

which they modelled on the Bible. Thus what they say of the deluge is borrowed from Genesis, and adds no testimony to that book.

It is curious to learn the opinion of the ancient Persians on this subject, before it was modified by Christian and Mahometan creeds. We find it deposited in their Boundehesh or Cosmogony, a work of the prince of the Sassanides, but evidently extracted or translated from more ancient works, and which Anguetil du Perron found among the Parsees of India. The whole duration of the world it states to be only 12,000 years, therefore it cannot yet be very old. The appearance of the Cayoumortz (the bullman, the first man) is preceded by the creation of a great water. (1)

For the rest, it would be useless to ask from the Parsees a serious history, as from the other oriental nations. The Magi have left no more than the Brahmins or Chaldeans: I ask no other proof than the uncertainties concerning the epoch of Zoroaster. It is even pretended, that the little history that they might have had which related to the Achemenides, the successors of Cyrus to the time of Alexander, has been expressly altered, and by the official command of one of the kings, Sossanides. (2)

To discover the authentic dates of the commencement of empires, and traces of the universal deluge (grand cataclisme) we must go beyond the vast deserts of Tartary. Towards the east and north is another race, whose institutions and modes of life differ from ours as much as their formation and tem-

(1) Zendavesta d'Anquetil, v. 2. p. 354.

(2) Mezoudi ap Sacy. Manuscripts of the king's library, vol. viii. p. 161.