

It cannot, however, be denied that Hodgson, in this controversy as well as in the morphology of Himalaya in general, has been too rash. Without sufficient knowledge and authoptic experience he makes his constructions at home and believes that he is able in a few words or on a sketch map to solve problems which need centuries to be cleared up. In the same way he has dealt with Transhimalaya, and it is only as an example of his methods in physical geography that I have touched upon his views regarding the questions of Himalaya.

He does not give up his own ground for he says: »Since I presented to the Society in 1849 my paper on the physical geography of the Himalaya a good deal of new information has been published, mixed with the inevitable quantum of speculation, touching the true character of the chain, and the true position of its water-shed, with their inseparable concomitants, the general elevation and surface character of the plateau of Tibet. After an attentive perusal of these interesting speculations I must, however, confess that I retain my priorly expressed opinion that the great points in question are inextricably involved with, and consequently can never be settled independently of the larger question of the true physical features of the whole of the *bám-i-dúnya* of Asiatics and *Asie Centrale* of Humboldt.» He goes on saying that it *may be* that the Himalaya is not a chain at all and that ELIE DE BEAUMONT's theory of chains is right even here,<sup>1</sup> it *may be* that Himalaya is not a latitudinal but a meridional chain, it *may be* that the question of the water-shed is to be regarded with reference to the whole eastern half of the continent of Asia . . . and he sums up: »Such things, or some one of them, I repeat, *may be*, and one of the theories just enumerated *may* involve the true solution of questions for some time past investigated and debated on the frontier of India, though without any sufficiently distinct reference to those theories, prior though they all be in date. But the mere statement of them suffices I should say, to show that they will not find their solution on that frontier, but only when the whole *bám-i-dúnya* has become accessible to science.»

These are wise words. When has a geographical problem of this sort ever been solved in easy chairs at home, and what is the use of disputes beyond the frontier and the loss of time with empty words when only exploration in the unknown country in a simple way lays the unknown regions before everybody's eyes. It would be unjust to Hodgson not to point out that he himself never claimed to have played any part at all in the history of Transhimalaya. He regarded the existence of a range indubitable, for its existence had been made very likely by Klaproth and Ritter. For himself he never claimed an inch of new ground and he would probably not have felt flattered had he known that he would be quoted as an

<sup>1</sup> Compare: »Nous nous bornerons ici à observer par rapport aux idées ingénieuses que M. Elie de Beaumont a développées récemment sur l'âge relatif et le parallélisme des systèmes de montagnes contemporains, que dans l'intérieur de l'Asie aussi, les quatre grandes chaînes qui courent de l'est à l'ouest sont d'une origine totalement différente de celle des chaînes qui se dirigent du nord au sud, ou du nord 30° ouest, au sud 30° est.» Humboldt, *Fragmens Asiatiques*, p. 140.