

source, so rarely that in the discussions arising out of Captain Speke's great journey, it has even been denied that such a thing exists in nature, it is remarkable how frequent is the phenomenon in the traditions of many nations, and there must be something in the idea attractive to man's imagination.

The interpretation of the four rivers of Eden as literally diverging from one fount has long been abandoned by Catholics as well as Protestants; but in the middle ages, meeting perhaps that attraction to which allusion has been made, it was received to the letter, and played a large part in the geography both of Christendom and Islam; the possible traces of which remain stamped on the map of Taurus in the names of Sihun and Jihun given to the *Sarus* and the *Pyramus*. (See *Mas'udi*, i, 264, 270.) The most prominent instance of the tradition alluded to is that in both Brahmanical and Buddhist cosmogony which derives four great rivers of India, the Indus, the Sutlej, the Ganges, and the Sardha from one Holy Lake at the foot of Kilas. It is also firmly believed by the Hindus that the Sone and the Nerbudda rise out of the same pool near Amarkantak. The natives were so convinced that there was a communication between the Jumna and the Saraswati, which flows towards the Sutlej, that an officer of the Revenue Survey reported it to government as a fact, and my then chief (now M. General W. E. Baker) was desired to verify it. We found that the alleged communication was supposed to take place *gupti gupti*, i. e., in a clandestine manner! Hiwentsang relates that from the Dragon Lake on the high lands of Pamer one stream descends to the Oxus, another to the Sita, which Ritter supposes to be the river of Cashgar, but which perhaps is the mystic source of the Hoang Ho. In a later form of the same tradition, reported by Burnes, the Oxus, Jaxartes, and Indus are all believed to rise in the Sirikul on Pamer. The rivers of Cambodia, of Canton, of Ava, and a fourth (perhaps the Salwen) were regarded by the people of Laos as all branches of one river; a notion which was probably only a local adaptation of the Indian Buddhist tradition. A Chinese work mentioned by Klaproth describes the river of Siam as being a branch of the Hoang Ho. Even in the south of New Zealand we find that the Maoris have a notion that the three chief rivers known to them issue from a common lake. These legendary notions so possessed travellers and geographers that they seemed to assume that the law of rivers was one of dispersion and not of convergence, and that the best natural type of a river system was to be found, not in the veins of a leaf, but in the body of a spider. Thus the Catalan map of 1375, in some respects the most remarkable geographical production of the Middle Ages, represents all the great rivers of Cathay as radiating from one source to the sea. The misty notions of the great African lakes, early gathered by the Portuguese, condensed themselves into one great sea, that fed the sources not only of the Nile but of the Niger, Congo, Zambesi, and several more. The Hindu myths suggested to map makers a great Lake Chimay in Tibet, from which dispersed all the great rivers of Eastern Asia; Ferdinand Mendez Pinto declared, perhaps believed, that he had visited it, and