

**THE RIVERS OF PARADISE AND
CHILDREN OF SHEM: WITH A COPIOUS
APPENDIX, AND A DISQUISITION
CONCERNING THE EXPEDITION OF
SESOSTRIS INTO INDIA**

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The Rivers of Paradise and Children of Shem: With a Copious Appendix, and a Disquisition Concerning the Expedition of Sesostris Into India by William Stirling

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WILLIAM STIRLING

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SKETCH OF PLACES REFERRED TO BY MAJOR STIRLING.



NOTE.— The Vindhya Mountains rise to the height of 1000 or 1500 feet between Mandao & Deogarha, and the Nerbudda, and run parallel to the river about 500 miles.

Longitude of Baroach 72 . 55 East Latitude 21 . 45 North.

Longitude of Mhowchur 75 . 30 East Latitude 22 . 15 North.

THE
Rivers of Paradise

AND

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AND

A DISQUISITION

CONCERNING

THE EXPEDITION OF SESOSTRIS
INTO INDIA.

BY MAJOR WILLIAM STIRLING.

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(continued)

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CHAPTER I.

I WILL not presume to disturb any of the many suppositions respecting the site of the Garden of Eden, far less to pronounce whether it was indeed a garden, or the whole creation, when man was in the image of his Maker, pure and undefiled—when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy: but I feel myself more at liberty to speak of the localities of the rivers of Paradise, as something has been revealed to us respecting them; and we shall find, that the regions represented by the rivers which I shall name, were the scenes of such important events, as to give them in Sacred History a very prominent distinction.

In naming the Euphrates, and the Tigris, or perhaps the Jordan,* as the rivers of the 14th verse of the 2d

* By, I may say, a known geological convulsion, the Dead Sea is 1300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and the course of the Jordan eastward and towards Assyria stopped—*Boat and Caravan.*

Gen. xi. 10.—In the mystical language of the East, the Brahmins, at the temple of Mahabelishwar,^c assert that a certain number of the rivers of the surrounding country, including the Kistna, have their sources within the precincts of the temple; but they could not show them *all* to me, some not being visible to the natural eye. See Mandoo in the Appendix.

^c Maha-great, Bel-Belus.—Ishwar-Lord. The great god Belus. I requested the Brahmins to show me the image of the great god Bel, on which they pointed to the emblem of Siva, the lingam. They are one and the same.

chapter of Genesis, I may refer to the numerous events recorded of Babylon, Nineveh, Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Judæa; and when I name the Nile as the Gihon* which compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia,† we will remember how much Egypt and all the regions of Cush partook of the Scriptural events. I now come to the Pison, a river which commentators have hitherto scarcely ventured to guess at, but which will receive from me, I hope, a befitting notice; in which I shall endeavour to prove that the region of the Nerbudda, one of the great and sacred rivers of India, was the ancient dwelling-place of the children of Shem, and the birth-place of Abraham, and that that river was the Pison. I will endeavour to show also that Ophir and Havilah, and Tarshish, were in the same region.

* See the Map of Africa for the great extent of the land compassed by the Nile. Bruce's sources are in Abyassinia, which they literally almost compass round, while the *white river*, the true Nile, has its sources near the Equator, and traverses the Ethiopia of the ancients.

† Cush in the Hebrew.

Cush, Misraim, Phut, and Canaan, the sons of Ham, the wicked son of Noah, peopled, besides other regions, that of Ethiopia. See the part fulfilment of the curse in the degraded state of its people as recorded in Scripture.—Jeremiah xxxviii. 7. Now when Ebedmelech, the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs—Acts viii. 27.—Behold a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of authority. By Amos, ix. 7.—The children of the Ethiopians are of value in the sight of God (like the rest of His creatures).

CHAPTER II.

THE river Nerbudda, the Pison of the antediluvian world, rises near the tropic of Cancer, and trending slightly to the southward in its westerly course of seven hundred miles, has its confluence with the sea,* twenty-six miles beyond the Baroach of the moderns and the Barygaza of the Greeks. Although the Deluge swept over it, and many geological changes have taken place in its course, yet its fountains and its bed seem to be the same as in the beginning. The deep rich diluvium of the banks of its estuary, and its cliffs,† higher up, of large rounded stones, pebbles, sand, fossils, and other diluvial remains prove the catastrophe, and show how well the mighty river has striven for, and obtained, its own, again.

I shall afterwards speak of the region of the Nerbudda as the birth-place of Abram; and I will now proceed to show on what grounds I conclude that that river was the Pison.

* Forbes' Oriental Memoirs.

† In the Transactions of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Geographical Society for Feb. 1841, some notices by me of the geological features of the Nerbudda near Mhesbur are published. The fertility of the rich black deep soil around Baroach is known to all who take an interest in those countries. The *Swal's* cotton of commerce is mostly grown towards Baroach and the estuary of the Nerbudda. The large rounded stones of the cliffs and of the river are like those of Budleigh Salterton, Devonshire, but of closer grain. There is a fine specimen, highly polished, in my cabinet.

“The name of the first is Pison, that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah where there is gold.” Gen. ii. 11.

It will be seen, by the 10th chapter of Genesis, that a grandson of Shem was Mash, the same who, in 1 Chronicles, 1st chapter, 17th verse, is written Meshech. In the 30th verse of the former chapter it is said, that the children of Shem had their dwelling from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the east, and it will further be seen by the 10th chapter that Ophir and Havilah, and Mash, or Meshec, the children or descendants of Shem gave names to countries or districts, as was the custom in early days.*

We know that Ophir and Havilah were gold countries, and that there is a most ancient city of Mheyshur† on the Nerbudda. I think from what I have written and from what will follow, it will be admitted that Mheyshur is the Mesha of Scripture, and that Ophir and Havilah, the locations of the children of Shem, were thereabouts.

Baroach, the Barigaza‡ of the Greeks, was the port of

* Psalm lxxix. 11.—They call their lands after their own names.

† The name of Meshur is variously written, thus—

By Sir John Malcolm—Mheysch-ur—Mheys-ur—and Mheys-ir.

By Colonel Tod—Mahsis-ur—Mahes-war.

By Colonel Blacker—Mheys-ur.

By Colonel Dow—Mahois-ur.

By the Bombay Calendar—Myhesur.

Mundlais-ur, or Mundlais-ir, a considerable town is near Mheshur.

It is likely that Ur Chasdim simply means “The City of the Chaldeans;” Ur being the Babylonian for Ir.—*Ninveh and its Palaces*, page 41.

‡ Barigaza signifies the water of wealth—Bari water, gaza wealth—riches, treasure, or treasury.—Sanskrit or Persian.—*A. Hamilton*.