

Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea on the west.

The Coast Waters, Capes, Islands, and Peninsulas are given at the foot of the Map of Asia.

Area.—632. Asia is twice as large as North America, and includes one-third the land surface of the Earth.

Surface.—633. Asia has the highest mountains, the lowest valleys, the broadest table-lands, and the most extensive plains in the world. In America the highlands extend north and south, near the coasts; in Asia we find them stretching east and west through the middle of the continent.

634. The highlands of Central Asia consist of a broad table-land, with the *Himalaya Mountains* on the south, the *Altai Mountains* on the north, and two other parallel mountain walls through the interior.

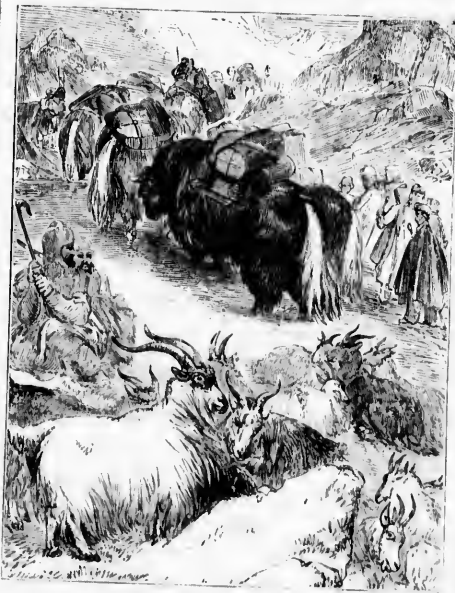
635. The *Himalayas*, on the north of Hindostan, are the highest mountains in the world. The highest peak, called *Mount Everest*, is five and a half miles above the level of the sea. In ascending these mountains from the south, we should first find dense forests, similar to those on the lower slopes of the *Andes*. Here are many kinds of palm trees, one of which is called the *fan palm*. It is remarkable for its broad leaves, a single leaf being large enough to cover a dozen men. We should find here many large and ferocious wild beasts, such as lions, tigers, leopards, and hyenas. Beyond the forests are shrubs and bright-coloured flowers; then wild rough rocks and everlasting snows.

636. These mountains are more difficult to climb than almost any others, they are so steep and so rent by deep gorges, where the foaming streams come rushing down towards the plains. Far up on the mountains, shut in on all sides, we find the beautiful valley of *Cashmere*, so celebrated for its goats, from whose fine hair costly shawls are manufactured.

637. North of the *Himalaya Mountains* is a highland country called *Tibet*. The lowest valleys here are two miles above the sea-level. This country is so near the Equator that it has warm summers; but on account of its great elevation the winters are extremely cold.

638. Further north, beyond the *Kuen-lun Mountains*, is the great table-land, extending hundreds and hundreds of miles. In some parts it is covered with loose sand, and in others with rocks.

639. The most important mountains in the west of Asia are the *Caucasus*, the *Taurus*, the *Elburz*, the *Hindoo Koosh*, and the *Mountains of Lebanon*.



636. CROSSING THE HIMALAYAS.

640. On the north of the *Altai Mountains* is the vast lowland plain of *Siberia*, sloping towards the *Arctic Ocean*.

Rivers.—641. The chief rivers in the north of Asia are the *Obi*, the *Yenisei*, and the *Lena* in *Siberia*. Like the *Mackenzie* in *North America*, they are frozen over during a large part of the year.

The *Amoor*, the *Houng Ho*, and the *Yang-tse-Kiang*, flowing easterly in *China*, are the most important rivers in Asia. The *Yang-tse-Kiang* equals the *Mississippi* in length.

The great rivers in the south of Asia are the *Mekong*, *Meinam*, *Irrawaddy*, the *Brahmapootra*, the *Ganges*, the *Indus*, the *Tigris*, and the *Euphrates*.

642. The *Ganges* and *Brahmapootra* rise far apart on the cold high *Himalayas*; but after rushing down the steep slopes,