

could be regarded as a tributary to the Ganges.¹ If he be right, this would probably be the first time that the Brahmaputra appears in classical literature.

It was well known to Strabo that the natives worshipped the Ganges. With admirable clearness and perspicacity he describes the monsoon rains, and their influence upon the volume of water in the rivers, and he knows that the precipitation falls in the mountains in the form of snow.

POMPONIUS MELA, who wrote in 43 A. D., has a by far more vague and imperfect knowledge of India than Strabo and describes only the country situated between the Indus and Ganges. To him also, both rivers have their sources on the southern side of Taurus Mons, which, together with Paropamisus and Emodus, constitutes the great partition wall of the whole continent, from Asia Minor to the east coast of Asia. And how could he have been able to add anything new to the conception of Eratosthenes and Strabo! What he has to say of the sources of the Ganges may be regarded as generally correct.² His view on the source of the Indus is the ordinary one of his time.³

In his *Natural History* the elder PLINY, 23—79 A. D. collected the knowledge of his epoch. Through the extension of the Roman trade India had become better known, in spite of which Pliny describes northern India entirely from writers of Alexander's time or that of their successors. While Strabo quite correctly placed the source of the Ganges in the Emodi Montes, Pliny says that the sources of the river are unknown, like those of the Nile, or, as other authors would have it, were situated in the Scythian mountains. As compared with Strabo his locating of the source of the Ganges is a step in the wrong direction. And still he is not at all to be blamed, for cartographers of a much later time have made similar mistakes.⁴ Pliny also quotes another account of the source of the Ganges, as breaking out at once in a violent cascade with a loud noise, and gradually lapsing down into a gentle and placid stream, after taking its abode in a certain lake. A lake in connection with the Ganges, — one almost hopes a mistake of the same kind as that of DESIDERI and D'ANVILLE, and that the lake should be the Manasarovar! But no, there is no sign of our lake, which, however, long before Pliny's days had been praised in the *Ramāyāna* and *Mahābhārata*. And Pliny does not give us any indication of the geographical site of his lake.⁵

¹ STRABO'S Erdbeschreibung. Fünftes Bändchen. Stuttgart 1858, p. 211.

² Ille multis fontibus in Hemode, Indiæ monte, conceptus, simul unum alveum fecit, sit omnium maximus, et alicubi latius, quando angustissime fluit, decem milia passuum patens in septem ora dispergitur.

³ Indus ex monte Paropamiso exortus, et alia quidem flumina admittit, sed clarissima, Copen, Acesinen, Hydaspes: conceptamque pluribus alveis undam lato spatio trahit. Hinc paene Gangem magnitudine exæquat. . . . Lib. III. Cap. VII.

⁴ We should not forget that some 1,600 years later, or in 1641, HONDIUS placed the source of the Ganges at 48½°N. lat., far to the north of Tian-shan, and in 1730 STRAHLENBERG has the river to rise from the southern side of the same range, from the northern side of which the Keriya-darya takes its origin.

⁵ The passage concerning the source of the Ganges runs as follows: »Hunc alii incertis fontibus ut Nilum rigantemque vicina eodem modo, alii in Scythicis montibus nasci dixerunt. Influire in eum