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# The History of British India

VOLUME 1

JAMES MILL

Cambridge University Press  
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James Mill  
Frontmatter  
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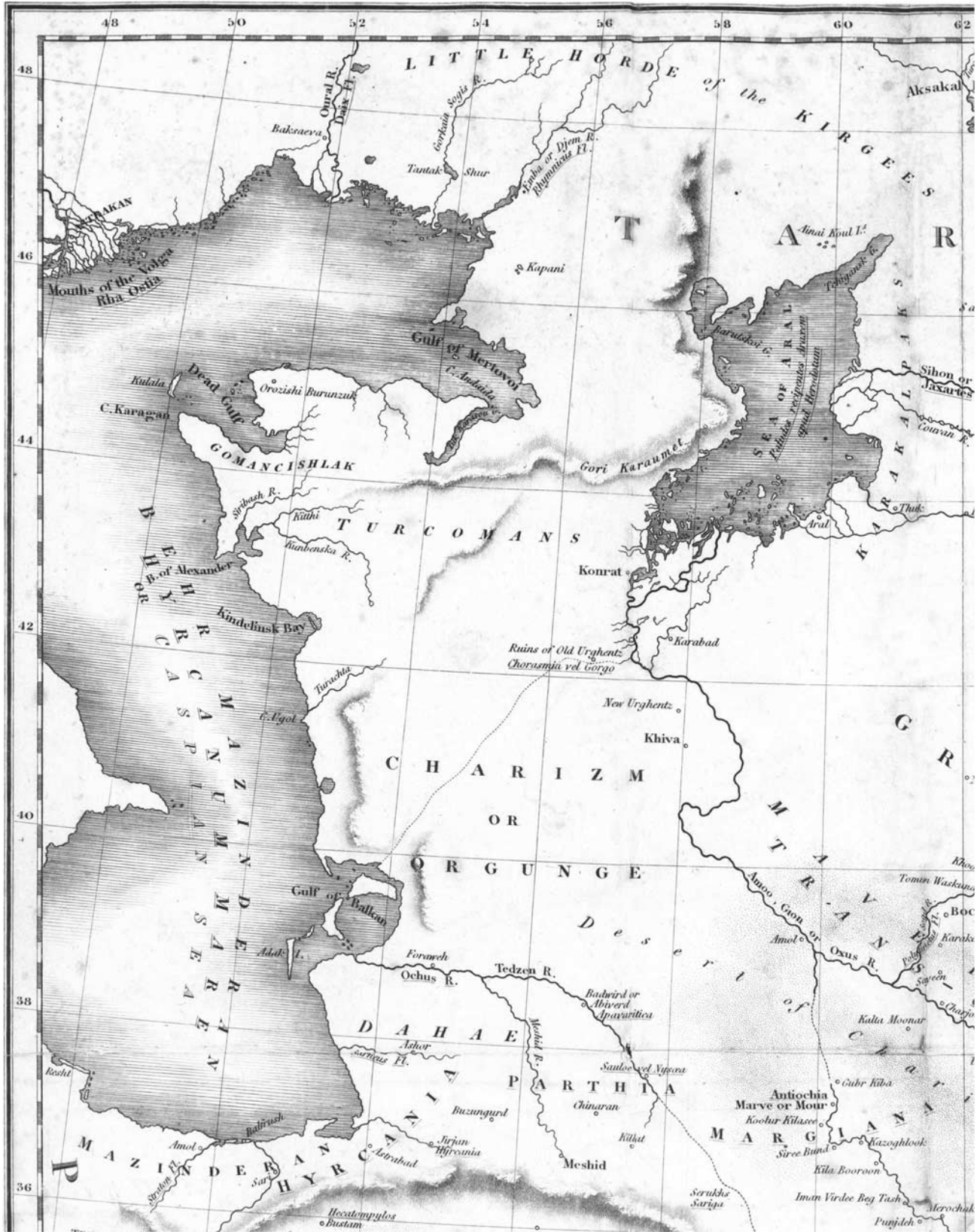
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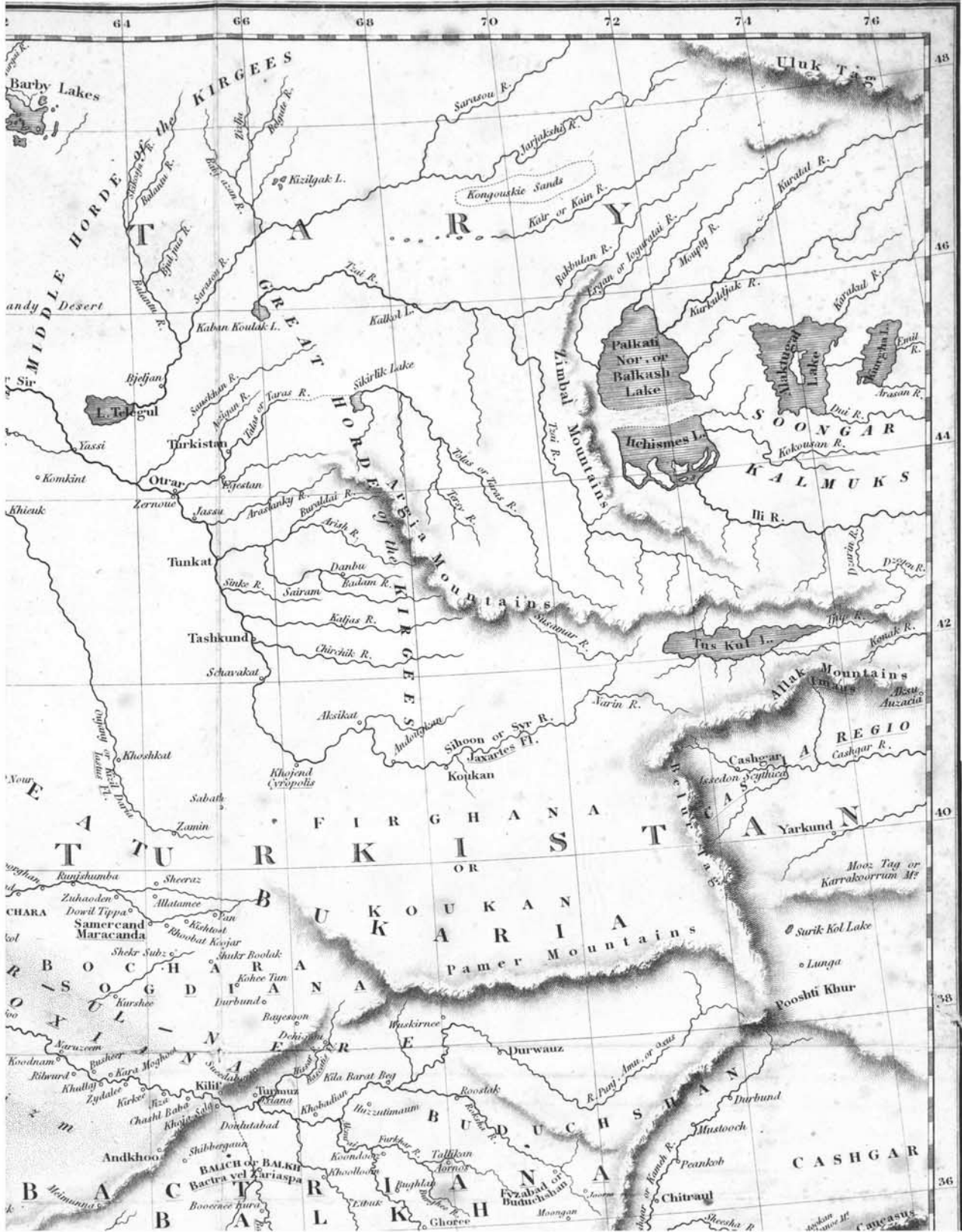
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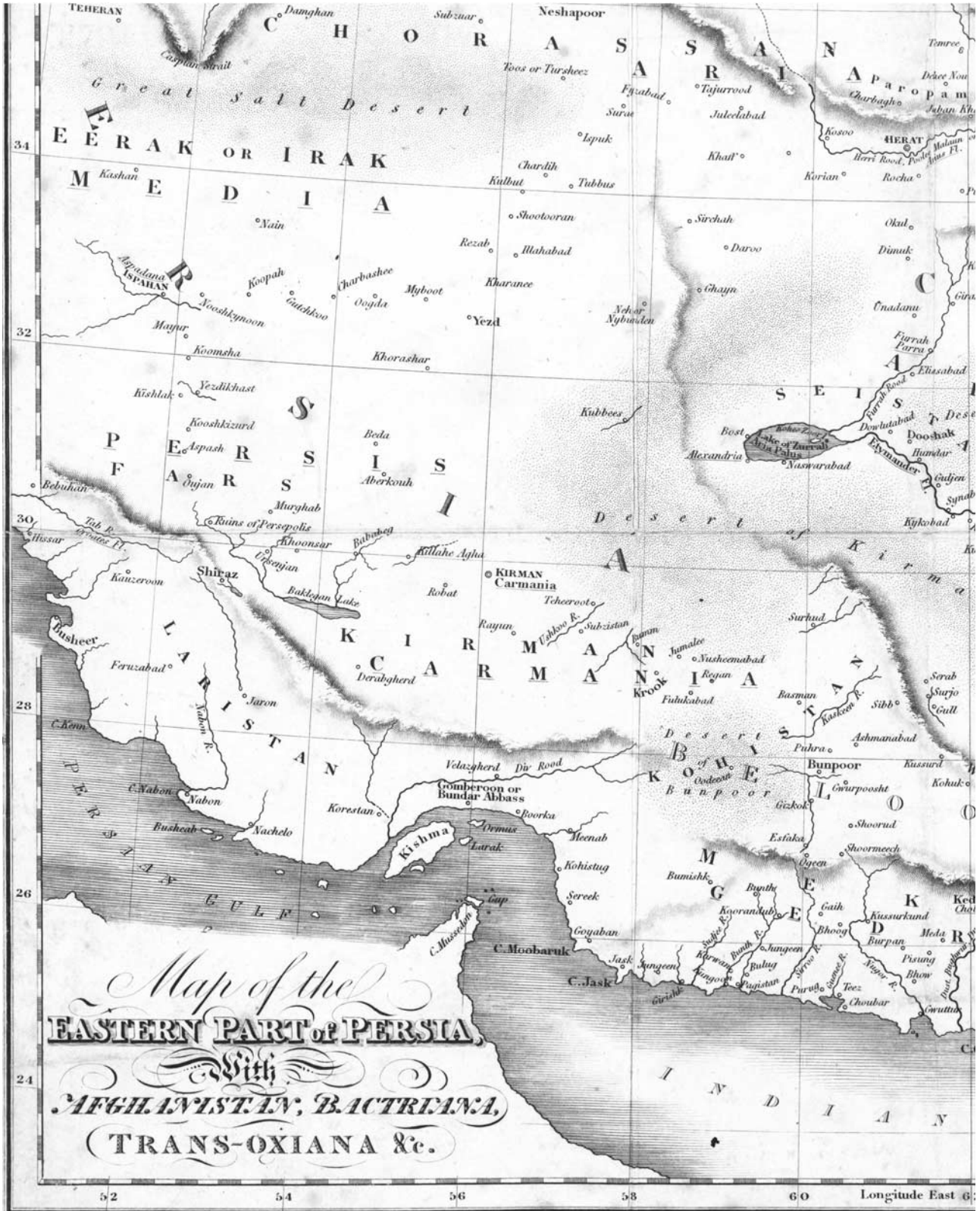
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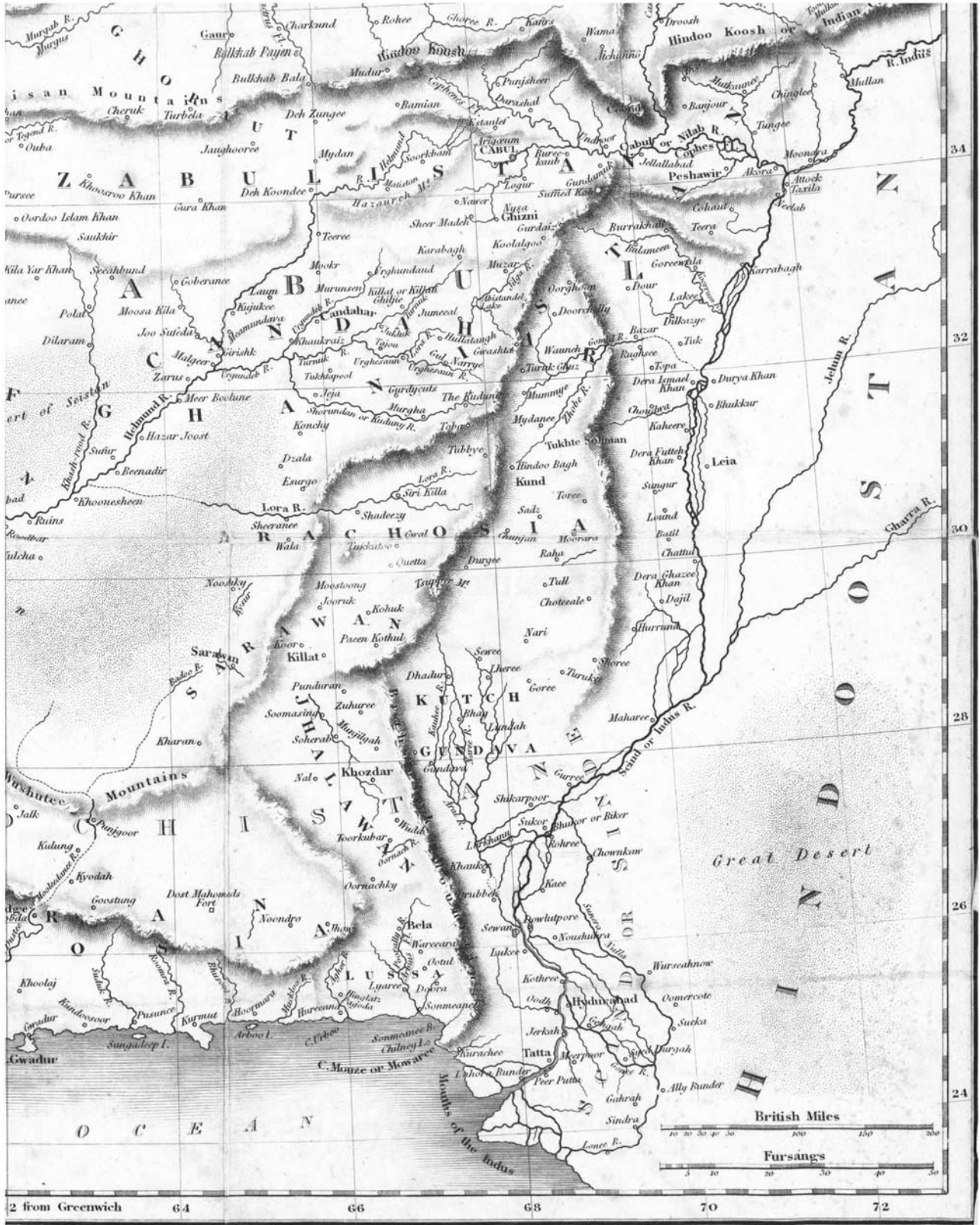


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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
BRITISH INDIA

BY JAMES MILL, ESQ.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.  
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Hoc autem pressè et distinctè excutiamus, sermone quodam activo  
et masculino, nusquam digrediendo, nil amplificando.

BACON, *De Augm. Scient. lib. ii.*

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# CONTENTS.

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## BOOK I.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE BRITISH INTERCOURSE WITH INDIA; AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF ITS PROGRESS, TILL THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMPANY ON A DURABLE BASIS BY THE ACT OF THE SIXTH OF QUEEN ANNE.

### CHAPTER I.

From the Commencement of the Efforts to begin a Trade with India, till the Change of the Company from a Regulated to a Joint-stock Company . . . . . 2

### CHAPTER II.

From the Change of the Company into a Joint-stock, instead of a Regulated, Company, in 1612, till the Formation of the third Joint-stock, in 1631-2. . . . . 19

### CHAPTER III.

From the Formation of the third Joint-stock, in 1632, till the Coalition of the Company with the Merchant Adventurers in 1657 . . . . . 40

### CHAPTER IV.

From the Coalition between the Company and the Merchant Adventurers, till the Project for a new and a rival East India Company . . . . . 55

### CHAPTER V.

From the Project of forming a new and rival Company, till the Union of the two Companies by the Award of Godolphin, in the year 1711 . . . . . 69

## CONTENTS.

## BOOK II.

## OF THE HINDUS.

## CHAPTER I.

Chronology and Ancient History of the Hindus..... 91

## CHAPTER II.

Classification and Distribution of the People..... 106

## CHAPTER III.

The Form of Government..... 122

## CHAPTER IV.

The Laws..... 133

## CHAPTER V.

The Taxes..... 173

## CHAPTER VI.

Religion..... 198

## CHAPTER VII.

Manners..... 287

## CHAPTER VIII.

The Arts..... 332

## CONTENTS.

v

## CHAPTER IX.

Literature ..... 362

## CHAPTER X.

General Reflections ..... 429

---

**BOOK III.**

## THE MAHOMEDANS.

## CHAPTER I.

From the first Invasion of India by the Nations in the North, till the Expulsion of  
 the Gaznevide Dynasty. .... 481

## CHAPTER II.

From the Commencement of the first Gaurian Dynasty, to that of the second Gau-  
 rian or Afghaun Dynasty ..... 496

## CHAPTER III.

From the Commencement of the second Gaurian Dynasty, to the Commencement of  
 the Mogul Dynasty. .... 509

## CHAPTER IV.

From the Commencement to the Close of the Mogul Dynasty ..... 532

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER V.

A Comparison of the State of Civilization among the Mahomedan Conquerors of  
India, with the State of Civilization among the Hindus. . . . . 625

## P R E F A C E.

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**I**N the course of reading and investigation, necessary for acquiring that measure of knowledge which I was anxious to possess, respecting my country, its people, its government, its interests, its policy, and its laws, I was met, and in some degree surprised, by extraordinary difficulties, when I arrived at that part of my inquiries which related to India. On other subjects, of any magnitude and importance, I generally found, that there was some one book, or small number of books, containing the material part of the requisite information; and in which direction was obtained, by reference, to other books, if, in any part, the reader found it necessary to extend his researches. In regard to India, the case was exceedingly different. The knowledge requisite for attaining an adequate conception of that great scene of British action, was collected no where. It was scattered in a great variety of repositories, sometimes in considerable portions, often in very minute ones; sometimes by itself, often mixed up with subjects of a very different nature: but even where information relating to India stood disjoined from other subjects, a small portion of what was useful lay commonly imbedded in a large mass of what was trifling and insignificant; and of a body of statements, given indiscriminately as matters of fact, ascertained by the senses, the far greater part was in general only matter of opinion, borrowed, in succession, by one set of Indian gentlemen from another.\*

\* The difficulty arising from this source of false information was felt by the very first accurate historian.

*Ὅτι γὰρ ἀνθρώποι τὰς ἀκοὰς τῶν προγεννημένων, καὶ ἢ ἐπιχθονίᾳ σφισιν ἢ, ὁμῶς ἀβαστανιστῶς παρ' ἀλλήλων διχονται.* Thucyd. lib. i. c. κ'. Other excellent observations to the same purpose are found in the two following chapters.

In bestowing the time, labour, and thought, necessary to explore this assemblage of heterogeneous things, and to separate, for my own use, what was true and what was useful, from what was insignificant and what was false, I was led to grieve, that none of those who had preceded me, in collecting for themselves a knowledge of Indian affairs, had been induced to leave their collection for the benefit of others; and perform the labour of extracting and ordering the dispersed and confused materials of a knowledge of India, once for all. The second reflection was, that, if those who preceded me had neglected this important service, and in so doing were not altogether free from blame, neither should I be exempt from the same condemnation, if I omitted what depended upon me, to facilitate and abridge to others the labour of acquiring a knowledge of India; an advantage I should have valued so highly, had it been bestowed upon me by any former inquirer.

In this manner, the idea of writing a History of India was first engendered in my mind. I should have shrunk from the task, had I foreseen the labour in which it has involved me.

The books, in which more or less of information respecting India might be expected to be found, were sufficiently numerous to compose a library. Some were books of Travels. Some were books of History. Some contained philological, some antiquarian researches. A considerable number consisted of translations from the writings of the natives in the native tongues; others were books on the religion of the people of India; books on their laws; books on their sciences, manners, and arts.

The transactions in India were not the only transactions of the British nation, to which the affairs of India had given birth. Those affairs had been the subject of much discussion by the press, and of many legislative, executive, and even judicial proceedings, in England. Those discussions and proceedings would form of course an essential part of the History of British India; and the materials of it remained to be extracted, with much labour, from the voluminous records of British literature, and British legislation.



## PREFACE.

ix

The British legislature had not satisfied itself with deliberating, and deciding; it had also inquired; and, inquiring, it had called for evidence. This call, by the fortunate publicity of parliamentary proceedings, brought forth the records of the councils in India, and their correspondence, with one another, with their servants, and with the constituted authorities in England: a portion of materials, inestimable in its value; but so appalling by its magnitude, that many years appeared to be inadequate to render the mind familiar with it.

Such is a short and very imperfect description of the state of the materials.\* The operations necessary, to draw from them a useful history, formed the second subject of consideration. To omit other particulars, which will easily present themselves, and are common to this with all undertakings of a similar nature, a peculiar demand, it is evident, was presented for the exercise of discrimination, that is, of criticism, in a chaotic mass, of such extent, where things related to the subject were to be separated from things foreign to it; where circumstances of importance were to be separated from circumstances that were insignificant; where real facts, and just inferences, were to be separated from such as were the contrary; and above all things, where facts, really testified by the senses, were to be discriminated from matters, given as testified by the senses, but which, in truth, were nothing but matters of opinion, confounded with matters of fact, and mistaken for them, in the minds of the reporters themselves.†

\* Il y avoit plus de choses la dessus qu'on ne le croyoit communement, mais elles estoient noyées dans une foule de recueils immenses, en langues Latine, Espagnole, Angloise, et Hollandoise, ou personne ne s'avisoit de les aller chercher; dans une quantité de routiers tres-secs, tres-ennuyeux, relatifs à cent autres objets, et dont il seroit presque impossible de rendre la lecture interressente. Les difficultés ne touchent guère ceux qui ne les essuyent pas. Hist. des Navigation aux Terres Australes, par M. le President de Brosse.

† L'on ne sent que trop, says Mr. Gibbon, combien nous sommes portés à mêler nos idées avec celles que nous rapportons. Memoire sur la Monarchie des Medes, Gibbon's Miscel. Works, iii. 61. Ed. 8vo. This infirmity of the human mind, a fact of great importance, both in speculation and in action, the reader, who is not already acquainted with it, will find very

A history of India, therefore, to be good for any thing, must, it was evident, be, what, for want of a better appellation, has been called, “A Critical History.”\* To criticise means, to judge. A critical history is, then, a *judging* history. But, if a judging history, what does it judge?

It is evident that there are two, and only two, classes of objects, which constitute the subject of historical judgments. The first is, the matter of statement, the things given by the historian, as things really done, really said, or really thought. The second is, the matter of evidence, the matter by which the reality of the saying, the doing, or thinking, is ascertained.

In regard to evidence, the business of criticism visibly is, to bring to light the value of each article, to discriminate what is true from what is false, to combine partial statements, in order to form a complete account, to compare varying, and balance contradictory statements, in order to form a correct one.

elegantly illustrated in one of the chapters of the second volume of the work of Mr. Dugald Stewart, on the Philosophy of the Human Mind. See p. 385, vol. i. of the present work. Many examples of it will present themselves in the course of this history; for as it is a habit peculiarly congenial to the mental state of the natives, so a combination of circumstances has given it unusual efficacy in the minds of those of our countrymen by whom India has been surveyed.

\* The idea of a critical history is not very old. The first man who seems to have had a distinct conception of it, says, “Je traiterai mon sujet en critique, suivant la regle de St. Paul, *Examinez toutes choses, et ne retenez que ce qui est bon.* L’histoire n’est bien souvent qu’un melange confus de faux et de vrai, entassé par des ecrivains mal instruits, credules, ou passionnez. C’est au lecteur attentif et judicieux d’en faire le discernement, à l’aide d’une critique, qui ne soit ni trop timide, ni temeraire. Sans le secours de cet art, on erre dans l’histoire, comme un pilote sur le mer, lorsqu’il n’a ni boussole, ni carte marine.” Beausobre, *Hist. de Manichee*, Disc. Prelim. p. 7.

The same writer has, also, said, what is not foreign to the present purpose; “Une histoire critique ne pouvant être trop bien justifiée, j’ai eu soin de mettre en original, au bas des pages, les passages qui servent de preuve aux faits que j’avance. C’est un ennuyeux travail, mais je l’ai cru necessaire. Si l’on trouve les citations trop amples et trop abondantes, c’est un superflu qui n’a coûté qu’à moi, et le lecteur peut bien m’en pardonner la depense.” *Id. Ibid.* Pref. p. 24.

A great historian of our own has said: “It is the right, it is the duty of a critical historian to collect, to weigh, to select the opinions of his predecessors; and the more diligence he has exerted in the search, the more rationally he may hope to add some improvement to the stock of knowledge, the use of which has been common to all.” *Gibbon’s Miscel. Works*, iv. 589.

## PREFACE.

xi

In regard to the matter of statement, the business of criticism is, to discriminate between real causes and false causes; real effects and false effects; real tendencies and falsely supposed ones; between good ends and evil ends; means that are conducive, and means not conducive to the ends to which they are applied.

In exhibiting the result of these several judgments, the satisfaction, or the instruction of the reader, is very imperfectly provided for, if the reasons are not adduced. I have no apology, therefore, to make, for those inductions, or those ratiocinations, sometimes of considerable length, which were necessary to exhibit the grounds on which my decisions were founded. Those critical disquisitions may be well, or they may be ill performed; they may lead to correct, or they may lead to erroneous conclusions; but they are, indisputably, in place; and my work, whatever had been its virtues in other respects, would have remained most imperfect without them.\*

There will be but one opinion, I suppose, with regard to the importance of the service, which I have aspired to the honour of rendering to my country; for the public are inclined to exaggerate, rather than extenuate, the magnitude of the interests which are involved in the management of their Indian affairs. And it may be affirmed, as a principle, not susceptible of dispute, that good management of any portion of the affairs of any community is almost always

\* Even those strictures, which sometimes occur, on institutions purely British, will be all found, I am persuaded, to be not only strictly connected with measures which relate to India, and which have actually grown out of those institutions; but indispensably necessary to convey complete and correct ideas of the Indian policy which the institutions in question contributed mainly to shape. The whole course of our Indian policy having, for example, been directed by the laws of parliamentary influence, how could the one be explained without adducing, as in the last chapter of the second volume, and in some other places, the leading principles of the other? The result of all the judicial inquiries, which have been attempted in England, on Indian affairs, depending in a great degree on the state of the law in England, how could those events be sufficiently explained, without adducing, as in the chapter on the trial of Mr. Hastings, those particulars in the state of the law of England, on which the results in question appeared more remarkably to depend? The importance of this remark will be felt, and, I hope, remembered when the time for judging of the use and pertinence of those elucidations, arrives.

proportional to the degree of knowledge respecting it diffused in that community. Hitherto the knowledge of India, enjoyed by the British community, has been singularly defective. Not only among the uneducated, and those who are regardless of knowledge, but among those who are solicitous to obtain a competent share of information with respect to every other great branch of the national interests, nothing is so rare as to meet with a man who can with propriety be said to know any thing of India, and its affairs. A man who has any considerable acquaintance with them, without having been forced to acquire it by the offices he has filled, is scarcely perhaps to be found.

The same must continue to be the case, till the knowledge of India is rendered more accessible. Few men can afford the time sufficient for perusing even a moderate portion of the documents from which a knowledge of India, approaching to completeness, must have hitherto been derived. Of those, whose time is not wholly engrossed, either by business or by pleasure, the proportion is very moderate whom the prospect of a task so heavy, and so tedious, as that of exploring the numerous repositories of Indian knowledge, would not deter. And, with respect to the most important of all the sources of information, the parliamentary documents, they were not before the public, and by the very nature of the case within the reach of a number comparatively small.

But though no dispute will arise about the importance of the work, I have no reason to expect the same unanimity about the fitness of the workman.

One objection will doubtless be taken, on which I think it necessary to offer some observations, notwithstanding the unfavourable sentiments which are commonly excited by almost any language in which a man can urge pretensions which he may be suspected of urging as his own; pretensions which, though they must exist, in some degree, in the case of every man who writes a book, and ought to be encouraged, therefore, rather than extinguished, had better, in general, be understood, than expressed.

This writer, it will be said, has never been in India; and, if he has any, has a very slight, and elementary acquaintance, with any of the languages of the East.

## PREFACE.

xiii

I confess the facts; and will now proceed to mention the considerations, which led me, notwithstanding, to conclude, that I might still produce a work, of considerable utility, on the subject of India.

In the first place, it appeared to me, that a sufficient stock of information was now collected in the languages of Europe, to enable the inquirer to ascertain every important point, in the history of India. If I was right in that opinion, it is evident, that a residence in India, or a knowledge of the languages of India, was, to express myself moderately, not indispensable.

In the next place, I observed, that no exceptions were taken to a President of the Board of Control, or to a Governor-General, the men entrusted with all the powers of government, because they had never been in India, and knew none of its languages.

Again, I certainly knew, that some of the most successful attempts in history had been made, without ocular knowledge of the country, or acquaintance with its language. Robertson, for example, never beheld America, though he composed its history. He never was either in Germany or Spain, yet he wrote the history of Charles the Fifth. Of Germany he knew not so much as the language; and it was necessary for him to learn that of Spain, only because the documents which it yielded were not translated into any of the languages with which he was acquainted. Tacitus, though he never was in Germany, and was certainly not acquainted with the language of our uncultivated ancestors, wrote the exquisite account of the manners of the Germans.

But, as some knowledge may be acquired by seeing India, which cannot be acquired without it; and as it can be pronounced of hardly any portion of knowledge that it is altogether useless, I will not go so far as to deny, that a man would possess advantages, who, to all the qualifications for writing a history of India which it is possible to acquire in Europe, should add those qualifications which can be acquired only by seeing the country and conversing with its people. Yet I have no doubt of being able to make out, to the satisfaction of all reflecting minds, that the man who should bring to the com-

position of a history of India the qualifications alone which can be acquired in Europe, would come, in an almost infinite degree, better fitted for the task, than the man who should bring to it the qualifications alone which can be acquired in India; and that the business of acquiring the one set of qualifications is almost wholly incompatible with that of acquiring the other.

For, let us inquire what it is that a man can learn, by going to India, and understanding its languages. He can treasure up the facts, which are presented to his senses; he can learn the facts which are recorded in such native books, as have not been translated; and he can ascertain facts by conversation with the natives, which have never yet been committed to writing. This he can do; and I am not aware that he can do any thing further.

But, as no fact is more certain, so none is of more importance, in the science of human nature, than this; that the powers of observation, in every individual, are exceedingly limited; and that it is only by combining the observations of a number of individuals, that a competent knowledge of any extensive subject can ever be acquired. Of so extensive and complicated a scene as India, how small a portion would the whole period of his life enable any man to observe!

If, then, we may assume it as an acknowledged fact, that an account of India complete in all its parts, at any one moment, still more through a series of ages, could never be derived from the personal observation of any one individual, but must be collected from the testimony of a great number of individuals, of any one of whom the powers of perception could extend but a little way, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that the man best qualified for dealing with evidence, is the man best qualified for writing the history of India. It will not, I presume, admit of much dispute, that the habits which are subservient to the successful exploration of evidence are more likely to be acquired in Europe, than in India.

The man who employs himself in treasuring up, by means of perception and the languages, the greatest portion of knowledge in regard to India, is he who

## PREFACE.

xv

employs the greatest portion of his life, in the business of observing; and in making himself familiar with the languages. But the mental habits which are acquired in mere observing, and in the acquisition of languages, are almost as different as any mental habits can be, from the powers of combination, discrimination, classification, judgment, comparison, weighing, inferring, inducting, philosophizing in short; which are the powers of most importance for extracting the precious ore from a great mine of rude historical materials.

Whatever is worth seeing or hearing in India, can be expressed in writing. As soon as every thing of importance is expressed in writing, a man who is duly qualified may attain more knowledge of India, in one year, in his closet in England, than he could obtain during the course of the longest life, by the use of his eyes and his ears in India.

As soon as the testimony is received of a sufficient number of witnesses, to leave no room for mistake from the partial or the erroneous statements which they may have separately made, it is hardly doubtful, that a man, other circumstances being equal, is really better qualified for forming a correct judgment on the whole, if his information is totally derived from testimony, than if some little portion of it is derived from the senses. It is well known, how fatal an effect on our judgments is exerted by those impulses, called partial impressions; in other words, how much our conceptions of a great whole are apt to be distorted, and made to disagree with their object, by an undue impression, received from some particular part. Nobody needs to be informed, how much more vivid, in general, is the conception of an object which has been presented to our senses, than that of an object which we have only heard another man describe. Nobody, therefore, will deny, that, of a great scene, or combination of scenes, when some small part has been seen, and the knowledge of the rest has been derived from testimony, there is great danger, lest the impression received from the senses should exert an immoderate influence, hang a bias on the mind, and render the conception of the whole erroneous.

If a man were to lay down the plan of preparing himself for writing the

history of India, by a course of observation in the country, he must do one of two things. Either he must resolve to observe minutely a part; or he must resolve to take a cursory view of the whole. Life is insufficient for more. If his decision is, to observe minutely; a very small portion comparatively is all that he will be able to observe. What aid he can derive from this, in writing a history, has partly been already unfolded, and may for the rest be confided to the reflections of the intelligent reader.

What I expect to be insisted upon with greatest emphasis is, that, if an observer were to take an expansive view of India, noting, in his progress, those circumstances alone which are of greatest importance, he would come with peculiar advantage to the composition of a history; with lights capable of yielding the greatest assistance in judging even of the evidence of others. To estimate this pretension correctly, we must not forget a well-known and important law of human nature. From this we shall see, that a cursory view, of the nature of that which is here described, is a process, in the highest degree effectual, not for removing error, and perfecting knowledge, but for strengthening all the prejudices, and confirming all the prepossessions or false notions, with which the observer sets out. This result is proved by a very constant experience; and may further be seen to spring, with an almost irresistible necessity, from the constitution of the human mind. In a cursory survey, it is understood, that the mind, unable to attend to the whole of an infinite number of objects, attaches itself to a few; and overlooks the multitude that remain. But what, then, are the objects to which the mind, in such a situation, is in preference attracted? Those which fall in with the current of its own thoughts; those which accord with its former impressions; those which confirm its previous ideas. These are the objects to which, in a hasty selection, all ordinary minds are directed, overlooking the rest. For what is the principle in the mind by which the choice is decided? Doubtless that of association. And is not association governed by the predominant ideas? To this remains to be added, the powerful influence of the affections; the well known pleasure, which a man finds, in meeting, at every



## PREFACE.

xvii

step, with proofs that he is in the right, and the eagerness with which he is thence inspired to look out for that source of satisfaction; the well-known aversion, on the other hand, which a man usually has, to meet with proofs that he is in the wrong, and the readiness with which he obeys the temptation, to overlook such disagreeable objects.

He who, without having been a percipient witness in India, undertakes, in Europe, to digest the materials of Indian history, is placed, with regard to the numerous individuals who have been in India, and of whom one has seen and reported one thing, another has seen and reported another thing, in a situation very analogous to that of the Judge, in regard to the witnesses who give their evidence before him. In the investigation of any of those complicated scenes of action, on which a judicial decision is sometimes required, one thing has commonly been observed by one witness, another thing has been observed by another witness; the same thing has been observed in one point of view by one, in another point of view, by another witness; some things are affirmed by one, and denied by another. In this scene, the judge, putting together the fragments of information which he has severally received from the several witnesses, marking where they agree and where they differ, exploring the tokens of fidelity in one, of infidelity in another; of correct conception in one, of incorrect conception in another; comparing the whole collection of statements with the general probabilities of the case, and trying it by the established laws of human nature, endeavours to arrive at a complete and correct conception of the complicated transaction, on which he is called to decide. Is it not understood, that in such a case as this, where the sum of the testimony is abundant, the judge, who has seen no part of the transaction, has yet, by his investigation, obtained a more complete and correct conception of it, than is almost ever possessed by any one of the individuals from whom he has derived his information? \*

\* The Indians themselves have a striking apologue to illustrate the superiority of the comprehensive student over the partial observer.

“ One day in conversation,” says Mr. Ward, “ with the Sūngskritū head pūndit of the College

VOL. I.

c

But, if a life, in any great degree devoted to the collecting of facts by the senses and the acquiring of tongues, is thus incompatible with the acquisition of that knowledge, and those powers of mind, which are most conducive to a masterly treatment of evidence; it is still less compatible with certain other endowments, which the discharge of the highest functions of the historian imperiously demands. Great and difficult as is the task of extracting perfectly the light of evidence from a chaos of rude materials, it is yet not the most difficult of his operations, nor that which requires the highest and rarest qualifications of the mind. It is the business of the historian not merely to display the obvious outside of things; the qualities which strike the most ignorant observer, in the acts, the institutions, and ordinances, which form the subject of his statements. His duty is, to convey just ideas of all those objects; of all the transactions, legislative, administrative, judicial, mercantile, military, which he is called upon to describe. But in just ideas of great measures what is implied? A clear discernment, undoubtedly, of their causes; a clear discernment

of Fort William, on the subject of God, this man, who is truly learned in his own Shastrũs, gave the author, from one of their books, the following parable:—In a certain country, there existed a village of blind men, who had heard of an amazing animal called the elephant, of the shape of which, however, they could procure no idea. One day an elephant passed through the place: the villagers crowded to the spot where the animal was standing; and one of them seized his trunk, another his ear, another his tail, another one of his legs. After thus endeavouring to gratify their curiosity, they returned into the village, and sitting down together, began to communicate their ideas on the shape of the elephant, to the villagers: the man who had seized his trunk said, he thought this animal must be like the body of the plantain tree; he who had touched his ear was of opinion, that he was like the winnowing fan; the man who had laid hold of his tail said, he thought he must resemble a snake; and he who had caught his leg declared, he must be like a pillar. An old blind man, of some judgment, was present, who, though greatly perplexed in attempting to reconcile these jarring notions, at length said—You have all been to examine the animal, and what you report, therefore, cannot be false: I suppose, then, that the part resembling the plantain tree must be his trunk; what you thought similar to a fan must be his ear; the part like a snake must be the tail; and that like a pillar must be his leg. In this way, the old man, uniting all their conjectures, made out something of the form of the elephant.” *A View of the History, Literature, and Religion of the Hindoos.* By the Rev. W. Ward. Introd. p. lxxxvii. London Ed. 1817.

## PREFACE.

xix

of their consequences ; a clear discernment of their natural tendencies ; and of the circumstances likely to operate either in combination with these natural tendencies, or in opposition to them. To qualify a man for this great duty, hardly any kind or degree of knowledge is not demanded ; hardly any amount of knowledge, which it is within the competence of one man to acquire, will be regarded as enough. It is plain, for example, that he requires the most profound knowledge of the laws of human nature, which is the end, as well as instrument, of every thing. It is plain, that he requires the most perfect comprehension of the principles of human society ; or the course, into which the laws of human nature impel the human being, in his gregarious state, or when formed into a complex body along with others of his kind. It is plain, that the historian requires a clear comprehension of the practical play of the machinery of government ; that, in like manner as the general laws of motion are counteracted and modified by friction, the power of which may yet be accurately ascertained and provided for, so he may correctly appreciate the counteraction which the more general laws of human nature may receive from individual or specific varieties, and what allowance for it his anticipations and conclusions ought to embrace. In short, the whole field of human nature, the whole field of legislation, the whole field of judicature, the whole field of administration, down to war, commerce, and diplomacy, ought to be familiar to his mind.\*

What, then ? it will be said, and most reasonably said, do you hold yourself up, as the person in whom all these high qualifications are adequately combined ? No. And I am well assured, that by not one of those by whom I shall be criticized, not even of those by whom I shall be treated with the greatest severity, will the distance between the qualifications which I possess, and the qualifications which are desirable in the writer of a history, be estimated at more than it is estimated by myself. But the whole of my life, which I may, without scruple,

\* Aux yeux d'un philosophe, les faits composent la partie la moins intéressante de l'histoire. C'est la connoissance de l'homme ; la morale, et la politique qu'il y trouve, qui la relevent dans son esprit. Gibbon, Mem. sur la Monarchie des Medes, Misc. Works, iii. 126. Ed. 8vo.

xx

## PREFACE.

pronounce a laborious one, has been devoted to the acquisition of those qualifications; and I am not unwilling to confess, that I deemed it probable I should be found to possess them in a greater degree than those, no part of whose life, or a very small part, had been applied to the acquisition of them. I was also of opinion, that if no body appeared, with higher qualifications, to undertake the work, it was better it should be done imperfectly, better it should be done even as I might be capable of doing it, than not done at all.

Among the many virtues which have been displayed by the Company's servants, may justly be enumerated the candour with which they themselves confess the necessity under which they are laid, of remaining to a great degree ignorant of India. That they go out to their appointments, at a time of life when a considerable stock of general knowledge cannot possibly have been acquired, is a fact which nobody will dispute. And they are the foremost to declare, that their situation in India is such, as to preclude them from the acquisition of local knowledge. Notwithstanding the high degree of talent, therefore, and even of literary talent, which many of them have displayed, more than some very limited portion of the history of India none of them has ventured to undertake.\*

“When we consider,” said Lord Teignmouth, in his celebrated Minute on the Revenues of Bengal, “the nature and magnitude of our acquisition, the characters of the people placed under our dominion, their difference of language, and dissimilarity of manners; that we entered upon the administration of the government ignorant of its former constitution, and with little practical experience in Asiatic finance, it will not be deemed surprising that we should have fallen into errors; or if any should at this time require correction.—If we further consider the form of the British government in India, we shall find it ill calculated for the

\* The following words are not inapplicable, originally applied to a much more limited subject. *De quibus partibus singulis, quidam separatim scribere maluerunt, velut onus totius corporis veriti, et sic quoque complures de unaquaque earum libros ediderunt: quas ego omnes ausus contexere, prope infinitum mihi laborem prospicio, et ipsa cogitatione suscepti muneris fatigor. Sed durandum est quia cœpimus; et, si viribus deficiemus, animo tamen perseverandum.* Quinct. *Inst. Or. lib. 4. Procem.*

## PREFACE.

xxi

speedy introduction of improvement. The members composing it are in a state of constant fluctuation, and the period of their residence often expires, before experience can be acquired, or reduced to practice. Official forms necessarily occupy a large portion of time; and the constant pressure of business leaves little leisure for study and reflection, without which, no knowledge of the principles and detail of the revenues of this country can be attained. True information is also procured with difficulty, because it is too often derived from mere practice, instead of being deduced from fixed principles.”\*

Lord William Bentinck, after being Governor of Fort St. George, and President of the Council at Madras, expresses himself in very pointed terms. “The result of my own observation, during my residence in India, is, that the Europeans generally know little or nothing of the customs and manners of the Hindoos. We are all acquainted with some prominent marks and facts, which all who run may read: but their manner of thinking; their domestic habits and ceremonies, in which circumstances a knowledge of the people consists, is I fear in great part wanting to us. We understand very imperfectly their language. They, perhaps, know more of ours; but their knowledge is by no means sufficiently extensive to give a description of subjects not easily represented by the insulated words in daily use. We do not, we cannot, associate with the natives. We cannot see them in their houses, and with their families. We are necessarily very much confined to our houses by the heat. All our wants and business, which would create a greater intercourse with the natives, is done for us; and we are, in fact, strangers in the land.”†

\* No. 1, Appendix to the Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, on the Affairs of the East India Company, in 1810. This passage, the Committee have thought of sufficient importance to be incorporated in their Report.

† Observations of Lord William Bentinck, printed in the Advertisement, prefixed to the “Description of the Character, &c. of the People of India.” By the Abbé J. A. Dubois, Missionary in the Mysore. If any one should object to the testimony of this Ruler, as that of a man who had not been bred in India, it is to be remembered that the testimony is adduced, as expressing his own opinion, by the translator of that work, whose knowledge of India is not liable to dispute;

Another servant of the Company, Sir Henry Strachey, distinguished both by his local experience, and by general knowledge, remarking upon the state of judicature, under the English government in India, says, “Another impediment, though of a very different nature from those I have mentioned, and much more difficult to remove, is to me too palpable to be overlooked,—I mean, that arising from Europeans in our situation being necessarily ill qualified, in many points, to perform the duties required of us, as judges and magistrates. This proceeds chiefly from our very imperfect connexion with the natives; and our scanty knowledge, after all our study, of their manners, customs, and languages.” “We cannot study the genius of the people in its own sphere of action. We know little of their domestic life, their knowledge, conversation, amusements, their trades, and casts, or any of those national and individual characteristics, which are essential to a complete knowledge of them.” “The difficulty we experience in discerning truth and falsehood among the natives, may be ascribed, I think, chiefly, to our want of connexion and intercourse with them; to the peculiarity of their manners and habits; their excessive ignorance of our characters; and our almost equal ignorance of theirs.”\*

and given to the world as the opinion of the Court of Directors, to whom the manuscript belonged, and under whose authority and direction, it was both translated and published.

\* Fifth Report, *ut supra*, p. 534, 562. “It is a fact,” says another enlightened observer, “which, however singular and unfortunate, is yet founded in truth, that those persons from whom correct information on these subjects might justly be expected, are generally the least able, from the peculiar circumstances of their situation, to supply it: I mean, the Company’s servants.—During the early period of their residence in the East, every hour must be employed, in the acquisition of the languages, in the study of the laws of the country, and the manners of the natives; whilst the latter years of their service are still more unremittingly engrossed, in the discharge of the irksome and arduous duties of their profession.” *Considerations on the Present Political State of India*. By Alexander Fraser Tytler, late Assistant Judge in the Twenty-four Pergunnahs, Bengal Establishment, Preface, p. xii. See other passages to the same purpose, Introduction, p. iv, v, xi; also i. 77, 357, 415. And Mr. Tytler quotes with peculiar approbation the passage already given from the Minute of Lord Teignmouth.

“I must beg you always to bear in mind, that when an English gentleman undertakes to give an account of Indian manners and habits of private life, he labours under many disadvant-