

V.—*Outline of a Route through the Panj-áb, Kábul, Kashmír, and into Little Tibet, in the Years 1834-8.* By G. T. VIGNE, Esq.

HAVING just returned to England, after an absence of seven years, about five of which were passed in countries at this moment of peculiar interest to every Englishman, I am induced to believe that a brief outline of my travels, while the more detailed account is preparing for publication, may not be unacceptable to the members of the Geographical Society.

Quitting England in October, 1832, I passed through Constantinople, Trebizond, and Kurdistan, to Persia, where I resided during the summer months with Sir John Campbell, then British Envoy at the court of Tehran; from whence the principal excursion that I made was into Mazanderan. I thence descended by the usual route to Bushire, and soon afterwards arrived at Bombay.

An impaired state of health, an anxious desire for breathing cold air, and the prospect of enjoyment among the magnificent scenery of the Himálaya, combined to send me to the north of India, which I had not the least intention of visiting when I left England. After travelling a little in the mountains between Simlah and Misúrí, I descended into the plains to visit the Taj, at Agrah, whence, having at last, after a great deal of delay, obtained leave to cross the Setlej and proceed to Kashmír, I started direct for Ludh'yánah. I crossed the river at Belas-púr, below the fortress of Maláún, and, attended by a servant of the Mahá Rájah Ranjít Sing'h, to whose kind treatment of me I am happy to bear testimony, proceeded along the skirts of the lower mountains to Jambú and Rajawar, where I joined the great road of the Moguls, and entered Kashmír at Shapiyán. Altogether I have had the good fortune to reside a much longer time than any other European in this celebrated valley; have passed through it three times in my visits to Tibet, and may say generally that I have seen all that is to be seen there, or with very little exception, having traversed the greater part of it several times. I am in possession of a large map of Kashmír, on the scale of 2 miles to an inch, connected with the Indus on the north; and showing many of the passes which I traversed two or three times: I have also several observed latitudes. My map is chiefly laid down from a base of 3 miles, measured on a plain in the centre of the valley, by Licut. Mackeson, political assistant to Col. Wade, aided by Dr. Falconer, Superintendent of the E. I. Company's Botanical Garden at Saháran-púr. Lieut. Mackeson entered Kashmír for a little time, but was shortly recalled to his more important duties, as assistant political agent at Pesháwar. Having received a most cordial invitation from Ahmed Sháb, the king, or "Ergilfo," of Little Tibet, I pushed over the passes from the Wulur lake; met him close to the elevated plain of Deosoh, or Deosaih; was conducted to his

capital by him, and treated with the greatest kindness and respect, as having been the first Englishman who had paid him a visit. So fine a field induced me to pay him a second and a third. I made an attempt to reach the Nubrá Tsoh, whence flows the great northern branch of the Indus, but was (although I entered the valley of Nubrá) foiled by the treatment I experienced from the insolent servants of Guláb Singh, of Jambú, one of the rajahs, who, having been raised from the rank of common soldiers by Ranjít, have eventually become too powerful for their master, and prevented my moving forward, in the teeth of the positive orders of the Mahá Rajah, given in full derbar. It is unnecessary to mention here to what causes I attribute the treatment I received; but the more I see and hear, since my return, of the great anxiety for information about those countries, the more annoying is the reflection on what I might have done, had I been fairly assisted only to the extent that I ought and sought to have been, as a private English traveller.

A second attempt about this time last year to reach the source and the frontiers of Yar-kand, by another path, failed in consequence of the new snow falling upon the passes three weeks earlier than the usual time. I returned to India through Kashmír and the mountain states and towns on the N. of the Panj-áb, some of which, such as Chambak, Badrawar, Dodah, &c., have never been, I believe, previously visited by any European traveller. I have also, to the best of my ability, mapped the whole of the last-mentioned country, and connected it with Ludh'yánah: so that the map I have made is that of the whole of Alpine India on the N. of the Panj-áb, including Kashmír, Great and Little Tibet, the course of the Indus, more or less correctly, from Ladák'h to the plain of Peshawar, and the whole of the hill country between Kashmír and Ludh'yánah. The fosse and ruins on the Sikander-ke-D'har, or Hill of Alexander, mentioned by Mr. Moorcroft, I seriously believe to be the remains of the altars of Alexander. The Rajah of Mandeh assured me that, although the place has frequently been used as a fort, yet that the ditch and ruins, &c., had always existed there from time immemorial. I found there on a stone an ornament which might have passed for a roughly-carved Grecian rosette, which I copied.

I went to Ghazní with the Lohani caravan, along the course of the Gómal river. Kandahar I did not visit, as there was then nothing of particular interest about it. From Ghazní I proceeded to Kábul by a bye-road, seeing the famous dam built by Mahmúd, and called the Bandi-Sultán. I remained at Kábul three or four months, and received every civility from Dost Mohammed Khán, and his brother, the Nawwáb Jabbar Khán, whose guest I was. I made several excursions in the neighbourhood of Kábul, but did not cross the Hindú Kush, the requisite permission from Murád Beg, of Kundúz, not having been ob-

tained, chiefly because the present for him, which I ordered from Calcutta, was unfortunately not forwarded from Ludh'yanah till two months after it should have been.

Upon my arrival at Ludh'yanah, last March, I immediately descended the Indus to Bombay, in company with General Churchill, who kindly allowed me to take advantage of the preparations which had been made for him. I reached Europe by the overland route through Egypt.

I should not forget to mention that I have had the good fortune to bring home safely a great number of sketches, portraits, &c., and an interesting collection of miscellanea, and two accurate panoramic views—one of the vale of Kashmír, and the other of the city of Kábul.

Having thus given a general outline of my travels, I proceed to give an answer to some queries about the Dardú country. The valley of Kashmír lies about N.N.W. and S.S.E.: if its greater axis were continued, it would (as well as I can judge before marking it on the map), cut right through the Dardú country: the snowy ranges seen in my panoramic view of Kashmír are, I believe, those which rise between the Indus and the Krishn Gangá, the Dardú country lying at their feet on the left or eastern bank of the Indus. Its latitude, that is, the latitude of its centre, may be about 20 or 25 miles below the junction of the Astor, or Hasorah river, with the Indus, which will make it about $34^{\circ} 48'$, probably. I have seen it from a mountain immediately overhanging the junction of the Astor river with the Indus, and whence, in fact, I traced with great ease the whole course of the Indus, nearly down to the plains. The stream itself is visible for not less than 50 or 60 miles. Astor is, strictly speaking, in the Dardú country; but, as Astor belongs to Ahmed Shah, it is always specified by its name when speaking of it. The country of Dardú proper, when spoken of, consists of three or four of the numerous wild states that border on the Indus from Astor downwards. I have the names and positions of all of them but Chilas (in particular, I believe), with Tor, Jelkót, Palas, and Koli form the Malki-Dardú. As to their towns, I am not aware they have any; I should think nothing but small villages: they are a wild and lawless set, and, whilst a portion are employed in agricultural pursuits, the others are known and feared as marauders. The thieves whom Ahmed Sháh of Iskardó cut up immediately before I met him, just below the plains of Deosóh, were plunderers from Palas, who had penetrated through the mountains, and were carrying off men, women, children, and a large number of cattle, from one of his villages. They own no authority but that of their múllahs, are quite independent of each other, and are Sunní Mohammedans. Ahmed Sháh assured me that they wear a large ring of iron on the

wrists, round which the fingers are doubled, and then used in general battles in the same manner that the ancients used the cestus. The Dardú country lies to the south of the great Himálaya chain.

The direction and distance of Iskardó from the Wulur lake is about N.E. 60 miles. The direction of Iskardó from Drás itself will be northerly: it is about a fortnight's march from it, the Sind'h pass being much longer than that by Bander-púr and Garás, which occupies but 11 days. Iskardó itself, like the other valleys in Tibet, is an open sandy flat, 18 miles long, by actual survey, surrounded by enormous mountains and washed by the Indus. The rock, or *kal'ah*, is about 800 feet high, and was once evidently washed on both sides by the Indus, but now only on the western and northern. I have once thought it was the Rock of Aornos, but it is too far in the mountains, and too barren of trees to warrant belief of it. *Kamlah G'har* in the Mandeh country, washed by the deep *Biyas*, answers the description of *Aornos* better than any place I know (singularly so, I may say); but it is on the wrong side of the Indus. *Tará-g'har* (that is, *Satára G'har*, or the Star's house*), near *Nar-púr*, in the Panjab, is another such fort. *Daír* will, I think, be found to be *Aornos*, if we are to believe it to be on the west of the *Attak*. It is a strong mountain fort, round which runs a river of the same name, which joins the *Kábul* river at the *Hasht-nagar*, on the plain of *Pesháwar*. †

As before mentioned, my map is upon the scale of 2 miles to an inch; the base, I repeat, was measured with great care by Lieutenant Mackeson, with the help of Dr. Falconer: I was present during part of the time, and when it was finished, and I can vouch for its accuracy. I had often measured smaller bases in different parts of the valley, but have made my map of *Kashmír* chiefly from this. It was measured on the *Kariwah*, or plain of *Dámodar-udar*, the same near or upon which the great serpent resided, which frequented the waters when the valley was a lake. The direction of the base was N. 37° W., its length about 3 miles.

I obtained four small vocabularies of different languages, *Kashmírian*, *Little Tibetan* (which differs considerably from the *Ladákhí*), *Chitrálí*, and the *Dangrí* or *Ghilghítí*, which, I am told, much resembles the *Hindustaní*.

The mountains of *Little Tibet* are usually of much the same elevation, from 15,000 to 16,000 feet; but from any open summit, such as that at the junction of the *Astor* valley with the *Indus*, whence there is one of the finest views in the world, several mountains are seen in different parts that rise far above them, such as would make *Mont Blanc* look small beside them. The *Harámósh* (all sides)

* Rather *Gar'h*, fort.

† I am indebted to Prof. H. H. Wilson for the derivation of the word *Aornos* from *Awar*, "a stockaded place," as *Pesháwar*, *Kajáwar*, &c.; and near *Kamlah G'har* is an eminence called *Awar Deví*, or goddess of the fortress.

mountain, in the valley of the same name on the Indus, the Múz-ták range, which is seen in the distance, and the stupendous peak of the Nangá Parbet (the naked mountain), or Diyarmal, as it is called by the Little Tibetians, between Astor and the Dardú country, are of this description. I have seen the same magnificent view from the summit of the passes between Ladakh and Nubra, whence the Múz-ták presents a most noble appearance. There is a pass from Little Tibet towards the Múz-ták, up which Dr. Falconer ascended for several days farther than I have been, and poor Dr. Henderson visited Nubrá before I did, and arrived at about the same distance. He was obliged to travel as a Sayyid, and the fatigues and privations that he underwent were too much for him, and he died in my presence at Ludh'yánah. The public are great losers by his death.

There are two Káshghars; Chitrál is called Little Kashghar by the Yarkandís. At present, I think that the Hindu Kush may be said to be joined to the Himálaya of Tibet by the Lurch pass between Chitrál and the valley of the Daír, that which joins the Kábul river at Hasht-nagar on the plain of Pesháwar.

There are two passes into Tibet, the Bander-púr and Gurás pass, by which I have gone three times and returned once, and the Darás pass, by which I have twice returned to Kashmír: it is not so difficult, although longer. After ascending the pass from Bander-púr to a height equal to that of the Pír Panjál pass, about 12,000 feet, I walked along a broad ridge until I saw the valley of Gurás lying at my feet like a punch-bowl, with Krishn Gangá running along it. This river is formed of two branches, one from the valley of Tiläil, somewhat like that of Gurás (to which, however, I have not been), and the other from Deósóh: they join at the entrance of Gurás. I followed up the river for three days to the plains of Deósóh: I then, either as in the first instance, ascended to and crossed these plains to Iskárdó, or, after crossing a lofty snowy pass and a frontier torrent, a place of great natural strength, where Ahmed Sháh beat off the Sik'hs, descended a rocky valley the whole way to the western end of the valley of Iskárdó. At the further extremity of Deósóh, there is an ascent of 400 or 500 feet over a snowy ridge, and thence the rocky vista conducts the eye at once upon the plains of Iskárdó and the mountains beyond it. Iskárdó is the name of the valley; there is no city. Dó* signifies an open space where two rivers or two ways meet. As to the population of the valley, it may be counted by the villages at an average (a rough guess) of 250 persons in each throughout Tibet. Ahmed Sháh and his people have always insisted that he can produce 12,000 men armed in some way or another. I think he might be able to muster about 7000 or 8000.

* Dó is "two" in the Persian and cognate tongues.—F. S.