in breadth, and is detached from the mainland by a creek, the north end of which is dry at low water. The spring-

tides rise here to the height of four fathoms. This station is found more healthy for ships than those farther up the Hooghly. This is owing to the great expansion of the river, in consequence of which, ships have the advantage of lying at a greater distance from the shore, and of enjoying a re­freshing circulation of sea-air; and they also escape the offensive exhalations from the mud banks at Culpee and Diamond Harbour.

Sagor island has been from time immemorial a cele­brated place of pilgrimage among the Hindus, being si­tuated at the junction of the Bhogurutty river, or most sacred branch of the Ganges, with the ocean. Many of the pilgrims formerly made voluntary sacrifices of them­selves, and sometimes of their children, to the sacred sharks and alligators inhabiting the surrounding waters. But in 1812 the practice was abolished under the administration of the Marquis Wellesley. The jungles of this island swarm with tigers of the largest and most ferocious sort. The island is not inhabited ; but the Brahmins repair at the ap­pointed season to the temple, and are followed by pilgrims. Its south point is in long. 88. 20. E. and lat. 21. 34. N.

SAGRES, a town of Portugal, in the province of Algarve, and in the corregimiento of Lagos, It is situated on a steep and rocky tongue of land which projects into a deep bay near to Cape St Vincent. It has a good roadstead, with a safe anchorage, and it is defended by a fort, but is chiefly inhabited by fishermen. It is celebrated as having been the favourite residence of the children of one of their princes, Henry the Sailor.

SAGUM, in Roman antiquity, a military habit, open from top to bottom, and usually fastened on the right shoulder with a buckle or clasp. It was not different in shape from the *chlamys* of the Greeks, and the *paludamentum* of the generals. The only difference between them was, that the *paludamentum* was made of a richer stuff, and was general­ly of a punie colour, and both longer and fuller than the *sagurn.*

SAGUNTUM. See Murvιedro.

SAHAB AD, a Rajpoot town of Hindustan, in the province of Ajmeer, tributary to the Mahrattas. It is eighty-five miles east by north from Kotah. Long. 77. 10. E. Lat. 25. 26. N.

SAHARA, or the Great Desert, an immense tract of territory in Northern and Central Africa, the most desolate and terrible on the face of the globe. It is bounded on the north by the Barbary States; on the south by Soudan, or the countries watered by the upper course of the Niger, and by the Lower Senegal ; and on the east it commences near the left bank of the Nile, and stretches westward to the shores of the North Atlantic Ocean, being nearly the whole breadth of Africa. Its actual extent may be stated as from the fifteenth to the thirtieth parallels of north latitude, and from the thirtieth of east to the fifteenth of west longitude. Its length is thus about three thousand miles, and its breadth is in some parts above a thousand miles. It is by many degrees the largest desert to be found in any part of the world, and it occupies about one fifth of the surface of this part of the globe. Sahara seems to be a table-land little raised above the level of the sea, covered with mov­ing sands, and here and there containing some rocky heights, and valleys, or oases, where the water collects and nourishes thorny shrubs, ferns, and grass. From the defective culti­vation of the surrounding countries, and the influence of the prevailing winds, the desert has always been gaining ground, so that in the east some of the Egyptian monuments of antiquity, which at the time of their erection were no doubt unencumbered by the sand, even at their bases, are now covered with it. In the south, likewise, it has en­croached on the banks of the Niger and the Senegal ; and on the north and north-west the southern provinces of Morocco

have been partly usurped by it, so that the streams descend­ing from the Atlas Mountains are either drunk up, or have their courses diverted so as to be rendered comparatively useless ; while in the west it has, in some parts, extend­ed a hundred miles into the sea, forming immense sand­banks, destructive to the formation of landing-places. The mountains along the Atlantic Ocean are in no continued chain, but rise up in isolated peaks, and through the open spaces between them the sand is drifted by the winds. To­wards the interior they again lose themselves in a plain co­vered with white and sharp pebbles. From being frequently shifted by winds, the sand extends over the vast plain in a billowy or undulating manner, like the sea when agitated. In its nature it is quartzy and calcareous. The solid fixed rocks which occasionally rise above this mobile surface are sometimes extensive enough to form tracts of country. In the eastern part of the Sahara, the rocks are principally secondary, and for the most part limestone, sandstone, gyp­sum, and rock-salt, which occasionally appear to be tra­versed by trap-rocks. At Tegazza, and some other places, a sal-gem, whiter than the purest marble, lies in extensive strata under a bed of rock. Golberry informs us, that on its southern margin he found masses of native iron. The waters of the lakes which here and there occur in the desert are in some instances impregnated with carbonate of soda, in others with muriate of soda or common salt, forming the natron and salt lakes of travellers. The rocks on the sea­coast of the Sahara, and the islands that lie along it, are said to be principally composed of igneous rock, and chiefly basalt.

The principal production of Sahara is mineral salt, which, in many places, covers the surface in white glittering crys­tals, so that at a distance they appear to be rugged fields of snow or ice. This salt constitutes the staple article of the trade of Soudan, and Timbuctoo is indebted to this product of the waste for its existence as well as its prosperity.

The most remarkable feature of this desolate ocean of sand consists in the oases or verdant islands which, at dis­tant and dreary intervals, agreeably break its appaling uni­formity. These are formed by springs, which, fed by dis­tant mountains, burst forth amidst the desert solitudes, and, diffusing a partial verdure and fertility, form a strikingly beautiful contrast with the surrounding desolation. They are embellished with flowering shrubs of peculiar beauty. An aromatic plant resembling thyme, the same which bears the grains of zahara, acacias and other thorny shrubs, nettles, and brambles, constitute the ordinary vegetation of these places. Whole tracts are covered with forests of acacia, from which rich gums distil their odours; and groves of the date and lotus also occur, but more rarely. The fruits and berries which they yield constitute the food of whole tribes of men, while the verdure affords a support for animals chief­ly of the antelope species. But lions, panthers, and serpents of enormous size, sometimes augment the horrors of these frightful solitudes. Ravens and other birds of prey are likewise often seen hovering over the track of the caravan, ready to dispute with the Moorish dogs for the carcasses of those who have perished in the desert. These oases are frequented by numerous flocks of ostriches, which feed on snails, lizards, and some coarse plants. For a great part of the year the dry and heated air has the appearance of a reddish vapour, and the horizon looks like the fire of a se­ries of volcanoes. The rain, which descends from July to October or November, does not extend its precarious and momentary blessing to all the districts. In some of them rain does not fall for years together, on which occasions the springs also dry up, and a frightful want of water ensues, which drives men and animals to despair. The air during the day is oppressively hot, without a cloud to mitigate the glowing sunshine; and during the night it is disproportion- ally cool. The natural magic of the *Fata Morgana,* here