

## INTRODUCTION.

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THE great mystery of language, which by one sound can bring before us not a single image only, but a multitude of objects and events, and fill the imagination according to its capacity, in no case exercises its influence more strongly than in words which express the names of different lands. To the ear of a European, the word England, for example, instantly recals to mind the wealth of that island, and her maritime power; France, is ever associated with the turmoils of ambition and faction; Italy, with sunny climes and poetry; and Germany, with our ideas of a staid conscientious people. True, the images conjured up in the fancy of every individual, will lose much of their truth and charms when experience has shewn him how sorely he has deceived himself in many things; but when the land of which he dreams, is situated far off, his ideas, though equally vague, are less likely to be disappointed. We have no remembrances attached to the name of a New Zealander; we revert only to his character with horror, as a cannibal, while the New Hollanders excite our compassion for the scanty gifts which Providence has vouchsafed them. Compared, however, with these countries, Kashmír is an object of especial interest. We behold, in imagination, a delightful valley sheltered on every side by lofty mountains, with streams of the purest water issuing forth from their declivities, which flow gently on till they fall into the mighty rivers which bend their way majestically through the vale. From their summits, crowned with Alpine vegetation, down to the depths beneath, where the luxuriant products of India predominate, there is a succession of plants, which gradually assume as they descend, the lighter and more graceful forms of tropical vegetation. The same fancy peoples the land with noble human forms, adorns it with the palaces and gardens of the Moghul Emperors, and recals the tales of fairy islets, with their magic lakes and floating gardens. There, exclaims the youthful enthusiast, who is never likely

to realize these visions, there, must be happiness; there, thinks the philosopher, might our first parents have been summoned into being. Indians, no less than Europeans feel the charm of this name. The Mohammedan believes Kashmir to have been the earthly paradise; the Hindú has the same tale in his legends of the last Mahá-Yúg, descriptive of the revival of the human race. Fiction, in every case, points to Kashmir, as the land of promise. Even the apathetic eye of the Brahmin, and the cold-fixed thoughtfulness of the Mullah, are known to brighten up at the mention of its sweet retreats.

The last travellers, Jacquemont and Wolff, men of very opposite minds and opinions, have somewhat lessened our favourable ideas on this subject; but the first avows himself nearly blind, and it certainly was not the design of the latter to descant on the loveliness of nature. To examine whether Kashmir would bear the uplifting of the veil which has so gracefully and immemorially hung over her, and see whether the first or the last travellers have drawn the truest portrait, to reach the very limit of Indian civilization, were my chief persuasives to pass several months in this celebrated region; and, why should I deny it? the anticipation of beholding the loveliest spot on earth, had power enough to allure one no longer young, to undertake another tedious and toilsome journey.

Our authorities on Kashmir are very defective before the time of the Mohammedans, though, in fact, there is yet one native chronicle extant, entitled, the Raja Taringini, which has been translated by Professor Wilson, and published in the Asiatic Researches; to this we shall allude further in speaking of the History of Kashmir. The Raja Taringini has always been considered in our times as a complete work; far otherwise: it is a collection of four separate treatises, by as many authors. The first begins with the creation of the valley of Kashmir, and concludes with the year A.D. 1027 (Saka 949). The author of this portion was Kalhana Pandit. The second, or Rajavali, by Jona Raja, carries the history down to A.D. 1412. The third, or Sri Jaina Raja Taringini, was written by Sri Vara Pandit, who brought it down to the year of the Hejira 882 (A.D. 1477). The fourth and last part, called Rajavali Pataka, by Punya Bhatta, concludes with the conquest of Kashmir by Akbar the Great, Emperor of Delhi, A.H. 995 (A.D. 1586).

We shall see elsewhere, how far the Raja Taringini merits that pretension to antiquity, to which it has hitherto laid claim.

The other works are, Baber's Memoirs, which are quite unimportant on this subject of Kashmír.

Goheri Alem Tohfet us-Shah of Badia-ud-din.

Abúl Fazel Ayín-Akberi.

A History by an unknown Persian author, containing a long list of princes and legends.

A History of the Mohammedan Kingdoms of India, by Mohammed Kásim Ferishta.

Hajus de Rebus Japonicis, Indicis, &c.

Les Lettres Edifiantes.

Tarikh-i-Kashmír, by Naráyan Kúl.

The History of Kashmír, by Múllah Hassan Kári.

Ditto, by Hyder Malek Shad-Waria.

Wakiat-i-Kashmír, by Mohammed Azim.

Nawádir úl Akbar, by Mohammed Rafia-ud-din.

Núr Nameh, written by Shekh Núr-ud-din, in the Kashmirian language, and translated into Persian by Múlvi Ahmet Almeh.

History of Kashmír, while in possession of the Afghans, in Persian, by Múlvi Khair-ud-din.

Elphinstone's Kabúl, and Burnes' Journey to Bokhara; very valuable works for the countries they visited in person; but as their information regarding Kashmír was derived exclusively from natives, whose testimony must be admitted with great caution, many errors have crept in.

The most recent work which treats of Kashmír, and contains the most important documents concerning the last sixteen years, is the History of Ranjít Singh, by Mr. Prinsep, Secretary to the Government of India, who derived his information from the Honourable Company's archives. I have taken most of my notes on the Panjáb from this gentleman's valuable work.

Bernier's Travels in India; an Essay in Letters concerning his Journey in Aurungzíb's suite.

Forster's Letters, Journey from Bengal to St. Petersburg.

Researches and Missionary Labours, by the Rev. Jos. Wolff.

Correspondence of Victor Jacquemont, during his Travels in India.

The Papers in the Asiatic Researches, and in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Major Rennel's Geographical Memoirs.

Ritter's Geography of Asia; a work containing an immense store of information and learning, greater indeed and more important than any other dedicated to the same objects, though perhaps not strictly to be considered as one of the authorities on Kashmir.

Moorcroft's work, not yet published, though it was sent to me while in the press, I have purposely abstained from reading, that I might keep my mind free from any impressions which I might otherwise in all probability have received from the perusal of a work by another modern author.

The first authentic information concerning Kashmir, which appears to have reached Europe, was through the Portuguese, whose religious zeal prompted them to promulgate Christianity among the natives; for we attach little credit to the tales we are told of their king marching to the relief of Porus, when he was attacked by Alexander the Great, although the later Greek authors mention a country they call Kaspapyrus and Kaspatyrus, and sometimes Kasperia, which would seem to be Kashmir. Setting aside such unsatisfactory accounts, we may repeat, that to Europe, Kashmir was in a measure unknown, till the subjects of Portugal first trod its valleys. The Jesuit Xavier, a Navarese of high birth, is supposed to be the very first European who ever had the glory or the courage to penetrate to this remote region. Another of the same family, Francis Xavier, animated with like fervent zeal to diffuse the light of Christian truth throughout the East, had already gained, and not undeservedly, the glorious title of the Apostle of the Indies. In the year 1572, exactly twenty years after Francis Xavier had fallen a martyr to his high and holy calling, his kinsman landed on the shores where Xavier had been foremost to plant the cross. His apostolic mission carried him first to the residence of the Moghul Emperors, which Father Rudolf Aquaviva had recently visited. Xavier appeared at the court of Akbar the Great at Agra, accompanied by another fellow-labourer, Benedict Goez, a native of the Azores; and by their shortly afterwards attending the Emperor to Kashmir, it would seem that the tolerant spirit of Akbar had actually entertained some thoughts of

establishing, or at least of favouring the progress of, the new faith in India. Xavier's remarks on Kashmír, which are published in that very scarce work, *Hajus de Rebus Japonicis, Indicis, &c.*, (Antwerp, 1605,) are of no particular value.

The second traveller who made us acquainted with this country, was Bernier, whose motives for undertaking the journey were widely different from those of his predecessor. Xavier prosecuted what he believed to be a high and holy office; Bernier's sole object was, an increased knowledge of the world; but the bent of his genius as well as the advantages under which he travelled, render his observations on the countries he visited, more valuable than any that had then appeared. He was a young physician, of engaging appearance, of enterprising mind and pleasing manners, qualities which would insure to most travellers a hearty welcome in foreign lands. Urged by an unconquerable desire to see the world, he left his native country, France, in 1654, in his twenty-ninth year, (Voltaire says he was born at Angers in 1625,) and without any settled purpose or plan, wandered first through Syria and Egypt. In the year 1657, during the reign of Shah Jehan, he came to Surat, then a place of some importance in the commercial world, at the very period when the emperor's four sons were contending for the Moghul throne. Aurungzib was the conqueror, and under the name of Alungír ascended the throne of Delhi. To that city Bernier repaired, and there entered the service of Danishmand Khan, an Omrah in the court of Alungír, as his personal physician, with a monthly salary of 300 rupees. In 1665, he attended the Emperor and Danishmand Khan to Kashmír, for the purpose of restoring the health of the former, which had long been declining. Kashmír at that time was in all the plenitude of its glory. For fifty years it had been the favourite summer resort of Aurungzib's grandfather Jehangír, and his father Shah Jehan, but the latter had more particularly occupied himself in embellishing the valley with palaces and gardens. The wealth thus brought into circulation by the protracted visits of the Court, had produced general abundance; while the grandees vied with their sovereign in every predilection for luxury and extravagance. The patron of Bernier was a friend and protector to science, and afforded him every facility for exploring the country; but unfortunately, speculative philosophy so pre-occupied his

mind, that the study of nature and even statistics, had little or no charm for him. This deprived his work of much value, notwithstanding which, it is an interesting record of the history of that time, as its pages have the evident impress of truth; nor is it any slight praise when we say, that Bernier is one of the most faithful writers that ever travelled, a merit the more uncommon in those days, when readers longed to be surprised by the marvellous, rather than instructed by the true, and when, at all events, Bernier had nothing to fear from the superior information of any European.

After twelve years' abode in India, he returned to his fatherland, and fixed himself at Paris, where his travels were published in 1670. I cannot forbear relating the cause of his end, as it seems to me peculiarly affecting and instructive. Befriended by Ninon de l'Enclos, and in the literary coteries where Racine, Boileau, St. Evremond, and other stars of Louis XIV.'s brilliant reign, moved along with him, distinguished as the handsome philosopher, Bernier could not withstand the general corruption around him, and at length died, in consequence of the mortification he experienced at a bitter satire of the President du Harlay, in 1688, a proof that his philosophy, the Epicurean philosophy of Gassendi, was merely a mask to cover the extreme of folly.

As a traveller, however, Bernier surely deserves a high place among those who unite courage to talent, and whose enterprises are undertaken, not from any low or sordid motives, but from an honourable thirst after knowledge and truth. His travels are now almost forgotten. It has, unhappily, been too much the habit of most readers, to expect something wonderful and fantastic from writers on India; his work, nevertheless, is not a whit the less valuable, and is entitled to every confidence as an authority, from which modern writers may well derive much information, and may justly find a place in every library. Nowhere shall we read a more faithful and impartial account of the manners and usages of India; his descriptions are, to this moment, as striking and appropriate as when his hand first penned them\*.

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\* It is the Editor's hope, at no distant period, to give to the public an entirely new and accurate translation of these travels, with notes and illustrative comments.

Father Desideri, a Jesuit, was the third European visitor to Kashmir; he undertook a mission to Tibet, reached the valley in 1714, and was compelled to remain there during the winter. His observations on Kashmir, contained in a letter from Lassa in 1716, are wholly undeserving of notice.

Then came George Forster, in the year 1783, a civil servant in the Company's Presidency of Madras, who journeyed through Bengal, Lucknow, Srinagur, Nadaun, and over the mountains of Kashmir, returning by way of Kabúl, the Caspian, and St. Petersburg, home, altogether a most arduous enterprise, at a period when Northern India and Central Asia were overrun with freebooters, and a number of petty states had arisen on the ruins of the Moghul kingdoms, whose very weakness made them suspicious of each other. Kashmir had then been, for some years, rent from the crown of Delhi, Ahmed Shah Abdalli having conquered the whole province in 1754, and annexed it to Afghanistan. Originally Ahmed had been Nadir Shah's armour-bearer, and had learned the art of government in the Persian court. In the year 1739, as Nadir Shah gazed from the terrace before the little mosque of Rokn-ud-dáula, on the burning of the plundered houses of Delhi, he exclaimed to those around him, among whom Ahmed stood, "So will I deal with all the kingdoms of India, until the wealthiest of the land shall beg before seven doors, ere he finds an earthen pot to cook his rice in." His threat was not fulfilled by himself, but his servant Ahmed trod in his footsteps in Hindústhan, and plundered Kashmir, which even Nadir had spared. When Forster visited the valley, Timúr Shah, the son and successor of Ahmed, had been ten years on the throne, enjoying the fruits of his father's conquests, in as much quiet as his restless neighbours to the north and west would permit. A despotic viceroy, Azad Khan, then governed Kashmir, and to avoid persecutions, which had nearly cost him his life, Forster was obliged to have recourse to disguises and concealments which, during his short stay there, under a perpetual dread of discovery, prevented him from making any very important use of his time; his little work is, nevertheless, very attractive, and one cannot help

feeling interested in the unassuming kind-hearted man, who relates his adventures and dangers so unpretendingly.

Forty years passed away before another traveller went to Kashmír, and, during this long period, many changes had taken place in the aspect of affairs in this part of Asia. The English had begun to aspire to universal dominion in India; the sums of money, yearly expended for the shawls of Kashmír had not escaped their attention, and it had become a question, which engaged their merchants, whether it would not be more profitable to manufacture the wool in Hindústhan or in England, or even, whether it would not be possible to introduce the breed of sheep into their own country, and secure the exclusive produce of that material. Mr. Moorcroft, an enterprising man, who had gone out to India as a veterinary surgeon, was commissioned, by his government, to make a journey through the Himálaya to the table-land of Tibet, and report on this matter. Both regions were then imperfectly known, and made the subjects of many fabulous narratives; but, however important the result of his journey, in a geographical view, he altogether failed in the object of his mission. It is true that he sent a number of goats to Bengal, which were despatched afterwards to England, but they proved to be of a different breed from the finest shawl-wool goats of Kashmír. In 1820, Moorcroft, then officiating as director of a large stud in Bengal, was commissioned once more to visit Central Asia, and with their usual liberality, the East India Company permitted him to make his own arrangements for the journey, and gave him authority to draw upon them for any sum he might require for his expenses\*.

Accompanied by two young men, named Trebeck and Guthrie, Moorcroft commenced his adventurous journey at Lahor. Ranjít Singh, the Mahá Raja of the Sikhs, King of Lahor, had just taken possession of Kashmír, and Moorcroft found no difficulty in obtaining the Prince's permission to traverse his dominions on his way from Ladák

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\* This account is full of mistakes. Mr. Moorcroft had on neither occasion any appointment or commission from government. He travelled with its sanction, but at his own risk and charge.



to Bokhara. In his character of a horse-dealer, attended by a numerous retinue, he passed by Bilaspoor and Mundí, to the strong fortress of Dankar, and reached Ladák in safety. There, however, forgetting that he had nothing to do with politics, he drew up, and signed, in the name of the Company, a formal treaty with the Rajas of Ladák. Although a stranger in an unknown and dangerous country, he might be excused, if, environed with difficulties, he consented to negotiate where he had no authority, and promised without any power of fulfilment, with the view to gain some specific object. But Moorcroft could plead no such necessity, for he was kindly received, and met with no impediments at all; and hence, the treaty which he executed in the Company's name, can be defended on no one ground; and during my residence in Kashmír, it caused the Raja of Ladák to brave the consequences of a war which may cost him the half of his dominions\*.

From Ladák he journeyed to Kashmír through the Naubuk-Pansal; and after remaining there nearly two years, proceeded, with a princely retinue, towards Balkh. His baggage, worth several lacs of rupees, was carried by 300 bearers, exclusive of all the animals employed; and this parade being displayed in sight of the natives, induced the Sikh Viceroy, Moti Ram, to offer him a friendly warning, while his friend Mahommed Shah Nakshbandi, of a Turkisthan family, sent him a strong escort to serve him in case of danger. From Balkh he proceeded to Andkhoo. There he felt symptoms of a fever gaining on him; but he wrote to one of his Indian friends, full of hope, that the medicines he had taken to remove them, would be effectual. In this hope he deceived himself; in three days from that time he was a corpse, and the same disease speedily cut off his two young English companions.

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\* The statements made in the text are wholly erroneous, as a little consideration might have suggested to Baron Hügel. Had any treaty been concluded on the part of the East India Company with the Raja of Ladák, his dominions would have been effectually guarded against Sikh aggression. Mr. Moorcroft never executed any treaty at all; he was the channel of a communication from the Raja of Ladák to the government of India, tendering to it that allegiance which his ancestors had professed to the throne of Delhi. The offer, unhappily for the Raja, was peremptorily declined, and Moorcroft was severely rebuked for his interposition, even to the limited extent to which it had been exercised. (See MOORCROFT'S *Travels*, vol. i., 418.)

Naturally enough, the premature death of the three Europeans was ascribed to the half civilized people among whom they were then residing, and their plundering habits, joined to the circumstance, that Moorcroft's baggage was entirely lost, certainly favoured that suspicion; but a strict investigation, instituted among his retinue, has proved it to be wholly unfounded, and every well-informed person in Kashmír, and Hindústhan, is now satisfied, that his death was occasioned by fever; the declaration that Trebeck and Guthrie fell victims to the same disease, does not seem to me, however, quite so well substantiated.

His papers were saved, and transmitted to the Political Agent in Lúdiána, who sent them forthwith to his superior, the Resident at Delhi. The expectation of the Indian public to know the results of a journey, which had cost such vast sums, and terminated so fatally, was long strained to its highest pitch, but in vain; the non-appearance of the papers was attributed to the narrow policy of the government, which desired not to admit the world to a participation in their unknown treasures, and as all things in India are of brief interest and duration, poor Moorcroft, his travels, and his death, were soon forgotten. A fresh and more tragical event, however, transpired, to shew how unfounded were these accusations of the Company. In March, 1835, Mr. Fraser, Assistant Resident at Delhi, was basely murdered by an hired assassin of Shams-ud-din, the Nawáb of Ferozpoor, and on examining his papers those of Moorcroft were discovered, lying forgotten in his desk, and were then, for the first time, brought to light\*. What they may contain, I know not; but certainly the long and uninterrupted residence of Moorcroft, in the valley of Kashmír, must have made him very well acquainted with it.

Under what different aspects and governments was Kashmír seen

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\* This account is not strictly correct. From an opinion very generally entertained, that the later and concluding notices of Moorcroft's journey would constitute a very essential addition to those discursive documents digested by Professor Wilson, Mr. Fraser of Delhi made every exertion for their recovery; and all, both journals and the notes of Trebeck and Guthrie, up to the period of their departure from Bokhara, were obtained from his executors and sent home in 1836. (See preface to MOORCROFT'S *Travels*, p. 52.)—*Ed.*