INDIA AND MALAYSIA
ILLUSTRATED

BISHOP THOBURN
INDIA AND MALAYSIA.

BY

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INDIA AND MALAYSIA.

Chapter I.

INDIA.

If a line were drawn from the city of Atlanta to the middle of the southern boundary of Oregon, and if along this line a range of lofty mountains were reared up, covered with everlasting snow and buttressed with gigantic peaks rising from twenty to twenty-nine thousand feet into the sky, this mountain range would represent the vast boundary-wall of Northern India. If another line were drawn from Atlanta to Lake Erie, and thence a third line to a point in British Columbia, and this again connected with the point first named in Southern Oregon, and the space thus inclosed, amounting to a million square miles, elevated fifteen thousand feet above the sea-level, it would represent that extraordinary elevation in Central Asia sometimes called the "roof of the world," which has through uncounted centuries helped to shut in both India and China from the rest of the world, and which has contributed in a marked degree to give India, especially, some of those peculiarities of season and climate for which it is noted. If, now, an irregular mass of lower but still lofty mountains be thrown in between Atlanta and the Gulf at one extremity of this line, and the Oregon terminus and the Pacific Ocean at the other extremity, the northeastern, northern, and northwestern boundaries will be complete, and it only remains to fill in to the southward a vast peninsula extending to a point nineteen hundred miles south of Oregon, making a large, pear-
shaped region nearly as large as all the United States lying east of the Rocky Mountains, and containing a million and a half square miles, to present a territory corresponding to historic India. This comparison will strikingly exhibit the small area of North America as compared with that of Asia. On the map of Asia, India looks like one of a dozen countries, and does not extend half-way across the continent. On the map of North America, not only would its northern boundary need to be pushed northward, but its outlying mountain spurs would touch two oceans, and a vast region have to be filled in to the south to complete its area.

The name India has been applied to this region since a very early day. It would seem that the early Aryans, who entered India through the northwest passes, applied the Sanskrit word Sindhus (ocean) to the great river Indus, which they found probably flowing in the rainy season in a volume which would remind them of the sea. This name, in the lapse of time, was also applied to the people who lived on the upper banks of the river, and still lingers in India in the province of Sindh, at the mouth of the river, and in the Sindhi people, who are its chief inhabitants. The Zoroastrian branch of the ancient Aryans, who, at an early period, lived side by side with those who migrated into India, softened the initial sibilant of the word Sindhus into h, and have been followed in this change by both the ancient and modern Persians. The Greeks, in turn, further softened the word by dismissing the Persian aspirate altogether, and thus in time the name India has come into use throughout all the Western world. In more recent times the Persians have applied the word Hindustan to that part of India lying north of the Vindhyas Mountains, meaning the place or country of the Hindu. Strictly speaking, neither the word Hindustan nor India applies to that part of the empire south of the Vindhyas Mountains, but in all past ages this distinction has been lost sight of by those at a distance; and since the various nations and tribes of this region have
been welded into one vast empire by the British power, the term India has been applied to the whole region without any attempt to limit its application.

Writers on India frequently divide the country into three sections,—the first including the mountains of the Himalaya range; the second, the plains of Northern India; and the third, the table-land of Central and Southern India. This division, however, is somewhat arbitrary, and does not convey a very clear idea of the actual configuration of the country. Immediately south of the snow-line of the Himalayas is a belt of lower mountains, with an average width of perhaps one hundred miles, inhabited by various tribes of mountaineers, and furnishing valuable supplies of mountain products to the plains below. The great rivers of Northern India, which are fed by the snows of the Himalayas proper, and the plateau lying to the northward, have brought down an immense alluvial deposit, which is spread over the whole of Northern India and down the valley of the Ganges, making one of the richest and best cultivated plains of the world.

At a distance of several hundred miles from the mountains the country begins to rise, and long before it reaches the Vindhya Mountains, a range which crosses India from east to west about the middle of the country, the land has become an elevated plateau. Immediately south of this mountain range is a rich valley through which the Nerbudda River flows westward, dividing the greater part of the country into two somewhat distinct sections. South of this valley is another range of mountains called the Satpuras, which forms the northern boundary of a triangular plateau known as the Deccan, or South Country. This plateau has an average elevation of nearly two thousand feet, and is hemmed in on the west by a line of mountains running parallel with the ocean from the northwest to the southeast. A similar but somewhat lower range shuts in the plateau on the eastern side. These two ranges are called respectively the Eastern and Western