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GENERAL SIR CHAS. J. NAPIER G.C.B.





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HISTORY  
OF  
**BRITISH INDIA.**

BY  
HUGH MURRAY, Esq. F.R.S.E.

WITH CONTINUATION  
COMPREHENDING  
THE AFGHAN WAR—THE CONQUEST OF SINDH AND GWALIOR—  
WAR IN THE PUNJAB.

Sec. 3 &c.

**A57-003575**

Date 27.11.73

Is India free? and does she wear her plumed  
And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,  
Or does she groan her still?

**85001**

The 1st. 1850.

**85001**

LONDON:  
THOMAS NELSON, PATERNOSTER ROW;  
AND EDINBURGH.

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

IN addition to a succinct account of the grand natural features of India, contained in the following work, it exhibits that splendid series of discovery and triumph by which the maritime passage to India was achieved, and the Portuguese first established European sway on its shores. These events, which, to the importance of truth, add the interest of romance, being narrated only in voluminous foreign works, have never before been combined in a form suited to general perusal. The early voyages and settlements of the English also include many incidents characteristic of the enterprise that paved the way for the amazing power which the nation has achieved.

Next to the discovery and early trade with India is its history. This commences with the Mohammedan invasion, the remotest period concerning which authentic records exist. A comprehensive view is taken of the revolutions of the Patan and Mogul dynasties, the most splendid in the East, and the story of which is diversified with striking vicissitudes of grandeur and humiliation—of cruel and benevolent exercise of power. Particular care has been taken to exhibit the internal economy of this powerful court; a subject hitherto much overlooked, yet for which ample materials are afforded both by Oriental records and by the observations of intelligent European travellers.





## PREFACE.

Attention is next invited to a train of events which are at once memorable in the military annals of the world, and deeply interesting to this country. The first of these is the conquest of British India; when a few merchants, with a handful of troops, and struggling against European and native rivalry, subverted all the states which had sprung from the ruins of the Mogul empire, and became arbiters of the destiny of upwards of One Hundred Millions of human beings placed at the opposite extremity of the globe. In this important recital, the incidents which distinguished the several contests are exhibited in one view, instead of passing repeatedly from one to another, and carrying all forward with a regard to nothing but the order of time. This plan, which is followed with such success by Mr. Hallam in his *History of the Middle Ages*, renders the narrative more perspicuous as well as more interesting.

EDINBURGH, March 1832.





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## ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

THE first edition of this History of British India brought down the narrative of events in our great Eastern empire to the close of the Pindaree war, and the conquest of the Mahrattas. Since then, events of the utmost magnitude have transpired, sufficient to cast into the shade the older history of the Peninsula in the estimation of its British rulers. The war in Afghanistan was marked by circumstances at once glorious and tragical beyond perhaps any which distinguished former periods of our history, sufficing for a time to fill the minds of the most sanguine with apprehensions for our whole Indian empire. A fruitless triumph restored confidence and honour; but peace had not long given repose to our arms, ere the war in Sindé called for new exertions, and excited fresh anxiety. To this succeeded the eventful campaigns in the Punjaub and Moultan, where British arms achieved triumphs against braver and more daring enemies than ever before threatened our progress, if not even our very existence, in the East. The chapters in which these eventful incidents of Indian history are narrated have accordingly been added to Mr Murray's original work. They have been compiled with the utmost care from official documents and the narratives





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## vi ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

of individuals who bore a part in the scenes they have described. They furnish to the reader a concise and comprehensive narrative of the most important wars in which British arms have been engaged since the peace of 1815, and of the most critical struggle which has chequered the later history of our Indian empire.

EDINBURGH, September 1849.





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CSL

# HISTORY OF BRITISH INDIA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *General View of the Natural Features of India.*

Great Importance always attached to India—Its Outline and Boundaries—General Aspect—The Great Central Plain—Provinces of which it is composed—Vegetable and Animal Productions—The Great Desert—Mountain-region of the Himalah—Belt or Border of thick Jungle—Tract of lower Hills—Elevated Ranges—Their steep and rugged Character—Change in Vegetable and Animal Nature—Three Zones of Vegetation—Central Region—The different River-giants—Valleys—Cashmere—Dangerous Passes—Difficulty of Respiration—Sources of the Jumna and Ganges—Pilgrimage—The Deccan—Vyndhya Range—The Ghauts—Nhilgerries—Opposite Coasts—Central Table-lands—Scenery—Influence of the physical Character upon the political State of these different Regions.

Of all the countries on the Asiatic continent, India, from the earliest ages, has excited the greatest interest, and enjoyed the highest celebrity. The exploits of the conquerors who made it the object of their warlike expeditions, as also the splendid productions of nature

CHAP. I.





CHAP. I.  
Magnificent  
associations.

and art which were thence imported, procured for it a great name even in the remotest eras of classical antiquity. It has all along appeared to the imagination of the Western World as adorned with whatever is most splendid and gorgeous; glittering as it were with gold and gems, and redolent of fragrant and delicious odours. Though there be, in these magnificent conceptions, something romantic and illusory, still India forms unquestionably one of the most remarkable regions that exist on the surface of the globe. The varied grandeur of its scenery, and the rich productions of its soil, are scarcely equalled in any other country. It is also extremely probable that it was, if not the first, at least one of the earliest seats of civilisation, laws, arts, and of all the improvements of social life. These, it is true, have at no period attained to the same pitch of advancement as among Europeans; but they have, nevertheless, been developed in very original forms, displaying human nature under the most striking and singular aspects.

Interest as a  
British pro-  
vince.

The strong interest which India in itself is thus calculated to excite, must to us be greatly heightened by the consideration of its having become so completely a province of the British Empire. The government of this country now directs the fortunes of a hundred millions of human beings placed at the opposite extremity of the earth; and hence the welfare of the state is intimately suspended on that of this vast dependency. This connexion, too, is peculiarly strengthened by the great number of our countrymen who are constantly going out to administer the affairs of that important colony. Closer personal ties, in many instances, are thereby formed with our eastern settlements, than with the different provinces of Britain itself. Thousands, to whom Cornwall and Devonshire are almost strange lands, are connected by the most intimate social relations with Madras and Calcutta. For such persons the history and description of our Indian possessions, independently of the grandeur of the subject and its union with national wealth and power, must have a peculiar interest,





as being closely associated with the pursuits and prospects of their dearest friends. CHAP. I.

India is enclosed by grand natural boundaries. Its whole northern frontier is separated from the high table-land of Thibet by the chain of the Himmaleh Mountains, which, according to recent observation, appears to reach at least as great a height as any other ridge by which the globe is traversed. The western and eastern limits are formed by the lower course of two great rivers,—the Indus on one side, and the Brahmapoutra on the other. The southern portion consists of a very extensive peninsula bounded by the ocean. Other countries have often been comprehended under the general appellation of India,—particularly Cabul and Candahar, which ranked long as provinces belonging to the Mogul emperors; but this was merely in consequence of those warlike rulers having conquered India, and transferred thither the seat of their empire. These districts, it is manifest, bear a much closer relation to Persia and Tartary; and, when they are included in Hindostan, they necessarily extend that country beyond its great river-line on the north-west, where it has no decided or natural boundaries. But within the limits we have indicated there is found a religion, languages, manners, and institutions, characteristic of this region, and distinguishing it from all the other countries of Asia.

India, thus defined, though some of its extremities have not been very precisely determined, may be suitably described as lying between the 8th and 34th degrees of north latitude, and the 68th and 92d of east longitude. It thus extends somewhat above 1800 miles from north to south, and, at its greatest breadth, nearly 1500 from east to west.

In treating of this important country, it will be useful to begin with a general survey of its geographical features; and these, it will soon appear, are distinguished at once by their grandeur and their variety. India is, as it were, an epitome of the whole world. It has regions that bask beneath the brightest rays of a tropical

Boundaries of India.

Its geographical features.





## CHAP. I.

The varieties  
of its climate.

sun, and others, than which the most awful depths of the polar world are not more dreary. The varying degrees of elevation produce here the same changes that arise elsewhere from the greatest difference of position on the earth's surface. Its vast plains present the double harvests, the luxuriant foliage, and even the burning deserts of the torrid zone; the lower heights are enriched by the fruits and grains of the temperate climates; the upper steeps are clothed with the vast pine forests of the north; while the highest pinnacles are buried beneath the perpetual snows of the arctic zone. We do not here, as in Africa and the polar regions, see nature under one uniform aspect; on the contrary, we have to trace gradual yet complete transitions between the most opposite extremes that can exist on the surface of the same planet.

The Indian  
plain.

The main body, as it were, of India, the chief scene of her matchless fertility and the seat of her great empires, is composed of a plain extending along the entire breadth from east to west, between the Brahmapoutra and the Indus; and reaching, in point of latitude, from the great chain of mountains to the high table-land of the Southern Peninsula. It may thus possess a length of 1500 miles, with an average breadth of from 300 to 400. The line of direction is generally from south-east to north-west, following that of the vast mountain-range which bounds it on the north, and from whose copious streams its fruitfulness is derived. With the exception, perhaps, of the country watered by the great river of China, it may be considered the finest and most fertile on the face of the earth. The whole of its immense superficies, if we leave out an extensive desert-tract to be presently noticed, forms one continuous level of unvaried richness, and over which majestic rivers, with slow and almost insensible course, diffuse their sea-like expanse.

Its fertility.

Province of  
Bengal.

Of this general character of the Indian plain, the province of Bengal presents the most complete and striking example; no part of it being diversified with a single rock, or even a hillock. The Ganges pours through it a





## CHAP. I.

continually widening stream, which, during the rainy season, covers a great extent with its fertilizing inundation. From this deep, rich, well-watered soil, the sun, beating with direct and intense rays, awakens an almost unrivalled power of vegetation, and makes it one entire field of waving grain. Bahar, farther up the current, has the same general aspect, though its surface is varied by some slight elevations; but Allahabad, higher still, is mostly low, warm, and fruitful, exactly like Bengal. North of the river the provinces of Oude and Rohilcund, sloping gradually upwards to the mountains, enjoy a more cool and salubrious climate, and display in profusion the most valuable products both of Asia and Europe. Here the valley of the Ganges terminates, and is succeeded by that of the Jumna, more elevated, and neither so well watered nor quite so fertile. The Doab, or territory between the two rivers, requires in many places artificial irrigation. Its woods, however, are more luxuriant, while the moderate cold of its winter permits a crop of wheat or other European grain to be raised, and the summer is sufficient to ripen one of rice. To the south of the Jumna, and along the course of its tributary the Chumbul, the ground is broken by eminences extending from the hills of Malwah and Ajmere; while, even amid its most level tracts, insulated rocks, with perpendicular sides and level summits, form those almost impregnable hill-forts so much celebrated in Indian history. Westward of Delhi begins the Great Desert, which we shall at present pass over to notice the plain of the Punjaub, where the five tributaries of the Indus, rolling their ample streams, produce a degree of fertility equal to that of the region watered by the Ganges. High cultivation, too frequently obstructed by public disorders and the ruder character of the people, is alone wanting to make it rival the finest portions of the more eastern territory.

Source of its fertility.

Provinces of Oude and Rohilcund.

The Punjaub

Throughout the whole of this vast plain, the wants of the population and the demands of commerce have entirely superseded the original productions of nature, and

Artificial changes





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Products of  
the Punjab.Its mono-  
tonous as-  
pect.Counterbal-  
ancing effects.

Jungles.

substituted plants and grains better fitted for human use. Even under the most careful management, few of those exquisite shrubs are now reared which have given such celebrity to the vegetable kingdom of the East. Here are quite unknown those aromatic gales which perfume the hilly shores of Malabar and the oriental islands. Its staples consist of solid, rich, useful articles, produced by strong heat acting on a deep, moist, and fertile soil,—rice, the eastern staff of life,—sugar, the most generally used of dietetic luxuries,—opium, whose narcotic qualities have made it every where so highly prized,—indigo, the most valuable substance used in dyeing,—and, in the drier tracts, cotton, which clothes the inhabitants of the East, and affords the material of the most delicate and beautiful fabrics. Such an entire subjection to the plough and the spade, joined to the want of variety in the surface, gives to this great central region a tame and monotonous aspect. Baber, its Afghan conqueror, complains, in his Memoirs, of the uniform and uninteresting scenery which every where met his eye, and looks back with regret to the lofty cliffs, the green slopes, and murmuring streams of his native land.

In spite, however, of every human effort, some tracts are left uncultivated in consequence of political disorder and misrule; while, in others, nature, under the combined influence of heat and moisture, makes efforts so powerful as to baffle all attempts to modify or control her. She then riots in unbounded luxuriance, and covers large tracts with that dense, dark, impenetrable mass of foliage, crowded and twined together, called *jungle*, which opposes an almost impassable barrier even to an army. Trees spreading on every side their gigantic arms,—thorny and prickly shrubs of every size and shape,—canes shooting in a few months to the height of sixty feet,—compose the chief materials of those natural palisades. Even in the open plain, the banyan and other single trees, when full scope is given to their growth, spread out into the dimensions of a considerable forest.

From the cultivated regions the various classes of wild





beasts are excluded with the utmost solicitude. Even the domestic species are not reared in great numbers, nor to any remarkable size or strength. There is a small cow with a hump, fit only for draught, but which the Hindoo regards as a sacred object. Light active steeds are bred by the natives for predatory excursions; though, for regular military service, the large Turkish horse is decidedly preferred. But the wooded tracts, where nature revels uncontrolled, are filled with huge and sometimes destructive animals, of which the two most remarkable are the elephant and the tiger. The former, of a species distinct from that of Africa, is here not merely pursued as game, but, being caught alive, is trained for the various purposes of state, hunting, and war. The tiger, the most formidable tenant of the Bengal jungle, supplies the absence of the lion, and, though not quite equal in strength and majesty, is still more fierce and dangerous. These two mighty quadrupeds are brought into conflict in the Indian hunts, when the elephant is used as an instrument for attacking his fiercer but less vigorous rival. The hunter, well armed, is seated on the back of his huge ally; and, in the first advance, the whole body of the assailants are ranged in a line. When the combat commences, the elephant endeavours either to tread down the tiger with his hoof, crushing him with the whole weight of his immense body, or to assail him with his long and powerful tusks. Whenever either of these movements can be fully accomplished, the effect is irresistible; but the tiger, by his agility, and especially by his rapid spring resembling the flight of an arrow, often succeeds in fastening upon the legs and sides of his unwieldy adversary, and inflicts deep wounds, while the latter is unable either to resist or to retaliate. Even the rider, notwithstanding his exalted seat and the use of fire-arms, is not on such occasions wholly exempt from danger.

To complete the survey of the great Indian plain, there remains to be described, as already hinted, one feature wholly dissimilar to all the rest. Immediately

CHAP. I.

Domestic animals.

Wild animals.

Tiger hunts.

The Great Desert.





## CHAP. I.

westward of the Jumna, the general level of the country attains a point of elevation, whence it descends on both sides; and all the torrents, falling from this high mountain-range, roll either eastward and become tributary to the Ganges, or westward to pour their waters into the Indus. Between these two rivers and their respective branches there intervenes a considerable space, which is refreshed only by a few small rivulets that spring up and disappear amid the waste. In this manner is formed a desert, of extent sufficient to compose a mighty kingdom, and occupying in that direction the whole breadth, from the mountains to the ocean. This entire region, about 600 miles long and 300 broad, presents an aspect nearly similar to the most dreary tracts of Arabia and Africa. Its surface, scarcely raised above the sea, is covered with saline incrustations and marine exuvia, and hence bears every appearance of having been at one time a portion of the ocean-bed, which the waters have deserted. According to the observations of Mr Elphinstone, who crossed it in his way to Cabul, the eastern division consists of sand often rising into hills of surprising height, and so loose that, whenever the horses quitted the path hardened by beating, they sunk above the knee. Over this wilderness, however, is scattered some coarse grass, with stunted and prickly shrubs; while, in the midst of the sand, there grow large water-melons, affording the most delicious refreshment to the thirsty traveller. At wide intervals are found villages, or rather clusters of mud huts, round which are reared crops of coarse grain and pulse, whose stalks, like shrubs, stand distinctly separate from each other. Yet a considerable population must be sprinkled over this immense desert, since Bikaner, in its centre, presents, though on a small scale, the aspect of a city adorned with palaces, temples, and other spacious edifices. Westward of that town the soil is generally a hard clay, variegated only by mounds of sand. Poogul, a village of straw huts defended by a ruinous mud fort, encompassed with naked hills and amid a sea of sand without a trace of vegetation, ap-

Extent and  
character of  
the Desert.

Population.

Poogul and  
its fort.

Cabul





peared a spot so desolate that it seemed astonishing how any human beings could make it their abode. On the more smooth and level portions of this dreary tract the traveller is tantalized by the phenomenon of *mirage*, producing before him the appearance of immense lakes that even reflect the surrounding objects; and the illusion continues till he has almost touched the watery semblance, and finds it to consist of the same arid soil as the rest of the desert. The mirage.

Northward of this great plain, and along its whole extent, towers the sublime mountain-region of the Him-maleh, ascending gradually till it terminates in a long range of summits wrapped in perpetual snow. According to Mr Calder, there may be traced, for the space of 1000 miles, a continuous line 21,000 feet above the sea, from which, as a base, detached peaks ascend to the additional height of 5000 or 6000 feet. The inhabitant of the burning plains contemplates, not without wonder, this long array of white pinnacles forming the boundary of the distant horizon. In this progressive ascent nature assumes a continually changing aspect; and hence it will be necessary to view in succession the different stages through which she passes. Himmaleh Mountains.

The Himmaleh range, where it touches on the campaign country, is almost every where girt with a peculiar belt or border, called the Tarryani. This term is applied to a plain about twenty miles broad, upon which the waters from the higher regions are poured down in such profusion that the river-beds are unable to contain them. They accordingly overflow, and convert the ground into a species of swamp, which, acted on by the burning rays of a tropical sun, throws up an excessively rank vegetation, whereby the earth is choked rather than covered. The soil is concealed beneath a mass of dark and dismal foliage, while long grass and prickly shrubs shoot up so densely and so close as to form an almost impenetrable barrier. It is still more awfully guarded by the pestilential vapours exhaling from those dark recesses, which make it at certain seasons a region of death. The Tarry-aul.  
Pestilential swamps.





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Hence the destruction which overtakes an army that encamps for any length of time near this valley,—an effect fatally experienced by the British detachments which were stationed on the frontiers of Bootan and Nepaul. Beneath these melancholy shades, too, the elephant, the tiger, and other wild animals, prowl unmolested; while the few human beings who occupy the vicinity present a meagre, dwarfish, and most sickly aspect.

Lower mountain-stages.

In emerging from this dark and deadly plain, and beginning to ascend the lower mountain-stages, the visiter enjoys a much more pleasing scene. He passes now through smiling and fruitful valleys, overhung by the most romantic steeps, and covered to a great extent with the noblest forests. Amid trees similar to those which spread their majestic foliage on the banks of the Ganges, various species of the more hardy oak and the pine begin to appear. Some possess rich juices and aromatic odours not found among the lower woods; such as that peculiar mimosa, the fluid extracted from which yields the medical substance called catechu, and a species of cinnamon or rather cassia, the virtue of which resides in its root. The prospects obtained from commanding points in these regions, consisting in a foreground of smiling and cultured vales, hills behind crowned with natural plantations, steeper and loftier ranges beyond, and in the distance the snow-clad tops of the highest mountain-chain, form a combination of the most sublime and enchanting scenery.

Character of higher ranges.

The Himmaleh, as it ascends above the picturesque slopes which diversify its lower border, assumes a much bolder and severer aspect. The lofty ridge, the deep valley, the dashing torrent, produce a resemblance to the most elevated portions of our own central Highlands; and Scottish officers, accordingly, who happened to serve in that remote province, have fancied themselves wandering amid the romantic glens of their native country. Generally speaking, the character of this mountain-chain is rugged and stern; its ridges rise behind each





other in awful array; but they enclose no rural scenes, nor present any gentle undulations. Their steep sides, sometimes wooded, sometimes presenting vast faces of naked rock, dip down abruptly, forming dark chasms and ravines, at the bottom of which there is only room for the torrent to force its way through rude fragments fallen from the cliffs above. A laborious task is imposed on the traveller, who has successively to mount and descend this series of lofty terraces, along rough and narrow paths that often skirt the most tremendous precipices. The expedients, too, provided for the passage of the rivers which dash through these gloomy hollows, are of the most slender and imperfect description. Two planks fastened to the point of opposite cliffs, called a *sanga* or *sancha*, are, in many cases, considered amply sufficient; others, called *jhulas*, are formed by ropes stretched across, making a species of loose parapet, and supporting a light ladder for the feet to rest upon. Captain Webb met with an instance where there were merely stretched from bank to bank two or three ropes, round which the passenger was expected to coil himself, and work his way across, having a hoop for the back to rest upon; those who could not effect this movement were pulled across by a cord.

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Their stern and gloomy character.

Rude bridges.

So irregular is the surface of this territory that great difficulty occurs in finding a level space on which to build their towns. It is supposed that, in the whole extent of country surrounding Serinagur, there could not have been discovered another place on which to have erected that small city; and there is no spot between it and the great plain where a thousand men could encamp. At Nālm the passenger mounts through the principal street by a stair cut in the rock. Rampore, the chief town in the valley of the Upper Sutledge, is reached only over ledges of rocks and flights of steps; its houses rise in tiers above each other along the face of the steep, while the river tumbles beneath, and awful crags overhang it from above.

Extreme irregularity of surface.

In consequence of this peculiar structure, these loftier





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Monotony.

regions of the Himmaleh do not present that tranquil grandeur, and those picturesque views, which render the mountain-scenery of Europe so enchanting. They are rugged, gloomy, and monotonous. The mighty summits overhang no soft pastoral valleys, nor wave with varied foliage, nor are reflected in the bosom of still and transparent lakes. The traveller, hemmed in between their steep precipices, sees only the dark grandeur of the chasin through which he winds. Sometimes, however, on reaching a clear point, he finds himself in possession of a prospect bearing a character of the most awful sublimity. A spot, raised almost to an immeasurable height above the plain beneath, proves only the base, whence seven or eight successive ranges rise towards heaven, and terminate at length in a line of snowy pinnacles.

Different  
tempera-  
tures.

Tropical and  
temperate  
crops at Ne-  
paul.

Mr Royle, in his elegant and instructive work on the botany of the Himmaleh, divides that region, in respect to vegetation, into three zones or belts. The first he considers as rising to the height of 5000 feet. The general temperature is here lowered, as usual, in proportion to the elevation, yet without the disappearance, to the extent that might be expected, of tropical plants. The southern exposure, the intense force of the sun's rays during the hot season, and the tropical rains falling in undiminished abundance, enable these to be brought to almost equal maturity as in the upper part of the central plain. In Nepaul, and other favourable situations, rice as a summer, and wheat as a winter crop, form the regular course of cultivation. But some of the more delicate plants are unable to resist exposure to the keen atmosphere and the nightly breezes; among which are the choicest of fruits, the mango and the pine apple. At the same time, in the colder season, on elevated peaks, the plants of Europe and other temperate climates, are seen springing contiguously to those of the tropic. Snow is scarcely ever observed on this lower stage of the mountain territory.

The second belt is considered as reaching to the height





of 9000 feet. Snow here falls constantly in winter, often to a great depth, but melts in early spring. Although the vegetation becomes more and more that of the temperate zone, yet the causes already stated enable tropical plants to climb beyond their natural height, and to mingle with those of a very different climate. In sheltered well-watered valleys, crops of rice are still successfully raised, while wheat grows on the heights above. But though the herbaceous plants are able to mount thus high, it is otherwise with trees, exposed to every vicissitude of the seasons. The palms and other Indian species are seen no longer, and the foliage appears exclusively European.

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Second belt

The third and most elevated belt reaches from the border of the latter to the summit of the Himmaleh. The climate here is that of the more northern part of Europe and America, terminating in the perpetual snows of the arctic world. These, even in the lower districts, do not melt till May or June, when the extreme cold of winter is suddenly succeeded by the most intense heat. The rays of the sun, indeed, beat fiercely and painfully, even when the atmosphere is so little affected by them that the thermometer stands many degrees below the freezing point; and hence the traveller is scorched amidst almost unbearable cold,—extremes which always prove distressing and sometimes fatal. The territory called Bhot, constituting the most elevated portion, has the severity of the climate aggravated by its rocky surface, so that not above a sixteenth part of it is fit for cultivation; yet, even here, under circumstances not at all favourable, vegetation displays a luxuriance which could little be expected at so great a height. Buckwheat and barley are generally raised with success. At 12,000 feet, Captain Webb saw the finest grain, and at 11,680, he observed forests of oak, and beds of strawberries and currants in full blossom. The pasturage, in consequence probably of copious moisture, combined with the power of the sun's rays, grows with a luxuriance almost unequalled. The natives, prone to exaggeration, assert it

Third belt.  
Arctic climate.

Bhot territory.





CHAP. I to be inexhaustible, so that whatever has been crompt during the day is restored in the following night. A productive field, however, is occasionally ruined by the descent of glaciers, or beds of snow, which do not melt for several years. It is alleged, indeed, by the inhabitants, that there is a gradual lowering of the frozen line, and that the snow covers woods and fields which were once entirely free from it.

Glaciers

Vast forest.

Notwithstanding the shattered and rocky aspect of those precipices, they are yet covered with vast masses of hanging wood. Amidst the wilds, tall and majestic forests of pine, larch, spruce, and silver fir, sometimes even of cypress and cedar, grow, flourish, and decay; for there are no means of conveying the timber to any spot where it might be subservient to human use or ornament. With these trees are intermingled numerous bushes loaded with the fruits which form the luxury of the northern regions of Europe; gooseberry, raspberry, strawberry, all unknown to the plains below. In sheltered spots, the wild rose, the lily of the valley, cowslip, dandelion, and various other flowers, are seen bursting through the green carpet. The trees and rocks in the higher districts are richly clothed with moss and lichen, the vegetation of the countries bordering on the arctic circle; a specimen of the latter has even been observed resembling that which flourishes in Iceland, and which is imported for medicinal purposes under the name of Iceland moss.

Fruits and flowers.

Northern side of the Himmaleh.

After passing the crest of the Himmaleh, and descending the northern side, quite a different scene opens to the view. The periodical rains, which plentifully water all the opposite face, cannot pass that tremendous barrier. Snow also falls in much smaller quantity, and is more easily melted. The same luxuriant verdure and vegetation no longer clothe those remote heights, which are described by Jacquemont as steep and naked, covered with shrubs, parched grass, and debris washed down by the waters. Yet it is remarkable that a mild climate, fit for the production of valuable grain, reaches





to a considerably greater elevation here than even on the southern face. In the Tariat pergunnah of Hungarung, the village of Nako, 12,000 feet high, was seen surrounded by the most luxuriant crops of wheat and barley. A hamlet, in the north-east of Kunawur, at 14,000 feet, is described by Dr Gerard as being encompassed with the finest fields of the latter; and it appeared to him that culture might be carried to the height of 16,000 or 17,000 feet. Even the grasses, though having a withered appearance, are of a nutritious species, and afford subsistence to numerous flocks and herds. Passes 20,000 feet high have, in this region, been found clear of snow. It is remarkable that, on coming to the outer face of one of these mountains, even with a southern exposure, the temperature is greatly diminished. The case is the same with peaks projected into the air, like promontories into the ocean; though the cause of the peculiar mildness in this enclosed part of the great range seems not to be fully understood. Mr Royle suggests the reflection of the sun's rays from opposite mountains, and the warm vapours ascending from the sheltered valleys which lie between them.

The animal world in this higher region undergoes a change equally striking with the vegetable. The elephant and tiger, kings of the forests beneath, disappear, or are very seldom seen. Depredations are chiefly committed by the wild cat, the bear, and the hog. The chamois bounds from rock to rock, and the forests are filled with deer of various species; of which the most rare and precious is that producing the musk. It is found only in the loftiest heights, amid rocks which the human foot scarcely dares to tread. The most intense cold is so essential to its life, that the young, on being brought down to a warm situation, usually perish in a few days. The forests at all the more moderate elevations are filled with flocks of such fowls as are elsewhere domesticated, here running about wild, tempting the pursuit of the sportsman; but, as they very seldom take wing, they are with difficulty reached by the gun. The peacock





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Birds of prey,  
game, &c.

displays his glittering plumage only on the lower hills. The sovereign eagle is seldom descried amid the cliffs, which are inhabited by kites, hawks, and others of the minor predatory birds. Partridges and pheasants are numerous and of various species; the latter are even seen flying amid the snows at a great elevation. Bees swarm in all the lower districts, making their hives in the hollows of trees; these the natives plunder by merely raising a loud noise, which causes the swarm to issue forth and leave the honey unprotected.

Domestic  
animals.

The domestic animals, fed by the natives on their rich pastures, are the common black cattle of India, combined with the yak of Thibet. A mule bred between the two is also very common. The latter produces with either of the pure species, and even with its own kind, though in this last case it soon degenerates. Sheep and goats are also reared in large numbers, not only for the ordinary purposes of food and clothing, but for the conveyance of merchandise, which they alone are fitted to transport over the steep mountain-passes. Besides the common sheep, there is another breed, powerful, and long-legged, and able to bear more than double the burden of the other; its wool is also very fine.

The greatest  
elevations.

The most elevated part of this stupendous range is that to the north of Bengal, along the heads of the Gogra, the Ganges, and the Jumna, and westward as far as the Sutledge. In this line there are supposed to be at least twenty-eight peaks higher than Chimborazo; and several appear, upon strict measurement, to reach 25,000 feet. Three, farther to the north, seen at different times, but at some distance, by Moorcroft, Gerard, and a government surveyor, could not, it was thought by these gentlemen, fall short of 22,000 or even 30,000 feet. This sublime formation, supposed to be 1000 miles in length and eighty in breadth, does not enclose any thing that can properly be called a table-land, for though, from the plain it appears like a succession of ridges, in the interior it is found composed of arms, radiating in every direction, intersected by deep ravines, through

Their im-  
mense ex-  
tent.





CHAP. I

NATURAL

which the waters struggle, and are often turned in opposite directions. Their line is so winding and irregular, that the traveller is usually obliged to cross the summit of the ridge, as if no openings existed. It is observed, too, that the north-western face is always rugged, while that to the north-east is shelving. The declivity towards Thibet is small, when compared to the descent on the southern side; indicating the great elevation of that country, which is estimated not to fall short of 15,000 feet.

Westward of the Sutledge, the Himmaleh greatly declines, or rather, according to Baron Hügel, it stretches in a northern direction, along the frontier of Thibet, detaching only an inferior branch along the Indian border. The white summits are no longer seen in a continuous line, but appear only singly, and at some distance. The most western is Tricota Devi, a beautiful three-peaked mountain, and beyond it a break occurs, which, however, to an eye looking from India is filled up by more distant masses. Southward of Cashmere, the Peer Pandjahl, as it is called, rears its snowy head, though not altogether to the same stupendous height; and it is continued to the Hindoo Coosh, which separates Cabul from Tartary.

The frontier  
of Thibet.Tricota Devi,  
and Peer  
Pandjahl.

A natural division of this high country is formed by the narrow valleys, or rather ravines, furrowed out by those mighty rivers which descend from the heights to water the plains of Hindostan. These glens, all deep, dark, and enclosed by precipitous walls, have each, besides, its own peculiar aspect; and a late traveller has enabled us to form some idea of the leading features which distinguish those of the Sutledge, the Pabur, the Jumna, and the Bagiruttee, or principal head of the Ganges.

Valleys of the  
great rivers.

The glen of the Sutledge is little more than a profound and gloomy chasm, without the romantic beauty produced by swelling banks or fringing woods. Cultivation appears only on a few scattered patches; no villages smile along its border, though numerous forts frown over its steep. —The Pabur, a tributary of the Jumna, presents a pleas-

The Sutledge.





CHAP. I. ing variety compared to this or to any other ravine of the  
The Pabur. Himmaleh. It rolls through a vale of moderate breadth ;  
its banks and the slopes above are beautifully studded  
with fields, woods, and villages ; while brown hills, tipped  
The Jumna. with rocks and snow, tower in the background. The  
Jumna, again, has its borders generally bold and savage ;  
all its higher tracts, too, consist of mighty rocks and  
precipices buried under huge masses of snow. Yet the  
lower grounds are wooded ; and along the river are seen  
some narrow vales, rising into slopes covered with culti-  
vation and verdure, which diversify even its wildest  
The Bagiruttee. scenes with a mixture of softness and elegance. The  
banks of the Bagiruttee, a broader stream, which has  
worn a still deeper bed through the mountain-strata,  
are beyond all others repulsive, and equally destitute of  
beauty and life. These solitary steeps, too, are only scanti-  
ly clothed with the foliage of the sombre fir ; the cliffs,  
shattered and splintered, are not even tinted with moss  
or lichen, but, bearing the dusky colours of their nat-  
ural fracture, shoot up on every side into pinnacles of  
amazing height.

The Happy Valley. But, notwithstanding the gloomy aspect of these moun-  
tain-scenes, there are a few places in which they open out  
into smiling plains of considerable extent. The valleys  
of Nepaul, indeed, besides being very narrow, belong  
rather to the region of the lower hills. Considerably  
higher is found the Rama Serai, or the Happy Valley,  
where little eminences, villages, and richly cultivated  
fields, combine to form a delightful scene. The most  
extensive opening however takes place at its western  
extremity, where these great ridges enclose the little  
Cashmere. Kingdom of Cashmere, which, beyond any other spot on  
earth, seems to merit the appellation of a terrestrial  
paradise. Numerous rivulets flowing down the moun-  
tain-sides diffuse verdure and beauty over the hills and  
vales, and in the plains expand into an extensive  
lake, profusely adorned with all the pomp of art and  
nature. The Mogul sovereigns had erected on the  
banks of this sheet of water gay palaces and pavilions,





to which they were wont to repair as their most pleasing retreat from the toils of empire. The poets vie with each other in celebrating the delights of this enchanting valley. They extol particularly the rose of Cashmere as possessing beauty without a rival, the opening of whose buds is held by their countrymen as a national festival. M. Jacquemont, a very recent traveller, considers these descriptions of the country as exaggerated; though Baron Hügel, who visited it in 1835, thinks that none can be too flattering. The flora is entirely that of Europe, and particularly of Lombardy; the gigantic plane tree, the vine, the poplar, cover the lower grounds; while on the heights hang majestic forests of cedar and pine. The level part of the valley, nearly 5000 feet above the sea, is about eighty miles long and from six to thirty broad; but between the eternal snows of the opposite Pandjahls, or mountain-ridges, from fifty to sixty miles intervene. Shalimar alone, of the gay palaces erected by the Mogul, is still standing. The beauty of the Cashmerian maidens has also been highly celebrated throughout the East; and though Jacquemont professes scepticism upon this point, he gives a solution of his doubt, by mentioning the painful circumstance that almost all who possess good looks are in early life sold and carried away as slaves.

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Celebrity of  
the vale of  
Cashmere.

its flora

Beauty of the  
maidens.

The passes which extend across this tremendous ridge into Thibet are of extreme and peculiar difficulty. From the structure of the mountains the roads must generally be carried nearly over their summits rising sometimes as high as 20,000 feet. They are in most cases formed by a precarious track along the alpine torrent, which dashes in an unbroken sheet of foam, through dark ravines bordered by precipitous mountain-walls ascending above the clouds. Down the perpendicular faces of these stupendous avenues descend almost continual showers of stony fragments, broken off from the cliffs above. Occasionally large portions of rock are detached, and roll down in heaps, effacing every path which has been formed beneath, filling the beds of the rivers, and converting

Dinacit  
passes into  
Thibet.





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Tracks  
through the  
passes.

them into cataracts. The whole side of a mountain has been seen thus parted, and spread in fragments at its base. Trees torn up, and precipitated into the abyss, lie stretched with their branches on the earth, and their roots turned up to the sky. Yet through these tremendous passes, and across all these mighty obstructions, the daring industry of mortals has contrived to form tracks, narrow indeed, as well as fearful and perilous, but by means of which Thibet and India find it possible to exchange their respective commodities. Nothing, it is true, resembling a wagon, not even the ordinary beasts of burden, can pass this way. The goods, as already suggested, are placed on the backs of goats and sheep, which alone can scramble along these precipitous routes, though, in other respects, these animals are ill-fitted for such a laborious employment. Goats, in descending, are often pressed down by the load, while sheep, if at all urged, are very apt to run,—a movement which is here attended with the utmost peril. In some cases human aid is required, and these patient quadrupeds are raised and lowered by slings. The principal passes are those of Niti and Mana, by the heads of the Ganges; Juwar, Darma, and Byanase, by those of the Gogra. They are connected by a few cross-paths; but these are uncertain, and passable only in the very height of summer.

Sensations in  
traversing the  
passes.

In proceeding along these stupendous heights, the traveller occasionally experiences a distressing sensation. The atmosphere, rarefied to excess, becomes nearly unfit for supporting respiration,—the action of the lungs being impeded, the slightest fatigue overpowers him,—he stops at every three or four steps, gasping for breath,—the skin is painful, and blood bursts from the lips,—sometimes he is affected by giddiness in the head and a tendency to vertigo. The natives, who are also seized with these symptoms without being able to divine the physical cause, ascribe them to *bis*, or *bish*, meaning air poisoned, as they imagine, by the deleterious odour of certain flowers. A little observation would have shown them that the flowers in these regions have scarcely any scent; while





it is in the most elevated tracts, where all vegetation has ceased, that the feelings in question become the most severe and oppressive. CHAP. I.

The arrangements for facilitating a passage over these frightful cliffs are still more perilous than those employed on the lower declivities. Rude staircases are constructed along the precipices, by which the traveller is invited to make his way. The road in some places is formed merely by posts driven into the side of the steep, over which branches of trees and earth are spread, affording a narrow footpath, suspended at a fearful height above the torrent, and shaking beneath the tread of the passenger. Rock staircases.

Amid these awful scenes there are two spots peculiarly sacred and sublime; those, namely, where the Jumna and the Ganges, the two rivers which give grandeur and fertility to the plain of Hindostan, burst from beneath the eternal snows. No mortal foot has yet ascended to their original springs, situated in the most elevated recesses of the mountains. There they issue forth as torrents, amid broken masses of granite, to force their way through the deep glens of the middle Himalah. Above them, huge piles of rock and heaps of snow rise higher and higher, till they shoot up into the two amazing peaks of Roodroo Himala and Jumnavatari. the Jumna and the Ganges.

Jumnotree is situated at the foot of the immense mountain-mass of Bunderpouch, the upper section of which is entirely buried in snow; but the brow which overhangs the village is rendered green by the trickling of numberless rills that fall down and unite in a broad basin, the fountain of the Jumna. The highest peak that towers above is estimated by Mr Colebrooke at 25,500 feet, which, however, Mr Fraser suspects to be considerably overrated. The river is here swelled by numerous hot springs issuing from the rocky banks, or from pools in its own current. Captain Hodgson penetrated to several of these fountains that lay concealed beneath vast beds of snow, which, being melted by the Jumnotree  
Hot Springs





## CHAP. I.

## Gangoutrie.

exhalations, were formed into spacious halls resembling vaulted roofs of marble.

The mountain-scenery which surrounds Gangoutri, where the infant Ganges bursts into view, is still more sublime and amazing. The traveller winds his way to this place, clambering over steep rocks, or creeping along the face of precipices, where flights of steps are formed by posts driven into the crevices. At length he reaches the village, consisting only of a few huts and the temple dedicated to Mahadeo. Here the naked and pointed cliffs, shooting up to the skies, with confused masses of rock lying at their feet, and only a few trees rooting themselves in the deep chasms, make the spectator feel as if he trode on the ruins of a former world. Shattered precipices, which frown over the temple, have strown the vicinity with enormous fragments of granite, destined probably one day to overwhelm the edifice itself. A few old pines throw a dark shade over the troubled waters, whose roar is heard beneath, mingled with the stifled but fearful sound of the stones borne down by the current. Rocky heights shut in the prospect on every side except towards the east, where, behind a crowd of naked spires, the view is bounded by the four snowy peaks of Roodroo Himnala.

Higher rise  
of the Gan-  
ges.

Mr Fraser attempted to trace the Ganges above Gangoutri to a spot famous in India under the appellation of "The Cow's Mouth," the river being represented as rushing there from beneath the snows through an aperture bearing that particular form. The ruggedness of the banks and other obstacles obliged him to return; but Captain Hodgson, after three days of severe toil, reached this memorable spot, and saw the stream issuing from under a perpendicular wall of frozen snow, with numerous depending icicles, in a manner not very dissimilar to that which Indian report had led him to expect.

Sacredness of  
the region.

The two places above mentioned, with the lower shrines of Bhadrinath and Kedarnath, and indeed the whole of this region, possess a peculiarly sacred character in the eyes of the Hindoo, and are the scene of many of





the most remarkable fictions in his poetical mythology. They are esteemed the chosen dwelling of Siva or Mahadeo, the third person in the Hindoo trinity, who, in withdrawing from Lanka or Ceylon, threw up, it is pretended, the Himalaleh as his place of retreat. Dewtas, or spirits, are imagined to haunt the inaccessible glens, and by feigned sounds to allure the unfortunate passenger into their recesses, whence he never returns to the living world. Pilgrimage, the favourite form of Hindoo devotion, is most frequently performed into these mysterious solitudes, where many, however, in attempting to penetrate by the rugged paths buried in snow, either perish, or lose partially the use of their limbs. The perils which bar the approach to Gangoutri deter the greater number of the devotees, who ascend from the great fair at Hurdwar, from proceeding beyond the lower shrine of Bhadrinath; which, in the year when Captain Webb was there, had been visited by between 45,000 and 50,000 pilgrims.

CLAP. I.  
Mythological  
Actions.

Pilgrimages.

The Deccan or Southern Peninsula, which alone remains to be described, presents none of those singular features that distinguish the great central plain and its northern boundary. Hills occasionally rising to the rank of mountains, and enclosing table-lands of various elevation, diversify its surface, and procure for it at once the climate and vegetation of the tropical and of the temperate zones. But the most prominent feature is a range of heights corresponding to the triangular form of this part of the continent. The northern border consists in a tract of high country stretching from the Gulf of Cambay to the Bay of Bengal, chiefly along both banks of the Nerbudda, and composing the provinces of Malwah, Candeish, and Gundwana, to which has been given the appellation of Central India. It is known by the name of the Vyndhya chain; yet it is so widely extended and of such moderate height, seldom exceeding 2000 feet, that it seems rather a very rough and broken table-land than a regular mountain-range. Various local names are given to its branches. In some of the districts rise per-

The Deccan.

Central India.





CHAP. I. perpendicular heights, with a plain at the top, on which, as already mentioned, are constructed those strong hill-forts peculiar to that part of the world. From its extremities extend southward two parallel chains, called the Gates or Ghauts, which, at a greater or less distance, girdle the whole of the opposite coasts of Malabar and Coromandel.

Western  
Ghauts.

The Western Ghauts, which range along the Indian Ocean, stand generally at a small distance from the sea, and sometimes approach so close that their cliffs are washed by its waves. More commonly at ten or twelve miles from the shore, they rear their peaks, crowned, not like those of the Himalach with the trees of the temperate or arctic zones, but with the stately palms and aromatic shrubs which form the pride of tropical groves.

Tropical for-  
ests.

The most valuable of these productions are the plant bearing the pepper,—the betel, whose leaves are the universal masticatory in India,—the areca-palm, the nut of which is chewed along with the betel,—the sago-palm, whence flows a rich and nourishing juice,—and the cocoa-palm, so famed for its numerous and important uses. Higher than all towers the teak-tree, whose timber, stronger and more durable than that of the British oak, forms the material of oriental navies. This chain does not in the northern part reach above 3000 feet. Near Bombay, the Peak of Mahabuleshwar, 5000 feet high, affords a convenient station for invalids from that city. But it is on the coasts of Canara and Malabar, southward of the fifteenth degree of latitude, that this range attains its greatest height, shooting up pinnacles of granite 6000 feet. At the boundary of Mysore there crosses the continent a ridge called the Nhilgerries, the highest in all this part of India, having one peak estimated at 8700 feet, which has lately become a most important sanitary retreat. Mr Royle conceives this group as joining together and closing the parallel chain of the two Ghauts, so that from thence only a single arm stretches southward to Cape Comorin. The western coast is in general very low, and traversed by numerous rivers flowing parallel to the

The Nhilger-  
ries.





shore, thus affording great convenience for inland navigation. CHAP. I.

The Eastern Ghauts, rising behind the Coromandel coast, are generally less lofty, but spread into more numerous branches, and over a wider surface. They leave also a broader plain between them and the sea; yet, unless in the deltas of the great rivers, which from the west cross the Ghauts and fall into the Bay of Bengal, this space bears somewhat of a naked and arid character. There occur even extensive tracts of sandy soil impregnated with saline substances, which in some degree taint the atmosphere. More to the north, in Orissa and the Circars, the high grounds often advance close to the sea, and consist to a great extent of mountain and jungle, continuing in a more uncultivated state, and peopled by more uncivilized races, than almost any other part of India. Cuttack, again, a district approaching the Ganges, is so low as to be liable to frequent inundations from the sea, which, in 1830, 1831, 1832, and 1833, broke the bunds or barriers, and overflowed numerous fields.

Eastern  
Ghauts.

These three ranges enclose a table-land, elevated nearly two thousand feet above the level of the ocean, and comprising the main body of Southern India. The south-western tract, the original seat of Mahratta power, forms a hilly country, not extremely rugged, but interspersed with deep valleys. In its aspect it is decidedly highland, and is a fit residence for a pastoral people of predatory habits. The central region, composing the once powerful kingdoms of Goleonda and Bejapore, comprehends extensive plains, secured by their elevation from the scorching heats which afflict the territory along the coast. The surface is generally level, and possesses much fertility, though diversified by those insulated steeps which supply a position for the almost impregnable hill-forts. The extreme southern district, called the Carnatic, is divided into two table-lands, the Balaghaut and the Mysore, considerably higher than those of the Deccan, and on that account including a greater variety of climate, soil, and production.

Southern  
India.





## CHAP. I.

Character of  
the scenery.

The mountain-scenery of Southern India in general, though wanting those features which invest the Himalach with so sublime a character, is beautiful, striking, and picturesque. It assimilates more to that of Wales and Scotland,—with this peculiarity, that it never rises above the limit of the richest vegetation, and has its highest summits crowned with woods and verdure. The greater part is under cultivation; though there is distributed over it a considerable portion of jungle, rock, forest, and even of sandy waste.

Political con-  
dition.

The political condition of the different regions of India varies strikingly according to the peculiarities in their physical circumstances. The great central plain, for example, has generally, from the earliest ages, been the seat of an empire whose greatness and splendour have eclipsed those of almost every other country. Some detached portions, as Bengal in the east, and the Punjaub in the west, have been frequently divided from the main body; but, under a vigorous and warlike dynasty, they have been as often reunited. It might have been expected that India, separated from other countries by a vast ocean and the loftiest mountain-barrier on earth, would have been secured from foreign aggression; but nothing could check the avarice and ambition which were attracted by the fame of her great wealth. That ocean has been passed,—those mountain-barriers have been scaled,—and during many generations she has groaned, and continues to groan without hope of deliverance, under the yoke of strangers.

Divisions of  
the country.

The power which bears rule over this central empire has usually aspired to the dominion of the whole; but the success of such undertakings has been only partial and temporary. They have been chiefly directed towards the extensive plains of the Deccan, which have in fact for ages been under foreign sway,—composed of branches broken off from the great trunk of Mogul dominion. In the most southern quarter, the table-lands and coasts have been shared among a number of little kingdoms, wealthy, populous, and civilized. These have often





owned allegiance, and even paid tribute, to the Mogul, or more frequently to the Deccan rulers; but in all essential respects they have ranked as independent states.

The mountain-regions of Northern India have enjoyed a happier lot, and been inhabited generally by races different from those which occupy the lower parts of the peninsula. The rugged tracts of the higher Himmaleh are possessed by bold, fierce, semi-Tartar tribes, who scarcely acknowledge the supremacy of the several powers which govern the adjacent plains. They have even from time to time harassed their neighbours by predatory inroads; but their small number, and the strong barriers by which they are separated, have prevented them from forming any extensive schemes of conquest.

Since the war with Nepal, a considerable tract has been annexed to the British dominion; to which officers of the Bengal presidency are now in the habit of resorting with a view to the restoration of health. At Simla and Landour, government have formed stations for invalids; and in the vicinity of those places, villas built by opulent Europeans stud the summit of hills rising 7000 or 8000 feet above the sea, and commanding extensive views into the regions of perpetual snow.





## CHAPTER II.

*Knowledge of India among the Ancients.*

India early known to the Ancients.—Accounts in Scripture of its Trade—Bacchus—Sesostris—Expedition of Semiramis—Conquest by Darius—Accounts by Herodotus and Ctesias—Expedition of Alexander—He is obliged to return—Voyage down the Indus—Voyage of Nearchus—Alexander's March through Gedrosia—Accounts of India obtained by this Channel—Kingdoms of Syria and of Bactria—Its Numismatic Remains—Mercantile Voyage from Egypt to India—Coasts which were then visited.

CHAP. II.  
Ancient  
writers on  
India.

INDIA, in the view of the earliest Greek and Roman writers, appeared an almost inaccessible region; the extensive seas which intervene being in the infancy of navigation considered quite impassable. The inland route, besides its very great length and the imperfect means of conveyance, lay partly across the loftiest ridge of mountains in the world, partly through deserts as dreary as those of Arabia. Yet the country had features which, seen even at this mysterious distance, strongly attracted attention among the civilized nations of antiquity. Its wealth and large population made it one of the principal objects of ambition to those great conquerors who aimed at universal empire; its fabrics, the most beautiful that human art has any where produced, were sought by merchants at the expense of the greatest toils and dangers; and the manners of its people, as well as the maxims of its sages, had something original and peculiar, which strongly excited philosophical inquiry. For these reasons, from the first moment that its existence became known down to the present-day, Hindostan has continued to hold a conspicuous name in the Western world.





In the sacred volume, which contains the earliest of our historical records, no statement is made whence we might conclude that the Jews had arrived at any knowledge of India. The Great River (Euphrates), and the territory immediately beyond it, appeared to them the most remote objects to the eastward, and are described under the appellation of the "ends of the earth." Yet those writings make a direct allusion to the extensive caravan routes, formed at an early period for conveying the manufactures of that opulent region into the kingdoms of the West. We cannot hesitate to believe, with Dr Vincent, that the embroidered work, and chests of rich apparel bound with cords, mentioned by Ezekiel (xxvii. 23) as brought from Haran, Canneh, and other towns on the Euphrates, were not produced by the ingenuity of the nations on that river, but drawn from the more distant countries of Eastern Asia. We have little doubt also, that the trade across Arabia, by way of Dedan and Idumea, and of which "precious cloths" are mentioned as the staple, was an Indian trade.

Bacchus, in the classic mythology, is named as the conqueror of India; but this tradition, though probably not destitute of some foundation, is so enveloped in fable that we can attach to it little historical importance. Whether that country was at all included in the wide career of invasion, rather than of conquest, pursued by Sesostris, seems extremely doubtful; though some light may perhaps be thrown upon the subject by the researches now in progress for the interpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphics.

The next expedition into the East, which is described in more ample detail, was that accomplished by Semiramis, the celebrated queen of Assyria. Although the knowledge possessed by the Greeks respecting the early Asiatic empires is exceedingly imperfect, yet the great fame of this enterprise, and the various shapes in which it has been reported, leave little room to doubt that it was actually undertaken. In the absence of a narrative on which a fuller dependence might be placed, recourse must





## CHAP. II

be had to the account given by Diodorus. The Assyrian queen, it is said, having extended her dominion widely over Western Asia, till even Bactria was comprehended within it, and having been informed that India was the most populous, the most wealthy, and the most beautiful of kingdoms, determined to employ all the resources of her empire in attempting its conquest. Only two circumstances made this great exploit appear impracticable. One was the broad and rapid stream of the Indus, with the entire want of vessels fitted for its passage; the other was the strength and formidable character of the war-elephants, the very aspect of which struck terror into troops unaccustomed to their presence. To supply these deficiencies, the queen engaged naval architects from Phœnicia, Cyprus, and other maritime districts; and, as proper materials were not to be found on the banks of the river, she caused vessels suited to its navigation to be constructed at Bactra, and conveyed thence overland. For supplying the want of elephants a still more singular plan was devised. Three hundred thousand oxen were slain, and their hides formed into the shape of the huge animals to be represented, within which camels and men were introduced as the moving power. After three years spent in these extraordinary preparations, she sent forward her armies, which some writers describe as amounting to several millions of combatants; but the narrative of Ctesias, itself much exaggerated, estimates them at three hundred thousand foot, five hundred thousand horse, while two thousand boats and the mock-elephants were conveyed on the backs of camels. Strabonates, the Indian king, was ready to meet them on the eastern bank, with four thousand boats framed out of the reeds (canes) which grew in abundance on its marshy borders. At the same time he collected, from the various districts of India, an army even greater than that of Semiramis, supported by a numerous body of elephants. The two powers first encountered each other in the river-stream, where the queen gained a decided advantage, sinking many of the enemy's barks, and obtaining posses-

Assyrian  
preparations  
for conquest.

Preparations  
to oppose the  
invaders.





sion of both shores. She then constructed a spacious bridge, by which the whole army passed, and advanced against her adversaries. In front the pretended elephants, ranged in order of battle, somewhat surprised and appalled the native troops; but Stabrobates, having learned by means of deserters the real composition of these fictitious quadrupeds, prepared without apprehension to encounter them. As long as the contest was confined to the cavalry, victory inclined to the side of Assyria; but as soon as the real and mighty war-elephants, on the most powerful of which the king himself was mounted, rushed to the attack, the artificial semblances opposed to them, wholly unable to sustain the shock, were soon resolved into their constituent elements, who fled in dismay, and, being pursued, were many of them trampled under foot. The whole army was completely routed, and Semiramis brought back scarcely a third of her host; some authors even maintain that she herself perished in the expedition. At all events, the conquest of India appears not to have been again attempted by any of the Assyrian or Babylonian monarchs.

CHAP. II.

Passage of  
the Indus.Rout of the  
Assyrians.

Darius, the Persian, is mentioned as the next who undertook to explore and to conquer that vast country. Having reached the Indus, he determined to trace its course till it should fall into the ocean. In this important service he employed Scylax the Caryandean, the most distinguished naval commander of that early age, who sailed down the stream, and, after a navigation of two years and a half, arrived in Egypt,—a most extensive, and at that period most arduous voyage, of which, unfortunately, no detailed account has been preserved. The historian then simply informs us, that “Darius subdued the Indians;” and it appears that he drew from their country a more ample tribute than from any other province of his wide dominions,—paid too in gold, the most valuable of commodities. Yet the description of Herodotus, brief and indistinct as it is, shows that the power of the conqueror extended over only a very small portion of India. The simple statement that this

Invasion of  
Darius





## CHAP. II.

Narrative of  
Herodotus.Characteris-  
tic Indian  
manners

country was bounded on the east by vast sandy deserts, forming on that side the limit of the known world, renders it manifest that *his* India included nothing beyond the western provinces of Moultan, Lahore, and possibly Guzerat. His details, which are truly defective, seem applicable to some rude mountain-tribe rather than to the inhabitants of a great and civilized empire; yet the particulars, when narrowly examined, indicate the early existence of the same features by which the land of the Hindoos is still distinguished. The wool growing on trees like fruit, more beautiful and valuable than that produced from sheep, and like it used for clothing, is evidently cotton, a substance then unknown in the West. The statement, too, that some natives kill no living thing, but subsist wholly on herbs, points out a characteristic fact in Indian manners; while the assertion that others of them neither cultivate the ground nor inhabit houses, clearly applies to the superstitious practices of the yogues or fakirs. The Padaei, probably a mountain-tribe, are described as living on raw flesh, while the people bordering on the river are said to subsist on raw fish. The singular statement that when any one, male or female, falls sick, his relations kill him, and feed upon the body, as well as another passage asserting that those who feel themselves indisposed go out into the desert, and die without any one caring for them, may have been suggested by the various forms of self-immolation, which, if not urged, are at least permitted, by the nearest kindred. A remarkable notice is conveyed respecting the great quantity of gold found in mines and in the beds of rivers; to which is appended an odd story respecting huge ants that defend this treasure, and often give chase to those who attempt to collect it.

Account by  
Ctesias.

The work of Ctesias, who, after the time of Herodotus, communicated the information collected during a long residence in Persia, is known to us only through the medium of some fragments preserved by Photius and other authors. The knowledge of India in his time does not appear to have been any farther extended. He





mentions no river except the Indus, yet says that the inhabitants in its neighbourhood are the remotest people known to the eastward; so that his intelligence evidently terminated with the western desert, and did not include the vast regions which compose the proper Hindostan. Yet, even under this limited view, he relates that it surpassed in number all other nations; and hence it may be inferred, that the country, even in that early age, was populous and highly cultivated. His descriptions of the animals and vegetables, though bearing some traces of truth, are greatly mixed with fable. Some light, however, is thrown on the reports of Herodotus concerning the gold of India, which is here stated to be found, not like that of Pactolus in the beds of rivers, but in extensive and rugged mountains, haunted by wild beasts of peculiar form and fierceness. For this reason, it is added, only a small quantity of the precious metal could be extracted from the mines; and it is probable that their remote and difficult situation led to an exaggerated idea of their real importance.

Much more ample information respecting this quarter of the globe was obtained from the expedition of Alexander, though that great conqueror did not pass or perhaps even reach the limit which had arrested the progress of Darius. Having overrun the whole Persian empire as far as Bactra (Balkh), the capital of Bactria, and finding it every where subdued and submissive, he determined to cross the mountains, and complete the subjugation of the known world by conquering India. He cleared the ridge of Paropamisus, probably by the great caravan-route between Balkh and Candahar, without having suffered any serious loss, though it is admitted that the reduction of the strongholds by which the passes of the mountains were guarded gave occasion to several arduous conflicts. He then marched eastward, and reached the Indus at or near Attock, where its breadth is considerably less than in most other parts of its lower course; and he crossed it without encountering any obstacles, but such as arose from the rapidity of the current.

CHAP. V.

Very partial  
knowledge of  
India.Alexander's  
expedition.





## CHAP. II.

Persian  
claims on In-  
dia.

Although this hero founded his claim to India on its being a province of the Persian empire, transferred to him by right of conquest, the truth appears to be, that during the weak reigns of the successors of Darius, every trace of their dominion had been entirely obliterated; the country not being even united under one sovereign, but parcelled out among numerous independent chiefs. The first whose territories the Macedonian entered was named Taxiles, or Tacshailas, who, either considering resistance hopeless or expecting to derive advantage from the Greek alliance, immediately joined him with all his forces. But when the conqueror reached the Hydaspes, he found its opposite bank occupied by Porus, or Phoor, with a very numerous army, composed of stronger men and braver troops than those whom he had so easily vanquished in Persia, and selected, it is probable, from the Rajputs and mountain-tribes, the most warlike part of the Hindoo population. The difficulties of the invading army were increased by the rainy season, which had swelled the river to a height that made it impossible for the soldiers to ford it. Alexander however displayed his generalship by taking advantage of a wooded island at some distance below; to which, while making a feigned attempt in another quarter, he transported the flower of his phalanx as well as the best of his cavalry. These, having easily defeated the small force which hastened to oppose their landing, were soon drawn up in order of battle. Porus without delay attacked the strangers; and his defeat, his noble bearing in captivity, and the generous treatment bestowed upon him, are well-known events in the history of the Grecian prince.

Alexander's  
generalship

Causes of the  
celebrated  
mutiny.

Alexander having overcome this formidable enemy, pressed onward, and soon arrived on the banks of the Hyphasis, the modern Sutledge, and the last of that series of rivers which water the Punjab. But here his progress was arrested by the celebrated mutiny, which seems to have originated in the opinion of his followers, from the highest to the lowest, that no





farther advance could be made with advantage or safety. The extensive desert which it was necessary to pass, joined to the great magnitude and populousness of the eastern regions, rendered the attempt at invasion most hazardous, and precluded almost every hope of being able to preserve any conquests which they might make in so remote a quarter. Their leader was therefore obliged to set bounds to his vast ambition, and to resign the fondly cherished hope of reaching the Ganges, and the supposed extremity of the world.

It behoved Alexander to commence the disagreeable task of returning towards Assyria; but he resolved at least to vary his route, and thereby to extend his acquaintance with the country which he had overrun. Among his other great qualities he was animated with an ardent thirst for knowledge, and particularly for geographical discovery. In retracing his steps towards Babylon, therefore, which he made his Asiatic capital, it appeared to him that he might have an opportunity of determining the course of the Indus and the southern limits of Asia. He was encouraged by an idea, and even belief, which to us it appears astonishing he could even for a moment have cherished, that the Indus and the Nile were the same river. But we must not, from the full light we now enjoy, denounce too severely the imperfect steps by which the ancients groped their way in that twilight of science. The voyage of Scylax being probably forgotten or doubted, and the shores of Asia as well as the situation of the Arabian and Persian Gulfs continuing still very imperfectly known, the imagined circuit uniting the two rivers might appear by no means impossible.

Alexander's  
return.

Singular geo-  
graphical  
fancies.

Having formed this resolution, he proceeded to execute it with his characteristic activity. Having found on the banks of the Hydaspes an ample store of excellent timber, he employed the Phenicians and other maritime people belonging to his army to construct out of it a fleet of more than two thousand vessels, of which eighty had three banks of oars. He put some of his troops on board, while strong detachments encamped on either

Voyage on  
the Indus.