

rapaciousness and cruelty are a proverb in Persia. The daughters of these mountaineers, especially in the province of Ghelan, are extremely beautiful.

In the towns, from causes already mentioned, the inhabitants present a very different aspect; for the long admixture of Georgian and Circassian blood has done much to improve the Tartar physiognomy of the rural tribes, and the somewhat heavy figures and sallow color of the original Persians.

"At the present time," says Chardin, "there is scarcely a man of rank in Persia whose mother is not either a Georgian or Circassian. The King himself is mostly derived, on the maternal side, from this exotic source; and as it is a long time since this mixture commenced, the women of Persia have also become much more beautiful, though they do not equal those of Georgia. As for the men, they are generally tall and erect, with a graceful manner and agreeable deportment."*

The modern Persians are polite and polished in their manners, and extravagantly addicted to flattery. They are obsequious to their superiors, but affect to despise all foreigners. They are proverbial adepts in deception, and like the Arabs, make a merit of their frauds when these have been practised with adroitness. They are lively and imaginative, fond of music and poetry, and idolise the names of Hafez and Saadi. The Persian language is a dialect of that of Pars, and is used in poetry and general literature, but the Turkish is the court language. The present rulers of Persia (who are Tartars of the Kujur race) have, of course, established Mahomedanism as the state religion; but the Ghebres and Parsees still worship fire as the emblem of the Supreme Being. The great body of this sect, however, was driven from Persia by the Arabs under the Chalif Omar in the seventh century. They established themselves in India, and especially in the province of Surat, where they are still numerous, and constitute an industrious population.

The *Illyats*, or wandering tribes of Persia, are chiefly of exotic extraction, and form a distinct body of people. Morier compares them to foreign shoots, grafted on the original Persian stock. They date from the conquest by the Saracens, A. D. 651, and their numbers were augmented during the subsequent invasions of Genghiz and Tamerlane. They are of Mongol-Tartar extraction, but have mingled for centuries with the Persians, to whom they have imparted their roving propensities. They are by turns cultivators, shepherds, soldiers, and freebooters,†

* CHARDIN, Voy. II, p. 31.

† MORIER, in Jour. Roy. Geog. Soc., VII, p. 230.