *Persians*.

I. In the new and important remarks, which I am going to offer, on the ancient *languages* and *characters* of *Irân*, I am sensible, that you must give me credit for many assertions, which on this occasion it is impossible to prove; for I should ill deserve your indulgent attention, if I were to abuse it by repeating a dry list of detached words, and presenting you with a vocabulary instead of a dissertation; but, since I have no system to maintain, and have not suffered imagination to delude my judgement; since I have habituated myself to form opinions of men and things from *evidence*, which is the only solid basis of *civil*, as *experiment* is of *natural* knowledge; and since I have maturely considered the questions which I mean to discuss; you will not, I am per-



resolved, suspect my testimony, or think that I go too far, when I assure you, that I will assert nothing positively, which I am not able satisfactorily to demonstrate. When MUHAMMED was born, and ANU'SHIRAVAN, whom he calls *the Just King*, sat on the throne of *Persia*, two languages appear to have been generally prevalent in the great empire of *Iràn*; that of the *Court*, thence named *Deri*, which was only a refined and elegant dialect of the *Pársi*, so called from the province, of which *Shiráz* is now the capital, and that of the learned, in which most books were composed, and which had the name of *Pahlavi*, either from the *heroes*, who spoke it in former times, or from *Pahlu*, a tract of land, which included, we are told, some considerable cities of *Irák*: the ruder dialects of both were, and, I believe, still are, spoken by the rustics in several provinces; and in many of them, as *Hera'ti*, *Zabul*, *Sistán* and others, distinct idioms were vernacular, as it happens in every kingdom of great extent. Besides the *Pársi* and *Pahlavi* a very ancient and abstruse tongue was known to the priests and philosophers, called *the language of the Zend*, because a book on religious and moral duties, which they held sacred, and which bore that name, had been written in it; while the *Pázend*, or comment on that work, was composed in *Pahlavi* as a more popular idiom; but a learned follower of ZERA'TUSHT, named BARMAN, who lately died at *Calcutta*, where he had lived with me as a *Persian* reader about three years, assured me, that the letters of his prophet's book were properly called *Zend*, and the language, *Avestà*, as the words of the *Véda's* are *Sanscrit*, and the characters, *Nágarì*; or as the old *Saga's* and poems of *Iseland* were expressed in *Runic* letters: let us however, in compliance with custom, give the name of *Zend* to the sacred language of *Persia*, until we can find, as we shall very soon, a fitter appellation for it. The *Zend* and the old *Pahlavi* are almost extinct in *Iràn*; for among six or seven thousand *Gabrs*, who reside chiefly at *Yezd*, and in *Cirmàn*, there are very few, who can read *Pahlavi*, and scarce any, who even boast of knowing the *Zend*; while the *Pársi*, which remains almost pure in the *Sháhna'mah*, has now become by the intermixture of numberless *Arabic* words, and many imperceptible changes, a new language exquisitely polished by a series of fine writers in prose and verse, and analogous to the different idioms gradually formed in *Europe* after the subversion of the *Roman* empire: but with modern *Persian* we have no concern in





our present inquiry, which I confine to the ages, that preceded the Mohammedan conquest. Having twice read the works of FIRDAUSI with great attention, since I applied myself to the study of old Indian literature, I can assure you with confidence, that hundreds of Pārsi nouns are pure Sanscrit, with no other change than such as may be observed in the numerous *bhāṣhās*, or vernacular dialects, of India; that very many Persian imperatives are the roots of Sanscrit verbs; and that even the moods and tenses of the Persian verb substantive, which is the model of all the rest, are deducible from the Sanscrit by an easy and clear analogy: we may hence conclude, that the Pārsi was derived, like the various Indian dialects, from the language of the Brāhmans; and I must add, that in the pure Persian I find no trace of any Arabian tongue, except what proceeded from the known intercourse between the Persians and Arabs, especially in the time of BAHRA'M who was educated in Arabia, and whose Arabic verses are still extant, together with his heroic line in *Deri*, which many suppose to be the first attempt at Persian versification in Arabian metre: but, without having recourse to other arguments, the composition of words, in which the genius of the Persian delights, and which that of the Arabic abhors, is a decisive proof, that the Pārsi sprang from an Indian, and not from an Arabian stock. Considering languages as mere instruments of knowledge, and having strong reasons to doubt the existence of genuine books in *Zend* or *Pahlavi* (especially since the well-informed author of the *Dabistān* affirms the works of ZERA'TUSHT to have been lost, and its place supplied by a recent compilation) I had no inducement, though I had an opportunity, to learn what remains of those ancient languages; but I often conversed on them with my friend BAHMAN, and both of us were convinced after full consideration, that the *Zend* bore a strong resemblance to Sanscrit, and the *Pahlavi* to Arabic. He had at my request translated into *Pahlavi* the fine inscription, exhibited in the *Gulistān*, on the diadem of CYRUS; and I had the patience to read the list of words from the *Pāzend* in the appendix to the *Farhang-i-Jehā'ngīrī*: this examination gave me perfect conviction, that the *Pahlavi* was a dialect of the Chaldaic; and of this curious fact I will exhibit a short proof. By the nature of the Chaldaean tongue most words ended in the first long vowel like *shemīā*, heaven; and that very word, unaltered in a single letter, we find in the *Pāzend*, together with *lailiā*, night; *meyā*, water; *nirā*, fire;



rain, and a multitude of others, all *Arabic* or *Hebrew* with a *Chaldean* termination: so *zamar*, by a beautiful metaphor from pruning trees, means in *Hebrew* to compose verses, and thence, by an easy transition, to sing them; and in *Pahlavi* we see the verb *zamrūniten*, to sing, with its forms *zamrūnemi*, I sing, and *zamrūnid*, he sang; the verbal terminations of the *Persian* being added to the *Chaldaic* root. Now all those words are integral parts of the language, not adventitious to it like the *Arabic* nouns and verbals engrafted on modern *Persian*; and this distinction convinces me, that the dialect of the *Gabrs*, which they pretend to be that of *ZERATUSHT*, and of which *BAHMAN* gave me a variety of written specimens, is a late invention of their priests, or subsequent at least to the *Muselman* invasion; for, although it may be possible, that a few of their sacred books were preserved, as he used to assert, in sheets of lead or copper at the bottom of wells near *Yezd*, yet as the conquerors had not only a spiritual, but a political interest in persecuting a warlike, robust, and indignant race of irreconcilable conquered subjects, a long time must have elapsed, before the hidden scriptures could have been safely brought to light, and few, who could perfectly understand them, must then have remained; but, as they continued to profess among themselves the religion of their forefathers, it became expedient for the *Múbeds* to supply the lost or mutilated works of their legislator by new compositions, partly from their imperfect recollection, and partly from such moral and religious knowledge, as they gleaned, most probably, among the *Christians*, with whom they had an intercourse. One rule we may fairly establish in deciding the question, whether the books of the modern *Gabrs* were anterior to the invasion of the *Arabs*: when an *Arabic* noun occurs in them changed only by the spirit of the *Chaldean* idiom, as *wertā*, for *werd*, a rose, *dabā*, for *dhahab*, gold, or *demān*, for *zemān*, time, we may allow it to have been ancient *Pahlavi*; but, when we meet with verbal nouns or infinitives, evidently formed by the rules of *Arabian* grammar, we may be sure, that the phrases, in which they occur, are comparatively modern; and not a single passage, which *BAHMAN* produced from the books of his religion, would abide this test.

We come now to the language of the *Zend*; and here I must impart a discovery, which I lately made, and from which we may draw the most interesting consequences. *M. ANQUETIL*, who had





the merit of undertaking a voyage to *India*, in his earliest youth, with no other view than to recover the writings of ZERA'TUSHT, and who would have acquired a brilliant reputation in *France* if he had not sullied it by his immoderate vanity and virulence of temper, which alienated the good will even of his own countrymen, has exhibited in his work, entitled *Zenda'vestâ* to vocabularies in *Zend* and *Pahlavi*, which he had found in an approved collection of *Râwayât*, or *Traditional Pieces*, in modern *Persian*: of his *Pahlavi*, no more needs be said, than that it strongly confirms my opinion concerning the *Chaldaic* origin of that language; but, when I perused the *Zend* glossary, I was inexpressibly surprized to find, that six or seven words in ten were pure *Sanscrit*, and even some of their inflexions formed by the rules of the *Vyâcaran*; as *Yushmâcam*, the genitive plural of *Yushmad*. Now M. ANQUETIL most certainly, and the *Persian* compiler most probably, had no knowledge of *Sanscrit*; and could not, therefore, have invented a list of *Sanscrit* words: it is, therefore, an authentic list of *Zend* words, which had been preserved in books or by tradition; and it follows, that the language of the *Zend* was at least a dialect of the *Sanscrit*, approaching perhaps as nearly to it as the *Prâcrit*, or other popular idioms, which we know to have been spoken in *India* two thousand years ago. From all these facts it is a necessary consequence, that the oldest discoverable languages of *Persia* were *Chaldaic* and *Sanscrit*; and that, when they had ceased to be vernacular, the *Pahlavi* and *Zend* were deduced from them respectively, and the *Parisi* either from the *Zend*, or immediately from the dialect of the *Brahmans*; but all had perhaps a mixture of *Tartarian*; for the best lexicographer's assert, that numberless words in ancient *Persian* are taken from the language of the *Cimmerians*, or the *Tartars* of *Kipchak*; so that the three families, whose lineage we have examined in former discourses, had left visible traces of themselves in *Irân*, long before the *Tartars* and *Arabs* had rushed from their deserts, and returned to that very country, from which in all probability they originally proceeded, and which the *Hindus* had abandoned in an earlier age, with positive commands from their legislators to revisit it no more. I close this head with observing, that no supposition of a mere political or commercial intercourse between the different nations will account for the *Sanscrit* and *Chaldaic* words, which we find in the old *Persian* tongues; because they are, in the first place,



too numerous to have been introduced by such means, and, secondly, are not the names of exotic animals, commodities, or arts, but those of material elements, parts of the body, natural objects and relations, affections of the mind, and other ideas common to the whole race of man.

If a nation of *Hindus*, it may be urged, ever possessed and governed the country of *Irān*, we should find on the very ancient ruins of the temple or palace, now called *the throne of JEMSHĪD*, some inscriptions in *Dēvānagari*, or at least in the characters on the stones at *Elephanta*, where the sculpture is unquestionably *Indian*, or in those on the *Staff of FIRUZ SHAH*, which exist in the heart of *India*; and such inscriptions we probably should have found, if that edifice had not been erected after the migration of the *Brahmans* from *Irān*, and the violent schism in the *Persian* religion, of which we shall presently speak; for, although the popular name of the building at *Istakhr*, or *Persepolis*, be no certain proof that it was raised in the time of JEMSHĪD, yet such a fact might easily have been preserved by tradition, and we shall soon have abundant evidence, that the temple was posteriour to the reign of the *Hindu* monarchs: the *cypresses* indeed, which are represented with the figures in procession, might induce a reader of the *Shāh-nāmah* to believe, that the sculptures related to the new faith introduced by ZERATUSHT; but, as a cypress is a beautiful ornament, and as many of the figures appear inconsistent with the reformed adoration of fire, we must have recourse to stronger proofs, that the *Takhti JEMSHĪD* was erected after CAYUMERS. The building has lately been visited, and the characters on it examined by Mr. FRANKLIN; from whom we learn, that NIEBUHR has delineated them with great accuracy: but without such testimony I should have suspected the correctness of the delineation; because the *Danish* traveller has exhibited two inscriptions in modern *Persian*, and one of them from the same place, which cannot have been exactly transcribed: they are very elegant verses of NIZAMI and SADR on the instability of human greatness, but so ill engraved or so ill copied, that, if I had not had them nearly by heart, I should not have been able to read them; and M. ROUSSEAU of *Isfahān*, who translated them with shameful inaccuracy, must have been deceived by the badness of the copy; or he never would have created a new king WAKAM, by forming one word of JEM and the particle prefixed to it. Assuming, however, that we





may reason as conclusively on the characters published by NIEBUHR, as we might on the monuments themselves, were they now before us, we may begin with observing, as CHARDIN had observed on the very spot, that they bear no resemblance whatever to the letters used by the *Gabrs* in their copies of the *Vendidad*: this I once urged, in an amicable debate with BAHRMAN, as a proof, that the *Zend* letters were a modern invention; but he seemed to hear me without surprize, and insisted, that the letters, to which I alluded; and which he had often seen, were monumental characters never used in books, and intended either to conceal some religious mysteries from the vulgar, or to display the art of the sculptor, like the embellished *Cufick* and *Nagari* on several *Arabian* and *Indian* monuments. He wondered, that any man could seriously doubt the antiquity of the *Pahlavi* letters; and in truth the inscription behind the horse of *Rüstam*, which NIEBUHR has also given us, is apparently *Pahlavi*, and might with some pains be decyphered: that character was extremely rude, and seems to have been written; like the *Roman* and the *Arabic*, in a variety of hands; for I remember to have examined a rare collection of old *Persian* coins in the Museum of the great Anatomist, WILLIAM HUNTER, and, though I believed the legends to be *Pahlavi*, and had no doubt, that they were coins of *Parthian* kings, yet I could not read the inscriptions without wasting more time, than I had then at command, in comparing the letters and ascertaining the proportions, in which they severally occurred. The gross *Pahlavi* was improved by ZERATUSHT or his disciples into an elegant and perspicuous character, in which the *Zendavestâ* was copied; and both were written from the right hand to the left like other *Chaldaic* alphabets; for they are manifestly both of *Chaldean* origin; but the *Zend* has the singular advantage of expressing all the long and short vowels, by distinct marks, in the body of each word, and all the words are distinguished by full points between them; so that, if modern *Persian* were unmixed with *Arabic*, it might be written in *Zend* with the greatest convenience, as any one may perceive by copying in that character a few pages of the *Shâhnâmâh*. As to the unknown inscriptions in the place of JEMSHÏD, it may reasonably be doubted, whether they contain a system of letters which any nation ever adopted: in five of them the letters, which are separated by points, may be reduced to forty, at least I can distinguish no more essentially different; and they all seem to be



regular variations and compositions of a straight line and an angular figure like the head of a javelin or a leaf (to use the language of botanists) *hearted and lanced*. Many of the *Runic* letters appear to have been formed of similar elements ; and it has been observed, that the writing at *Persepolis* bears a strong resemblance to that, which the *Irish* call *Ogham* : the word *Agam* in *Sanscrit* means *mysterious knowledge* ; but I dare not affirm, that the two words had a common origin, and only mean to suggest, that, in the characters in question be really alphabetical, they were probably secret and sacerdotal, or a mere cypher, perhaps, of which the priests only had the key. They might, I imagine, be decyphered, if the language were certainly known ; but, in all the other inscriptions of the same sort, the characters are too complex, and the variations of them too numerous, to admit an opinion, that they could be symbols of articulate sounds ; for even the *Nāgarī* system, which has more distinct letters than any known alphabet, consists only of forty-nine simple characters, two of which are mere substitutions, and four of little use in *Sanscrit* or in any other language ; while the more complicated figures, exhibited by NIEBUHR, must be as numerous at least as the *Chinese* keys, which are the signs of *ideas* only, and some of which resemble the old *Persian* letters at *Istakhr* : the *Danish* traveller was convinced from his own observation, that they were written from the left hand, like all the characters used by *Hindu* nations ; but I must leave this dark subject, which I cannot illuminate, with a remark formerly made by myself, that the square *Chaldaic* letters, a few of which are found on the *Persian* ruins, appeared to have been originally the same with the *Dévanāgarī* before the latter were enclosed, as we now see them, in angular frames.

II. The primeval religion of *Irān*, if we rely on the authorities adduced by MOHSANI FA'NĪ, was that, which NEWTON calls the oldest (and it may justly be called the noblest) of all religions ; " a firm belief, that One Supreme God made the world by his power, and continually governed it by his providence ; a pious fear, love, and adoration of Him ; a due reverence for parents and aged persons ; a fraternal affection for the whole human species, and a compassionate tenderness even for the brute creation." A system of devotion so pure and sublime could hardly among mortals be of long duration ; and we learn from the *Dabistān*, that the popular worship of the





*Iranians* under HUSHANG was purely *Sabian*; a word, of which I cannot offer any certain etymology, but which has been deduced by grammarians from *Sabà*, a *host*, and, particularly the *host of heaven*, or the *celestial bodies*, in the adoration of which the *Sabian* ritual is believed to have consisted: there is a description, in the learned work just mentioned, of the several *Persian* temples dedicated to the Sun and Planets, of the images adored in them, and of the magnificent processions to them on prescribed festivals, one of which is probably represented by sculpture in the ruined city of JEMSHID; but the planetary worship in *Persia* seems only a part of a far more complicated religion, which we now find in these *Indian* provinces; for MOSHAN assures us, that, in the opinion of the best informed *Persians*, who professed the faith of HUSHANG, distinguished from that of ZERA'TUSHT, the first monarch of *Iran* and of the whole earth was MAHA'BA'D, a word apparently *Sanscrit*, who divided the people into four orders, the *religious*, the *military*, the *commercial*, and the *servile*, to which he assigned names unquestionably the same in their origin with those now applied to the four primary classes of the *Hindus*. They added, that He received from the creator, and promulgated among men, a *sacred book in a heavenly language*, to which the *Muselman* author gives the *Arabic* title of *desâtîr*, or regulations, but the original name of which he has not mentioned; and that *fourteen* MAHA'BA'Ds had appeared or would appear in human shapes for the government of this world: now when we know, that the *Hindus* believe in *fourteen* MENU's, or celestial personages with similar functions, the *first* of whom left a book of *regulations*, or *divine ordinances*, which they hold equal to the *Vêda*, and the language of which they believe to be that of the Gods, we can hardly doubt, that the first corruption of the purest and oldest religion was the system of *Indian* Theology, invented by the *Brâhmans* and prevalent in these territories, where the book of MAHA'BA'D or MENU is at this hour the standard of all religious and moral duties. The accession of CAYUMERS to the throne of *Persia*, in the eighth or ninth century before CHRIST, seems to have been accompanied by a considerable revolution both in government and religion: he was most probably of a different race from the *Mahâbâdians*, who preceded him, and began perhaps the new system of national faith, which HUSHANG, whose name it bears completed; but the reformation was partial; for, while they rejected the complex polytheism of their predecessors,



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retained the laws of MA'HA'BA'D, with a superstitious veneration for the sun, the planets, and fire; thus resembling the *Hindu* sects, called *Sáuras*, and *Ságnicas*, the second of which is very numerous at *Banares*, where many *agnihótras* are continually blazing, and where the *Ságnicas*, when they enter on the sacerdotal office, kindle, with two pieces of the hard wood *Semí*, a fire which they keep lighted through their lives for their nuptial ceremony, the performance of solemn sacrifices, the obsequies of departed ancestors, and their own funeral pile. This remarkable rite was continued by ZERA'TUSHT; who reformed the old religion by the addition of genii, or angels, presiding over months and days, of new ceremonies in the veneration shown to fire, of a new work, which he pretended to have received from heaven, and, above all, by establishing the actual adoration of One Supreme Being: he was born, according to MOHSAN, in the district of *Rai*; and it was He, not, as AMMIANUS asserts, his protector GUSHTASE, who travelled into *India*, that he might receive information from the *Bráhmans* in theology and ethics. It is barely possible, that PYTHAGORAS knew him in the capital of *Irak*; but the *Grecian* sage must then have been far advanced in years, and we have no certain evidence of an intercourse between the two philosophers. The reformed religion of *Persia* continued in force, till that country was subdued by the *Muselmans*; and, without studying the *Zend*, we have ample information concerning it in the modern *Persian* writings of several, who professed it. BAHMAN always named ZERA'TUSHT, with reverence; but he was in truth a pure Theist, and strongly disclaimed any adoration of the fire or other elements: he denied, that the doctrine of two coeval principles, supremely good and supremely bad, formed any part of his faith; and he often repeated with emphasis the verses of FIRDAUSI on the prostration of CYRUS and his paternal grandfather before the blazing altar:—"Think not, that they were adorers of fire; for that element was only an exalted object, on the lustre of which they fixed their eyes; they humbled themselves a whole week before God; and, if thy understanding be ever so little exerted, thou must acknowledge thy dependence on the being supremely pure." In a story of SADI, near the close of his beautiful *Bústán*, concerning the idol of SO'MANA'TH, or MAHA'DEVA, he confounds the religion of the *Hindus* with that of the *Gabrs*, calling the *Bráhmans* not only *Moghs*, (which might be justified by passage in the *Mesnavi*) but even readers of the *Zend* and *Pázend*: now, whether this confusion





proceeded from real or pretended ignorance, I cannot decide, but am as firmly convinced, that the doctrines of the *Zend* were distinct from those of the *Véda*, as I am that the religion of the *Bráhmans*, with whom we converse every day, prevailed in *Persia* before the accession of *CAYUMERS*, whom the *Pársis*, from respect to his memory, consider as the first of men, although they believe in an *universal deluge* before his reign.

With the religion of the old *Persians* their *philosophy* (or as much as we know of it) was intimately connected; for they were assiduous observers of the luminaries, which they adored, and established, according to *MOHSAN*, who confirms in some degree the fragments of *BEROSUS*, a number of artificial cycles with distinct names, which seem to indicate a knowledge of the period, in which the equinoxes appear to revolve: they are said also to have known the most wonderful powers of nature, and thence to have acquired the fame of magicians and enchanters; but I will only detain you with a few remarks on that metaphysical theology, which has been professed immemorially by a numerous sect of *Persians* and *Hindus*, was carried in part into *Greece*, and prevails even now among the learned *Muselmans*, who sometimes avow it without reserve. The modern philosophers of this persuasion are called *Súfi's*, either from the *Greek* word for a *sage*, or from the *woollen* mantle, which they used to wear in some provinces of *Persia*: their fundamental tenets are, that nothing exists absolutely but *God*: that the human soul is an emanation from his essence, and, though divided for a time from its heavenly source, will be finally re-united with it; that the highest possible happiness will arise from its re-union, and that the chief good of mankind, in this transitory world, consists in as perfect an *union* with the *Eternal Spirit* as the incumbrances of a mortal frame will allow; that, for this purpose, they should break all *connection* (or *ta'alluk*, as they call it,) with *ecstrinsic* objects, and pass through life without *attachments*, as a swimmer in the ocean strikes freely without the impediment of clothes; that they should be straight and free as the cypress, whose fruit is hardly perceptible, and not sink under a load, like fruit-trees attached to a trellis; that, if mere earthly charms have power to influence the soul, the *idea* of celestial beauty must overwhelm it in ecstatic delight; that, for want of apt words to express the divine perfections and the ardour of devotion, we must borrow such expressions as approach the nearest to our ideas, and speak of *Beauty* and *Love* in a transcendent and



mystical sense ; that, like a *reed* torn from its native bank, like separated from its delicious honey, the soul of man bewails its disunion with *melancholy music*, and sheds burning tears, like the lighted taper, waiting passionately for the moment of its extinction, as a disengagement from earthly trammels, and the means of returning to its Only Beloved. Such in part (for I omit the minuter and more subtil metaphysics of the *Sûfis*, which are mentioned in the *Dabistân*) is the wild and enthusiastic religion of the modern *Persian* poets, especially of the sweet *Hafîz* and the great *Maulavi* : such is the system of the *Védânti* philosophers and best lyric poets of *India* ; and, as it was a system of the highest antiquity in both nations, it may be added to the many other proofs of an immemorial affinity between them.

III. On the ancient *monuments* of *Persian* sculpture and architecture we have already made such observations, as were sufficient for our purpose ; nor will you be surprized at the diversity between the figures at *Elephanta*, which are manifestly *Hindu*, and those at *Persepolis*, which are merely *Sabian*, if you concur with me in believing, that the *Takht Jemshîd* was erected after the time of *CAYÛMERS*, when the *Brâhmans* had migrated from *Irân*, and when their intricate mythology had been superseded by the simpler adoration of the planets and of fire.

IV. As to the *sciences* or *arts* of the old *Persians*, I have little to say ; and no complete evidence of them seems to exist. *MOHSAN* speaks more than once of ancient verses in the *Pahlavi* language ; and *BAHMAN* assured me, that some scanty remains of them had been preserved : their music and painting, which *NIZA'MI* celebrated, have irrecoverably perished ; and in regard to *MA'NI'*, the painter and imposter, whose book of drawings called *Artang*, which he pretended to be divine, is supposed to have been destroyed by the *Chinese*, in whose dominions he had sought refuge, the whole tale is too modern to throw any light on the questions before us concerning the origin of nations and the inhabitants of the primitive world.

Thus has it been proved by clear evidence and plain reasoning, that a powerful monarchy was established in *Irân* long before the *Assyrian* or *Pishdadh*, government ; that it was in truth a *Hindu* monarchy, though, if any chuse to call it *Cusian*, *Casdean*, or *Seythian*, we shall not enter into a debate on mere names ; that it subsisted many centuries and that its history has been ingrafted





on that of the *Hindus*, who founded the monarchies of *Ayóthya* and *Indraprestha*; that the language of the first *Persian* empire was the mother of the *Sanscrit*, and consequently of the *Zend*, and *Parsi*, as well as of *Greek*, *Latin*, and *Gothic*; that the language of the *Assyrians* was the parent of *Chaldaic* and *Pahlavi*, and that the primary *Tartarian* language also had been current in the same empire; although, as the *Tartars* had no books or even letters, we cannot with certainty trace their unpolished and variable idioms. We discover, therefore in *Persia*, at the earliest dawn of history, the *three* distinct races of men, whom we described on former occasions as possessors of *India*, *Arabia*, *Tartary*; and, whether they were collected in *Iràn* from distant regions, or diverged from it, as from a common centre, we shall easily determine by the following considerations. Let us observe in the first place the central position of *Iràn*, which is bounded by *Arabia*, by *Tartary*, and by *India*; whilst *Arabia* lies contiguous to *Iràn* only, but is remote from *Tartary*, and divided even from the skirts of *India* by a considerable gulf; no country, therefore, but *Persia* seems likely to have sent forth its colonies to all the kingdoms of *Asia*: the *Brahmans* could never have migrated from *India* to *Iràn*, because they are expressly forbidden by their oldest existing laws to leave the region, which they inhabit at this day; the *Arabs* have not even a tradition of an emigration into *Persia* before *MOHAMMED*, nor had they indeed any inducement to quit their beautiful and extensive domains; and, as to the *Tartars*, we have no trace in history of their departure from their plains and forests, till the invasion of the *Medes*, who, according to etymologists, were the sons of *MADAI*, and even they were conducted by princes of an *Assyrian* family. The *three* races, therefore, whom we have already mentioned, (and more than three we have not yet found) migrated from *Iràn*, as from their common country; and thus the *Saxon* chronicle, I presume from good authority, brings the first inhabitants of *Britain* from *Armenia*; while a late very learned writer concludes, after all his laborious researches, that the *Goths* or *Scythians* came from *Persia*; and another contends with great force, that both the *Irish* and old *Britons* proceeded severally from the borders of the *Caspian*; a coincidence of conclusions from different media by persons wholly unconnected, which could scarce have happened, if they were not grounded on solid principles. We may therefore hold this proposition firmly established, that



*India*, or *Persia* in its largest sense, was the true centre of population, of knowledge, of languages, and of arts; which, instead of travelling westward only, as it has been fancifully supposed, or eastward, as might with equal reason have been asserted, were expended in all directions to all the regions of the world, in which the *Hindu* race had settled under various denominations: but, whether *Asia* has not produced other races of men, distinct from the *Hindus*, the *Arabs*, or the *Tartars*, or whether any apparent diversity may not have sprung from an intermixture of those three in different proportions, must be the subject of a future inquiry. There is another question of more immediate importance, which you, gentlemen, only can decide: namely, "by what means we can preserve our Society from dying gradually away, as it has advanced gradually to its present (shall I say flourishing or languishing?) state." It has subsisted five years without any expense to the members of it, until the first volume of our Transactions was published; and the price of that large volume, if we compare the different values of money in *Bengal* and in *England*, is not more than equal to the *annual* contribution towards the charges of the Royal Society by each of its fellows, who may not have chosen to compound for it on his admission: this I mention, not from an idea that any of us could object to the purchase of one copy at least, but from a wish to inculcate the necessity of our common exertions in promoting the sale of the work both here and in *London*. In vain shall we meet, as a literary body, if our meetings shall cease to be supplied with original dissertations and memorials; and in vain shall we collect the most interesting papers, if we cannot publish them occasionally without exposing the Superintendents of the Company's Press, who undertake to print them at their own hazard, to the danger of a considerable loss: by united efforts the French have compiled their stupendous repositories of universal knowledge; and by united efforts only can we hope to rival them, or to diffuse over our own country and the rest of *Europe* the lights attainable by our *Asiatic Researches*.





THE SEVENTH  
ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE;  
DELIVERED 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 1790.

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GENTLEMEN,



ALTHOUGH we are at this moment considerably nearer to the frontier of *China* than to the farthest limit of the *British* dominions in *Hindusta'n*, yet the first step, that we shall take in the philosophical journey, which I propose for your entertainment at the present meeting, will carry us to the utmost verge of the habitable globe known to the best geographers of old *Greece* and *Egypt*; beyond the boundary of whose knowledge we shall discern from the heights of the northern mountains an empire nearly equal in surface to a square of fifteen degrees; an empire, of which I do not mean to assign the precise limits, but which we may consider, for the purpose of this dissertation, as embraced on two sides by *Tartary* and *India*, while the ocean separates its other sides from various *Asiatic* isles of great importance in the commercial system of *Europe*: annexed to that immense tract of land is the peninsula of *Corea*, which a vast oval bason divides from *Nippon* or *Japan*, a celebrated and imperial island, bearing in arts and in arms, in advantage of situation but not in felicity of government, a pre-eminence among eastern kingdoms analogous to that of *Britain* among the nations of the west. So many climates are included in so prodigious an area, that, while the principal emporium of *China* lies nearly under the tropic, its metropolis enjoys the temperature of *Samarkand*; such too is the diversity of soil in its fifteen provinces, that, while some of them are exquisitely fertile, richly cultivated, and extremely populous, others are barren and rocky, dry and unfruitful, with plains as wild or mountains as rugged as any in *Scythia*, and those either wholly deserted, or peopled by savage hordes, who, if they be not still independent, have been very lately subdued by the perfidy, rather than the valour, of a monarch, who has perpetuated his own



breach of faith in a *Chinese* poem, of which I have seen a translation.

The word *China*, concerning which I shall offer some new remarks, is well known to the people, whom we call the *Chinese*; but they never apply it (I speak of the learned among them) to themselves or to their country: themselves, according to Father VISDELLOU, they describe as the *people of HAN*, or of some other illustrious family, by the memory of whose actions they flatter their national pride; and their country they call *Chim-cuë*, or the *Central Kingdom*, representing it in their symbolical characters by a parallelogram exactly bisected: at other times they distinguish it by the words *Tien-hia* or *What is under Heaven*, meaning *all that is valuable on Earth*. Since they never name themselves with moderation, they would have no right to complain, if they knew, that *European* authors have ever spoken of them in the extremes of applause or of censure: by some they have been extolled as the oldest and the wisest, as the most learned and most ingenious, of nations; whilst others have derided their pretensions to antiquity, condemned their government as abominable, and arraigned their manners as inhuman, without allowing them an element of science, or a single art, for which they have not been indebted to some more ancient and more civilized race of men. The truth perhaps lies, where we usually find it, between the extremes; but it is not my design to accuse or to defend the *Chinese*, to depress or to aggrandize them: I shall confine myself to the discussion of a question connected with my former discourses, and far less easy to be solved than any hitherto started. "Whence came the singular people, who long had governed *China*, before they were conquered by the *Tartars*?" On this problem, the solution of which has no concern, indeed, with our political or commercial interests, but a very material connection, if I mistake not, with interests of a higher nature, four opinions have been advanced, and all rather peremptorily asserted, than supported by argument and evidence. By a few writers it has been urged, that the *Chinese* are an original race, who have dwelled for ages, if not from eternity, in the land, which they now possess; by others, and chiefly by the missionaries, it is insisted, that they sprang from the same stock with the *Hebrews* and *Arabs*; a third assertion is that of the *Arabs* themselves and of M. PAUW, who hold it indubitable, that they were originally *Tartars* descending in wild clans from the





steps of *Imaus* ; and a fourth, at least as dogmatically pronounced as any of the preceding, is that of the *Bráhmens*, who decide, without allowing any appeal from their decision, that the *Chínas* (for so they are named in *Sanscrit*) were *Hindus* of the *Cshatriya*, or military, class, who, abandoning the privileges of their tribe, rambled in different bodies to the north-east of *Bengal* ; and, forgetting by degrees the rites and religion of their ancestors, established separate principalities, which were afterwards united in the plains and valleys, which are now possessed by them. If any one of the three last opinions be just, the first of them must necessarily be relinquished ; but of those three, the first cannot possibly be sustained ; because it rests on no firmer support than a foolish remark, whether true or false, that *Sem* in *Chinese* means *life* and *procreation* ; and because a tea-plant is not more different from a palm, than a *Chinese* from an *Arab* : they are men, indeed, as the tea and the palm are vegetables ; but human sagacity could not, I believe, discover any other trace of resemblance between them. One of the *Arabs*, indeed, an account of whose voyage to *India* and *China* has been translated by *RENAUDOT*, thought the *Chinese* not only handsomer (according to his ideas of beauty) than the *Hindus*, but even more like his own countrymen in features, habiliments, carriages, manners and ceremonies ; and this may be true, without proving an actual resemblance between the *Chinese* and *Arabs*, except in dress and complexion. The next opinion is more connected with that of the *Bráhmens*, than *M. PAUW*, probably, imagined ; for though he tells us expressly, that by *Scythians* he meant the *Turks* or *Tartars* ; yet the dragon on the standard, and some other peculiarities, from which he would infer a clear affinity between the old *Tartars* ; and the *Chinese*, belonged indubitably to those *Scythians*, who are known to have been *Goths* ; and the *Goths* had manifestly a common lineage with the *Hindus*, if his own argument, in the preface to his *Researches*, on the similarity of language, be, as all men agree that it is, irrefragable. That the *Chinese* were anciently of a *Tartarian* stock, is a proposition, which I cannot otherwise disprove for the present, than by insisting on the total dissimilarity of the two races in manners and arts, particularly in the fine arts of imagination, which the *Tartars*, by their own account, never cultivated ; but, if we show strong grounds for believing, that the first *Chinese* were actually of an *Indian* race, it will follow that *M. PAUW* and the *Arabs* are mistaken : it is to the discussion of this



and, in my opinion, very interesting point, that I shall confine the remainder of my discourse.

In the *Sanscrit* Institutes of Civil and Religious Duties, revealed, as the *Hindus* believe, by MANU, the son of BRAHMA, we find the following curious passage : “ Many families of the military class, having gradually abandoned the ordinances of the *Véda*, and the company of *Bráhmens*, lived in a state of degradation ; as the people of *Pundraca* and *Odra*, those of *Dravira* and *Cambója*, the *Yavanas* and *Sacas*, the *Páradas* and *Pahlavas*, the *Chínas* and some other nations.” A full comment on this text would here be superfluous : but, since the testimony of the Indian author, who, though certainly not a divine personage, was as certainly a very ancient lawyer, moralist, and historian, is direct and positive, disinterested and unsuspected, it would, I think, decide the question before us, if we could be sure, that the word *Chína* signified a *Chinese*, as all the *Pundits*, whom I have separately consulted, assert with one voice : they assure me, that the *Chínas* of MANU settled in a fine country to the north-east of *Gour*, and to the east of *Camarúp* and *Népál* ; that they have long been, and still are, famed as ingenious artificers ; and that they had themselves seen old *Chinese* idols, which bore a manifest relation to the primitive religion of *India* before BUDDHA’S appearance in it. A well-informed *Pandit* showed me a *Sanscrit* book in *Cashmirian* letters, which, he said, was revealed by SIYA himself, and entitled *Sactisangama* : he read to me a whole chapter of it on the heterodox opinions of the *Chínas*, who were divided, says the author, into near two hundred clans. I then laid before him a map of *Asia* ; and, when I pointed to *Cashmír*, his own country, he instantly placed his finger on the north-western provinces of *China*, where the *Chínas*, he said, first established themselves ; but he added, that *Mahá-chína*, which was also mentioned in his book, extended to the eastern and southern oceans. I believe, nevertheless, that the *Chinese* empire, as we now call it, was not formed when the laws of MANU were collected ; and for this belief, so repugnant to the general opinion, I am bound to offer my reasons. If the outline of history and chronology for the last two thousand years be correctly traced, (and we must be hardy sceptics to doubt it) the poems of CALIDA’S were composed before the beginning of our era : now it is clear, from internal and external evidence, that the *Rámáyana* and *Mahá-bhárata* were considerably older than the productions of that poet ;





and it appears from the style and metre of the *Dharma Śāstra* revealed by MANU, that it was reduced to writing long before the age of VĀLMĪK or VYĀSA, the second of whom names it with applause : we shall not, therefore, be thought extravagant, if we place the compiler of those laws between a thousand and fifteen hundred years before CHRIST ; especially as BUDDHA, whose age is pretty well ascertained, is not mentioned in them ; but, in the twelfth century before our era, the *Chinese* empire was at least in its cradle. This fact it is necessary to prove ; and my first witness is CONFUCIUS himself. I know to what keen satire I shall expose myself by citing that philosopher, after the bitter sarcasms of M. PAUW against him and against the translators of his mutilated, but valuable, works ; yet I quote without scruple the book entitled *Lún Yü*, of which I possess the original with a verbal translation, and which I know to be sufficiently authentic for my present purpose : in the second part of it CON-FU-TSU declares, that “although he, like other men, could relate, as mere lessons of morality, the histories of the first and second imperial houses, yet, *for want of evidence*, he could give no certain account of them.” Now, if the *Chinese* themselves do not even pretend, that any historical monuments existed, in the age of CONFUCIUS, preceding the rise of their third dynasty about eleven hundred years before the *Christian* epoch, we may justly conclude, that the reign of VŪVAM was in the infancy of their empire, which hardly grew to maturity till some ages after that prince ; and it has been asserted by very learned *Europeans*, that even of the third dynasty, which he has the fame of having raised, no unsuspected memorial can now be produced. It was not till the eighth century before the birth of our Saviour, that a small kingdom was erected in the province of *Shen-si*, the capital of which stood nearly in the *thirty-fifth* degree of northern latitude, and about *five* degrees to the west of *Si-gan* : both the country and its metropolis were called *Chün* ; and the dominion of its princes was gradually extended to the east and west. A king of *Chün*, who makes a figure in the *Shāhnámah* among the allies of AFRA'SIYÁ'B, was, I presume, a sovereign of the country just mentioned ; and the river of *Chün*, which the poet frequently names as the limit of his eastern geography, seems to have been the *Yellow River*, which the *Chinese* introduce at the beginning of their fabulous annals : I should be tempted to expatiate on so curious a subject ; but the present occasion



nothing superfluous, and permits me only to add, that *Man-gukhán* died, in the middle of the thirteenth century, before the city of *Chín*, which was afterwards taken by KUBLAI, and that the poets of *Irán* perpetually allude to the districts around it which they celebrate, with *Chegil* and *Khoten*, for a number of musk-animals roving on their hills. The territory of *Chín* so called by the old *Hindus*, by the *Persians*, and by the *Chinese* (while the *Greeks* and *Arabs* were obliged by their defective articulation to miscall it *Sín*) gave its name to a race of emperors, whose tyranny made their memory so unpopular, that the modern inhabitants of *China* hold the word in abhorrence, and speak of themselves as the people of a milder and more virtuous dynastý ; but it is highly probable that the whole nation descended from the *Chínas* of MANU and, mixing with the *Tartars*, by whom the plains of *Honan* and the more southern provinces were thinly inhabited, formed by degrees the race of men, whom we now see in possession of the noblest empire in *Asia*.

In support of an opinion, which I offer as the result of long and anxious inquiries, I should regularly proceed to examine the language and letters, religion and philosophy, of the present *Chinese*, and subjoin some remarks on their ancient monuments, on their sciences, and on their arts both liberal and mechanical : but their spoken *language*, not having been preserved by the usual symbols of articulate sounds, must have been for many ages in a continual flux ; their *letters*, if we may so call them, are merely the symbols of ideas ; their popular *religion* was imported from *India* in an age comparatively modern ; and their *philosophy* seems yet in so rude a state, as hardly to deserve the appellation ; they have no *ancient monuments*, from which their origin can be traced even by plausible conjecture ; their *sciences* are wholly exotic ; and their *mechanical arts* have nothing in them characteristic of a particular family ; nothing, which any set of men, in a country so highly favoured by nature, might not have discovered and improved. They have indeed, both national music and national poetry, and both of them beautifully pathetic ; but of painting, sculpture, or architecture, as arts of imagination, they seem (like other *Asiatics*) to have no idea. Instead, therefore, of enlarging separately on each of those heads, I shall briefly inquire, how far the literature and religious practices of *China* confirm or oppose the proposition, which I have advanced.





The declared and fixed opinion of M. DE GUIGNES, on the subject before us, is nearly connected with that of the *Brâhmens* : he maintains, that the *Chinese* were emigrants from *Egypt*, and the *Egyptians*, or *Ethiopians*, (for they were clearly the same people) had indubitably a common origin with the old natives of *India*, as the affinity of their languages, and of their institutions, both religious and political, fully evinces ; but that *China* was peopled a few centuries before our era by a colony from the banks of the *Nile*, though neither *Persians* nor *Arabs*, *Tartars* nor *Hindus*, ever heard of such an emigration, is a paradox, which the bare authority even of so learned a man cannot support ; and, since reason grounded on facts can alone decide such a question, we have a right to demand clearer evidence and stronger arguments, than any that he has adduced. The hieroglyphics of *Egypt* bear, indeed, a strong resemblance to the mythological sculptures and paintings of *India*, but seem wholly dissimilar to the symbolical system of the *Chinese*, which might easily have been invented (as they assert) by an individual, and might very naturally have been contrived by the first *Chinas*, or out-cast *Hindus*, who either never knew, or had forgotten, the alphabetical characters of their wiser ancestors. As to the table and busts of *ISIS*, they seem to be given up as modern forgeries ; but, if they were indisputably genuine, they would be nothing to the purpose ; for the letters on the bust appear to have been designed as alphabetical ; and the fabricator of them (if they really were fabricated in *Europe*) was uncommonly happy, since two or three of them are exactly the same with those on a metal pillar yet standing in the north of *India*. In *Egypt*, if we can rely on the testimony of the *Greeks*, who studied no language but their own, there were two sets of alphabetical characters ; the one popular, like the various letters used in our *Indian* provinces : and the other sacerdotal, like the *Dérandgarî*, especially that form of it, which we see in the *Vêda* ; besides which they had two sorts of sacred sculpture ; the one simple, like the figures of *BUDDHA* and the three *RÂMAS* ; and the other, allegorical, like the images of *GANE'SA*, or *Divine Wisdom*, and *ISA'NT*, or *Nature*, with all their emblematical accompaniments ; but the real character of the *Chinese* appears wholly distinct from any *Egyptian* writing, either mysterious or popular ; and, as to the fancy of M. DE GUIGNES, that the complicated symbols of *China* were at first no more than *Phœnician* monograms let us hope, that he has abandoned so wild a



concept, which he started probably with no other view than to display his ingenuity and learning.

We have ocular proof, that the few radical characters of the *Chinese* were originally (like our astronomical and chymical symbols) the pictures or outlines of visible objects, or figurative signs for simple ideas, which they have multiplied by the most ingenious combinations and the liveliest metaphors; but, as the system is peculiar, I believe, to themselves and the *Japanese*, it would be idly ostentatious to enlarge on it at present; and, for the reasons already intimated, it neither corroborates nor weakens the opinion, which I endeavour to support. The same may as truly be said of their *spoken* language; for independently of its constant fluctuation during a series of ages, it has the peculiarity of excluding four or five sounds, which other nations articulate, and is clipped into monosyllables, even when the ideas expressed by them, and the written symbols for those ideas, are very complex. This has arisen, I suppose, from the singular habits of the people; for, though their common tongue be so *musically* accented as to form a kind of recitative, yet it wants those *grammatical* accents, without which all human tongues would appear monosyllabic: thus *Amita*, with an accent on the first syllable, means, in the *Sanscrit* language, *immeasurable*; and the natives of *Bengal* pronounce it *Omito*; but, when the religion of *BUDDHA*, the son of *MA'YA'*, was carried hence into *China*, the people of that country, unable to pronounce the name of their new God, called him *Foe*, the son of *MO-YE*, and divided his epithet *Amita* into three syllables *O-MI-TO*, annexing to them certain ideas of their own, and expressing them in writing by three distinct symbols. We may judge from this instance, whether a comparison of their spoken tongue with the dialects of other nations can lead to any certain conclusion as to their origin; yet the instance, which I have given, supplies me with an argument from analogy, which I produce as conjectural only, but which appears more and more plausible, the oftener I consider it. The *BUDDHA* of the *Hindus* is unquestionably the *Foe* of *China*; but the great progenitor of the *Chinese* is also named by them *Fo-hi*, where the second monosyllable signifies, it seems, a *victim*: now the ancestor of that military tribe, whom the *Hindus* call the *Chandravansa*, or children of the *MOON*, was, according to their *Puranas* or legends, *BUDDHA*, or the genius of the planet *Mercury*, from whom, in the *fifth* degree, descended a prince named *PRUHYA*;





whom his father YAYA'TI sent in exile to the east of *Hindustan*, with this imprecation, "may thy progeny be ignorant of the *Véda*." The name of the banished prince could not be pronounced by the modern *Chinese*; and, though I dare not conjecture, that the last syllable of it has been changed into YAO, I may nevertheless observe that YAO was the *fifth* in descent from FO-HI, or at least the fifth mortal in the first imperial dynasty; that all *Chinese* history before him is considered by *Chinese* themselves as poetical or fabulous; that his father TI-co, like the *Indian* king YAYA'TI, was the first prince who married several women; and that FO-HI, the head of their race, appeared, say the *Chinese*, in a province of the west, and held his court in the territory of *Chín*, where the rovers, mentioned by the *Indian* legislator are supposed to have settled. Another circumstance in the parallel is very remarkable; according to father DE PREMARE, in his tract on *Chinese* mythology, the mother of FO-HI was the *Daughter of Heaven*, surnamed *Flower-loving*; and, as the nymph was walking alone on the bank of a river with a similar name, she found herself on a sudden encircled by a *rain-bow*; soon after which she became pregnant, and at the end of twelve years was delivered of a son radiant as herself, who, among other titles, had that of SUI, or *Star of the Year*. Now in the mythological system of the *Hindus*, the nymph RO'HINI, who presides over the fourth lunar mansion, was the favourite mistress of SO'MA, or the Moon, among whose numerous epithets we find *Cumudamayaca* or *Delighting in a species of water-flower*, that blossoms at night; and their offspring was BU'DHA, regent of a planet, and called also, from the names of his parents, RAUHINE'YA or SAUMYA: it is true, that the learned missionary explains the word SUI by *Jupiter*; but an exact resemblance between two such fables could not have been expected; and it is sufficient for my purpose, that they seem to have a family likeness. The God BUDDHA, say the *Indians*, married ILA, whose father was preserved in a miraculous ark from an universal deluge: now, although I cannot insist with confidence, that the *rain-bow* in the *Chinese* fable alludes to the *Mosaic* narrative of the flood, nor build any solid argument on the divine personage NIU-VA, of whose character, and even of whose sex, the historians of *China* speak very doubtfully, I may, nevertheless, assure you, after full inquiry and consideration, that the *Chinese*, like the *Hindus*, believe this earth to have been wholly covered with water, which, in works of undisputed authenticity, they des-



as flowing abundantly, then subsiding, and separating the higher from the lower age of mankind; that the division of time, from which their poetical history begins, just preceded the appearance of FO-HI on the mountains of *Chin*, but that the great inundation in the reign of YAO was either confined to the lowlands of his kingdom, if the whole account of it be not a fable, or, if it contain any allusion to the flood of NOAH, has been ignorantly misplaced by the *Chinese* annalists.

The importation of a new religion into *China*, in the first century of our era, must lead us to suppose, that the former system, whatever it was, had been found inadequate to the purpose of restraining the great body of the people from those offences against conscience and virtue, which the civil power could not reach; and it is hardly possible that, without such restrictions, any government could long have subsisted with felicity; for no government can long subsist without equal justice, and justice cannot be administered without the sanctions of religion. Of the religious opinions, entertained by CONFUCIUS and his followers, we may glean a general notion from the fragments of their works translated by COUPLET: they professed a firm belief in the supreme God, and gave a demonstration of his being and of his providence from the exquisite beauty and perfection of the celestial bodies, and the wonderful order of nature in the whole fabric of the visible world. From this belief they deduced a system of Ethics, which the philosopher sums up in a few words at the close of the *Lün-yü*: "He," says CONFUCIUS, "who shall be fully persuaded, that the Lord of Heaven governs the universe, who shall in all things chuse moderation, who shall perfectly know his own species, and so act among them, that his life and manners may conform to his knowledge of God and man, may be truly said to discharge all the duties of a sage, and to be far exalted above the common herd of the human race." But such a religion and such morality could never have been general; and we find, that the people of *China* had an ancient system of ceremonies and superstitions, which the government and the philosophers appear to have encouraged, and which has an apparent affinity with some parts of the oldest *Indian* worship: they believed in the agency of genii or tutelary spirits, presiding over the stars and the clouds, over lakes and rivers, mountains, valleys, and woods, over certain regions and towns, over all the elements, (of which, like the *Hindus*, they reckoned five) and particularly over fire, the most brilliant of





time, when *Armenia* ceased to be a province of *Iran*: the letters, in which it now appears, are allowed to be comparatively modern; and, though the learned editor of the tract by *CARPANIUS* on the literature of *Ava*, compares them with the *Pali* characters, yet, if they be not, as I should rather imagine, derived from the *Pahlavi*, they are probably an invention of some learned *Armenian* in the middle of the fifth century. *MOSES* of *Khoren*, than whom no man was more able to elucidate the subject, has inserted in his historical work a disquisition on the language of *Armenia*, from which we might collect some curious information, if the present occasion required it; but to all the races of men, who inhabit the branches of *Caucasus* and the northern limits of *Iran*, I apply the remark, before announced generally, that ferocious and hardy tribes, who retire for the sake of liberty to mountainous regions, and form by degrees a separate nation, must also form in the end a separate language by agreeing on new words to express new ideas; provided that the language, which they carried with them, was not fixed by writing and sufficiently copious. The *Armenian* damsels are said by *STRABO* to have sacrificed in the temple of the goddess *ANATIS*, whom we know, from other authorities, to be the *ΝΑΨΙΔ*, or *VENUS*, of the old *Persians*; and it is for many reasons highly probable, that one and the same religion prevailed through the whole empire of *CYRUS*.

Having travelled round the continent, and among the islands, of *Asia*, we come again to the coast of the *Mediterranean*; and the principal nations of antiquity, who first demand our attention, are the *Greeks* and *Phrygians*, who, though differing somewhat in manners, and perhaps in dialect, had an apparent affinity in religion as well as in language: the *Dorian*, *Ionian*, and *Eolian* families having emigrated from *Europe*, to which it is universally agreed that they first passed from *Egypt*, I can add nothing to what has been advanced concerning them in former discourses; and, no written monuments of old *Phrygia* being extant, I shall only observe, on the authority of the *Greeks*, that the grand object of mysterious worship in that country was the Mother of the Gods, or Nature personified, as we see her among the *Indians* in a thousand forms and under a thousand names. She was called in the *Phrygian* dialect *ΜΑ΄*, and represented in a car drawn by lions, with a drum in her hand, and a towered coronet on her head: her mysteries (which seem to be alluded to in the *Mosaic* law) are solemnized



at the autumnal equinox in these provinces, where she is named, in one of her characters, MA', is adored, in all of them, as the great mother, is figured sitting on a lion, and appears in some of her temples with a diadem or mitre of turrets : a drum is called *din-dima* both in *Sanscrit* and *Phrygian* ; and the tittle of *Dindymene* seems rather derived from that word, than from the name of a mountain. The *DIANA* of *Ephesus* was manifestly the same goddess in the character of productive Nature ; and the *ASTARTE* of the *Syrians* and *Phenicians* ( to whom we now return ) was, I doubt not, the same in another form : I may on the whole assure you, that the learned works of *SELDEN* and *JABLONSKI*, on the Gods of *Syria* and *Egypt* would receive more illustration from the little *Sanscrit* book, entiled *Chand* ) ; than from all the fragments of oriental mythology, that are dispersed in the whole compass of *Grecian*, *Roman*, and *Hebrew* literature. We are told, that the *Phenicians*, like the *Hindus*, adored the Sun, and asserted water to be the first of created things ; nor can we doubt, that *Syria*, *Samaria*, and *Phenice*, or the long strip of land on the shore of the *Mediterranean*, were anciently peopled by a branch of the *Indian* stock, but were afterwards inhabited by that race, which for the present we call *Arabian* : in all three the oldest religion was the *Assyrian*, as it is called by *SELDEN*, and the *Samaritan* letter appear to have been the same at first with those of *Phenice* ; but the *Synac*, language, of which ample remains are preserved, and the *Punic*, of which we have a clear specimen, in *PLAUTUS* and on monuments lately brought to light, were indisputably of a *Chaldaic*, or *Arabic*, origin.

The seat of the first *Phenician* having extended to *Idume*, with which we began, we have now completed the circuit of *Asia* ; but we must not pass over in silence a most extraordinary people, who escaped the attention, as *BARROW* observes more than once, of the diligent and inquisitive, *HERODOTUS* : I mean the people of *Judea*, whose language demonstrates their affinity with the *Arabs*, but whose manners, literature, and history are wonderfully distinguished from the rest of mankind. *BARROW* loads them with the severe, but just, epithets of malignant, unsocial, obstinate, distrustful, sordid, changeable, turbulent ; and describes them as furiously zealous in succouring their own countrymen, but implacably hostile to other nations ; yet, with all the sottish perverseness, the stupid arrogance, and the brutal atrocity of their character, they had





the peculiar merit, among all races of men under heaven, of preserving a rational and pure system of devotion in the midst of wild polytheism, inhuman or obscene rights, and a dark labyrinth of errors produced by ignorance and supported by interested fraud. Theological inquiries are no part of present subject ; but I cannot refrain from adding, that the collection of tracts, which we call from their excellence the *Scriptures*; contain, independently of a divine origin, more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass from all other books, that were ever composed in any age or in any idiom. The two parts, of which the Scriptures consist, are connected by a chain of compositions, which bear no resemblance in form or style to any that can be produced from the stores of *Grecian, Indian, Persian*, or even *Arabian*, learning : the antiquity of those compositions no man doubts ; and the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication is a solid ground of belief, that they were genuine predictions, and consequently inspired ; but, if any thing be the absolute exclusive property of each individual, it is his belief ; and, I hope, I should be one of the last men living, who could harbour a thought of obtruding my own belief on the free minds of others. I mean only to assume, what, I trust, will be readily conceded, that the first *Hebrew* historian must be entitled, merely as such, to an equal degree of credit, in his account of all civil transactions, with any other historian of antiquity : how far that most ancient writer confirms the result of our inquiries into the genealogy of nations, I propose to show at our next anniversary meeting ; when, after an approach to demonstration, in the strict method of the old analysis, I shall resume the whole argument concisely and synthetically ; and shall then have condensed in seven discourses a mass of evidence, which, if brevity had not been my object, might have been expanded into seven large volumes with no other trouble than that of holding the pen ; but (to borrow a turn of expression from one of our poets) "for what I have produced, I claim only your indulgence ; it is for what I have suppressed, that I am entitled to your thanks."



THE NINTH DISCOURSE  
ON  
THE ORIGIN AND FAMILIES OF NATIONS.

DELIVERED 23RD FEBRUARY, 1792.

BY  
THE PRESIDENT.

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**Y**OU have attended, gentlemen, with so much indulgence to my discourses on the five *Asiatic* nations, and on the various tribes established along their several borders or interspersed over their mountains, that I cannot but flatter myself with an assurance of being heard with equal attention, while I trace to one centre the three great families, from which those nations appear to have proceeded, and then hazard a few conjectures on the different courses, which they may be supposed to have taken toward the countries, in which we find them settled at the dawn of all genuine history.

Let us begin with a short review of the propositions, to which we have gradually been led, and separate such as are morally certain, from such as are only probable: that the first race of *Persians* and *Indians*, to whom we may add the *Romans* and *Greeks*, the *Goths*, and the old *Egyptians* or *Ethiops*, originally spoke the same language and professed the same popular faith, is capable, in my humble opinion, of incontestable proof; that the *Jews* and *Arabs*, the *Assyrians*, or second *Persian* race, the people who spoke *Syriac*, and a numerous tribe of *Abyssinians*, used one primitive dialect wholly distinct from the idiom just mentioned, is, I believe, undisputed, and, I am sure, indisputable; but that the settlers in *China* and *Japan* had a common origin with the *Hindus*, is no more than highly probable; and, that all the *Tartars*, as they are inaccurately called, were primarily of a third separate branch, totally differing from the two others in language, manners, and features may indeed be plausibly conjectured, but





cannot, for the reasons alleged in a former essay, be perspicuously shown, and for the present therefore must be merely assumed. Could these facts be verified by the best attainable evidence, it would not I presume, be doubted, that the whole earth was peopled by a variety of shoots from the *Indian, Arabian,* and *Tartarian* branches, or by such intermixtures of them, as, in a course of ages, might naturally have happened.

Now I admit without hesitation the aphorism of LINNEUS, that "in the beginning God created one pair only of every living species, which has a diversity of sex;" but, since that incomparable naturalist argues principally from the wonderful diffusion of vegetables, and from an hypothesis, that the water on this globe has been continually subsiding, I venture to produce a shorter and closer argument in support of his doctrine. That *Nature*, of which simplicity appears a distinguishing attribute, *does nothing in vain*, is a maxim in philosophy; and against those, who deny maxims, we cannot dispute; but *it is vain and superfluous to do by many means what may be done by fewer*, and this is another axiom received into courts of judicature from the schools of philosophers: *we must not, therefore*, says our great NEWTON, *admit more causes of natural things, than those, which are true, and sufficiently account for natural phenomena*; but it is true, that one pair at least of every living species must at first have been created; and that one human pair was sufficient for the population of our globe in a period of no considerable length (on the very moderate supposition of lawyers and political arithmeticians, that every pair of ancestors left on an average two children, and each of them two more), is evident from the rapid increase of numbers in geometrical progression, so well known to those, we have ever taken the trouble to sum a series of as many terms, as they suppose generations of men in two or three thousand years. It follows, that the Author of Nature (for all nature proclaims its divine author) created but one pair of our species; yet, had it not been (among other reasons) for the devastations, which history has recorded, of water and fire, wars, famine, and pestilence, this earth would not now have had room for its multiplied inhabitants. If the human race then be, as we may confidently assume, of one natural species, they must all have proceeded from one pair; and if perfect justice be, as it is most indubitably, an essential attribute of GOD, that pair must have been gifted with sufficient wisdom and strength to be virtuous,



and as far as their nature admitted, happy, but intrusted with freedom of will to be vicious and consequently degraded : whatever might be their option, they must people in time the region where they first were established, and their numerous descendants must necessarily seek new countries, as inclination might prompt, or accident lead, them ; they would of course migrate in separate families and clans, which, forgetting by degrees the language of their common progenitor, would form new dialects to convey new ideas, both simple and complex ; natural affection would unite them at first, and a sense of reciprocal utility, the great and only cement of social union in the absence of public honor and justice, for which in evil times it is a general substitute, would combine them at length in communities more or less regular ; laws would be proposed by a part of each community, but enacted by the whole ; and governments would be variously arranged for the happiness or misery of the governed, according to their own virtue and wisdom, or depravity and folly ; so that, in less than three thousand years, the world would exhibit the same appearances, which we may actually observe on it in the age of the great *Arabian* impostor.

On that part of it, to which our united researches are generally confined, we see *five* races of men peculiarly distinguished, in the time of MAHOMMED, for their multitude and extent of dominion ; but we have reduced them to *three*, because we can discover no more, that essentially differ in language, religion, manners, and other known characteristics : now those three races, how variously soever they may at present be dispersed and intermixed, must (if the preceding conclusions be justly drawn) have migrated originally from a central country, to find which is the problem proposed for solution. Suppose it solved ; and give any arbitrary name to that centre : let it, if you please, be *Iràn*. The three primitive languages, therefore, must at first have been concentrated in *Iràn*, and there only in fact we see traces of them in the earliest historical age ; but, for the sake of greater precision, conceive the whole empire of *Iràn*, with all its mountains and vallies, plains and rivers, to be every way infinitely diminished ; the first winding courses, therefore, of all the nations proceeding from it by land, and nearly at the same time, will be little right lines, but without intersections, because those courses could not have thwarted and crossed one another :





If then you consider the seats of all the migrating nations as points in a surrounding figure, you will perceive, that the several rays, diverging from *Iràn*, may be drawn to them without any intersection; but this will not happen, if you assume as a centre *Arabia*, or *Egypt*; *India*, *Tartary*, or *China*; it follows, that *Iràn* or *Persia*, (I contend for the meaning, not the name), was the central country, which we sought. This mode of reasoning I have adopted, not from any affectation (as you will do me the justice to believe) of a scientific diction, but for the sake of conciseness and variety, and from a wish to avoid repetitions; the substance of my argument having been detailed in a different form at the close of another discourse; nor does the argument in any form rise to demonstration, which the question by no means admits: it amounts, however, to such a proof, grounded on written evidence and credible testimony, as all mankind hold sufficient for decisions affecting property, freedom, and life.

Thus then have we proved, that the inhabitants of *Asia*, and consequently, as it might be proved, of the whole earth, sprang from three branches of one stem: and that those branches have shot into their present state of luxuriance in a period comparatively short, is apparent from a fact universally acknowledged, that we find no certain monument, or even probable tradition, of a nations planted, empires and states raised, laws enacted, cities built, navigation improved, commerce encouraged, arts invented, or letters contrived, above twelve or at most fifteen or sixteen centuries before the birth of *CHRIST*, and from another fact, which cannot be controverted, that seven hundred or a thousand years would have been fully adequate to the supposed propagation, diffusion, and establishment of the human race.

The most ancient history of that race, and the oldest composition perhaps in the world, is a work in *Hebrew*, which we may suppose at first, for the sake of our argument, to have no higher authority than any other work of equal antiquity, that the researches of the curious had accidentally brought to light: it is ascribed to *MUSAH*; for so he writes his own name, which, after the *Greeks* and *Romans*, we have changed into *Moses*; and though it was manifestly his object to give an historical account of a single family, he has introduced it with a short view of the primitive world, and his introduction has been divided, perhaps improperly, into eleven chapters. After describing with awful



sublimity the creation of this universe, he asserts, that one pair of every animal species was called from nothing into existence ; that the human pair were strong enough to be happy, but free to be miserable ; that from delusion and temerity, they disobeyed their supreme benefactor, whose goodness could not pardon them consistently with his justice ; and that they received a punishment adequate to their disobedience, but softened by a mysterious promise to be accomplished in their descendants. We cannot but believe, on the supposition just made of a history uninspired, that these facts were delivered by tradition from the first pair, and related by MOSES in a figurative style ; not in that short of allegory, which rhetoricians describe as a mere assemblage of metaphors, but in the symbolical mode of writing adopted by eastern sages, to embellish and dignify historical truth : and, if this were a time for such illustrations, we might produce the same account of the *creation* and the *fall*, expressed by symbols very nearly similar, from the *Purānas* themselves, and even from the *Vēda*, which appears to stand next in antiquity to the five books of MOSES.

The sketch of antediluvian history, in which we find many dark passages, is followed by the narrative of a *deluge*, which destroyed the whole race of man, except four pairs ; an historical fact admitted as true by every nation, to whose literature we have access, and particularly by the ancient *Hindus*, who have allotted an entire *Purāna* to the detail of that event, which they relate, as usual, in symbols or allegories. I concur most heartily with those, who insist, that in proportion as any fact mentioned in history seems repugnant to the course of nature, or, in one word, miraculous, the stronger evidence is required to induce a rational belief of it ; but we hear without incredulity, that cities have been overwhelmed by eruptions from burning mountains ; territories laid waste by hurricanes, and whole islands depopulated by earthquakes : if then we look at the firmament sprinkled with innumerable stars ; if we conclude by a fair analogy, that every star is a sun, attracting, like ours, a system of inhabited planets ; and if our ardent fancy, soaring hand in hand with sound reason, waft us beyond the visible sphere into regions of immensity, disclosing other celestial expanses and other systems of suns and worlds on all sides without number or end, we cannot but consider the submersion of our little spheroid as an infinitely less event in respect of the immeasurable universe, than the destruction of a





of an isle in respect of this habitable globe. Let a general flood, however, be supposed improbable in proportion to the magnitude of so ruinous an event, yet the concurrent evidences of it are completely adequate to the supposed improbability; but, as we cannot here expatiate on those proofs, we proceed to the fourth important fact recorded in the *Mosaic* history; I mean the first propagation and early dispersion of mankind *in separate families* to separate places of residence.

Three sons of the just and virtuous man, whose lineage was preserved from the general inundation, travelled, we are told, as they began to multiply, in *three* large divisions variously subdivided: the children of YAFET seem, from the traces of *Sklavonian* names, and the mention of their being *enlarged*, to have spread themselves far and wide, and to have produced the race, which, for want of a correct appellation, we call *Tartarian*; the colonies, formed by the sons of HAM and SHEM, appear to have been nearly simultaneous; and, among those of the latter branch, we find so many names incontestably preserved at this hour in *Arabia*, that we cannot hesitate in pronouncing them the same people, whom hitherto we have denominated *Arabs*; while the former branch, the most powerful and adventurous of whom were the progeny of CUSH, MISR, and RAMA (names remaining unchanged in *Sanscrit*, and highly revered by the *Hindus*), were, in all probability, the race, which I call *Indian*, and to which we may now give any other name, that may seem more proper and comprehensive.

The general introduction to the *Jewish* history closes with a very concise and obscure account of a presumptuous and mad attempt, by a particular colony, to build a splendid city and raise a fabric of immense height, independently of the divine aid, and, it should seem, in defiance of the divine power; a project, which was baffled by means appearing at first view inadequate to the purpose, but ending in violent dissension among the projectors, and in the ultimate separation of them: this event also seems to be recorded by the ancient *Hindus* in two of their *Puránas*; and it will be proved, I trust, on some future occasion, that the *lion bursting from a pillar to destroy a blaspheming giant*, and the *dwarf, who beguiled and held in derision the magnificent BELI*, are one and the same story related in a symbolical style.



Now these primeval events are described as having happened between the *Oxus* and *Euphrates*, the mountains of *Caucasus* and the borders of *India*, that is, within the limits of *Irân*; for, though most of the *Mosaic* names have been considerably altered, yet numbers of them remain unchanged: we still find *Harrân* in *Mesopotamia*, and travellers appear unanimous in fixing the site of ancient *Babel*.

Thus, on the preceding supposition, that the first eleven chapters of the book, which it is thought proper to call *Genesis* are merely a preface to the oldest civil history now extant, we see the truth of them confirmed by antecedent reasoning, and by evidence in part highly probable, and in part certain; but the connection of the *Mosaic* history with that of the Gospel by a chain of sublime predictions unquestionably ancient, and apparently fulfilled, must induce us to think the *Hebrew* narrative more than human in its origin, and consequently true in every substantial part of it, though possibly expressed in figurative language; as many learned and pious men have believed, and as the most pious may believe without injury, and perhaps with advantage, to the cause of revealed religion. If *MOSES* then was endowed with supernatural knowledge, it is no longer probable only, but absolutely certain, that the whole race of man proceeded from *Irân*, as from a centre, whence they migrated at first in three great colonies; and that those three branches grew from a common stock, which had been miraculously preserved in a general convulsion and inundation of this globe.

Having arrived by a different path at the same conclusion with *MR. BRYANT* as to one of those families, the most ingenious and enterprising of the three, but arrogant, cruel, and idolatrous, which we both conclude to be various shoots from the *Hamian* or *Amorian* branch, I shall add but little to my former observations on his profound and agreeable work, which I have thrice perused with increased attention and pleasure, though not with perfect acquiescence in the other less important parts of his plausible system. The sum of his argument seems reducible to three heads. First; "if the deluge really happened at the time recorded by *MOSES*, those nations, whose monuments are preserved or whose writings are accessible, must have retained memorials of an event so stupendous and comparatively so recent; but in fact they have retained such memorials:" this reasoning seems just, and the fact is true





beyond controversy : Secondly ; “ those memorials were expressed by the race of HAM, before the use of letters, in rude sculpture or painting, and mostly in symbolical figures of the *ark*, the eight persons concealed in it, and the birds, which first were dismissed from it : this fact is probable, but, I think, not sufficiently ascertained.” Thirdly ; “ all ancient Mythology (except what was purely *Sabian*) had “ its primary source in those various symbols misunderstood ; so that ancient Mythology stands now in the place of symbolical sculpture or painting, and must be explained on the same principles, on which we should begin to decypher the originals, if they now existed : ” this part of the system is, in my opinion, carried too far ; nor can I persuade myself (to give one instance out of many, that the beautiful allegory of CUPID and PSYCHE, had the remotest allusion to the deluge, or that HYMEN signified the *veil*, which covered the patriarch and his family. These propositions, however, are supported with great ingenuity and solid erudition, but, unprofitably for the argument, and unfortunately, perhaps, for the fame of the work itself, recourse is had to etymological conjecture, than which no mode of reasoning is in general weaker or more delusive. He, who professes to derive the words of any one language from those of another, must expose himself to the danger of perpetual errors, unless he be perfectly acquainted with both ; yet my respectable friend, though eminently skilled in the idioms of *Greece* and *Rome*, has no sort of acquaintance with any *Asiatic* dialect, except *Hebrew* ; and he has consequently made mistakes, which every learner of *Arabic* and *Persian* must instantly detect. Among *fifty* radical words (*ma*, *taph*, and *ram* being included), *eighteen* are purely of *Arabian* origin, *twelve* merely *Indian*, and *seventeen* both *Sanscrit* and *Arabic*, but in senses totally different ; while *two* are *Greek* only, and one *Egyptian*, or barbarous : if it be urged, that those *radicals* (which ought surely to have concluded, instead of preceding, an *analytical* inquiry) are precious traces of the primitive language, from which all others were derived, or to which at least they were subsequent, I can only declare my belief, that the language of NOAH is lost irretrievably, and assure you, that, after a diligent search, I cannot find a single word used in common by the *Arabian*, *Indian* and *Tartar* families, before the intermixture of dialects occasioned by *Mahommedan* conquests. There are, indeed, very obvious traces of the *Hamian* language, and some hundreds of words might



be produced, which were formerly used promiscuously by most nations of that race ; but I beg leave, as a philologer, to enter my protest against conjectural etymology in historical researches, and principally against the licentiousness of etymologists in transposing and inserting letters, in substituting at pleasure any consonant for another of the same order, and in totally disregarding the vowels : for such permutations few radical words would be more convenient than CUS or CUSH, since, dentals being changed for dentals, and palatials for palatials, it instantly becomes *coot*, *goose*, and, by transposition, *duck*, all water-birds, and *evidently* symbolical ; it next is the *goat* worshipped in *Egypt*, and, by a metathesis, the *dog* adored as an emblem of *SIRIUS*, or, more obviously, a *cat*, not the domestic animal, but a sort of ship, and, the *Catos*, or great sea-fish, of the *Dorians*. It will hardly be imagined, that I mean by this irony to insult an author, whom I respect and esteem ; but no consideration should induce me to assist by my silence in the diffusion of error ; and I contend, that almost any word or nation might be derived from any other, if such licences, as I am opposing, were permitted in etymological histories : when we find, indeed, the same words, letter for letter, and in a sense precisely the same, in different languages, we can scarce hesitate in allowing them a common origin ; and, not to depart from the example before us, when we see CUSH or CUS (for the *Sanscrit* name also is variously pronounced) among the sons of BRAHMA, that is, among the progenitors of the *Hindus*, and at the head of an ancient pedigree preserved in the *Rāmāyan* ; when we meet with his name again in the family of RĀMA ; when we know, that the name is venerated in the highest degree, and given to a sacred grass, described as a *Poa* by KOENIG, which is used with a thousand ceremonies in the oblations to fire, ordained by MENU to form the sacrificial zone of the *Brāhmans*, and solemnly declared in the *Vēda* to have sprung up soon after the *deluge*, whence the *Paurānics* consider it as the *bristly hair of the boar which supported the globe* ; when we add, that one of the seven *dwīpas*, or great peninsulas of this earth, has the same appellation, we can hardly doubt, that the CUSH of MOSES and VALMIC was the same personage and an ancestor of the *Indian* race.

From the testimonies adduced in the six last annual discourses, and from the additional proofs laid before you, or rather opened, on the present occasion, it seems to follow, that the only





then : to those deities they offered victims on high places ; and the following passage from the *Shi-cin*, or *Book of Odes*, is very much in the style of the *Brahmans* : " Even they, who perform a sacrifice with due reverence, cannot perfectly assure themselves, that the divine spirits accept their oblations ; and far less can they, who adore the Gods with langour and oscitancy, clearly perceive their sacred illapses." These are imperfect traces indeed, but they are traces, of an affinity between the religion of MANU and that of the *Chinas*, whom he names among the apostates from it : M. LE GENTIL observed, he says, a strong resemblance between the funeral rites of the *Chinese* and the *Sra'ddha* of the *Hindus* ; and M. BAILLY, after a learned investigation, concludes, that " Even the puerile and absurd stories of the *Chinese* fabulists contain a remnant of ancient *Indian* history, with a faint sketch of the first *Hindu* ages." As the *Bauddhas*, indeed, were *Hindus*, it may naturally be imagined, that they carried into *China* many ceremonies practised in their own country ; but the *Bauddhas* positively forbade the immolation of cattle ; yet we know, that various animals, even bulls and men, were anciently sacrificed by the *Chinese* ; besides which we discover many singular marks of relation between them and the old *Hindus* : as in the remarkable period of *four hundred and thirty two thousand*, and the cycle of *sixty*, years ; in the predilection for the mystical number *nine* ; in many similar fasts and great festivals, especially at the solstices and equinoxes ; in the just-mentioned obsequies consisting of rice and fruits offered to the names of their ancestors ; in the dread of dying childless, lest such offerings should be intermitted ; and, perhaps, in their common abhorrence of *red* objects, which the *Indians* carried so far, that MANU himself, where he allows a *Brahmen* to trade, if he cannot otherwise support life, absolutely forbids " his trafficking in any sort of *red* cloths, whether linen or woollen, or made of woven bark." All the circumstances, which have been mentioned under the two heads of *literature* and *religion*, seem collectively to prove (as far as such a question admits proof) that the *Chinese* and *Hindus* were originally the same people, but having been separated near four thousand years, have retained few strong features of their ancient consanguinity, especially as the *Hindus* have preserved their old language and ritual, while the *Chinese* very soon lost both, and the *Hindus* have constantly intermarried among themselves while the *Chinese*, by a mixture of *Tartarian* blood from the time



of their first establishment, have at length formed a race distinct in appearance both from *Indians* and *Tartars*.

A similar diversity has arisen, I believe, from similar causes, between the people of *China* and *Japan*; on the second of which nations we have now, or soon shall have, as correct and as ample instruction as can possibly be obtained without a perfect acquaintance with the *Chinese* characters. KÆMPFER has taken from M. TITSINGH the honour of being the first, and he from KÆMPFER that of being the only *European*, who, by a long residence in *Japan*, and a familiar intercourse with the principal natives of it, has been able to collect authentic materials for the natural and civil history of a country *secluded*, as the *Romans* used to say of our own island, *from the rest of the world*: the works of those illustrious travellers will confirm and embellish each other; and, when M. TITSINGH shall have acquired a knowledge of *Chinese*, to which a part of his leisure in *Java* will be devoted, his precious collection of books in that language, on the laws and revolutions, the natural productions, the arts, manufactures, and sciences of *Japan*, will be in his hands an inexhaustible mine of new and important information. Both he and his predecessor assert with confidence, and, I doubt not, with truth, that the *Japanese* would resent, as an insult on their dignity, the bare suggestion of their descent from the *Chinese*, whom they surpass in several of the mechanical arts, and, what is of greater consequence, in military spirit; but they do not, I understand, mean to deny, that they are a branch of the same ancient stem with the people of *China*; and, were that fact ever so warmly contested by them, it might be proved by an invincible argument, if the preceding part of this discourse, on the origin of the *Chinese*, be thought to contain just reasoning. In the first place, it seems inconceivable, that the *Japanese*, who never appear to have been conquerors or conquered, should have adopted the whole system of *Chinese* literature with all its inconveniences and intricacies, if an immemorial connexion had not subsisted between the two nations, or, in other words, if the bold and ingenious race, who peopled *Japan* in the middle of the thirteenth century before Christ, and, about six hundred years afterwards, established their monarchy, had not carried with them the letters and learning, which they and the *Chinese* had possessed in common; but my principal argument is, that the *Hindu* or *Egyptian* idolatry has prevailed in *Japan* from the earliest ages; and among the idols





were snipped, according to KÆMPFER, in that country, before the innovations of SA'CYA or BUDDHA, whom the *Japanese* also call AMIDA, we find many of those, which we see every day in the temples of *Bengal*; particularly the goddess with many arms, representing the powers of Nature, in *Egypt* named Isis and here ISA'NI' or ISI, whose image, as it is exhibited by the *German* traveller, all the *Brahmans*, to whom I showed it, immediately recognized with a mixture of pleasure and enthusiasm. It is very true that the *Chinese* differ widely from the natives of *Japan* in their vernacular dialects, in external manners, and perhaps in the strength of their mental faculties; but as wide a difference is observable among all the nations of the *Gothic* family; and we might account even for a greater dissimilarity, by considering the number of ages, during which the several swarms have been separated from the great *Indian* hive, to which they primarily belonged. The modern *Japanese* gave KÆMPFER the idea of polished *Tartars*; and it is reasonable to believe, that the people of *Japan*, who were originally *Hindus* of the martial class and advanced farther eastward than the *Ghinas*, have, like them, insensibly changed their features and characters by intermarriages with various *Tartarian* tribes, whom they found loosely scattered over their isles, or who afterwards fixed their abode in them.

Having now shown in five discourses, that the *Arabs* and *Tartars* were originally distinct races, while the *Hindus*, *Chinese*, and *Japanese* proceeded from another ancient stem, and that all the three stems may be traced to *Iran*, as to a common centre, from which it is highly probable, that they diverged in various directions about four thousand years ago, I may seem to have accomplished my design of investigating the origin of the *Asiatic* nations; but the questions, which I undertook to discuss, are not yet ripe for a strict analytical argument; and it will first be necessary to examine with scrupulous attention all the detached or insulated races of men, who either inhabit the borders of *India*, *Arabia*, *Tartary*, *Persia* and *China*, or are interspersed in the mountainous, and uncultivated parts of those extensive regions. To this examination I shall, at our next annual meeting, allot an entire discourse; and if, after all our inquiries, no more than three primitive races can be found, it will be a subsequent consideration, whether those three stocks had one common root, and, if they had, by what means that root was preserved amid the violent shocks, which our whole globe appears evidently to have sustained.



THE EIGHTH  
ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE;

DELIVERED 24TH FEBRUARY, 1791.

GENTLEMEN,

**W**E have taken a general view, at our five last annual meetings, of as many celebrated nations, whom we have proved, as far as the subject admits of proof, to have descended from three primitive stocks, which we call for the present *Indian, Arabian, Tartarian*; and we have nearly travelled over all *Asia*, if not with a perfect coincidence of sentiment, at least, with as much unanimity, as can be naturally expected in a large body of men, each of whom must assert it as his right, and consider it as his duty, to decide on all points for himself, and never to decide on obscure points without the best evidence, that can possibly be adduced: our travels will this day be concluded, but our historical researches would have been left incomplete, if we had passed without attention over the numerous races of borderers, who have long been established on the limits of *Arabia, Persia, India, China, and Tartary*; over the wild tribes residing in the mountainous parts of those extensive regions; and the more civilized inhabitants of the islands annexed by geographers to their *Asiatic* division of this globe.

Let us take our departure from *Idume* near the gulf of *Elanitis*, and, having encircled *Asia*, with such deviations from our course as the subject may require, let us return to the point from which we began; endeavouring, if we are able, to find a nation, who may clearly be shown, by just reasoning from their language, religion, and manners, to be neither *Indians, Arabs, nor Tartars*, pure or mixed; but always remembering, that any small family detached in an early age from their parent stock, without letters, with few ideas beyond objects of the first necessity, and consequently with few words, and fixing their abode on a range of mountains, in an island, or even in a wide region before





uninhabited, might in four or five centuries people their new country, and would necessarily form a new language with no perceptible traces, perhaps, of that spoken by their ancestors. *Edom* or *Idume*, and *Erythra* or *Phœnice*, had originally, as many believe, a similar meaning, and were derived from words denoting a red colour ; but, whatever be their derivation, it seems indubitable, that a race of men were anciently settled in *Idume* and in *Median*, whom the oldest and best *Greek* authors call *Erythreans* ; who were very distinct from the *Arabs* ; and whom, from the concurrence of many strong testimonies, we may safely refer to the *Indian* stem. M. D'HERBELOT mentions a tradition (which he treats indeed, as a fable,) that a colony of those *Idumeans* had migrated from the northern shores of the *Erythrean* sea, and sailed across the *Mediterranean* to *Europe*, at the time fixed by Chronologers for the passage of EVANDER with his *Arcadians* into *Italy*, and that both *Greeks* and *Romans* were the progeny of those emigrants. It is not on vague and suspected traditions, that we must build our belief of such events ; but NEWTON, who advanced nothing in science without demonstration, and nothing in history without such evidence as he thought conclusive, asserts from authorities, which he had carefully examined, that the *Idumean* voyagers "carried with them both arts and sciences, among which were their astronomy, navigation, and letters ; for in *Idume*, says he, they had letters, and names for constellations, before the days of JOB, who mentions them." JOB, indeed, or the author of the book, which takes its name from him, was of the *Arabian* stock as the language of that sublime work incontestably proves ; but the invention and propagation of letters and astronomy are by all so justly ascribed to the *Indian* family, that, if STRABO and HERODOTUS were not grossly deceived, the adventurous *Idumeans*, who first gave names to the stars, and hazarded long voyages in ships of their own construction, could be no other than a branch of the *Hindu* race : in all events, there is no ground for believing them of a fourth distinct lineage ; and we need say no more of them, till we meet them again, on our return, under the name of *Phœnicians*.

As we pass down the formidable sea, which rolls over its coral bed between the coast of the *Arabs*, or those, who speak the pure language of ISMAIL, and that of the *Ajams*, or those, who mutter it barbarously, we find no certain traces, on the *Arabian* side,



Of any people, who were not originally *Arabs* of the genuine or mixed breed : anciently, perhaps, there were *Troglodytes* in part of the peninsula, but they seem to have been long supplanted by the *Nomades*, or wondering herdsmen ; and who those *Troglodytes* were, we shall see very clearly, if we deviate a few moments from our intended path, and make a short excursion into countries very lately explored on the *Western*, or *African*, side of the Red Sea.

That the written *Abyssinian* language, which we call *Ethiopic*, is a dialect of old *Chaldean*, and a sister of *Arabic* and *Hebrew*, we know with certainty, not only from the great multitude of identical words, but (which is a far stronger proof) from the similar grammatical arrangement of the several idioms : we know at the same time, that it is written, like all the *Indian* characters, from the left hand to the right, and that the vowels are annexed, as in *Devan'garì*, to the consonants ; with which they form a syllabic system extremely clear and convenient, but disposed in a less artificial order than the system of letters now exhibited in the *Sanscrit* grammars ; whence it may justly be inferred, that the order contrived by PA'NINI or his disciples is comparatively modern ; and I have no doubt, from a cursory examination of many old inscriptions on pillars and in caves, which have obligingly been sent to me from all parts of *India*, that the *Na'garì* and *Ethiopian* letters had at first a similar form. It has long been my opinion, that the *Abyssinians* of the *Arabian* stock, having no symbols of their own to represent articulate sounds, borrowed those of the black pagans, whom the *Greeks* call *Troglodytes*, from their primeval habitation in natural caverns, for in mountains excavated by their own labour : they were probably the first inhabitants of *Africa*, where they became in time the builders of magnificent cities, the founders of seminaries for the advancement of science and philosophy, and the inventors (if they were not rather the importers) of symbolical characters. I believe on the whole, that the *Ethiops* of *Meroë* were the same people with the first *Egyptians*, and consequently, as it might easily be shown, with the original *Hindus*. To the ardent and intrepid Mr. BRUCE, whose travels are to my taste uniformly agreeable and satisfactory, though he thinks very differently from me on the language and genius of the *Arabs*, we are indebted for more important, and, I believe, more accurate, information concerning the nations established near the *Nile* from its fountains to its mouths, than all *Europe* united





could before have supplied ; but, since he has not been at the pains to compare the seven languages, of which he has exhibited a specimen, and since I have not leisure to make the comparison, I must be satisfied with observing, on his authority, that the dialects of the *Gafots* and the *Gallas*, the *Agows* of both races, and the *Falashas* who must originally have used a *Chaldean* idiom, were never preserved in writing, and the *Amharic* only in modern times ; they must, therefore, have been for ages in fluctuation, and can lead, perhaps, to no certain conclusion as to the origin of the several tribes, who anciently spoke them. It is very remarkable, as Mr. BRUCE and Mr. BRYANT have proved, that the *Greeks* gave the appellation of *Indians* both to the southern nations of *Afric* and to the people, among whom we now live ; nor is it less observable, that, according to EPHORUS quoted by STRABO, they called all the southern nations in the world *Ethiopians*, thus using *Indian* and *Ethiop* as convertible terms : but we must leave the gymnosophists of *Ethiopia*, who seem to have professed the doctrines of BUDDHA, and enter the great *Indian* ocean, of which their *Asiatic* and *African* brethren were probably the first navigators.

On the islands near *Yemen* we have little to remark : they appear now to be peopled chiefly by *Mohammedans*, and afford no marks of discrimination, with which I am acquainted, either in language or manners ; but I cannot bid farewell to the coast of *Arabia*, without assuring you, that, whatever may be said of *Omma'n* and the *Scythian* colonies, who, it is imagined, were formerly settled there, I have met with no trace in the maritime part of *Yemen*, from *Aden* to *Maskat*, of any nation, who were not either *Arabs* or *Abyssinian* invaders.

Between that country and *Iran* are some islands, which, from their insignificance in our present inquiry, may here be neglected ; and, as to the *Curds* or other independent races, who inhabit the branches of *Taurus* or the banks of *Euphrates* and *Tigris*, they have, I believe, no written language, nor any certain memorials of their origin : it has, indeed, been asserted by travellers, that a race of wanderers in *Diyarbeer* yet speak the *Chaldaic* of our scripture ; and the rambling *Taremans* have retained, I imagine, some traces of their *Tartarian* idioms ; but, since no vestige appears, from the gulf of *Persia* to the rivers *Cur* and *Aras*, of any people distinct from the *Arabs*, *Persians* or *Tar-*



We may conclude, that no such people exists in the *Iranian* mountains, and return to those, which separate *Irán* from *India*. The principal inhabitants of the mountains, called *Pársici*, where they run towards the west, *Parveti*, from a known *Sanscrit* word, where they turn in an eastern direction, and *Paropamisus*, where they join *Imaus* in the north, were anciently distinguished among the *Brahmans* by the name of *Deradas*, but seem to have been destroyed or expelled by the numerous tribes of *Afgha'ns* or *Patans*, among whom are the *Balójas*, who give their name to a mountainous district ; and there is very solid ground for believing, that the *Afgha'ns* descended from the *Jews* ; because they sometimes in confidence avow that unpopular origin, which in general they sedulously conceal, and which other *Muselmans* positively assert ; because *Hazaret*, which appears to be the *Asareth* of *ESDRAS*, is one of their territories ; and, principally, because their language is evidently a dialect of the scriptural *Chaldaic*.

We come now to the river *Sindhu* and the country named from it : near its mouths we find a district, called by *NEARCHUS*, in his journal, *Sangada* ; which *M. D'ANVILLE* justly supposes to be the seat of the *Sanganians*, a barbarous and piratical nation mentioned by modern travellers, and well known at present by our countrymen in the west of *India*. *Mr. MALET*, now resident at *Púna* on the part of the *British* government, procured at my request the *Sanganian* letters, which are a sort of *Nágarí*, and a specimen of their language, which is apparently derived, like other *Indian* dialects, from the *Sanscrit* ; nor can I doubt, from the descriptions, which I have received, of their persons and manners, that they are *Pámeras*, as the *Brahmans* call them, or outcast *Hindus*, immemorially separated from the rest of the nation. It seems agreed, that the singular people, called *Egyptians*, and, by corruption, *Gypsies*, passed the *Mediterranean* immediately from *Egypt* ; and their motely language, of which *Mr. GRELLMANN* exhibits a copious vocabulary, contains so many *Sanscrit* words, that their *Indian* origin can hardly be doubted : the authenticity of that vocabulary seems established by a multitude of *Gypsy* words, as *angár*, charcoal, *cdshth*, wood, *pa'r*, a bank, *bhá*, earth, and a hundred more, for which the collector of them could find no parallel in the vulgar dialect of *Hindustán*, though we know them to be pure *Sanscrit* scarce changed in a single letter. A very ingenious friend, to whom this remarkable fact was imparted, suggested to me,





that those very words might have been taken from old *Egyptian*, and that the *Gypsies* were *Troglodytes* from the rocks near *Thebes*, where a race of banditti still resemble them in their habits and features ; but, as we have no other evidence of so strong an affinity between the popular dialects of old *Egypt* and *India*, it seems more probable, that the *Gypsies* whom the *Italians* call *Zingaros*, and *Zinganos*, were no other than *Zinganians*, as M. D'ANVILLE also writes the word, who might, in some piratical expedition, have landed on the coast of *Arabia* or *Africa*, whence they might have rambled to *Egypt*, and at length have migrated, or been driven into *Europe*. To the kindness of Mr. MALET I am also indebted for an account of the *Boras* : a remarkable race of men inhabiting chiefly the cities of *Gujarat*, who, though *Muselmans* in religion, are *Jews* in features, genius, and manners : they form in all places a distinct fraternity, and are every where noted for address in bargaining, for minute thrift, and constant attention to lucre, but profess total ignorance of their own origin ; though it seems probable, that they came first with their brethren the *Afghans* to the borders of *India*, where they learned in time to prefer a gainful and secure occupation in populous towns to perpetual wars and laborious exertions on the mountains. As to the *Moplas*, in the western parts of the *Indian* empire, I have seen their books in *Arabic*, and am persuaded, that, like the people called *Malays*, they descended from *Arabian* traders and mariners after the age of MUHAMMED.

On the continent of *India*, between the river *Vipasa*, or *Hyphasis*, to the west, the mountains of *Tripura* and *Camarupa* to the east, and *Himalaya* to the north, we find many races of wild people with more or less of that pristine ferocity, which induced their ancestors to secede from the civilized inhabitants of the plains and valleys : in the most ancient *Sanscrit* books they are called *Sacas*, *Ciratas*, *Colas*, *Pulindas*, *Barbaras*, and are all known to *Europeans*, though not all by their true names ; but many *Hindu* pilgrims, who have travelled through their haunts, have fully described them to me ; and I have found reasons for believing, that they sprang from the old *Indian* stem, though some of them were soon intermixed with the first ramblers from *Tartary*, whose language seems to have been the basis of that now spoken by the *Moguls*.

We come back to the *Indian* islands, and hasten to those, which lie to the south-east of *Silán*, or *Taprobane* ; for *Silán* itself.



We know from the languages, letters, religion, and old monuments of its various inhabitants, was peopled beyond time of memory by the *Hindu* race, and formerly, perhaps, extended much farther to the west and to the south, so as to include *Lancà*, or the equinoctial point of the *Indian* astronomers; nor can we reasonably doubt, that the same enterprising family planted colonies in the other isles of the same ocean from the *Malayadwīpas*, which take their name from the mountain of *Malaya*, to the *Moluccas*, or *Mallica's*, and probably far beyond them. Captain FORREST assured me, that he found the isle of *Bali* (a great name in the historical poems of *India*) chiefly peopled by *Hindus*, who worshipped the same idols, which he had seen in this province; and that of *Madhurà* must have been so denominated, like the wellknown territory in the western peninsula; by a nation, who understood *Sanscrit*. We need not be surprized, that M. D'ANVILLE was unable to assign a reason, why the *Jabadios*, or *Yavadwīpa*, of PTOLEMY was rendered in the old *Latin* version the isle of *Barley*; but we must admire the inquisitive spirit and patient labour of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, whom nothing observable seems to have escaped: *Yava* means *barley* in *Sanscrit*; and though that word, or its regular derivative, be now applied solely to *Java*, yet the great *French* geographer adduces very strong reasons for believing, that the ancients applied it to *Sumatra*. In whatever way the name of the last mentioned island may be written by *Europeans*, it is clearly an *Indian* word, implying *abundance* or *excellence*; but we cannot help wondering, that neither the natives of it, nor the best informed of our *Pandits*, know it by any such appellation; especially as it still exhibits visible traces of a primeval connexion with *India*: from the very accurate and interesting account of it by a learned and ingenious member of our own body, we discover, without any recourse to etymological conjecture, that multitudes of pure *Sanscrit* words occur in the principal dialects of the *Sumatrans*; that, among their laws, two positive rules concerning *sureties* and *interest* appear to be taken word for word from the *Indian* legislators NA'RED and HA'RITA; and, what is yet more observable, that the system of letters, used by the people of *Rejang* and *Lampun*, has the same artificial order with the *Dévana'gari*; but in every series one letter is omitted, because it is never found in the languages of those islanders. If Mr. MARSDEN has proved (as he firmly believes, and as we, from our knowledge of his accuracy, may fairly presume) that clear vestiges





of one ancient language are discernible in all the insular dialects of the southern seas from *Madagascar* to the *philippines* and even to the remotest islands lately discovered, we may infer from the specimens in his account of *Sumatra*, that the parent of them all was no other than the *Sanscrit*; and with this observation, having nothing of consequence to add on the *Chinese* Isles or on those of *Japan*, I leave the farthest eastern verge of this continent, and turn to the countries, now under the Government of *China*, between the northern limits of *India*, and the extensive domain of those *Tartars*, who are still independent.

That the people of *Pótyid* or *Tibet* were *Hindus*, who engrafted the heresies, of *BUDDHA* on their old mythological religion, we know from the researches of *CASSIANO*, who long had resided among them; and whose disquisitions on their language and letters, their tenets and forms of worship, are inserted by *GIORGI* in his curious but prolix compilation, which I have had the patience to read from the first to the last of nine hundred rugged pages: their characters are apparently *Indian*, but their language has now the disadvantage of being written with more letters that are ever pronounced; for, although it was anciently *Sanscrit* and polysyllabic, it seems at present, from the influence of *Chinese* manners, to consist of monosyllables, to form which, with some regard to grammatical derivation, it has become necessary to suppress in common discourse many letters, which we see in their books; and thus we are enabled to trace in their writing a number of *Sanscrit* words and phrases, which in their spoken dialect are quite undistinguishable. The two engravings in *GIORGI*'s book, from sketches by a *Tibetan* painter, exhibit a system of *Egyptian* and *Indian* mythology; and a complete explanation of them would have done the learned author more credit than his fanciful etymologies, which are always ridiculous, and often grossly erroneous.

The *Tartars* having been wholly unlettered, as they freely confess, before their conversion to the religion of *Arabia*; we cannot but suspect, that the natives of *Eighúr*, *Tancút*, and *Khata*, who had systems of letters and are even said to have cultivated liberal arts, were not of the *Tartarian*, but of the *Indian* family; and I apply the same remark to the nation whom we call *Barmas*, but who are known to the *Pandits* by the name of *Brahmachinas*, and seem to have been the *Brachmani* of *PROLEMY*: they were probably rambling



*Hindus*, who, descending from the northern parts of the eastern peninsula, carried with them the letters now used in *Ava*, which are no more than a round *Na'garì* derived from the square characters, in which the *Pa'li*, or sacred language of *BUDDHA*'s priests in that country, was anciently written ; a language, by the way, very nearly allied to the *Sanscrit*, if we can depend on the testimony of M. DE LA LOUBERE ; who, though always an acute observer, and in general a faithful reporter, of facts, is charged by *CARPANIUS* with having mistaken the *Barma* for the *Pa'li* letters ; and when, on his authority, I spoke of the *Bali* writing to a young chief of *Aracan*, who read with facility the books of the *Barmas*, he corrected me with politeness, and assured me, that the *Pa'li* language was written by the priests in a much older character.

Let us now return eastward to the farthest *Asiatic* dominions of *Russia*, and, rounding them on the northeast, pass directly to the *Hyperboreans* ; who, from all that can be learned of their old religion and manners, appear like the *Massagetæ*, and some other nations usually considered as *Tartars*, to have been really of the *Gothic*, that is of the *Hindu*, race ; for I confidently assume, that the *Goths* and the *Hindus* had originally the same language, gave the same appellations to the stars and planets, adored the same false deities, performed the same bloody sacrifices, and professed the same notions of rewards and punishments after death. I would not insist with M. BAILLY, that the people of *Finland* were *Goths*, merely because they have the word *ship* in their language ; while the rest of it appears wholly distinct from any of the *Gothic* idioms : the publishers of the Lord's Prayer in many languages represent the *Finnish* and *Lapponian* as nearly alike, and the *Hungarian* as totally different from them ; but this must be an error, if it be true, that a *Russian* author has lately traced the *Hungarian* from its primitive seat between the *Caspian* and the *Euxine*, as far as *Lapland* itself ; and, since the *Huns* were confessedly *Tartars*, we may conclude, that all the northern languages, except the *Gothic*, had a *Tartarian* origin, like that universally ascribed to the various branches of *Slavonian*.

On the *Armenian*, which I never studied, because I could not hear of any original compositions in it, I can offer nothing decisive ; but am convinced, from the best information procurable in *Bengal*, that its basis was ancient *Persian* of the same *Indian* stock with the *Zend*, and that it has been gradually changed since the





human family after the flood established themselves in the northern parts of *Iràn*; that, as they multiplied, they were divided into three distinct branches, each retaining little at first, and losing the whole by degrees, of their common primary language, but agreeing severally on new expressions for new ideas; that the branch of YAFET was *enlarged* in many scattered shoots over the north of *Europe* and *Asia*, diffusing themselves as far as the western and eastern seas, and, at length in the infancy of navigation, beyond them both; that they cultivated no liberal arts, and had no use of letters, but formed a variety of dialects, as their tribes were variously ramified; that secondly, the children of HAM, who founded in *Iràn* itself the monarchy of the first *Chaldeans*, invented letters, observed and named the luminaries of the firmament, calculated the known *Indian* period of *four hundred and thirty-two thousand years*, or an *hundred and twenty* repetitions of the *Saros*, and contrived the old system of Mythology, partly allegorical, and partly grounded on idolatrous veneration for their sages and lawgivers; that they were dispersed at various intervals and in various colonies over land and ocean; that the tribes of MISR, CUSH, and RAMA settled in *Afric* and *India*; while some of them, having improved the art of sailing, passed from *Egypt*, *Phenice*, and *Phrygia*, into *Italy* and *Greece*, which they found thinly peopled by former emigrants, of whom they supplanted some tribes, and united themselves with others; whilst a swarm from the same hive moved by a northerly course into *Scandinavia*, and another, by the head of the *Oxus*, and through the passes of *Imaus*, into *Cashghar* and *Eighür*, *Khaté* and *Khoten*, as far as the territories of *Chín* and *Tancút*, where letters have been used and arts immemorially cultivated; nor is it unreasonable to believe, that some of them found their way from the eastern isles into *Mexico* and *Peru*, where traces were discovered of rude literature and Mythology analogous to those of *Egypt* and *India*; that, thirdly, the old *Chaldean* empire being overthrown by the *Assyrians* under CAYUMERS, other migrations took place, especially into *India*, while the rest of SHEM's progeny, some of whom had before settled on the Red Sea, peopled the whole *Arabian* peninsula, pressing close on the nations of *Syria* and *Phenice*; that, lastly, from all the three families were detached many bold adventurers of an ardent spirit and a roving disposition, who disdained subordination and wandered in separate clans, till they settled in distant isles or in deserts and mountainous regions;



That, on the whole, some colonies might have migrated before the death of their venerable progenitor, but that states and empires could scarce have assumed a regular form, till fifteen or sixteen hundred years before the *Christian* epoch, and that, for the first thousand years of that period, we have no history unmixed with fable, except that of the turbulent and variable, but eminently distinguished, nation descended from ABRAHAM.

My design, gentlemen, of tracing the origin and progress of the five principal nations, who have peopled *Asia*, and of whom there were considerable remains in their several countries at the time of MAHOMMED'S birth, is now accomplished ; succinctly, from the nature of these essays ; imperfectly, from the darkness of the subject and scantiness of my materials, but clearly and comprehensively enough to form a basis for subsequent researches : you have seen, as distinctly as I am able to show, *who* those nations originally were, *whence* and *when* they moved toward their final stations ; and, in my future annual discourses, I propose to enlarge on the *particular advantages* to our country and to mankind which may result from our sedulous and united inquiries into the history, science, and arts, of these *Asiatic* regions, especially of the *British* dominions in *India*, which we may consider as the centre (not of the human race, but) of our common exertions to promote its true interests ; and we shall concur, I trust, in opinion, that the race of man, to advance whose manly happiness is our duty and will of course be our endeavour, cannot long be happy without virtue, nor actively virtuous without freedom, nor securely free without rational knowledge.





CSL

THE TENTH  
ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE

ON

ASIATIC HISTORY, CIVIL AND NATURAL.

DELIVERED 28TH FEBRUARY, 1793.



**B**EFORE our entrance, gentlemen, into the disquisition, promised at the close of my ninth annual discourse, on the *particular advantages*, which may be derived from our concurrent researches in *Asia*, it seems necessary to fix with precision the sense, in which we mean to speak of *advantage* or *utility*: now, as we have described the five *Asiatic* regions on their largest scale, and have expanded our conceptions in proportion to the magnitude of that wide field, we should use those words, which comprehend the fruit of all our inquiries, in their most extensive acceptation; including not only the solid conveniences and comforts of social life, but its elegances and innocent pleasures, and even the gratification of a natural and laudable curiosity; for, though labour be clearly the lot of man in this world, yet, in the midst of his most active exertions, he cannot but feel the substantial benefit of every liberal amusement, which may lull his passions to rest, and afford him a sort of repose without the pain of total inaction, and the real usefulness of every pursuit, which may enlarge and diversify his ideas, without interfering with the principal objects of his civil station or economical duties; nor should we wholly exclude even the trivial and worldly sense of *utility*, which too many consider as merely synonymous with *lucre*, but should reckon among useful objects those practical, and by no means illiberal, arts, which may eventually conduce both to national and to private emolument. With a view then to *advantages* thus explained, let us examine every point in the whole circle of arts and sciences, according to the received order of their



dependence on the faculties of the mind, their mutual connexion, and the different subjects, with which they are conversant: our inquiries indeed, of which Nature and Man are the primary objects, must of course be chiefly *Historical*; but, since we propose to investigate the *actions* of the several *Asiatic* nations, together with their respective progress in *science* and *art*, we may arrange our investigations under the same three heads, to which our *European* analysts have ingeniously reduced all branches of human knowledge; and my present address to the society shall be confined to history, civil and natural, or the observation and remembrance of *mere facts*, independently of *ratiocination*, which belongs to philosophy, or of *imitations* and *substitutions*, which are the province of art.

Were a superior created intelligence to delineate a map of general knowledge (exclusively of that sublime and stupendous theology, which himself could only hope humbly to know by an infinite approximation) he would probably, begin by tracing with NEWTON the system of the universe, in which he would assign the true place to our little globe; and, having enumerated its various inhabitants, contents, and productions, would proceed to man in his natural station among animals, exhibiting a detail of all the knowledge attained or attainable by the human race; and thus observing, perhaps, the same order, in which he had before described other beings in other inhabited worlds: but, though BACON seems to have had a similar reason for placing the history of Nature before that of Man, or the whole before one of its parts, yet, consistently with our chief object already mentioned, we may properly begin with the *civil history* of the five *Asiatic* nations, which necessarily comprises their Geography, or a description of the *places*, where they have acted, and their astronomy, which may enable us to fix with some accuracy the *time* of their actions: we shall thence be led to the history of such other *animals*, of such *minerals*, and of such *vegetables*, as they may be supposed to have found in their several migrations and settlements, and shall end with the *uses* to which they have applied, or may apply, the rich assemblage of natural substances.

I. In the first place, we cannot surely deem it an inconsiderable advantage, that all our historical researches have confirmed the *Mosaic* accounts of the primitive world; and our testimony on that subject ought to have the greater weight, because, if the





result of our observations had been totally different, we should nevertheless have published them, not indeed with equal pleasure, but with equal confidence ; for *Truth is mighty, and*, whatever be its consequences, *must always prevail* : but, independently of our interest in corroborating the multiplied evidences of revealed religion, we could scarce gratify our minds with a more useful and rational entertainment, than the contemplation of those wonderful revolutions in kingdoms and states, which have happened within little more than four thousand years ; revolutions, almost as fully demonstrative of an all-ruling Providence, as the structure of the universe and the final causes, which are discernible in its whole extent and even in its minutest parts. Figure to your imaginations a moving picture of that eventful period, or rather a succession of crowded scenes rapidly changed. Three families migrate in different courses from one region, and, in about four centuries, establish very distant governments and various modes of society : *Egyptians, Indians, Goths, Phenicians, Celts, Greeks, Latians, Chinese, Peruvians, Mexicans*, all sprung from the same immediate stem, appear to start nearly at one time, and occupy at length those countries, to which they have given, or from which they have derived, their names : in twelve or thirteen hundred years more the *Greeks* overrun the land of their forefathers, invade *India*, conquer *Egypt*, and aim at universal dominion ; but the *Romans* appropriate to themselves the whole empire of *Greece*, and carry their arms into *Britain*, of which they speak with haughty contempt : the *Goths*, in the fulness of time, break to pieces the unwieldy *Colossus* of *Roman* power, and seize on the whole of *Britain*, except its wild mountains ; but even those wilds become subject to other invaders of the same *Gothic* lineage : during all these transactions, the *Arabs* possess both coasts of the Red Sea, subdue the old seat of their first progenitors, and extend their conquests on one side, through *Afric*, into *Europe* itself ; on another, beyond the borders of *India*, part of which they annex to their flourishing empire : in the same interval the *Tartars*, widely diffused over the rest of the globe, swarm in the north-east, whence they rush to complete the reduction of *CONSTANTINE'S* beautiful domains, to subjugate *China*, to raise in these *Indian* realms a dynasty splendid and powerful, and to ravage, like the two other families, the devoted regions of *Iran* : by this time the *Mexicans* and *Peruvians*, with many races of adventurers variously intermixed, have peopled the





continent and isles of *America*, which the *Spaniards*, having restored their old government in *Europe*, discover and in part overcome : but a colony from *Britain*, of which *CICERO* ignorantly declared, that it contained nothing valuable, obtain the possession, and finally the sovereign dominion, of extensive *American* districts ; whilst other *British* subjects acquire a subordinate empire in the finest provinces of *India*, which the victorious troops of *ALEXANDER* were unwilling to attack. This outline of human transactions, as far as it includes the limits of *Asia*, we can only hope to fill up, to strengthen, and to colour, by the help of *Asiatic* literature ; for in history, as in law, we must not follow streams, when we may investigate fountains, nor admit any secondary proof, where primary evidence is attainable : I should, nevertheless, make a bad return for your indulgent attention, were I to repeat a dry list of all the *Muselman* historians, whose works are preserved in *Arabic*, *Persian*, and *Turkish*, or expatiate on the histories and medals of *China* and *Japan*, which may in time be accessible to members of our Society, and from which alone we can expect information concerning the ancient state of the *Tartars* ; but on the history of *India*, which we naturally consider as the centre of our enquiries, it may not be superfluous to present you with a few particular observations.

Our knowledge of civil *Asiatic* history (I always except that of the *Hebrews*) exhibits a short evening twilight in the venerable introduction to the first book of *MOSES*, followed by a gloomy night, in which different watches are faintly discernible, and at length we see a dawn succeeded by a sunrise more or less early according to the diversity of regions. That no *Hindu* nation, but the *Cashmirians*, have left us regular histories in their ancient language, we must ever lament ; but from *Sanscrit* literature, which our country has the honour of having unveiled, we may still collect some rays of historical truth, though time and a series of revolutions have obscured that light, which we might reasonably have expected from so diligent and ingenious a people. The numerous *Purānas* and *Itihāsas*, or poems mythological and heroic, are completely in our power ; and from them we may recover some disfigured, but valuable, pictures of ancient manners and governments ; while the popular tales of the *Hindus* in prose and in verse, contain fragments of history ; and even in their *dramas* we may find as many real characters and events, as a future age might find in our





own plays, if all histories of *England* were, like those of *India*, to be irrecoverably lost : for example, a most beautiful poem by SO'MADEVA, comprising a very long chain of instructive and agreeable stories, begins with the famed revolution at *Pā'taliputra* by the murder of King NANDA, with his eight sons, and the usurpation of CHANDRAGUPTA ; and the same revolution is the subject of a tragedy in *Sanscrit*, entitled the Coronation of CHANDRA, the abbreviated name of that able and adventurous usurper. From these, once concealed but now accessible, compositions, we are enabled to exhibit a more accurate sketch of old *Indian* history than the world has yet seen, especially with the aid of well-attested observations on the places of the colures. It is now clearly proved, that the first *Pura'na* contains an account of the deluge, between which and the *Mahommedan* conquests the history of genuine *Hindu* government must of course be comprehended ; but we know from an arrangement of the seasons in the astronomical work of PARASARA, that the war of the PANDAVAS could not have happened earlier than the close of the twelfth century before CHRIST, and SELEUCUS must, therefore, have reigned about nine centuries after that war : now the age of VICRAMA'DITYA is given ; and, if we can fix on an *Indian* prince, contemporary with SELEUCUS, we shall have three given points in the line of time between RAMA, or the first *Indian* colony, and CHANDRABIJA, the last *Hindu* monarch, who reigned in *Behār* ; so that only eight hundred or a thousand years will remain almost wholly dark ; and they must have been employed in raising empires or states, in framing laws, in improving languages and arts, and in observing the apparent motions of the celestial bodies. A *Sanscrit* history of the celebrated VICRAMA'DITYA was inspected at *Banares* by a *Pandit*, who would not have deceived me, and could not himself have been deceived ; but the owner of the book is dead and his family dispersed ; nor have my friends in that city been able, with all their exertions, to procure a copy of it : as to the *Mogul* conquests, with which modern *Indian* history begins, we have ample accounts of them in *Persian*, from ALI of *Yezd* and the translations of *Turkish* books composed even by some of the conquerors, to GHULAM HUSAIN, whom many of us personally know, and whose impartiality deserves the highest applause, though his unrewarded merit will give no encouragement to other contemporary historians, who, to use his own phrase in a letter to myself, may, like him, consider plain truth as the beauty of historical composition. From all





these materials, and from these alone, a perfect history of India (if a mere compilation, however elegant, could deserve such a little) might be collected by any studious man, who had a competent knowledge of *Sanscrit*, *Persian*, and *Arabic*; but, even in the work of a writer so qualified, we could only give absolute credence to the general outline; for, while the abstract *sciences* are all truth, and the fine *arts* all fiction, we cannot but own, that, in the *details of history*, truth and fiction are so blended as to be scarce distinguishable.

The practical use of history, in affording particular *examples* of civil and military wisdom, has been greatly exaggerated; but *principles* of action may certainly be collected from it; and even the narrative of wars and revolutions may serve as a lesson to nations and an admonition to sovereigns: a desire, indeed, of knowing past events, while the future cannot be known, and a view of the present gives often more pain than delight, seems natural to the human mind; and a happy propensity would it be, if every reader of history would open his eyes to some very important corollaries, which flow from the whole extent of it. He could not but remark the constant effect of *despotism* in benumbing and debasing all those faculties, which distinguish men from the herd, that grazes; and to that cause he would impute the decided inferiority of most *Asiatic* nations, ancient and modern, those in *Europe*, who are blest with happier governments; he would see the *Arabs* rising to glory, while they adhered to the free maxims of their bold ancestors, and sinking to misery from the moment, when those maxims were abandoned. On the other hand he would observe with regret, that such *republican* governments as tend to produce virtue and happiness, cannot in their nature be permanent, but are generally succeeded by *Oligarchies*, which no good man would wish to be durable. He would then, like the king of *Lydia*, remember SOLON, the wisest, bravest, and most accomplished of men, who asserts, in four nervous lines, that, "as hail and snow, which mar the labours of husbandmen, proceed from elevated clouds, and, as the destructive thunderbolt follows the brilliant flash, thus is a free state ruined by men exalted in power and splendid in wealth, while the people, from gross ignorance, chuse rather to become the slaves of one tyrant, than to preserve themselves from tyranny of any kind by their union and their virtues." Since,



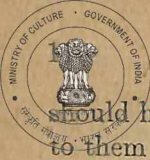


therefore, no unmixed form of government could both deserve permanence and enjoy it, and since changes even from the worst to the best, are always attended with much temporary mischief, he would fix on our *British* constitution (I mean our *public law*, not the actual *state of things* in any given period) as the best form ever established, though we can only make distant approaches to its theoretical perfection. In these *Indian* territories, which providence has thrown into the arms of *Britain* for their protection and welfare, the religion, manners, and laws of the natives preclude even the idea of political freedom; but their histories may possibly suggest hints for their prosperity, while our country derives essential benefit from the diligence of a placid and submissive people, who multiply with such increase, even after the ravages of famine, that in one collectorship out of *twenty-four*, and that by no means the largest or best cultivated, a *million* and *three hundred thousand* native inhabitants; whence it should seem, that in all *India* there cannot now be fewer than *thirty-millions* of black *British* subjects.

Let us proceed to *geography* and *chronology*, without which history would be no certain guide, but would resemble a kindled vapour either a settled place or a steady light. For a reason before intimated I shall not name the various cosmographical books, which are extant in *Arabic* and *Persian*, nor give an account of those, which the *Turks* have beautifully printed in their own improved language, but shall expatiate a little on the geography and astronomy of *India*; having first observed generally, that all the *Asiatic* nation must be far better acquainted with their several countries than mere *European* scholars and travellers; that, consequently, we must learn their geography from their own writings; and that, by collating many copies of the same work, we may correct the blunders of transcribers in tables, names, and description.

Geography, astronomy, and chronology have, in this part of *Asia*, shared the fate of authentic history, and, like that, have been so masked and bedecked in the fantastic robes of mythology and metaphor, that the real system of *Indian* philosophers and mathematicians can scarce be distinguished: an accurate knowledge of *Sanscrit* and a confidential intercourse with learned *Brahmans*, are the only means of separating truth from fable; and we may expect the most important discoveries from two of our members; concerning whom it may be safely asserted, that, if our society





should have produced no other advantage than the invitation given to them for the public display of their talents, we should have a claim to the thanks of our country and of all *Europe*. Lieutenant WILFORD has exhibited an interesting specimen of the geographical knowledge deducible from the *Puranás*, and will in time present you with so complete a treatise on the ancient world known to the *Hindus*, that the light acquired by the *Greeks* will appear but a glimmering in comparison of that, which He will diffuse; while Mr. DAVIS, who has given us a distinct idea of *Indian* computations and cycles, and ascertained the place of the colures at a time of great importance in history, will hereafter disclose the systems of *Hindu* astronomers from NA'RED and PARA'SAR to MEYA, VARA'HAMIHIR, and BHA'SCAR, and will soon, I trust, lay before you a perfect delineation of all the *Indian* asterisms in both hemispheres, where you will perceive so strong a general resemblance to the constellations of the *Greeks*, as to prove that the two systems were originally one and the same, yet with such a diversity in parts, as to show incontestably, that neither system was copied from the other; whence it will follow, that they *must* have had some common source.

The jurisprudence of the *Hindus* and *Arabs* being the field, which I have chosen for my peculiar toil, you cannot expect, that I should greatly enlarge your collection of historical knowledge; but I may be able to offer you some occasional tribute, and I cannot help mentioning a discovery, which accident threw in my way; though my proofs must be reserved for an essay, which I have destined for the fourth volume of your Transactions. To fix the situation of that *Palibothra* (for there may have been several of the name), which was visited and described by MEGASTHENES had always appeared a very difficult problem; for, though it could not have been *Prayá'ga*, where no ancient metropolis ever stood, nor *Cá'nyacubja*, which has no epithet at all resembling the word used by the *Greeks*, nor *Gaur*, otherwise called *Lacshmanavati*, which all know to be a town comparatively modern, yet we could not confidently decide that it was *Pataliputra*, though names and most circumstances nearly correspond, because that renowned capital extended from the confluence of the *Sone* and the *Ganges* to the seite of *Patna*, while *Palibothra* stood at the junction of the *Ganges* and *Erannoboas*, which the accurate M. D'ANVILLE had pronounced to be the *Yamuná*: but this only difficulty was





removed, when I found in a classical *Sanscrit* book, near two thousand years old, that *Hiranyabahu*, or *golden-armed*, which the *Greeks* changed into *Erannobas*, or the river *with a lovely murmur*, was in fact another name for the *Sona* itself, though MEGASTHENES, from ignorance or inattention, has named them separately. This discovery led to another of greater moment ; for CHANDRAGUPTA, who, from a military adventurer, became, like SANDRACOTTUS, the sovereign of upper *Hindustàn*, actually fixed the seat of his empire at *Pataliputra*, where he received ambassadors from foreign princes, and was no other than that very SANDRACOTTUS, who concluded a treaty with SELEUCUS NICATOR ; so that we have solved another problem, to which we before alluded, and may in round numbers consider the twelve and three hundredth years before CHRIST as two certain epochs between RAMA, who conquered *Silàn* a few centuries after the flood, and VICRAMA'DITYA, who died at *Ujjayini* fifty-seven years before the beginning of our era.

II. SINCE these discussions would lead us too far, I proceed to the history of Nature distinguished, for our present purpose, from that of Man ; and divided into that of other *animals*, who inhabit this globe, of the *mineral* substances, which it contains, and of the *vegetables*, which so luxuriantly and so beautifully adorn it.

1. Could the figure, instincts, and qualities of birds, beasts, insects, reptiles, and fish be ascertained, either on the plan of BUFFON, or on that of LINNÆUS, without giving pain to the objects of our examination, few studies would afford us more solid instruction or more exquisite delight ; but I never could learn by what right, nor conceive with what feelings, a naturalist can occasion the misery of an innocent bird and leave its young perhaps, to perish in a cold nest, because it has gay plumage and has never been accurately delineated, or deprive even a butterfly of its natural enjoyments, because it has the misfortune to be rare or beautiful ; nor shall I ever forget the couplet of FIRDAUSI, for which SADI, who cites it with applause, pours blessings on his departed spirit :

Ah ! spare yon emmet, rich in hoarded grain :  
He lives with pleasure, and he dies with pain.

This may be only a confession of weakness, and it certainly is not meant as a boast of peculiar sensibility ; but, whatever name may be given to my opinion, it has such an effect on my conduct, that I never would suffer the *Cócua*, whose *wild native woodnotes*



announce the approach of spring, to be caught in my garden for the sake of comparing it with BUFFON's description; though I have often examined the domestic and engaging *Mayanà*, which bids us good morrow at our windows, and expects, as its reward, little more than security: even when a fine young *Manis* or *Pungolin* was brought me, against my wish, from the mountains, I solicited his restoration to his beloved rocks, because I found it impossible to preserve him in comfort at a distance from them. There are several treatises on animals in *Arabic*, and very particular accounts of them in *Chinese* with elegant outlines of their external appearance; but I have met with nothing valuable concerning them in *Persian*, except what may be gleaned from the medical dictionaries; nor have I yet seen a book in *Sanscrit*, that expressly treats of them: on the whole, though rare animals may be found in all *Asia*, yet I can only recommend an examination of them with this condition, that they be left, as much as possible, in a state of natural freedom, or made as happy as possible, if it be necessary to keep them confined.

2. The history of minerals, to which no such objection can be made, is extremely simple and easy, if we merely consider their exterior look and configuration, and their visible texture; but the analysis of their internal properties belongs particularly to the sublime researches of Chymistry, on which we may hope to find useful disquisitions in *Sanscrit*, since the old *Hindus* unquestionably applied themselves to that enchanting study; and even from their treatises on alchymy we may possibly collect the results of actual experiment, as their ancient astrological works have preserved many valuable facts relating to the *Indian* sphere and the precession of the equinox: both in *Persian* and *Sanscrit* there are books on metals and minerals, particularly on *gems*, which the *Hindu* philosophers considered (with an exception of the diamond) as varieties of one crystalline substance either simple or compound: but we must not expect from the chymists of *Asia* those beautiful examples of analysis, which have but lately been displayed in the laboratories of *Europe*.

3. We now come to *Botany*, the loveliest and most copious division in the history of nature; and, all disputes on the comparative merit of systems being at length, I hope, condemned to one perpetual night of undisturbed slumber, we cannot employ our leisure more delightfully, than in describing all new *Asiatic* plants





in the *Linneæan* style and method, or in correcting the descriptions of those already known, but of which dry specimens only, or drawings, can have been seen by most *European* botanists: in this part of natural history we have an ample field yet unexplored; for, though many plants of *Arabia* have been made known by GARCÍAS, PROSPER ALPINUS, and FORSKÖEL, of *Persia*, by GARCIN, of *Tartary*, by GMELIN and PALLAS, of *China* and *Japan*, by KÖEMPFER, OSBECK, and THUNBERG, of *India*, by RHEEDE and RUMPHIUS, the two BURMANS, and much-lamented KOENIG, yet none of those naturalists were deeply versed in the literature of the several countries, from which their vegetable treasures had been procured; and the numerous works in *Sanscrit* on medical substances, and chiefly on plants, have never been inspected, or never at least understood, by any *European* attached to the study of nature. Until the garden of the *India* Company shall be fully stored (as it will be, no doubt, in due time) with *Arabian*, *Persian*, and *Chinese* plants, we may well be satisfied with examining the native flowers of our own provinces; but, unless we can discover the *Sanscrit* names of all celebrated vegetables, we shall neither comprehend the allusions, which *Indian* poets perpetually make to them, nor (what is far worse) be able to find accounts of their tried virtues in the writings of *Indian* physicians; and (what is worst of all) we shall miss an opportunity, which never again may present itself; for the *Pandits* themselves have almost wholly forgotten their ancient appellations of particular plants, and, with all my pains, I have not yet ascertained more than *two hundred* out of twice that number, which are named in their medical or poetical compositions. It is much to be deplored, that the illustrious VAN RHEEDE had no acquaintance with *Sanscrit*, which even his three *Brâhmens*, who composed the short preface engraved in that language, appear to have understood very imperfectly, and certainly wrote with disgraceful inaccuracy: in all his twelve volumes I recollect only *Punarnavâ*, in which the *Nâgari* letters are tolerably right; the *Hindu* words in *Arabian* characters are shamefully incorrect; and the *Malabar*, I am credibly informed, is as bad as the rest. His delineations, indeed, are in general excellent; and, though LINNÆUS himself could not extract from his written descriptions the natural character of every plant in the collection, yet we shall be able, I hope, to describe them all from the life, and to add a considerable number of new species, if not of new genera, which RHEEDE, with all his noble



exertions, could never procure. Such of our learned members, as profess medicine, will, no doubt, cheerfully assist in these researches, either by their own observations, when they have leisure to make any, or by communications from other observers among their acquaintance, who may reside in different part of the country : and the mention of their art leads me to the various *uses* of natural substances, in the three kingdoms or classes to which they are generally reduced.

III. You cannot but have remarked, that almost all the *sciences*, as the *French* call them, which are distinguished by *Greek* names and arranged under the head of philosophy, belong for the most part to history ; such are philology, chymistry, physics, anatomy, and even metaphysics, when we barely relate the phenomena of the human mind ; for, in all branches of knowledge, we are only historians, when we announce facts, and philosophers, only when we reason on them : the same may be confidently said of law and of medicine, the first of which belongs principally to civil, and the second chiefly to natural, history. Here, therefore, I speak of *medicine*, as far only as it is grounded on experiment ; and, without believing implicitly what *Arabs*, *Persians*, *Chinese*, or *Hindus* may have written on the virtues of medicinal substances, we may, surely, hope to find in their writings what our own experiments may confirm or disprove, and what might never have occurred to us without such intimations.

*Europeans* enumerate more than *two hundred and fifty* mechanical arts, by which the productions of nature may be variously prepared for the convenience and ornament of life ; and, though the *Silpasastra* reduce them to *sixty-four*, yet *ABU'LFAZL* had been assured, that the *Hindus* reckoned *three hundred* arts and sciences : now, their sciences being comparatively few, we may conclude, that they anciently practised at least as many useful arts as ourselves. Several *Pandits* have informed me, that the treatises on art, which they call *Upavédas* and believe to have been inspired, are not so entirely lost, but that considerable fragments of them may be found at *Banares* ; and they certainly possess many popular, but ancient, works on that interesting subject. The manufactures of sugar and indigo have been well known in these provinces for more than two thousand years ; and we cannot entertain a doubt, that their *Sanskrit* books on dying and metallurgy contain very curious facts, which might, indeed, be discovered by accident in a long course of





years, but which we may soon bring to light, by the help of *Indian* literature, for the benefit of manufacturers and artists, and consequently of our nation, who are interested in their prosperity. Discoveries of the same kind might be collected from the writings of other *Asiatic* nations, especially of the *Chinese*; but, though *Persian*, *Arabic*, *Turkish*, and *Sanscrit* are languages now so accessible, that, in order to obtain a sufficient knowledge of them, little more seems required than a strong inclination to learn them, yet the supposed number and intricacy of the *Chinese* characters have deterred our most diligent students from attempting to find their way through so vast a labyrinth: it is certain, however, that the difficulty has been magnified beyond the truth; for the perspicuous grammar by M. FOURMONT, together with a copious dictionary, which I possess, in *Chinese* and *Latin*, would enable any man, who pleased, to compare the original works of CONFUCIUS, which are easily procured, with the literal translation of them by COUPLET; and, having made that first step with attention, he would probably find, that he had traversed at least half of his career. But I should be led beyond the limits assigned to me on this occasion, if I were to expatiate farther on the historical division of the knowledge comprised in the literature of *Asia*; and I must postpone till next year my remarks on *Asiatic* philosophy and on those arts, which depend on imagination; promising you with confidence, that, in the course of the present year, your inquiries into the *civil and natural history* of this eastern world will be greatly promoted by the learned labours of many among our associates and correspondents.



THE ELEVENTH  
DISCOURSE,

ON

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ASIATICS.

DELIVERED 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 1794.



**H**AD it been of any importance, gentlemen, to arrange these anniversary dissertations according to the ordinary progress of the human mind, in the gradual expansion of its three most considerable powers, *memory, imagination and reason*, I should certainly have presented you with an essay on the *liberal arts* of the five *Asiatic* nations, before I produced my remarks on their *Abstract sciences*; because, from my own observation at least, it seems evident, that *fancy*, or the faculty of combining our ideas agreeably by various modes of imitation and substitution, is in general earlier exercised, and sooner attains maturity, than the power of separating and comparing those ideas by the laborious exertions of intellect; and hence, I believe, it has happened, that all nations in the world had poets before they had mere philosophers: but, as M. D'ALEMBERT has deliberately placed science before art, as the question of precedence is, on this occasion, of no moment whatever, and as many new facts on the subject of *Asiatic* philosophy are fresh in my remembrance, I propose to address you now on the sciences of *Asia*, reserving for our next annual meeting a disquisition concerning those fine arts, which have immemorially been cultivated, with different success and in very different modes, within the circle of our common inquiries.

By science I mean an assemblage of transcendental propositions discoverable by human reason, and reducible to first principles, axioms, or maxims, from which they may all be derived in a regular succession; and there are consequently as many sciences as there are general objects of our intellectual powers: when man first exerts those powers, his objects are *himself* and





the *rest of nature*; himself he perceives to be composed of *body and mind*, and in his *individual* capacity, he reasons on the *uses* of his animal frame and of its parts both exterior and internal, on the *disorders* impeding the regular functions of those parts, and on the most probable methods of preventing those disorders or of removing them; he soon feels the close connexion between his corporeal and mental faculties, and when his *mind* is reflected on itself, he discourses on its *essence* and its *operations*; in his *social* character, he analyzes his various *duties* and *rights* both private and public; and in the leisure, which the fullest discharge of those duties always admits, his intellect is directed to *nature* at large, to the *substance* of natural bodies, to their several *properties*, and to their quantity both separate and united, finite and infinite; from all which objects he deduces notions, either purely abstract and universal, or mixed with undoubted facts, he argues from phenomena to theorems, from those theorems to other phenomena, from causes to effects, from effects to causes, and thus arrives at the demonstration of a *first intelligent cause*; whence his collected wisdom, being arranged in the form of science, chiefly consists of *physiology* and *medicine*, *metaphysics* and *logic*, *ethics* and *jurisprudence*, *natural philosophy* and *mathematics*; from which the *religion of nature* (since revealed religion must be referred to *history*, as alone affording evidence of it) has in all ages and in all nations been the sublime and consoling result. Without professing to have given a logical definition of science, or to have exhibited a perfect enumeration of its objects, I shall confine myself to those *five* divisions of *Asiatic* philosophy, enlarging for the most part on the progress which the *Hindus* have made in them, and occasionally introducing the sciences of the *Arabs* and *Persians*, the *Tartars*, and the *Chinese*; but, how extensive soever may be the range which I have chosen I shall beware of exhausting your patience with tedious discussions, and of exceeding those limits, which the occasion of our present meeting has necessarily prescribed.

I. THE first article affords little scope; since I have no evidence, that, in any language of *Asia*, there exists one original treatise on medicine considered as a *science*: physic, indeed, appears in these regions to have been from time immemorial, as we see it practised at this day by *Hindus* and *Muselmāns*, a mere empirical *history* of diseases and remedies; useful, I admit, in a high degree, and worthy of attentive examination, but wholly foreign





to the subject before us : though the *Arabs*, however, have chiefly followed the *Greeks* in this branch of knowledge, and have themselves been implicitly followed by other *Mahommedan* writers, yet (not to mention the *Chinese*, of whose medical works I can at present say nothing with confidence) we still have access to a number of *Sanscrit* books on the old *Indian* practice of physic, from which, if the *Hindus* had a theoretical system, we might easily collect it. The *Ayurvêda*, supposed to be the work of a celestial physician, is almost entirely lost, unfortunately perhaps for the curious *European*, but happily for the patient *Hindu* ; since a revealed science precludes improvement from experience, to which that of medicine ought, above all others, to be left perpetually open ; but I have myself met with curious fragments of that primeval work, and, in the *Vêda* itself, I found with astonishment an entire *Upanishad* on the internal parts of the human body ; with an enumeration of nerves, veins, and arteries, a description of the heart, spleen, and liver, and various disquisitions on the formation and growth of the fetus : from the laws, indeed, of *MENU*, which have lately appeared in our own language, we may perceive, that the ancient *Hindus* were fond of reasoning in their way on the mysteries of animal generation, and on the comparative influence of the sexes in the production of perfect offspring ; and we may collect from the authorities adduced in the learned Essay on *Egypt* and the *Nile*, that their physiological disputes led to violent schisms in religion, and even to bloody wars. On the whole we cannot expect to acquire many valuable truths from an examination of eastern books on the science of medicine ; but examine them we must, if we wish to complete the history of universal philosophy, and to supply the scholars of *Europe* with authentic materials for an account of the opinions anciently formed on this head by the philosophers of *Asia* : to know, indeed, with certainty, that so much and no more can be known on any branch of science, would in itself be very important and useful knowledge, if it had no other effect than to check the boundless curiosity of mankind, and to fix them in the straight path of attainable science, especially of such as relates to their duties and may conduce to their happiness.

II. We have an ample field in the next division, and a field almost wholly new ; since the mytaphysics and logic of the *Brahmens*, comprised in their six philosophical *Sa'stras*, and explained by numerous glosses or comments, have never yet been accessible





*Europeans*; and, by the help of the *Sanscrit* language, we now may read the works of the *Saugatas*, *Bauddhas*, *Arhatas*, *Jainas*, and other heterodox philosophers, whence we may gather the metaphysical tenets prevalent in *China* and *Japan*, in the eastern peninsula of *India*, and in many considerable nations of *Tartary*: there are also some valuable tracts on these branches of science in *Persian* and *Arabic*, partly copied from the *Greeks*, and partly comprising the doctrines of the *Sûfis* which anciently prevailed, and still prevail in great measure over this oriental world, and which the *Greeks* themselves condescended to borrow from eastern sages.

The little treatise in four chapters, ascribed to *Vya'sa*, is the only philosophical *Sâstra*, the original text of which I have had leisure to peruse with a *Brahmen* of the *Vêdânti* school: it is extremely obscure, and, though composed in sentences elegantly modulated, has more resemblance to a table of contents, or an accurate summary, than to a regular systematical tract; but all its obscurity has been cleared by the labour of the very judicious and most learned SANCARA, whose commentary on the *Vêdânta*, which I read also with great attention, not only elucidates every word of the text, but exhibits a perspicuous account of all other *Indian* schools, from that of CAPILA to those of the more modern heretics. It is not possible, indeed, to speak with too much applause of so excellent a work; and I am confident in asserting, that, until an accurate translation of it shall appear in some *European* language, the general history of philosophy must remain incomplete; for I perfectly agree with those, who are of opinion, that one correct version of any celebrated *Hindu* book would be of greater value than all the dissertations or essays, that could be composed on the same subject; you will not, however, expect, that, in such a discourse as I am now delivering, I should expatiate on the diversity of *Indian* philosophical schools, on the several founders of them, on the doctrines, which they respectively taught, or on their many disciples, who dissented from their instructors in some particular points. On the present occasion, it will be sufficient to say, that the oldest head of a sect, whose entire work is preserved, was (according to some authors) CAPILA; not the divine personage, a reputed grandson of BRAHMA, to whom CRI'SHNA compares himself in the *Gîtâ*, but a sage of his name, who invented the *Sânc'hya*, or *Numeral*, philosophy, which CRI'SHNA



himself appears to impugn in his conversation with ARJUNA, and which, as far as I can recollect it from a few original texts, resembled in part the metaphysics of PYTHAGORAS, and in part the theology of ZENO : his doctrines were enforced and illustrated, with some additions, by the venerable PA'TANJALI, who has also left us a fine comment on the grammatical rules of PA'NINI, which are more obscure, without a gloss, than the darkest oracle ; and here by the way let me add, that I refer to metaphysics the curious and important science of *universal grammar*, on which many subtil disquisitions may be found interspersed in the particular grammars of the ancient *Hindus*, and in those of the more modern *Arabs*. The next founder, I believe, of a philosophical school was GO'TAMA, if, indeed, he was not the most ancient of all ; for his wife AHALY'A was, according to *Indian* legends, restored to a human shape by the great RA'MA ; and a sage of his name, whom we have no reason to suppose a different personage, is frequently mentioned in the *Véda* itself ; to his rational doctrines those of CANA'DA were in general conformable ; and the philosophy of them both is usually called *Nyaya*, or *logical*, a title aptly bestowed ; for it seems to be a system of metaphysics and logic better accommodated than any other anciently known in *India*, to the natural reason and common sense of mankind ; admitting the actual existence of *material substance* in the popular acceptation of the word *matter*, and comprising not only a body of sublime dialectics, but an artificial method of reasoning, with distinct names for the three parts of a proposition, and even for those of a regular syllogism. Here I cannot refrain from introducing a singular tradition, which prevailed, according to the well-informed author of the *Dabistân*, in the *Panjab* and in several *Persian* provinces, that, "among other *Indian* curiosities, which "CALLISTHENES transmitted to his uncle, was a *technical system of logic*, which the *Brâhmens* had communicated to the inquisitive *Greek*," and which the *Mahommedan* writer supposes to have been the groundwork of the famous *Aristotelean* method : if this be true, it is one of the most interesting facts, that I have met with in *Asia* ; and if it be false, it is very extraordinary, that such a story should have been fabricated either by the candid MOHSANI Fa'nî ; or by the simple *Pârsis Pandits*, with whom he had conversed ; but, not having had leisure to study the *Nyâya Sâstra*, I can only assure you, that I have frequently seen perfect syllogisms in the philo-





sophical writings of the *Bráhmens*, and have often heard them used in their verbal controversies. Whatever might have been the merit or age of GÓTAMA, yet the most celebrated *Indian* school is that, with which I began, founded by VYA'SA, and supported in most respects by his pupil JAIMINI, whose dissent on a few points is mentioned by his master with respectful moderation: their several systems are frequently distinguished by the names of the first and second *Mimánsá*, a word, which, like *Nya'ya*, denotes the the operations and conclusions of reason; but the tract of VYA'SA has in general the appellation of *Védánta*, or the scope and end of the *Véda*, on the texts of which, as they were understood by the philosopher, who collected them, his doctrines are principally grounded. The fundamental tenet of the *Védántí* school, to which in a more modern age the incomparable SANCARA was a firm and illustrious adherent, consisted, not in denying the existence of matter, that is, of solidity, impenetrability, and extended figure (to deny which would be lunacy), but, in correcting the popular notion of it, and in contending, that it has no essence independent of of mental perception, that existence and perceptibility are convertible terms, that external appearances and sensations are illusory, and would vanish into nothing, if the divine energy, which alone sustains them, were suspended but for a moment; an opinion, which EPICHRMUS and PLATO seem to have adopted, and which has been maintained in the present century with great elegance, but with little public applause; partly because it has been misunderstood, and partly because it has been misapplied by the false reasoning of some unpopular writers, who are said to have disbelieved in the moral attributes of GOD, whose omnipresence, wisdom, and goodness are the basis of the *Indian* philosophy: I have not sufficient evidence on the subject to profess a belief in the doctrine of the *Védánta*, which human reason alone could, perhaps, neither fully demonstrate, nor fully disprove; but it is manifest, that nothing can be farther removed from impiety than a system wholly built on the purest devotion; and the inexpressible difficulty, which any man, who shall make the attempt, will assuredly find in giving a satisfactory definition of *material substance*, must induce us to deliberate with coolness, before we censure the learned and pious restorer of the ancient *Véda*; though we cannot but admit, that, if the common opinions of mankind be the criterion of philosophical truth, we must adhere to the system of GÓTAMA,





which the *Brahmens* of this province almost universally follow.

If the metaphysics of the *Védantis* be wild and erroneous, the pupils of BUDDHA have run, it is asserted, into an error diametrically opposite ; for they are charged with denying the existence of pure spirit, and with believing nothing absolutely and really to exist but *material substance* ; a heavy accusation which ought only to have been made on positive and incontestable proof, especially by the orthodox *Brahmens*, who, as BUDDHA dissented from their ancestors in regard to *bloody sacrifices*, which the *Véda* certainly prescribes, may not unjustly be suspected of low and interested malignity. Though I cannot credit the charge, yet I am unable to prove it entirely false, having only read a few pages of a *Saugata* book, which Captain KIRKPATRICK had lately the kindness to give me ; but it begins, like other *Hindu* books, with the word *O'm*, which we know to be a symbol of the divine attributes ; then follows, indeed, a mysterious hymn to the Goddess of Nature, by the name of *Ary'a*, but with several other titles, which the *Brahmens* themselves continually bestow on their *Dévi* ; now the *Bráhmens*, who have no idea, that any such personage exists as *DEV*, or the *Goddess*, and only mean to express allegorically the *power* of *God*, exerted in creating, preserving and renovating this universe, we cannot with justice infer, that the dissenters admit no deity but *visible nature* : the *Pandit*, who now attends me, and who told Mr. WILKINS, that the *Saugatas* were atheists, would not have attempted to resist the decisive evidence of the contrary, which appears in the very instrument, on which he was consulted, if his understanding had not been blinded by the intolerant zeal of a mercenary priesthood. A literal version of the book just mentioned (if any studious man had learning and industry equal to the task) would be an inestimable treasure to the compiler of such a history as that of the laborious BRUCKER ; but let us proceed to the *morals* and *jurisprudence* of the *Asiatics*, on which I could expatiate if the occasion admitted a full discussion of the subject, with correctness and confidence.

III. That both ethics and abstract law might be reduced to the *method of science*, cannot surely be doubted ; but, although such a method would be of infinite use in a system of universal, or even of national, jurisprudence, yet the *principles* of morality are so few, so luminous, and so ready to present themselves on





every occasion, that the practical utility of a scientific arrangement, in a treatise on ethics, may very justly be questioned. The moralists of the east have in general chosen to deliver their precepts in short sententious maxims, to illustrate them by sprightly comparisons, or to inculcate them in the very ancient form of agreeable apoloques: there are, indeed, both in *Arabic* and *Persian*, philosophical tracts on ethics written with sound ratiocination and elegant perspicuity: but in every part of this eastern world, from *Pekin* to *Damascus*, the popular teachers of moral wisdom have immemorially been poets, and there would be no end of enumerating their works, which are still extant in the five principal languages of *Asia*. Our divine religion, the truth of which (if any history be true) is abundantly proved by historical evidence, has no need of such aids, as many are willing to give it, by asserting, that the wisest men of this world were ignorant of the two great maxims, that *we must act in respect of others, as we should wish them to act in respect of ourselves*, and that, *instead of returning evil for evil, we should confer benefits even on those who injure us*; but the first rule is implied in a speech of *LYSIAS*, and expressed in distinct phrases by *THALES* and *PITTACUS*; and I have even seen it word for word in the original of *CONFUCIUS*, which I carefully compared with the *Latin* translation. It has been usual with zealous men, to ridicule and abuse all those, who dare on this point to quote the *Chinese* philosopher; but, instead of supporting their cause, they would shake it, if it could be shaken, by their uncandid asperity; for they ought to remember, that one great end of revelation, as it is most expressly declared, was not to instruct the wise and few, but the many and unenlightened. If the conversation, therefore, of the *Pandits* and *Maulavis* in this country shall ever be attempted by protestant missionaries, they must beware of asserting, while they teach the gospel of truth, what those *Pandits* and *Maulavis* would know to be false: the former would cite the beautiful *Ary'a* couplet, which was written at least three centuries before our era, and which pronounces the duty of a good man, even in the moment of his destruction, to consist *not only in forgiving, but even in a desire of benefiting, his destroyer, as the Sandal-tree, in the instant of its overthrow, sheds perfume on the axe, which fells it*; and the latter would triumph in repeating the verse of *SADÏ*, who represents a return of good for good as a slight reciprocity, but says to the virtuous man, “confer benefits on him, who has injured thee,” using



Arabic sentence, and a maxim apparently of the ancient *Arabs*. Nor would the *Muselmans* fail to recite four distichs of HA'FIZ, who has illustrated that maxim with fanciful but elegant allusions ;

Learn from yon orient shell to love thy foe,  
And store with pearls the hand, that brings thee wo :  
Free, like yon rock, from base vindictive pride,  
Imblaze with gems the wrist, that rends thy side :  
Mark, where yon tree rewards the stony show'r  
With fruit nectareous, or the balmy flow'r :  
All nature calls aloud : " Shall man do less  
Than heal the smiter, and the railer bless ?"

Now there is not a shadow of reason for believing, that the poet of *Shiraz* had borrowed this doctrine from the *Christians* ; but, as the cause of *Christianity* could never be promoted by falsehood or error, so it will never be obstructed by candour and veracity ; for the lessons of CONFUCIUS and CHANACYA, of SADI and HA'FIZ, are unknown even at this day to millions of *Chinese* and *Hindus*, *Persians* and other *Mahommedans*, who toil for their daily support ; nor, were they known ever so perfectly, would they have a divine sanction with the multitude ; so that, in order to enlighten the minds of the ignorant, and to enforce the obedience of the perverse, it is evidently *a priori*, that a revealed religion was necessary in the great system of providence : but my principal motive for introducing this topic, was to give you a specimen of that ancient oriental morality, which is comprised in an infinite number of *Persian*, *Arabic*, and *Sanscrit* compositions.

Nearly one-half of *jurisprudence* is closely connected with ethics ; but, since the learned of *Asia* consider most of their laws as positive and divine institutions, and not as the mere conclusions of human reason, and since I have prepared a mass of extremely curious materials, which I reserve for an introduction to the digest of *Indian* laws, I proceed to the fourth division, which consists principally of science transcendently so named, or the knowledge of abstract quantities, of their limits, properties, and relations, impressed on the understanding with the force of irresistible demonstration, which, as all other knowledge depends at best on our fallible senses, and in great measure on still more fallible testimony, can only be found, in pure mental abstractions ; though for all the purposes of life, our own senses, and even the credible testimony of others,





give us in most cases the highest degree of certainty, physical and moral.

IV. I HAVE already had occasion to touch on the *Indian* metaphysics of *natural bodies* according to the most celebrated of the *Asiatic* schools, from which the *Pythagoreans* are supposed to have borrowed many of their opinions ; and, as we learn from *CICERO*, that the old sages of *Europe* had an idea of *centripetal force* and a principal of *universal gravitation* (which they never indeed attempted to demonstrate), so I can venture to affirm, without meaning to pluck a leaf from the neverfading laurels of our immortal *NEWTON*, that the whole of his theology and part of his philosophy may be found in the *Vedas* and even in the works of the *Sûfis* : that *most subtil spirit*, which he suspected to pervade natural bodies, and, lying concealed in them, to cause attraction and repulsion, the emission, reflection, and refraction of light, electricity, calefaction, sensation, and muscular motion, is described by the *Hindus* as a *fifth element* endued with those very powers ; and the *Vedas* abound with allusions to a force universally attractive, which they chiefly ascribe to the Sun, thence called *Aditya*, or the *Attractor* ; a name designed by the mythologists to mean the child of the Goddess *ADITI* ; but the most wonderful passage on the theory of attraction occurs in the charming allegorical poem of *SHIRIN* and *FERHAD*, or the *Divine Spirit* and a *human Soul disinterestedly pious* ; a work which from the first verse to the last, is a blaze of religious and poetical fire. The whole passage appears to me so curious, that I make no apology for giving you a faithful translation of it : “ There is a strong propensity, which dances through every atom, and attracts the minutest particle to some peculiar object ; search this universe from its base to its summit, from fire to air, from water to earth, from all below the Moon to all above the celestial sphere, and thou wilt not find a corpuscle destitute of that natural attractibility ; the very point of the first thread, in this apparently tangled skein, is no other than such a principle of attraction, and all principles beside are void of a real basis ; from such a propensity arises every motion perceived in heavenly or in terrestrial bodies ; it is a disposition to be attracted, which taught hard steel to rush from its place and rivet itself on the magnet ; it is the same disposition, which impels the light straw to attach itself firmly on amber ; it is this quality, which gives every substance in nature a tendency toward another,



and an inclination forcibly directed to a determinate point." These notions are vague, indeed, and unsatisfactory ; but permit me to ask, whether the last paragraph of NEWTON'S incomparable work goes much farther, and whether any subsequent experiments have thrown light on a subject so abstruse and obscure : that the sublime astronomy and exquisitely beautiful geometry, with which that work is illumined, should in any decree be approached by the Mathematicians of *Asia*, while of all *Europeans*, who ever lived, ARCHIMEDES alone was capable of emulating them, would be a vain expectation ; but we must suspend our opinion of *Indian* astronomical knowledge, till the *Sūrya siddhānta* shall appear in our own language, and even then (to adopt a phrase of CICERO) our greedy and capacious ears will by no means be satisfied ; for in order to complete an historical account of genuine *Hindu* astronomy, we require verbal translations of at least three other *Sanskrit* books ; of the treatise by PARASARA, for the first age of *Indian* science, of that by VARA'HA, with the copious comment of his very learned son, for the middle age, and of those written by BHASCARA, for times comparatively modern. The valuable and now accessible works of the last mentioned philosopher, contain also an *universal*, or *specious*, arithmetic, with one chapter at least on geometry ; nor would it, surely, be difficult to procure, through our several residents with the *Pishwá* and with SCINDHYA, the older books on algebra, which BHASCARA mentions, and on which Mr. DAVIS would justly set a very high value ; but the *Sanskrit* work, from which we might expect the most ample and important information, is entitled *Cshetrádersa*, or a *View of Geometrical Knowledge*, and was compiled in a very large volume by order of the illustrious JAYASINHA, comprising all that remains on that science in the sacred language of *India* : it was inspected in the west by a *Pandit* now in the service of Lieutenant WILFORD, and might, I am persuaded, be purchased at *Fayanagar*, where Colonel POLIER had permission from the *Rájá* to buy the four *Védas* themselves. Thus have I answered, to the best of my power, the three first questions obligingly transmitted to us by professor PLAYFAIR ; whether the *Hindus* have books in *Sanskrit* expressly on geometry, whether they have any such on arithmetic, and whether a translation of the *Sūrya siddhānta* be not the great *desideratum* on the subject of *Indian* astronomy : to his three last questions, whether an accurate summary account of all the *Sanskrit* works on that subject, a delineation of the *Indian*





celestial sphere, with correct remarks on it, and a description of the astronomical instruments used by the ancient *Hindus*, would not severally be of great utility, we cannot but answer in the affirmative, provided that the utmost critical sagacity were applied in distinguishing such works, constellations, and instruments, as are clearly of *Indian* origin, from such as were introduced into this country by *Muselman* astronomers from *Tartary* and *Persia*, or in later days by Mathematicians from *Europe*.

V. FROM all the properties of man and of nature, from all the various branches of science, from all the deductions of human reason, the general corollary, admitted by *Hindus*, *Arabs*, and *Tartars*, by *Persians*, and by *Chinese*, is the supremacy of an all-creating and all-preserving spirit, infinitely wise, good, and powerful, but infinitely removed from the comprehension of his most exalted creatures ; nor are there in any language (the ancient *Hebrew* always excepted) more pious and sublime addresses to the being of beings, more splendid enumerations of his attributes, or more beautiful descriptions of his visible works, than in *Arabic*, *Persian* and *Sanscrit*, especially in the *Koran*, the introductions to the poems of SADI, NIZAMI, and FIRDAUSI, the four *Védas* and many parts of the numerous *Puránas* : but supplication and praise would not satisfy the boundless imagination of the *Vedánti* and *Sūfi* theologists, who blending uncertain metaphysics with undoubted principles of religion, have presumed to reason confidently on the very nature and essence of the divine spirit, and asserted in a very remote age, what multitudes of *Hindus* and *Muselmans* assert at this hour, that all spirit is homogeneous, that the spirit of God is in kind the same with that of man, though differing from it infinitely in degree, and that, as material substance is mere illusion, there exists in this universe only one generic spiritual substance, the sole primary cause, efficient, substantial and formal of all secondary causes and of all appearances whatever, but endued in its highest degree, with a sublime providential wisdom, and proceeding by ways incomprehensible to the spirits which emanate from it ; an opinion, which GOTAMA never taught, and which we have no authority to believe, but which, as it is grounded on the doctrine of an immaterial creator supremely wise, and a constant preserver supremely benevolent, differs as widely from the pantheism of SPINOZA and TOLAND, as the affirmation of a proposition differs from the negation of it ; though the last named professor of that *insane philosophy*



had the baseness to conceal his meaning under the very words of Saint PAUL, which are cited by NEWTON for a purpose totally different, and has even used a phrase, which occurs, indeed, in the *Véda*, but in a sense diametrically opposite to that, which he would have given it. The passage, to which I allude, is in a speech of *Varuna* to his son, where he says : "That spirit, from which these created beings proceed ; through which having proceeded from it, they live ; toward which they tend and in which they are ultimately absorbed, that spirit study to know ; that spirit is the Great One."

The subject of this discourse, gentlemen, is inexhaustible : it has been my endeavour to say as much on it as possible in the fewest words ; and, at the beginning of next year, I hope to close these general disquisitions with topics measureless in extent, but less abstruse than that, which has this day been discussed, and better adapted to the gaiety, which seems to have prevailed in the learned banquets of the *Greeks*, and which ought, surely, to prevail in every symposiac assembly.