

THE
ASIATIC JOURNAL

AND

MONTHLY REGISTER

FOR

BRITISH AND FOREIGN INDIA, CHINA,

AND

AUSTRALASIA.



VOL. XXIV.—NEW SERIES.



SEPTEMBER—DECEMBER, 1837.

~~UNIVERSITY OF~~

~~MINNESOTA~~

~~LONDON:~~

~~W. H. ALLEN AND CO.,~~

~~LEADENHALL STREET.~~

~~1837.~~

JOURNAL OF A TOUR IN THE HIMÁLAYA MOUNTAINS.*

BY A GENTLEMAN IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

ON the 20th October, we marched to Rána, stopping to breakfast at Ujári. We at first descended to a nála, and then kept along the bank of the Jamna, somewhat above its stream, with tremendous land-slips full of shattered quartz rocks every now and then crossing our path, and rendering it very difficult, till we came to a frail and half-rotten bridge over the Jamna. We then crossed to the right bank, and continued gradually ascending through thick grass, jungle, &c., over white rocks, till we came opposite to the wild-looking peninsula on which Ujári, once a fort, now a poor village, is placed. Here the Jamna struggles through narrow passages, formed by the angles that project into its bed. A large glen, on its right, sends hither a tributary from some craggy heights that shut it in. The glen of Pálá, lower down, which we saw at the beginning of our march, did not strike us as half so wide, although Fraser, in his Tour, makes it the subject of three pages. The precipices overhanging the river opposite the mouth of the Pálá valley must have been the first he had seen of a grand kind, and as they are one thousand feet or more high, no wonder he felt admiration; but we came from the snowy range, and he was for the first time approaching it.

A little beyond Ujári, the guide pointed below to a white mass of rock close to the Jamna, whence a hot spring issues. These springs are very common near the bed of the river. We descended hence to a rather tottering sango, underneath which the torrent of the Jamna, being confined to a bed hardly twenty feet wide, boils and foams in a fearful manner. All the rocks here are gneiss, and we seem quite suddenly to have left the white sandy quartz country. We then proceeded along the left bank, leaving the villages of Kúpara and Gonsálí above us; the latter presenting a remarkably pretty appearance from its red and scarlet battú fields. The woods, of rhododendron, elm, and dwarf bambú, are deep and shady, and clear rivulets rushed across our path. We began a steep ascent, at first over ledges of rocks, and latterly through fine woods, to the crest of the hill, on which we found Rána pleasantly situated. This hill is merely a buttress of the great Jadól and Achásí, which are bare at the top, but not so high as the Chángsil ridge, on the left of the Pábar, nor so richly covered with birch and cedar. Height 6,725 feet.

Next morning, some heavy rain having fallen, the air was clear, and afforded a fine view of the two peaks of Bandarpúch, at the head of the basin from which the Jamna seems to issue. Leaving Rána in my jhampán, following a very uneven path through jungle, I came to the sango over the Bhím-ke-Garh (stream), a torrent nearly as large and tumultuous as the Jamna. Hence a very steep ascent commenced and continued through woods of rhododendron and oak for a full mile. The prospect of the snowy peaks from Bandarpúch on the right, to Bachúncha on the left, was grand. From the top of the climb, which was over a shoulder of Chaiah Kánta, called Barain, I could follow the course of the Jamna to the south-westward, as far as the Deoban peak. Chaiah Kánta itself was sprinkled with snow, that fell yesterday; but many other mountains, quite as high and higher, were black and snowless, on account of the greater steepness of the pinnacled summits. Afterwards, the way lay through a beautiful forest of ash, sycamore, horse-chestnut, bambú, and wild pomegranate (besides trees unknown to me), down to Banáss,

* Concluded from last vol. p. 240.

situated close to the river, which is here, at one striking peninsular projection, confined to a bed of a few yards. The village was on the right bank: the position of this and many of the villages, in the midst of precipices, has struck me with astonishment. Height 6,867 feet.

On the 22d, my companions started early to Karsáli, but I waited to breakfast at Banáss; and examined a hot spring in the bed of a torrent, which here joins the Jamna: the water is too hot to allow of the hand being kept in it.* There seems to be something ferruginous in the spring, as the stones in it are crusted black. The rocks from which it issues are all quartz, surrounded by gneiss and mica schist on every side but one, down which the torrent rushes, making the quartz as smooth as marble, in a fierce water-fall of some depth. I proceeded on my way, a very short march, to Karsáli, at first along the right bank of the Jamna by an extremely steep and rough road, but with a magnificent view in front. The roots of the snowy range are here not much higher above the sea than the hill Jakko, above Simla, and the mountains start up at once to their sublime elevation. For my own part, although the scenery of the Jamna glen is very fine, I far prefer that of the Rúpín and Pábar rivers, where the precipices close in over the gradually rising bed of the river, steeper and grander every march, and where the forests which clothe their lower part are so much more alpine in aspect than those in the neighbourhood. The dark yews, cedars, and firs, and the light-leaved birch, are there in far greater profusion at two marches from the snow, and here we are within six miles of the source of the Jamna, without meeting any thing like them. I crossed the Jamna by a sango close to the junction of the U'nta Ganga, and thence ascended over blocks of gneiss and mica schist to the table-land of fields on which Karsáli is situated. This is a large and flourishing place, full of temples and brahmins, for the benefit of pious pilgrims to Jamnútrí, most of whom pay pretty dearly, for their piety, to the sacerdotal guardians of this holy land. Height 7,860 feet.

To-morrow, we do not intend, like Mr. Fraser, to walk barefooted to Jamnútrí. If our shoes are a gross insult to the religious feelings of a Hindú (which they are not, except in the inmost shrines of a few temples), we ought not to go at all; but no native would understand why a Christian should take off his shoes, or in any other way mark the holiness of a particular spot, unless he really thought the spot holy. At Hardwár, I was shewn voluntarily into all the outer rooms of the temples, without a word about my shoes; and all the brahmins (whether truly or not I do not know) told me, with great glee, how Lord William Bentinck honoured the Holy Land of Hardwár by making a present of Rs. 1,000 to its priests. Such conduct as Fraser's, and such presents, are sure to be misunderstood to be a secret relief of conscience on the part of the Christians, when they inwardly acknowledge the glory of Hindúism. At Jaggarnáth, the patronage of the Company (*me teste*) is openly spoken of as the result of the two feelings of fear and admiration. "Even the Company honour Jaggarnáth," said a pundit to me at Púrí; but if they did not, all Orissa would be flooded by the sea, at the order of the god, and the revenue would be lost!"

We visited Jamnútrí on the 23d October. The cold in the morning at Karsáli was excessive; the thermometer in the shade being below the freezing point. The glen of the Jamna became narrower and narrower at every step, and the precipices on both sides steeper and loftier, till just after crossing a

* I was unable to ascertain the temperature by the thermometer, which my companions had taken away.

stream coming down from Bachúncha ridge, we ascended over a projecting angle of the left bank of the Jamna, to the half-way house, a small shrine, sacred to Bhyram-jí, and called Bhyram Ghátí. Here a brahmin sat, ringing a little bell. From this spot, the prospect was very grand. We could see the glen of the river, and all the lofty ridges that form it, nearly as far as the plains. West of us, that is, exactly opposite, rose immense bare precipices to an astonishing height. At the N.E., we caught a view of part of the western corner of Bandarpúch, glittering in snow, and in front rose the peak called Kot, Dútí, and by other names, from whence, and from the large mass of frozen snow underneath it, the small stream that forms the Jainna trickled down into the basin beneath us. Here we scrambled up and down, sometimes finding merely a notched tree for a path, sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other of the river, and sometimes in the stones of the river itself, till we came opposite the beautiful cascades in which the Ath Pysár Ganga joins the Jamna itself, one continued water-fall. The name of the mountain between the Unta Ganga and the Jamna, is Dúman Kandí, a noble mass of precipices, from which also a torrent tumbled down to this place. After some more crossings and scramblings, we arrived at Jamnútrí, where the river glen is not more than thirty or forty feet wide, and the rocks overhead, therefore, appear to be not far from touching each other. We found the holy spot to be on the left bank, where a mass of quartz and siliceous schist rock sends forth five hot springs into the bed of the river. Some of them bubble up most spiritedly. Height about ten thousand feet. The thermometer in the air was 50°; the temperature of the river close to the hot springs was 37°; and the springs we tried varied from 155° to 160°. The wind was very cold, and exercise being agreeable, we followed Jamna-jí a little further up, crossing to a large mass of snow from which it emerged. We got over this snow with some difficulty, and then found that three streams came down, in separate water-falls, from the mountains above, into this snow-bed. The green hills down which they fell, in their lowest part, might with some danger and fatigue be surmounted, and a wider prospect be obtained; but I soon gave up the attempt to climb them, as the stones slipped from under my feet. I picked up a piece of quartz out of the snow-bed, as a memento of my having gone so far (about a mile) beyond the place called Jamnútrí. The mere height is nothing hereabouts, for this snow-bed cannot be more than 10,300 feet high, and the limit of forest we perceived some 1,500 feet over-head. But the source of the Jamna is an interesting spot to any one who has seen its width in Hindusthán, the number of boats that crowd its surface, and the noble cities that adorn its banks. We fully ascertained that the most direct stream of this river does not come from any part of Bandarpúch, but from the range that runs off from it to the westward. The Unta Ganga, at Karsáli, is as large as the Jamna, and comes from Bandarpúch; so that the snows of that mountain do in reality form part, nearly half, of the waters of the Jamna, six miles from Jamnútrí. The Ath Pysár Ganga rises to the west of Bandarpúch also; so that, when speaking of the source of the Jamna, we ought to say that the river is formed from the snows that cover the summits and upper faces of the mountain chain, beginning with Bandarpúch on the east, and ending with Bachúncha on the west, a space of about ten miles horizontal.

At Jamnútrí, all our Hindus bathed, and were prayed over, and new marked in the most orthodox fashion, on the forehead, by the brahmin who came with us as master of the ceremonies.

I picked up a number of rock specimens; every stone found on the hill was

here; some very beautiful, especially those with garnet, and shorl, and tourmaline crystals. I saw here much talcose gneiss rocks, but the chief was a very coarse gneiss. We did not see limestone, but there was calcareous schist at the snow-bed and elsewhere. The granite summits of the mountain peaks were more than ten thousand feet above even that place. In the course of this day's journey, we crossed the Jamna, going and returning, thirty-two times.

October 24th, we marched on our old road, *viâ* Banass, to the crest of the hill which we clomb on our way from Rána; we thence turned to the left, and descended to the banks of the roaring Bhím or Barain-ke-Gárh. The view was grand, the Barain precipices opposite rising more than two thousand feet perpendicular from the river: the eagles that flew near their tops looked like crows. We ascended to Nisni, a small village, on the face of the great cedar-covered mountain, with a bare top, on which Rána is situated. The height of Nisni is about 7,150 feet.

Next day, we marched four miles to our camp, on the banks of a torrent pouring down the face of the mountain from a snow-bed near the summit: height 9,588 feet. This day we found very cold; hard frost on the ground. The scenery is very wild and magnificent.

On the 26th, we commenced our long and toilsome ascent over Uncha Ghátí. We first scrambled up the bed of a stream, the stones in which were very slippery from ice, to the limit of cedar forest; we then came to birch and small rhododendron, the former now very bare and wintry-looking, and we then got above all wood. When we attained the crest of the Pass, where was some thin snow, at an elevation of some hundred feet above the limit of forest, and looked back on Bandarpúch, Dútí, Mánji, and Bachúncha peak and ridge, we confessed that we had met very few sublimer scenes in our whole march.

The prospect of range after range to the south and east was very extensive—an ocean of ridges. It was not, however, till we descended some hundred feet, that the Gangútrí peaks burst upon us—a sublime mass. We could not see the connexion between Bandarpúch and these peaks, as the high mountain we had crossed intervened; but we saw the whole line of snowy mountains, with the various peaks, from the semicircle at the back of which the Bhágirathí issues out of its immense snow-bed. We also observed the same river below us, flowing apparently in a peaceful valley after its escape from the snowy mountains and their rugged and awful approaches. On the south-east side, we met with no birch, and what was more curious, tall smooth pines, and a kind of ever-green oak, with a holly-like leaf (*quercus semicarpifolia*), grew in abundance before we came to the cedar. The rhododendron, which, near the crest, was merely a ground-creeper (*R. lepidotum*), again became a large tree (*R. arboreum*) as we got lower down; but the cedars were few and small: indeed, this latter tree does not flourish so well in Garhwál as in Bissehar.

The descent was long, and often painful, to Nangáng. The villagers told us that no Europeans had ever before crossed from the Jamna to the Ganga by this pass: such travellers either go higher up, or lower down, over the separating ridge. The people were very civil to us, and brought us honey of a very fine quality. The mountain we crossed this day was entirely composed of arenaceous quartz rocks, and of quartzes of all shades. Height 6,160 feet.

Next day, after scrambling up and down, we breakfasted at Bakolí. Resuming our journey, we descended to the Biní-ke-Gárh, a torrent which comes down from a high ridge to the northward, and waters the deep glen through which our path now lay. I never saw anything more lovely than the woods

of this glen, and the view of the precipitous heights of the Uncha Ghát, at its head, through the foliage, was a very fine contrast. We at length reached the junction of the Bíní with the Bhágirathí. The Ganga is here a noble stream, far wider and deeper than the Jamna at the same distance from its source, but not so tumultuous.

From this point we proceeded through pleasant fields to the village of Barahát, at the head of a fine rich valley, watered by the Ganga, where is the celebrated iron pillar, or lat'h, surmounted by a trident, in the temple of Parserám. The temple is a mere hut, but the lat'h is very curious, and similar to those of Dehli, Allahábád, Tírhút, &c., whose ancient characters have been decyphered and translated by Principal Mill and others. The people here can tell very little about its history or object. Barahát has other temples.

October 28th. A beautiful morning, and not too cold. We marched down the valley through fresh reaped rice-fields, passing the villages of Baretí and Mátelí: Barahát is the limit between the wild and gentle scenery of the Bhágirathí. Near Barahát, the stream is crossed by a rope bridge of a most fragile kind, more dangerous than the *jhúla*, where the traveller is suspended by a loop of rope with a wooden seat, and is pulled across; but in this suspension bridge, he must walk on small sticks placed on the suspended ropes, with a loose rope on either side to hold by, whilst the bridge swings about.

The valley became a glen, and after some slippery walking over quartz rocks, we reached Dúnda, a poor village, though the river is full of fine fish, especially *máhsír*, the gigantic salmon of the East. Another rope bridge was suspended over the Bhágirathí, under the promontory of Dúnda. The river was here confined to a bed of not more than twenty feet in width, and the rocks, through which it rolled, were steep to the water's edge. The rocks here resembled basalt, but were really talcose schistus. This evening, the grass on a hill in the neighbourhood was set on fire, and had a fine volcanic effect.

In our march next day, the chief cultivation in the valley was rice, with a few patches of cotton, indicating our low situation. The glen soon narrowed, and our path became rough, through jungle, at some hundred feet above the stream. The hills here have the regular Himálaya character, a three-quarter perpendicular slope, to a hollow, from which at once a similar hill strikes up. We observed some wild sheep on the rocks opposite us, where neither man nor bullet could reach them. From the top of a promontory, northward, we beheld Bandarpúch towering in bold relief to the clear heavens, and the contrast of his hoary colour to the black hills in front was more strange than would suit a picture. Indeed, the commonest oriental sky is often thought an exaggeration, when its mellow beauty is represented on paper or canvass at home; and yet no painting can give a just notion of its peculiar glory. No Englishman can conceive the sky under which I am now writing, till he has left his own staring blue or muddy black canopy, in which the finest varieties are a yellow sunset and a fleecy noon, and beheld our green and scarlet evenings, and our noon-day skies of mellow purple, trimmed at the horizon with a hazy straw colour.

We breakfasted under the shade of some trees thickly covered with gigantic creepers, with pods like the soles of a shoe. The rocks were chiefly quartz, varied by the talcose and arenaceous kinds.

At the village of Dhoráso, the Bhágirathí emerges from the confined glen, and widens into a deep and often quiet river, flowing through a valley of rice-fields. At Dhoráso, the Gadhúl-ke-Gárh, a broad and shallow stream, from the right, joins the great river. This village is full of Fakírs, and is one of the

resting-places of the Gangutrí pilgrims. The peasantry wore cotton dresses; their houses are no longer Chinese, and the change in the country is strongly marked. We found our camp at Chináli, one of the many flourishing villages in this valley. Height 4,900 feet.

On the 30th, we kept, for a few miles, along a high bank overhanging the course of the river, and then, turning straight to the right, up the glen of the Nágúr, we bade adieu to the happy vale of the Bhágirathí, which had still thirty miles to travel before its junction with the Alaknanda, at Deoprayag, from which point the united Ganges may be said to commence its course to Hindústhan and the sea. Considered merely as a river, independent of other scenery, I prefer the Bhágirathí to the Satlaj, the Tonse, or the Jamna. The Satlaj is the least pleasing of the four, and the hills through which it flows are bare and ugly in comparison with those washed by the other three rivers. We pursued our way along the face of a hill entirely wooded by creepers of a large kind, bearing a profusion of pungent fruit, the size of green-gages, till we crossed the Nágúr nála, and thence ascended a steep face to Lalúr. To-day the rocks were all argillaceous slates and quartzes. The ferns, the whole family of which is so fine and various in the higher mountains (from 7,000 to 10,000 feet), are now no longer to be seen amongst the luxuriant vegetation. The flowers are now all out of flower, but no part of the world can shew a more wonderful variety of gay flowers than the Himálaya in spring and during the rains: the blood-red *potentilla* was beautiful.

Next day, we continued climbing up the face of the hill above Lalúr. From the crest at Moráli Ghatí, which must be about eight thousand feet high, we obtained the finest prospect since we left Simla. The whole trans-Satlaj snowy peaks are visible in a grand amphitheatre, with a fine foreground in the cedar forest and the lofty Hattú mountain. The snowy mountains were distinct masses, not an undistinguishable line. The Jamnútrí peak formed one mass, the Gangútrí another; Kedar Náth, at the source of the Kali Ganga, another; and still further eastward, the Juváhir peak, above Bhadrínáth, whence flows the Alaknanda, another noble mass. To the westward, we saw three or four peaks near Búrin and Rúpin Gháts, and between them and the sources of the Jamna we could distinguish parts of the snowy ridges at the head of the Baspa valley. An ocean of mountains lay between, some bare and some deeply wooded; and we could see the Bhágirathí below us, flowing through its lovely valley. Nothing could be plainer than that, from the head of the Tonse, on Dúndár or Swergároní mountains, to Bhadrínáth, the snowy range is one great line, although, as just observed, its masses are distinct. The sublimity of the scene is indescribable by pen or pencil.

From the crest we descended at first through shady woods of oak and rhododendron, and afterwards by the face of a bare hill, to Morári. The south sides of all the Himálaya hills, it is well known, are bare in comparison with those on the north: we observed this every where, but never more distinctly than here. The rocks were the same as yesterday. We proceeded to Bhowání, along the valley of the Agloár or Aglára Nála, which became confined between two narrow precipices, and thence flowed into another valley somewhat like that of the Girrí, at Paráli, but not near so pretty. Bhowání is at the junction of the Bhain Nála.

November 1st. We continued our march, through the rice-fields of the valley, till turning the shoulder of a mountain on the left, we met our ponies from Massúrí. Leaving the ugly valley of the Aglára, we ascended to the south-westward, through fine woods of oak, to Magra, a ravine, with a spring

of water, at the foot of the Sowá Khola ridge, which is right above the Dún. The ridge next in order from the plains is that we crossed yesterday, to the west, called Tain, or Nág Tiba, in the centre Marma-ke-Dánda, and to the east, Morala. To-day, the rocks all the way up to Magra were coarse, black and other clay slates, with much quartzose sandstone.

From the crest of the Sowá Khola ridge, which we climbed next day, the whole lovely valley of Dehra, the small Sewálik hills that shut it in, to the south, and the dim plains of Sahárunpúr still further behind, burst upon our delighted eyes. The snowy mountains being hidden by clouds, the usual noble background was wanting. The immense Chór, however, was seen in the distance, and we perceived on the expanse of plain the silver lines of the Ganges and Jamna shining through the haze. We at last came upon a beautiful view of Landour hill, with its scattered houses and gay appearance, and were met at the entrance of the station by a friend, who laughed heartily at our wild dress and hirsute aspect.

We refreshed on this mountain till the 8th, and saw all that was to be seen at Landour and Massúrí. The houses here are totally different from those of Simla, being merely thatch-roofed bungalows; and there is so little table-land, that the foundations of many of the cottages (for there is not a single large house) are built up with masonry against the edge of precipices. There is hardly an inclosed piece of ground round any dwelling. The roads are narrow, being in some places cut out on the side of the most fearful-looking precipices; and yet ladies gallop along them without alarm, and the drunken soldiers, belonging to the sanitarium at Landour, stagger on them with impunity. The bazár, which has not a single European tradesman in it, is small, but is plentifully supplied with necessaries and luxuries, except wine and beer. There are no billiard-tables or reading-rooms at Massúrí. The glaring whiteness of the narrow roads, the bare and ugly appearance of the houses, the absence of fine timber and of *near* scenery, at Landour and Massúrí, are ill-compensated by the magnificent views of the snowy range of the Dún and the plains. Landour is preferable to Massúrí, because higher up; but the perpetual descent and ascent to and from Massúrí, where are the bazár and life of the place, constitute a great drawback. Simla, with its beautiful alpine trees, its wide and safe roads, its grand houses with cedar-wood verandahs and roofs, its European shops, public room, large and handsome bazár, its pretty vales and streams, and above all, its proximity to such glorious scenery as Mahású and Nágkanda, has greater attractions.

The Massúrí heights are composed of transition limestone, very craggy and bold, and argillaceous schistus—the slate very crumbling. There is also a large vein of trap in its valleys.*

On the 8th November, we proceeded along a fine road to Rájpúr, at the foot of the Massúrí mountain, a descent of nearly five thousand feet. Beyond the village of Nágál, we came to the Dripping Rock, at Shansa Dhára,—a wall of low precipice, down which, for about two hundred feet, drops of water drip in the most beautiful manner, petrifying every thing they touch. Opposite the petrifying well, is another spring, containing sulphureous matter, which rises out of a mass of limestone, and discolours the adjacent stones. There is much gypsum about here. At Nála Páni, where there are a few huts, we saw the tomb of General Gillespie, and on a table land, on the summit of a hill, a

* Let not the believers in Humboldt think I err in placing volcanic rocks in the Himálaya. Trappean rocks have been found in some hundred places, without (*i. e.* this side of) the gneiss, mica slate, and granite country, springing up out of limestone and argillaceous slate. I have some beautiful specimens.

cairn of bricks, with a staff in its centre, at the highest point, is all that marks the site of the fort of Kallanga, where he fell. We reached Col. Young's grounds at Dehra, just as it became dark. Dehra is a lovely spot. The houses and grounds of the European residents are very pretty, and the view from the parade ground of the Gúrkha regiment is enchanting.

The range of low hills, which separate Dehra, Rijárda, and Pinjor Dúns from the vast plain of Hindústhan, and which vary in height from 4,500 feet to 2,500 feet, and are composed almost wholly of sandstone and quartz conglomerate, are called the Sewálik hills, and in them, chiefly to the west of the Jamna, are found the immense quantities of gigantic fossil remains recently discovered.

On the 10th November, we "told out" the Kheri pass, and arrived at Saháranpúr.
