

and its relations to the geography of the countries adjacent to it. His own conclusions were communicated to the J. A. S. B. whilst I was still in Sikkim, in a very remarkable and learned essay, wherein the whole subject of the mountain and its river-systems, peoples, and productions is treated with a fulness of knowledge of which I had not a fraction.»

Sir William Hunter has also an interesting passage on Hodgson as a geographical scholar: »Hodgson had also the good fortune to supply materials for the solution of the river problems of Northern India itself. It is known that the three mighty river systems of the Indus, the Sutlej, and the Brahmaputra take their rise near to each other, not on the Indian side of the Himalayas but on the northern or Tibetan side. During the first eight hundred miles of their course the Indus and Brahmaputra are essentially rivers of Central Asia, with the vast ranges of the Himalayas between them and India. But while thus rising on opposite sides of the same sacred mountain, the Indus turns westward and forces a passage through the Western Himalayas into the Punjab, and so eventually to the Arabian Sea. The Brahmaputra, on the other hand, turns eastward from its source, and eventually bursts through a gorge of the Eastern Himalayas into Assam, and so reaches the Bay of Bengal on the opposite side of India. Its course of eight hundred miles along the Tibetan or Central Asian trough on the north of the Himalayas still remained unexplored when Hodgson wrote. It was only known that a great river called the Sanpu flowed eastwards along the Central Asian trough, while a great river called the Brahmaputra burst through the Eastern Himalayas into Assam. Indications that these two rivers formed different sections of the same stream were not wanting. But they were not complete. Hodgson's inferences while in Nepal, and the geographical details which he supplied, raised these indications almost into proof. The evidences of the Sanpu and the Brahmaputra being one and the same river, wrote Pemberton in 1839, 'are greatly strengthened by Mr. Hodgson's MS. map forwarded to the Surveyor-General. I consider this so satisfactory that nothing but ocular demonstration to the contrary could now shake my conviction'.»¹

There is not a word about the Nien-chen-tang-la or the mountains north of the Tsangpo in the whole book. If during his long and restless life Brian Hodgson had contributed in any remarkable way to our knowledge of this system, — if he had found a description of it in some of the manuscripts he sent to Europe or if he had heard it described by some of his friends in Nepal, Sikkim or Tibet, if by any means he had proved the existence of a continuous mountain system north of the Tsangpo, such a feat would certainly not have been omitted in a book on his life's achievements.

In order to settle the matter we have nothing else to do than to return to Hodgson's own original works on geography, to make sure whether, in a more

¹ Op. cit. p. 287.