to the Khalif. When they reached Sham they showed the box to the king, who ordered it into the seraglio, opening it in the presence of the daughters of Da'wir, to whom he said, “Behold how absolute is my power, and how I treat such servants as Bin Kassim.” The women replied, “Oh king, just men ought not to be precipitate in great affairs, or be too hasty to act, either upon the representation of friends or foes.” The king asked their meaning, they said, “We made this accusation against Bin Kassim because of the hatred we bore him, seeing that he slew our father, and through him we lost all our property and possessions, and became exiles from our own country; but Bin Kassim was like a father and brother to us, he looked not on us for any bad purpose, but when our object was revenge for the blood of our father, we accused him of this treachery: this end attained do as you will.” The Khalif on hearing this, suffered great remorse: he ordered the two women to be tied to horses, and dragged to death, and they buried Bin Kassim in the burial place at Damascus.

III.—Note of a Visit to the Niti Pass of the grand Himalayan chain.

By J. H. Batten, Esq. C. S.

[Extracted from a letter to, and communicated by, Captain P. T. Cautley.]

Joshinath, 22nd Dec. 1837.

Having just returned from the Spiti pass, I think that an account of my expedition thither, however brief, will not fail to interest one whom I look upon, now that the admirable Falconer is far away absent from India Proper, as the chief scientific authority of the Upper Provinces. You are entitled to the first tribute of information gleaned in my trip, because you have been ever ready to give the benefit of your instruction to your pupils; and secondly, because Falconer and yourself have rendered the geological School of Scharanpur illustrious, by the well-deserved medals which you have won for its professoors!

Above the junction of the Dhauli and Alaknanda branches of the Ganges at Vishnuprag a mile below this place, (which is the chief seat of the Badrinarath Rawal and his priests,) the glen of the Dhauli continues for 35 miles up to Niti village. Near Joshinath and the whole way to the junction of the Ksh river, which comes from the northwest face of Nandi Devi, this glen is characterised by the most exquisite scenery; the southern mountains sloping down to the river covered by forests of Quercus semicarpifolia, Rosa webbiana (wild red rose), yew,
horse chestnut, alder, poplars and elms, interspersed with pretty villages
of which the chief ornament, at this season, are the fields of red *Marsa,
(the *Batti of Bassehr) a species of amaranth, while the high craggy
northern mountains and peaks, that form the separating ridge between
Badrînâth and Nîti, come down to the *Dhauli in the most terrific
precipices. Above the *Râst, both sides of the glen assume the regular
Himalayan features of wild sublimity, although villages are every where
seen perched up on seemingly inaccessible heights. The river remains
broad and deep, though often broken into cataracts. The road (a fine
new one made by myself this year) is carried on either side of the river
as most easy, and is crossed by fine Sangas. We soon enter *Bhoûs; and
flocks upon flocks of sheep carrying loads of grain, or salt and borax
according as they are from *Bhoûs or to *Bhoûs, are met with at every
step, guarded by the savage dogs of *Thibet and the still more savage
Bhôtias among whom are also discerned a few *most savage Lámias, or
wandering beggars from *Tartary. Of the latter the dress and appear-
ance are most strange; the women are scarcely human, and both they
and the men resemble the pictures given of the Esquimaux. The
children are rosy-cheeked and sometimes pretty, but the small Chinese
eyes buried in the face give a somewhat monkey-like look to their
physiognomy. This latter observation applies equally to the Bhôtias
as to the Lámias. But I refer you to *Traill’s report on *Bhoûs for a
description of the people and their customs, as well as of the trade between
this province and *Thibet, and the mode in which it is conducted. Let
me rather tell you what *Traill does not describe with accuracy, or at
least with minuteness, viz., the rocks and the trees and the general
geography. There is a very dreary glen without villages for ten or
twelve miles separating *Upper from *Lower *Pynkânda, or as they are
sometimes, but improperly, called *Upper and *Lower *Nîti. After leaving
the *oaks and elms, &c., the wood becomes entirely *cypress, and from
summit to base of the mountains no other tree is seen. The larger
trees attain not unfrequently an enormous size, some of them hav-
ing a girth of 27 feet. The smaller kind are, however, the prettiest,
and even appear to be different from the larger in species; but on
observing them attentively I perceived no difference whatever in reality
between what some travellers call the *Arbor vitae and the large
Himalayan *cypress. At *Jînâ, *Upper *Pynkânda is entered, and then
the scenery, retaining all its grandeur, also becomes exquisitely lovely.
Villages of the true Swiss character are seen on every open spot,
surrounded by *cedar trees, and overhung by crags of the most stupen-
dous character wooded up to the snow which shines on their summits,
with similar trees and birch, which latter as well as the sycamores have
at this season the true autumnal tints contrasting finely with the dark
branches of the deodar. The bridges now become very frequent; and
the river, though still unfordable, becomes a torrent falling over rapids.
Malarti is next entered, a very large village in every respect similar to
those seen in Kamaur. The crops when I arrived had just been cut, and
it was somewhat strange at 10,250 feet above the sea to see the fields in
the valley covered with harvest-sheaves, while the eternal snows were
not more than 3000 feet distant overhead: and heavy frost was whitening
the ground. Between Malarti and Melam in the Jawahir pass is a
route practicable in August for about a fortnight every year, but like all
the other routes within the Himalaya very high, snowy, and dangerous.
It is in this intermediate range between the Dhaul and the Gori that
silver is said to exist*. Lead mines are now worked on a high range
not far above Malarti; but the situation renders all hopes of increased
produce or new discoveries of this metal, almost vain in this direction.
After leaving Malarti, we march up a glen of the most beautiful kind,
the deodar trees (all of the spreading shape) coming down to the
waters' edge, and now beginning to be mingled with chilapines† (pinus
excelsa, not unlike the chir at a distance), and Rágia firs (abies webbiana): a set of large villages is then entered. Bampa, Gúmsáli, &c.
all varying in elevation from the sea from 10,200 to 11,000 feet and upwards, the highest of which is Nitti. At Bampa the deodar pines end,
and no other tree is seen save birch and pinus excelsa, but the ground is
covered as well as the surrounding heights, with beds of ground cypress,
gooseberries, currants, furze, (astralagus, ROYLE.) webb rose, sweet-briar and juniper. The furze is especially plentiful, but there is no
heath as at Badrínáth. By heath I mean the andromeda fastigiata
depicted in Royle. Up to Gúmsáli the rocks have been quartz, mica,
schist and gneiss, with granite blocks, in the river beds, fallen from the
peaks, except in the neighbourhood of Malarti where argillaceous and

* N. B. All our snowy range galena ores have a good proportion of silver in
them? Would this be worth extracting by chemical process? Could not you
come and visit all our mines? [Capt. DRUMMOND and an experienced miner
have since been deputed to the district.—Ed.]
† N. B. The Chilk pine grows up very near to the upper limit of birch. At
Nitti it is found at 11,800 feet; the birch only goes to 12,200 feet. At Badrínáth,
the limit of wood is lower, as the snow comes down lower. Both Badrínáth and
Nitti are within the Himalaya, and have snowy peaks to their south; Kedárnáth, is
on the contrary on the south base of the peaks and snow is met with at 10,000
feet. Gangesutra and Badrínáth are in the north of the peaks. Jamnepatri and
Kedárnáth, on their south.
talcose schist is the chief rock. At Gumsālī the granite is met with in situ, pervading gneiss and mica schist, exactly in the mode shown by Lyell in his picture of *Cape Wrath* in Scotland. The breadth of the veins is sometimes very thin, but sometimes the granite spreads into great broad patches. It is a reddish variety in general, but a highly argillaceous variety with large schorl (?) or tourmaline (?) crystals is very common. Just above Gumsālī the river runs through tremendous gneiss and granite precipices, and the road is carried along scaffolding, now quite passable for a poney, hamāre aqbāl se. After turning this corner and ascending to *Nitī* village the Himalaya peaks are all turned, not one is left to the north, though some of the northwest and northeastern heights are within perpetual snow limits. At *Nitī* limestone (not crystalline) and argillaceous schist, chiefly the latter, are the rocks. *Nitī* is 11,500 feet above the sea, and when I arrived no snow was to be seen even in the river bed. On the 10th October, I left the Nittāns cutting their barley and phāphar harvest, and proceeded on to the junction of the Gunās with the Dhauli. I met with the first snow near Gildāng, more than 14,500 feet high, and this snow was merely a snow-cave in the river, the levings of last winter. A few masses of gneiss and granite were still to be seen in the bed of the Dhauli, the debris of some of the southern precipices through which I could see the granite veins running along; but argillaceous schist and quartzes were the rocks of the surrounding hills. There is one very bad gorge between Gothīning and Gildāng pastures, where I shall have some trouble in making my road, but after Gildāng the hills are round and smooth up to the pass. They were covered with grass and saussure flowers, the grass of very peculiar kinds and noted for its goodness. The pastures were covered with yaks (chowran-gaies) and jubboos, the mule breed. These animals retreat of their own accord to the villages on the setting in of the winter just before the villagers depart for the southern parganas. I carried up firewood and other loads on the backs of yaks, and my servants rode on others. Very few are white, except at the tail.

The rivers Gunās and Dhauli are mere streams, and were half frozen above. Gildāng at their junction, but between Gothīning, the Rylkanda joins the main river with a large body of water, arising at this season from a glacier, and up to this point the Dhauli may be said to be unfordable, except at one or two rocky points near Nitī. The Gunās may be said to arise from a snow-bed, for I saw snow-caves towards its source, but the Dhauli or furthest branch of the Ganges certainly rises from a spring at the southern face of the pass where on the 11th Oct. there was not even a speck of snow. My camp on the 10th, was at
er up. Wedged in the blue limestone in the ascent back to the crest of the pass, I observed a large bed of thinly laminated and contorted argillaceous schist. The round quartz stones are everywhere scattered.

I see no difference whatever either in the geological character of the hills or the form of the ranges, between one side of the pass and the other. Tartary is in fact entered very soon after leaving Niti village, and the peaks seen so grandly towering in the south are the real beginning of the Himalaya mountains, and not the crest of the pass. Pray come and see whether I am not right in conjecturing that fossil ammonites can be found on the south face of the Niti pass, which is in my idea, only the highest portion of the Tartaric plain, running up to the Himalaya peaks. Even at Niti, there are peaks 23,000 feet high due south, and there as well as at the pass itself the spectator wonders how one is to thread one's way into Hindustán through them, no gorge or glen being visible, that seems to be like an introit or exit. Behind Malārī the hills become round and Tartaric also, as well as behind Niti, but being higher and within the limit of perpetual snow, they are difficult to cross, and the pass following a river bed is preferred. The time to visit Niti is from the 20th Sept. to the 10th Oct. In May, Malārī even is hardly reachable, and the snow does not melt in any part of Upper Pynkanda till the end of that month. The pass is not open till July, and it shuts now. On the evening of the day (11th Oct.) on which I visited the pass, the first snow fell. All night it snowed heavily and next day I could hardly reach Niti! Such are the vicissitudes at this season. At 3 p. m. when the wind got up, the thermometer was 30° in the shade and 42° in the sun at the crest of the pass. On the morning of the 12th, in my camp at 14,500 feet, the thermometer was 16° in the air and 22° at my bedside!

I shall wait till I get back to send you specimens. I have a good many fossil bones brought from the interior of Thibet, and from the Mana pass. They are however very broken and small.

P. S. The Hindu pilgrims who visit Manasarovara Lake go up by the Mana pass, which is merely the continuance of the glen of the Saraswati above Badrináth, (as the Niti pass is of the Dhuáli river,) and they return by the Nilang pass behind Gangautri or by Niti. These two last are the easiest of all the passes, Nilang being without much ascent and being the course of the Jhannábi river, which rises on the Thibet side. The Jwáhír pass is the most difficult, but being near Almora the greatest traffic, nevertheless, is carried on in that pass. The Neipūl passes are all easy. The pilgrims leave Mana in July, and return to this side in the beginning of October.