

AN
ACCOUNT
OF
THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL,
AND OF THE TERRITORIES ANNEXED TO THIS DOMINION BY THE
HOUSE OF GORKHA.

BY
FRANCIS HAMILTON, (FORMERLY BUCHANAN,) M.D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETIES OF LONDON AND EDINBURGH;
THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES, AND OF THE LINNEAN SOCIETY OF LONDON;
AND OF THE ASIATICK SOCIETY OF CALCUTTA.

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CHAPTER SECOND.

NATURE OF THE COUNTRY.

Division into four Regions from their relative elevation.—First, or Plain Region, or Tariyani.—Soil.—Productions, Animal and Vegetable.—Cultivation.—Climate.—Rivers.—Second, or Hilly Region—Productions.—Minerals.—Forests.—Birds.—Vallies called Dun.—Cultivation.—Climate.—Third, or Mountainous Region.—Elevation.—Climate.—Diseases.—Cultivation.—Pasture.—Sheep and Cattle.—Minerals.—Spontaneous Vegetables.—Extent.—Fourth, or Alpine Region.—Vallies.—Mountains.—Productions, Mineral, Animal, and Vegetable.

I SHALL next proceed to give a general view of the appearance, soil, climate, and productions of the country, and for this purpose I must divide it into four stages of elevation. My actual observations are confined to the three lower of these, and I have seen these only in the vicinity of the capital. What I say concerning the highest region is, therefore, entirely from report, and what I mention concerning the others, so far as I write from actual observation, is strictly applicable only to the parts near the capital; but inquiries have enabled me to judge, that a great similarity prevails over the whole territory, and whatever differences have come to my knowledge

shall be mentioned either in this part, or when I come to treat of the different principalities, which have now been subjected to the chief of Gorkha.

The lowest region is a part of the great plain of Hindustan. In a few places the Company's territory extends to the foot of the mountains which bound the great plain on the north, which are called Himadri, Himachul, Himalichul, or Himaliya, and which form the Emodus of the ancients : But in most parts the dominions of Gorkha extend about twenty miles into the plain, and it seems in general to have been the policy of the princes of India to allow the mountain chiefs, even when very petty, to retain at least this extent of the low country, as being too obnoxious to their incursions to be of a value adequate to defray the expense of its defence. At times, some of the mountain tribes, which had acquired power, have been able to extend their authority over the plains much farther, and as none of them have ever equalled in power the chiefs of Gorkha, these have for some time been eager in taking every opportunity of encroachment; but although powerful, they have been opposed by a force vastly more formidable than was ever before known in India, and this has checked their power, which might have been very formidable to an undisciplined state however extensive.

This low region is called Tariyani, Tarai, or Ketoni, and, as I have said, is, in general, about twenty miles in width. In this space there are a few scattered small hills, and much poor high land overgrown with trees and bushes of little value; but there is, also, a very large proportion of rich land, and on the whole the soil is much better than in the adjacent parts of the Company's territory.

I do not intend here to enter into a detailed account of its productions; because they are nearly the same with those of

the Company's adjacent territory, of which it is my intention to give hereafter a full account, only being less cultivated, there are in the Tariyani more wild beasts, especially elephants and rhinoceroses. The breed of the former is considered as uncommonly bad, and it has been lately remarked to me by Mr Venour, the surgeon at Puraniya, that every one of them has a toe of some one of its feet very much lengthened, which gives the foot an unseemly appearance. So far as I have been able to observe since, the remark of Mr Venour is accurate; but the number of elephants of this kind that I have seen is not great. In the dry season the elephants retire to the lower ranges of hills; but in the rainy season they abandon these forests, and are then very destructive to the crops, which, indeed, prevents the natives from being so attentive to the cultivation of rice as they otherwise would be, so that, although the country is best adapted for the culture of this grain, the farmers content themselves chiefly with winter crops of wheat, barley, and mustard. The Raja reserves to himself the sole right of catching the elephants, and annually procures a considerable number. They are sold on his account at 200 Mohurs, or 86 rupees, for every cubit of their height; but five cubits of the royal measure are only six English feet. As few merchants are willing to give this price for elephants which have not been seasoned, the Raja generally forces them on such persons as have claims on the court, who sell their elephants in the best manner they can. Tigers are not so numerous as might have been expected in a country so uncultivated. Black bears of a great size are more numerous, and are very troublesome. Wild hogs, hog-deer, hares, foxes, and jackalls, are to be found in abundance.

In the waste lands of the Tariyani, the most common trees are the *Palas*, (*Erythina monosperma*, Lamarck,) and the *Simul*, (*Bombax heptaphyllum*, Lamarck;) but by far the greater part