ASIATIC RESEARCHES.

THE EIGHTH

ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE,

Delivered 24th February, 1791,

By Sir William Jones, President.

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 travelled over all Asia, if not with a perfect coincidence of sentiment, at least, with as much unanimity, as can be naturally expected in a large body of men, each of whom must assert it as his right, and consider it as his duty, to decide on all points for himself; and, never to decide on obscure points without the best evidence that can possibly be adduced. Our travels will this day be concluded; but our historical researches would have been left incomplete, if we had passed without attention over the numerous races of
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 Erihthra or Phenice, had originally, as many believe, a similar meaning, and were derived from words denoting a red colour: but whatever be their derivation, it seems indubitable, that a race of men were anciently settled in Idume and in Median, whom the oldest and best Greek authors call Erythreans, who were very distinct from the Arabs; and
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, affirms from authorities, which he had carefully examined, that the Idumean voyagers "carried with them both arts and sciences, among which were their astronomy, navigation, and letters; for in Idume, says he, they had letters and names for constellations before the days of Job, who mentions them." Job, indeed, or the author of the book which takes its name from him, was of the Arabian stock, as the language of that sublime work incontestably proves: but the mention and propagation of letters, 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 Troglophytes in part of the peninsula, but they seem to have been long supplanted by the Nomades, or wandering herdsmen; and who those Troglophytes 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 Arabick 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 Devanagari, to the consonants; with which they form a syllabick system extremely clear and convenient, but disposed in a less artificial order than the system of letters now exhibited in the Sanscrit grammars;
march; whence it may justly be inferred, that the
order contrived by Patini or his disciples is compa-
paratively 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 Nāgarī
and Ethiopic 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 Troglody-
tes, from their primeval habitations in natural ca-
verns, or in mountains excavated by their own la-
bour: 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

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languages,
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 Gbaldean idiom, were never preserved in writing, and the Ambarick 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 ancienly 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 Africk and to the people, among whom we now live; nor is it less observable, that, according to Ephorus, quoted by Strabon, 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 seemed to have professed the doctrines of Buddha, and enter the great Indian ocean, of which their Asiatick 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 Omman and the Scythian colonies, who, it is imagined, was formerly settled there, I have
have met with no trace, in the maritime part of Yemen, from Aden to Masfkat, of any nation who were not either Arabs or Abyssinian invaders.

Between that country and Irán are some islands, which, from their insignificance in our present inquiry, may here be neglected; and, as to the Curds, and 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 Diyárber, yet speak the Chaldaick 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 exist in the Iranian mountains, and return to those which separate Iran from India. The principal inhabitants of the mountains, called Párfici, where they run towards the west, Parveti, from a known Sanscrit word; where they turn in an eastern direction, and Paropamíjus, where they join Imaus in the north, were anciently distinguished among the Bráhmans by the name of Deradas, but seem to have been destroyed or expelled by the numerous tribes of Afgáns or Patans, among whom are the Balójas, who give their name to a mountains district; and there is very solid ground for believing, that the Afgáns descended from the Jews; because they

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sometimes in confidence avow that unpopular origin, which in general they sedulously conceal, and which other Muslims positively assert; because Hazaret, which appears to be the Asareth of Esdras, is one of their territories; and, principally, because their language is evidently a dialect of the scriptural Chaldaic.

We come now to the river Sindhu, and the country named from it: near its mouths we find a district, called by Nearchus, in his journal, Sangada; which M. D'Anville justly supposes to be the seat of the Sanganian, 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 Puna on the part of the British government, procured at my request the Sanganian letters, which are a sort of Nagari, 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 Pameras, as the Brabmans call them, or outcast Hindus, immemorially separated from the rest of the nation. It seems agreed, that the singular people, called Egyptians, and, by corruption, Gypsies, passed the Mediterranean immediately from Egypt: and their motley language, of which Mr. Grellmann exhibits a copious vocabulary, contains so many Sanscrit words, that their Indian origin can hardly be doubted: the authenticity of that vocabulary seems established by a multitude of
of Gypsy words, as angár, charcoal, cáshib, wood, pár, a bank, bbú, 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 Gypsi were Trogloidytes 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 Gypsi, 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 might have migrated, or been driven into Europe. To the kindnells of Mr. Malet I am also indebted for an account of the Beras: a remarkable race of men inhabiting chiefly the cities of Gujarát, who, though Muselmans in religion, are Jews in features, genius, and manners: they form in all places a distinct fraternity, and every where noted for address in bargaining, for minute thrist, and constant attention to lucre, but profess total ignorance of their own origin; though it seems probable, that they came first with their brethren, the Afghans, to the borders of India, where they learned in time to prefer a gainful
ful 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 Arabick, and am persuaded, that, like the people called Malays, they descended from Arabian traders and mariners after the age of Muhammad.

On the continent of India, between the river Vipāṣa, or Hysphasis, to the west, the mountains of Tripura and Cāmarūpa to the east, and Himālaya 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, Cirvatas, Cólás, Pulindas, Barbaras, and are all known to Europeans, though not all by their true names; but many Hindu pilgrims, who have travelled through their haunts, have fully described them to me; and I have found reasons for believing, that they sprang from the old Indian stem, though some of them were soon intermixed with the first ramblers from Tartary, whose language seems to have been the basis of that now spoken by the Moguls.

We come back to the Indian islands, and hasten to those which lie to the south-east of Silán or Taprobane; for Silán itself, 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
so as to include *Lancā*, or the equinoctial point of the *Indian* astronomers; nor can we reasonably doubt, that the same enterprising family planted colonies in the other isles of the same ocean from the *Malayadwīpas*, which take their name from the mountain of *Malaya*, to the *Moluccas* or *Mālicās*, and probably far beyond them. Captain *Forrest* assured me, that he found the isle of *Bali* (a great name in the historical poems of *India*) chiefly peopled by *Hindus*, who worshipped the same idols, which he had seen in this province; and that of *Madburā* must have been so denominated, like the well known territory in the western peninsula, by a nation, who understood *Sanscrit*. We need not be surprized, that M. *D'Anville* was unable to assign a reason, why the *Jabādios*, or *Yavadwīpa*, of *Ptolemy* was rendered in the old *Latin* version the isle of *Barley*; but we must admire the inquisitive spirit and patient labour of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, whom nothing observável seems to have escaped: *Java* 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 isle 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 prim-
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eval connection with India; from the very accurate and interesting account of it by a learned and ingenious member of our own body, we discover, without any recourse to etymological conjecture, that multitudes of pure Sanscrit words occur in the principal dialects of the Sumatrans; that, among their laws, two positive rules concerning sureties and interest appear to be taken word for word from the Indian legislators Na'ed and Ha'rita; and, what is yet more observable, that the system of letters used by the people of Rejang and Lampun, has the same artificial order with the Devanagari; 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 Tatars, who are still independent.
That the people of Pólyid or Tibet were Hindus, who engrafted the heresies of Buddha on their old mythological religion, we know from the researches of Cassiano, who had 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 and 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 Turtars having been wholly unlettered, as they freely confess, before their conversion to the religion of Arabia, we cannot but suspect that the natives of Eighur, Tancút, and Katha, who had systems
systems of letters, and are even said to have cultivated liberal arts, were not of the Tartarian, but of the Indian family; and I apply the same remark to the nation, whom we call Barmas, but who are known to the Pandits by the name of Brabhmacrinas, and seem to have been the Brachmani 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 Nagari derived from the square characters, in which the Pali, 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 Carpantius with having mistaken the Barma for the Pali 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 Pali 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 Massogeeta, and some other nations usually considered as Tartars, to have been really of the Gothick, that is of the Hindu race; for
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 *sip* 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 *Gotbick*, had a Tartarian origin, like that universally ascribed to the various branches of *Sclavonian*.

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

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the tract by Carpianus, on the literature of Avâj compares them with the Pâlì 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 Kboren, than whom no man was more able to elucidate the subject, has inserted in his historical work a disquisition on the language of Armenia, from which we might collect some curious information, if the present occasion required it; but to all the races of men, who inhabit the branches of Caucasus, and the northern limits of Iran, I apply the remark, before announced generally, that ferocious and hardy tribes, who retire for the sake of liberty to mountainous regions, and form by degrees a separate nation, must also form in the end a separate language, by agreeing on new words to express new ideas; provided that the language, which they carried with them, was not fixed by writing, and sufficiently copious. The Armenian damsels are said by Strabo to have sacrificed in the temple of the goddess Anaitis, whom we know, from other authorities, to be the Na'hîd, or Venus, of the old Persians; and it is for many reasons highly probable, that one and the same religion prevailed through the whole empire of Cyrus.

Having travelled round the continent, and among the islands, of Asia, we come again to the coast of the Mediterranea; and the principal nations of antiquity, who first demand our attention, are
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are the Grecians and Phrygians, who, though differing somewhat in manners, and perhaps in dialect, had an apparent affinity in religion as well as in language: the Dorian, Ionian, and Eolian families having emigrated from Europe, to which it is universally agreed that they first passed from Egypt. I can add nothing to what has been advanced concerning them in former discourses; and, no written monuments of old Phrygia being extant, I shall only observe, on the authority of the Greeks, that the grand object of mysterious worship in that country was the Mother of the Gods, or Nature personified, as we see her among the Indians in a thousand forms and under a thousand names. She was called in the Phrygian dialect Ma, 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 Mosesick law) are solemnized at the autumnal equinox in these provinces, where she is named; in one of her characters, Ma, is adored, in all of them, as the great Mother, is figured sitting on a lion, and appears in some of her temples with a diadem or mitre of turrets: a drum is called dinâima 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 Ephesus was manifestly the same goddess in the character of productive Nature; and the Astarte of the Syrians and Phenicians (to whom we now return) was, I doubt not, the same in another form: I may on the whole assure you, that
that the learned works of Selden and Jablonski, on the Gods of Syria and Egypt, would receive more illustration from the little Sanskrit book, entitled Chandâ, 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 Syriack 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 Chaldaick, or Arabian 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
loads them with the severe, but just, epithets of malignant, unsocial, obstinate, distrustful, fordid, changeable, turbulent; and describes them as furiously zealous in succouring their own countrymen, but implacably hostile to other nations; yet, with all the sottish perverseness, the stupid arrogance, and the brutal atrocity of their character, they had the peculiar merit, among all races of men under heaven, of preserving a rational and pure system of devotion in the midst of wild polytheism, inhuman or obscene 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 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 untrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication is a solid ground of belief, that they were genuine predictions, and consequently inspi-
ed; 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 suppress-ed, that I am entitled to your thanks."

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