

**THE HISTORY OF INDIA, FROM
THE EARLIEST AGES TO THE FALL
OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY,
AND THE PROCLAMATION OF
QUEEN VICTORIA IN 1858**

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The History of India, from the Earliest Ages to the Fall of the East India Company, and the Proclamation of Queen Victoria in 1858 by Robert Hunter

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ROBERT HUNTER

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**BENARES FROM THE GANGES,
WITH TEMPLES OF THE BRAHMANIC STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE.**

THE
HISTORY OF INDIA,

FROM

THE EARLIEST AGES

TO

THE FALL OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY, AND THE
PROCLAMATION OF QUEEN VICTORIA IN 1858.

BY THE

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Preface.

THE volume now submitted to the British public was penned primarily for use in those Indian missionary seminaries, or "Institutions," with which the name of Dr. Duff will be for ever associated, and which have effected so much good in the East. While the work was in progress, it was suggested that the alteration of a few sentences might adapt it to the higher schools in this country, for which a small History of India was much required. In making the requisite alterations, a question arose whether the first part of the volume, that entitled, "The Hindu Period," should not be greatly curtailed, as parts of it would, no doubt, prove tedious reading to the youths in Britain. It had been purposely presented at great length, from the conviction that the Hindus could not fail to feel interest in a narrative describing the rise and consolidation of their civil and religious polity. On the whole, it was thought better to allow the early chapters to remain unabridged, counselling teachers who might use the volume to omit the parts less interesting in the West, and proceed as soon as possible to the continuous narrative. The omitted portions may be read by some of those who intend ultimately to compete for Indian appointments, and wish, therefore, to gain all the information within their reach regarding the history, philosophy, and religions of ancient India.

The volume now issued must necessarily be, in its main features, a compilation. Of the various authorities consulted in penning the earlier chapters, the chief have been the writings of Professors Horace Hayman Wilson and Max Müller; the Rev. Dr. Wilson of Bombay, and John Muir, Esq., D.C.L., late of the Bengal Civil Service; the *Calcutta Review*; the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of London*; the *Asiatic Researches*; Murray's, Elphinstone's, and Marshman's *Histories of India*; Ferguson's *Handbook of Architecture*; the volume on India in Bohn's Series; the Rev. Joseph Mullens on the *Religious Aspects of the Hindu Philosophy*, &c. The latter half of the volume is mainly founded on Mill's *History of India*, with the continuation by Professor Horace Hayman Wilson, the *Calcutta Review*, Thornton's and Murray's *Histories*, and others.

In regard to the spelling of Indian words, the author has experienced considerable perplexity. While in India, he adopted the system of Sir William Jones, which is in use in the Asiatic and other societies, and, if universally adopted, would establish a consistent and intelligible method of writing Eastern words. But, since returning to Europe, he has seen cause to doubt whether this scientific method will ever gain favour in Britain. The present treatise, therefore, in a great majority of cases, adopts the popular mode of spelling—that used in Government despatches and in the newspapers of the day.

The volume being designed for young persons of fifteen or sixteen, there is in it an occasional touch of pleasantry, which would have been avoided had the author been addressing persons of graver years.

The illustrations have been derived from various sources. Two, the Mahratta and the god Krishna, are from native pictures, purchased in Nagpore; the spirited representation of Hunooman, the monkey god, is from a picture on mica,

the property of the Rev. R. B. Blyth, late of Madras; that of Seringham from a similar one, the property of the Rev. A. B. Campbell of Madras. Of the remaining figures, some are from the Asiatic Researches and the Journal of the Asiatic Society; the others generally recut from figures or woodcuts, the property of the Messrs. Nelson. The author bears cheerful testimony to the skill and fidelity with which Mr. Small has drawn the figures and Mr. Borders cut them on wood.

John Muir, Esq., D.C.L., whose high attainments as an orientalist are so well known, and to whom Scotland and the empire generally are indebted for the Sanscrit chair recently founded in Edinburgh University, did the author the high favour of looking over the chapters on the "Hindu Period" when they were in proof. Some slight modifications have been adopted at the suggestion of Dr. Muir, but it would be unfair to hold that gentleman as committed to any one specific statement made in the work. The Rev. John Braidwood, late of Madras, also kindly looked over the above-named portion of the volume; and the Rev. T. Smith, formerly of Calcutta, and the Rev. R. B. Blyth, formerly of Madras, over the whole.

Still, for the facts stated, and especially for the opinions expressed, the writer holds himself alone responsible. Availing himself of the experience acquired during a residence of upwards of eight years in India, he has written with more freedom than he would otherwise have ventured to employ. However imperfectly he has succeeded, his aim has been historic impartiality. On this account it has at times been necessary to dissent from the policy or the actings of the Anglo-Indian Government; yet, when the exceeding difficulty of its position is taken into account, it has, in the author's judgment, all along, and specially within these later years, deserved much more commendation than

it has ever received. Had its good deeds not greatly exceeded those of a contrary character, it would long ere this have fallen. With all its defects, it is the best Government India has ever known; and had it been overthrown, as the rebels desired, in 1857, untold miseries would long ere this have begun to overspread the land.

It has pleased God, in his wonderful providence, that the vast Indian empire should be governed from this remote island of the sea. It is consequently the duty of all classes in this land to acquaint themselves with the condition of the countless millions in the East living under the sway of the British sceptre. It is the earnest desire and prayer of the writer, that the volume now sent forth may, to some small extent, at least, aid in interesting the young people of our country in the remote Angle-Indian empire; so that, when they grow up, they may in their several spheres assist in promoting its temporal welfare, and taking measures to dissipate that moral and religious darkness which casts over the eternal destiny of its people so fearful a gloom.

R. H.

Edinburgh, May 1863.