

ANALYSES, &c.

I.— *On the Political State of the Countries between Persia and India.* By E. Stirling, Esq. London. 1835. 8vo. pp. 80.

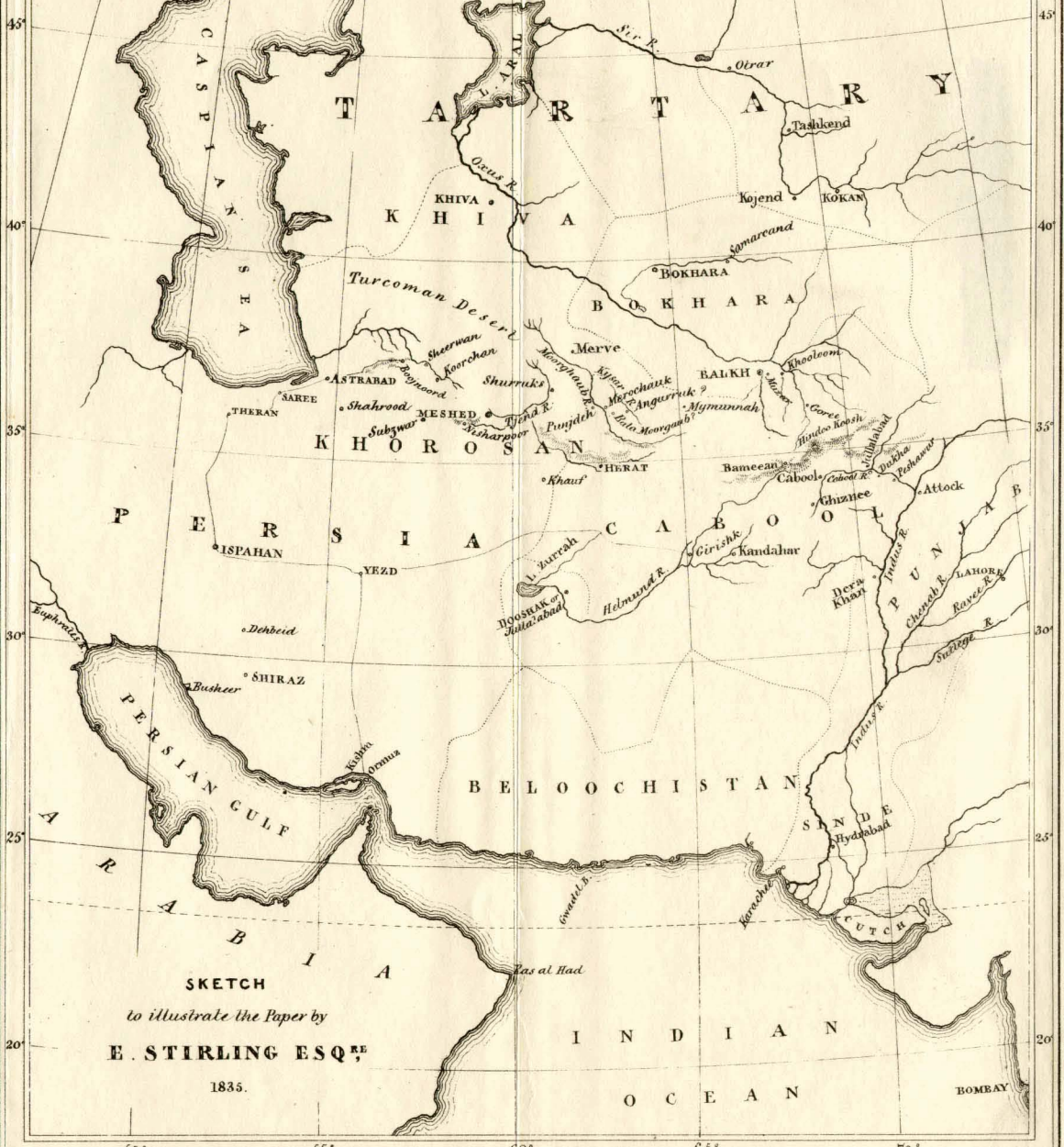
THE object of this pamphlet is to discuss the question, whether it be possible for an enemy to invade India with any reasonable prospect of success, by way of Khorasan and Affghanistan: a question with which we have in this Journal no concern. The details, however, on which the argument is founded are essentially geographical, and it may be interesting to detach them from the conclusions with which they are here allied, and which anticipate a danger that, we trust, does not exist.

In 1828 Mr. Stirling found himself in Persia on his way to India; and, in concert with Sir John Kinneir M'Donald, then our envoy in that country, he planned a route by Meshed, Merve, Bokhara, Khooloom, Bamian, and Cabool; to the loss of any part of which the geographical world would have been extremely sensitive, had not Lieutenant Burnes successfully accomplished the same journey two years afterwards. As it has turned out, we are rather gainers by Mr. Stirling having been eventually compelled to take a shorter and, at that time, less interesting road by Meshed, Shurrukhs, and Muzar (near Balkh). A new itinerary is thus given us, viz., from Shurrukhs to Muzar, on which the information afforded is that of an eye-witness; and although this tract is not in itself important, Mr. Stirling's account of it, combined with what is otherwise known of the vicinity, adds some names to its map.

We ought to premise, that in speaking thus specifically of Mr. Stirling's route, we do not quote from his book, which is silent on this point, but from a private letter addressed by him to Major Archer, with an extract from which, together with comments on its contents, we have been favoured by that officer, a member of the society, and otherwise known to it by his tours in Upper India. We shall first, therefore, give these documents *verbatim*, and then notice briefly the more general views of the geography of this part of Asia, suggested by Mr. Stirling:—

“From Shurrukhs,” says this gentleman, in the letter adverted to, “I proceeded to Punjdel and Bala Moorghaub, both situated on the banks of the Moorghaub river, which fertilizes the city

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SKETCH
 to illustrate the Paper by
E. STIRLING ESQ^{RE}
 1835.

and environs of Merve;—thence to Angurruck (situated on the left bank of the Kysar), to Almar, and then to Mymunnah. Our march between Shurrukhs and Punjdeh was estimated at 35 fursungs ($3\frac{1}{8}$ miles each = $108\frac{1}{2}$ miles); and to within six of the latter place the whole country was a perfect desert, without water, and destitute of trees or shrubs. On the sand-hills there was occasionally a very scanty appearance of coarse grass. We carried our water and provisions, and only rested four or five hours to feed the cattle and take refreshment, dividing the distance into two halts.

“The several marches between Punjdeh and Mymunnah, six in number, may be averaged at six fursungs each ($19\frac{1}{2}$ miles). From Mymunnah to Sirepool they may be rated, five in number, at seven fursungs each ($21\frac{1}{2}$ miles); and thence to Muzar, in the vicinity of Balkh, there are five more, of the same average length.

“In this sketch I mention only the principal towns visited. Shurrukhs is a fort surrounded by a large encampment of Toorkmans, and Punjdeh is likewise an extensive congregation of that wild people. Merochawk, situated on the Moorghaub, between Punjdeh and Bala Moorghaub, has the remains of an old fort: there is also a dilapidated bridge over the river. At Bala Moorghaub resides Derveish Ally Khan, chief of the Jemsheidæe tribe. Ally Yar Khan is the Hakim at Mymunnah—he is an Oosbeck: Sheer Mahomed Khan is the chief of one of the Hazaree tribes, and lives at Angurruck. Sirepool is possessed by Zoolfiekar Sheer; and the chief authority at Muzar is in the hands of the Mootawullee of the shrine of the holy Imaum. Mymunnah is a dependance of Cabool.

“The governments of these countries approach nearer to a state of nature than can be easily conceived. Self-interest is the basis of every action, and to this is sacrificed every consideration of equity. The stronger governments do, indeed, though very rarely, attempt to introduce among the people some of the most essential laws, and visit crime with great severity of punishment. In some, every thing depends on the personal character and talents of the ruler; in others, on the qualities of the chief minister. But the people submit with great reluctance to coercion, and are always ready to oppose themselves to their rulers.

“In such countries the wildest passions of our nature have scope, and despotism alone is able to restrain their violence. The sword is the law. The priests and moollahs interfere, indeed, in civil matters, and where the government will permit, in criminal concerns also; but the chief or ruler allows no interposition where his own passions or interests are concerned. In consequence of this state of society, distress and misery are abundant. Anarchy spreads even into the interior of family connexions. The country is overrun by organized bands of Allamans (so are called armed parties of horsemen), who find in this occupation an indulgence of their natural ferocity, as well as a supply for their wants. Slave-taking is their horrid trade. During my stay at Meshed, the country was in a most disturbed state. For three months it had been in a state of convulsion, in consequence of

the Prince who ruled it, and who was the son of Hussein Ally Mirza, having been seized by the chief of the Khoord tribe. This threw everything into commotion. I did not hear that the chief of Bokhara was at variance with his neighbours, but as the people of Orgunge had attacked the city of Merve, belonging to Bokhara, this inroad prevented my going to the latter place.

“ My manner of travelling was in company with the Kaffilahs. I disguised myself—assumed the dress of the country—imitated the manners, and habituated myself, as nearly as I could, to the usages of the people with whom I associated. Sometimes I professed myself a physician—sometimes assumed other characters, as occasion required; but I was often known for a Feringhee, to which no respect was attached, but rather the stigma of being a Kaffir, or unbeliever. I always rode either on horseback or on a mule.

“ The natives are fond of European fire-arms—not, however, muskets, but of a finer and lighter make, so as to be used on horseback, and carry a ball to a great distance. At Cabool I saw that the attempts to imitate them had made considerable advance. The best time of the year for a European to visit these countries is the cold weather, and spring. The summer and autumn should be avoided; the climate, during these two last seasons, being prejudicial. I consider spring to be the most pleasant in all respects. Animal food should form the support of life: fruits ought to be most carefully avoided. Money, as far as Meshed on one side, and Cabool on the other, may be obtained to any amount, by bills; but secrecy ought to be observed in these transactions. Credit for any sum, however small, cannot be obtained. No occupation will afford a livelihood; and were merchandize to be carried here, great loss must be sustained in the sale of it, if it were not wholly plundered. One or two small instruments might be taken, but the cupidity of the people is so great, that anything of consequence would most probably be stolen or destroyed. My barometer was stolen before I had made four marches from Bushire. Much jealousy is entertained of the practice of writing, and it can only be accomplished by stealth; a good memory is therefore essentially necessary. One's conduct should be as inoffensive as possible: patience, prudence, great self-command, and a constitution capable of encountering privations and hardships are indispensable. The best plan is as much as possible to assume the appearance of a Faker or beggar, without actually being one.

“ A knowledge of Persian will aid a traveller in these countries; but the *Toorkey* is of infinitely greater consequence. I do not mean that now spoken in Turkey itself, but that which is the language of the Turcomans. This is spoken or understood all over Persia, particularly by the wandering tribes.”

On which Major Archer makes the following remarks:—

1. “ The information in the above extract can only be regarded as an itinerary of the names of places and their assumed relative distances; not being confirmed by any scientific observations. The distance between Shurrukhs and Muzar, as estimated by Mr.

Stirling at 141 fursungs (437 miles), appears, moreover, much too large; for his points of departure and arrival being established, the difference of longitude is only six degrees and a few miles, and does not bear out so high a computation. Shurrukhs and Muzar are in nearly the same parallel of latitude, and Mr. Stirling's course was uniformly east.

2. "Bala Moorghaub, noted by Mr. Stirling as being on the river Moorghaub, is not marked in Arrowsmith's Map of Central Asia. Mr. Stirling makes it a place of some account. It is to the eastward of Merochauk. Angurruk is perhaps the Heruk of Arrowsmith's Map; but if so, the latter is misplaced, for Mr. Stirling states it to be on the left bank of the Kysar.

3. "With the exception of the tract above specified, Mr. Stirling's route was the same either with Mr. Fraser's or Lieutenant Burnes's. But his corroboration of their statements is important; and he deserves much credit at once for the spirit with which he voluntarily undertook his journey—a peculiarly difficult one at that juncture—the address with which he accomplished it, and the spirit of active and enlightened curiosity with which he everywhere sought the best hearsay information when his means of personal observation failed him." We turn, then, now to his general views.

Besides the direct road to India, through the middle of Persia, three other routes may be traced across that part of Asia which lies west of its great central tract of mountain and elevated plains. One is from Astrabad to Meshed, and thence by Herat and Candahar to the Indus, either by Dera Khan or Cabool. Another is through Orgunge, or Khiva, to Bokhara, Balkh, Khooloom and Cabool. And the last is from the N.E., and supposes an enemy to approach by way of Otrar, Tashkend, Kojend, and Samarkand, also to Bokhara. Thus the first route divides into two at Candahar, while the other two combine at Bokhara, and also take up a branch of the first at Cabool. We shall notice each in its order.

1. From Astrabad there are two principal roads to Meshed, one leading to the southward by Shahrood, Subzwar, and Nishapoor—the other skirting the Turcoman desert, and passing by Boojnoord, Sheerwan, and Koochan. Of these, the southern is the best supplied, but otherwise the most difficult. The passes near Astrabad are rugged and lofty, and the people occupying them are poor and hardy; their constant warfare with the Turcomans making them all soldiers. This elevated tract continues to Shahrood; it is formed by a lofty chain of hills, which separates the Caspian districts from those more easterly. From Shahrood to Subzwar the road is good: only one low range of hills intervening between Meyomeed and Abassabad, about twelve fursungs

(37 miles) across, but with open and broad passes. Subzwar is a walled city, with towers and a ditch. Beyond it is another low range of hills, and beyond them a deep nullah or ravine, not very broad, nor with much water in it, but yet of some importance as a difficulty in the way. After crossing it the valley of Nishapoor is entered—one of the finest in Persia—from which a detour becomes requisite to cross, or turn a lofty hill, which separates it from the valley of Meshed. The first is effected by a road leading from Deroot direct to Meshed, which is extremely difficult, as described by Mr. Frazer, who passed along it in 1821; the second, by proceeding south, as far as Sherefabad, where the road is easily practicable for artillery.

The route from Astrabad to Meshed, along the skirt of the Turcoman desert, is open; but the want of water is great, and few or no supplies could be obtained in it. The friendship of the Turcomans would also be requisite to enable an army to advance in this direction, not so much on account of their strength as their activity. Nearly all the towns on this line are walled, for protection against their inroads.

Beyond Meshed, the road to Herat is good, but traverses a much devastated country, winding along a valley formed on the north by the Parapomisan range running east to join the Hindoo Koh, and on the south by a parallel range of inferior mountains—the prolongation of that which bars the way between Nishapoor and Meshed. The recesses of both are occupied by the Turcomans and Hazarees, two very wild and lawless tribes, whose chief towns are Jam, Noabshehr, and Khauf. The chief of Toorbut, now Mahomed Khan, one of the ablest of the petty rulers of this country, is also here very powerful. His regular force is estimated at 5000 men, and his alliance is close with the Turcomans and Hazarees, which swells his strength.

Near Herat the valley opens into a wide plain, covered with innumerable gardens, orchards, and plantations. The city is surrounded with a wall and deep ditch, but has no other defence. A road proceeds from it direct to Cabool; but so difficult and unsafe as to be little known or traversed. It is nearly certain that artillery could not be transported along it. To Candahar the road is good, but much harassed by the wild tribes which occupy the recesses of the hills to the northward. To the south the hills have now melted away; and the great plains are opened which surround Lake Zurrah, and are traversed by the river Helmund. Candahar is a large, populous, and formerly a wealthy city, surrounded by strong walls, and not destitute of artillery. It is also the capital of the nominal chief of the Afghans, Camraun, whose real power, however, is of very limited extent, in consequence of the dissensions created by the murder

of his famous vizier, Futteh Khan, father of the present chiefs of Cabool and Peshawur. To these respective sovereignties, then, the accustomed road by Ghiznee now separates from the direct road to India by Dera Khan. The first, Mr. Stirling says, is difficult, and in winter impracticable, from the quantity of snow which falls about Ghiznee. The second crosses a desert country, interspersed with sandy plains; but is not otherwise difficult. We could have wished, for the sake of his argument, which is manifestly incomplete here, that our author had added more details at this place; but as this country was quite out of the line of his own immediate inquiry, it was probably out of his power to say more regarding it.

3. The whole country about Khiva or Orgunge is a desert, containing a widely-scattered population of Kirghees. They possess no towns, excepting their capital; and no grain could be procured from them. Khiva is a poor place, supported by the trade of making slaves of foreigners on all sides of the desert, and selling them at Bokhara. Its inhabitants have no species of commerce except this, and the rude manufacture of the most ordinary domestic utensils. The only supplies afforded by the country are the produce of its scattered pastures.

This inhospitable country Mr. Stirling seems to consider it necessary that either army or traveller should quit as soon as possible, for he pursues his itinerary beyond it across the Oxus at Orgunge, or lower, to Bokhara, though compelled to re-cross the same river in proceeding from Bokhara to Balkh. The distance between the two cities, he states, nearly as Mr. Burnes does, at twelve days' march, the country flat, and the road good. From Balkh to Muzar and Khooloom the road is also good, and the distance about seventy miles. From Khooloom to Cabool there are two roads, generally travelled; one by Ghoree and the Hindoo Coosh; the other by Heibuk and Bameean. If the season is favourable, the first is reckoned both the better and shorter; but the latter may be traversed nearly at all times. Mr. Stirling passed along it in the last days of December and first of January. From Khooloom to Cabool his caffilah took twenty-two days, including stoppages at Heibuk and Bameean, for the settlement of the duties. But by the other road, he was assured, the journey may be made in fifteen days. Baber, in his Memoirs, mentions other roads across this tract, to the number of five, and had good opportunities of knowing. A detachment of Nadir Shah's army, when he invaded Cabool, followed this route, and transported the requisite provisions on mules; but the dangers and defiles are almost without number; "and, in fact, the Himalaya here commences."

Cabool is situated 11,000 feet above the level of the sea; and

its climate nearly resembles that of Europe—being cold in winter, but agreeable in spring, summer, and autumn. It is surrounded with gardens and orchards; and the quality of its fruits is celebrated. The descent from it to the south is precipitate, the defiles are numerous, and the country on every side is occupied by unruly tribes, whose practice it is to interrupt and levy contributions on all passengers. The power of the present chief of Cabool, Dost Mahommed, and his anxiety to encourage its trade, have of late years improved the communications; but they are still difficult in themselves, and much interrupted.

“From Cabool to Peshawur, the Khelgees and Kyberees are found in great force; and the Mymuns, who inhabit Lalpoor, are also numerous, and live on the left of the Cabool river, opposite to Dukha. There are many passes of magnitude and difficulty, both on the range of hills situated between Cabool and Jullalabad, and between the latter place and Peshawur.

“Owing to the frequent interruption of these last passes, two other routes, though circuitous and difficult, are often chosen by travellers and kafilahs; one of which I myself took, and found it in many places troublesome and dangerous: our mules could not pass without great risk, and sometimes we had to unload them. This road enters the plains of Peshawur at Muchnee, where the Cabool river quits the western hills. Between Dukha and this place we crossed the river twice, on a small raft made of inflated buffalo-skins and a few cross sticks. The stream is rapid, and, I should imagine, at the spot where we first passed over, deep: it was confined in a rocky bed, and hills formed its banks and narrowed its channel.

“The road which leads through the Khyber pass branches off in the vicinity of Dukha: it is the high road, and the best in all respects, except that it is infested by the Khyber tribe. It is the one usually travelled by armies and large bodies of men; but, notwithstanding every precaution, the mountaineers frequently manage to harass and plunder them, and to cut off small parties.

“There is another road, more to the north than the one by Dukha; but I know little concerning it: it is, however, represented as not so good, though shorter than that of Dukha.

“From Jullalabad to Peshawur, jallahs or rafts, made of inflated buffalo-skins, frequently navigate the river; but very great dexterity is required in several channels and difficult straits, where no inconsiderable danger exists.* There is plenty of water in the river, but how far it might be navigable for boats it is not easy to foresee; it may however be mentioned, that two, very strongly constructed, for the purpose of ferrying over people and cattle, were found at Lalpoor, where the chief of the Mymuns resides; but it may fairly be left a matter of doubt whether such boats would answer for river navi-

* “Humayoon, the father of Akber, went down the river in this manner to Peshawur from Jullalabad; and my servant travelled in the same way without any difficulty.”

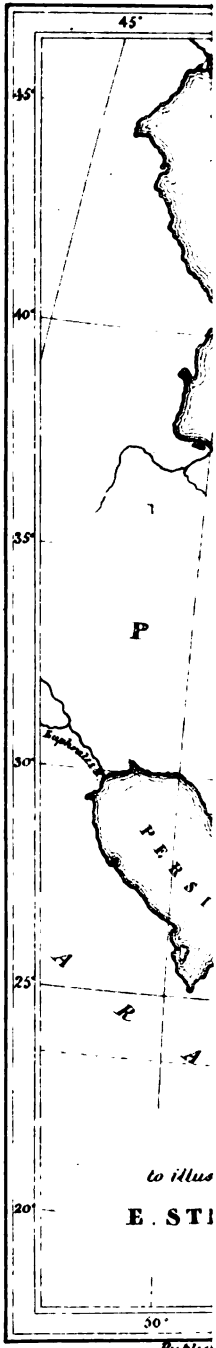
gation, for if they were found useful, would they not be employed?—would not the natives of the country have increased their number?

“Owing to the strong rapids and other obstacles, nothing, I imagine, is found to be more suited to the navigation of the river than these inflated rafts, however coarse the materials and rude the architecture. I was told it was not uncommon for the fruit-merchants to transport their property and merchandise on them from Jullalabad as far as Peshawur, and even to the Attock; and the men, therefore, who conduct these rafts ought to be well experienced. When they have arrived at their destination, the raft is taken out of the water, the wind allowed to escape, and the skins ordinarily conveyed by their owners back to the place whence they had started.

“It is worthy of observation, that it was in the valley of the Soorkaband, near Jullalabad, that open and undefended villages were first remarked. This resemblance to the villages in Hindostan was very striking about Jullalabad: not only these open and unprotected villages, but all the natural productions, both animal and vegetable, indicated our approach to the country of the eastern sun. We now but seldom met with fortified villages; and even the people had become very black in their complexion, and less athletic in their appearance. Here the mina and the parrot were recognised among the feathery tribe; while the orange and the sugar-cane saluted our sight among the productions of the vegetable world. Here also we began to meet with the full-channelled rivers, navigable streams, and effeminate faces. These symptoms were more apparent when we entered the valley of Peshawur, where the extensively-cultivated plains, defenceless villages, and wide-scattered hamlets, might have been taken for a portion of Hindostan: and I was much struck with the pertinent resemblance. After reaching the valley of Pashawur, the remainder of the journey to Hindostan is easy and unembarrassing.”—p. 54-58.

3. The line of the third of Mr. Stirling's routes being the same from Bokhara as that of which his account is thus concluded in his own words, we have only to advert to his observations on its beginning. The country, then, from Otrar to Tunkat and Tashkend he considers nearly level; and from Tashkend to Kojend, the emperor Baber represents the whole as ill inhabited, and little better than a desert. Near Kojend, on the contrary, (a celebrated city on the Sir,) the plains are fertile, fruits in particular are abundant, and supplies, to any extent, may probably be drawn from the fertile province of Ferghana, up the river. The valley of Sogd, quite to Samarkand, seems also open from this point; but there is reason to believe that these fertile valleys are filled with a numerous, warlike, and hostile population, imbued with all the prejudices of the Chinese against straungers. Samarkand gained, the road is open to Bokhara.

In thus analyzing Mr. Stirling's statements, we have found it impossible to keep perfectly out of view, as we had proposed, the object on account of which he makes them. But the truth is,



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that the two are almost inseparable; and mere private speculations cannot give offence. It may be added, that his conclusion is, that a European army would meet with insuperable difficulties along all the above routes; likely, too, to be augmented by a reunion of the now divided Affghan states into one sovereignty, which seems to him not improbable.

II.—*Voyage Round the World.* By Lieutenant Holman, R.N.
London. 1834-5. 8vo.

THE deficiencies under which Mr. Holman labours are known to the public; but with them we have here little concern. We are even not disinclined to admit that within our province there is considerable truth in the apparent paradox with which he prefaces his work, viz. that these deficiencies are rather in his favour, as a traveller, than otherwise. Geography deals with facts, not appearances; and he who, unable to see the latter, zealously and diligently endeavours everywhere to obtain the best authorities for the former, may, we think, not unlikely acquire them more exactly than those who confide in their powers and opportunities of cursory inspection. Be this as it may, however, we shall not again recur either to the advantages or disadvantages under which this traveller has brought together his materials; but leaving out of sight the personal narrative by which he has made his volumes popular, shall string together the chief passages by which he has also sought to make them useful.

Mr. Holman's route was by way of Madeira, Teneriffe, St. Jago, Sierra Leone, Cape Coast, Fernando Po, the Coast of the Bight of Benin, Ascension, Rio Janeiro (including a portion of the interior of Brazil), the Cape of Good Hope, Mauritius, Madagascar, the Comoro and other neighbouring islands, Ceylon, the Coast of Coromandel, Calcutta, New South Wales, and Canton. The three first volumes of his intended publication have been some time out, terminating with his residence at Calcutta; and one more, which will probably appear as soon as this notice, will, it is understood, complete his plan. He is among the latest travellers in most parts of his track, and certainly appears to have been everywhere most indefatigable in making the inquiries of which the results are thus in the course of appearing before the public.

The wine-trade of Madeira seems to be rapidly declining. In 1825 the export was 14,425 pipes; in 1826, 9391; in 1827, the returns are not here complete, but up to September they only give 5274. In consequence the planting of coffee has lately become very general in the island, and with such success, that already