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Our Visit to Hindostán, Kashmir and Ladakh

Published in 1879, this work is a first-hand account by a female traveller in nineteenth-century India. Broad in its scope and empirical in its presentation, the book is formed from descriptions of the travels of Harriet Murray Aynsley (1827?–98) and her husband in northern and central India over three years. Originally intended for the private interest of family and friends, the text remains clear, accessible and engaging to the general reader. Travelling from Bombay to Hyderabad through myriad cities and villages, including Delhi, Varanasi, Jaipur and Lucknow, Aynsley records her observations on native life, including descriptions of festivals, industry, clothing, domestic practices, food and famine, politics and religion. She vividly describes the architecture and landscapes of the places she visits, incorporating atmospheric anecdotes of her experiences. The book also contains much historical background, based on careful research, which puts the author's impressions into a broader context.

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HARRIET MURRAY AYSLEY



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BY

MRS J. C. MURRAY AYNSLEY.

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P R E F A C E.

COMING to India as simple travellers, we were able to go wherever fancy led us—so that, at the expiration of nearly three years, we have perhaps seen much more of that country than many who have passed half their lives there. A friend in England seemed pleased with some letters I wrote to him, giving descriptions of places we had visited; and thus arose the idea of a continued series of papers, which I thought might possibly interest other friends at home at some future period. The idea of publication was an after-thought; and this must be my excuse for the almost colloquial style in which they are written. Those who know me will, I trust, excuse the many imperfections incidental to a first attempt at coming before the public; and I crave the indulgence of strangers also for the same reason. I am much indebted to various friends in India for the loan of some rare and valuable books; also of departmental works belonging to their offices, by means of which I have obtained information on many subjects of interest.

Amongst the former may be classed Ferishta's 'History of Hindostán,' translated by Dow, from the original Persian, more than one hundred years ago; and the travels of Fa Hiang and Hionen Thsang, the Chinese pilgrims, who visited India, the former in the fifth, and the latter in the seventh, century of our era. Other works I have also consulted and compared with each other, as opportunity occurred; but many months spent in camp, with, at times, an almost daily removal to a fresh spot, has prevented much study for want of the necessary time and materials. I only wish I could insure my friends as much pleasure in reading our travels as I have felt in writing about them.

H. G. M. M. A.

KULU VALLEY, *Oct. 4, 1878.*

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