

HISTORY OF GREECE.

CHAPTER LIII.

ALEXANDER'S CAMPAIGNS IN INDIA TO HIS RETREAT FROM THE HYPHISIS.

AFTER the conquest of the Bactrian satrapy, there remained only one province of the Persian empire into which Alexander had not yet carried his arms: it was that which tempted his curiosity, as well as his ambition, perhaps more than any other. Already, indeed, before he crossed the Paropamisus, he had made himself master of a great part of the country which the Persians called India, and perhaps had very nearly reached the utmost limits within which the authority of the Great King was acknowledged in the latter years of the monarchy. But the power of the first Darius had certainly been extended much further eastward. It seems probable that a part of his Indian tribute was collected in the Pendjab, and there is some reason to believe that it was on the Hydaspes Scylax began his voyage of discovery.¹ After the death of Darius, the attention of the Persian kings was so much turned toward the west, or distracted by wars with their revolted subjects,

¹ So Ritter, *Asien*, iv. i. p. 445. v. Bohlen (*Indien*, i. p. 64.), who likewise considers Caspatyrus as Cashmire, takes the river mentioned by Herodotus iv. 44. for the Cabul river. But in the same page he expresses a doubt whether the voyage described by Herodotus was ever made.

that they would scarcely have had leisure for fresh conquests in India, even if the spirit of Cyrus had lived in his successors: and it is very uncertain, whether their territories reached so far as the Indus. The greater part of the peninsula was, as we see from the accounts of Herodotus and Ctesias, utterly unknown to the Persians. The India of Herodotus is bounded on the east by a sandy desert, which, it seems, he believed to be terminated by the ocean which girded his earth, and was inhabited chiefly by pastoral and savage, even it was said cannibal tribes.¹ Nor had Ctesias, during his long residence at the Persian court, heard of the Ganges, or of the countries on its banks. He had indeed collected many marvellous reports, which must for the most part have seemed incredible to all intelligent Greeks, about the productions of India; but he betrays a total ignorance of the peculiar features of Indian society. Both he however and Herodotus represent the country, so far as it was known to them, as exceedingly rich and populous. The Indians, Herodotus observes, are by far the most numerous race of men we know: and the tribute of the Indian satrapy amounted to a third of the whole that Darius received: all, according to him, arising from the gold found in the northern mountains. But many other costly and useful productions of India, as cotton, spices, ivory, and precious stones, were very early known in the west, chiefly, it appears, through the commercial activity of the Phœnicians. At the battle of Arbela the Greeks for the first time saw elephants, which they heard had been brought from the banks of the Indus. To Alexander and his companions India appeared from a distance as a new world, of indefinite extent, and abounding in wonders and riches. Even without any other inducement, he must eagerly have desired to explore and subdue it.

During the campaigns of the last two years, he had met with opportunities of gaining better information

¹ These are generally supposed to be the aboriginal negro population from which the Parias are believed to descend.

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about India, than was to be found in Herodotus or Ctesias. Among the followers of Bessus was an Indian chief, or leader of mercenaries, named Sisycottus, who, when Bessus fell into Alexander's hands, submitted to the conqueror, and became firmly attached to him. The accounts which he gave of the countries beyond the Indus, might afterwards have been confirmed by an embassy which Alexander received in Sogdiana, from a prince whose name is written by the Greeks Omphis, or Mophis, and who reigned over the rich tract which intervenes between the Upper Indus and the Hydaspes (Behut or Jhelum), the westernmost of the five great tributaries from which the whole eastern basin of the Indus, down to their confluence with it, takes the name of the Pendjab. His capital Taxila, from which he is more commonly entitled Taxiles, stood at some distance from either stream, and appears to have been a large and splendid city, though its site has perhaps not yet been discovered.¹ The king of Taxila had offered his alliance to Alexander, and sought aid from him against a powerful neighbour; and thus Alexander ascertained that the state of things in this part of India was highly favourable to his projected invasion. The distribution of power in the Pendjab appears to have fluctuated as much in the earliest times to which we can ascend in its history, as it has in those nearest to our own days. Ctesias spoke of the king of the Indians², as if all India, so far as it was known to him, was comprised under a single monarchy. This king was an ally of Artaxerxes, to whom he sent presents³, but not, it appears, as tokens of inferiority. Hence we may collect, that, when Ctesias wrote, a great part of the country on the Persian frontier was united under one powerful ruler. But in its ordinary condition it seems to have been subdivided into a number of small states, which were not under kingly government, and its inhabitants were on this

¹ The claims of the Tope of Manikiaula (Elphinstone, p. 79) to such antiquity are very doubtful.

² Ind. 22. 27. 28.

³ Ind. 28.

account branded, by the eastern Indians, whose kings reigned by divine right, as a lawless race.¹ Through some revolutions, no record of which has been preserved, a great part of it had in Alexander's time fallen under the dominion of three princes, the Taxiles already mentioned, and two who were kinsmen, and bore the name of Porus. The most powerful of these was the immediate neighbour of Taxiles; his territories lay to the east of the Hydaspes. It was against him that the king of Taxila sought to strengthen himself by an alliance with the Macedonian conqueror.

The accounts which Alexander received of the population and resources of the country he was about to enter, together with the consideration of the great length of time that would be requisite for reinforcements to reach him there, convinced him of the necessity of extraordinary preparations for his Indian expedition. But the European force which he had at his disposal for this purpose, can hardly have amounted to a greater number than he at first brought over into Asia. For beside the manifold losses this part of his army had suffered in the last two years, and the garrisons and colonies which had been drawn from it, he thought it necessary to leave a corps of 10,000 infantry, and 3,500 horse, in Bactria, under the command of the satrap Amyntas. Yet he marched into India at the head of 120,000 foot and 15,000 horse.² Of these we must suppose that at least 70,000 were Asiatic troops. A considerable part of these auxiliaries were drawn from Bactria and Sogdiana, and from the neighbouring Scythian hordes: and they answered the double purpose of strengthening his army, and of securing the tranquillity of the conquered lands from which they were withdrawn. With the same object a large proportion of

¹ Ritter, *Asien*, iv. p. 459. Lassen, *de Pentapotamia Indica*, p. 22. Ἀράττοι (Arrian, *Peripl.* p. 27 ed. Huds.), Arāshtras, or Arattas, kingless. The nickname seems to have been applied to the whole population of the Pendjab, though it happened that in Alexander's time the part west of the Acesines was under kingly government. Lassen, *u. s.*, speaks of this as if it had been a permanent distinction.

² Plut. *Al.* 66., Arrian, *Ind.* 19. who does not mention the cavalry.

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the boys, who were taken from their homes to receive Greek training, were undoubtedly collected in the north-east provinces. According to Curtius, it was just before he set out for India, that Alexander ordered a levy of 30,000 youths, to serve at once as hostages and soldiers.

The summer of 327 had scarcely begun, when he crossed the mountains, by a shorter route than he had taken in the winter of 329¹, which brought him in ten days to Alexandria. Here he found reason to remove the governor whom he had left there, and, having appointed Nicanor in his room, descended the valley of the Cabul river to Nicæa. This, according to the most probable conjecture, was the new name which he gave to the city otherwise called Ortospaña, or Cabura, the site of the modern Cabul, where he made a sacrifice to Athene, perhaps to place it under her protection. He then advanced to the banks of the Cophen, the river formed by the confluence of the Cabul river with the Pendjshir, a larger stream, which meets it from the north-west. Here, in conformity to his summons, he was met by Taxiles, and by several chiefs from the country west of the Indus, bringing presents, such as were accounted the most honourable; and, as he expressed a wish for elephants, they promised all they possessed, which however amounted to no more than five-and-twenty. The satrapy of the Paropamisadæ, west of the Cophen, or Pendjshir, was committed to Tyriaspes. Alexander now divided his forces. He sent Hephæstion and Perdicas, with a strong division, accompanied by the Indian chiefs, down the vale of the Cophen to the Indus, to prepare a bridge for the passage of the army, while he himself directed his march into the mountains north of the Cophen, and included between it and the Indus.² Here lay the territories

¹ Strabo, xv. p. 267. Tauchn.

² An opinion of such a man as Schlosser must always deserve notice, and therefore the reader ought to be informed, that Schlosser (i. 3. p. 133.) takes an entirely different view of Alexander's march from Bactria to the Cophen. He says: "Alexander must probably have found the nearest road to

of three warlike tribes, the Aspasiens or Hippasiens, Guræans, and Assaceniens. The operations of this campaign, which occupied the rest of the year, do not require to be related here with all the military details which belonged to Arrian's subject. It seems that Alexander was induced to take the upper road, not so much because he desired to reduce the mountaineers, as because he had learnt that it led through a country which was both better supplied with provisions, and on the whole presented fewer obstacles (since the streams would be more easily crossed near their sources, while the climate was more temperate) than he was likely to meet with, if he kept closer to the left bank of the Cophen.¹

He first ascended the rugged vale of the Choes, which seems also to have been called Choaspes, and Evaspla, by the Greeks; a tributary of the Cophen, apparently the modern Kamah, or Kashgar, which falls into it at the eastern foot of the great mountain pile called the Khoond, in which the Caucasus projects southward, toward the Khyber range. This vale led into the territory of the Aspasiens, where, having taken two of the smaller towns, leaving Craterus to subdue the rest of the southern district, he himself marched

Cabul by Bamian too difficult, for he took the other, which leads from the southern part of the province of Balkh (from Ghoraut) to Kandahar, and accomplished this march in ten days. Thence he marched up the river Urgundab by Ghizni, which his Greeks called Nysa, to Cabul, or Arigæum, and then down the river Cabul, which the ancients named Kophes, to its confluence with the Indus at Attock, the ancient Taxila." But Strabo (xv. p. 267. Tauchn.) on the contrary says expressly, that Alexander on his return crossed the Paropamisus by a *shorter route* than he had taken on his road to Bactria, and then directed his march straight toward India. This seems clearly to prove that he did not pass through Candahar, or Ghizni. As he had before crossed the mountains in the winter, the shortest route was probably then impracticable. Schlosser assigns no reason for fixing Nysa at or near Ghizni. Nysa lay (Arr. v. 1.) in the country between the Cophen and the Indus, the same highlands in which lay the towns which Schlosser himself (p. 137.) describes as situate in the mountains of the Hindukuh.

¹ Strabo, xv. p. 268. Tauchn. It seems necessary to interpret the passage thus, on account of the concluding sentence, which assigns the reason why Alexander crossed the Cophen, and subdued the mountain region eastward. Otherwise it would seem that the description of the drought and the heat was meant for the south of India, and not for the valley of Cabul.

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northward against the capital, Gorydala, which stood on the eastern bank of the Choës. On his approach, the natives set fire to their city, and fled into the heart of their mountains: but they were overtaken by the invader, and their chief fell by the hand of Ptolemy. He then crossed over to the city of Arigæum, on the eastern side of the Aspasian territory. This he also found reduced to ashes, and deserted by its inhabitants: and as it commanded an important pass between the vale of the Choës, and that of the Guræus, another tributary of the Cophen (probably the Penjkore), he ordered Craterus, who had here rejoined the great army, to rebuild it, while he himself advanced into the interior in pursuit of the fugitives. He defeated their collected forces, and gathered a vast booty, including 40,000 captives, and between three and four hundred thousand head of cattle, from which he selected some of the finest to be sent into Macedonia. He then, with some difficulty, effected the passage of the deep and rapid Guræus, and entered the territory of the Assaceniens. They did not venture to keep the field, but trusted to the strength of their towns. In Massaga, their capital, their chief had prepared to defend himself with the aid of 7000 mercenaries from the Pendjab. But when, after a short siege, he was killed by a dart from an engine, the garrison capitulated, and Alexander accepted the surrender of the place, on the condition that the mercenaries should join his army. But they discovered a degree of patriotism which he had not looked for. They were so averse from the thought of turning their arms against their countrymen, that, having marched out, and encamped on a hill by themselves, they meditated making their escape in the night. Alexander was apprized of their design, and, though they had not begun to execute it—with less generosity than might have been expected from him, even if mercy was out of the question—surrounded the hill with his troops, and cut them all to pieces. Then, holding the capitulation to

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have been broken, he stormed the defenceless city, where the chief's mother and daughter fell into his hands.

Two strongholds, named Ora and Bazira, remained to be reduced in the district between the Guræus and the Indus : and the inhabitants of Ora, which probably lay farthest eastward, had received promises of support from a neighbouring prince named Abisares, who, according to this and the other indications afforded by his proceedings, must have reigned over Cashmire, a part of which is said to bear a name of very similar sound. Alexander however anticipated the arrival of these succours, by the capture of Ora, where he found some elephants : and the inhabitants of Bazira, now despairing of their own safety, fled to another place of refuge, which was deemed impregnable, and soon became crowded with fugitives from all parts of the country. This was a hill fort on the right bank of the Indus, not far above its junction with the Cophen. Its Indian name seems to have been slightly distorted by the Greeks, according to their usual practice, into that of Aornus, which answered to its extraordinary height, as above the flight of a bird. It was precipitous on all sides, and accessible only by a single path cut in the rock, though in one direction it was connected with a range of hills. But its summit was an extensive plain of fruitful soil, partly clothed with wood, and containing copious springs. The traditions of the country concerning its insurmountable strength seem to have given occasion to the fable, which spread through the Macedonian camp, that Hercules himself had assailed it without success. Alexander did not need this inducement to excite him to the undertaking. The opinion of the natives, which had led so many to take shelter there, was a sufficient motive. It had been a principle, to which he owed most of his conquests, to show that he was not to be deterred by any natural difficulties : and he resolved to make the Aornus his own. On his road southward, along the right bank of the Indus, he passed through the district of Peucelaotis, so called after its chief city Peucela,

which lay west of the Indus, though it has given its name to the modern Puckhelee on the opposite side of the river.¹ Its ruler, Astes, whose territory stretched southward beyond the Cophen, had maintained his independence against Hephæstion and Perdiccas, in a city which they besieged for thirty days on their march eastward. But he had fallen in the siege, and the place having been stormed, was committed to the care of Sangæus, one of his subjects who had revolted from him. Peucela surrendered to Alexander on his passage, and he occupied it with a Macedonian garrison. He then advanced to a city called Ecbolima, which lay very near to the foot of Aornus, and here he left Craterus, with orders to lay in a great stock of provisions: for the reports he had heard of Aornus, though they did not shake his resolution, made him doubt whether he might not be forced to turn the siege into a blockade.

The sight of the place itself, when he encamped before it, probably suggested no better hopes. But he had not long arrived at it, before he received information of a rugged and difficult track that led up to the top of a hill, separated by a hollow of no great depth, though of considerable width, from the rock. By this path he sent Ptolemy, with a body of light troops, who reached the summit before he was noticed by the garrison, and immediately, as he had been ordered, threw up an intrenchment, and by a fire-signal announced his success to the camp below. The Indians attempted in vain to dislodge him from his position: and the next day Alexander, by a hard struggle, notwithstanding their vigorous resistance, joined him there with the rest of the army. He now availed himself of his superior numbers, and began to carry a mound across the hollow. He took part in the work with his own hands, and the whole army, animated by his example and exhortations, prosecuted it with restless assiduity. It advanced at the rate of a furlong a day; and on the fourth day, a

¹ Rennell, *Memoir of a Map of Hindostan*, p. 147.

small detachment of Macedonians took possession of a little peak, which was on a level with the rock, where it seems they were protected by the missiles with which the besieged were now continually assailed: and the army redoubled its efforts to connect the mound with this point. But the Indians, astonished at the intrepidity with which a handful of men had seized this vantage-ground, and alarmed by the progress of the work, began to despair of resistance, and to meditate flight. They sent envoys to treat of terms of capitulation; but their intention was only to amuse Alexander until nightfall, and then to make their escape. He however was apprized of their design, and permitted them partly to execute it. But while they were stealing out of the place, he scaled the deserted wall with a part of his guard, entered the fortress, and chased the fugitives with great slaughter into the plains below. The capture of the rock which had baffled the assaults of Hercules, was celebrated with solemn sacrifices, and supplied a fresh theme for the eloquence of Agis and Anaxarchus.

The government of this important fortress was committed to Sisycottus: and the satrapy of the newly conquered districts between the Cophen and the Indus to Nicanor.¹ But the spirit of the mountaineers was not yet subdued. Alexander had scarcely left the Assacenic territory, before it was roused to revolt by a brother of the chief who had fallen at Massaga; and as soon as he had taken Aornus, the conqueror retraced his steps into the mountains, to suppress this insurrection.² He was the more anxious to reduce the rebel, because he was in possession of a number of elephants. But when he arrived at the town of Dyrta in the insur-

¹ So perhaps Arrian's statement, iv. 28., in which Droysen, p. 376., suspects an error, may be reconciled with that which follows, v. 8. The satrapy of Philippos may have begun south of the Cophen.

² It is amusingly characteristic to find Droysen, p. 380., talking of Alexander's *just anger* against the insurgents: as if a robber had a *right* to be angry, when a man whom he has knocked down gets up again, and tries to recover his property.