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PER001. Persia, Chapter 1	a Grace Notes study

PERSIA

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Author ¹

Canon George Rawlinson (23 November 1812 – 7 October 1902) was a 19th-century English scholar, historian, and Christian theologian. He was born at Chadlington, Oxfordshire, and was the younger brother of Sir Henry Rawlinson.

Having taken his degree at the University of Oxford (from Trinity College) in 1838, he was elected to a fellowship at Exeter College, Oxford, in 1840, of which from 1842 to 1846 he was fellow and tutor. He was ordained in 1841, was Bampton lecturer in 1859, and was Camden Professor of Ancient History from 1861 to 1889.

In his early days at Oxford, he played cricket for the University, appearing in five matches between 1836 and 1839 which have since been considered to have been first-class.

In 1872 he was appointed canon of Canterbury, and after 1888 he was rector of All Hallows, Lombard Street. In 1873, he was appointed proctor in Convocation for the Chapter of Canterbury. He married Louisa, daughter of Sir RA Chermiside, in 1846.

His chief publications are his translation of the History of Herodotus (in collaboration with Sir Henry Rawlinson and Sir John Gardiner Wilkinson), 1858–60; The Five

Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World, 1862–67; The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy (Parthian), 1873; The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy (Sassanian), 1875; Manual of Ancient History, 1869; Historical Illustrations of the Old Testament, 1871; The Origin of Nations, 1877; History of Ancient Egypt, 1881; Egypt and Babylon, 1885; History of Phoenicia, 1889; Parthia, 1893; Memoir of Major-General Sir HC Rawlinson, 1898. His lectures to an audience at Oxford University on the topic of the accuracy of the Bible in 1859 were published as the apologetic work The Historical Evidences of the Truth of the Scripture Records Stated Anew in later years. He was also contributor to the Speaker's Commentary, the Pulpit Commentary, Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, and various similar publications. He was the author of the article "Herodotus" in the 9th edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica.

Chapter 1. Geographical Extent of the Empire

The geographical extent of the Fifth Monarchy was far greater than that of any one of the four which had preceded it. While Persia Proper is a comparatively narrow and poor tract, extending in its greatest length only some seven or eight degrees (less than 500 miles), the dominions of the Persian kings covered a space fifty-six degrees long, and in places more than twenty degrees wide. The boundaries of their empire were the desert of Tibet, the Sutlej, and the Indus, on the east; the Indian Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian and Nubian deserts, on the south; on the west, the Greater Syrtis, the Mediterranean, the Aegean, and the Strymon river; on the north, the Danube, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Caspian, and the Jaxartes. Within these limits lay a territory, the extent of which from east to west was little less than 3000 miles, while its width varied between 500 and 1500 miles. Its entire area was probably not less than, two millions of square miles--or more than half that of modern Europe. It was thus at least eight times as

¹ Wikipedia, *George Rawlinson*

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large as the Babylonian Empire at its greatest extent, and was probably more than four times as large as the Assyrian.

The provinces included within the Empire may be conveniently divided into the Central, the Western, and the Eastern. The Central are Persia Proper, Susiana, Babylonia, Assyria, Media, the coast tract of the Caspian, and Sagartia, or the Great Desert. The Western are Paeonia, Thrace, Asia Minor, Armenia, Iberia, Syria and Phoenicia, Palestine, Egypt, and the Cyrenaica. The Eastern are Hyrcania, Parthia, Aria, Chorasmia, Sogdiana, Bactria, Scythia, Gandaria, Sattagydia, India, Paricania, the Eastern Aethiopia, and Mycia.

Of these countries a considerable number have been already described in these volumes. Susiana, Babylonia, Assyria, Media, the Caspian coast, Armenia, Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine, belong to this class; and it may be assumed that the reader is sufficiently acquainted with their general features. It would therefore seem to be enough in the present place to give an account of the regions which have not yet occupied our attention, more especially of Persia Proper--the home of the dominant race.

Persia Proper seems to have corresponded nearly to that province of the modern Iran, which still bears the ancient name slightly modified, being called Farsistan or Fars. The chief important difference between the two is, that whereas in modern times the tract called Herman is regarded as a distinct and separate region, Carmania anciently was included within the limits of Persia. Persia Proper lay upon the gulf to which it has given name, extending from the mouth of the Tab (Oroatis) to the point where the gulf joins the Indian Ocean. It was bounded on the west by Susiana, on the north by Media Magna, on the east by Mycia, and on the south by the sea. Its length seems to have been about 450, and its average width about 250 miles. It thus contained an area of rather more than 100,000 square miles.

In modern times it is customary to divide the province of Fars into the *_ghermsir_*, or, "warm district," and the *_serdsir_*, or "cold region"--and the physical character of the country must have made such a division thoroughly appropriate at every period. The "warm district" is a tract of sandy plain, often impregnated with salt, which extends between the mountains and the sea the whole length of the province, being a continuation of the flat region of Susiana, but falling very much short of that region in all the qualities which constitute physical excellence. The soil is poor, consisting of alternate sand and clay--it is ill-watered, the entire tract possessing scarcely a single stream worthy of the name of river--and, lying only just without the northern Tropic, the district is by its very situation among the hottest of western Asia. It forms, however, no very large portion of the ancient Persia, being in general a mere strip of land, from ten to fifty miles wide, and thus not constituting more than an eighth part of the territory in question.

The remaining seven eighths belong to the *serdsir*, or "cold region." The mountain-range which under various names skirts on the east the Mesopotamian lowland, separating off that depressed and generally fertile region from the bare high plateau of Iran, and running continuously in a direction parallel to the course of the Mesopotamian streams--i.e. from the north-west to the south-east--changes its course as it approaches the sea, sweeping gradually round between long. 50 deg. and 55 deg., and becoming parallel to the coast-line, while at the same time it broadens out, till it covers a space of nearly three degrees, or above two hundred miles. Along the high tract thus created lay the bulk of the ancient Persia, consisting of alternate mountain, plain, and narrow valley, curiously intermixed, and as yet very incompletely mapped. This region is of varied character. In places richly, fertile, picturesque, and romantic almost beyond imagination, with lovely wooded dells, green mountain-sides, and broad plains suited for the production of

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almost any crops, it has yet on the whole a predominant character of sterility and barrenness, especially towards its more northern and eastern portions. The supply of water is everywhere scanty. Scarcely any of the streams are strong enough to reach the sea. After short courses they are either absorbed by the sand or end in small salt lakes, from which the superfluous water is evaporated. Much of the country is absolutely without streams, and would be uninhabitable were it not for the kanats, or karizes, subterranean channels of spring-water, described at length in a former volume.

The only rivers of the district which deserve any attention are the Tab (or Oroatis), whereof a description has been already given, the Kur or Bendamir (called anciently Araxes), with its tributary, the Pulwar (or Cyrus), and the Khoonazaberni or river of Khisht.

The Bendamir rises in the mountains of the Bakhtiyari chain, in lat. 30 deg. 35', long. 51 deg. 50' nearly, and runs with a course which is generally south-east, past the ruins of Persepolis, to the salt lake of Neyriz or Kheir, which it enters in long. 53 deg. 30'. It receives, where it approaches nearest to Persepolis, the Pulwar or Kur-ab, a small stream coming from the north-east and flowing by the ruins of both Pasargadae and Persepolis. A little below its junction with this stream the Bendamir is crossed by a bridge of five arches, and further down, on the route between Shiraz and Herman, by another of twelve. Here its waters are to a great extent drawn off by means of canals, and are made to fertilize a large tract of rich flat country on either bank, after which the stream pursues its course with greatly diminished volume to the salt lake in which it ends. The entire course, including only main windings, may be estimated at 140 or 150 miles.

The Khoonazaberni or river of Khisht rises near the ruins of Shapur, at a short distance from Kazerun, on the route between Bushire and Shiraz, and flows in a broad valley

between lofty mountains towards the south-west, entering the Persian Gulf by three mouths, the chief of which is at Rohilla, twenty miles north of Bushire, where the stream has a breadth of sixty yards, and a depth of about four feet. Above Khisht the river is already thirty yards wide. Its chief tributary is the Dalaki stream, which enters it from the east, nearly in long. 51 deg.. The entire course of the Khisht river may be about 95 or 100 miles. Its water is brackish except near the source.

The principal lakes are the Lake of Neyriz and the Deriah-i-Nemek. The Deriah-i-Nemek is a small basin distant about ten miles from Shiraz, which receives the waters of the streams that supply that town. It has a length of about fifteen and a breadth of about three or three and a half miles. The lake of Neyriz or Kheir is of far larger size, being from fifty to sixty miles long and from three to six broad, though in the summer season it is almost entirely dried up. Salt is then obtained from the lake in large quantities, and forms an important feature in the commerce of the district. Smaller lakes, also salt or brackish, exist in other parts of the country, as Lake Famur, near Kazerun, which is about six miles in length, and from half a mile to a mile across.

The most remarkable feature of the country consists in the extraordinary gorges which pierce the great mountain-chain, and render possible the establishment of routes across that tremendous barrier. Scarped rocks rise almost perpendicularly on either side of the mountain-streams, which descend rapidly with frequent cascades and falls. Along the slight irregularities of these rocks the roads are carried in zigzags, often crossing the streams from side to side by bridges of a single arch, which are thrown over profound chasms where the waters chafe and roar many hundred feet below.⁴⁶ [PLATE XXVI.] The roads have for the most part been artificially cut in the sides of the precipices, which rise from the streams sometimes to the

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height of 2000 feet. In order to cross from the Persian Gulf to the high plateau of Iran, no fewer than three or four of these kotuls, or strange gorge-passes, have to be traversed successively. Thus the country towards the edge of the plateau is peculiarly safe from attack, being defended on the north and east by vast deserts, and on the south by a mountain-barrier of unusual strength and difficulty.

It is in these regions, which combine facility of defence with pleasantness of climate, that the principal cities of the district have at all times been placed. The earliest known capital of the region was Pasargadae, or Persagadae, as the name is sometimes written, of which the ruins still exist near Murgab, in lat. 30 deg. 15' long. 53 deg. 17'. Here is the famous tomb of Cyrus, whereof a description will be given hereafter; and here are also other interesting remains of the old Persian architecture. Neither the shape nor the extent of the town can be traced. The situation was a plain amid mountains, watered by small streams which found their way to a river of some size (the Pulwar) flowing at a little distance to the west.

At the distance of thirty miles from Pasargadae, or of more than forty by the ordinary road, grew up the second capital, Persepolis, occupying a more southern position than the primitive seat of power, but still situated towards the edge of the plateau, having the mountain-barrier to the south-west and the desert at no great distance to the north-east. Like its predecessor, Persepolis was situated in a plain, but in a plain of much larger dimensions and of far greater fertility. The plain of Merdasht is one of the most productive in Persia, being watered by the two streams of the Bendamir and the Pulwar, which unite a few miles below the site of the ancient city. From these two copious and unfailing rivers a plentiful supply of the precious fluid can at all times be obtained; and in Persia such a supply will always create the loveliest verdure, the most

abundant crops, and the richest and thickest foliage. The site of Persopolis is naturally far superior to that in which the modern provincial capital, Shiraz, has grown up, at about the same distance from Persepolis as that is from Pasargadae. and in the same--i.e. in a south-west--direction.

Besides Persepolis and Pasargadse, Persia Proper contained but few cities of any note or name. If we include Carmania in Persia, Carmana, the capital of that country, may indeed be mentioned as a third Persian town of some consequence; but otherwise the names which occur in ancient authors are insignificant, and designate villages rather than towns of any size. Carmana, however, which is mentioned by Ptolemy and Ammianus as the capital of those parts, seems to have been a place of considerable importance. It may be identified with the modern Kerman, which lies in lat. 39 deg. 55', long. 56 deg. 13', and is still one of the chief cities of Persia. Situated, like Pasargadae and Persepolis, in a capacious plain surrounded by mountains, which furnish sufficient water for cultivation to be carried on by means of kanats in most parts of the tract enclosed by them, and occupying a site through which the trade of the country almost of necessity passes, Kerman must always be a town of no little consequence. Its inland and remote position, however, caused it to be little known to the Greeks; and, apparently, the great Alexandrian geographer was the first who made them acquainted with its existence and locality.

The Persian towns or villages upon the coast of the Gulf were chiefly Armuza (which gave name to the district of Ar-muzia), opposite the modern island of Ormuz; Sisidona, which must have been near Cape Jerd; Apostana, probably about Shewar; Gogana, no doubt the modern Kongoon; and Taoce on the Granis, famous as having in its neighborhood a royal palace, which we may perhaps place near Dalaki, Taoce itself occupying the position of Rohilla, at the mouth of the Khisht river. Of

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the inland towns the most remarkable, after Persepolis, Pasargadse, and Carmana, were Gabae, near Pasar-gadae, also the site of a palace; Uxia, or the Uxian city, which may have occupied the position of Mai-Amir, Obroatis, Tragonice, Ardea, Portospana, Hyrba, etc., which it is impossible to locate unless by the merest conjecture.

The chief districts into which the territory was divided were Paraetacene, a portion of the Bakhtiyari mountain-chain, which some, however, reckoned to Media; Mardyene, or the country of the Mardi, also one of the hill tracts; Taocene, the district about Taoce, part of the low sandy coast region; Ciribo, the more northern portion of the same region; and Carmania, the entire eastern territory. These districts were not divided from one another by any marked natural features, the only division of the country to which such a character attached being the triple one into the high sandy plains north of the mountains, the mountain region, and the Deshtistan, or low hot tract along the coast.

From this account it will be easy to understand how Persia Proper acquired and maintained the character of "a scant land and a rugged," which we find attaching to it in ancient authors. The entire area, as has been already observed was about 100,000 square miles--little more than half that of Spain, and about one fifth of the area of modern Persia. Even of this space nearly one half was uninhabitable, consisting either of barren stony mountain or of scorching sandy plain, ill supplied with water, and often impregnated with salt, the habitable portion consisted of the valleys and plains among the mountains and along their skirts, together with certain favored spots upon the banks of streams in the flat regions. These flat regions themselves were traversed in many places by rocky ridges of a singularly forbidding aspect. The whole appearance of the country was dry, stony, sterile. As a modern writer observes, "the livery of the land is constantly brown or gray; water is scanty; plains and

mountains are equally destitute of wood. When the traveller, after toiling over the rocky mountains that separate the plains looks down from the pass he has won with toil and difficulty upon the country below, his eye wanders unchecked and unrested over an uniform brown expanse losing itself in distance."

Still this character, though predominant, is not universal. Wherever there is water, vegetation springs up. The whole of the mountain region is intersected by valleys and plains which are more or less fertile. The line of country between Bebahan and Shiraz is for above sixty miles "covered with wood and verdure," in East of Shiraz, on the route between that city and Kerman the country is said to be in parts "picturesque and romantic," consisting of "low luxuriant valleys or; plains separated by ranges of low mountains, green to their very summits with beautiful turf." The plains of Khubbes, Merdasht, Ujan, Shiraz, Kazerun, and others, produce abundantly under a very inefficient system of cultivation. Even in the most arid tracts there is generally a time of greenness immediately after the spring rains, when the whole country smiles with verdure.

It has been already remarked that the Empire, which, commencing from Persia Proper, spread itself towards the close of the sixth century before Christ, over the surrounding tracts, included a number of countries not yet described in these volumes, since they formed no part of any of the four Empires which preceded the Persian. To complete, therefore, the geographical survey proper to our subject, it will be necessary to give a sketch of the tracts in question. They will fall naturally into three groups, an eastern, a north-western, and a southwestern--the eastern extending from the skirts of Mount Zagros to the Indian Desert, the north-western from the Caspian to the Propontis, and the south-western from the borders of Palestine to the shores of the Greater Syrtis.

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Inside the Zagros and Elburz ranges, bounded on the north and west by those mountain-lines, on the east by the ranges of Suliman and Hala, and on the south by the coast-chain which runs from Persia Proper nearly to the Indus, lies a vast tableland, from 3000 to 5000 feet above the sea-level, known to modern geographers as the Great Plateau of Iran. Its shape is an irregular rectangle, or trapezium, extending in its greatest length, which is from west to east, no less than twenty degrees, or above 1100 miles, while the breadth from north to south varies from seven degrees, or 480 miles (which is its measure along the line of Zagros), to ten degrees, or 690 miles, where it abuts upon the Indus valley. The area of the tract is probably from 500,000 to 600,000 square miles.

It is calculated that two thirds of this elevated region are absolutely and entirely desert. The rivers which flow from the mountains surrounding it are, with a single exception--that of the Etymandrus or Helمند--insignificant, and their waters almost always lose themselves, after a course proportioned to their volume, in the sands of the interior. Only two, the Helمند and the river of Ghuzni, have even the strength to form lakes; the others are absorbed by irrigation, or sucked up by the desert. Occasionally a river, rising within the mountains, forces its way through the barrier, and so contrives to reach the sea. This is the case, especially, on the south, where the coast chain is pierced by a number of streams, some of which have their sources at a considerable distance inland. On the north the Heri-rud, or River of Herat, makes its escape in a similar way from the plateau, but only to be absorbed, after passing through two mountain chains, in the sands of the Kharezm. Thus by far the greater portion of this region is desert throughout the year, while, as the summer advances, large tracts, which in the spring were green, are burnt up--the rivers shrink back towards their sources--the whole plateau becomes dry and parched--

--and the traveller wonders that any portion of it should be inhabited.

It must not be supposed that the entire plateau of which we have been speaking is to the eye a single level and unbroken plain. In the western portion of the region the plains are constantly intersected by "brown, irregular, rocky ridges," rising to no great height, but serving to condense the vapors held in the air, and furnishing thereby springs and wells of inestimable value to the inhabitants. In the southern and eastern districts "immense" ranges of mountains are said to occur; and the south-eastern as well as the north-eastern corners of the plateau are little else than confused masses of giant elevations. Vast flats, however, are found. In the Great Salt Desert, which extends from Kashan and Koum to the Deriah or "Sea" in which the Helمند terminates, and in the sandy desert of Seistan, which lies east and south-east of that lake, reaching from near Furrah to the Mekran mountains, plains of above a hundred miles in extent appear to occur, sometimes formed of loose sand, which the wind raises into waves like those of the sea, sometimes hard and gravelly, or of baked and indurated clay.

The tract in question, which at the present day is divided between Afghanistan, Beloochistan, and Iran, contained, at the time when the Persian Empire arose, the following nations: the Sagartians, the Cossseans, the Parthians, the Hariva or Arians, the Gandarians, the Sattagyrians, the Arachotians, the Thamanseans, the Sarangae, and the Paricanians. The Sagartians and Cossseans dwelt in the western portion of the tract, the latter probably about the Siah-Koh mountains, the former scattered over the whole region from the borders of Persia Proper to the Caspian Gates and the Elburz range. Along its northern edge, east of the Sagartians, were the Parthians, the Arians, and the Gandarians. occurring in that order as we proceed from west to east. The Parthians held the country known now as the Atak or

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"Skirt," the flat tract at the southern base of the Elburz from about Shahrud to Khaff, together with a portion of the mountain region adjoining. This is a rich and valuable territory, well watered by a number of small streams, which, issuing from the ravines and valleys of the Elburz, spread fertility around, but lose themselves after a short, course in the Salt Desert. Adjoining the Parthians upon the east were the Haroyu, Hariva, or Arians, an Iranic race of great antiquity, who held the country along the southern skirts of the mountains from the neighborhood of Khaff to the point where the Heri-rud (Arius) issues from the Paropamisan mountains. The character of this country closely resembles that of Parthia, whereof it is a continuation; but the copious stream of the Heri-rud renders it even more productive.

The Gandarians held Kabul, and the mountain tract on both sides of the Kabul river as far as the upper course of the Indus, thus occupying the extreme north-eastern corner of the plateau, the region where its elevation is the greatest. Lofty mountain-ridges, ramifying in various directions but tending generally to run east and west, deep gorges, narrow and tremendous passes, like the Khyber, characterize this district. Its soil is generally rocky and barren; but many of the valleys are fertile, abounding with enchanting scenery and enjoying a delightful climate. More especially is this the case in the neighborhood of the city of Kabul, which is perhaps the Caspatyrus of Herodotus, where Darius built the fleet which descended the Indus.

South of Aria and Gandaria, in the tract between the Great Desert and the Indus valley, the plateau was occupied by four nations--the Thamanseans, the Sarangians, the Sattagydiens, and the Arachotians. The Thamansean country appears to have been that which lies south and south-east of Aria (Herat), reaching from the Haroot-rud or river of Subzawar to the banks of the Helمند about Ghirisk. This is a varied region, consisting on the north and the north-

east of several high mountain chains which ramify from a common centre, having between them large tracts of hills and downs, while towards the south and the south-west the country is comparatively low and flat, descending to the level of the desert about the thirty second parallel. Here the Thamanseans were adjoined upon by the Sarangians, who held the land about the lake in which the Helمند terminates--the Seistan of Modern Persia. Seistan is mainly desert. One third of the surface of the soil is composed of moving sands, and the other two thirds of a compact sand, mixed with a little clay, but very rich in vegetable matter. It is traversed by a number of streams, as the Haroot-rud, the river of Furrah, the river of Khash, the Helمند, and others, and is very productive along their banks, which are fertilized by annual inundations; but the country between the streams is for the most part an arid desert.

The Sattagydiens and Arachotians divided between them the remainder of Afghanistan, the former probably occupying south-eastern Kabul, from the Ghuzni river and its tributaries to the valley of the Indus, while the latter were located in the modern Candahar, upon the Urghand-ab and Turnuk rivers. The character of these tracts is similar to that of north-western Kabul, but somewhat less rugged and mountainous. Hills and downs alternate with rocky ranges and fairly fertile vales. There is a scantiness of water, but still a certain number of moderate-sized rivers, tolerably well supplied with affluents. The soil, however, is either rocky or sandy; and without a careful system of irrigation great portions of the country remain of necessity barren and unproductive.

The south-eastern corner of the plateau, below the countries of the Sarangians and the Arachotians, was occupied by a people, called Paricanians by Herodotus, perhaps identical with the Gedrosians of later writers. This district, the modern Beloochistan, is still very imperfectly known, but appears to be generally mountainous, to have a singularly

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barren soil, and to be deficient in rivers. The nomadic life is a necessity in the greater part of the region, which is in few places suitable for cultivation, but has good pastures in the mountains or the plains according to the season of the year. The rivers of the country are for the most part mere torrents, which carry a heavy body of water after rains, but are often absolutely dry for several months in succession. Water, however, is generally obtainable by digging wells in their beds; and the liquid procured in this way suffices, not only for the wants of man and beast, but also for a limited irrigation.

The Great Plateau which has been here described is bordered everywhere, except at its north-eastern and north-western corners, by low regions. On the north the lowland is at first a mere narrow strip intervening between the Elburz range and the Caspian, a strip which has been already described in the account given of the Third Monarchy. Where, however, the Caspian ends, its shore trending away to the northward, there succeeds to this mere strip of territory a broad and ample tract of sandy plain, extending from about the 54th to the 68th degree of east longitude--a distance of 760 miles--and reaching from the 36th to the 50th parallel of north latitude--a distance not much short of a thousand miles! This tract which comprises the modern Khanats of Khiva and Bokhara, together with a considerable piece of Southern Asiatic Russia, is for the most part a huge trackless desert, composed of loose sand, black or red, which the wind heaps up into hills. Scarcely any region on the earth's surface is more desolate. The boundless plain lies stretched before the traveller like an interminable sea, but dead, dull, and motionless. Vegetation, even the most dry and sapless, scarcely exists. For three or four hundred miles together he sees no running stream. Water, salt, slimy, and discolored, lies Occasionally in pools, or is drawn from wells, which yield however only a scanty supply. For anything like a drinkable beverage the traveller has to trust to the skies, which give or withhold their

stores with a caprice that is truly tantalizing. Occasionally, but only at long intervals, out of the low sandy region there issues a rocky range, or a plateau of moderate eminence, where the soil is firm, the ground smooth, and vegetation tolerably abundant. The most important of the ranges are the Great and Little Balkan, near the Caspian Sea, between the 39th and 40th parallels, the Khalata and Urta Tagh, north-west, of Bokhara, and the Kukuth; still further to the north-west in latitude 42 deg. nearly. The chief plateau is that of Ust-Urt, between the Caspian and the Sea of Aral, which is perhaps not more than three or four hundred feet above the sandy plain, but is entirely different in character.

This desolate region of low sandy plain would be wholly uninhabitable, were it not for the rivers. Two great streams, the Amoo or Jyhun (anciently the Oxus), and the Sir or Synuti (anciently the Jaxartes), carry their waters across the desert, and pour them into the basin of the Aral. Several others of less volume, as the Murg-ab, or river of Merv, the Abi Meshed or Tejend, the Heri-rud, the river of Maymene, the river of Balkh, the river of Khulm, the Shehri-Sebz, the Ak Su or river of Bokhara, the Kizil Deria, etc., flow down from the high ground into the plain, where their waters either become lost in the sands, or terminate in small salt pools. Along the banks of these streams the soil is fertile, and where irrigation is employed the crops are abundant. In the vicinity of Khiva, at Kermineh on the Bokhara river, at Samarcand, at Balkh--and in a few other places, the vegetation is even luxuriant; gardens, meadows, orchards, and cornfields fringe the river-bank; and the natives see in such favored spots resemblances of Paradise! Often, however, even the river-banks themselves are uncultivated, and the desert creeps up to their very edge; but this is in default, not in spite, of human exertion. A well-managed system of irrigation could, in almost every instance, spread on either side of the streams a broad strip of verdure.

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In the time of the Fifth Monarchy, the tract which has been here described was divided among three nations. The region immediately to the east of the Caspian, bounded on the north by the old course of the Oxus and extending eastward to the neighborhood of Merv, though probably not including that city, was Chorasmia, the country of the Chorasmians. Across the Oxus to the north-east was Sogdiana (or Sugd), reaching thence to the Jaxartes, which was the Persian boundary in this direction. South of Sogdiana, divided from it by the Middle and Upper Oxus, was Bactria, the country of the Bakhtars or Bactrians. The territory of this people reached southward to the foot of the Paropamisus, adjoining Chorasmia and Aria on the west, and on the south Sattagydia and Gandaria.

East of the table-land lies the valley of the Indus and its tributaries, at first a broad tract, 350 miles from west to east, but narrowing as it descends, and in places not exceeding sixty or seventy miles, across. The length of the valley is not less than 800 miles. Its area is probably about a hundred thousand square miles. We may best regard it as composed of two very distinct tracts--one the broad triangular plain towards the north, to which, from the fact of its being watered by five main streams, the natives have given the name of Punj-ab, the other the long and comparatively narrow valley of the single Indus river, which, deriving its appellation from that noble stream, is known in modern geography as Sinde. The Punjab, which contains an area of above fifty thousand square miles, is mountainous towards the north, where it adjoins on Kashmeer and Thibet, but soon sinks down into a vast plain, with a soil which is chiefly either sand or clay, immensely productive under irrigation, but tending to become jungle or desert if left without human care. Sinde, or the Indus valley below the Punjab, is a region of even greater fertility. It is watered, not only by the main stream of the Indus, but by a number of branch channels which the river begins to throw off from

about the 28th parallel. It includes, on the right bank of the stream, the important tract called Cutchi Gandava, a triangular plain at the foot of the Suliman and Hala ranges, containing about 7000 square miles of land which is all capable of being made into a garden. The soil is here for the most part rich, black, and loamy; water is abundant; and the climate suitable for the growth of all kinds of grain. Below Cutchi Gandava the valley of the Indus is narrow for about a hundred miles, but about Tatta it expands and a vast delta is formed. This is a third triangle, containing above a thousand square miles of the richest alluvium, which is liable however to floods and to vast changes in the river beds, whereby often whole fields are swept away. Much of this tract is moreover low and swampy; the climate is trying; and rice is almost the only product that can be advantageously cultivated.

The low region lying south of the Great Plateau is neither extensive nor valuable. It consists of a mere strip of land along the coast of the Indian Ocean, extending a distance of about nine degrees (550 miles) from the mouth of the Persian Gulf to Cape Monze, near Kurrachee, but in width not exceeding ten or, at the most, twenty miles. This tract was occupied in ancient times mainly by a race which Herodotus called Ethiopians and the historians of Alexander Ichthyophagi (Fish-Eaters). It is an arid, sultry, and unpleasant region, scarcely possessing a perennial stream, and depending for its harvests entirely upon the winter rains, and for its water during the summer on wells which are chiefly brackish. Tolerable pasturage is, however, obtainable in places even during the hottest part of the year, and between Cape Jask and Gwattur the crops produced are far from contemptible.

A small tract of coast, a continuation of the territory just described, intervening between it and Kerman, was occupied in the early Persian times by a race known to the Persians as Maka, and to the Greeks as Mycians. This

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district, reaching from about Cape Jask to Gombroon, is one of greater fertility than is usual in these regions, being particularly productive in dates and grain. This fertility seems, however, to be confined to the vicinity of the sea-shore.

To complete the description of the Eastern provinces two other tracts must be mentioned. The mountain-chain which skirts the Great Plateau on the north, distinguished in these pages by the name of Elburz, broadens out after it passes the south-eastern corner of the Caspian Sea till it covers a space of nearly three degrees (more than 200 miles). Instead of the single lofty ridge which separates the Salt Desert from the low Caspian region, we find between the fifty-fourth and fifty-ninth degrees of east longitude three or four distinct ranges, all nearly parallel to one another, having a general direction of east and west. Broad and rich valleys are enclosed between these latitudinal ranges which are watered by rivers of a considerable size, as more especially the Ettrek and the Gurgan. Thus a territory is formed capable of supporting a largish population, a territory which possesses a natural unity, being shut in on three sides by mountains, and on the fourth by the Caspian. Here in Persian times was settled a people called Hyrcani; and from them the tract derived the name of Hyrcania (Vehrkana), while the lake on which it adjoined came to be known as "the Hyrcanian Sea." The fertility of the region, its broad plains, shady woods and lofty mountains were celebrated by the ancient writers.

Further to the east, beyond the low sandy plain, and beyond the mountains in which its great rivers have their source--on the other side of the "Roof of the World," as the natives name this elevated region--lay a tract unimportant in itself, but valuable to the Persians as the home of a people from whom they obtained excellent soldiers. The plain of Chinese Tartary, the district about Kashgar and Yarkand, seems to have been in

possession of certain Sacans or Scythians, who in the flourishing times of the empire acknowledged subjection to the Persian crown. These Sacans, who call themselves Huma-varga or Amyrgians, furnished some of the best and bravest of the Persian troops. Westward they bordered on Sogdiana and Bactria; northward they extended probably to the great mountain-chain of the Tien-chan; on the east they were shut in by the vast desert of Gobi or Shamoo; while southward they must have touched Gandaria and perhaps India. A portion of this country--that towards the north and west--was well watered and fairly productive; but the southern and eastern part of it must have been arid and desert.

From this consideration of the Eastern provinces of the Empire, we pass on naturally to those which lay towards the North-West. The Caspian Sea alone intervened between these two groups, which thus approached each other within a distance of some 250 or 260 miles.

Almost immediately to the west of the Caspian there rises a high table-land diversified by mountains, which stretches eastward for more than eighteen degrees between the 37th and 41st parallels. This highland may properly be regarded as a continuation of the great Iranian plateau, with which it is connected at its south-eastern corner. It comprises a portion of the modern Persia, the whole of Armenia, and most of Asia Minor. Its principal mountain-ranges are latitudinal or from west to east, only the minor ones taking the opposite or longitudinal direction. Of the latitudinal chains the most important is the Taurus, which, commencing at the southwestern corner of Asia Minor in longitude 29 deg. nearly, bounds the great table-land upon the south, running parallel with the shore at the distance of sixty or seventy miles as far as the Pylse Cilicise, near Tarsus, and then proceeding in a direction decidedly north of east to the neighborhood of Lake Van, where

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it unites with the line of Zagros. The elevation of this range, though not equal to that of some in Asia, is considerable. In Asia Minor the loftiest of the Taurus peaks seem to attain a height of about 9000 or 10,000 feet. Further to the east the elevation appears to be even greater, the peaks of Ala Dagħ, Sapan, Nimrud, and Mut Khan in the tract about Lake Van being all of them considerably above the line of perpetual snow, and therefore probably 11,000 or 12,000 feet.

At the opposite side of the table-land, bounding it towards the north, there runs under various names a second continuous range of inferior elevation, which begins near Brusa, in the Keshish Dagħ or Mysian Olympus, and proceeds in a line nearly parallel with the northern coast to the vicinity of Kars. Between this and Taurus are two other important ridges, which run westward from the neighborhood of Ararat to about the 34th degree of east longitude, after which they subside into the plain.

The heart of the mountain-region, the tract extending from the district of Erivan on the east to the upper course of the Kizil-Irmak river and the vicinity of Sivas upon the west, was, as it still is, Armenia. Amidst these natural fastnesses, in a country of lofty ridges, deep and narrow valleys, numerous and copious streams, and occasional broad plains--a country of rich pasture grounds, productive orchards, and abundant harvests--this interesting people has maintained itself almost unchanged from the time of the early Persian kings to the present day. Armenia was one of the most valuable portions of the Persian Empire, furnishing, as it did, besides stone and timber, and several most important minerals, an annual supply of 20,000 excellent horses to the stud of the Persian king.

The highland west of Armenia, the plateau of Asia Minor, from the longitude of Siwas (37 deg. E.) to the sources of the Meander and the Hermus, was occupied by the two nations of the Cappadocians and Phrygians, whose

territories were separated by the Kizil-Irmak or Halys river. This tract, though diversified by some considerable ranges, and possessing one really lofty mountain, that of Argseus, was, compared with Armenia, champaign and level. Its broad plains afforded the best possible pasturage for sheep, while at the same time they bore excellent crops of wheat. The entire region was well-watered; it enjoyed a delightful climate; and besides corn and cattle furnished many products of value.

Outside the plateau on the north, on the north-east, on the west, and on the south, lie territories which, in comparison with the high region whereon they adjoined, may be called lowlands. The north-eastern lowland, the broad and rich valley of the Kur, which corresponds closely with the modern Russian province of Georgia, was in the possession of a people called by Herodotus Saspeires or Sapeires, whom we may identify with the Iberians of later writers. Adjoining upon them towards the south, probably in the country about Erivan, and so in the neighborhood of Ararat, were the Alarodians, whose name must be connected with that of the great mountain. On the other side of the Sapeirian country, in the tracts now known as Mingrelia and Imeritia, regions of a wonderful beauty and fertility, were the Colchians--dependants, but not exactly subjects, of Persia.

The northern lowland, which consisted of a somewhat narrow strip of land between the plateau and the Euxine, was a rich and well-wooded region, 630 miles in length, and in breadth from forty to a hundred. It was inhabited by a large number of rude and barbarous tribes, each of whom possessed a small portion of the sea-board. These tribes, enumerated in the order of their occurrence from east to west, were the following: the Moschi, the Macrones (or Tzani), the Mosynoeci, the Mares, the Tibareni, the Chalybes, the Paphlagonians, the Mariandyni, the Bithyni, and the Thyni. The Moschi, Macrones, Mosynoeci, Mares, and Tibareni dwelt towards the east, occupying the coast from

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Batoum to Ordou. The Chalybes inhabited the tract immediately adjoining on Sinope. The Paphlagonians held the rest of the coast from the mouth of the Kizil-Irmak to Cape Baba, where they were succeeded by the Mariandyni, who owned the small tract between Cape Baba and the mouth of the Sakkariyeh (Sangarius). From the Sangarius to the canal of Constantinople dwelt the Thynians and Bithynians intermixed, the former however affecting the coast and the latter the interior of the country. The entire tract was of a nearly uniform character, consisting of wooded spurs from the northern mountain-chain, with, valleys of greater or less width between them. Streams were numerous, and vegetation was consequently rich; but it may be doubted whether the climate was healthy.

The western lowland comprised the inland regions of Mysia, Lydia, and Caria, together with the coast-tracts which had been occupied by immigrant Greeks, and which were known as Juolis, Doris, and Ionia. The broad and rich plains, the open valleys, the fair grassy mountains, the noble trees, the numerous and copious rivers of this district are too well known to need description here. The western portion of Asia Minor is a terrestrial paradise, well deserving the praises which Herodotus with patriotic enthusiasm bestowed upon it. The climate is delightful, only that it is somewhat too luxurious; the soil is rich and varied in quality; the vegetable productions are abundant; and the mountains, at any rate anciently, possessed mineral treasures of great value.

The lowland upon the south is narrower and more mountainous than either of the others. It comprised three countries only--Lycia, Pamphylia, and Cilicia. The tract is chiefly occupied by spurs from Taurus, between which lie warm and richly wooded valleys. In Lycia, however, the mountain-ridges embrace some extensive uplands, on a level not much inferior to that of the central plateau itself,

while in Pamphylia and Cilicia are two or three low alluvial plains of tolerable extent and of great fertility. Of these the most remarkable is that near Tarsus, formed by the three streams of the Cydnus, the Sarus, and the Pyramus, which extends along the coast a distance of forty miles and reaches inland about thirty, the region which gave to the tract where it occurs the name of Cilicia Campestris or Pedias.

The Persian dominion in this quarter was not bounded by sea. Opposite to Cilicia lay the large and important island of Cyprus, which was included in the territories of the Great King from the time of Cambyses to the close of the Empire. Further to the west, Rhodes, Cos, Samos, Chios, Lesbos, Tenedos, Lemnus, Imbrus, Samothrace, Thasos, and most of the islands of the Egean were for a time Persian, but were never grasped with such firmness as to be a source of real strength to their conquerors. The same may be said of Thrace and Pseonia, subjugated under Darius, and held for some twenty or thirty years, but not assimilated, not brought into the condition of provinces, and therefore rather a drain upon the Empire than an addition to its resources. It seems unnecessary to lengthen out this description of the Persian territories by giving an account of countries and islands, whose connection with the Empire was at once so slight and so temporary.

A few words must, however, be said respecting Cyprus. This island, which is 140 miles long from Bafa (Paphos) to Cape Andrea, with an average width for two thirds of its length of thirty-five, and for the remaining third of about six or seven miles, is a mountainous tract, picturesque and varied, containing numerous slopes, and a few plains, well fitted for cultivation. According to Eratosthenes it was in the more ancient times richly wooded, but was gradually cleared by human labor. Its soil was productive, and particularly well suited for the vine and the olive. It grew also sufficient corn for its own use. But its special value arose from its

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mineral products. The copper mines near Tamasus were enormously productive, and the ore thence derived so preponderated over all other supplies that the later Romans came to use the word Cyprium for the metal generally--whence the names by which it is even now known in most of the languages of modern Europe. On the whole Cyprus was considered inferior to no known island. Besides its vegetable and mineral products, it furnished a large number of excellent sailors to the Persian fleet.

It remains to notice briefly those provinces of the south-west which had not been included within any of the preceding monarchies, and which are therefore as yet undescribed in these volumes. These provinces are the African, and may be best considered under the three heads of Egypt, Libya, and the Cyrenaica.

Egypt, if we include under the name not merely the Nile valley and the Delta, but the entire tract interposed between the Libyan Desert on the one side and the Arabian Gulf or Red Sea on the other, is a country of nearly the size of Italy. It measures 520 miles from Elephantine to the Mediterranean, and has an average width of 150 or 160 miles. It must thus contain an area of about 80,000 square miles. Of this space, however, at least three fourths is valueless, consisting of bare rocky mountain or dry sandy plain. It is only along the course of the narrow valley in which the Nile flows from the Cataracts to beyond Cairo, in the tract known as the Faioum, and in the broad region of the Delta, that cultivation is possible. Even in the Delta itself there are large spaces which are arid, and others which are permanent marshes, so that considerable portions of its surface are unfitted for husbandry. But if the quantity of cultivable land is thus limited in Egypt, the quality is so excellent, in consequence of the alluvial character of the soil, that the country was always in ancient times a sort of granary of the world. The noble river, bringing annually a fresh deposit of the richest soil, and

furnishing a supply of water, which is sufficient, if carefully husbanded, to produce a succession of luxuriant crops throughout the year, makes Egypt--what it is even at the present day--one of the most fertile portions of the earth's surface--a land of varied products, all excellent--but especially a land of corn, to which the principal nations of the world looked for their supplies, either regularly, or at any rate in times of difficulty.

West of Egypt was a dry and sandy tract, dotted with oases, but otherwise only habitable along the shore, which in the time of the Persian Empire was occupied by a number of wild tribes who were mostly in the lowest condition to which savage man is capable of sinking. The geographical extent of this tract was large, exceeding considerably that of Egypt; but its value was slight. Naturally, it produced nothing but dates and hides. The inhumanity of the inhabitants made it, however, further productive of a commodity, which, until the world is christianized, will probably always be regarded as one of high value--the commodity of negro slaves, which were procured in the Sahara by slave-hunts, and perhaps by purchase in Nigritia.

Still further to the west, and forming the boundary of the Empire in this direction, lay the district of the Cyrenaica, a tract of singular fertility and beauty. Between Benghazi, in east longitude 20 deg., and the Ras al Tynn (long. 23 deg. 15'), there rises above the level of the adjacent regions an extensive table land, which, attracting the vapors that float over the Mediterranean, condenses them, and so abounds with springs and rills. A general freshness and greenness, with rich vegetation in places, is the consequence. Olives, figs, carobs, junipers, oleanders, cypresses, cedars, myrtles, arbutus-trees, cover the flanks of the plateau and the hollows which break its surface, while the remainder is suitable alike for the cultivation of cereals and for pasturage. Nature has also made the region a special gift

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in the laserpitium or silphium, which was regarded by the ancients as at once a delicacy and a plant of great medicinal power, and which added largely to the value of the country.

Such was the geographical extent of the Persian Empire, and such were the chief provinces which it contained besides those previously comprised in the empires of Media or Babylon. Territorially, the great mass of the Empire lay towards the east, between long. 50 deg. and 75 deg., or between the Zagros range and the Indian Desert. But its most important provinces were the western ones. East of Persepolis, the only regions of much value were the valleys of the Indus and the Oxus. Westward lay Susiana, Babylonia, Assyria, Media, Armenia, Iberia, Cappadocia, Asia Minor, Cyprus, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, the Cyrenaica--all countries of great, or at least considerable, productiveness. The two richest grain tracts of the ancient world, the best pasture regions, the districts which produced the most valuable horses, the most abundant of known gold-fields, were included within the limits of the Empire, which may be looked upon as self-sufficing, containing within it all that man in those days required, not only for his necessities, but even for his most cherished luxuries.

The productiveness of the Empire was the natural result of its possessing so many and such large rivers. Six streams of the first class, having courses exceeding a thousand miles in length, helped to fertilize the lands which owned the sway of the Great King. These were the Nile, the Indus, the Euphrates, the Jaxartes, the Oxus, and the Tigris. Two of the six have been already described in these volumes, and therefore will not need to detain us here; but a few words must be said with respect to each of the remaining four, if our sketch of the geography of the Empire is to make any approach to completeness.

The Nile was only in the latter part of its course a Persian stream. Flowing, as we now know that it does, from within a short

distance of the equator, it had accomplished more than three fourths of its course before it entered a Persian province. It ran, however, through Persian territory a distance of about six hundred miles, and conferred on the tract through which it passed immeasurable benefits. The Greeks sometimes maintained that "Egypt was the gift of the river;" and, though this was very far from being a correct statement in the sense intended, there is a meaning of the words in which we may accept them as expressing a fact. Egypt is only what she is through her river. The Nile gives her all that makes her valuable. This broad, ample, and unfailing stream not only by its annual inundation enriches the soil and prepares it for tillage in a manner that renders only the lightest further labor necessary, but serves as a reservoir from which inexhaustible supplies of the precious fluid can be obtained throughout the whole of the year. The water, which rises towards the end of June, begins to subside early in October, and for half the year--from December till June--Egypt is only cultivable through irrigation. She produces, however, during this period, excellent crops--even at the present day, when there are few canals--from the facility with which water is obtained, by means of a very simple engine, out of the channel of the Nile. This unfailing supply enabled the cultivator to obtain a second, a third, and even sometimes a fourth crop from the same land within the space of a year.

The course of the Nile from Elephantine, where it entered Egypt, to Cercasorus, near Heliopolis, where it bifurcated, was in general north, with, however, a certain tendency westward. It entered Egypt nearly in long. 33 deg., and at Neapolis (more than two degrees further north) it was still within 15 deg. of the same meridian; then, however, it took a westerly bend, crossed the 32nd and 31st meridians, and in lat. 28 deg. 23' reached west as far as long. 30 deg. 43'. After this it returned a little eastward, recrossed the 31st meridian, and having reached long. 31 deg.

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22' near Aphroditopolis (lat. 29 deg. 25'), it proceeded almost due north to Cercasorus in lat. 30 deg. 7'. The course of the river up to this point was, from its entry into the country, about 540 miles. At Cercasorus the Delta began. The river threw out two branches, which flowed respectively to the north-east and the north-west, while between them was a third channel, a continuation of the previous course of the stream, which pierced the Delta through its centre, flowing almost due north. Lower down, further branch channels were thrown out, some natural, some artificial, and the triangular tract between the two outer arms of the river was intersected by at least five, and (in later times) by fourteen large streams. The right and left arms appear to have been of about equal in length, and may be estimated at 150 or 160 miles; the central arm had a shorter course, not exceeding 110 miles. The volume of water which the Nile pours into the Mediterranean during a day and night is estimated at from 150,000 millions to 700,000 millions of cubic metres. It was by far the largest of all the rivers of the Empire.

The Indus, which was the next largest of the Persian rivers to the Nile, rose (like the Nile) outside the Persian territory. Its source is in the region north of the Himalaya range, about lat. 31 deg., long. 82 deg. 30'. It begins by flowing to the north-west, in a direction parallel to that of the Western Himalayas, along the northern flank of which it continues in this line a distance of about 700 miles, past Ladak, to long. 75 deg. nearly. Here it is met by the Bolor chain, which prevents its further progress in this direction and causes it to turn suddenly nearly at a right angle to the south-west. Entering a transverse valley, it finds a way (which is still very imperfectly known) through the numerous ridges of the Himalaya to the plain at its southern base, on which it debouches about thirty miles above Attock. It is difficult to say at what exact point it crossed the Persian frontier, but probably at least the first 700 miles of its course were through territory not Persian. From Attock to

the sea the Indus is a noble river. It runs for 900 miles in a general direction of S.S.W. through the plain in one main stream (which is several hundred yards in width), while on its way it throws off also from time to time small side streamlets, which are either consumed in irrigation or rejoin the main channel. A little below Tatta its Delta begins--a Delta, however, much inferior in size to that of the Nile. The distance from the apex to the sea is not more than sixty miles, and the breadth of the tract embraced between the two arms does not exceed seventy miles. The entire course of the Indus is reckoned at 1960 miles, of which probably 1260 were through Persian territory. The volume of the stream is always considerable, while in the rainy season it is very great. The Indus is said then to discharge into the Indian ocean 446,000 cubic feet per second, or 4280 millions of cubic yards in the twenty-four hours.

The Oxus rises from an Alpine lake, lying on the western side of the Bolor chain in lat. 37 deg. 40', long. 73 deg. 50'. After a rapid descent from the high elevation of the lake, during which it pursues a somewhat serpentine course, it debouches from the hills upon the plain about long. 69 deg. 20', after receiving the river of Fyzabad, and then proceeds, first west and afterwards north-west, across the Great Kharesmian Desert to the Sea of Aral. During the first 450 miles of its course, while it runs among the hills, it receives from both sides numerous and important tributaries; but from the meridian of Balkh those fail entirely, and for above 800 miles the Oxus pursues its solitary way, unaugmented by a single affluent, across the waste of Tartary, rolling through the desert a wealth of waters, which must diminish, but which does not seem very sensibly to diminish, by evaporation. At Kilef, sixty miles north-west of Balkh, the width of the river is 350 yards; at Khodja Salih, thirty miles lower down, it is 823 yards with a depth of twenty feet; at Kerki, seventy miles below Khodja Salih, it is "twice the width of the Danube at Buda-Pesth," or about 940 yards; at Betik, on

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the route between Bokhara and Merv, its width has diminished to 650 yards, but its depth has increased to twenty-nine feet. Finally, at Gorlen Hezaresp near Khiva, the breadth of the Oxus is so great that both banks are hardly distinguishable at the same time; but the stream is here comparatively shallow, ceasing to be navigable at about this point. The present course of the Oxus from its rise in Lake Sir-i-Kol to its termination in the Sea of Aral is estimated at 1400 miles.

Anciently its course must have been still longer. The Oxus, in the time of the Achaemenian kings, fell into the Caspian by a channel which can even now be traced. Its length was thus increased by at least 450 miles, and, exceeding that of the Jaxartes, fell but little short of the length of the Indus.

The Oxus, like the Nile and the Indus, has a periodical swell, which lasts from May to October. It does not, however, overflow its banks. Under a scientific system of irrigation it is probable that a considerable belt of land on either side of its course might be brought under cultivation. But at present the extreme limit to which culture is carried, except in the immediate vicinity of Khiva, seems to be four miles; while often, in the absence of human care, the desert creeps up to the very brink of the river.

The Jaxartes, or Sir-Deria, rises from two sources in the Thian-chan mountain chain, the more remote of which is in long. 79 deg. nearly. The two streams both flow to the westward in almost parallel valleys, uniting about long. 71 deg.. After their junction the course of the stream is still to the westward for two degrees; but between Khokand and Tashkend the river sweeps round in a semicircle and proceeds to run first due north and then north-west, skirting the Kizil Koum desert to Otrar, where it resumes its original westerly direction and flows with continually diminishing volume across the desert to the Sea of Aral. The Jaxartes is a smaller stream than the Oxus. At Otrar, after receiving its last tributary, it is no more than 250 yards wide.

Below this point it continually dwindles, partly from evaporation, partly from the branch stream which it throws off right and left, of which the chief are the Cazala and the Kuvan Deria. On its way through the desert it spreads but little fertility along its banks, which are in places high and arid, in others depressed and swampy. The branch streams are of some service for irrigation; and it is possible that a scientific system might turn the water of the main channel to good account, and by its means redeem from the desert large tracts which have never yet been cultivated. But no such system has hitherto been applied to the Sir, and it is doubtful whether success would attend it. The Sir, where it falls into the Sea of Aral, is very shallow, seldom even in the flood season exceeding four feet. The length of the stream was till recently estimated at more than 1208 miles; but the latest explorations seem to require an enlargement of this estimate by at least 200 or 250 miles.

In rivers of the second class the Persian Empire was so rich that it will be impossible, within the limits prescribed for the present work, to do more than briefly enumerate them. The principal were, in Asia Minor, the Hermus (Ghiediz Chai), and the Maeander (Mendere) on the west, the Sangarius (Sakkarieh), the Halys (Kizil Irmak), and the Iris (Yechil Irmak) on the north, the Cydnus (Tersoos Chai), Sarus (Cilician Syhun), and Pyramus (Cilician Jyhun) on the south; in Armenia and the adjacent regions, the Araxes (Aras), Cyrus (Kur), and Phasis (Eion); on the Iranic plateau, the Sefid-rud, the Zenderud or river of Isfahan, the Etymandrus (Helmend), and the Arius (Heri-rud); in the low country east of the Caspian, the Gurgan and Ertrek, rivers of Hyrcania, the Margus Churghab (or river of Merv), the Delias or river of Balkh, the Ak Su or Bokhara river, and the Kizil Deria, a stream in the Khanat of Kokand; in Afghanistan and India, the Kabul river, the Hydaspes (Jelum), the Aoesines (Chenab), the Hydraotes (Ravee), and the Hyphasis (Sutlej or Gharra); in Persia Proper, the Oroatis

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(Hindyán or Tab), and the Bendamir; in Susiana, the Pasitigris (Kuran), the Hedyfnus (Jerahi), the Choaspes (Kerkhah), and the Eulsenus (a branch of the same); in the Upper Zagros region, the Gyndes (Diyaleh), and the Greater and Lesser Zabs; in Mesopotamia, the Chaboras (Kha-bour), and Bilichus (Belik); finally, in Syria and Palestine, the Orontes or river of Antioch (Nahr-el-asy), the Jordan, and the Barada or river of Damascus. Thus, besides the six great rivers of the Empire, forty other considerable streams fertilized and enriched the territories of the Persian monarch, which, though they embraced many arid tracts, where cultivation was difficult, must be pronounced upon the whole well-watered, considering their extent and the latitude in which they lay.

The Empire possessed, besides its rivers, a number of important lakes. Omitting the Caspian and the Aral, which lay upon its borders, there were contained within the Persian territories the following important basins: the Urumiyeh, Lake Van, and Lake Goutcha or Sivan in Armenia; Lakes Touz-Ghieul, Egerdir, Bey-Shehr, Chardak, Soghla, Buldur, Ghieul-Hissar, Iznik, Abullionte, Maniyas, and many others in Asia Minor; the Sabakhah, the Bahr-el-Melak, and the Lake of Antioch in Northern Syria; the Lake of Hems in the Coele-Syrian valley; the Damascus lakes, the Lake of Merom, the Sea of Tiberias, and the Dead Sea in Southern Syria and Palestine; Lake Moeris and the Natron lakes in Egypt; the Bahr-i-Nedjif in Babylonia; Lake Neyriz in Persia Proper; the Lake of Seistan in the Iranic Desert; and Lake Manchur in the Indus valley. Several of these have been already described in these volumes. Of the remainder the most important were the Lake of Van, the Touz-Ghieul, the great lake of Seistan, and Lake Moeris. These cannot be dismissed without a brief description.

Lake Van is situated at a very unusual elevation, being more than 5400 feet above the sea level. It is a triangular basin, of which the three sides front respectively S.S.E.,

N.N.E., and N.W. by W. The sides are all irregular, being broken by rocky promontories; but the chief projection lies to the east of the lake, where a tract is thrown out which suddenly narrows the expanse from about fifty miles to less than five. The greatest length of the basin is from N.E. to S.W., where it extends a distance of eighty miles between Amis and Tadvan; its greatest width is between Aklat and Van, where it measures across somewhat more than fifty miles. The scenery which surrounds it is remarkable for its beauty. The lake is embosomed amid high mountains, picturesque in outline, and all reaching in places the level of perpetual snow. Its waters, generally placid, but sometimes lashed into high waves, are of the deepest blue; while its banks exhibit a succession of orchards, meadows, and gardens which have scarcely their equals in Asia. The lake is fed by a number of small streams flowing down from the lofty ridges which surround it, and, having no outlet, is of course salt, though far less so than the neighboring lake of Urumiyeh. Gulls and cormorants float upon its surface fish can live in it; and it is not distasteful to cattle. Set in the expanse of waters are a few small islets, whose vivid green contrasts well with the deep azure which surrounds them.

The Touz-Ghieul is a basin of a very different character. Situated on the upland of Phrygia, in lat. 39 deg., long. 33 deg., 30', its elevation is not more than 2500 feet. Low hills of sandstone and conglomerate encircle it, but generally at some distance, so that a tract of plain, six or seven miles in width, intervenes between their base and the shore. The shape of the lake is an irregular oval, with the greater axis running nearly due north and south. Its greatest length is estimated at forty-five miles, its width varies, but is generally from ten to sixteen miles. At one point, however, nearly opposite to Kodj Hissar, the lake narrows to a distance of no more than five miles; and here a causeway has been constructed from shore to shore, which, though ruined, still affords a dry pathway in

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the summer. The water of the Touz-Ghieul is intensely salt, containing at some seasons of the year no less than thirty-two per cent of saline matter, which is considerably more than the amount of such matter in the water of the Dead Sea. The surrounding plain is barren, in places marshy, and often covered with an incrustation of salt. The whole scene is one of desolation. The acrid waters support no animal organization; birds shun them; the plain grows nothing but a few stunted and sapless shrubs. The only signs of life which greet the traveller are the carts of the natives, which pass him laden with the salt that is obtained with ease from the saturated water. The Zerreh or Sea of Seistan--called sometimes the Hamun, or "expanse"--is situated in the Seistan Desert on the Great Iranic plateau, and consequently at an elevation of (probably) 3000 feet. It is formed by the accumulation of the waters brought down by the Helمند, the Haroot-rud, the river of Khash, the Furrah-rud and other streams, which flow from the mountains of Afghanistan, with converging courses to the south-west. It is an extensive basin, composed of two arms, an eastern and a western. The western arm, which is the larger of the two, has its greatest length from N.N.E. to S.S.W., and extends in this direction about ninety miles. Its greatest width is about twenty-five miles. The eastern arm is rather more than forty miles long, and from ten to twenty broad. It is shaped much like a fish's tail. The two arms are connected by a strait seven or eight miles in width, which joins them near their northern extremities. The water of the lake, though not salt, is black and has a bad taste. Fish support life in it with difficulty, and never grow to any great size. The lake is shallow, not much exceeding a depth of three or four feet. It contracts greatly in the summer, at which time the strait connecting the two arms is often absolutely dry. The edges of the lake are clothed with tamarisk and other trees; and where the rivers enter it, sometimes by several branches, the soil is rich and cultivation productive; but

elsewhere the sand of the desert creeps up almost to the margin of the water, clothed only with some sickly grass and a few scattered shrubs.

The Birket-el-Keroun, or Lake Moaris of the classical writers, is a natural basin--not, as Herodotus imagined, an artificial one--situated on the western side of the Nile valley, in a curious depression which nature has made among the Libyan hills. This depression--the modern district of the Faïoum--is a circular plain, which sinks gradually towards the north-west, descending till it is more than 100 feet below the surface of the Nile at low water. The Northern and northwestern portion of the depression is occupied by the lake, a sheet of brackish water shaped like a horn (whence the modern name) measuring about thirty-five or thirty-six miles from end to end, and attaining in the middle a width of between five and six miles. The area of the lake is estimated roughly at 150 square miles, its circumference at about ninety miles. It has a depth varying from twelve to twenty-four feet. Though the water is somewhat brackish, yet the Birket contains several species of fresh-water fish; and in ancient times its fisheries are said to have been exceedingly productive.

The principal cities of the Empire were, besides Pesargadae and Persepolis, Susa--the chief city of Susiana--which became the capital; Babylon, Ecbatana, Rhages, Zadracarta, Bactra (now Balkh), Maracanda (now Samarcand), Aria, or Artacoana (Herat), Caspatyrus on the Upper Indus, Taxila (Attock?), Pura (perhaps Bunpoor), Carmana (Kerman), Arbela, Nisibis, Amida (now Diarbekr); Mazaca in Cappadocia; Trapezus (Trebizond), Sinope, Dascyleium, Sardis, Ephesus, Miletus, Gordium, Perga, and Tarsus in Asia Minor: Damascus, Jerusalem, Sidon, Tyre, Azotus or Ashdod, and Gaza in Syria; Memphis and Thebes in Egypt; Cyrene and Barca in the Cyrenaica. Of these, while Susa had from the time of Darius Hystaspis a

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decided pre-eminence as the main residence of the court, and consequently as the usual seat of government, there were three others which could boast the distinction of being royal abodes from time to time, either regularly at certain seasons, or occasionally at the caprice of the monarch. These were Babylon, Ecbatana, and Persepolis, the capitals respectively of Chaldaea, Media, and Persia Proper, all great and ancient cities, accustomed to the presence of Courts, and all occupying positions sufficiently central to render them not ill-suited for the business of administration. Next to these in order of dignity may be classed the satrapial residences, often the chief cities of old monarchies, such as Sardis, the capital city of Lydia, Dascyleium of Bithynia, Memphis of Egypt, Bactra of Bactria, and the like; while the third rank was held by the towns, where there was no Court, either royal or satrapial.

Before this chapter is concluded a few words must be said with respect to the countries which bordered upon the Persian Empire. The Empire was surrounded, for the most part, either by seas or deserts. The Mediterranean, the Egean, the Propontis, the Euxine, the Caspian, the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and the Arabian Gulf or Bed Sea washed its shores, bounding almost all its western, and much of its northern and southern sides; while the sands of the Sahara, the deserts of Arabia and Syria of India and Thibet, filled up the greater part of the intervening spaces. The only countries of importance which can be viewed as in any sense neighbors of Persia are European and Asiatic Scythia, Hindustan, Arabia, Ethiopia, and Greece.

Where the Black Sea, curving round to the north, ceased to furnish to the Empire the advantage of a water barrier, a protection of almost equal strength was afforded to it by the mountain-chain of the Caucasus.

Excepting on the extreme east, where it slopes gently to the Caspian, this range is one of great elevation, possessing but few passes,

and very difficult to traverse. Its fastnesses have always been inhabited by wild tribes, jealous of their freedom; and these tribes may have caused annoyance, but they could at no time have been a serious danger to the Empire. They were weak in numbers, divided in nationality and in interests, and quite incapable of conducting any distant expedition. Like their modern successors, the Circassians, Abassians, and Lesghians, their one and only desire was to maintain themselves in possession of their beloved mountains; and this desire would cause them to resist all attempts that might be made to traverse their country, whether proceeding from the north or from the south, from the inhabitants of Europe or from those of Asia. Persia was thus strongly protected in this quarter; but still she could not feel herself altogether safe. Once at least within historic memory the barrier of the Caucasus had proved to be surmountable. From the vast Steppe which stretches northwards from its base, in part salt, in part grassy, had crossed into Asia--through its passes or round its eastern flank--a countless host, which had swept all before it, and brought ruin upon flourishing empires. The Scythian and Samaritan hordes of the steppe-country between the Wolga and the Dnieper were to the monarchies of Western Asia a permanent, if a somewhat distant, peril. It could not be forgotten that they had proved themselves capable of penetrating the rocky barrier which would otherwise have seemed so sure a protection, or that when they swarmed across it in the seventh century before our era, their strength was at first irresistible. The Persians knew, what the great nations of the earth afterwards forgot, that along the northern horizon there lay a black cloud, which might at any time burst, carrying desolation to their homes and bringing ruin upon their civilization. We shall find the course of their history importantly affected by a sense of this danger, and we shall have reason to admire the wisdom of their measures of precaution against it.

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It was not only to the west of the Caspian that the danger threatened. East of that sea also was a vast steppe-region--rolling plains of sand or grass--the home of nomadic hordes similar in character to those who drank the waters of the Don and Wolga. The Sacse, Massagetse, and Dahse of this country, who dwelt about the Caspian, the Aral, and the Lower Jaxartes, were an enemy scarcely less formidable than the Sarmatians and the Scythians of the West. As the modern Iran now suffers from the perpetual incursions of Uzbeks and Turcomans, so the north-eastern provinces of the ancient Persia were exposed to the raids of the Asiatic Scythians and the Massagetse, who were confined by no such barrier as the Caucasus, having merely to cross a river, probably often fordable during the summer, in order to be in Persia. Hyrcania and Parthia had indeed a certain amount of protection from the Kharezmian Desert; but the upper valleys of the great streams--the satrapies of Sogdiana and Bactria--must have suffered considerable annoyance from such attacks.

On the side of India, the Empire enjoyed a twofold security. From the shores of the Indian Ocean in the vicinity of the Runn of Cutch to the 31st parallel of north latitude--a distance of above 600 miles--there extends a desert, from one to two hundred miles across, which effectually shuts off the valley of the Indus from the rest of Hindustan. It is only along the skirts of the mountains, by Lahore, Umritsir, and Loodiana, that the march of armies is possible--by this line alone can the Punjabis threaten Central India, or the inhabitants of Central India attack the Punjab. Hence in this quarter there was but a very narrow tract to guard; and the task of defence was still further lightened by the political condition of the people. The Gangetic Indians, though brave and powerful, were politically weak, from their separation into a number of distinct states under petty Rajahs, who could never hope to contend successfully against the forces of a mighty Empire. Persia, consequently, was safe upon this side, in the

division of her adversaries. Nor had she neglected the further security which was obtainable by an interposition between her own actual frontier and her enemies' dominions of a number of half-subject dependencies. Native princes were allowed to bear sway in the Punjab region, who acknowledged the suzerainty of Persia, and probably paid her a fixed tribute, but whose best service was that they prevented a collision between the Power of whom they held their crowns and the great mass of their own nation.

The Great Arabian Peninsula, which lay due south of the most central part of the Empire, and bordered it on this side for about thirteen degrees, or (if we follow the line of the boundary) for above a thousand miles, might seem to have been the most important of all the adjacent countries, since it contains an area of a million of square miles, and is a nursery of brave and hardy races. Politically, however, Arabia is weak, as has been shown in a former volume; while geographically she presents to the north her most arid and untraversable regions, so that it is rarely, and only under very exceptional circumstances, that she menaces seriously her northern neighbors. Persia seems never to have experienced any alarm of an Arab invasion; her relations with the tribes that came into closest contact with her were friendly; and she left the bulk of the nation in unmolested enjoyment of their independence.

Another country adjoining the Persian Empire on the south, and one which might have been expected to cause some trouble, was Ethiopia. To Egypt Ethiopia had always proved an unquiet, and sometimes even a dangerous, neighbor; she was fertile, rich, populous; her inhabitants were tall, strong, and brave; she had a ready means of marching into Egypt down the fertile valley of the Nile; and her hosts had frequently ravaged, and even held for considerable terms of years, that easily subjected country. It is remarkable that during the whole time of

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the Persian dominion Ethiopia seems to have abstained from any invasion of the Egyptian territory. Apparently, she feared to provoke the power which had seated itself on the throne of the Pharaohs, and preferred the quiet enjoyment of her own wealth and resources to the doubtful issues of a combat with the mistress of Asia.

On her western horizon, clearly discernible from the capes and headlands of the Asiatic coast, but separated from her, except in one or two places, by a tolerably broad expanse of sea, and so--as it might have seemed--less liable to come in contact with her than her neighbors upon the land, lay the shores and isles of Greece--lovely and delightful regions, in possession of a brave and hardy race, as yet uncorrupted by luxury, though in the enjoyment of a fair amount of civilization. As the eye looked across the Egean waters, resting with pleasure on the varied and graceful forms of Sporades and Cyclades, covetous thoughts might naturally arise in the beholder's heart; and the idea might readily occur of conquering and annexing the fair tracts which lay so temptingly near and possessed such numerous attractions. The entire region, continent and islands included, was one of diminutive size--not half so large as an ordinary Persian satrapy; it was well peopled, but its population could not have amounted to that of the Punjab or of Egypt, countries which Persia had overrun in a single campaign; its inhabitants were warlike, but they were comparatively poor, and the true sinews of war are money; moreover, they were divided amongst themselves, locally split up by the physical conformation of their country, and politically repugnant to anything like centralization or union. A Persian king like Cambyzes or Darius might be excused if, when his thoughts turned to Greece, he had a complacent feeling that no danger could threaten him from that quarter--that the little territory on his western border was a prey which he might seize at any time that it suited his convenience or seemed good to his caprice; so opening without any risk a

new world to his ambition. It required a knowledge that the causes of military success and political advance lie deeper than statistics can reach--that they have their roots in the moral nature of man, in the grandeur of his ideas and the energy of his character--in order to comprehend the fact, that the puny power upon her right flank was the enemy which Persia had most to fear, the foe who would gradually sap her strength, and finally deal her the blow that would lay her prostrate.