

The great mountain systems, the *spina dorsalis* of the old world, he describes in broad lines thus:¹

»As to the orographic configuration of the inhabitable world, imagine a range of towering mountains like the vertebræ of a spine stretching through the middle latitude of the earth, and in longitude from east to west, passing through China, Tibet, the country of the Turks, Kâbul, Badakshân, Tokhâristân, Bâmiyân, Elghôr, Khurâsân, Media, Âdharbaijân, Armenia, the Roman Empire, the country of the Franks, and of the Jalâika (Gallicians). Long as this range is it has also a considerable breadth, and, besides, many windings which enclose inhabited plains watered by streams which descend from the mountains both towards north and south. One of these plains is India, limited in the south by the above-mentioned Indian Ocean, and on all three other sides by the lofty mountains, the waters of which flow down to it.»

»The river Ganges rises in the mountains which have already been mentioned. Its source is called Gangâdvâra. Most of the other rivers of the country also rise in the same mountains . . .»

»Bhôteshar² is the first frontier of Tibet. There the language changes as well as the customs and the anthropological character of the people. Thence the distance to the top of the highest peak is 20 farsakh. From the height of this mountain, India appears as a black expanse below the mist, the mountains lying below this peak like small hills, and Tibet and China appear as red. The descent towards Tibet and China is less than one farsakh. — Kashmîr lies on a plateau surrounded by high inaccessible mountains . . . The north and part of the east of the country belong to the Turks of Khoten and Tibet. The distance from the peak of Bhôteshar to Kashmîr through Tibet amounts to nearly 300 farsakh . . .»

In the following words he speaks of the sources of the Jehlum, the Ganges and the Indus: »The Jailam rises in the mountains Haramakôt,³ where also the Ganges rises, cold, impenetrable regions where the snow never melts nor disappears. Behind them there is Mahâcîn, i. e. Great China . . . The river Sindh rises in the mountains Unang in the territory of the Turks, which you can reach in the following way . . .» — the road he gives is, however, much too short to enable the traveller even to reach the neighbourhood of Ladak; and with the source of the Indus he cannot mean anything but »the farthest place to which our merchants trade, and beyond which they never pass». He places the source of the Jehlum and Ganges in the same mountain range, behind which China is situated; but the Indus comes from another range in Turkish territory.

The following description of the rainfall in India is remarkable and clever:⁴

»In provinces still farther northward, round the mountains of Kashmîr up to the peak of Jûdarî between Dulpûr and Barshâwar, copious rain falls during two and a half months, beginning with the month Srâvana. However, on the other side of this peak there is no rainfall; for the clouds in the north are very heavy, and do not rise much above the surface. When then they reach the mountains, the mountain-sides strike against them, and the clouds

¹ Op. cit. p. 201.

² Seems to be bhautta-îśvara, lord of the bhauttas, or Tibetans (Sachau).

³ Elliot who writes the name Harmakût identifies it with Hemakûta, »The range immediately to the north of the Himâlayas».

⁴ Op. cit. Vol. I, p. 211.