

ed of that host of able and useful men which the world owes to the old East India Company. He and other kindred spirits of ardent genius and speculative mind made themselves acquainted with Sanscrit, in which was preserved the literature of the Brahmins, and Zend, the tongue in which the Persians embodied the creations of their fancy amid the dark ages of a remote antiquity. The former was ascertained to have been a fully equipped language—to have embalmed productions that still survive the decay of time centuries before the Christian Era, centuries even before Homer sang or Hesiod wrote. The Vedas, or Bible of the Brahmins, appear to have been composed within a very few years of the time when Moses bequeathed the Pentateuch as a Testament to the children of Israel. So far as known, it is thus, not indeed the parent of languages, but the eldest sister of that large stock which constitute what is called the Aryan, or Indo-Germanic family of tongues. Acquaintance with this elaborately constructed and perfectly developed tongue was facilitated by the aid of Grammars, composed by native authors, and marked by exact analysis as well as minute examination of details. A close investigation of its root-characters and forms of inflection disclosed the intimate relation which connected it with Greek and Latin—revealed the amount of light which it was capable of throwing on the origin, construction, and development of these. From this discovery may be dated the rise of those new branches of learning, Comparative Lexicography and Comparative Grammar. Nor is the task wholly left to a few antiquarians to trace back the pedigree of that multifarious mass of words which compose a Latin or Greek Dictionary through perhaps long lines of descent to a comparatively few original stems. It now to a certain extent forms part of the regular class work. Numerous indeed are the words which