

and histories, their journals, poems, and miscellanies, their dipolmas, records of state, and justice, the laws of CHENGIZ, their publick registers and their compositions of every species:" if this be true, the people of *Khâtâ* 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 ARABSHA'H 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 *Jaghatâi* the people of *Oighûr*, as he calls them, "have a system of fourteen letters only, denominated from themselves *Oighûrî*;" and those are the characters, which the *Mongals* are supposed by most authors to have borrowed: ABU'L'GHAZI' tells us only, that CHENGIZ employed the natives of *Eighûr* 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 KUBLAIKHA'N ordered letters to be invented for his nation by a *Tibetan*, whom he rewarded with the dignity of chief *Lama*. The small number of *Eighûrî* 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 FERIDU'N; and, if the alphabet ascribed to the *Eigurians* by M. DES HAUTESRAYES be correct, we may safely decide, that in many of its letters it resembles both the *Zend* and the *Syriack*, 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 *Khatâyan* writing, is evidently a sort of broken *Cufick*; and the fine manuscript at *Oxford*, from which it was taken, is more probably a *Mendeian* work on some religious subject than, as he imagined, a code of *Tartarian* laws. That very learned man appears to have made a worse mistake in giving us for *Mongal* characters a page of writing, which has the appearance of *Japanese*, or mutilated *Chinese* letters,

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