

CHAPTER II.

SOME CONTEMPORARIES OF MAJOR RENNELL.

In comparison with his predecessors, SANSON and DELISLE, d'Anville marks a very considerable step forwards in the knowledge of the geography of our regions. He got his materials from the Jesuits in China, and all he had to do with their detailed maps was to prepare them for engraving. As to the general map of Tibet he drew it from the detailed sheets, arranged it in accordance with known astronomical points, and entered all information he could gather from other sources than those of the Jesuits.¹

Major Rennell's work was equally important to the geography of India. In one respect he had much greater merit than d'Anville, namely, in relying upon his own personal observation in the solution of several important problems. Amongst other things he traced, in 1765, the course of the Brahmaputra for about 400 miles above the conflux with the Ganges, and therefore arrived at the conviction that the Brahmaputra was the continuation of the Tsangpo. For regions which he had not seen himself he had to accept the Lamas' map, which he does not find »altogether favorable to its character, especially in the parts towards the source of the Sanpoo and Ganges». Therefore he gladly followed the advice of Anquetil du Perron and changed the hydrography in accordance with Father Tieffenthaler.

SPRENGEL is no doubt partly right in saying that ORME, Rennell and Tieffenthaler augmented the knowledge of India to such a degree that from 1770 to 1790 more light was spread over the country than before, ever since the discoveries of the Portuguese.² Of these three names Rennell's is by far the greatest. Orme's geography of the northern borderland of India is nothing else than a translation into words from d'Anville's map.³ He was a historian and not a geographer. To him Mount Caucasus still separates India to the north from different Tartarian nations and from Great and Little Tibet.

¹ Notice des ouvrages de M. D'ANVILLE, Paris 1802, p. 84.

² Geschichte der wichtigsten geographischen Entdeckungen bis zur Ankunft der Portugiesen in Japan 1542, von M. CH. SPRENGEL, Halle, 1792, p. 31.

³ ROBERT ORME: Histoire des Guerres de l'Inde, ou des événemens militaires arrivés dans l'Indoustan depuis l'année 1745. Translated by TARGE. Amsterdam 1765, p. 2 and 25.