

was the *Affyrian*; 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 *Affyrian* 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 *Muselmâns* and *Gabrs*, I had allowed the utmost natural duration to the reigns of eleven *Pishdadz* 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 era, 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 *Muselmâns* in *India*, has at once dissipated the cloud and cast a gleam of light 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 *Dabistân*, and composed by a *Mohammedan* traveller, a native of *Cashmir*, named MOHSAN, but distinguished by the assumed surname of FÂ'NÎ, or *Perishable*, begins with a wonderfully curious chapter on the religion of HU SHANG, which was long antierior to that of ZERATÛST, but had continued to be secretly professed 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 only are named in the *Dabistân*, and among them MAHBUL, or MAHA' BELLI, 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*, *Arabian*, 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*.

1. 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