

Chapter XLII: State Of The Barbaric World.--Part II.

In the rapid career of conquest, the Turks attacked and subdued the nation of the Ogors or Varchonites [3011] on the banks of the River Til, which derived the epithet of Black from its dark water or gloomy forests. [31] The khan of the Ogors was slain with three hundred thousand of his subjects, and their bodies were scattered over the space of four days' journey: their surviving countrymen acknowledged the strength and mercy of the Turks; and a small portion, about twenty thousand warriors, preferred exile to servitude. They followed the well-known road of the Volga, cherished the error of the nations who confounded them with the Avars, and spread the terror of that false though famous appellation, which had not, however, saved its lawful proprietors from the yoke of the Turks. [32] After a long and victorious march, the new Avars arrived at the foot of Mount Caucasus, in the country of the Alani [33] and Circassians, where they first heard of the splendor and weakness of the Roman empire. They humbly requested their confederate, the prince of the Alani, to lead them to this source of riches; and their ambassador, with the permission of the governor of Lazica, was transported by the Euxine Sea to Constantinople. The whole city was poured forth to behold with curiosity and terror the aspect of a strange people: their long hair, which hung in tresses down their backs, was gracefully bound with ribbons, but the rest of their habit appeared to imitate the fashion of the Huns. When they were admitted to the audience of Justinian, Candish, the first of the ambassadors, addressed the Roman emperor in these terms: "You see before you, O

mighty prince, the representatives of the strongest and most populous of nations, the invincible, the irresistible Avars. We are willing to devote ourselves to your service: we are able to vanquish and destroy all the enemies who now disturb your repose. But we expect, as the price of our alliance, as the reward of our valor, precious gifts, annual subsidies, and fruitful possessions." At the time of this embassy, Justinian had reigned above thirty, he had lived above seventy-five years: his mind, as well as his body, was feeble and languid; and the conqueror of Africa and Italy, careless of the permanent interest of his people, aspired only to end his days in the bosom even of inglorious peace. In a studied oration, he imparted to the senate his resolution to dissemble the insult, and to purchase the friendship of the Avars; and the whole senate, like the mandarins of China, applauded the incomparable wisdom and foresight of their sovereign. The instruments of luxury were immediately prepared to captivate the Barbarians; silken garments, soft and splendid beds, and chains and collars incrusting with gold. The ambassadors, content with such liberal reception, departed from Constantinople, and Valentin, one of the emperor's guards, was sent with a similar character to their camp at the foot of Mount Caucasus. As their destruction or their success must be alike advantageous to the empire, he persuaded them to invade the enemies of Rome; and they were easily tempted, by gifts and promises, to gratify their ruling inclinations. These fugitives, who fled before the Turkish arms, passed the Tanais and Borysthenes, and boldly advanced into the heart of Poland and Germany, violating the law of nations, and abusing the rights of victory. Before ten years had elapsed, their camps were seated on

the Danube and the Elbe, many Bulgarian and Sclavonian names were obliterated from the earth, and the remainder of their tribes are found, as tributaries and vassals, under the standard of the Avars. The chagan, the peculiar title of their king, still affected to cultivate the friendship of the emperor; and Justinian entertained some thoughts of fixing them in Pannonia, to balance the prevailing power of the Lombards. But the virtue or treachery of an Avar betrayed the secret enmity and ambitious designs of their countrymen; and they loudly complained of the timid, though jealous policy, of detaining their ambassadors, and denying the arms which they had been allowed to purchase in the capital of the empire. [34]

[Footnote 3011: The Ogors or Varchonites, from Var. a river, (obviously connected with the name Avar,) must not be confounded with the Uigours, the eastern Turks, (v. Hammer, Osmanische Geschichte, vol. i. p. 3,) who speak a language the parent of the more modern Turkish dialects. Compare Klaproth, page 121. They are the ancestors of the Usbeck Turks. These Ogors were of the same Finnish race with the Huns; and the 20,000 families which fled towards the west, after the Turkish invasion, were of the same race with those which remained to the east of the Volga, the true Avars of Theophy fact.--M.]

[Footnote 31: The River Til, or Tula, according to the geography of De Guignes, (tom. i. part ii. p. lviii. and 352,) is a small, though grateful, stream of the desert, that falls into the Orhon, Selinga, &c. See Bell, Journey from Petersburg to Peking, (vol. ii. p. 124;) yet

his own description of the Keat, down which he sailed into the Oby, represents the name and attributes of the black river, (p. 139.) * Note: M. Klaproth, (*Tableaux Historiques de l'Asie*, p. 274) supposes this river to be an eastern affluent of the Volga, the Kama, which, from the color of its waters, might be called black. M. Abel Remusat (*Recherchea sur les Langues Tartares*, vol. i. p. 320) and M. St. Martin (vol. ix. p. 373) consider it the Volga, which is called Atel or Etel by all the Turkish tribes. It is called Attilas by Menander, and Etilia by the monk Ruysbreek (1253.) See Klaproth, *Tabl. Hist.* p. 247. This geography is much more clear and simple than that adopted by Gibbon from De Guignes, or suggested from Bell.--M.]

[Footnote 32: Theophylact, l. vii. c. 7, 8. And yet his true Avars are invisible even to the eyes of M. de Guignes; and what can be more illustrious than the false? The right of the fugitive Ogors to that national appellation is confessed by the Turks themselves, (Menander, p. 108.)]

[Footnote 33: The Alani are still found in the Genealogical History of the Tartars, (p. 617,) and in D'Anville's maps. They opposed the march of the generals of Zingis round the Caspian Sea, and were overthrown in a great battle, (*Hist. de Gengiscan*, l. iv. c. 9, p. 447.)]

[Footnote 34: The embassies and first conquests of the Avars may be read in Menander, (*Excerpt. Legat.* p. 99, 100, 101, 154, 155,) Theophanes, (p. 196,) the *Historia Miscella*, (l. xvi. p. 109,) and Gregory of Tours,

(L iv. c. 23, 29, in the Historians of France, tom. ii. p. 214, 217.)]

Perhaps the apparent change in the dispositions of the emperors may be ascribed to the embassy which was received from the conquerors of the Avars. [35] The immense distance which eluded their arms could not extinguish their resentment: the Turkish ambassadors pursued the footsteps of the vanquished to the Jaik, the Volga, Mount Caucasus, the Euxine and Constantinople, and at length appeared before the successor of Constantine, to request that he would not espouse the cause of rebels and fugitives. Even commerce had some share in this remarkable negotiation: and the Sogdoites, who were now the tributaries of the Turks, embraced the fair occasion of opening, by the north of the Caspian, a new road for the importation of Chinese silk into the Roman empire. The Persian, who preferred the navigation of Ceylon, had stopped the caravans of Bochara and Samarcand: their silk was contemptuously burnt: some Turkish ambassadors died in Persia, with a suspicion of poison; and the great khan permitted his faithful vassal Maniach, the prince of the Sogdoites, to propose, at the Byzantine court, a treaty of alliance against their common enemies. Their splendid apparel and rich presents, the fruit of Oriental luxury, distinguished Maniach and his colleagues from the rude savages of the North: their letters, in the Scythian character and language, announced a people who had attained the rudiments of science: [36] they enumerated the conquests, they offered the friendship and military aid of the Turks; and their sincerity was attested by direful imprecations (if they were guilty of falsehood) against their own head, and the head of Disabul their master. The Greek

prince entertained with hospitable regard the ambassadors of a remote and powerful monarch: the sight of silk-worms and looms disappointed the hopes of the Sogdoites; the emperor renounced, or seemed to renounce, the fugitive Avars, but he accepted the alliance of the Turks; and the ratification of the treaty was carried by a Roman minister to the foot of Mount Altai. Under the successors of Justinian, the friendship of the two nations was cultivated by frequent and cordial intercourse; the most favored vassals were permitted to imitate the example of the great khan, and one hundred and six Turks, who, on various occasions, had visited Constantinople, departed at the same time for their native country. The duration and length of the journey from the Byzantine court to Mount Altai are not specified: it might have been difficult to mark a road through the nameless deserts, the mountains, rivers, and morasses of Tartary; but a curious account has been preserved of the reception of the Roman ambassadors at the royal camp. After they had been purified with fire and incense, according to a rite still practised under the sons of Zingis, [361 1] they were introduced to the presence of Disabul. In a valley of the Golden Mountain, they found the great khan in his tent, seated in a chair with wheels, to which a horse might be occasionally harnessed. As soon as they had delivered their presents, which were received by the proper officers, they exposed, in a florid oration, the wishes of the Roman emperor, that victory might attend the arms of the Turks, that their reign might be long and prosperous, and that a strict alliance, without envy or deceit, might forever be maintained between the two most powerful nations of the earth. The answer of Disabul corresponded with these friendly professions, and

the ambassadors were seated by his side, at a banquet which lasted the greatest part of the day: the tent was surrounded with silk hangings, and a Tartar liquor was served on the table, which possessed at least the intoxicating qualities of wine. The entertainment of the succeeding day was more sumptuous; the silk hangings of the second tent were embroidered in various figures; and the royal seat, the cups, and the vases, were of gold. A third pavilion was supported by columns of gilt wood; a bed of pure and massy gold was raised on four peacocks of the same metal: and before the entrance of the tent, dishes, basins, and statues of solid silver, and admirable art, were ostentatiously piled in wagons, the monuments of valor rather than of industry. When Disabul led his armies against the frontiers of Persia, his Roman allies followed many days the march of the Turkish camp, nor were they dismissed till they had enjoyed their precedency over the envoy of the great king, whose loud and intemperate clamors interrupted the silence of the royal banquet. The power and ambition of Chosroes cemented the union of the Turks and Romans, who touched his dominions on either side: but those distant nations, regardless of each other, consulted the dictates of interest, without recollecting the obligations of oaths and treaties. While the successor of Disabul celebrated his father's obsequies, he was saluted by the ambassadors of the emperor Tiberius, who proposed an invasion of Persia, and sustained, with firmness, the angry and perhaps the just reproaches of that haughty Barbarian. "You see my ten fingers," said the great khan, and he applied them to his mouth. "You Romans speak with as many tongues, but they are tongues of deceit and perjury. To me you hold one language, to my subjects another; and the nations are

successively deluded by your perfidious eloquence. You precipitate your allies into war and danger, you enjoy their labors, and you neglect your benefactors. Hasten your return, inform your master that a Turk is incapable of uttering or forgiving falsehood, and that he shall speedily meet the punishment which he deserves. While he solicits my friendship with flattering and hollow words, he is sunk to a confederate of my fugitive Varchonites. If I condescend to march against those contemptible slaves, they will tremble at the sound of our whips; they will be trampled, like a nest of ants, under the feet of my innumerable cavalry. I am not ignorant of the road which they have followed to invade your empire; nor can I be deceived by the vain pretence, that Mount Caucasus is the impregnable barrier of the Romans. I know the course of the Niester, the Danube, and the Hebrus; the most warlike nations have yielded to the arms of the Turks; and from the rising to the setting sun, the earth is my inheritance." Notwithstanding this menace, a sense of mutual advantage soon renewed the alliance of the Turks and Romans: but the pride of the great khan survived his resentment; and when he announced an important conquest to his friend the emperor Maurice, he styled himself the master of the seven races, and the lord of the seven climates of the world. [37]

[Footnote 35: Theophanes, (Chron. p. 204,) and the Hist. Miscella, (l. xvi. p. 110,) as understood by De Guignes, (tom. i. part ii. p. 354,) appear to speak of a Turkish embassy to Justinian himself; but that of Maniach, in the fourth year of his successor Justin, is positively the first that reached Constantinople, (Menander p. 108.)]

[Footnote 36: The Russians have found characters, rude hieroglyphics, on the Irtysh and Yenisei, on medals, tombs, idols, rocks, obelisks, &c., (Strahlenberg, Hist. of Siberia, p. 324, 346, 406, 429.) Dr. Hyde (de Religione Veterum Persarum, p. 521, &c.) has given two alphabets of Thibet and of the Eygours. I have long harbored a suspicion, that all the Scythian, and some, perhaps much, of the Indian science, was derived from the Greeks of Bactriana. * Note: Modern discoveries give no confirmation to this suspicion. The character of Indian science, as well as of their literature and mythology, indicates an original source. Grecian art may have occasionally found its way into India. One or two of the sculptures in Col. Tod's account of the Jain temples, if correct, show a finer outline, and purer sense of beauty, than appears native to India, where the monstrous always predominated over simple nature.--M.]

[Footnote 3611: This rite is so curious, that I have subjoined the description of it:-- When these (the exorcisers, the Shamans) approached Zemarchus, they took all our baggage and placed it in the centre. Then, kindling a fire with branches of frankincense, lowly murmuring certain barbarous words in the Scythian language, beating on a kind of bell (a gong) and a drum, they passed over the baggage the leaves of the frankincense, crackling with the fire, and at the same time themselves becoming frantic, and violently leaping about, seemed to exorcise the evil spirits. Having thus as they thought, averted all evil, they led Zemarchus himself through the fire. Menander, in Niebuhr's Bryant. Hist. p. 381. Compare Carpini's Travels. The princes of the race of Zingis

Khan condescended to receive the ambassadors of the king of France, at the end of the 13th century without their submitting to this humiliating rite. See Correspondence published by Abel Remusat, *Nouv. Mem. de l'Acad des Inscip.* vol. vii. On the embassy of Zemarchus, compare Klaproth, *Tableaux de l'Asie* p. 116.--M.]

[Footnote 37: All the details of these Turkish and Roman embassies, so curious in the history of human manners, are drawn from the extracts of Menander, (p. 106--110, 151--154, 161-164,) in which we often regret the want of order and connection.]

Disputes have often arisen between the sovereigns of Asia for the title of king of the world; while the contest has proved that it could not belong to either of the competitors. The kingdom of the Turks was bounded by the Oxus or Gihon; and Touran was separated by that great river from the rival monarchy of Iran, or Persia, which in a smaller compass contained perhaps a larger measure of power and population. The Persians, who alternately invaded and repulsed the Turks and the Romans, were still ruled by the house of Sassan, which ascended the throne three hundred years before the accession of Justinian. His contemporary, Cabades, or Kobad, had been successful in war against the emperor Anastasius; but the reign of that prince was distracted by civil and religious troubles. A prisoner in the hands of his subjects, an exile among the enemies of Persia, he recovered his liberty by prostituting the honor of his wife, and regained his kingdom with the dangerous and mercenary aid of the Barbarians, who had slain his father. His nobles

were suspicious that Kobad never forgave the authors of his expulsion, or even those of his restoration. The people was deluded and inflamed by the fanaticism of Mazdak, [38] who asserted the community of women, [39] and the equality of mankind, whilst he appropriated the richest lands and most beautiful females to the use of his sectaries. The view of these disorders, which had been fomented by his laws and example, [40] embittered the declining age of the Persian monarch; and his fears were increased by the consciousness of his design to reverse the natural and customary order of succession, in favor of his third and most favored son, so famous under the names of Chosroes and Nushirvan. To render the youth more illustrious in the eyes of the nations, Kobad was desirous that he should be adopted by the emperor Justin: [4011] the hope of peace inclined the Byzantine court to accept this singular proposal; and Chosroes might have acquired a specious claim to the inheritance of his Roman parent. But the future mischief was diverted by the advice of the quaestor Proclus: a difficulty was started, whether the adoption should be performed as a civil or military rite; [41] the treaty was abruptly dissolved; and the sense of this indignity sunk deep into the mind of Chosroes, who had already advanced to the Tigris on his road to Constantinople. His father did not long survive the disappointment of his wishes: the testament of their deceased sovereign was read in the assembly of the nobles; and a powerful faction, prepared for the event, and regardless of the priority of age, exalted Chosroes to the throne of Persia. He filled that throne during a prosperous period of forty-eight years; [42] and the Justice of Nushirvan is celebrated as the theme of immortal praise by the nations of the East.

[Footnote 38: See D'Herbelot, (Bibliot. Orient. p. 568, 929;) Hyde, (de Religione Vet. Persarum, c. 21, p. 290, 291;) Pocock, (Specimen Hist. Arab. p. 70, 71;) Euty chius, (Annal. tom. ii. p. 176;) Texeira, (in Stevens, Hist. of Persia, l. i. c. 34.) * Note: Mazdak was an Archimagus, born, according to Mirkhond, (translated by De Sacy, p. 353, and Malcolm, vol. i. p. 104,) at Istakhar or Persepolis, according to an inedited and anonymous history, (the Modjmal-alte-warikh in the Royal Library at Paris, quoted by St. Martin, vol. vii. p. 322) at Wischapour in Chorasán: his father's name was Bamdadam. He announces himself as a reformer of Zoroastrianism, and carried the doctrine of the two principles to a much greater height. He preached the absolute indifference of human action, perfect equality of rank, community of property and of women, marriages between the nearest kindred; he interdicted the use of animal food, proscribed the killing of animals for food, enforced a vegetable diet. See St. Martin, vol. vii. p. 322. Malcolm, vol. i. p. 104. Mirkhond translated by De Sacy. It is remarkable that the doctrine of Mazdak spread into the West. Two inscriptions found in Cyrene, in 1823, and explained by M. Gesenius, and by M. Hamaker of Leyden, prove clearly that his doctrines had been eagerly embraced by the remains of the ancient Gnostics; and Mazdak was enrolled with Thoth, Saturn, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Epicurus, John, and Christ, as the teachers of true Gnostic wisdom. See St. Martin, vol. vii. p. 338. Gesenius de Inscriptioe Phoenicio-Graeca in Cyrenaica nuper reperta, Halle, 1825. Hamaker, Lettre a M. Raoul Rochette, Leyden, 1825.--M.]

[Footnote 39: The fame of the new law for the community of women was soon propagated in Syria (Asseman. Bibliot. Orient. tom. iii. p. 402) and Greece, (Procop. Persic. l. i. c. 5.)]

[Footnote 40: He offered his own wife and sister to the prophet; but the prayers of Nushirvan saved his mother, and the indignant monarch never forgave the humiliation to which his filial piety had stooped: *pedes tuos deosculatus* (said he to Mazdak,) *cujus foetor adhuc nares occupat*, (Pocock, Specimen Hist. Arab. p. 71.)]

[Footnote 4011: St. Martin questions this adoption: he urges its improbability; and supposes that Procopius, perverting some popular traditions, or the remembrance of some fruitless negotiations which took place at that time, has mistaken, for a treaty of adoption some treaty of guaranty or protection for the purpose of insuring the crown, after the death of Kobad, to his favorite son Chosroes, vol. viii. p. 32. Yet the Greek historians seem unanimous as to the proposal: the Persians might be expected to maintain silence on such a subject.--M.]

[Footnote 41: Procopius, Persic. l. i. c. 11. Was not Proclus over-wise? Was not the danger imaginary?--The excuse, at least, was injurious to a nation not ignorant of letters. Whether any mode of adoption was practised in Persia, I much doubt.]

[Footnote 42: From Procopius and Agathias, Pagi (tom. ii. p. 543, 626)

has proved that Chosroes Nushirvan ascended the throne in the fifth year of Justinian, (A.D. 531, April 1.--A.D. 532, April 1.) But the true chronology, which harmonizes with the Greeks and Orientals, is ascertained by John Malala, (tom. ii. 211.) Cabades, or Kobad, after a reign of forty-three years and two months, sickened the 8th, and died the 13th of September, A.D. 531, aged eighty-two years. According to the annals of Eutychius, Nushirvan reigned forty seven years and six months; and his death must consequently be placed in March, A.D. 579.]

But the justice of kings is understood by themselves, and even by their subjects, with an ample indulgence for the gratification of passion and interest. The virtue of Chosroes was that of a conqueror, who, in the measures of peace and war, is excited by ambition, and restrained by prudence; who confounds the greatness with the happiness of a nation, and calmly devotes the lives of thousands to the fame, or even the amusement, of a single man. In his domestic administration, the just Nushirvan would merit in our feelings the appellation of a tyrant. His two elder brothers had been deprived of their fair expectations of the diadem: their future life, between the supreme rank and the condition of subjects, was anxious to themselves and formidable to their master: fear as well as revenge might tempt them to rebel: the slightest evidence of a conspiracy satisfied the author of their wrongs; and the repose of Chosroes was secured by the death of these unhappy princes, with their families and adherents. One guiltless youth was saved and dismissed by the compassion of a veteran general; and this act of humanity, which was revealed by his son, overbalanced the merit of reducing twelve nations

to the obedience of Persia. The zeal and prudence of Mebodes had fixed the diadem on the head of Chosroes himself; but he delayed to attend the royal summons, till he had performed the duties of a military review: he was instantly commanded to repair to the iron tripod, which stood before the gate of the palace, [43] where it was death to relieve or approach the victim; and Mebodes languished several days before his sentence was pronounced, by the inflexible pride and calm ingratitude of the son of Kobad. But the people, more especially in the East, is disposed to forgive, and even to applaud, the cruelty which strikes at the loftiest heads; at the slaves of ambition, whose voluntary choice has exposed them to live in the smiles, and to perish by the frown, of a capricious monarch. In the execution of the laws which he had no temptation to violate; in the punishment of crimes which attacked his own dignity, as well as the happiness of individuals; Nushirvan, or Chosroes, deserved the appellation of just. His government was firm, rigorous, and impartial. It was the first labor of his reign to abolish the dangerous theory of common or equal possessions: the lands and women which the sectaries of Mazdak has usurped were restored to their lawful owners; and the temperate [4311] chastisement of the fanatics or impostors confirmed the domestic rights of society. Instead of listening with blind confidence to a favorite minister, he established four viziers over the four great provinces of his empire, Assyria, Media, Persia, and Bactriana. In the choice of judges, praefects, and counsellors, he strove to remove the mask which is always worn in the presence of kings: he wished to substitute the natural order of talents for the accidental distinctions of birth and fortune; he professed, in specious language,

his intention to prefer those men who carried the poor in their bosoms, and to banish corruption from the seat of justice, as dogs were excluded from the temples of the Magi. The code of laws of the first Artaxerxes was revived and published as the rule of the magistrates; but the assurance of speedy punishment was the best security of their virtue. Their behavior was inspected by a thousand eyes, their words were overheard by a thousand ears, the secret or public agents of the throne; and the provinces, from the Indian to the Arabian confines, were enlightened by the frequent visits of a sovereign, who affected to emulate his celestial brother in his rapid and salutary career. Education and agriculture he viewed as the two objects most deserving of his care. In every city of Persia orphans, and the children of the poor, were maintained and instructed at the public expense; the daughters were given in marriage to the richest citizens of their own rank, and the sons, according to their different talents, were employed in mechanic trades, or promoted to more honorable service. The deserted villages were relieved by his bounty; to the peasants and farmers who were found incapable of cultivating their lands, he distributed cattle, seed, and the instruments of husbandry; and the rare and inestimable treasure of fresh water was parsimoniously managed, and skilfully dispersed over the arid territory of Persia. [44] The prosperity of that kingdom was the effect and evidence of his virtues; his vices are those of Oriental despotism; but in the long competition between Chosroes and Justinian, the advantage both of merit and fortune is almost always on the side of the Barbarian. [45]

[Footnote 43: Procopius, Persic. 1. i. c. 23. Brisson, de Regn. Pers. p. 494. The gate of the palace of Ispahan is, or was, the fatal scene of disgrace or death, (Chardin, Voyage en Perse, tom. iv. p. 312, 313.)]

[Footnote 4311: This is a strange term. Nushirvan employed a stratagem similar to that of Jehu, 2 Kings, x. 18--28, to separate the followers of Mazdak from the rest of his subjects, and with a body of his troops cut them all in pieces. The Greek writers concur with the Persian in this representation of Nushirvan's temperate conduct. Theophanes, p. 146. Mirkhond. p. 362. Euty chius, Ann. vol. ii. p. 179. Abulfeda, in an unedited part, consulted by St. Martin as well as in a passage formerly cited. Le Beau vol. viii. p. 38. Malcolm vol 1 p. 109.--M.]

[Footnote 44: In Persia, the prince of the waters is an officer of state. The number of wells and subterraneous channels is much diminished, and with it the fertility of the soil: 400 wells have been recently lost near Tauris, and 42,000 were once reckoned in the province of Khorasan (Chardin, tom. iii. p. 99, 100. Tavernier, tom. i. p. 416.)]

[Footnote 45: The character and government of Nushirvan is represented some times in the words of D'Herbelot, (Bibliot. Orient. p. 680, &c., from Khondemir,) Euty chius, (Annal. tom. ii. p. 179, 180,--very rich,) Abulpharagius, (Dynast. vii. p. 94, 95,--very poor,) Tarikh Schikard, (p. 144--150,) Texeira, (in Stevens, l. i. c. 35,) Asseman, (Bibliot Orient. tom. iii. p. 404-410,) and the Abbe Fourmont, (Hist. de l'Acad. des Inscriptions, tom. vii. p. 325--334,) who has translated a spurious

or genuine testament of Nushirvan.]

To the praise of justice Nushirvan united the reputation of knowledge; and the seven Greek philosophers, who visited his court, were invited and deceived by the strange assurance, that a disciple of Plato was seated on the Persian throne. Did they expect, that a prince, strenuously exercised in the toils of war and government, should agitate, with dexterity like their own, the abstruse and profound questions which amused the leisure of the schools of Athens? Could they hope that the precepts of philosophy should direct the life, and control the passions, of a despot, whose infancy had been taught to consider his absolute and fluctuating will as the only rule of moral obligation?

[46] The studies of Chosroes were ostentatious and superficial: but his example awakened the curiosity of an ingenious people, and the light of science was diffused over the dominions of Persia. [47] At Gondi Sapor, in the neighborhood of the royal city of Susa, an academy of physic was founded, which insensibly became a liberal school of poetry, philosophy, and rhetoric. [48] The annals of the monarchy [49] were composed; and while recent and authentic history might afford some useful lessons both to the prince and people, the darkness of the first ages was embellished by the giants, the dragons, and the fabulous heroes of Oriental romance. [50] Every learned or confident stranger was enriched by the bounty, and flattered by the conversation, of the monarch: he nobly rewarded a Greek physician, [51] by the deliverance of three thousand, captives; and the sophists, who contended for his favor, were exasperated by the wealth and insolence of Uranius, their more successful rival. Nushirvan

believed, or at least respected, the religion of the Magi; and some traces of persecution may be discovered in his reign. [52] Yet he allowed himself freely to compare the tenets of the various sects; and the theological disputes, in which he frequently presided, diminished the authority of the priest, and enlightened the minds of the people. At his command, the most celebrated writers of Greece and India were translated into the Persian language; a smooth and elegant idiom, recommended by Mahomet to the use of paradise; though it is branded with the epithets of savage and unmusical, by the ignorance and presumption of Agathias. [53] Yet the Greek historian might reasonably wonder that it should be found possible to execute an entire version of Plato and Aristotle in a foreign dialect, which had not been framed to express the spirit of freedom and the subtleties of philosophic disquisition. And, if the reason of the Stagyrite might be equally dark, or equally intelligible in every tongue, the dramatic art and verbal argumentation of the disciple of Socrates, [54] appear to be indissolubly mingled with the grace and perfection of his Attic style. In the search of universal knowledge, Nushirvan was informed, that the moral and political fables of Pilpay, an ancient Brachman, were preserved with jealous reverence among the treasures of the kings of India. The physician Perozes was secretly despatched to the banks of the Ganges, with instructions to procure, at any price, the communication of this valuable work. His dexterity obtained a transcript, his learned diligence accomplished the translation; and the fables of Pilpay [55] were read and admired in the assembly of Nushirvan and his nobles. The Indian original, and the Persian copy, have long since disappeared; but this venerable monument

has been saved by the curiosity of the Arabian caliphs, revived in the modern Persic, the Turkish, the Syriac, the Hebrew, and the Greek idioms, and transfused through successive versions into the modern languages of Europe. In their present form, the peculiar character, the manners and religion of the Hindoos, are completely obliterated; and the intrinsic merit of the fables of Pilpay is far inferior to the concise elegance of Phaedrus, and the native graces of La Fontaine. Fifteen moral and political sentences are illustrated in a series of apologues: but the composition is intricate, the narrative prolix, and the precept obvious and barren. Yet the Brachman may assume the merit of inventing a pleasing fiction, which adorns the nakedness of truth, and alleviates, perhaps, to a royal ear, the harshness of instruction. With a similar design, to admonish kings that they are strong only in the strength of their subjects, the same Indians invented the game of chess, which was likewise introduced into Persia under the reign of Nushirvan. [56]

[Footnote 46: A thousand years before his birth, the judges of Persia had given a solemn opinion, (Herodot. l. iii. c. 31, p. 210, edit. Wesseling.) Nor had this constitutional maxim been neglected as a useless and barren theory.]

[Footnote 47: On the literary state of Persia, the Greek versions, philosophers, sophists, the learning or ignorance of Chosroes, Agathias (l. ii. c. 66--71) displays much information and strong prejudices.]

[Footnote 48: Asseman. Bibliot. Orient. tom. iv. p. DCCXLV. vi. vii.]

[Footnote 49: The Shah Nameh, or Book of Kings, is perhaps the original record of history which was translated into Greek by the interpreter Sergius, (Agathias, l. v. p. 141,) preserved after the Mahometan conquest, and versified in the year 994, by the national poet Ferdoussi. See D'Anquetil (Mem. de l'Academie, tom. xxxi. p. 379) and Sir William Jones, (Hist. of Nadir Shah, p. 161.)]

[Footnote 50: In the fifth century, the name of Restom, or Rostam, a hero who equalled the strength of twelve elephants, was familiar to the Armenians, (Moses Chorenensis, Hist. Armen. l. ii. c. 7, p. 96, edit. Whiston.) In the beginning of the seventh, the Persian Romance of Rostam and Isfendiar was applauded at Mecca, (Sale's Koran, c. xxxi. p. 335.) Yet this exposition of ludicrum novae historiae is not given by Maracci, (Refutat. Alcoran. p. 544--548.)]

[Footnote 51: Procop. (Goth. l. iv. c. 10.) Kobad had a favorite Greek physician, Stephen of Edessa, (Persic. l. ii. c. 26.) The practice was ancient; and Herodotus relates the adventures of Democedes of Crotona, (l. iii p. 125--137.)]

[Footnote 52: See Pagi, tom. ii. p. 626. In one of the treaties an honorable article was inserted for the toleration and burial of the Catholics, (Menander, in Excerpt. Legat. p. 142.) Nushizad, a son of Nushirvan, was a Christian, a rebel, and--a martyr? (D'Herbelot, p. 681.)]

[Footnote 53: On the Persian language, and its three dialects, consult D'Anquetil (p. 339--343) and Jones, (p. 153--185:) is the character which Agathias (l. ii. p. 66) ascribes to an idiom renowned in the East for poetical softness.]

[Footnote 54: Agathias specifies the Gorgias, Phaedon, Parmenides, and Timaeus. Renaudot (Fabricius, Bibliot. Graec. tom. xii. p. 246--261) does not mention this Barbaric version of Aristotle.]

[Footnote 55: Of these fables, I have seen three copies in three different languages: 1. In Greek, translated by Simeon Seth (A.D. 1100) from the Arabic, and published by Starck at Berlin in 1697, in 12mo. 2. In Latin, a version from the Greek Sapia Indorum, inserted by Pere Poussin at the end of his edition of Pachymer, (p. 547--620, edit. Roman.) 3. In French, from the Turkish, dedicated, in 1540, to Sultan Soliman Contes et Fables Indiennes de Bidpai et de Lokman, par Mm. Galland et Cardonne, Paris, 1778, 3 vols. in 12mo. Mr. Warton (History of English Poetry, vol. i. p. 129--131) takes a larger scope. * Note: The oldest Indian collection extant is the Pancha-tantra, (the five collections,) analyzed by Mr. Wilson in the Transactions of the Royal Asiat. Soc. It was translated into Persian by Barsuyah, the physician of Nushirvan, under the name of the Fables of Bidpai, (Vidyapriya, the Friend of Knowledge, or, as the Oriental writers understand it, the Friend of Medicine.) It was translated into Arabic by Abdolla Ibn Mokaffa, under the name of Kalila and Dimnah. From the Arabic it passed

into the European languages. Compare Wilson, in *Trans. As. Soc.* i. 52.
dohlen, *das alte Indien*, ii. p. 386. Silvestre de Sacy, *Memoire sur*
Kalila vs Dimnah.--M.]

[Footnote 56: See the *Historia Shahiludii* of Dr. Hyde, (*Syntagm.*
Dissertat. tom. ii. p. 61--69.)]