

CHAPTER VI.

COLEBROOKE, WEBB AND RAPER ON THE SOURCE OF THE GANGES.

D'Anville's Lama map was a great step forward, not only directly, by the new information it gave of the geography of Tibet, but also indirectly, by the impulse it gave to new exploration on the frontiers of this mysterious country. In some parts nothing was added to d'Anville's map for more than a hundred years, but in other parts the authority of the map was shaken by detailed exploration carried out by Englishmen. A question that especially interested English geographers was the situation of the source of the Ganges, and as this question, as I have shown before, very intimately comes in contact with our lakes, I cannot help quoting some passages in an article by H. T. COLEBROOKE.¹

His article is an introductory note to a narrative of a journey, the object of which was to find the real source of the Ganges. Lieutenant-Colonel COLEBROOKE disbelieved the authority and information on which, ever since d'Anville's time, the origin of the Ganges had been traced on maps and H. T. Colebrooke examined the material existing at his time.

When Anquetil du Perron, in 1776, had pronounced the Lamas' work to be faulty, erroneous, and unworthy of credit, Colebrooke finds his arguments to be forcible and convincing, and points out that the sources and subsequent course of a river could evidently not be laid down from oral information, collected on the opposite side of a chain of lofty mountains, in which it was said to take its origin. That such information, hastily gathered by inexperienced geographers, as the Lamas were, must be grossly inaccurate, seemed indisputable. They did not pretend to have seen any part of what they described. Their route, says H. T. Colebrooke, does not approach nearer to the celebrated lake Mapama than a quarter of a degree, and terminates at a mountain marked M. Kentais, which is the name of a chain of mountains known to the Chinese as the western range in Tibet, and which is ex-

¹ »On the Sources of the Ganges, in the Himádrí or Emodus». Asiatic Researches, Vol. XI, 1812, p. 429 et seq.