

***GEORGE
RAWLINSON***



***HISTORY OF THE PERSIAN
EMPIRE (ILLUSTRATED
EDITION)***

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History of the Persian Empire (Illustrated Edition)

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REGNUM PERSARUM DARI ET XERXIS TEMPORIBUS.



Chapter I. Extent of the Empire

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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 Thibet, 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 Egean, 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 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° and 55° , 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 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. $30^{\circ} 35'$, long. $51^{\circ} 50'$ 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. $53^{\circ} 30'$. 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° . 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

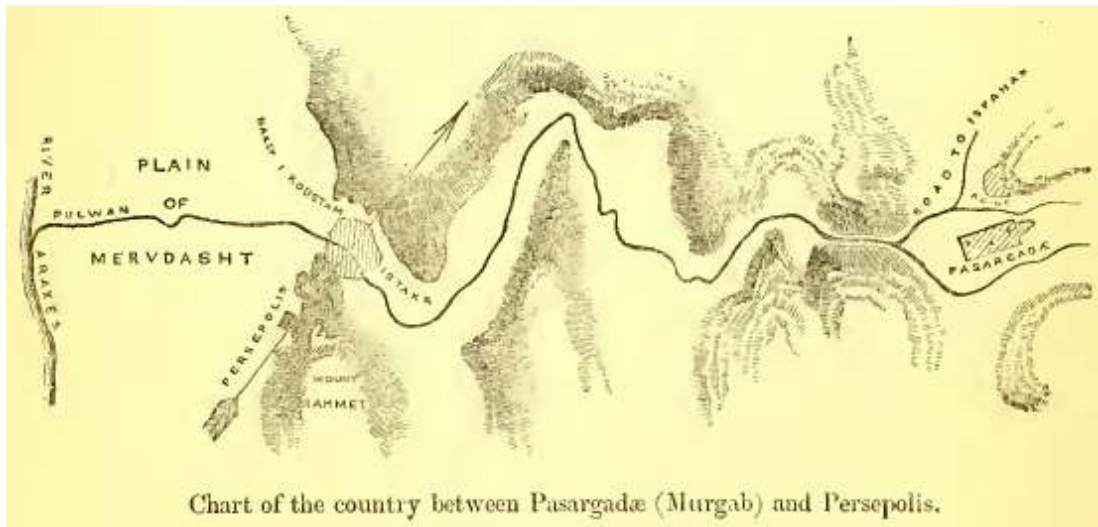
the country, as Lake Famur, near Kazerun, which is about six miles in length, and from half a mile to a mile across.

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. The roads have for the most part been artificially cut in the sides of the precipices, which rise from the streams sometimes to the 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. $30^{\circ} 15'$ long. $53^{\circ} 17'$. 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 Pasargadæ, 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. $39^{\circ} 55'$, long. $56^{\circ} 13'$, and is still one of the chief cities of Persia. Situated, like Pasargadæ 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 Armuzia), 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 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.

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 Kharesm. 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 Furrāh 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 Sattagydiāns, 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 "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 Sattagydians, and the Arachotians. The Thamanaean 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 Sattagydians 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 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° 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 Kerminch 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.

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. Sindh, 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 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 Etrek 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° 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 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 Dagh, 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 Dagh 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° 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 Mosy-noeci, 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 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.