

Their vedas or sacred books, revealed, as they say, by Brahma himself, at the beginning of the world, and arranged by Viasa (a name which only signifies a collector) at the beginning of the present age; and—if we may judge of them by the calendar which is annexed, and to which they refer, as well as by the position of the colours which this calendar points out,—may go as far back as 3200 years. which would closely approach the epoch of Moses. (1) Perhaps even those who have faith in the assertion of Megasthenes, (2) that in his times the Indians were ignorant of the art of writing; those who will reflect that none of the ancients have made mention of the superb temples, the immense pagodas, those remarkable monuments of the religion of the Brahmins; those who know that the epochs of their astronomical tables have been subsequently calculated, and inaccurately done; and that their treatises on astronomy are modern and antedated, will be inclined to discredit still farther this pretended antiquity of the Vedas.

Yet in the midst of all the Brahminical fables, there occur points of coincidence with the historical monuments in the more western nations, which must astonish us. Thus their mythology determines the successive deluges which the surface of the globe has experienced, and is yet fated to experience; and it is only from a period rather less than 5000 years that they derive that which last occurred. (3) One of these revolutions, which they

(1) See the Mem. of Mr. Colebrooke on the Vedas, Mem. de Calcutta, vol. viii. of the 8vo. edition, p. 493.

(2) Megasthenes, apud Strabo, lib. xv. p. 709. Almel.

(3) That which produced the present age or *cali-yug* (the earth's age) is made 4927 years or 3102 years before Christ.