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*A Bird's-Eye View
of Picturesque India*

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PREFACE

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THE greater part of this work was originally written in the shape of articles for the Syndicate of Northern Newspapers at Kendal. These articles accordingly appeared in many newspapers during the early months of this year 1898, under the general title of "Picturesque India." It has now been determined to republish them together in a book, with some important additions and improvements, each article making a Chapter of the work in its new form. The scheme was, and still is, to present "a Bird's-eye View of Picturesque India," which is the title adopted for the book. Such a purview naturally embraced the principal features in the India of to-day, the land, the people, and the government. But, to render this more complete than it would otherwise have been, three new Chapters have been added—namely, "III. A Summer's Sojourn in the Himalaya"; "XI. Historic Remains and Ruins"; "XII. Episodes in History and their Localities." Thus the work at first consisted of nine Chapters; it now consists of twelve; and to these nine Chapters some improvements have been added. Further, a new feature has been introduced, the introduction of which was not possible in the original work—namely, that of illustration in black and white. For such illustration I happen to possess abundant materials, having been all my life a diligent sketcher in water-colour, and of later years in oil also. From my portfolios, containing literally hundreds of pictures, there have been selected thirty subjects specially suited to

illustrate the text of the several Chapters. These pictures have been reproduced by a photographic process, so that they exactly represent at least the outlines and the shades of the pictures.

Although the necessary limitations of such a book as this, on so enormous a subject as India, must be evident, still, it may be well to remind the general reader of what is, and what is not, to be expected from a work like this. Though not, as I hope, unlearned, yet it does not presume to address itself to the world of Oriental learning. Though not uninformed as to the method and the results of our rule in India, it does not undertake to supply information regarding the legislation, the administration, the land tenures, the trade and industry of a vast and varied Empire. Though it gives here and there the sum total of figures which, from their magnitude, deserve recollection and can easily be remembered, it presents no statistics properly so called. Though describing the ideas, the temper, and spirit of the Natives, it does not attempt any account of their customs, inasmuch as such an account would have to enter into the lives of the various classes in many nationalities. Though touching lightly on the historic eras and epochs which have preceded, or led up to, the present British era, it hardly essays even a synopsis of the antiquities and the mediæval history of the Indian continent and peninsula. Though routes and places are freely mentioned, yet the work is not at all a handbook in the technical sense of the term.

The real object of the work, then, is in this wise. There is a growing sense among British people regarding the absolute importance of the Indian Empire to the well-being

of the British Isles. Consequently there must be an increasing number of persons who wish to acquire some knowledge which, though not profound nor adequate, is far from being superficial and is not wholly insufficient—who have an idea that the country must be picturesque, and desire to have some more definite notion as to what the beauties are. More especially the number increases of travellers who are unable, indeed, to undertake extensive travel, but who will make a comprehensive tour of six months, or at the most of a year. The benefit and pleasure to be derived from such tours are manifest to all thoughtful and cultured people. The enlightenment too is remarkable, provided always that the traveller be not tempted to pronounce offhand on questions which can hardly be determined except by long service or residence in the country. Such travellers would need at the outset some general explanation regarding the whole Empire, which would be in some degree sufficient, should they have no time for enlarged reading, and would help them to pursue any particular subject whenever they might require some study of details in other books. It is for persons of both these important classes that this work is intended.

For the names of places I have adhered to the old spelling in all cases where the word has been used for history in an English form—and most of the names in this book belong to that class. In other cases the more scientific spelling known as Hunterian has been adopted.

The book begins with an Introduction, Chapter I., setting forth the condition of India in the year 1897-8. That year happened to be one of misfortunes, for most of which a

termination has been vouchsafed by Providence. The reader, so to speak, breaks ground in India itself by Chapter II. "A Winter's Tour in India," and by Chapter III. "A Summer's Sojourn in the Himalaya." These projects of comprehensive travel are followed by Chapter IV. on "The Forests and Wild Sports of India," which things may or may not be connected with travel according to the disposition of the traveller. The Land having thus been touched upon, a brief description is given of the People, with their nationalities and religions, of the Native Princes with their Courts and camps, in Chapters V., VI., and VII. The Land and the People having thus been noticed, it is time to refer to the governance and administration of the country. As a preliminary to this, some account is presented of "The Frontiers of India," in Chapter VIII., especially those on the north-west and the south-east. On this there follow Chapter IX. with the title "How India is Governed"; and Chapter X. "Progress of India under British Rule." These ten chapters, then, comprise the essential substance of the work according to its original design. But perhaps a traveller or a student, who had proceeded so far and noticed so much as is assumed to have been the case, would desire to understand the broad outlines of the history and the antiquities, of all which he will have observed many traces, but which are too vast and complex for him to study with any minuteness. Therefore Chapters XI. and XII. have been added, on "Historic Remains and Ruins," and on "Episodes in History and their Localities."

Although no statistics are embodied in the Chapters, still some readers might like to refresh their memory by an easy reference to leading facts, therefore in an Appendix are

presented three tables: first, that of the principal figures relating to India; the second, that of the dates of the principal epochs in her history; third, that of the Governors-General and Viceroys. A compact map of India, kindly lent by the proprietors of "Whitaker's Almanack," is prefixed to the work.

Most of the facts mentioned in this work are the results of British heroism and endurance, yet there is no space for attempting any record of the heroes themselves, military, civil, political.

The aim throughout has been to render the exposition easy and popular. The subject, though interesting, is alien to British thoughts; though demanding a comprehensive treatment, it is yet, in many respects, highly technical. The difficulties are great in rendering it, on the one hand, easily intelligible to the ordinary English reader; and yet, on the other hand, technically accurate. I have tried to overcome these difficulties so far as may be possible. Moreover, many of the things as here set forth are, after all, matters of judgment and opinion, sometimes also of controversy. Many a page in this book contains allusions which might give rise to objections that could not be met without an explanation for which there is no space. So also, again, many a general consideration verges on details which might, from some points of view, be deemed essential, but for which, again, space could not be found; and consequently some sense of unavoidable incompleteness might arise. For all that is stated, however, there is my own cognisance, practice, study, and observation. He who shall master all that is written in this very limited work will know the substance of

much that is best worth knowing, so far, at least, as my own knowledge goes after long experience.

It may be well here to give some descriptive list of the illustrations. The number being limited to thirty-two, they have been distributed so as best to suit the tenour of each Chapter. The first Chapter, being introductory, has no illustration. The second Chapter, "A Winter's Tour in India," is illustrated (1) by a distant prospect of the promontories, the islands, and the harbour of Bombay; (2) by a view of the famous Taj Mehal, the gem of all India, as seen in the middle distance from the fortress of Agra—indeed, from the balcony where the dying Emperor Shah Jehan was placed to direct his last looks at the matchless mausoleum which he had erected; by views from (3) the citadel of Lahore, with the Mogul mosque and the tomb of Ranjit Sing, the Lion King of the Sikh nationality; and of the (—used as Frontispiece to this volume) crossing of the Indus at Attok in the days before the great river was spanned by a railway viaduct, and as it must have looked when Alexander the Great crossed it; and (5) by a picture of the beautiful Eden Gardens on the bank of the Hooghly near Calcutta; next (6) by a picture of the carved teakwood vestibule of the temple at Nagpore, in the centre of India, being one of the few surviving examples of the woodwork for which the Mahrattas were once celebrated; and lastly, (7) by an outline of the rock of Trichinopoly, around which were waged some of the contests between the English and the French for the possession of Southern India.

The third Chapter, "A Summer's Sojourn in the Himalaya," is illustrated by views of the (8) Sirinagar Lake in

Cashmere, a sheet of water celebrated in song and story; of the town (9) and station of Simla, the summer retreat of the Viceroy and his Council, on the mountain ridge, seeming almost like a city suspended in mid-air, as seen from amidst the foliage of the Jacko Forest; of Mount Everest (10) as seen from the mountainous frontier of Nepaul; of Kinchinjanga (11) from the British hill-station of Darjeeling, these two being the loftiest summits yet discovered in the world.

The fourth Chapter, "The Forest and Wild Sports," is illustrated by views of a tropical forest (12) near the western coast, south of Bombay, with a tarn; and of graceful bamboos (13) hanging over a stream; both places being just the spots whither the tiger comes to slake his thirst.

The fifth Chapter, "The Nationalities and Religions of India," is illustrated by sketches (14) of a native fair held in tents at a religious festival on the banks of the sacred river Nerbudda, convenient for bathing with all the ceremonies of caste; of a gala company (15) on the stone steps of a sacred tank at Goverdhan, near Mathra, the scene of Hindu religious legends; (16) of the river Ganges, just below Benares, the chief city of the Hindu faith; (17) of a dwelling of the Aborigines in the Nilgherry Hills.

The sixth Chapter, on "The Native States," is illustrated by views of (18) Ambair, near Jyepore, the principal State of Rajputana; of Gwalior (19), a leading Mahratta State; of Hyderabad (20), under a Moslem ruler, held to be the premier native State of India.

The seventh Chapter, on "The Courts and Camps of the Native Princes," is not one that readily admits of illustration

according to the method that has been adopted. Still, a sketch has been introduced of the summer-house (21) at Deeg, a native State near Bhurtpore, not far from the border of Northern India, perhaps the most perfectly graceful structure of its kind to be found in the Indian Empire; and (22) the Gateway of a Native Palace.

The eighth Chapter, on “The Frontiers of India,” has four characteristic views: of the Sikkim-Tibet border (23) in the cold and snowy north; (24) of the Peshawar city, with the Khyber Pass in the background—which was the head and front of the recent frontier campaign—the pools (25) of the stream that runs through the Bolan Pass—leading from the Indus Valley towards Southern Afghanistan; the last two being for the north-west and west, and then of the river Irawady (26) in Burma for the east.

The next two Chapters, the ninth entitled “How India is Governed,” the tenth relating to the “Progress of India under British Rule,” do not admit of illustration in this manner.

The eleventh Chapter, on “Ruins and Historical Remains,” has two illustrations: one relating to the interior of the redstone temple (27) at Bindraban, near Mathra, not far from Agra, being quite the finest interior in any style of architecture throughout India; the other to the great tower at Booddh Gya (28) in Behar, being the stateliest monument remaining to recall the Booddhist era.

The twelfth Chapter, on “Episodes in History and their Localities,” is illustrated by a sketch (29) of the Pertabgurh rock-fortress, at the base of which the Mahratta Sivaji assassinated the Moslem envoy, and so set in movement the insurrection of a Hindu nationality against the Moslem

Empire; and (30) by a picture of the temple-crowned rock in the midst of the lake at Poona, whence the last of the Peshwas watched his forces being beaten by the British troops, an event which terminated the Mahratta Empire and left it to be succeeded by that of the British.

To the above illustrations have been added (31) one of the Sacred Bull of Tanjore, a granitic monolith, remarkable because the nearest formations of granite are hundreds of miles away; and (32) one of the grey stone temple near Islamabad in Cashmere.

There is yet one more topic to be mentioned at the conclusion of this Preface. After the book had been composed, but before it was completed, certain events occurred, some of which already are affecting India indirectly and may affect her in the future more and more, but of which a notice could not be conveniently included in the body of the work. I allude to the recent development of the British sphere of influence and of commerce in China. Now, without following the ramifications of this immense subject in many directions, all persons connected with India will have observed that one outcome of this affair will be the inclusion of the whole Yangtse River basin in that sphere, at least as far as the rapids and the mountain range which separate the mid-valley of the Yangtse from its upper valley in Czechuen and Yunan. Within the borders of Yunan the river Yangtse is called by British geographers the River of the Golden Sand, and under that name it approaches the Yunan plateau near Talifoo. This plateau overhangs the valleys of the Mekhong; and the Salwin (as will be seen in

Chapter VIII. of this book) touches the Shan States of Burma, belonging to the Empire of India.

Now, from Mandalay, the capital of Ava or Upper Burma, a British railway has been undertaken towards the Chinese frontier in Yunan. Capital has been provided and the project has received the State sanction, for the first part at least. The surveys and other preliminary operations have been or are being conducted as far as the ferry of Kowlong on the Salwin River, which just here is the boundary between the British and the Chinese Empires. Under the circumstances which have arisen in consequence of recent events, it is to be hoped, indeed expected, that the British Government will press on this railway to speedy completion right up to the Salwin. Naturally the line will not stop there, but must eventually be carried on to the Mekhong River and across its basin to the base of the Yunan plateau. This extension will require the sanction of the Chinese Government. The further enterprise, at the time of the project being initiated, was a matter for negotiations of which the success was more or less doubtful. But in the alteration, indeed the radical improvement, of our relations with China, there should be no longer a doubt as to the success of any arrangements of this nature. Again, this line, with the application of the needful energy and resources, might possibly reach the base of the Yunan plateau in the course of three or four years. But it would not stop there: it must ascend the plateau, which has an altitude of a few thousand feet, by inclines practicable for engineering. Once on the plateau, it would proceed to Talifoo, an important commercial point in the Yunan province. That station would then be within

measurable distance of the River of the Golden Sand, which is really the Upper Yangtse. It were premature now to estimate the progress onwards in future years through the Czechuen province towards the mid-valley of the Yangtse, which would be the goal of the long enterprise.

Thus British communications are pressing slowly but, as we hope, surely, on the great Yangtse valley from Shanghai on the east to Mandalay on the west. From Mandalay there is now a railway to Rangoon near the sea. So the main British line of the future, apparently marked out by destiny, is from the Bay of Bengal at Rangoon to the Pacific Ocean near Shanghai, a distance of about three thousand miles right athwart the south-eastern part of the Asiatic continent from sea to sea—one of the finest lines for the march of Empire to be found in all Asia.

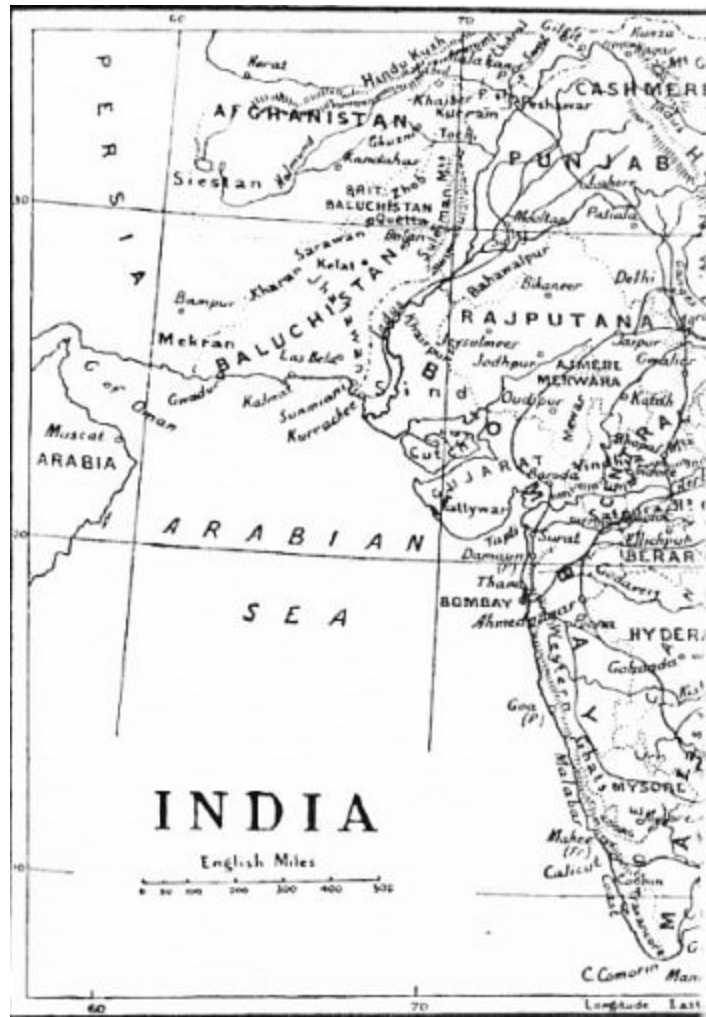
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WEST INDIA
From 'Whitaker's Almanack'
[by permission]