

nations, in fact, which appear to have been the most anciently civilized of the Caucasian Race, and having a remarkable similarity, not only in their temperament, and in the climate and nature of the countries which they occupied, but also in their political and religious constitution, but whose testimony this almost identical constitution ought to render equally suspected*.

These three nations agreed in having each a hereditary caste, to which the care of religion, laws, and science, was exclusively consigned. In all of them, this caste had its allegorical language and secret doctrines; and in all it reserved to itself the privilege of reading and explaining the sacred books, the whole doctrines of which had been revealed by the gods themselves.

We can easily conceive what history would necessarily come to in such hands; but, without having recourse to any great efforts of reason, we may learn it from the fact itself, by examining what it has come to in the only one of these

* This mutual resemblance in their institutions is carried to such an extent as to make it very natural to suppose that these nations had a common origin. It should not be forgotten, that many ancient authors thought that the Egyptian institutions came from Ethiopia; and that Syncellus, p. 151. says positively that the Ethiopians came from the banks of the Indus in the time of King Amenophthis.