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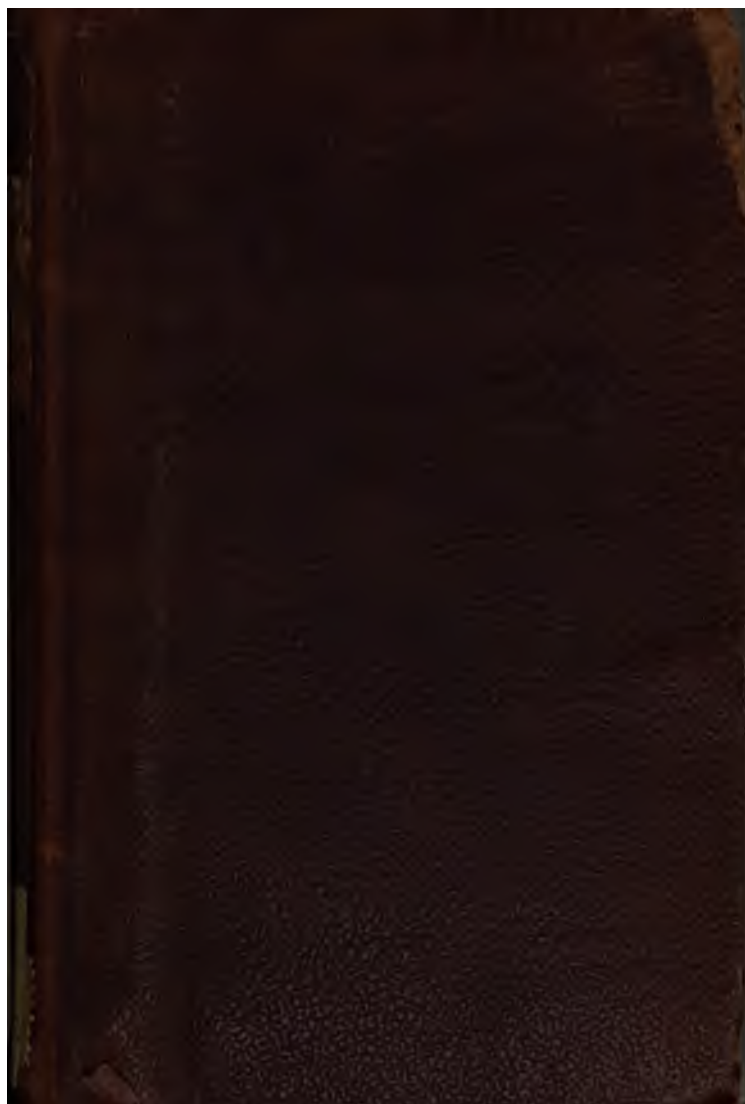
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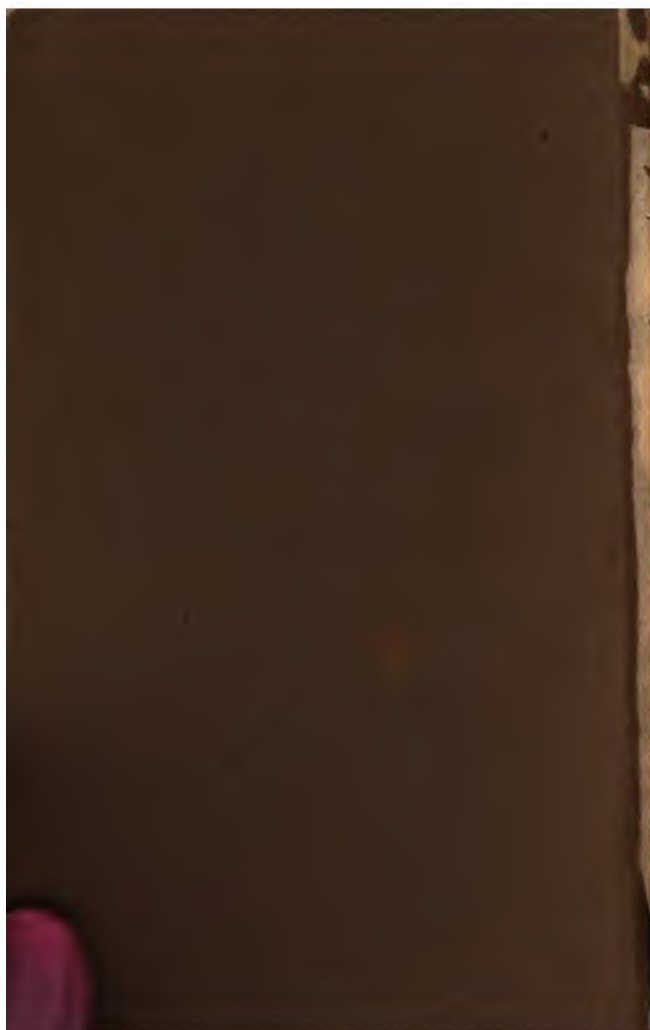
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**SIR WILLIAM JONES'S**  
**DISCOURSES.**



**SECOND EDITION.**



SIR WILLIAM JONES'S  
DISCOURSES.



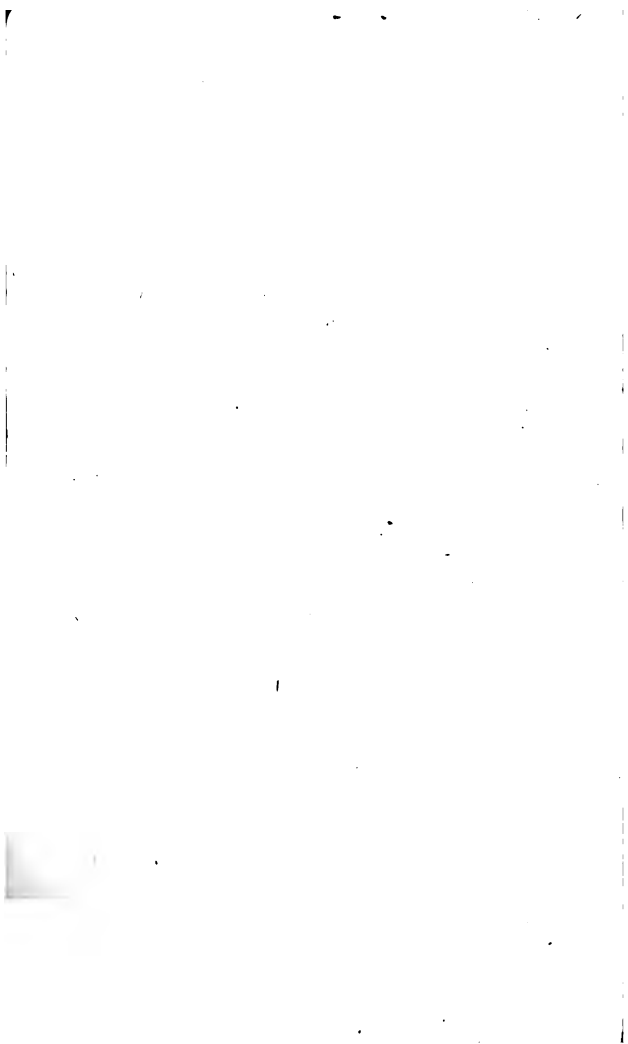
A.W. Davis del.

E. Scriven sculp.

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Lord Teignmouth.*

LONDON, PUBLISHED BY W.B. CARPENTER  
LOWER BROOK STREET, 1821.





# DISCOURSES

DELIVERED BEFORE

*The Asiatic Society :*

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS,

ON

THE RELIGION, POETRY, LITERATURE, ETC.  
OF THE NATIONS OF INDIA.

---

BY

*SIR WILLIAM JONES.*

---

WITH AN

*Essay on his Name, Talents, and Character.*  
BY THE RIGHT HON. LORD TEIGNMOUTH.

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SELECTED AND EDITED

BY JAMES ELMES,

AUTHOR OF LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE, ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

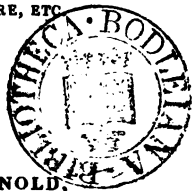
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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR CHARLES S. ARNOLD,

TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1824.



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C. Whittingham Chiswick.

**TO THE RIGHT HON.**  
**THE EARL OF LIVERPOOL, K. G.**

**FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY,**  
**COMMISSIONER FOR THE AFFAIRS OF INDIA, PRIME**  
**MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM,**  
**ETC. ETC. ETC.**

**MY LORD,**  
**T**HE variety, value, and extent of the talents  
and character of Sir William Jones, are ac-  
knowledged wherever the English language  
is spoken or understood.

The immensity of his literary attainments,  
his fertile capacity, his great and unerring  
judgment, his zeal, his patriotism, and his



public services to his country, in the administration of justice in her most important colony, India, are as universally acknowledged at home as they are felt and valued in our Eastern settlements. His works are a monument of his greatness; and the two volumes of the lighter and more generally interesting parts, the elegant amusements of his leisure hours, selected from his vast storehouse of intellect, which your Lordship has permitted me to dedicate to you, are proofs of the brilliancy and versatility of his powers, the blanchèd purity of his vigorous mind, and the ardent love of his fellow creatures, which so prominently distinguish this illustrious character.

It is delightful, instructive, and exhilarating, to follow this great lawyer, unbending from a pursuit which generally requires the entire occupation of the strongest minds, informing,

amusing, and enlightening his auditors and readers with discussions on law; language; the elegant literature of France, Spain and Italy, by turns with that of Greece and Rome; diving into 'Hebrew with ease and success\*,' acquiring the Arabic and Persian with an accuracy acknowledged by natives to be equal to their own; conversant with the Turkish idiom, and the characters of that singularly constructed language, the Chinese; reading, translating, and writing law, religion and poetry with equal profoundness, sincerity, and elegance. He was a phenomenon in literature, and one of the greatest ornaments of the English name. It is also satisfactory, if religion requires such consolation, to find this profoundly investigating philosopher, who acknowledges, with our great Newton, that we must not admit more causes of natural

\* Lord Teignmouth's Discourse.

things than those which are true, and sufficiently account for natural phenomena\*; expressing his firm conviction of the truth of our national religion†.

He was in short, my Lord, in literature, what Raffaele was in art. Like that justly celebrated painter, he was distinguished by the precocity of his intellect, by the elegance of his manners, by the goodness of his heart, and by the cultivation of the minor graces of society. Like that great man also, he was cut off in the spring and vigour of his life; and like him too, his name will be as immortal as language, and as great an ornament to England, as Raffaele is to Italy.

Your Lordship has had the gratification of having pursued a liberal policy in the govern-

\* Vol. II. p. 3.    † Vol. I. pp. 145, 146.

ment of a nation of which Sir William Jones was a native, with a continued perseverance under clouds of apparently appalling difficulties, which have terminated in a success as brilliant as any in our history, and most aptly illustrative of your Lordship's family motto, *Palmarum non sine pulvere*. The part which your Lordship has taken in all the public measures of the late reign, of the brilliant epoch of the regency, and of the present momentous period, will be amply honoured by the historian, done justice to by posterity, and acknowledged by the most enlightened of your cotemporaries.

I did not mean in this dedication to touch upon politics, but it was unavoidable, nor have I said half what I feel: but a Dedication of the Discourses of Sir William Jones, and not flattery, is my object; and whenever your Lordship may retire from the fatigues of

the public station you have so long graced,  
may your private life be gilded with all the  
happiness and comforts that a long life, a  
green old age, and the satisfaction of seeing  
your country safe from the storms of a con-  
vulsed age, can render you.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obliged

and very obedient servant,

JAMES ELMES.

29, Charlotte Street, Portland Place,  
August 12th, 1821.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

IN preparing that course of Lectures on Architecture, which I delivered last winter at the Russel and Surrey Institutions of London, and this spring at the Philosophical Society of Birmingham, the architecture and antiquities of India naturally came under my investigation; and led me to consult, among other writings, the voluminous and philosophical works of Sir William Jones. Perceiving in these interesting and delightful volumes, gems of the rarest kind, scattered among discussions of the severest nature, I was led to wish a selection of his Discourses and lighter works, separated from those connected with law, jurisprudence, physiology and other graver and more important investigations. This selection I proposed to my Publisher, and the result of our discussions and agreement are the two volumes which I have now the happiness of presenting to the Public, conjointly with him. These volumes will, I trust, be accepted as an addition of no common order, to the lighter and more elegant specimens of English literature.

With the lately collected Letters of the same eminent character, with the beautiful Discourses of Sir

Joshua Reynolds, and with other elegant English classical works recently published, of the same size, will these Discourses and Papers be suitable companions.

I originally intended to have written a brief life of this illustrious man, but it is done so well by Lord Teignmouth in the complete collection of his works, that I preferred referring the reader of this selection to that memoir, and substituting, in its stead, his Lordship's eloquent Discourse\* on the Name, Character, and Talents of Sir William Jones, which rivals for beauty of composition, and truth of statement, any of the beautiful *eloges* of the French; to that of intruding any thing of my own.

The unbounded pleasure which I have received in the selection and compilation of these two volumes, and the satisfaction which I feel in presenting their elegant and profound contents to my countrymen, are rewards that infinitely compensate whatever labour they have required of me.

J. E.

London,  
Aug. 12, 1821.

\* See Vol. II. pp. 55, 56, et seq.

# SIR WILLIAM JONES'S DISCOURSES.

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## DISCOURSE I.

*Delivered at the Opening of the Asiatic Society,*

FEBRUARY 24, 1784.

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Importance of Asia in the history of mankind — Advantages to be derived from cultivating its history, antiquities, &c. — Hints for the foundation of the Society's objects and future views.

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GENTLEMEN,

**W**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 foretell, that an institution so likely to afford entertainment, and convey knowledge to mankind, will advance to maturity by slow, 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 honour.

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 Hindustan 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 Iran, 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 enclosed: but, since Egypt had unquestionably an old connexion 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 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 colour, figure, or sound.

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 chirurgery and medicine; and their 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 elegancies 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 labour 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 derived so much pleasure and information from the agreeable work of Kœmpfer, 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 enrol 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 *Nazir* to your Society with as much respectful zeal as to the greatest potentate on earth.

## DISCOURSE II.

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 24, 1785.

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Congratulations at the success of the institution.—Reflections on the history, laws, manners, arts, and antiquities of Asia.—Parallel between the works and actions of the western and eastern world.—The botany, medicine, chemistry, fine and liberal arts, poetry, architecture, sciences, jurisprudence, &c. of the Asiatics considered.—Contributions and desiderata pointed out.

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GENTLEMEN,

If the Deity of the Hindus, 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 the 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 any invocation to Càmadhènu; 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 Hindu 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 *Aeneas* 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 cannot 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 condemn 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 Bahar, 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 Retna's*, 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 Hindu or Muselman 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 *fifty-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 foretell 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 im-

possible 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 *fusing 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 labours 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 on 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 *Mahábhárat*, 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, Petrarch, Shakespeare, Spenser, have most abounded in images not far from the brink of absurdity; but, if their luxuriant fancies, or those of Abulola, Firdausi, Nizámi, 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 Vyása, 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 Mathurà, 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, the *Bhāshá*, 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 Vêda's, as well as the Alkoran, 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 Muselman 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 worshiped 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 Cashmîr 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 favourable 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 Muselmans 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 labour, and almost by imperceptible degrees, a fuller catalogue of Oriental books than has hitherto been exhibited; and our correspondents should 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 *Mekámát* and *Risálahs* 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 favour. 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 improper 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 Brahmins; and, if they be men of substance, without reward; but they would all be flattered with an honorary mark of distinction; and the Mahomedans 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.*

## DISCOURSE III.

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 2, 1786.

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On the Hindus.—History of the ancient world.—Etymology, &c. of the Asiatics.—the five principal nations of the continent of Asia.—Sources of Asiatic wealth.—The languages, letters, philosophy, religion, sculpture, architecture, sciences, and arts, of the Eastern nations.—Antiquity, structure, and description of the Sanscrit language.—Characters of the same.—Of the Indian religion and philosophy.—Chronology of the Hindus.—Of the remains of architecture and sculpture in India.—Of the arts and manufactures of India.—Inventions of the Hindus.

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## GENTLEMEN,

In the former discourses which I had the honour of addressing to you, 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 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 from 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 *internal* 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 *filz* 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, de-

scriptive 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 connexion between the members of one great empire; but when we derive our *hanger*, or *short pendant sword*, from the Persian, because ignorant travellers thus mispel the word *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 *Cús*, then, or, as it certainly is written in one ancient dialect, *Cút*, and in others, probably, *Cáz*, 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 *Calicátà*; that both *Cátà* and *Cút* unquestionably mean *places of strength*, or, in general, any *enclosures*; and that *Gujerát* 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 labour 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 connexion 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 Mohammedan 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 Cashmír, and all the domains of the old Indoscythians, the countries of Népál and Butánt, Cámrúp or Asàm, together with Siam, Ava, Racañ, and the bordering kingdoms, as far as the China of the Hindus, or Sín of the Arabian Geographers: not to mention the whole Western Peninsula, with the celebrated island of Sinhala, or *Lion-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 Nágari 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 *Medhyama*, or *Central*, and *Punyabhúmi*, or the *Land of Vir-*

*tues*, to have been the portion of Bharat, one of the nine brothers, whose father had the dominion of the whole earth; and they represent the mountains of Himálaya 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 Dwáracà, 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 Airávti 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 Jambudwípa, 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 *Jáman* by the Muselmans, and by us *rose-apple*; but the largest and richest sort 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 somewhat 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 manner, 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 the' east a lovely country wide extends,  
India, whose borders the wide ocean bounds;  
On this the sun, new rising from the main,  
Smiles pleased, and sheds his early orient beam.  
The' 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 labour at the woof with cunning skill,  
And manufacture linen; others shape  
And polish ivory with the nicest care:  
Many retire to rivers shoal, and plunge  
To seek the beryl flaming in its bed,  
Or glittering 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 soever the 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 Moham-medans, we know, heard the people of proper Hindustan, or India, on a limited scale, speaking a Bháshá, or living tongue, of a very singular construction, the purest dialect of which was current in the districts round Agrá, and chiefly on the poetical ground of Mat'hurá; 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 Hindustáni, particularly the inflexions 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 groundwork, 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 Vêda's was used in the great extent of country which has before been delineated, as long as the religion of Brahmá 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 philologer 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 Cel-

tic, 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 Nágari, from Nagara, a city, with the word Déva 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 Cusick 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 Ráma's Bridge, and from the Sindhu to the river of Siam. Nor can I help believing, although the polished and elegant Dévanágari may not be so ancient as the monumental characters in the caverns of Jarasandha, 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 Phenician, 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 Canárah, of which you now possess a most accurate copy, seem to be compounded of Nágari 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 favour an opinion en-

tertained 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 Hindus 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 worshiped 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 *Dersana Sástra*, comprise all the meta-

physics of the old Academy, the Stoa, the Lyceum ; nor is it possible to read the Védánta, 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 FO.

This may be a proper place to ascertain an important point in the chronology of the Hindus ; 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 has 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 account 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 Cášmirians, who boast of his descent in their kingdom, assert that he appeared on earth about two centuries after Chrishna the Indian Apollo, who took so decided a part in the war of the Máhabhárat ; and, if an etymologist were to suppose that the Athenians

had embellished their poetical history of Pandion's expulsion, and the restoration of Ægeus, with the Asiatic tale of the Pándus and Yudhishtir, neither of which words they could have articulated, I should not hastily deride his conjecture: certain it is that Pándumandel is called by the Greeks the country of Pandion. We have, therefore, determined another interesting epoch, by fixing the age of Chrishna near the three thousandth year from the present time; and, as the three first Avatárs, 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 Hindus 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 Ráma, 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 descendant from Súrya, or the Sun; as the husband of Sitá, and the son of a princess named Caúseyla. It is very remarkable that the Peruvians, whose Incas boasted of the same descent, styled their greatest festival Ramasitoa; 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 Ráma. 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 connexion 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 Varáhavatár, 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 Canárah, 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 monuments 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 Hindustân were peopled or colonized by the same extraordinary race; in confirmation of which, it may be added, that the mountaineers of Bengal and Bahar can hardly be distinguished in some of their features, particularly their lips and noses, from the modern Abyssinians, whom the Arabs call the children of Cûsh. And the ancient Hindus, according to Strabo, differed in nothing from the Africans, but in the straightness 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 Arii 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 labours 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 Ezekiel, containing the most

authentic delineation 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 Tancùt, among whom probably the word *Sèr*, which the Greeks applied to the *silk-worm*, signified *gold*; a sense which it now bears in Tibet. That the Hindus 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 to 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 *Níti Sás-tra*, or System of Ethics, is yet preserved; and the Fables of Vishnuserman, whom we ridiculously call Pilpay, are the most beautiful, if not the most ancient collection of apologues in the world. They were first translated from the Sanscrit in the sixth century, by the order of Buzerchumihir, or Bright as the Sun, the chief physician, and afterwards Vezír, of the great Anúshirevân, and are extant under various names in more than twenty languages; but their original title is *Hitópadésa*, or Amicable Instruction: and, as the very existence of *Æsop*, whom the Arabs believe to have been an Abyssinian, appears rather doubtful, I am not disinclined to sup-

pose 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 *Apologues*; 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 Purána's comprise a series of mythological Histories, in blank verse, from the Creation to the supposed incarnation of Búddha: and their Védas, as far as we can judge from that compendium of them which is called Upanishat, abound with noble speculations in metaphysics, and fine discourses on the being and attributes of God. Their most ancient medical book, entitled Chereca, 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 Cashmír, 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 Achárya, because he had traveled,

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 Jática*, which may signify the Ionic 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,

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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.

## DISCOURSE IV.

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 15, 1787.

## ON THE ARABS.

Remarks on the old inhabitants of India.—Similarity of language, religion, arts, and manners.—On the Arabs; and the knowledge of their language possessed by the Europeans.—On the Sanscrit, Greek, Persian, and German languages.—Religion of the Arabs.—Their monuments of antique art.—Dr. Johnson's opinion on the imperfections of unwritten languages.—On the knowledge of Hindu law and Sanscrit literature.

## GENTLEMEN,

I HAD the honour 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 connexion 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 discovered 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 sides, which would be completely maritime, if no isthmus intervened between the Mediterranean and the Sea of Kolzom: that country in short I call Arabia, in which the Arabic 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

*Alluwa* 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 Othman Tartars, have severally acquired settlements; but, with these exceptions, the natives of Hejaz 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 Hinzuani, whither many had come from Maskat for the purpose of trade; and those of Hejaz, whom I have met in Bengal, form a striking contrast to the Hindu inhabitants of those 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 proofs that the people of Arabia, both on plains and in cities, in 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 Dhu Yezen, as that of the Hindus before Vicramaditya; for, although the vast historical work of Alnuwairi, and the Murujuldhahab or Golden Meadows of Almasuudi, contain chapters on the kings of Himyar, Ghasan, 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 moun-



tains 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 Maidani which he had prepared for publication; nor, even if that 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 Maidani also may be expected, the honour 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 langour, 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 Taimur by Ibni Arabsbah, 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 shall 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 an excess, that I could produce words of more than twenty syllables, not formed ludicrously, like that by which the buffoon in *Antiphanes* 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 (*zenmerdah* for instance which occurs in the *Hamasa*) 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 *Surja*; 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 connexion of ancient Arabian poems; and we are told, that the great author of the *Kamus* 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 may be known to de-

light 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 tyranny of Yemen, about a century before the birth of Muhammed.

Of the characters in which the old compositions of Arabia were written, we know but little, except that the Koran originally appeared in those of Cufah, 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 Himyrac 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 con-

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 Muhammed. 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 deciphered 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 deciphered 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 Khalifah 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 needle-work,’ 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 Hymyaric 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 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 Sanaa.

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 worshiped 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 *Beccah* signifies a *great and tumultuous crowd*; and, in this sense, is one name of the sacred city commonly called Meccah.

The *Cabah*, or *quadrangular* edifice at Meccah, 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 are now 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 Meccah 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 *Tobba* or king *by succession*, who is generally allowed to have reigned in Yemen 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 Muhammed, 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 Ismaelites 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 Himyaric 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 the 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 Rama, were subduing the first inhabitants of these regions, and extending the Indian



empire from Ayodhya or Audh, as far as the isle of Sinhal or Silan. 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 honours 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 *Al-muaaser*, 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 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 transactions in Arabia were recorded in verse; and that more certain facts may be known by reading the Hamasah, the Diwan 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 Heja'zi Arabs, which have continued, we know, from the time of Solomon to the present age, were by no means favourable 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 Koran, may be ascribed, perhaps, to the little skill which they seem to have had in writing, to their predilection in favour 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 *Rawasim*; but suppose that they were collections of their common or customary law. Writing was so little practised amongst 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, and 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 lovesongs. 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 re-

quire," 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 surprised when we see that blaze of genius which they displayed, as far as their arms extended, when they burst, like their own dyke Arim, through their ancient limits, and spread like an inundation over the great empire of Iran. That a race of Tazis 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 favourites, and hope at your next anniversary meeting to travel with you over a part of Asia which exhibits a race of men distinct both from 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 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.

## DISCOURSE V.

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 21, 1788.

## ON THE TARTARS.

The boundaries of Tartary.—Ancient Scythians.—Tartary considered according to Pliny.—The Atlantis of Plato.—Remarks on de Guignes, and other modern authors.—Dialects of the Tartars.—Of the Moguls.—Of the Persians.—The primitive religion of mankind.—The laws of Zamolxis.—Religious opinions and allegorical fables of the Hindus.—Ancient monuments of the Tartars.—On the Tuzac of Taimur.—Asia originally peopled by the Hindus, Arabs, and Tartars.

## GENTLEMEN,

AT 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 mean the people whom we call Tartars: but I enter with extreme diffidence on my present subject, because I have little knowledge of the Tartarean 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 Oby to that of the Dneiper, 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 Cur and Aras, to the Caspian Lake, from the opposite shore of which, follow the course of the Jaihun, 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 encrusted 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, Italy, and Provence; and 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 Cashagar, 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 Tancut, which was known to the Greeks by the name of Serica, and considered by them as the 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. Tartaristan 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 Tartar is by some considered as that of a particular tribe; by others, as that of a small river only; while Turan, as opposed to Iran, seems to mean the ancient dominion of Afrasia, 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 Europe has in different ages been overrun, 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 stronger metaphor, the *foundery of the human race*; but M. Bailly, a wonderfully in-

genious 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 Macares, 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 Shadeam, so named from *Pleasure* and *Love*, not in any one climate which the common sense of mankind considers as the seat of delights, but beyond the mouth of the Oby, in the Frozen Sea, in a region equaled 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, Spitzbergen 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 was 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 Muhammed ; 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, Khwajah 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 Helaçu had sent into Tartaristan 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, Abulghazi, 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 Muhammedan histories, exhibits tribes or nations as individual sovereigns ; and if Baron De Tott 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 Koran, and proceeds to rank Turc, Chin, 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 their historical period commences. It is rather surprising that M. Bailly, who makes frequent appeals to etymological arguments, has not derived Ogyges from Oghuz, and Atlas from Atlai, 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 Visdelou, Demailla, 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 Hymnus 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 Procopius, had not even heard of them; the magnificent Chengis, 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 Arabshah mentions a set of characters called Dilberjin, which were used in Khata: "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 Khata 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 Devanagari. The learned and eloquent Arab adds, "that the Tartars of Khata 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 Khata 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. Abulghazi 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 Hautefrayes 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 Cufick; and the fine manuscript at Oxford from which it was taken is more probably a Mendean 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, have 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 Abulghazi. 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 the 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 Tartaristan; and we may collect from Abulghazi, 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 Abulghazi, 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 Othmanlus, but the two idioms differ perhaps less than Swedish and German, or Spanish and Portuguese, and certainly less than Welsh 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 forgot 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 ground work of the western Turkish, when separated from the Persian and Arabic with which it is embellished, be a branch of the lost Oguzian tongue, I can assert with confidence that it has not the least resemblance either to Arabic or Sanscrit, 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 Sanscrit, of which he gives in several places a most erroneous account, as "*A fine monument of his primeval Scythians, the preceptors of nankind, 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 Brahmins 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, and Arabia; therefore it must have been derived from Tartary. No man, I believe, who has traveled in winter through

Bahar, 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 enough 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. Buffon, who imagines that our whole globe was at first of a white heat, and has been gradually cooling from the pole to the equator; so that the Hyperborean countries had once a delightful temperature, and Siberia itself was *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 a 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 the young as the earth cooled had sought a genial warmth in the climate 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 Abulghazi that the primitive re-

ligion of human creatures, or the pure adoration of one Creator, prevailed in Tartary during the first generations of Yafet, but was extinct before the birth of Oghuz, who restored it in his dominions; that some ages after him, the Mongals and the Turcs relapsed into gross idolatry, but that Chengiz was a Theist, and in a conversation with the Muhammedan 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 worshiped the sun, and the narrative of an embassy from Justin to the Rhaken or emperor, who then resided in a fine vale near the source of the Irtish, 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 honour of fire; toward the west and east, in honour of water and air; and as often toward the north, in honour 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 beauties 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 Turcmans described by Ibmuarabshah, and by him called Tartars, 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 traveled thither from Tibet; whence it is more than probable that the religion of the Bauddhas was imported into Southern or Chinese Tartary, since we know that rolls of Tibetan writing have been brought even from the borders of the Caspian. The complexion of Cuddha 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 Brahmans 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 ever been connected, if Anacharsis had not visited Athens and Lydia for that instruction which his birth-place 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 *Dabistan*, 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 voracity, 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 deserve 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 *Yasac* 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 Avatars, and inscriptions on pillars or in caverns, analagous to those which remain in every part of the western peninsula, or to those which many of us have seen in Bahar and at Banares; but (except a few detached idols) the only great monuments of Tartarian antiquity are in a line of ramparts on the west and east of the Caspian, ascribed indeed by ignorant Muselmans to Yajuj and Majuj, 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 æra, 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 Jemshid. It is related, that pyramids and tombs have been found in Tataristan, or Western Scythia, and some remnants of edifices in the lake Saison; 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 Tshudes; 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 Eighur. Towards the end of the tenth century the Chinese emperor dispatched an ambassador to a prince named Erslan, 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 Eighuris to be a grave people, with fair complexions, diligent workmen, and ingenious artificers 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, Turcs, 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 of which lay near the source of the Irtysh, 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 war songs 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 Turc 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 Manchu monarchs of China have been patrons of the learned and ingenious; and the emperor Kien 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 Taimur 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 Arabshah, 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 Nawwab Mozaffer Jang informed me of his own accord, that no man of sense in Hindustan believed the work to have been composed by Taimur, but that his favourite, sur-named Hindu Shah, 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 attained the court of Taimur, and has given us a flowery panegyric instead of history, renders highly probable, by confirming the latter part of the Arabian account, and by a total silence as to the literary productions 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 over-set 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 Taimur, 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 region to the north of India, the seats of it, I have reason to suspect must have been Eighur, Cashghar, Khata, Chin, Tancut, 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 Tancut, 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 purpose 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 opi-

nion 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 nearer approach to be deserts of sand.

## DISCOURSE VI.

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 19, 1789.

## ON THE PERSIANS.

Important remarks on their ancient languages and characters.—Primeval religion, and its connexion with their philosophy.—On the ancient monuments of Persian sculpture and architecture.—The arts and sciences of the old Persians.

## GENTLEMEN,

I TURN with delight from the vast mountains and barren deserts of Turan, over which we traveled 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 Iran, as it is correctly denominated by the present natives of it, and by the learned Muselmans who reside in these British territories. To give you an account 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 Forat) 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 of 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 Jaihun, down which we are conducted to the Caspian, which formerly perhaps it entered, though it loses itself now in the sands and lakes of Khwarezn. We are next led from the Sea of Khozar, by the banks of the Cur, or Cyrus, and along the Caucasian ridges to the shore of the Euxine, and thence by the several Grecian Seas to the point whence we took our departure, 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 Tahmures than to that of any other Assyrian monarch. Thus may we look on Iran 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 Iran 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 connexion 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 Firdausti 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 Cambyzes from Cambakhsh, or *granting desires*, a title rather than a name; and Xerxes from Shiruya, a prince and warrior in the Shahnamah, or from Shirshah, 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 Iran and Hindustan, 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 Iran, without which they could

at most attain but 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 their empire; and, in the numerous distractions which followed the overthrow of Dara, especially in the great revolution on the defeat of Yezdegird, 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 Sasan, except a few rustic traditions and fables, which furnished materials for the *Shahnamah*, and which are still supposed to exist in the Pahlavi language. All the annals of the Pishdadi, or Assyrian race, must be considered as dark and fabulous; and those of the Cayani 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 Zeratush was protected, of the Parthian kings descended from Arshac or Arsaces, we know, little more than the names, but the Sasanis 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 es-

tablished 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 Iran 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 Muselmans and Gabrs, I had allowed the utmost natural duration to the reigns of eleven Pishdadi 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 æra, 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 Muselmans in India, has at once dissipated the cloud, and cast a gleam of it on the primeval history of Iran 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 Dabistan, and composed by a Mohammedan traveller, a native of Cashmir, named Mohsan, but distinguished by the assumed surname of Fani, or *perishable*, begins with the wonderfully curious chapter on the religion of Hushang, which was long anterior to that of Zeratusht, but had continued to be secretly possessed 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 Iran before the accession of Cayumers; that it was called the Mahabadian dynasty, for a reason which will soon be mentioned; and that many princes, of whom seven or eight are only named in the Dabistan; 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, Arabia, or Tartar, the first kings of Iran 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 Iran, 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 judgment, 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 persuaded, 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 Anushiravan, 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 Iran; that of the *Court*, thence named *Deri*, which was only a refined and elegant dialect of the *Parsi*, so called from the province of which Shiraz 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 *Irak*. The ruder dialects of both were, and, I believe, still are spoken by the rustics in several provinces, and in many of them, as *Herat*, *Zabul*, *Sistan*, and others, distinct idioms were vernacular, as it happens in

every kingdom of great extent. Besides the Parsi 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 Pazand, or comment on that work, was composed in Pahlavi, as a more popular idiom; but a learned follower of Zeratusht, named Bahman, 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* Avesta, as the words of the Vedus are Sanscrit, and the characters Nagari; or as the old Sagas and poems of Iceland 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 Iran; for among six or seven thousand Gabrs, who reside chiefly at Yezd, and in Cirman, there are very few who can read Pahlavi; and scarce any who even boast of knowing the Zend; while the Parsi, which remains almost pure in the Shahnamah, has 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 Parsi nouns are pure Sanscrit, with no other change than such as may be observed in the numerous *bhashas*, 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 Parsi was derived, like the various Indian dialects, from the language of the Brahmans; 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 Bahram, 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 Parsi 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 Dabistan affirms the work of Zeratusht 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 Gulistan, on the diadem of Cyrus; and I had the patience to read the list of words from the Pazand in the appendix to the Farhangi Jehangiri. 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 Chaldean tongue, most words ended in the first long vowel, like *shemia*, heaven; and that very word, unaltered in a single letter, we find in the Pazand, together with *laila*, night; *mejd*, water; *nira*, fire; *matra*, 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 *zamruniten*, to *sing*, with its forms *zamrunemi*, I *sing*, and *samrunid*, 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 poli-

tical 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 then became expedient for the Mubeds 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 *werta* for *werd*, a rose; *daba* for *dhahab*, gold; or *deman* for *zeman*, 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 writings of Zaratust, and who would have acquired a brilliant reputation in France, if he had not sullied it by hi

immoderate vanity and virulence of temper, which alienated the good will even of his own countrymen, has exhibited in his work entitled *Zendavesta*, two vocabularies in Zend and Pahlavi, which he had found in an approved collection of *Rawayat*, or *Traditional Pieces*, in modern Persian. Of his Pahlavi, no more need to 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 surprised to find that six or seven words in ten were pure Sanscrit, and even some of their inflexions formed by the rules of *Vyacaran*; as *yushmacam*, 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 *Pracrit*, 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 *Parsi* either from the Zend, or immediately from the dialect of the Brahmins; but all had perhaps a mixture of Tartarian; for the best lexicographers 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 Iran long before the Tartars and Arabs had rushed from their deserts, and returned from 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 Iran, we should find on the very ancient ruins of the temple or palace, now called *the Throne of Jemshid*, some inscriptions in Devanagari, 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 Iran, and the violent schism in the Persian religion, of which we shall presently speak; for, although the popular name of the building at Istakar or Persepolis be no certain proof that it was raised in the time of Jemshid, yet such a fact might easily have been preserved by tradition; and

we shall soon have abundant evidence that the temple was posterior to the reign of the Hindu monarchs. The *cypresses* indeed, which are represented with the figures, in procession, might induce a reader of the *Shahnamah* 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 Jemshid was erected after Cayumers. The building has lately been visited, and the characters on it examined, by Mr. Francklin, 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 Sadi, *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 Isfahan, 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 Bahman, as a proof that the Zend letters were a modern invention; but he seemed to hear me without surprise, 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 Rustam, 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 Zendavesta 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 mo-

dern 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 Shahnamah. As to the unknown inscriptions in the palace of Jemshid, 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 if 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 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 Nagari 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, appear to have been originally the same with the Devanagari before the latter were enclosed, as we now see them, in angular frames.

II. The primeval religion of Iran, if we rely on the authorities adduced by Mohsani Fani, was that which Newton calls the oldest (and it may be justly 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 Dabistan, 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 Saba, an *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 Mohsan assures us, that in the opinion of the best informed Persians who professed the faith of Hushang, distinguished from that of Zeratusht, the first monarch of Iran, and of the whole earth, was Mahabad (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 Desatir, or Regulations, but the original name of which he has not mentioned; and that *fourteen* Mahabads had appeared or would appear in human shapes for the government of this world. Now when we know that the Hindus believe in *fourteen* Menus, or celestial personages, with similar functions, the *first* of whom left a book of *regulations* or *divine ordinances*, which they hold equal to the Veda, 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 Brahmans, and prevalent in these territories where the book of Mahabad or Menu is at this moment 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 Mahabadians 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, they retained the laws of Mahabad, with a superstitious veneration for the sun, the planets, and fire ; thus resembling the Hindu sects called Sauras and Sagnicas, the second of which is very numerous at Banares, where many *agnihotras* are continually blazing, and where the Sagnicas, when they enter on their sacerdotal office, kindle, with two pieces of the hard wood *Semi*, a fire which they keep lighted through their lives, for the nuptial ceremony, the performance of solemn sacrifices, the obsequies of departed ancestors, and their own funeral pile. This remarkable rite was continued by Zeratusht, 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 Gush-tash) who traveled into India, that he might receive information from the Brahmans 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 Zeratusth 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 Bustan, concerning the idol Somanath, or Mahadeva, he confounds the religion of the Hindus with that of the Gabrs, calling the Brahmans not only Moghs (which might be justified by a passage in the Mesnavi) but even readers of the Zend and Pazend. 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 Veda, as I am that the religion of the Brahmans, with whom we converse every day, prevailed in Persia before the accession of Cayumers, whom the Parsis,

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 Sufis, 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 reunited with it; that the highest possible happiness will arise from its reunion; and that the chief good of mankind in this transitory world consists in as perfect an *union* with the Eternal Spirit as the encumbrances of a mortal frame will allow; that for this purpose they should break all *connexion* (or *taulluk*, as they call it) with extrinsic 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 *wax* separated from its delicious honey, the son 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 subtle metaphysics, of the Sufis which are mentioned in the *Dabistan*) is the wild and enthusiastic religion of the modern Persian poets, especially of the sweet Hafiz and the great Maulavi: such is the system of the Vedanti 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 surprised 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 Takhti Jemshid was erected after the time of Cayumers, when the Brahmins had migrated from Iran, 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 Nizami celebrated, have irrecoverably perished; and in regard to Mani, the painter and impostor, 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 Iran long before the Assyrian or Pishdadi government: that it was in truth a Hindu monarchy, though if any chuse to call it Cusian, Casdean, or Scythian, we shall not enter into a debate on mere names; that it subsisted many centuries, and that its history has been engrafted on that of the Hindus, who founded the monarchies of Ayodhya 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 Iran 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 Iran, which is bounded by Arabia, by Tartary, and by India; whilst Arabia lies contiguous to Iran 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 Iran, 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 Iran 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 Iran, or Persia in its largest sense, was the true centre of population, of knowledge, of languages, and of arts; which, instead of traveling westward only, as it has been fancifully supposed, or eastward, as might with equal reason have been asserted, were expanded 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 So-



ciety 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 light attainable by our Asiatic Researches.

## DISCOURSE VII.

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 25, 1790.

## ON THE CHINESE.

Origin of the people who governed China before they were conquered by the Tartars.—Examination of the language, and letters, religion and philosophy, of the present Chinese.  
—Remarks on their ancient monuments, sciences, and arts.  
—The importation of a new religion into China.

GENTLEMEN,

ALTHOUGH we are at this moment considerably nearer to the frontier of China than to the farthest limit of the British dominions in Hindustan, yet the first step that we should 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 this immense track of land is the peninsula of Corea, which a vast oval bason divides from Nison 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 analagous 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 Visdelou, 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 Chum-cue, 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-hai*, 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 connexion, 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 dwelt 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 steeps of Imaus; and a fourth, at least as dogmatically pronounced as any of the preceding, is that of the Brahmens, who decide, without allowing any appeal from their decision, that the Chinas (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 handsomer (according to his ideas of beauty) than the Hindus; but even more like his own countrymen in features, habiliments, carriage, 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 Brahmens 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 new, 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 Menu, the son of Brahma, we find the following curious passage: "Many families of the military class having gradually abandoned the ordinances of the Veda and the company of Brahmens, lived in a state of degradation; as the people of Pundraca and Odra, those of Dravira and Camboja, the Yavanas and Sacas, the Paradas and Pahlavas, the Chinas, and some other nations." A full comment on his 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 China signified a Chinese, as all the Pandits, whom I have separately consulted, assert with one voice. They assure me that the Chinas of Menu settled in a fine country to the north-east of Gaur, and to the east of Camarup and Nepal; 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 Siva himself, and entitled Sactisangama: he read to me a whole chapter of it on the heterodox opinions of Chinas, 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 Cashmir, his own country, he instantly placed his finger on the north-western provinces of China, where the Chinas, he said, first established themselves; but he added, that Mahachina, 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 Menu 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 Calidas were composed before the beginning of our era. Now it is clear, from internal and external evidence, that the Ramayan and Mahabharat were considerably older than the productions of that poet; and it appears from the style and metre of the Dherma Sastra, revealed by Menu, that it was reduced to writing long before the age of Valmic or Vyasa, 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 sarcaasms of M. Pauw against him, and against the translators of his mutilated but valuable works; yet I quote without scruple the book entitled Lun Yu, 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 Confu-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 monument 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 Vuvam 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 Chin; and the dominion of its princes was gradually extended to the east and west. A king of Chin, who makes a figure in the Shahnamah among the allies of Afrasiyab, was, I presume, a sovereign of the country just mentioned; and the river of Chin, 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 allows nothing superfluous, and permits me only to add, that Mangukhan died in the middle of the thirteenth century, before the city of Chin, which was afterwards taken by Kublai, and that the poets of Iran 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 Chin, 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 Sin) 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 dynasty; but it is highly probable that the whole nation descended from the Chinas of Menu, 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 in 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 Brahmens: 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 evince; 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 yet 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 outcast Hindus, who either never knew or had forgotten the alphabetical characters of their wiser ancestors. As to the table and bust 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 fa-

bricated 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 Devanagari, especially that form of it which we see in the Veda: besides which they had two sorts of *sacred sculpture*; the one simple, like the figures of Buddha and the three Ramas; and the other allegorical, like the images of Ganesa, or Divine Wisdom, and Isani, 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 Phenician monograms, let us hope that he has abandoned so wild a conceit, 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 lan-*

guage; 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 Maya, 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 Chandravansa, or *Children of the Moon*, was, ac-

cording to their Puranas or legends, Buddha, or the genius of the planet Mercury, from whom, in the *fifth* degree, descended a prince named Druhya; whom his father Yayati sent in exile to the east of Hindustan, with this imprecation, "May thy progeny be ignorant of the Veda." 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 the Chinese themselves as poetical or fabulous; that his father Ti-co, like the Indian king Yayati, 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 Chin, 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 *rainbow*; 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 Rohini, who presides over the fourth lunar mansion, was the favourite mistress of Soma, or the Moon, among whose numerous epi-

thets we find Cumudanayaca, or, *Delighting in a species of water-flower* that blossoms at night; and their offspring was Buddha, regent of a planet, and called also, from the names of his parents, Rauhineya 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 *rainbow* 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 describe 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 Lun-yu: "He," says Confucius, "who will be fully persuaded that the Lord of Heaven governs the universe, who shall in all things choose 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 them. 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 a due reverence, cannot perfectly assure themselves that the divine spirits accept their oblations; and far less can they, who adore the Gods with languor and oscitancy, clearly perceive their sacred illapses." These are imperfect traces indeed, but they are traces of an affinity between the religion of Menu 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 Straddha 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 Buddhas, indeed, were Hindus, it may naturally be imagined that they carried into China many ceremonies practised in their own country; but the Buddhas 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 manes of their ancestors; in the dread of dying childless, lest such offering should be intermitted; and, perhaps, in their common abhorrence of red objects, which the Indians carried so far, that Menu himself, where he allows a Brahmen to trade, if he cannot otherwise support life, absolutely forbids "his trafficking in any sort of red clothes, 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 worshiped, according to Kämpfer, in that country, before the innovations of Sacya 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 Isani 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 Kämpfer 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 Chinas, 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.

## DISCOURSE VIII.

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 24, 1791.

ON THE BORDERERS, MOUNTAINEERS, AND  
ISLANDERS OF ASIA.

Observations on the Idumeans, their arts and sciences.—The written Abyssinian language.—The Islands near Yemen.—On the Sanganians.—Origin of that singular people called Gipsies.—Inhabitants of the Indian islands.—People of Tibet.—Tartars.—Armenians.—Greeks.—Phrygians.—And Phœnicians.

## GENTLEMEN,

WE 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 traveled 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 the 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 Erithrea or Phenice, had originally, as many believed, 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 these 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 incontestibly 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 Phenicians.

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 wandering 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 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 Dévanágari, 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 Pánini 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 Nágari 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 habitations in natural caverns, or 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 Amharick 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 Africa, 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 Ommán and the Scythian colonies, who, it is imagined was 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 Kurds 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 Diyábeer yet speak the Chaldaic of our scripture; and the rambling Turcmáns 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 Tartars, we may conclude, that no such people exists in the Iranian mountains, and return to those which separate Iran 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; Paropamisus, where they join Imaus in the north, were anciently distinguished among the Bráhmans by the name of Derados, but seem to have been destroyed or expelled by the numerous tribes of Afgháns 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 Afgháns 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 Hazareth, which appears to be the Asareth of Eadras, 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 Nágari, 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 Bráhmans 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 Gipsies, passed the Mediterranean immediately from Egypt; and their motley language, of which Mr. Grellman 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 Gipsy words, as *angár*, charcoal; *cáshth*, wood; *pár*, a bank; *bhú*, 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 Gipsies 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 Gipsies, 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 Gujerát, 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 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 the 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 Vipása or Hyphasis, to the west, the mountains of Tripura and Cámarúpa to the east, and Himálaya 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, Cirátas, Cólas, Pulindas, Barbaras, and are all known to Europeans, though not all by their true names; but many Hindu pilgrims, who have traveled 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, as 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 Malay-adwipas, which take their name from the mountain of Malaya, to the Moluccas or Mallicás, 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 worshiped the same idols which he had seen in this province; and that of Madhurà must have been so denominated, like the well known territory in the western peninsula, by a nation who understood Sanscrit. We need not be surprised that M. D'Anville was unable to assign a reason why the Jabadios or Yavadwipa 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 Nâred and Hârîta; and what is yet more observable, that the system of letters used by the people of Rejang and Lampûn has the same artificial order with the Dévanâgarî; 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 ingrafted 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 than 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 sys-

tems 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 *Bramachinas*, and seem to have been the *Bramachinas* of *Ptolemy*: 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 *Nágari*, derived from the square characters in which the *Páli*, 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 *Páli* 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 *Páli* 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 north-east, 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 *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 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 Irán, 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 Anaitis, whom we know, from other authorities, to be the Náhid 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 traveled 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 thou-

sand names. She was called in the Phrygian dialect Má, 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 Má, 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 *dindima* both in Sanscrit and Phrygian; and the title of Dindymene seems rather derived from that word than from the name of a mountain. The Diana of Epheus 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 entitled Chandi, 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 letters appear to have been the same at first with those of Phenice; but the Syriac

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 Phenicians 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 the races of men under heaven, of preserving a rational and pure system of devotion, in the midst of wild polytheism, inhuman or obscene rites, and a dark labyrinth of errors produced by ignorance, and supported by interested fraud. 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

ed 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."

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**SIR WILLIAM JONES'S**  
**DISCOURSES.**



**SECOND EDITION.**



# DISCOURSES

DELIVERED BEFORE

*The Asiatic Society:*

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS,

ON

THE RELIGION, POETRY, LITERATURE, ETC.  
OF THE NATIONS OF INDIA.

BY

*SIR WILLIAM JONES.*

WITH AN

*Essay on his Name, Talents, and Character.*

BY THE RIGHT HON. LORD TEIGNMOUTH.

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY JAMES ELMES,

AUTHOR OF LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE, ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

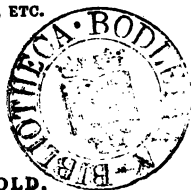
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**SIR WILLIAM JONES'S**  
**DISCOURSES.**

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**DISCOURSE IX.**

**DELIVERED FEBRUARY 23, 1792.**

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**ON THE ORIGIN AND FAMILIES OF NATIONS.**

Philosophical proposition of the whole of mankind proceeding from one pair of our species.—Observations on the books of Moses.—The establishment of the only human family after the deluge; and its diffusion.

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**GENTLEMEN,**

YOU have attended 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, towards the countries in which we find them settled at the dawn of all genuine history.

Let us begin with a short review of the proposi-



tions 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 incontestible 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, from 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 Linnæus, 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 who 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 honour 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 Muhammed, 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 these 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 Iran. The three primitive languages therefore must at first have been concentrated in Iran, 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 Iran, with all its mountains and valleys, 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 Iran 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 Iran 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

monkish 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 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 exist-

ence; 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 sort 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 Puráñas themselves, and even from the Véda, 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 Purána 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 over-

whelmed 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 city or 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, traveled, we are told, as they began to multiply, in *three* large divisions variously subdivided; the children of Yáfet 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 Parávas; 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 Bell,* 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 Iran; for, though most of the Mosaic names have been considerably altered,



yet numbers of them remain unchanged : we still find Harrán 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 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 *connexion* 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 endued with supernatural knowledge, it is no longer probable only, but absolutely certain, that the whole race of man proceeded from Iran, 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 Amenian 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 decipher 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 *vell* 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 Mahomedan 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 philologist, 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* worshiped 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 Brahmá, that is, among the progenitors of the Hindus, and at the head of an ancient pedigree preserved in the Rámáyán; when we meet with his name again in the family of Ráma; 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 Brahmans, and solemnly declared in the Vêda to have sprung up soon after the *deluge*, whence the Paurânicos 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 Válmic 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 human family after the flood, established themselves in the northern parts of Iran: 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 Yáfet 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 Iran 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 Africa 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 Cashgar and Eighúr, Khatá, 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 Cayúmers, 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 Muhammed'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 towards 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.

## DISCOURSE X.

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 28, 1793.

## ON ASIATIC HISTORY, CIVIL AND NATURAL:

Introductory remarks.—The Mosaic account of the primitive world confirmed.—The practical use of history.—Observations on animals, minerals, and vegetable substances.—On the mechanical arts, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

BEFORE our entrance 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 acceptance; 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 sub-



stantial 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 analysis have ingeniously reduced all the 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 those trans-

actions, 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 Africa, 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 Musselman 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 inquiries, 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 the 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 Puranas and Itihasas, 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 Somadeva, compris-

ing a very long chain of instructive and agreeable stories, begins with the famed revolution at Pataliputra, 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 Purana contains an account of the deluge; between which and the Mohammedan 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 Vicramaditya 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 Bahar; 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, improving languages and arts, and in observing the apparent motions of the celestial bodies. A Sanscrit history of the celebrated Vicramaditya was inspected at Benares 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 title) 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, to those in Europe who are blessed 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, choose rather to become the slaves of one tyrant, than they may escape from the domination of many, 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 (I mean Crishna-nagar) there have lately been found, by an actual enumeration, a million and three hundred thousand native inhabitants; whence it should seem, that in all India there cannot 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 without 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 nations 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 blunders of transcribers in tables, names, and descriptions.

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 Brahmens, 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 Puranas, 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 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 Nared and Parasar to Meya, Varahamihir, and Bhaskar; 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 incontestibly 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 Palybothra (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 Prayaga, where no ancient metropolis ever stood, nor Canyacubja, 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 site of Patna, while Palybothra stood at the junction of the Ganges and Erannoboas, which the accurate M. D'Anville had pronounced to be the Yamuna; but this only difficulty was removed, when I found in a classical Sanscrit book, near 2000 years old, that Hiranyabahu, or golden armed, which the Greeks changed into Erannoboas, 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 Hindustan, 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 Silan a few centuries after the flood, and Vicramaditya, 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 fishes, 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 Cocila, 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 Mayana, which bids us good morrow at our windows, and expects as its reward little more than security: even when a fine young Manis or Pangolin 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 Arabia, and very particular accounts of them in Chinese, with elegant outlines of their external appearance; but I 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 Chemistry, 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 procession 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 chemists 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 Linnæan 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 Garcias, Prosper Alpinus, and Forskoel; of Persia, by Garcin; of Tartary, by Gmelin and Pallas; of China and Japan, by Kœmpfer, Osbeck, and Thunberg; of India, by Rheede and Rumphius, the two Burmans, and the much lamented Kœnig, 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 Brahmens, 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 *Bunarnava*, in which the Nagari 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 parts 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 as philology, chemistry, physic, 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 subjects, 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 reduces them to sixty-four, yet Abulfazl 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 Upavedas, and believe to have been inspired, are not so entirely lost but that considerable fragments of them may be found at Benares; 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 Sanscrit 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 manufactures 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 attain 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 of 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.

## DISCOURSE XI.

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 20, 1794.

## ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ASIATICS.

Introductory observations.—On physiology and medicine.—  
Metaphysics and logic.—Ethics and jurisprudence.—Natural  
philosophy and mathematics.—And the religion of nature.

## GENTLEMEN,

HAD it been of any importance 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 philoso-

phers: 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 *revelation 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 Muselmans, a mere empirical *history* of diseases and reme-

dies; 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 Mohammedan 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 the nerves, veins, and arteries; a description of the heart, spleen, and liver; and various disquisitions on the formation and growth of the foetus. 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 metaphysics and logic of the Bráhmens, comprised in their *six* philosophical Sástras, and explained by numerous glosses, or comments, have never yet been accessible to Europeans; and, by the help of the Sanscrit language, we may now read the works of the Sangatas, Baudhdhas, 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 Súfis, which anciently prevailed, and still prevail in a 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

Vyása, is the only philosophical Sástra, the original text of which I have had leisure to peruse with a Bráhmen of the Védánti 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 Védánta 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 Brahmá, to whom Crishna compares himself in the Gítá; but a sage of



his name, who invented the San'chya, or Numeral philosophy, which Crishna himself appears to impugn in his conversation with Arjuna; and which, as far as I can collect 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 Patanjali, who has also left us a fine comment on the grammatical rules of Pánini, 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 subtle 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 Gótama; if, indeed, he was not the most ancient of all; for his wife Ahalyá was, according to Indian legends, restored to a human shape by the great Ráma; and a sage of his name, whom we have no reason to suppose a different personage, is frequently mentioned in the Védas itself: to his rational doctrines those of Canáda were in general conformable; and the philosophy of them both is usually called Nyáya, 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 *Dabistán*, in the Panjáb and in several Persian provinces; that, "among other Indian curiosities which Callisthenes transmitted to his uncle, was a *technical system of logic*, which the Brahmens had communicated to the inquisitive Greek," and which the Mohammedan writer supposes to have been the groundwork of the famous Aristotlean 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 Monshani Fání, or by the simple Páris and Pándits with whom he had conversed; but, not having had leisure to study the *Nyáya Sástra*, I can only assure you that I have frequently seen perfect syllogisms in the philosophical writings of the Brahmens, 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 Vyása, 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 *Mímánsá*; a word which, like *Nyáya*, denotes the operations and conclusions of reason; but the tract of Vyása 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 *Védánta* 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 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 Epicharmus 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 Védanta, 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 Vêda; 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

Gótamā, which the Brámens 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 intontestible proof, especially by the orthodox Bráhmens, who, as Buddha dissented from their ancestors in regard to *bloody sacrifices*, which the Vēda 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 Om, 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 Aryá, but with several other titles, which the Bráhmens themselves continually bestow on their Dévi. Now the Bráhmens, who have no idea that any such personage exists as Dévi, 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 apologues. 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 conversion, 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 Aryâ 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 Sadi, 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 an Arabic sentence, and a maxim apparently of the ancient Arabs. Nor would the

Muselmans fail to recite four distichs of Háfiz, 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 woe;  
Free, like yon rock, from base vindictive pride,  
Emblaze with gems the wrist that rends thy side;  
Mark, where yon tree rewards the stony shower,  
With fruit nectarious, or the balmy flower :  
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 Sâdi and Háfiz, are unknown even at this day to millions of Chinese and Hindus, Persians, and other Mahomedans, 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 evident, *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 *sciences* 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 a 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 principle of *universal gravitation* (which they never indeed attempted to demonstrate), so I can venture to affirm, without meaning to pluck a leaf from the never fading laurels of our immortal Newton, that the whole of his theology, and part of his philosophy, may be found in the *Védas*, and even in the works of the *Súfis*. The *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 Védas 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 Shírin and Ferhád, 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 particular 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 spheres, and thou wilt not find a corpurcle destitute of that natural attractability; 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 sub-

sequent 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 degree 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 *Súrya Siddhanta* 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 Sanscrit books; of the treatise of Parāsara, for the first age of Indian science; of that by Varāha, with the copious comment of his very learned son, for the middle age; and of those written by Bhāscara 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 in 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 Bhāscara mentions, and on which Mr. Davis would justly set a very high value; but the Sanscrit work from which we might expect the most ample and important information, is entitled *Cshétrádersa*, 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 Lieu-

nant Wilford, and might, I am persuaded, be purchased at Jayanagar, where Colonel Polier had permission from the Rájá to buy the four Védás 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 Sanscrit expressly on geometry? Whether they have any such on arithmetic? and, Whether a translation of the Súrya Siddhánta be not the great *desideratum* on the subject of Indian astronomy? To his three last questions,—Whether an accurate summary account of all the Sanscrit 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 attri-

butes, or more beautiful descriptions of his visible works, than in Arabic, Persian, and Sanscrit, especially in the Koran, the introductions of the poems of Sadí, Nizámí, and Firdaus'i, the four Védás, and many parts of the numerous Purānas: but supplication and praise would not satisfy the boundless imagination of the Vedānti 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 Gótama 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 negotiation 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 Vēda, 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.

END OF SIR WM. JONES'S DISCOURSES.

**SHORTLY** after the delivery of the foregoing Discourse the Society was deprived of its President by death. The Editor of this selection of his works intended to have written a brief life of their author, but he found it so admirably executed in the following, or Twelfth\* Anniversary Discourse by the new President, that he preferred printing it entire, and adding a few of the most interesting of Sir William's other papers, to the gratifying his own vanity by the composition of a new memoir.

**J. E.**

\* Advertisement.—The unfortunate death of Sir William Jones, on the 27th of April, 1794, having deprived the Society of their Founder and President, a meeting of the Members was convened on the 1st of May following, when it was unanimously agreed to appoint a Committee, consisting of Sir Robert Chambers, Mr. Justice Hyde, Colonel John Murray, John Briston, and Thomas Graham, Esquires, to wait on Sir John Shore, and, in the name of the Society, request his acceptance of the office of their President. With this request, he, in terms highly flattering to the Society, agreed to comply; and on the 22d of May, 1794, took his seat as President, and delivered the Discourse No. 12, of this volume.

**EDMUND MORRIS, Secretary.**

A

## DISCOURSE

*Delivered at a Meeting of the Asiatic Society,*

ON THE 22D OF MAY, 1794.

BY SIR JOHN SHORE\*, BART.

PRESIDENT.

GENTLEMEN,

IF 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, in promoting the laudable views of our 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.

\* Now Lord Teignmouth, the biographer of Sir Wm. Jones, and editor of his works.

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 or 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; 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 further improvements. It was to be ex-



pected, 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 objects 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 Mohammedan 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 Mahomedans 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 Molvees 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

auxiliary to it, he was led to study the works of Menu, reputed by the Hindus to be the oldest and holiest of legislators; and finding them to comprise 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 in any respect to promote the welfare or happiness of mankind, he gave the public an English version of the Arabic text of the Sirajiyyah, or Mahomedan Law of Inheritance, with a Commentary. He had already published in England, a translation of a tract on the same subject, by another Mahomedan 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 own 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 ele-

gant 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 expense, 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 *Saccontala*, 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 the 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 handwriting 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 Purānas.
2. A Botanical Description of Indian Plants, from the Cōshas, &c.
3. A Grammar of the Sanscrit Language, from Pāṇini, &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 Véda.
9. On Ancient Indian Geometry, Astronomy, and Algebra.
10. A Translation of the Puránas.
11. Translations of the Mahábharat Rámáyan.
12. On the Indian Theatre, &c. &c.
13. On the Indian Constellations, with their Mythology, from the Puránas.
14. The History of India before the Mahomedan Conquest. From the Sanscrit-Cashmír Histories.

## ARABIA.

15. The History of Arabia before Muhammed.
16. A Translation of the Hamása.
17. A Translation of Harírí.
18. A Translation of the Fâchatûl Khulafá.  
Of the Cáfiah.

## PERSIA.

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

## CHINA.

21. A Translation of the Shi-cing.
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.

We are not authorized 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 burdensome which had for their object substantial justice under the rules of law.

His addresses to the jurors are no 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 sis oro, non inutilis toga,  
Nec indisserta 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 the Vêdas, 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 unre-

strained 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, nor had he neglected to make himself acquainted with the interesting discoveries lately made in Chemistry; 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 in 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 in a number of 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 whatever 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 independence of his integrity, his humanity, probity, or benevolence, which every liv-

ing 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: his presence 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.*"

ON  
THE GODS  
OF  
GREECE, ITALY, AND INDIA.

WRITTEN IN 1784.

AND SINCE REVISED BY  
SIR WILLIAM JONES.

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WE cannot justly conclude, by arguments preceding the proof of facts, that one idolatrous people must have borrowed their deities, rites, and tenets from another; since gods of all shapes and dimensions may be framed by the boundless powers of imagination, or by the frauds and follies of men, in countries never connected; but, when features of resemblance, too strong to have been accidental, are observable in different systems of polytheism, without fancy or prejudice to colour them and improve the likeness, we can scarce help believing, that some connexion has immemorably subsisted between the several nations who have adopted them. It is my design, in this Essay, to point out such a resemblance between the popular worship of the old Greeks and Italians,

and that of the Hindus. Nor can there be room to doubt of a great similarity between their strange religions and that of Egypt, China, Persia, Phrygia, Phœnicia, Syria; to which, perhaps, we may safely add some of the southern kingdoms, and even islands of America: while the Gothic system, which prevailed in the northern regions of Europe, was not merely similar to those of Greece and Italy, but almost the same in another dress, with an embroidery of images apparently Asiatic. From all this, if it be satisfactorily proved, we may infer a general union or affinity between the most distinguished inhabitants of the primitive world, at the time when they deviated, as they did too early deviate, from the rational adoration of the only true God.

There seems to have been four principal sources of all mythology. I. Historical or natural truth has been perverted into fable by ignorance, imagination, flattery, or stupidity; as a king of Crete, whose tomb had been discovered in that island, was conceived to have been the God of Olympus; and Minos, a legislator of that country, to have been his son, and to hold a supreme appellate jurisdiction over departed souls; hence too probably flowed the tale of Cadmus, as Bochart learnedly traces it; hence beacons or volcanos became one-eyed giants, and monsters vomiting flames; and two rocks, from their appearance to mariners in certain positions, were supposed to crush all vessels attempting to pass between them; of which idle fictions many other instances might be collected from the *Odyssey*, and the various Argonautic poems. The less we say of Julian stars, dedications of princes or warriors, altars raised, with those of Apollo, to the basest of men, and divine

titles bestowed on such wretches as Caius Octavianus, the less we shall expose the infamy of grave senators and fine poets, or the brutal folly of the low multitude: but we may be assured, that the mad apotheosis of truly great men, or of little men falsely called great, has been the origin of gross idolatrous errors in every part of the pagan world. II. The next source of them appears to have been a wild admiration of the heavenly bodies, and, after a time, the systems and calculations of astronomers; hence came a considerable portion of Egyptian and Grecian fable; the Sabian worship in Arabia; the Persian types and emblems of Mihr, or the Sun; and the far extended adoration of the elements and the powers of nature; and hence, perhaps, all the artificial chronology of the Chinese and Indians, with the invention of demigods and heroes to fill the vacant niches in their extravagant and imaginary periods. III. Numberless Divinities have been created solely by the magic of poetry, whose essential business it is to personify the most abstract notions, and to place a Nymph or a Genius in every grove, and almost in every flower; hence Hygieia and Jaso, health and remedy, are the poetical daughters of Æsculapius, who was either a distinguished physician, or medical skill personified; and hence Chloris, or verdure, is married to the Zephyr. IV. The metaphors and allegories of moralists and metaphysicians have been also very fertile in Deities; of which a thousand examples might be adduced from Plato, Cicero, and the inventive commentators on Homer, in their pedigrees of the Gods, and their fabulous lessons of morality. The richest and noblest stream from this abundant fountain is

the charming philosophical tale of *Psyche*, or *the Progress of the Soul*; than which, to my taste, a more beautiful, sublime, and well supported allegory was never produced by the wisdom and ingenuity of man. Hence also the Indian Máya, or, as the word is explained by some Hindu scholars, "*the first Inclination of the Godhead to diversify himself* (such is their phrase) *by creating Worlds*," is feigned to be the Mother of universal Nature, and of all the inferior Gods; as a Cashmirian informed me, when I asked him why Cáma, or *Love*, was represented as her Son; but the word Máya, or *Delusion*, has a more subtle and recondite sense in the Védánti philosophy, where it signifies the system of *perceptions*, whether of secondary or primary qualities, which the Deity was believed by Epicharmus, Plato, and many truly pious men, to raise by his omnipresent spirit in the minds of his creatures; but which had not, in their opinion, any existence independent of mind.

In drawing a parallel between the Gods of the Indian and European Heathens, from whatever source they were derived, I shall remember, that nothing is less favourable to inquiries after truth than a systematical spirit, and shall call to mind the saying of a Hindu writer, "that whoever obstinately adheres to any set of opinions, may bring himself to believe that the freshest sandal wood is a flame of fire." This will effectually prevent me from insisting, that such a God of India was the Jupiter of Greece; such, the Apollo; such, the Mercury. In fact, since all the causes of polytheism contributed largely to the assemblage of Grecian Divinities (though Bacon reduces them all to refined allegories, and Newton to a poetical disguise of true history),



we find many Joves, many Apollos, many Mercuries, with distinct attributes and capacities: nor shall I presume to suggest more, than that, in one capacity or another, there exists a striking similitude between the chief objects of worship in ancient Greece or Italy, and in the very interesting country which we now inhabit.

The comparison which I proceed to lay before you must needs be very superficial; partly from my short residence in Hindustan, and partly from my want of complete leisure for literary amusements; but principally, because I have no European book, to refresh my memory, of old fables, except the conceited though not unlearned work of Pomey, entitled the Pantheon, and that so miserably translated that it can hardly be read with patience. A thousand more strokes of resemblance might, I am sure, be collected by any one who should with that view peruse Hesiod, Hyginus, Cornutus, and the other mythologists; or, which would be a shorter and a pleasanter way, should be satisfied with the very elegant Syntagmata of Lilius Giraldus.

Disquisitions concerning the manners and conduct of our species in early times, or indeed at any time, are always curious, at least, and amusing; but they are highly interesting to such as can say of themselves with Chremes in the play, "We are men, and take an interest in all that relates to mankind." They may even be of solid importance in an age when some intelligent and virtuous persons are inclined to doubt the authenticity of the accounts delivered by Moses, concerning the primitive world; since no modes or sources of reasoning can be unimportant, which have a tendency to remove such

doubts. Either the first eleven chapters of Genesis, all due allowances being made for a figurative Eastern style, are true, or the whole fabric of our national religion is false; a conclusion which none of us, I trust, would wish to be drawn. I, who cannot help believing the divinity of the Messiah, from the undisputed antiquity and manifest completion of many prophecies, especially those of Isaiah, in the only person recorded by history to whom they are applicable, am obliged of course to believe the sanctity of the venerable books to which that sacred person refers as genuine: but it is not the truth of our national religion, as such, that I have at heart; it is truth itself; and, if any cool unbiassed reasoner will clearly convince me, that Moses drew his narrative through Egyptian conduits from the primeval fountains of Indian literature, I shall esteem him as a friend for having weaned my mind from a capital error, and promise to stand among the foremost in assisting to circulate the truth, which he has ascertained. After such a declaration, I cannot but persuade myself, that no candid man will be displeased, if, in the course of my work, I make as free with any arguments that he may have advanced, as I should really desire him to do with any of mine that he may be disposed to controvert. Having no system of my own to maintain, I shall not pursue a very regular method, but shall take all the Gods, of whom I discourse, as they happen to present themselves; beginning, however, like the Romans and the Hindus, with Janus or Ganésa.

The titles and attributes of this old Italian deity are fully comprised in two choriambic verses of Sul-

pitius; and a further account of him from Ovid would here be superfluous :

Jane pater, Jane tuens, dive biceps, biformis,  
O cate rerum sator, O principium deorum!

“ Father Janus, all-beholding Janus, thou divinity with two heads, and with two forms; O sagacious planter of all things, and leader of deities!”

He was the God, we see, of Wisdom; whence he is represented on coins with *two*, and, on the Etruscan image found at Falisci, with *four* faces; emblems of prudence and circumspection: thus is Ganésa, the God of Wisdom in Hindustan, painted with an *elephant's* head, the symbol of sagacious discernment, and attended by a favourite *rat*, which the Indians consider as a wise and provident animal. His next great character (the plentiful source of many superstitious usages) was that from which he is emphatically styled *the father*, and which the second verse before cited more fully expresses, *the origin and founder of all things*. Whence this notion arose, unless from a tradition that he first built shrines, raised altars, and instituted sacrifices, it is not easy to conjecture; hence it came however, that his name was invoked before any other God; that, in the old sacred rites, corn and wine, and in later times incense also, were first offered to Janus; that the *doors* or *entrances* to private houses were called Januæ, and any pervious passage or thoroughfare, in the plural number, Jani, or *with two beginnings*; that he was represented holding a rod, as guardian of ways, and a key, as *opening* not gates only, but *all important works and affairs* of mankind; that he

was thought to preside over the morning, or *beginning of day*; that, although the Roman year began regularly with March, yet the eleventh month, named Jannarius, was considered as *first* of the twelve, whence the whole year was supposed to be under his guidance, and opened with great solemnity by the consuls inaugurated in his fane, where his statue was decorated on that occasion with fresh laurel; and, for the same reason, a solemn denunciation of war, than which there can hardly be a more momentous national act, was made by the military consul's opening the gates of his temple with all the pomp of his magistracy. The twelve altars and twelve chapels of Janus might either denote, according to the general opinion, that he leads and governs twelve months, or that, as he says of himself in Ovid, all entrance and access must be made through him to the principal Gods, who were, to a proverb, of the same number. We may add, that Janus was imagined to preside over infants at their birth, on the *beginning* of life.

The Indian Divinity has precisely the same character: all sacrifices and religious ceremonies, all addresses even to superior Gods, all serious compositions in writing, and all worldly affairs of moment, are begun by pious Hindus with an invocation of Ganésa; a word composed of *isa*, the *governor* or *leader*, and *gana*, or a *company* of deities, nine of which companies are enumerated in the Amarcósh. Instances of opening business auspiciously by an ejaculation to the Janus of India (if the lines of resemblance here traced will justify me in so calling him) might be multiplied with ease. Few books are begun without the words "*salutation to Ganés;*"

and he is first invoked by the Bráhmans, who conduct the trial by ordeal, or perform the ceremony of the *hóma*, or sacrifice to fire. M. Sonnerat represents him as highly revered on the coast of Coromandel; "where the Indians," he says, "would not on any account build a house, without having placed on the ground an image of this deity, which they sprinkle with oil, and adorn every day with flowers: they set up his figure in all their temples, in the streets, in the high roads, and in open plains at the foot of some tree; so that persons of all ranks may invoke him, before they undertake any business, and travellers worship him, before they proceed on their journey." - To this I may add, from my own observation, that in the commodious and useful town, which now rises at Dharmáranya or Gayá, under the auspices of the active and benevolent Thomas Law, Esq. collector of Rotas, every new built house, agreeably to an immemorial usage of the Hindus, has the name of Ganésa superscribed on its door; and in the old town, his image is placed over the gates of the temples.

We come now to Saturn, the oldest of the Pagan Gods, of whose office and actions much is recorded. The jargon of his being the son of Earth and Heaven, who was the son of the Sky and the Day, is purely a confession of ignorance who were his parents or who his predecessors; and there appears more sense in the tradition said to be mentioned by the inquisitive and well informed Plato, "that both Saturn, or Time, and his consort Cybele, or the Earth, together with their attendants, were the children of Ocean and Thetis; or, in less poetical language, sprang from the waters of the great deep,"

Ceres, the goddess of harvests, was, it seems, their daughter; and Virgil describes "the mother and nurse of all as crowned with turrets, in a car drawn by lions, and exulting in her hundred grandsons, all divine, all inhabiting splendid celestial mansions. As the God of Time, or rather as *time* itself personified, Saturn was usually painted by the heathens holding a scythe in one hand, and in the other a snake with its tail in its mouth, the symbol of perpetual cycles and revolutions of ages: he was often represented in the act of devouring years, in the form of children, and sometimes encircled by the seasons, appearing like boys and girls. By the Latins he was named Saturnus; and the most ingenious etymology of that word is given by Festus the grammarian; who traces it, by a learned analogy to many similar names, *à sasu*, from planting, because, when he reigned in Italy, he introduced and improved agriculture: but his distinguishing character, which explains, indeed, all his other titles and functions, was expressed allegorically by the stern of a ship or galley on the reverse of his ancient coins; for which Ovid assigns a very unsatisfactory reason, "because the divine stranger arrived in a ship on the Italian coast;" as if he could have been expected on horseback or hovering through the air.

The account quoted by Pomey from Alexander Polyhistor, casts a clearer light, if it really came from genuine antiquity, on the whole tale of Saturn; "that he predicted an extraordinary fall of rain, and ordered the construction of a vessel, in which it was necessary to secure men, beasts, birds, and reptiles, from a general inundation."

Now it seems not easy to take a cool review of

all these testimonies concerning the birth, kindred, offspring, character, occupations, and entire life of Saturn, without assenting to the opinion of Bochart, or admitting it at least to be highly probable, that the fable was raised on the true history of Noah; from whose flood a new period of *time* was computed, and a new series of ages may be said to have sprung; who rose fresh, and as it were, newly born, from the waves; whose wife was in fact the universal mother; and, that the earth might soon be re-peopled, was early blessed with numerous and flourishing descendants: if we produce, therefore, an Indian king of divine birth, eminent for his piety and beneficence, whose story seems evidently to be that of Noah disguised by Asiatic fiction, we may safely offer a conjecture, that he was also the same personage with Saturn. This was Menu, or Satyavrata, whose patronymick name was Vaivaswata, or Child of the Sun; and whom the Indians not only believe to have reigned over the whole world in the earliest age of their chronology, but to have resided in the country of Dravira, on the coast of the eastern Indian peninsula: the following narrative of the principal event in his life, I have literally translated from the Bhāgavat; and it is the subject of the first Purāna, entitled that of the Matsya, or Fish.

“ Desiring the preservation of herds, and of Brāhmanas, of genii and virtuous men, of the Vēdas, of law, and of precious things, the lord of the universe assumes many bodily shapes; but, though he pervades, like the air, a variety of beings, yet he is himself unvaried, since he has no quality subject to change. At the close of the last Calpa, there was a general destruction, occasioned by the sleep of

Brahmá; whence his creatures in different worlds were drowned in a vast ocean. Brahmá, being inclined to slumber, desiring a repose after a lapse of ages, the strong demon Hayagríva came near him, and stole the Védas which had flowed from his lips. When Heri, the preserver of the universe, discovered this deed of the prince of Dánavas, he took the shape of a minute fish called sap'hari. A holy king, named Satyavrata, then reigned; a servant of the spirit which moved on the waves, and so devout, that water was his only sustenance. He was the child of the Sun, and, in the present Calpa, is invested by Naráyan in the office of Menu by the name of Sráddhadéva, or the God of Obsequies. One day, as he was making a libation to the river Critamhlá, and held water in the palm of his hand, he perceived a small fish moving in it. The king of Dravira immediately dropped the fish into the river, together with the water which he had taken from it; when the sap'hari thus pathetically addressed the benevolent monarch: 'How canst thou, O king, who showest affection to the oppressed, leave me in this river water, where I am too weak to resist the monsters of the stream, who fill me with dread?' He, not knowing who had assumed the form of a fish, applied his mind to the preservation of the sap'hari, both from good nature, and from regard to his own soul; and, having heard its very suppliant address, he kindly placed it under his protection in a small vase full of water; but, in a single night its bulk was so increased, that it could not be contained in the jar, and thus again addressed the illustrious prince: 'I am not pleased with living miserably in this little vase; make me a large mansion, where I may dwell



in comfort.' The king, removing it thence, placed it in the water of a cistern; but it grew three cubits in less than fifty minutes, and said, 'O king, it pleases me not to stay vainly in this narrow cistern: since thou hast granted me an asylum, give me a spacious habitation.' He then removed it, and placed it in a pool, where, having ample space around its body, it became a fish of considerable size. 'This abode, O king, is not convenient for me, who must swim at large in the waters: exert thyself for my safety; and remove me to a deep lake.' Thus addressed, the pious monarch threw the suppliant into a lake, and, when it grew of equal bulk with that piece of water, he cast the vast fish into the sea. When the fish was thrown into the waves, he thus again spoke to Satyavrata: 'Here the horned sharks, and other monsters of great strength, will devour me; thou shouldst not, O valiant man, leave me in this ocean.' Thus repeatedly deluded by the fish, who had addressed him with gentle words, the king said; 'Who art thou, that beguilest me in that assumed shape? Never before have I seen or heard of so prodigious an inhabitant of the waters, who, like thee, hast filled up in a single day a lake an hundred leagues in circumference. Surely thou art Bhāgavat, who appearest before me; the great Heri, whose dwelling was on the waves; and who now, in compassion to thy servants, bearest the form of the natives of the deep. Salutation and praise to thee, O first male, the lord of creation, of preservation, of destruction! Thou art the highest object, O supreme ruler! of us thy adorers, who piously seek thee. All thy delusive descents in this world give existence to various beings: yet I am anxious to know for what

cause that shape has been assumed by thee. Let me not, O lotos-eyed, approach in vain the feet of a deity, whose perfect benevolence has been extended to all; when thou hast shown us to our amazement the appearance of other bodies, not in reality existing, but successively exhibited.' The lord of the universe, loving the pious man who thus implored him, and intending to preserve him from the sea of destruction, caused by the depravity of the age, thus told him how he was to act: 'In seven days from the present time, O thou tamer of enemies, the three worlds will be plunged in an ocean of death; but, in the midst of the destroying waves, a large vessel, sent by me for thy use, shall stand before thee. Then shalt thou take all medicinal herbs, all the variety of seeds: and, accompanied by seven saints, encircled by pairs of all brute animals, thou shalt enter the spacious ark, and continue in it secure from the flood, on one immense ocean, without light except the radiance of thy holy companions. When the ship shall be agitated by an impetuous wind, thou shalt fasten it with a large sea serpent on my horn; for I will be near thee; drawing the vessel with thee and thy attendants. I will remain on the ocean, O chief of men, until a night of Brahmā shall be completely ended. Thou shalt then know my true greatness, rightly named the supreme Godhead; by my favour all thy questions shall be answered, and thy mind abundantly instructed.' Heri, having thus directed the monarch, disappeared; and Satyavrata humbly waited for the time which the ruler of our senses had appointed. The pious king, having scattered toward the east the pointed blades of the grass *darbha*, and turning his face toward the north, sat meditating on

the feet of the God, who had borne the form of a fish. The sea, overwhelming its shores, deluged the whole earth : and it was soon perceived to be augmented by showers from immense clouds. He, still meditating on the command of Bhágavat, saw the vessel advancing, and entered it with the chiefs of Bráhmans, having carried into it the medicinal creepers, and conformed to the directions of Heri. The saints thus addressed him : ‘ O king, meditate on Césava, who will surely deliver us from this danger, and grant us prosperity.’ The God, being invoked by the monarch, appeared again distinctly on the vast ocean in the form of a fish, blazing like gold, extending a million of leagues, with one stupendous horn ; on which the king, as he had before been commanded by Heri, tied the ship with a cable made of a vast serpent, and happy in his preservation, stood praising the destroyer of Madhu. When the monarch had finished his hymn, the primeval male Bhágavat, who watched for his safety on the greater expanse of water, spoke aloud to his own divine essence, pronouncing a sacred Purána, which contained the rules of the Sânc’hya philosophy : but it was an infinite mystery to be concealed within the breast of Satyavrata ; who, sitting in the vessel with the saints, heard the principle of the soul, the External Being, proclaimed by the preserving power. Then Heri, rising together with Brahmá, from the destructive deluge, which was abated, slew the demon Hayagríva, and recovered the sacred books. Satyavrata, instructed in all divine and human knowledge, was appointed in the present Calpa, by the favour of Vishnu, the seventh Menu, surnamed Vaivaswata : but the appearance of a horned fish to the religious monarch was Máya,

or delusion; and he who shall devoutly hear this important allegorical narrative, will be delivered from the bondage of sin."

This epitome of the first Indian history that is now extant, appears to me very curious and very important; for the story, though whimsically dressed up in the form of an allegory, seems to prove a primeval tradition in this country of the *universal deluge* described by Moses, and fixes consequently the *time* when the genuine Hindu chronology actually begins. We find, it is true, in the Purān, from which the narrative is extracted, *another deluge*, which happened towards the close of the *third* age, when Yuddhist'hira was labouring under the persecution of his inveterate foe Duryōdhan; and when Chrishna, who had recently become incarnate for the purpose of succouring the pious and destroying the wicked, was performing wonders in the country of Mat'hurā; but the second flood was merely *local*, and intended only to affect the people of Vraja: they, it seems, had offended Indra, the god of the firmament, by their enthusiastic adoration of the wonderful child, "who lifted up the mountain Góverd'hena, as if it had been a flower, and, by sheltering all the herdsmen and shepherdesses from the storm, convinced Indra of his supremacy."

That the Satya, or (if we may venture so to call it) the Saturnian age, was in truth the age of the *general* flood, will appear from a close examination of the ten Avatārs, or *descents* of the deity, in his capacity of preserver: since, of the four which are declared to have happened in the Satya yug, the *three* first apparently relate to some stupendous convulsion of our globe from the fountains of the deep;

and the fourth exhibits the miraculous punishment of pride and impiety. First, as we have shown, there was, in the opinion of the Hindus, an interposition of Providence to preserve a devout person and his family (for all the Pandits agree that his wife, though not named, must be understood to have been saved with him) from an inundation, by which all the wicked were destroyed: next, the power of the deity descends in the form of a bear, the symbol of strength, to draw up and support on his tusks the whole earth, which had been sunk beneath the ocean: thirdly, the same power is represented as a tortoise sustaining the globe, which had been convulsed by the violent assaults of demons; while the Gods churned the sea with the mountain Mandar, and forced it to disgorge the sacred things and animals, together with the water of life, which it had swallowed. These three stories relate, I think, to the same event, shadowed by a moral, a metaphysical, and an astronomical allegory: and all three seem connected with the hieroglyphical sculptures of the old Egyptians. The fourth Avatâr was a lion issuing from a bursting column of marble to devour a blaspheming monarch, who would otherwise have slain his religious son; and of the remaining six, not one has the least relation to a deluge. The three which are ascribed to the Trétâ yug, when tyranny and irreligion are said to have been introduced, were ordained for the overthrow of tyrants, or, their natural types, giants with a thousand arms, formed for the most extensive oppression: and, in the Dwápar yug, the incarnation of Krishna was partly for a similar purpose, and partly with a view to thin the world of unjust and impious men, who had multiplied in that age, and began to

swarm on the approach of the Cali yug, or the age of contention and baseness. As to Buddha, he seems to have been a reformer of the doctrines contained in the Védas: and though his good nature led him to censure those ancient books, because they enjoined sacrifices of cattle, yet he is admitted as the ninth Avatâr even by the Brâhmans of Cási, and his praises are sung by the poet Jayadéva: his character is in many respects very extraordinary; but, as an account of it belongs rather to history than to mythology, it is reserved for another dissertation. The tenth Avatâr, we are told, is yet to come, and is expected to appear mounted (like the crowned conquerer in the Apocalyps) on a white horse, with a cimeter blazing like a comet, to mow down all incorrigible and impenitent offenders who shall then be on earth.

These four Yugs have so apparent an affinity with the Grecian and Roman ages, that one origin may be naturally assigned to both systems. The first in both is distinguished as abounding in *gold*, though Satya means *truth* and *probity*, which were found, if ever, in the times immediately following so tremendous an exertion of the Divine Power as the destruction of mankind by a general deluge: the next is characterized by *silver*; and the third by *copper*: though their usual names allude to proportions imagined in each between vice and virtue. The present, or *earthen* age, seems more properly disoriminated than by *iron*, as in ancient Europe; since that metal is not baser or less useful, though more common in our times, and consequently less precious than copper; while mere *earth* conveys an idea of the lowest degradation. We may here observe, that the true

History of the World seems obviously divisible into four ages or periods; which may be called, first, the Diluvian, or parent age; namely, the times preceding the deluge, and those succeeding it till the mad introduction of idolatry at Babel: next, the Patriarchal, or pure age, in which indeed, there were mighty hunters of beasts and of men, from the rise of patriarchs in the family of Sem, to the simultaneous establishment of great empires by the descendants of his brother Hâm: thirdly, the Mosaic, or less pure age; from the legation of Moses, and during the time when his ordinances were comparatively well observed, and uncorrupted: lastly, the *prophetical*, or *impure* age, beginning with the vehement warnings given by the prophets to apostate kings and degenerate nations, but still subsisting, and to subsist, until all genuine prophecies shall be fully accomplished. The duration of the historical ages must needs be very unequal and disproportionate; while that of the Indian Yugs is disposed so regularly and artificially, that it cannot be admitted as natural or probable. Men do not become reprobate in a geometrical progression, or at the termination of regular periods; yet so well proportioned are the Yugs, that even the length of human life is diminished as they advance, from an hundred thousand years, in a sub-decuple ratio; and, as the number of principal Avatars in each decreases arithmetically from four, so the number of years in each decreases geometrically, and all together constitute the extravagant sum of four million three hundred and twenty thousand years, which aggregate, multiplied by seventy-one, is the period in which every Menu is believed to preside over the world. Such a period, one might

conceive, would have satisfied Archetas, *the measurer of sea and earth, and the numberer of their sands*: or Archimedes, who invented a notation that was capable of expressing the number of them; but the comprehensive mind of an Indian chronologist has no limits; and the reigns of fourteen Menus are only a single day of Brahmá, fifty of which days have elapsed, according to the Hindus, from the time of the creation. That all this puerility, as it seems at first view, may be only an astronomical riddle, and allude to the apparent revolution of the fixed stars, of which the Brahmans made a mystery, I readily admit, and am even inclined to believe; but so technical an arrangement excludes all idea of serious history. I am sensible how much these remarks will offend the warm advocates for Indian antiquity; but we must not sacrifice truth to a base fear of giving offence. That the Védas were actually written before the flood, I shall never believe; nor can we infer from the preceding story, that the learned Hindus believe it; for the allegorical slumber of Brahmá and the theft of the sacred books mean only, in simpler language, that *the human race was become corrupt*; but that the Védas are very ancient, and far older than other Sanscrit compositions, I will venture to assert from my own examination of them, and a comparison of their style with that of the Puráns and the Dherma Sástra. A similar comparison justifies me in pronouncing, that the excellent law-book ascribed to Swáyambhuva Menu, though not even pretended to have been written by him, is more ancient than the Bhágavat; but that it was composed in the first age of the world, the Brahmans would find it hard to persuade me; and the date which has



been assigned to it does not appear in either of the two copies which I possess, or in any other that has been collated for me: in fact, the supposed date is comprised in a verse which flatly contradicts the work itself; for it was not Menu who composed the system of law by the command of his father Brahmá, but a holy personage or demigod, named Brighu, who revealed to men what Menu had delivered at the request of him and other saints and patriarchs. In the *Mánava Sástra*, to conclude this digression, the measure is so uniform and melodious, and the style so perfectly Sanscrit, or *polished*, that the book must be more modern than the scriptures of Moses, in which the simplicity, or rather nakedness of the Hebrew dialect, metre, and style, must convince every unbiassed man of their superior antiquity.

I leave etymologists, who decide every thing, to decide whether the word Menu, or in the nominative case, Menus, has any connexion with Minos the lawgiver, and supposed son of Jove. The Cretans, according to Diodorus of Sicily, used to feign, that most of the great men who had been deified in return for the benefits which they had conferred on mankind, were born in their island; and hence a doubt may be raised, whether Minos was really a Cretan. The Indian legislator was the first, not the seventh Menu, or Satyavrata, whom I suppose to be the Saturn of Italy. Part of Saturn's character, indeed, was that of a lawgiver:

Qui genus Indocile ac dispersum montibus altis  
Composuit *lege* que dedit:

And we may suspect that all the fourteen Menus are reducible to one, who was called Nub by the Arabs,

and probably by the Hebrews; though we have disguised his name by an improper pronunciation of it. Some near relation between the seventh Menu and the Grecian Minos, may be inferred from the singular character of the Hindu god Yama, who was also a child of the Sun, and thence named Vaivaswata. He had too the same title with his brother Sráddhadéva. Another of his titles was Dhermarája, or *King of Justice*; and a third, Pitripeti, or *Lord of the Patriarchs*; but he is chiefly distinguished as *judge of departed souls*; for the Hindus believe, that when a soul leaves its body, it immediately repairs to Yamapur, or the city of Yama, where it receives a just sentence from him, and either ascends to Swerga or the first heaven; or is driven down to Narac, the region of serpents; or assumes on earth the form of some animal, unless its offence had been such, that it ought to be condemned to a vegetable, or even to a mineral prison. Another of his names is very remarkable; I mean that of Cála, or *time*, the idea of which is intimately blended with the characters of Saturn and of Noah; for the name Cronos has a manifest affinity with the word *chronos*; and a learned follower of Zérátusht assures me, that in the books which the Behdás hold sacred, mention is made of an *universal inundation*, there named the deluge of Time.

It having been occasionally observed, that Ceres was the poetical daughter of Saturn, we cannot close this head without adding, that the Hindus also have their *Goddess of Abundance*, whom they usually call Lacshmi, and whom they consider as the daughter (not of Menu, but) of Brighu, by whom the first code of sacred ordinances was promulgated. She is also

## ON THE GODS OF GREECE,

named *Pedma* and *Camala*, from the sacred lotus; or, in the first case, *Sris*, which has a resemblance to the Latin, and means *fortune* or *prosperity*. It may be contended, that although *Lacshmi* may be comparatively called the *Ceres* of Hindustan, yet any nation, might naturally conceive a Deity to preside over their labours, without having the least intercourse with each other; but no reason appears why two nations should concur in supposing that Deity to be a female. One at least of them would be more likely to imagine that the Earth was a goddess, and that the God of Abundance rendered her fertile. Besides, in very ancient temples near *Gayá*, we see images of *Lacshmi*, with full breast, and a cord twisted under her arm like a *horn of plenty*, which look very much like the old Grecian and Roman figures of *Ceres*.

The fable of *Saturn* having been thus analyzed, let us proceed to his descendants; and begin, as the Poet advises, with *Jupiter*, whose supremacy, though der, and libertinism, every boy learns from *Ovid*; while his great offices of *Creator*, *Preserver*, and *Destroyer*, are not generally considered in the systems of European mythology. The Romans had, as we have before observed, many *Jupiters*, one of whom was only the *Firmament* personified, as *Ennius* clearly expresses it:

*Aspice hoc sublime candens, quem invocant omnes Jovem.*

This *Jupiter* or *Diespiter* is the Indian God of the visible heavens, called *Indra*, or the *King*; and *Diespiter*, or *Lord of the Sky*; who has also the cha-

racter of the Roman Genius, or chief of the Good Spirits; but most of his epithets in Sanscrit are the same with those of the Ennian Jove. His consort is named Sachí; his celestial city, Amarávatí; his palace, Vajrayanta; his garden, Nandana; his chief elephant, Airávat; his charioteer, Mátali; and his weapon, Vajra, or the thunderbolt: he is the regent of winds and showers; and though the East is peculiarly under his care, yet his Olympus is Méru, or the north pole, allegorically represented as a mountain of gold and gems. With all his power, he is considered as a subordinate Deity, and far inferior to the Indian Triad, Brahmá, Vishnu, and Mahádeva or Siva, who are three *forms* of one and the same Godhead; thus the principal divinity of the Greeks and Latians, whom they called Zeus and Jupiter, with irregular inflexions Dios and Jovis, was not merely Fulminator, the Thunderer, but, like the destroying power of India, Magnns Divus, Ultor, Genitor; like the preserving power, Conservator, Soter, Opitulus, Altor, Ruminus; and like the creating power, the *Giver of Life*; an attribute which I mention here on the authority of Cornutus, a consummate master of mythological learning. We are advised by Plato himself to search for the roots of Greek words in some barbarous, that is, foreign soil; but, since I look upon etymological conjectures as a weak basis for historical inquiries, I hardly dare suggest that Zev, Siv, and Jov, are the same syllable differently pronounced. It must however be admitted, that the Greeks, having no palatal *sigma* like that of the Indians, might have expressed it by their *setta*, and that the initial letters of *zugon* and *jugum* are (as the instance proves) easily interchangeable.

Let us now descend, from these general and introductory remarks, to some particular observations on the resemblance of Zeus or Jupiter, to the triple divinity Vishnu, Siva, Brahmā; for that is the order in which they are expressed by the letters A, U, and M, which coalesce, and form the mystical word O'M; a word which never escapes the lips of a pious Hindu, who meditates on it in silence. Whether the Egyptian ON, which is commonly supposed to mean the Sun, be the Sanscrit monosyllable, I leave others to determine. It must always be remembered, that the learned Indians, as they are instructed by their own books, in truth acknowledge only One Supreme Being, whom they call Brahme, or *the Great One*; in the neuter gender: they believe his Essence to be infinitely removed from the comprehension of any mind but his own; and they suppose him to manifest his power by the operation of his divine spirit, whom they name Vishnu, the *Pernader*, and Nārāyan, or *Moving on the Waters*, both in the masculine gender, whence he is often denominated the *First Male*; and by this power they believe that the whole order of nature is preserved and supported; but the Védāntis, unable to form a distinct idea of brute matter independent of mind, or to conceive that the work of Supreme Goodness was left a moment to itself, imagine that the Deity is ever present to his work, and constantly supports a series of perceptions, which in one sense they call *illusory*, though they cannot but admit the *reality* of all created forms, as far as the happiness of creatures can be affected by them. When they consider the Divine Power exerted in *creating*, or in giving existence to that which existed not before, they call the Deity Brahmā in the

masculine gender also; and when they view him in the light of *Destroyer*, or rather *Changer* of forms, they give him a thousand names, of which Siva, Isa, or Iswara, Rudra, Hara, Sambhu, and Mahádéva, or Mahésa, are the most common. The first operations of these three *Powers* are variously described in the different Puránas by a number of allegories, and from them we may deduce the Ionian Philosophy of *primeval water*, the doctrine of the Mundane Egg, and the veneration paid to the Nymphæ, or Lotos, which was anciently revered in Egypt, as it is at present in Hindustán, Tibet, and Népal. The Tibetians are said to embellish their temples and altars with it: and a native of Népal made prostrations before it on entering my study, where the fine plant and beautiful flowers lay for examination. Mr. Holwell, in explaining his first plate, supposes Brahmá to be floating on a leaf of *betel* in the midst of the abyss; but it was manifestly intended by a bad painter for a lotos leaf, or for that of the Indian fig-tree; nor is the species of pepper known in Bengal by the name of *Támbúla*, and on the coast of Malabar by that of *betel*, held sacred, as he asserts, by the Hindus, or necessarily cultivated under the inspection of Bráhmans; though, as the vines are tender, all the plantations of them are carefully secured, and ought to be cultivated by a particular tribe of Súdras, who are thence called Támbúlis.

That *water* was the primitive element, and first work of the Creative Power, is the uniform opinion of the Indian Philosophers; but, as they give so particular an account of the general deluge, and of the creation, it can never be admitted that their whole system arose from traditions concerning the

flood only, and must appear indubitable, that their doctrine is in part borrowed from the opening of *Birahit* or *Genesis*, than which a sublimer passage, from the first word to the last, never flowed, or will flow, from any human pen: "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.—And the earth was void and waste, and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters: and God said, Let Light be—and Light was.*" The sublimity of this passage is considerably diminished by the Indian paraphrase of it, with which Menu, the son of *Brahmā*, begins his address to the sages who consulted him on the formation of the universe. "This world (says he) was all darkness, undiscernible, undistinguishable, altogether as in profound sleep; till the self-existent invisible God, making it manifest with five elements and other glorious forms, perfectly dispelled the gloom. He, desiring to raise up various creatures by an emanation from his own glory, first created the *waters*, and impressed them with a power of motion; by that power was produced a golden egg, blazing like a thousand suns, in which was born *Brahmā*, self-existing, the great parent of all rational beings. The waters are called *nārā*, since they are the offspring of *Nera* or *Isvara*; and thence was *Nārāyana* named, because his first *ayana*, or *moving*, was on them.

"That which is, the invisible cause, eternal, self-existing, but unperceived, becoming masculine *from neuter*, is celebrated among all creatures by the name of *Brahmā*. That God, having dwelled in the Egg, through revolving years, Himself meditating on himself, divided it into two equal parts; and from those

halves formed the heavens and the earth, placing in the midst the subtle ether, the eight points of the world, and the permanent receptacle of waters."

To this curious description, with which the Mánava Sástra begins, I cannot refrain from subjoining the four verses which are the text of the Bhágavat, and are believed to have been pronounced by the Supreme Being to Brahmá: the following version is most scrupulously literal.

"Even I was even at first, not any other thing; that which exists, unperceived; supreme: afterwards *I am that which is*; and he, who must remain, am I.

"Except the *First Cause*, whatever may appear, and may not appear, in the mind, know that to be the mind's *Máyá*, or *Delusion*, as light, as darkness.

"As the great elements are in various beings, entering, yet not entering (that is, pervading, not destroying), thus am I in them, yet not in them.

"Even thus far may inquiry be made by him who seeks to know the principle of mind, in union and separation, which must be *every where always*."

Wild and obscure as these ancient verses must appear in a naked verbal translation, it will perhaps be thought by many, that the poetry or mythology of Greece and Italy afford no conceptions more awfully magnificent: yet the brevity and simplicity of the Mosaic diction are unequaled.

As to the creation of the world, in the opinion of the Romans, Ovid, who might naturally have been expected to describe it with learning and elegance, leaves us wholly in the dark, *which of the Gods was the actor in it*. Other mythologists are more explicit; and we may rely on the authority of Cornutus, that the old European heathens considered



Jove (not the son of Saturn, but of the Ether, that is, of an unknown parent) as the great *Life-giver*, and *Father of Gods and Men*: to which may be added the Orphean doctrine, preserved by Proclus, that, "the abyss and empyreum, the earth and sea, the Gods and Goddesses, were produced by Zeus or Jupiter." In this character he corresponds with Brahmá; and, perhaps, with that God of the Babylonians (if we can rely on the accounts of their ancient religion) who, like Brahmá, reduced the universe to order, and like Brahmá, *lost his head*, with the blood of which new animals were instantly formed. I allude to the common story, the meaning of which I cannot discover, that Brahmá had five heads, till one of them was cut off by Náráyán.

That, in another capacity, Jove was the *Helper and Supporter* of all, we may collect from his old Latin epithets, and from Cicero, who informs us, that his usual name is a contraction of Juvans Pater; an etymology, which shows the idea entertained of his character, though we may have some doubt of its accuracy. Callimachus, we know, addresses him as *the bestower of all good, and of security from grief*; and, *since neither wealth without virtue, nor virtue without wealth, give complete happiness*, he prays, like a wise poet, for both. An Indian prayer for riches would be directed to Lacshmi, the wife of Vishnu, since the Hindu goddesses are believed to be the *powers* of their respective lords.

As to Cuvéra, the Indian Plutus, one of whose names is Paulastya, he is revered, indeed, as a magnificent Deity, residing in the palace of Alacá, or borne through the sky in a splendid car, named Pushpaca, but is manifestly subordinate, like the other

seven Genii, to three principal Gods, or rather, to the principal God considered in three capacities. As the soul of the world, or the pervading *mind*, so finely described by Virgil, we see Jove represented by several Roman poets; and with great sublimity by Lucan in the known speech of Cato concerning the Ammonian oracle: "Jupiter is wherever we look, wherever we move." This is precisely the Indian idea of Vishnu, according to the four verses above exhibited: not that the Bráhmans imagine their male Divinity to be the *divine Essence* of the great one, which they declare to be wholly incomprehensible; but, since the power of *preserving* created things by a superintending providence, belongs eminently to the Godhead, they hold that power to exist transcendently in the *preserving* member of the Triad, whom they suppose to be *everywhere always*; not in substance, but in spirit and energy: here, however, I speak of the Vaishnavas; for the Saiva's ascribe a sort of preeminence to Siva, whose attributes are now to be concisely examined.

It was in the capacity of Avenger and Destroyer, that Jove encountered and overthrew the Titans and Giants, whom Typhon, Briareus, Tityus, and the rest of their fraternity, led against the God of Olympus; to whom an Eagle brought *lightning* and *thunderbolts* during the warfare. Thus in a similar contest between Siva and the Daityas, or children of Diti, who frequently rebelled against heaven, Bráhma is believed to have presented the God of Destruction with *fiery shafts*. One of the many poems, entitled Rámáyan, the last book of which has been translated into Italian, contains an extraordinary dialogue between the crow Bhushunda, and a rational Eagle

named Garúda, who is often painted with the face of a beautiful youth and the body of an imaginary bird; and one of the eighteen Puránas bears his name, and comprises his whole history. M. Sonnerat informs us, that Vishnu is represented in some places riding on the Garúda, which he supposes to be the Pondicheri eagle of Brisson, especially as the Bráhmans of the coast highly venerate that bird, and provide food for numbers of them at stated hours. I rather conceive the Garuda to be a fabulous bird, but agree with him, that the Hindu God who rides on it, resembles the ancient Jupiter. In the old temples at Gayà, Vishnu is either mounted on this poetical bird, or attended by it together with a little page; but, lest an etymologist should find Ganymed in Garud, I must observe that the Sanscrit word is pronounced Garura; though I admit that the Grecian and Indian stories of the celestial bird and the page appear to have some resemblance. As the Olympian Jupiter fixed his Court and held his Councils on a lofty and brilliant mountain, so the appropriated seat of Mahádéva, whom the Saiva's consider as the Chief of the Deities, was mount Cailása, every splinter of whose rocks was an inestimable gem. His terrestrial haunts are the snowy hills of Himálaya, or that branch of them to the East of the Brahmaputra, which has the name of Chandrasic'hara, or the *Mountain of the Moon*. When, after all these circumstances, we learn that Siva is believed to have *three* eyes, whence he is named also Trilóchan, and know from Pausanias, not only that Triopthalmos was an epithet of Zeus, but that a statue of him had been found so early as the taking of Troy, with a *third eye in his forehead*, as we see him represented by

the Hindus, we must conclude that the identity of the two Gods falls little short of being demonstrated.

In the character of *Destroyer* also, we may look upon this Indian Deity as corresponding with the Stygian Jove, or Pluto; especially since Cálí, or Time in the feminine gender, is a name of his consort, who will appear hereafter to be Proserpine. Indeed, if we can rely on a Persian translation of the Bhāgavat (for the original is not yet in my possession), the sovereign of Pátála, or the *Infernal Regions*, is the *King of Serpents*, named Séshanāga; for Chrishna is there said to have descended with his favourite Arjun to the seat of that formidable divinity, from whom he instantly obtained the favour which he requested, that the souls of a Bráhma's six sons, who had been slain in battle, might reanimate their respective bodies; and Séshanāga is thus described. "He had a gorgeous appearance, with a thousand heads, and on each of them a crown set with resplendent gems, one of which was larger and brighter than the rest; his eyes gleamed like flaming torches; but his neck, his tongues, and his body, were black; the skirts of his habiliment were yellow, and a sparkling jewel hung in every one of his ears; his arms were extended, and adorned with rich bracelets; and his hands bore the holy shell, the radiated weapon, the mace for war, and the lotos." Thus Pluto was often exhibited in painting and sculpture, with a diadem and sceptre; but himself and his equipage were of the blackest shade.

There is yet another attribute of Mhádeva, by which he is too visibly distinguished in the drawings and temples of Bengal. To destroy, according to

the Védānti's of India, the Sūsi's of Persia, and many philosophers of our European schools, is only to *generate* and *reproduce* in another form. Hence the God of *Destruction* is bolden in this country to preside over *Generation*; as a symbol of which he rides on a *white bull*. Can we doubt that the loves and feats of Jupiter Genitor (not forgetting the *white bull* of Europa) and his extraordinary title of Lapis, for which no satisfactory reason is commonly given, have a connexion with the Indian philosophy and mythology? As to the deity of Lampsacus, he was originally a mere scarecrow, and ought not to have a place in any mythological system; and, in regard to Bacchus, the god of Vintage (between whose acts and those of Jupiter we find, as Bacon observes, a wonderful affinity), his Ithyphallick images, measures, and ceremonies, alluded probably to the supposed relation of Love and Wine; unless we believe them to have belonged originally to Siva; one of whose names is Vāgīś or Bāgīś, and to have been afterwards improperly applied. Though, in an Essay on the Gods of India, where the Brāhmins are positively forbidden to taste fermented liquors, we can have little to do with Bacchus, as God of Wine, who was probably no more than the imaginary President over the vintage in Italy, Greece, and the lower Asia, yet we must not omit Surādēvī, the Goddess of Wine, who arose, say the Hindus, from the ocean, when it was churned with the mountain Mandar; and this fable seems to indicate, that the Indians came from a country in which wine was anciently made and considered as a blessing; though the dangerous effects of intemperance induced their

early legislators to prohibit the use of all spirituous liquors; and it were much to be wished that so wise a law had never been violated.

Here may be introduced the Jupiter Marinus, or Neptune of the Romans, as resembling Mahadéva in his *generative* character; especially as the Hindu God is the husband of Bhaváni, whose relation to the *waters* is evidently marked by her image being restored to them at the conclusion of her great festival called Durgótsava. She is known also to have attributes exactly similar to those of Venus Marina; whose birth from the sea-foam, and splendid rise from the conch, in which she had been cradled, have afforded so many charming subjects to ancient and modern artists; and it is very remarkable, that the Rembhá of Indra's court, who seems to correspond with the popular Venus, or Goddess of Beauty, was produced, according to the Indian fabulists, from the froth of the churned ocean. The identity of the *trisúla* and the *trident*, the weapon of Siva and of Neptune, seems to establish this analogy; and the veneration paid all over India to the large buccinum, especially when it can be found with the spiral line and mouth turned from left to right, brings instantly to our mind the music of Triton. The Genius of Water is Varuna; but he, like the rest is far inferior to Mahésa, and even to Indra, who is the Prince of the beneficent Genii.

This way of considering the Gods as individual substances, but as distinct persons in distinct characters, is common to the European and Indian systems; as well as the custom of giving the highest of them the greatest number of names: hence, not to repeat what has been said of Jupiter, came the triple capa-

city of Diana; and hence her petition in Callimachus, that she might be *polyonymous*, or *many-titled*. The consort of Siva is more eminently marked by these distinctions than those of Brahmá or Vishnu: she resembles the Isis Myrionymos, to whom an ancient marble, described by Gruter, is dedicated; but her leading names and characters are Párvatí, Durgá, Bhaváni.

As the *Mountain-born Goddess*, or Párvatí, she has many properties of the Olympian Juno: her majestic deportment, high spirit, and general attributes, are the same; and we find her both on mount Calasa, and at the banquets of the Deities, uniformly the companion of her husband. One circumstance in the parallel is extremely singular: she is usually attended by her son Cárticéya, who rides on a *peacock*; and in some drawings his own robe seems to be spangled with eyes; to which must be added, that in some of her temples, a *peacock*, without a rider, stands near her image. Though Cárticéya, with his six faces and numerous eyes, bears some resemblance to Argus, whom Juno employed as her principal wardour, yet, as he is a Deity of the second class, and a Commander of celestial Armies, he seems clearly to be the Orus of Egypt and the Mars of Italy: his name Scanda, by which he is celebrated in one of the Puránas, has a connexion, I am persuaded, with the old Secander of Persia, whom the poets ridiculously confound with the Macedonian.

The attributes of Durgá, or *difficult of access*, are also conspicuous in the festival abovementioned, which is called by her name, and in this character she resembles Minerva; not the peaceful inventress of the fine and useful arts, but Pallas, armed with a

helmet and spear: both represent heroic Virtue, or valour united with Wisdom; both slew Demons and Giants with their own hands, and both protected the wise and virtuous, who paid them due adoration. As Pallas, they say, takes her name from *vibrating* a lance, and usually appears in complete armour, thus *Curis*, the old Latian word for a spear, was one of Juno's titles; and so, if Giraldus be correct, was *Hoplosmia*, which at Elis, it seems, meant a female dressed in panoply, or complete accoutrements. The *unarmed* Minerva of the Romans apparently corresponds, as patroness of Science and Genius, with *Sereswatí*, the wife of *Brahmá*, and the emblem of his principal *Creative Power*. Both Goddesses have given their names to celebrated grammatical works; but the *Sáreswata* of *Sarúpácharya* is far more concise as well as more useful and agreeable, than the *Minerva* of *Sanctius*.

The *Minerva* of Italy invented the *flute*, and *Sereswatí* presides over melody: the protectress of Athens was even, on the same account, surnamed *Musicé*.

Many learned mythologists, with Giraldus at their head, consider the peaceful *Minerva* as the *Isis* of Egypt; from whose temple at Sais a wonderful inscription is quoted by Plutarch, which has a resemblance to the four Sanscrit verses above exhibited as the text of the *Bhágavat*: "I am all that hath been, and is, and shall be; and my veil no mortal hath ever removed." For my part, I have no doubt that the *Iswara* and *Isí* of the Hindus, are the *Osiris* and *Isis* of the Egyptians; though a distinct essay in the manner of Plutarch would be requisite, in order to demonstrate their identity: they mean, I conceive,



the *Powers of Nature*, considered as Male and Female; and Isis, like the other goddesses, represents the active power of her lord, whose *eight* forms, under which he becomes visible to man, were thus enumerated by Chlidêsa near two thousand years ago. "*Water* was the first work of the Creator; and *Fire* receives the oblation of clarified butter, as the law ordains: the *Sacrifice* is performed with solemnity: the *two Lights* of heaven distinguish time: the subtle *Ether*, which is the vehicle of sound, pervades the universe; the *Earth* is the natural parent of all increase; and by *Air* all things breathing are animated. May Isa, the *power* propitiously apparent in these eight forms, bless and sustain you." The *five* elements, therefore, as well as the Sun and Moon, are considered as Isa, or the *Ruler*, from which word Isî may be regularly formed; though Isânî be the usual name of his *active Power*, adored as the Goddess of Nature. I have not yet found in Sanscrit, the wild though poetical tale of Io; but am persuaded, that by means of the Purânas, we shall in time discover all the learning of the Egyptians, without decyphering their hieroglyphics. The bull of Iswara seems to be Apis or Ap, as he is more correctly named in the true reading of a passage in Jeremiah; and, if the veneration shown both in Tibet and India to so amiable and useful a quadruped as the Cow, together with the *regeneration* of the Bama himself, have not some affinity with the religion of Egypt and the idolatry of Israël, we must at least allow that circumstances have wonderfully coincided.

Bhuvânî now demands our attention; and in this character I suppose the wife of Mahadêva to be as

well the Juno Cinxia or Lucina of the Romans (called also by them Diana Solvizona, and by the Greeks, Illithyia) as Venus herself: not the Italian Queen of Laughter and Jollity, who, with her Nymphs and Graces, was the beautiful child of poetical imagination, and answers to the Indian Rembhá, with her celestial train of Apsará's or damsels of paradise: but Venus Urania, so luxuriantly painted by Lucretius, and so properly invoked by him at the opening of a poem on nature; Venus, presiding over *generation*, and on that account exhibited sometimes of both sexes (an union very common in the Indian sculptures), as in her *bearded* statue at Rome, in the images perhaps called Hermathena, and in those figures of her which had the form of a *conical marble*; "for the reason of which figure we are left (says Tacitus) in the dark." The reason appears too clearly in the temples and paintings of Hindustan, where it never seems to have entered the heads of the legislators or people, that any thing natural could be offensively obscene; a singularity which pervades all their writings and conversation, but is no proof of depravity in their morals.

Both Plato and Cicero speak of Eros or the Heavenly Cupid, as the son of Venus and Jupiter; which proves, that the Monarch of Olympus and the Goddess of Fecundity were connected, as Mahádéva and Bhaváni. The God Cama, indeed, had Mâyá, and Casyapa, or Uranus, for his parents, at least according to the mythologists of Cashmír; but in most respects he seems the twin-brother of Cupid, with richer and more lively appendages. One of his many epithets is Dípaca, the *Inflamer*, which is erroneously written Dípuc; and I am now convinced, that the

sort of resemblance which has been observed between his Latin and Sanscrit names, is accidental: in each name the three first letters are the *root*, and between them there is no affinity. Whether any mythological connexion subsisted between the *amaracus*, with the fragrant leaves of which Hymen bound his temples, and the *tulasi* of India, must be left undetermined: the botanical relation of the two plants (if *amaracus* be properly translated *majorum*) is extremely near.

One of the most remarkable ceremonies in the festival of the Indian Goddess is that before-mentioned, of casting her image *into the river*. The Pandits, of whom I inquired concerning its origin and import, answered, "that it was prescribed by the Vêda, they knew not why;" but this custom has, I conceive, a relation to the doctrine, that *water* is a *form* of Iswara, and consequently of Isani, who is even represented by some as the patroness of that element, to which her figure is restored, after having received all due honours on *earth*, which is considered as another *form* of the God of Nature, though subsequent in the order of Creation to the primeval fluid. There seems no decisive proof of one original system among idolatrous nations, in the worship of river-gods and river-goddesses, nor in the homage paid to their streams, and the ideas of purification annexed to them; since Greeks, Italians, Egyptians, and Hindus, might (without any communication with each other) have adored the several Divinities of their great rivers, from which they derived pleasure, health, and abundance. The notion of Doctor Musgrave, that large rivers were supposed, from their strength and rapidity, to be conducted by Gods, while rivulets only were protected by female Dei-

ties, is, like most other notions of grammarians on the genders of nouns, overthrown by facts. Most of the great Indian rivers are feminine; and the three goddesses of the waters, whom the Hindus chiefly venerate, are Gangā, who sprang, like armed Pallas, from the head of the Indian Jove; Yamunā, daughter of the Sun; and Sereswatī. All three met at Prayāga, thence called Trivēni, or *the three plated locks*; but Sereswatī, according to the popular belief, sinks under ground, and rises at another Trivēni near Hūgli, where she rejoins her beloved Gangā. The Brahmaputra is indeed a male river; and, as his name signifies, the Son of Brahmā, I thence took occasion to feign that he was married to Gangā, though I have not yet seen any mention of him, as a God, in the Sanscrit books.

Two incarnate deities of the first rank, Rāma and Crishna, must now be introduced, and their several attributes distinctly explained. The first of them, I believe, was the Dionysos of the Greeks, whom they named Bromius, without knowing why; and Bugeus when they represented him *horned*; as well as Lyaïos and Eleutherios, the Deliverer; and Triambos, or Dithyrambos, the Triumphant. Most of those titles were adopted by the Romans, by whom he was called Bruma, Tauriformis, Liber, Triumphus; and both nations had records or traditionary accounts of his *giving laws* to men, and deciding their contests, of his improving navigation and commerce, and, what may appear yet more observable, of his conquering India and other countries with an army of Satyrs, commanded by no less a personage than Pan; whom Lilius Giralduſ, on what authority I know not, asserts to have resided in Iberia, "when

he had returned (says the learned mythologist) from the Indian war, in which he accompanied Bacchus." It were superfluous in a mere essay to run any length in the parallel between this European God, and the sovereign Ayodhyà, whom the Hindus believe to have been an appearance on earth of the *Preserving Power*; to have been a conqueror of the highest renown, and the deliverer of nations from tyrants, as well as of his consort Sítá from the giant Rávan, king of Lancá; and to have commanded in chief a numerous and intrepid race of those large monkeys which our naturalists, or some of them, have denominated Indian Satyrs. His general, the Prince of Satyrs, was named Hanumat, or *with high cheek bones*; and, with workmen of such agility, he soon raised a bridge of rocks over the sea, part of which, say the Hindus, yet remains; and it is probably the series of rocks, to which the Muselmans or the Portuguese have given the foolish name of Adam's (it should be called Ráma's) bridge. Might not this army of Satyrs have been only a race of mountaineers, whom Ráma, if such a monarch ever existed, had civilized? However that may be, the large breed of Indian Apes is at this moment held in high veneration by the Hindus, and fed with devotion by the Bráhmans, who seem, in two or three places on the banks of the Ganges, to have a regular endowment for the support of them. They live in tribes of three or four hundred, are wonderfully gentle (I speak as an eyewitness), and appear to have some kind of order and subordination in their little silvan polity. We must not omit, that the father of Hanumat was the God of Wine, named Pavan, one of the eight Genii; and as Pan improved the pipe by

adding six reeds, and "played exquisitely on the cithern a few moments after his birth," so one of the four systems of Indian music bears the name of Hanumat, or Hanumán in the nominative, as its inventor, and is now in general estimation.

The war of Lencá is dramatically represented at the festival of Ráma on the ninth day of the new moon of Chaitra; and the drama concludes (says Holwel, who had often seen it) with an exhibition of the fire-ordeal, by which the victor's wife Sítá gave proof of her connubial fidelity. "The dialogue (he adds) is taken from one of the eighteen holy books," meaning, I suppose, the Puránas; but the Hindus have a great number of regular dramas, at least two thousand years old, and among them are several very fine ones on the story of Ráma. The first poet of the Hindus was the great Válmíc, and his Rámáyan is an Epic Poem on the same subject, which, in unity of action, magnificence of imagery, and elegance of style, far surpasses the learned and elaborate work of Nonnus, entitled Dionysiaca, half of which, or twenty-four books, I perused with great eagerness when I was very young, and should have traveled to the conclusion of it, if other pursuits had not engaged me. I shall never have leisure to compare the Dionysiaca with the Rámáyan, but am confident, that an accurate comparison of the two poems would prove Dionysos and Ráma to have been the same person; and I incline to think that he was Ráma the son of Cúsb, who might have established the first regular government in this part of Asia. I had almost forgotten, that Meros is said by the Greeks to have been a mountain of India, on which their Dionysos was born; and that Méru,

though it generally means the north pole in the Indian geography, is also a mountain near the city of Naishada or Nysa, called by the Grecian geographers Dionysopolis, and universally celebrated in the Sanscrit poems; though the birthplace of Ráma is supposed to have been Ayódhyá or Audh. That ancient city extended, if we believe the Bráhmans, over a line of ten Yojans, or about forty miles; and the present city of Lac'hnan, pronounced Lucnow, was only a lodge for one of its gates, called Lacshmanadwara, or the gate of Lacshman, a brother of Ráma. M. Sonnerat supposes Ayódhyá to have been Siam; a most erroneous and unfounded supposition, which would have been of little consequence, if he had not grounded an argument on it, that Ráma was the same person with Buddha, who must have appeared many centuries after the conquest of Lancá.

The second great divinity, Crishna, passed a life, according to the Indians, of a most extraordinary and incomprehensible nature. He was the son of Dévací by Vasúdeva; but his birth was concealed through fear of the tyrant Cansa, to whom it had been predicted, that a child born at that time in that family would destroy him: he was fostered, therefore in Mat'hurá by an honest herdsman surnamed Ananda, or *Happy*, and his amiable wife Yasódá, who, like another Pales, was constantly occupied in her pastures and her dairy. In their family were a multitude of young Gópa's or *cowherds*, and beautiful Gópi's or *milkmaids*, who were his playfellows during his infancy; and in his early youth he selected *nine* damsels as his favourites, with whom he passed his gay hours in dancing, sporting, and playing on his flute. For the remarkable number of his

Gópi's I have no authority but a whimsical picture, where *nine* girls are grouped in the form of an elephant, on which he sits and pipes; and unfortunately, the word *nava* signifies both *nine* and *new*, or young; so that in the following stanza, it may admit of two interpretations:

taranijápulíné navaballaví  
 perisadá saha célcútúhalát  
 dratavilamwiltacháruvibárinam  
 herimaham bri dayéna sadá vahé.

"I bear in my bosom continually that God, who for sportive recreation with a train of *nine* (young) dairymaids, dances gracefully, now quick, now slow, on the sands just left by the Daughter of the Sun."

Both he and the three Rámas are described as youths of perfect beauty; but the princesses of Hindustán, as well as the damsels of Nanda's farm, were passionately in love with Crishna, who continues to this hour the darling God of the Indian women. The sect of Hindus who adore him with enthusiastic and almost exclusive devotion, have broached a doctrine which they maintain with eagerness, and which seems general in these provinces; that he was distinct from all the Avatárs, who had only an *ansa* or portion of his divinity; while Crishna was the *person* of Vishnu himself in a human form; hence they consider the third Ráma, his elder brother, as the eighth Avatár invested with an *emanation* of his divine radiance; and, in the principal Sanscrit dictionary, compiled about two thousand years ago, Crishna, Vásadéva, Góvinda, and other names of the Shepherd God, are intermixed with epithets of Náráyan or the Divine Spirit. All



the Avatárs are painted with gemmed Ethiopian or Parthian coronets; with rays encircling their heads: jewels in their ears; two necklaces, one straight, and one pendent on their bosoms, with dropping gems; garlands of well disposed many-coloured flowers, or collars of pearls, hanging down below their waists; loose mantles of golden tissue or dyed silk, embroidered on their hems with flowers, elegantly thrown over one shoulder, and folded like ribands across the breast; with bracelets too on one arm, and on each wrist: they are naked to the waists, and uniformly with *dark azure* flesh, in allusion probably to the tint of that primordial fluid, on which Nárāyan moved in the beginning of time; but their skirts are bright yellow, the colour of the curious pericarpium in the centre of the water-lily, where *Nature*, as Dr. Murray observes, *in some degree discloses her secrets*, each seed containing, before it germinates, a few perfect leaves: they are sometimes drawn with that flower in one hand; a radiated elliptical ring, used as a missile weapon, in a second; the sacred shell, or left-handed buccinum, in a third; and a mace, or battle-axe, in a fourth. But Crishna, when he appears, as he sometimes does appear, among the Avatárs, is more splendidly decorated than any, and wears a rich garland of silvan flowers, whence he is named Vanamáli, as low as his ankles, which are adorned with strings of pearls. Dark blue approaching to black, which is the meaning of the word Crishna, is believed to have been his complexion; and hence the large bee of that colour is consecrated to him, and is often drawn fluttering over his head. That azure tint, which approaches to blackness, is peculiar, as we have already remarked, to Vishna;

and hence in the great reservoir or cistern at Cât-mánda, the capital of Népal, there is placed in a recumbent posture, a large well proportioned image of *blue* marble, representing Náráyan floating on the waters. But let us return to the actions of Crishna, who was not less heroic than lovely, and, when a boy, slew the terrible serpent Cáliya, with a number of giants and monsters. At a more advanced age he put to death his cruel enemy Cansa; and having taken under his protection the king Yudhisht'hir, and the other Pándus, who had been grievously oppressed by the Curus and their tyrannical chief, he kindled the war described in the great Epic Poem, entitled the Mahábhárat, at the prosperous conclusion of which he returned to his heavenly seat in Vaincont'ha, having left the instructions comprised in the Gítà with his disconsolate friend Arjun, whose grandson became sovereign of India.

In this picture it is impossible not to discover, at the first glance, the features of Apollo, surnamed Nomios or the *Pastoral*, in Greece, and Opifer in Italy; who fed the herds of Admetus, and slew the serpent Python; a God amorous, beautiful, and warlike. The word Góvinda may be literally translated Nomios, as Césava is Crinitus, or *with fine hair*; but whether Gópála or the *herdsman*, has any relation to Apollo, let our etymologists determine.

Colonel Vallancey, whose learned inquiries into the ancient literature of Ireland are highly interesting, assures me that Crishna in Irish means the Sun; and we find Apollo and Sol considered by the Roman poets as the same deity. I am inclined, indeed, to believe, that not only Crishnu or Vishnu, but even Brahmá and Siva, when united, and expressed

by the mystical word O'M, were designed by the first idolaters to represent the Solar Fire; but Phœbus, or the *orb of the Sun* personified, is adored by the Indians as the God Sûrya, whence the sect who pay him particular adoration are called Sauras. Their poets and painters describe his car as drawn by seven green horses, preceded by Arun, or the *Dawn*, who acts as his charioteer, and followed by thousands of Genii, worshipping him and modulating his praises. He has a multitude of names, and among them twelve epithets or titles, which denote his distinct *powers* in each of the twelve months; these *powers* are called Adityas, or sons of Aditi by Casyapa, the Indian Uranus; and one of them has, according to some authorities, the name of Vishnu, or *Perceader*.

Sûrya is believed to have descended frequently from his car in a human shape, and to have left a race on earth, who are equally renowned in the Indian stories with the Heliadae of Greece. It is very singular that his two sons, called Aswinau or Aswinicumârau, in the dual, should be considered as twin-brothers, and painted like Castor and Pollux; but they have each the character of Æsculapius among the Gods, and are believed to have been born of a nymph, who, in the form of a mare, was impregnated with sunbeams. I suspect the whole fable of Casyapa and his progeny to be astronomical; and cannot but imagine that the Greek name Cassiopeia has a relation to it.

Another great Indian family are called the *Children of the Moon*, or Chandra; who is a male Deity, and consequently not to be compared with Artemis or Diana; nor have I yet found a parallel in India

for the Goddess of the Chase, who seems to have been the daughter of an European fancy, and very naturally created by the invention of Bucolic and Georgic poets; yet, since the Moon is a *form* of Iswara, the God of Nature, according to the verse of Cálidása, and since Isáni has been shown to be his *consort* or *power*, we may consider her in one of her characters, as Luna; especially as we shall soon be convinced, that in the shades below she corresponds with the Hecate of Europe.

The worship of Solar or Vestal Fire may be ascribed, like that of Osiris and Isis, to the second source of mythology, or an enthusiastic admiration of nature's wonderful powers; and it seems, as far as I can yet understand the Védas, to be the principal worship recommended in them. We have seen, that Mahádéva himself is personated by Fire; but subordinate to him is the God Agni, often called Pávaca, or the *Purifier*, who answers to the Vulcan of Egypt, where he was a Deity of high rank; and his wife Swáhá resembles the younger Vesta, or Vestia, as the Eolians pronounced the Greek word for a *hearth*. Bhaváni or Venus is the consort of the Supreme Destructive and Generative Power; but the Greeks and Romans, whose system is less regular than that of the Indians, married her to their *divine artist*, whom they also named Hephaistos and Vulcan, and who seems to be the Indian Viswacarmān, the *forger of arms* for the Gods, and inventor of the *agnyastra*, or *fiery shaft*, in the war between them and the Daityas or Titans. It is not easy here to refrain from observing (and if the observation give offence in England, it is contrary to my intention) that the newly discovered planet should unquestion-

ably be named Vulcan; since the confusion of analogy in the names of the planets is inelegant, unscholarly, and unphilosophical. The name Uranus is appropriated to the firmament; but Vulcan, the slowest of the Gods, and according to the Egyptian priests, the oldest of them, agrees admirably with an orb which must perform its revolution in a very long period; and by giving it this denomination, we shall have seven primary planets, with the names of as many Roman Deities, Mercury, Venus, Tellus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Vulcan.

It has already been intimated, that the Muses and Nymphs are the Gópya of Math'urà, and of Góverdhan, the Parnassus of the Hindus; and the lyric poems of Jayadéva will fully justify this opinion; but the Nymphs of Music are the *thirty Rágins* or *Female Passions*, whose various functions and properties are so richly delineated by the Indian painters, and so finely described by the poets: but I will not anticipate what will require a separate Essay, by enlarging here on the beautiful allegories of the Hindus in their system of musical modes, which they call *Rágás*, or *Passions*, and suppose to be Genii or Demigods. A very distinguished son of Bráhma, named Náred, whose actions are the subject of a Purána, bears a strong resemblance to Hermes or Mercury: he was a wise legislator, great in arts and in arms, an eloquent messenger of the Gods, either to one another, or to favoured mortals, and a musician of exquisite skill. His invention of the Viná, or Indian lute, is thus described in the poem entitled Mágha: "Náred sat watching from time to time his large Viná, which, by the impulse of the breeze, yielded notes that pierced successively the

regions of his ear, and proceeded by musical intervals." The law tract supposed to have been revealed by Náred, is at this hour cited by the Pandits; and we cannot, therefore, believe him to have been the patron of *Thieves*; though an innocent theft of Crishna's cattle, by way of putting his divinity to a proof, be strangely imputed in the Bhágavat, to his father Brahmá.

The last of the Greek or Italian Divinites, for whom we find a parallel in the Pantheon of India, is the Stygian or Tauric Diana, otherwise named Hecate, and often confounded with Proserpine; and there can be no doubt of her identity with Cálí, or the wife of Siva, in his character of the Stygian Jove. To this black goddess, with a collar of golden skulls, as we see her exhibited in all her principal temples, *human sacrifices* were anciently offered, as the Védas enjoined; but in the present age they are absolutely prohibited, as are also the sacrifices of bulls and horses. Kids are still offered to her; and to palliate the cruelty of the slaughter, which gave such offence to Buddha, the Bráhmans inculcate a belief, that the poor victims rise in the heaven of Indra, where they become the musicians of his band.

Instead of the obsolete, and now illegal sacrifices of a man, a bull, and a horse, called Neramédha, Gómédha, and Aswamédha, the powers of nature are thought to be propitiated by the less bloody ceremonies at the end of autumn, when the festivals of Cálí and Lacshmi are solemnized nearly at the same time. Now, if it be asked, how the Goddess of Death came to be united with the mild Patroness of Abundance, I must propose another question. How

came Proserpine to be represented in the European system as the daughter of Ceres? Perhaps both questions may be answered by the proposition of natural philosophers, that "the apparent destruction of a substance is the production of it in a different form." The wild music of Cál's priests at one of her festivals, brought instantly to my recollection the Scythian measures of Diana's adorers in the splendid opera of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, which Gluck exhibited at Paris, with less genius, indeed, than art, but with every advantage that an orchestra could supply.

That we may not dismiss this assemblage of European and Asiatic Divinities with a subject so horrid as the altars of Hecate and Cál, let us conclude with two remarks, which properly indeed belong to the Indian Philosophy, with which we are not at present concerned. First, Elysium (not the place, but the bliss enjoyed there, in which sense Milton uses the word) cannot but appear, as described by the poets, a very tedious and insipid kind of enjoyment: It is however more exalted than the temporary Elysium in the court of Indra, where the pleasures, as in Muhammed's paradise, are wholly sensual; but the Mucti, or Elysian happiness of the Védánta school is far more sublime; for they represent it as a total absorption, though not such as to destroy consciousness in the Divine Essence: but, for the reason before suggested, I say no more of this idea of beatitude, and forbear touching on the doctrine of transmigration, and the similarity of the Védánta to the Sicilian, Italic, and old Academic Schools.

Secondly, in the mystical and elevated character of Pan, as a personification of the *Universe*, ac-

cording to the notion of Lord Bacon, there arises a sort of similitude between him and Crishna, considered as Náráyan. The Grecian God plays divinely on his reed, to express, we are told, æthereal harmony. He has his attendant Nymphs of the pastures and the dairy. His face is as radiant as the sky, and his head illumined with the horns of a crescent; whilst his lower extremities are deformed and shaggy, as a symbol of the vegetables which the earth produces, and of the beasts who roam over the face of it. Now we may compare this portrait partly with the general character of Crishna, the Shepherd God, and partly with the description in the Bhágavat of the Divine Spirit exhibited *in the form of this Universal World*; to which we may add the following story from the same extraordinary poem. The Nymphs had complained to Yasódá, that the child Crishna had been drinking their curds and milk. On being reproved by his foster-mother for this indiscretion, he requested her to examine his mouth; in which, to her just amazement, she beheld the *whole universe* in all its plenitude of magnificence.

We must not be surprised at finding, on a close examination, that the characters of all the Pagan Deities, male and female, melt into each other, and at last into one or two; for it seems a well founded opinion, that the whole crowd of gods and goddesses in ancient Rome, and modern Váránes, mean only the powers of nature, and principally those of the Sun, expressed in a variety of ways, and by a multitude of fanciful names.

Thus have I attempted to trace, imperfectly at present for want of ampler materials, but with a



confidence continually increasing as I advanced, a parallel between the Gods adored in three very different nations, Greece, Italy, and India; but which was the original system, and which the copy, I will not presume to decide; nor are we likely, I presume, to be soon furnished with sufficient grounds for a decision. The fundamental rule, that *natural and most human operations proceed from the simple to the compound*, will afford no assistance on this point; since neither the Asiatic nor European system has any simplicity in it; and both are so complex, not to say absurd, however intermixed with the beautiful and the sublime, that the honour, such as it is, of the invention, cannot be allotted to either with tolerable certainty.

Since Egypt appears to have been the grand source of knowledge for the *western*, and India for the more *eastern* parts of the globe, it may seem a material question, whether the Egyptians communicated their Mythology and Philosophy to the Hindus, or conversely; but what the learned of Memphis wrote or said concerning India, no mortal knows; and what the learned of Várânes have asserted, if any thing, concerning Egypt, can give us little satisfaction. Such circumstantial evidence on this question as I have been able to collect, shall nevertheless be stated; because, unsatisfactory as it is, there may be something in it not wholly unworthy of notice; though, after all, whatever colonies may have come from the Nile to the Ganges, we shall, perhaps, agree at last with Mr. Bryant, that Egyptians, Indians, Greeks, and Italians, proceeded originally from one central place, and that the same

people carried their religion and sciences into China and Japan : may we not add, even to Mexico and Peru ?

Every one knows that the true name of Egypt is Misr, spelled with a palatal sibilant both in Hebrew and Arabic. It seems in Hebrew to have been the proper name of the first settler in it ; and when the Arabs use the word for a great city, they probably mean a city like the capital of Egypt. Father Marco, a Roman missionary, who, though not a scholar of the first rate, is incapable, I am persuaded, of a deliberate falsehood, lent me the last book of a Rāmāyan, which he had translated through the Hindi into his native language, and with it a short vocabulary of mythological and historical names, which had been explained to him by the Pandits of Betiyā, where he had long resided. One of the articles in his little dictionary was, "Tirút, a town or province in which the priests from Egypt settled ;" and when I asked him what name Egypt bore among the Hindus, he said Misr, but observed, that they sometimes confounded it with Abyssinia. I perceived that his memory of what he had written was correct, for Misr was another word in his index, "from which country (he said) came the Egyptian priests who settled in Tirút." I suspected immediately that his intelligence flowed from the Muselmans, who call sugar-candy Misrī, or Egyptian ; but when I examined him closely, and earnestly desired him to recollect from whom he had received his information, he repeatedly and positively declared, that "it had been given him by several Hindus, and particularly by a Brahman his intimate friend, who was reputed a considerable Pandit, and had lived three years near

his house." We then conceived that the seat of his Egyptian colony must have been Tiróhit, commonly pronounced Tirút, and anciently called Mit'hilâ, the principal town of Janacadesa, or North Bahâr; but Mahésa Pandit, who was born in that very district, and who submitted patiently to a long examination concerning Misr, overset all our conclusions; he denied that the Bráhmans of his country were generally surnamed Misr, as we had been informed; and said that the addition of Misra to the name of Vâchespetí, and other learned authors, was a title formerly conferred on the writers of *miscellanies*, or *compilers* of various tracts on religion or science, the word being derived from a root signifying *to mix*. Being asked where the country of Misr was? "There are two (he answered) of that name; one of them is *the west*, under the dominion of Muselmâns: and another, which all the Sástras and Purânas mention, in a mountainous region to the north of Ayódhya." It is evident that by the first he meant Egypt; but what he meant by the second it is not easy to ascertain. A country called Tiruhut, by our geographers, appears in the maps between the north-eastern frontiers of Audh and the mountains of Népal; but whether that was the Tirút mentioned to Father Marco by his friend of Betiya I cannot decide. This only I know with certainty, that Misra is an epithet of two Bráhmans in the drama of Sacantalâ, which was written near a century before the birth of Christ; that some of the greatest lawyers, and two of the finest dramatic poets of India have the same title; that we hear it frequently in court added to the names of Hindu parties; and that none of the Pandits, whom I have since consulted, pretend to

know the true meaning of the word, as a proper name, or to give any other explanation of it, than that it is a *surname* of Brāhman in the west.

On the account given to Colonel Kyd by the old Rājā of Crishnanagar, "concerning *traditions* among the Hindus, that some Egyptians had settled in this country," I cannot rely; because I am credibly informed by some of the Rājā's own family, that he was not a man of solid learning, though he possessed curious books, and had been attentive to the conversation of learned men; besides, I know that his son and most of his kinsmen have been dabblers in Persian literature, and believe them very likely, by confounding one source of information with another, to puzzle themselves, and mislead those with whom they converse. The word *Misr*, spelled also in Sanscrit with a palatial sibilant, is very remarkable; and, as far as etymology can help us, we may safely derive *Nilus* from the Sanscrit word *nīla*, or *blue*: since Dionysius expressly calls the waters of that river "an *azure* stream;" and, if we can depend on Marco's Italian version of the Rāmāyan, the name of *Nīla* is given to a lofty and sacred mountain with a summit of pure gold, from which flowed a river of *clear, sweet, and fresh water*.

M. Sonnerat refers to a dissertation by Mr. Schmit, which gained a prize at the Academy of Inscriptions, "On an Egyptian Colony established in India." It would be worth while to examine his authorities, and either to overturn or verify them by such higher authorities as are now accessible in these provinces. I strongly incline to think him right, and to believe that Egyptian priests have actually come from the Nile to the Ganga and Yamunā, which

the Bráhmans most assuredly would never have left. They might, indeed, have come either to be instructed or to instruct; but it seems more probable that they visited the Sarmans of India, as the sages of Greece visited them, rather to acquire than to impart knowledge: nor is it likely that the self-sufficient Bráhmans would have received them as their preceptors.

Be all this as it may, I am persuaded that a connexion subsisted between the old idolatrous nations of Egypt, India, Greece, and Italy, long before they emigrated to their several settlements, and consequently before the birth of Moses: but the proof of this proposition will in no degree affect the truth and sanctity of the Mesianic history, which, if confirmation were necessary, it would rather tend to confirm. The Divine Legate, educated by the daughter of a king, and in all respects highly accomplished, could not but know the mythological system of Egypt; but he must have condemned the superstitions of that people, and despised the speculative absurdities of their priests, though some of their traditions concerning the creation and the flood were grounded on truth.

Who was better acquainted with the mythology of Athens than Socrates? Who more accurately versed in the Rabbinical doctrines than Paul? Who possessed clearer ideas of all ancient astronomical systems than Newton, or of scholastical metaphysics than Locke? In whom could the Roman Church have had a more formidable opponent than in Chillingworth, whose deep knowledge of its tenets rendered him so competent to dispute them? In a word, who more exactly knew the abominable rites and

shocking idolatry of Canaan than Moses himself? Yet the learning of those great men only incited them to seek other sources of truth, piety, and virtue, than those in which they had long been immersed. There is no shadow then of a foundation for an opinion, that Moses borrowed the first nine or ten chapters of Genesis from the literature of Egypt; still less can the adamantine pillars of our Christian faith be moved by the result of any debates on the comparative antiquity of the Hindus and Egyptians, or of any inquiries into the Indian Theology.

Very respectable natives have assured me, that one or two missionaries have been absurd enough, in their zeal for the conversion of the Gentiles, to urge, "that the Hindus were even now almost Christians, because their Brahmá, Vishnu, and Mahésa, were no other than the Christian Trinity;" a sentence in which we can only doubt whether folly, ignorance, or impiety predominates. The three *powers, creative, preservative, and destructive*, which the Hindus express by the triliteral word O'm, were grossly ascribed by the first idolaters to the *heat, light, and flame* of their mistaken divinity the Sun; and their wiser successors in the East, who perceived that the Sun was only a created thing, applied those powers to its creator; but the Indian Triad, and that of Plato, which he calls the Supreme Good, the Reason, and the Soul, are infinitely removed from the holiness and sublimity of the doctrine which pious Christians have deduced from texts in the Gospel; though other Christians, as pious, openly profess their dissent from them. Each sect must be justified by its own faith and good intentions. This only I mean to inculcate, that the tenet of our Church cannot,

without profaneness, be compared with that of the Hindus, which has only an apparent resemblance to it, but a very different meaning.

One singular fact, however, must not be suffered to pass unnoticed. That the name of Crishna, and the general outline of his story, were long anterior to the birth of our Saviour, and probably to the time of Homer, we know very certainly; yet the celebrated poem entitled Bhágavat, which contains a prolix account of his life, is filled with narratives of a most extraordinary kind, but strangely variegated and intermixed with poetical decorations. The incarnate Deity of the Sanscrit romance was cradled, as it informs us, among *herdsmen*; but it adds, that he was educated among them, and passed his youth in playing with a party of milkmaids. A tyrant at the time of his birth ordered all new born males to be slain; yet this wonderful babe was preserved by biting the breast, instead of sucking the poisoned nipple, of a nurse commissioned to kill him. He performed amazing but ridiculous miracles in his infancy; and, at the age of seven years, held up a mountain on the tip of his little finger. He saved multitudes, partly by his arms, and partly by his miraculous powers. He raised the dead, by descending for that purpose to the lowest regions. He was the meekest and best tempered of beings, washed the feet of the Bráhmans, and preached very nobly indeed, and sublimely, but always in their favour. He was pure and chaste in reality, but exhibited an appearance of excessive libertinism, and had wives or mistresses too numerous to be counted. Lastly, he was benevolent and tender, yet fomented and conducted a terrible war. This mntley story

must induce an opinion, that the spurious Gospels, which abounded in the first age of Christianity, had been brought to India, and the wildest parts of them repeated to the Hindus, who ingrafted them on the old fable of Césava, the Apollo of Greece.

As to the general extension of our pure faith in Hindustán, there are at present many sad obstacles to it. The Muselmans are already a sort of heterodox Christians. They are Christians, if Locke reasons justly, because they firmly believe the immaculate conception, divine character, and miracles, of the Messiah; but they are heterodox, in denying vehemently his character of Son, and his equality, as God, with the Father, of whose unity and attributes they entertain and express the most awful ideas; while they consider our doctrine as perfect blasphemy, and insist, that our copies of the Scriptures have been corrupted both by Jews and Christians. It will be inexpressibly difficult to undeceive them, and scarce possible to diminish their veneration for Mohammed and Ali, who were both very extraordinary men, and the second a man of unexceptionable morals. The Korán shines indeed, with a borrowed light, since most of its beauties are taken from our Scriptures; but it has great beauties, and the Muselmans will not be convinced that they were borrowed. The Hindus, on the other hand, would readily admit the truth of the Gospel; but they contend, that it is perfectly consistent with their Sástras. The Deity, they say, has appeared innumerable times, in many parts of this world, and of all worlds, for the salvation of his creatures; and though we adore him in one appearance, and they in others, yet we adore, they say, the same God, to whom our several wor-



ships, though different in form, are equally acceptable, if they be sincere in substance. We may assure ourselves, that neither Muselmáns nor Hindus will ever be converted by any mission from the Church of Rome, or from any other Church; and the only human mode, perhaps, of causing so great a revolution will be to translate into Sanscrit and Persian such chapters of the Prophets, particularly of Isaiah, as are indisputably evangelical, together with one of the Gospels; and a plain prefatory discourse, containing full evidence of the very distant ages, in which the predictions themselves, and the history of the Divine Person predicted, were severally made public; and then quietly to disperse the work among the well educated natives; with whom, if in due time it failed of producing very salutary fruit by its natural influence, we could only lament more than ever the strength of prejudice, and the weakness of unassisted reason.

ON

*The Mystical Poetry*

OF THE

PERSIANS AND HINDUS.

BY SIR WILLIAM JONES.

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A FIGURATIVE mode of expressing the fervour of devotion, or the ardent love of created spirits toward their Beneficent Creator, has prevailed from time immemorial in Asia; particularly among the Persian theists, both ancient Húshangis and modern Súfis, who seem to have borrowed it from the Indian philosophers of the Védánta school; and their doctrines are also believed to be the source of that sublime but poetical theology, which glows and sparkles in the writings of the old Academics. "Plato traveled into Italy and Egypt," says Claude Fleury, "to learn the theology of the Pagans at its fountain head:" its true fountain, however, was neither in Italy nor in Egypt (though considerable streams of it had been conducted thither by Pythagoras, and by the family of Misra), but in Persia or

India, which the founder of the Italic sect had visited with a similar design. What the Grecian travellers learned among the sages of the east may perhaps be fully explained at a season of leisure, in another dissertation; but we confine this essay to a singular species of poetry, which consists almost wholly of a mystical religious allegory, though it seems, on a transient view, to contain only the sentiments of a wild and voluptuous libertinism: now, admitting the danger of a poetical style, in which the limits between vice and enthusiasm are so minute as to be hardly distinguishable, we must beware of censuring it severely, and must allow it to be natural, though a warm imagination may carry it to a culpable excess; for an ardently grateful piety is congenial to the undepraved nature of man, whose mind, sinking under the magnitude of the subject, and struggling to express its emotions, has recourse to metaphors and allegories, which it sometimes extends beyond the bounds of cool reason, and often to the brink of absurdity. Barrow, who would have been the sublimest mathematician, if his religious turn of mind had not made him the deepest theologian of his age, describes Love as "an affection or inclination of the soul toward an object, proceeding from an apprehension and esteem of some excellence or convenience in it, as its *beauty*, worth, or utility; and producing, if it be absent, a proportionable desire, and consequently an endeavour to obtain such a property in it, such possession of it, such an *approximation to it, or union with it*, as the thing is capable of; with a regret and displeasure in failing to obtain it, or in the want and loss of it; begetting likewise a complacency, satisfac-

tion, and delight in its presence, possession, or enjoyment, which is moreover attended with a good will toward it, suitable to its nature; that is, with a desire that it should arrive at, or continue in, its best state; with a delight to perceive it thrive and flourish; with a displeasure to see it suffer or decay; with a consequent endeavour to advance it in all good, and preserve it from all evil." Agreeably to this description, which consists of two parts, and was designed to comprise the tender love of the Creator towards created spirits, the great philosopher bursts forth in another place, with his usual animation and command of language, into the following panegyric on the pious love of human souls toward the author of their happiness: "Love is the sweetest and most delectable of all passions; and, when by the conduct of wisdom it is directed in a rational way toward a worthy, congruous, and attainable object, it cannot otherwise than fill the heart with ravishing delight: such, in all respects, superlatively such, is God; who, infinitely beyond all other things, deserveth our affection, as most perfectly amiable and desirable; as having obliged us by innumerable and inestimable benefits; all the good that we have ever enjoyed, or can ever expect, being derived from his pure bounty; all things in the world in competition with him being mean and ugly; all things without him vain, unprofitable, and hurtful to us. He is the most proper object of our love; for we chiefly were framed, and it is the prime law of our nature, to love him; *our soul, from its original instinct, vergeth toward him as its centre, and can have no rest till it be fixed on him*: he alone can satisfy the vast capacity of our minds, and fill our boundless desires.

He, of all lovely things, most certainly and easily may be attained; for, whereas, commonly men are crossed in their affection, and their love is imbittered from their affecting things imaginary, which they cannot reach, or coy things which disdain and reject them; it is with God quite otherwise: He is most ready to impart himself; he most earnestly desireth and wooeth our love; he is not only most willing to correspond in affection, but even doth prevent us therein: *He doth cherish and encourage our love by sweetest influences and most consoling embraces*, by kindest expressions of favour, by most beneficial returns; and, whereas all other objects do in the enjoyment much fail our expectation, he doth even far exceed it. Wherefore in all affectionate motions of our hearts toward God; in *desiring* him, or seeking his favour and friendship; in *embracing* him, or setting our esteem, our good will, our confidence on him; in *enjoying* him by devotional meditations and addresses to him; in a reflective sense of our interest and propriety in him; in *that mysterious union of spirit, whereby we do closely adhere to, and are, as it were, inserted in him*; in a hearty complacence in his benignity, a grateful sense of his kindness, and a zealous desire of yielding some requital for it, we cannot but feel very pleasant transports; indeed, that celestial flame, kindled in our hearts by the spirit of love, cannot be void of warmth; we cannot fix our eyes on *infinite beauty*, we cannot taste infinite sweetness, we cannot cleave to infinite felicity, without also perpetually rejoicing in the first daughter of Love to God, Charity toward men; which, in complexion and careful disposition, doth much resemble her mother; for she doth rid us

from all those gloomy, keen, turbulent imaginations and passions, which cloud our mind, which fret our heart, which discompose the frame of our soul; from burning anger, from storming contention, from gnawing envy, from rankling spite, from racking suspicion, from distracting ambition and avarice; and consequently, doth settle our mind in an even temper, in a sedate humour, in an harmonious order, in *that pleasant state of tranquillity, which naturally doth result from the voidance of irregular passions.*" Now this passage from Barrow (which borders, I admit, on quietism and enthusiastic devotion) differs only from the mystical theology of the Súfis and Yógis, as the flowers and fruit of Europe differ in scent and flavour from those of Asia, or as European differs from Asiatic eloquence; the same strain, in poetical measure, would rise up to the odes of Spenser on *Divine Love and Beauty*, and in a higher key with richer embellishments, to the songs of Hafiz and Jayadéva, the raptures of the Masnavi, and the mysteries of the Bhágavat.

Before we come to the Persians and Indians, let me produce another specimen of European theology, collected from a late excellent work of the illustrious M. Necker. "Were men animated," says he, "with sublime thoughts, did they respect the intellectual power with which they are adorned, and take an interest in the dignity of their nature, they would embrace with transport that sense of religion, which ennobles their faculties, keeps their minds in full strength, and unites them in idea with him, whose immensity overwhelms them with astonishment: *considering themselves as an emanation from that infinite Being, the source and cause of all things,* they would then disdain to be misled by a gloomy

and false philosophy, and would cherish the idea of a God, who *created*, who *regenerates*, who *preserves* this universe by invariable laws, and by a continued chain of similar causes producing similar effects; who pervades all nature with his divine spirit, as an universal soul, which moves, directs, and restrains the wonderful fabric of this world. The blissful idea of a God sweetens every moment of our time, and embellishes before us the path of life; unites us delightfully to all the beauties of nature, and associates us with every thing that lives or moves. Yes: the whisper of the gales, the murmur of waters, the peaceful agitation of trees and shrubs, would concur to engage our minds and *affect our souls with tenderness*, if our thoughts were elevated to *one universal cause*, if we recognised on all sides the work of *Him whom we love*; if we marked the traces of his august steps and benignant intentions; if we believed ourselves actually present at the display of his boundless power, and the magnificent exertions of his unlimited goodness. Benevolence, among all the virtues, has a character more than human, and a certain amiable simplicity in its nature, which seems analogous to the *first idea*, the original intention of conferring delight, which we necessarily suppose in the Creator, when we presume to seek his motive in bestowing existence: benevolence is that virtue, or, to speak more emphatically, that *primordial beauty*, which preceded all times and all worlds; and, when we reflect on it, there appears an analogy, obscure indeed at present, and to us imperfectly known, between our moral nature and a time yet very remote, when we shall satisfy our ardent wishes and lively hopes, which constitute perhaps a sixth, and (if the phrase may be used) a distant sense. It may even

be imagined, that love, the brightest ornament of our nature, love, enchanting and sublime, is a mysterious pledge for the assurance of those hopes; since love, by disengaging us from ourselves, by transporting us beyond the limits of our own being, is the first step in our progress to a joyful immortality; and, by affording both the notion and example of a cherished object distinct from our own souls, may be considered as an interpreter to our hearts of something which our intellects cannot conceive. We may seem even to hear the supreme Intelligence and eternal Soul of all nature give this commission to the spirits which emanated from him: 'Go; admire a small portion of my works, and study them; make your first trial of happiness, and learn to love him who bestowed it; but seek not to remove the veil spread over the secret of your existence: your nature is composed of those divine particles, which, at an infinite distance, constitute my own essence; but you would be too near me, were you permitted to penetrate the mystery of our separation and union: wait the moment ordained by my wisdom; and, until that moment come, hope to approach me only by adoration and gratitude.'"

If these two passages were translated into Sanscrit and Persian, I am confident that the Védāntes and Sūfis would consider them as an epitome of their common system; for they concur in believing that the souls of men differ infinitely in degree, but not at all in *kind*, from the divine spirit, of which they are *particles*, and in which they will ultimately be absorbed; that the spirit of God pervades the universe, always immediately present to his work, and consequently always in substance, that he alone is



perfect benevolence, perfect truth, perfect beauty; that the love of him alone is *real* and genuine love, while that of all other objects is *absurd* and illusory, that the beauties of nature are faint resemblances, like images in a mirror, of the divine charms; that, from eternity without beginning, to eternity without end, the supreme benevolence is occupied in bestowing happiness, or the means of attaining it; that men can only attain it by performing their part of the *primal covenant* between them and the Creator; that nothing has a pure absolute existence but *mind* or *spirit*; that *material substances*, as the ignorant call them, are no more than gay *pictures* presented continually to our *minds* by the sempiternal artist; that we must beware of attachment to such *phantoms*, and attach ourselves exclusively to God, who truly exists in us, as we exist solely in him; that we retain, even in this forlorn state of separation from our beloved, the *idea of heavenly beauty*, and the *remembrance of our primal vows*; that sweet music, gentle breezes, fragrant flowers, perpetually renew the *primary idea*, refresh our fading memory, and melt us with tender affections; that we must cherish those affections, and by abstracting our souls from *vanity*, that is, from all but God, approximate to his essence, in our final union with which will consist our supreme beatitude. From these principles flow a thousand metaphors and other poetical figures, which abound in the sacred poems of the Persians and Hindus, who seem to mean the same thing in substance, and differ only in expression, as their languages differ in idiom; The modern Sûfis, who profess a belief in the Koran, suppose with great sublimity both of thought and of diction, an *express*

contract, on the day of eternity with beginning, between the assemblage of created spirits and the supreme soul, from which they were detached, when a celestial voice pronounced these words, addressed to each spirit separately, "Art thou not with thy Lord?" that is, art thou not bound by a solemn contract with him? and all the spirits answered with one voice, "Yes:" hence it is that *alist*, or *art thou not*, and *beli*, or *yes*, incessantly occur in the mystical verses of the Persians, and of the Turkish poets, who imitate them as the Romans imitated the Greeks. The Hindus describe the same covenant under the figurative notion, so finely expressed by Isaiah, of a *nuptial contract*; for considering God in the three characters of Creator, Regenerator, and Preserver, and supposing the power of *Preservation* and *Benevolence* to have become incarnate in the person of Crishna, they represent him as married to Rádhá, a word signifying *atonement*, *pacification*, or *satisfaction*, but applied allegorically to the soul of man, or rather to the whole assemblage of created souls, between whom and the benevolent Creator they suppose that *reciprocal* love, which Barrow describes with a glow of expression perfectly oriental, and which our most orthodox theologians believe to have been mystically *shadowed* in the Song of Solomon, while they admit, that, in a *literal* sense, it is an epithalamium on the marriage of the sapient king with the princess of Egypt. The very learned author of the Prelections on Sacred Poetry declared his opinion, that the Canticles were founded on historical truth, but involved an allegory of that sort, which he named *mystical*; and the beautiful poem on the loves of Laili and Majnun by the inimitable Nizámi (to

say nothing of other poems on the same subject) is indisputably built on true history, yet avowedly allegorical and mysterious; for the introduction to it is a continued rapture on *divine love*; and the name of Laili seems to be used in the Masnavi and the odes of Hafiz, for the omnipresent spirit of God.

It has been made a question, whether the poems of Hafiz must be taken in a literal or in a figurative sense; but the question does not admit of a general and direct answer; for even the most enthusiastic of his commentators allow, that some of them are to be taken literally, and his editors ought to have distinguished them, as our Spenser has distinguished his four odes on *Love* and *Beauty*, instead of mixing the profane with the divine, by a childish arrangement according to the alphabetical order of the rhymes. Hafiz never pretended to more than human virtues, and it is known he had human propensities; for, in his youth he was passionately in love with a girl surnamed Shakhi Nebât, or the *Branch of Sugar-cane*, and the prince of Shiraz was his rival: since there is an agreeable wildness in the story, and since the poet himself alludes to it in one of his odes, I give it you at length from the commentary.—There is a place called Pirisebz, or the *Green old man*, about four Persian leagues from the city; and a popular opinion had long prevailed, that a youth, who should pass forty successive nights in Pirisebz without sleep, would infallibly become an excellent poet; young Hafiz had accordingly made a vow that he would serve that apprenticeship with the utmost exactness, and for thirty-nine days he rigorously discharged his duty, walking every morning before the house of his coy mistress, taking some refresh-

ment and rest at noon, and passing the night awake at his poetical station; but, on the fortieth morning, he was transported with joy on seeing the girl beckon to him through the lattices, and invite him to enter: she received him with rapture, declared her preference of a bright genius to the son of a king, and would have detained him all night, if he had not recollected his vow, and, resolving to keep it inviolate, returned to his post. The people of Shiraz add (and the fiction is grounded on a couplet of Hafiz), that early next morning *an old man in a green mantle*, who was no less a personage than Khizr himself, approached him at Pirisebz with a cup brim full of nectar, which the Greeks would have called the water of Aganippe, and rewarded his perseverance with an inspiring draught of it. After his juvenile passions had subsided, we may suppose that his mind took that religious bent, which appears in most of his compositions; for there can be no doubt that the following distichs, collected from different odes, relate to the mystical theology of the Sufis:

“In eternity without beginning, a ray of thy beauty began to gleam; when love sprang into being and cast flames over all nature;

“On that day thy cheek sparkled even under thy veil, and all this beautiful imagery appeared on the mirror of our fancies.

“Rise, my soul; that I may pour thee forth on the pencil of that supreme artist, who comprised in a turn of his compass all this wonderful scenery!

“From the moment, when I heard the divine sentence, ‘I have breathed into man a portion of my spirit,’ I was assured, that we were His, and He ours.

" Where are the glad tidings of union, with thee, that I may abandon all desire of life! I am a bird of holiness, and would fain escape from the net of this world.

" Shed, O Lord, from the cloud of heavenly guidance, one cheering shower, before the moment, when I must rise up like a particle of dry dust!

" The sum of our transactions, in this universe, is nothing; bring us the wine of devotion; for the possessions of this world vanish.

" The true object of heart and soul is the glory of union with our beloved; that object really exists, but without it both heart and soul would have no existence.

" O the bliss of that day, when I shall depart from this desolate mansion; shall seek rest for my soul; and shall follow the traces of my beloved.

" Dancing with love of his beauty, like a mote in a sunbeam, till I reach the spring and fountain of light, whence yon sun derives all his lustre!"

The couplets which follow relate as indubitably to human love and sensual gratifications:

" May the hand never shake which gathered the grapes! May the foot never slip, which pressed them!

" That poignant liquor, which the zealot calls the *mother of sins*, is pleasanter and sweeter to me than the kisses of a maiden.

" Wine two years old, and a damsel of fourteen, are sufficient society for me, above all companies great or small.

" How delightful is dancing to lively notes, and the cheerful melody of the flute, especially when we touch the hand of a beautiful girl.

“ ‘ Call for wine, and scatter flowers around: what more canst thou ask of fate ? ’ Thus spoke the nightingale this morning ; what sayest thou, sweet rose, to his precepts ?

“ Bring thy couch to the garden of roses, that thou mayest kiss the cheeks and lips of lovely damsels, quaff rich wine, and smell odoriferous blossoms.

“ O branch of an exquisite roseplant, for whose sake dost thou grow ? Ah ! on whom will that smiling rosebud confer delight ?

“ The rose would have discoursed on the beauties of my charmer, but the gale was jealous, and stole her breath before she spoke.

“ In this age, the only friends who are free from blemish are a flask of pure wine and a volume of elegant lovesongs.

“ O the joy of that moment, when the self-sufficiency of inebriation rendered me independent of the prince and of his minister ! ”

Many zealous admirers of Hâfiz insist, that by wine he invariably means *devotion* : and they have gone so far as to compose a dictionary of words in the *language*, as they call it, of the Sûfis ; in that vocabulary, *sleep* is explained by *meditation* on the divine perfections, and *perfume* by *hope* of the divine favour ; *gates* are *illapses* of grace ; *kisses* and *embraces*, the raptures of piety ; *idolaters*, *infidels*, and *libertines*, are men of the purest religion, and their *idol* is the Creator himself ; the *tavern* is a retired oratory, and its *keeper*, a sage instructor ; *beauty* denotes the *perfection* of the Supreme Being ; *tresses* are the expansion of his glory ; *lips* the hidden mysteries of his essence ; *down* on the cheek,

the world of spirits who encircle his throne; and a *black mole*, the *point* of indivisible unity; lastly, *wantonness*, *mirth*, and *inebriety*, mean religious ardour and abstraction from all terrestrial thoughts. The poet himself gives a colour in many passages to such an interpretation; and without it we can hardly conceive that his poems, or those of his numerous imitators, would be tolerated in a Muselman country, especially at Constantinople, where they are venerated as divine compositions: it must be admitted, that the sublimity of the *mystical allegory*, which, like metaphors and comparisons, should be *general* only, not minutely exact, is diminished, if not destroyed, by an attempt at *particular* and *distinct resemblances*; and that the style is open to dangerous misinterpretation, while it supplies real infidels with a pretext for laughing at religion itself.

On this occasion I cannot refrain from producing a most extraordinary ode by a Súfi of Bokhárá, who assumed the poetical surname of Ismat: a more modern poet, by prefixing three lines to each couplet, which rhyme with the first hemistich, has very elegantly and ingeniously converted the Kesidah into a Mokhammes, but I present you only with a literal version of the original distichs:

“Yesterday, half inebriated, I passed by the quarter where the vintners dwell, to seek the daughter of an infidel who sells wine.

“At the end of the street, there advanced before me a damsel, with a fairy's cheeks, who in the manner of a pagan, wore her tresses dishevelled over her shoulders like the sacerdotal thread. I said:

‘O thou, to the arch of whose eyebrow the new moon is a slave, what quarter is this, and where is thy mansion?’

“She answered: ‘Cast thy rosary on the ground; bind on thy shoulder the thread of paganism; throw stones at the glass of piety; and quaff wine from a full goblet;

“‘After that come before me, that I may whisper a word in thine ear: thou wilt accomplish thy journey, if thou listen to my discourse.’

“Abandoning my heart, and rapt in ecstasy, I ran after her, till I came to a place in which religion and reason forsook me.

“At a distance I beheld a company, all insane and inebriated, who came boiling and roaring with ardour from the wine of love;

“Without cymbals, or lutes, or viols, yet all full of mirth and melody; without wine, or goblet, or flask, yet all incessantly drinking.

“When the cord of restraint slipped from my hand, I desired to ask her one question, but she said: ‘Silence!’

“‘This is no square temple, to the gate of which thou canst arrive precipitately; this is no mosque to which thou canst come with tumult, but without knowledge. This is the banquet house of infidels, and within it all are intoxicated; all from the dawn of eternity to the day of resurrection lost in astonishment.

“‘Depart then from the cloister, and take the way to the tavern; cast off the cloak of a dervise, and wear the robe of a libertine.’

“I obeyed; and, if thou desirest the same strain



and colour with Ismat, imitate him, and sell this world and the next for one drop of pure wine."

Such is the strange religion, and stranger language of the Sûfis; but most of the Asiatic poets are of that religion, and if we thing it worth while to read their poems, we must think it worth while to understand them: their great Maulavi assures us, that "they profess eager desire, but with no carnal affection, and circulate the cup, but no material goblet; since all things are spiritual in their sect, all is mystery within mystery;" consistently with which declaration, he opens his astonishing work, entitled the *Masnavi*, with the following couplets:

Hear how yon reed in sadly pleasing tales  
 Departed bliss, and present woe bewails!  
 ' With me from native banks untimely torn,  
 Love-warbling youths and soft-eyed virgins mourn.  
 O! let the heart, by fatal absence rent,  
 Feel what I sing, and bleed when I lament:  
 Who roams in exile from his parent bower,  
 Pants to return, and chides each lingering hour.  
 My notes, in circles of the grave and gay,  
 Have hail'd the rising, cheer'd the closing day:  
 Each in my fond affections claim'd a part,  
 But none discern'd the secret of my heart.  
 What though my strains and sorrows flow combined?  
 Yet ears are slow, and carnal eyes are blind.  
 Free through each mortal form the spirits roll,  
 But sight avails not.—Can we see the soul?  
 Such notes breathed gently from yon vocal frame:  
 Breathed, said I? no; 'twas all enlivening flame.  
 'Tis love that fills the reed with warmth divine;  
 'Tis love that sparkles in the racy wine.

Me, plaintive wanderer from my peerless maid,  
The reed has fired; and all my soul betray'd.  
He gives the bane, and he with balsam cures;  
Afflicts, yet soothes; impassions, yet allures.  
Delightful pangs his amorous tales prolong;  
And Laili's frantic lover lives in song.  
Not he who reasons best this wisdom knows;  
Ears only drink what rapturous tongues disclose.  
Nor fruitless deem the reed's heart-piercing pain:  
See sweetness dropping from the parted cane.  
Alternate hope and fear my days divide,  
I courted Grief, and Anguish was my bride.  
Flow on, sad stream of life! I smile secure:  
Thou livest; Thou, the purest of the pure!  
Rise, vigorous youth! be free; be nobly bold,  
Shall chains confine you, though they blaze with  
gold?

Go; to your vase the gather'd main convey:  
What were your stores? The pittance of a day!  
New plans for wealth your fancies would invent;  
Yet shells, to nourish pearls, must lie content.  
The man whose robe love's purple arrows rend  
Bids avarice rest and toils tumultuous end.  
Hail, heavenly love! true source of endless gains!  
Thy balm restores me, and thy skill sustains.  
Oh, more than Galen learn'd, than Plato wise!  
My guide, my law, my joy supreme, arise;  
Love warms this frigid clay with mystic fire,  
And dancing mountains leap with young desire.  
Bless'd is the soul that swims in seas of love,  
And long the life sustain'd by food above.  
With forms imperfect can perfection dwell?  
Here pause, my song, and thou, vain world, fare-  
well.

A volume might be filled with similar passages from the Súfí poets; from Saib, Orfi, Mír Khosrau, Jámi, Hazín, and Sábik, who are next in beauty of composition to Háfiz and Sadi, but next at a considerable distance; from Mesíbi, the most elegant of their Turkish imitators; from a few Hindi poets of our own times, and from Ibnul Fâred, who wrote mystical odes in Arabic; but we may close this account of the Súfis with a passage from the third book of the Bustan, the declared subject of which is *divine love*; referring you for a particular detail of their metaphysics and theology to the Dabistan of Moshani Fani, and to the pleasing essay, called the *Junction of two Seas*, by that amiable and unfortunate prince Dará Shécúh:

“The love of a being, composed like thyself, of water and clay, destroys thy patience and peace of mind; it excoites thee, in thy waking hours, with minute beauties, and engages thee, in thy sleep, with vain imaginations: with such real affection dost thou lay thy head on her foot, that the universe, in comparison of her, vanishes into nothing before thee; and, since thy gold allures not her eye, gold and mere earth appear equal in thine. Not a breath dost thou utter to any one else, for with her thou hast no room for any other; thou declarest that her abode is in thine eye, or, when thou closest it, in thy heart; thou hast no fear of censure from any man; thou hast no power to be at rest for a moment; if she demands thy soul, it runs instantly to thy lip; and if she waves a cimeter over thee, thy head falls immediately under it. Since an absurd love, with its basis on air, affects thee so violently, and commands with a sway so despotic, canst thou wonder,

that they who walk in the true path are drowned in the sea of mysterious adoration? They disregard life through affection for its giver; they abandon the world through remembrance of its maker; they are inebriated with the melody of amorous complaints; they remember their beloved, and resign to him both this life and the next. Through remembrance of God, they shun all mankind: they are so enamoured of the cupbearer that they spill the wine from the cup. No panacea can heal them, for no mortal can be apprized of their malady; so loudly has rung in their ears, from eternity without beginning, the divine word *alest* with *bell*, the tumultuous exclamation of all spirits. They are a sect fully employed, but sitting in retirement; their feet are of earth, but their breath is a flame: with a single yell they could rend a mountain from its base; with a single cry they could throw a city into confusion; like wind, they are concealed and move nimbly; like stone, they are silent, yet repeat God's praises. At early dawn, their tears flow so copiously as to wash from their eyes the black powder of sleep: though the courser of their fancy ran so swiftly all night, yet the morning finds them left behind in disorder: night and day they are plunged in an ocean of ardent desire, till they are unable, through astonishment, to distinguish night from day. So enraptured are they with the beauty of Him who decorated the human form, that, with the beauty of the form itself they have no concern; and if ever they behold a beautiful shape, they see in it the mystery of God's work.

"The wise take not the husk in exchange for the kernel; and he, who makes that choice, has no understanding. He only has drunk the pure wine of

unity, who has forgotten, by remembering God, a things else in both worlds."

Let us return to the Hindus, among whom we now find the same emblematical theology, which Pythagoras admired and adopted. The loves of Krishna and Radha, or the reciprocal attraction between the divine goodness and the human soul, are told at large in the tenth book of the Bhágavat, and are the subject of a little *Pastoral Drama*, entitled Gítagóvinda; it was the work of Jayadéva, who flourished, it is said, before Calidas, and was born, as he tells himself, in Cenduli, which many believe to be in Calinga; but, since there is a town of a similar name in Berdwan, the natives of it insist that the finest lyric poet of India was their countryman, and celebrate, in honour of him, an annual jubilee, passing a whole night in representing his drama, and in singing his beautiful songs. After having translated the Gítagóvinda word for word, I reduced my translation to the form in which it is now exhibited: omitting only those passages, which are too luxuriant and too bold for an European taste, and the prefatory ode on the ten incarnations of Vishnu, with which you have been presented on another occasion: the phrases in Italics are the burdens of the several songs; and you may be assured, that not a single image or idea has been added by the translator.

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