

"The garden abounded with a large yellow flower peculiar to India, the smaller varieties of which are used to ornament houses in Calcutta at Christmas-time. It is not quite so large as a dahlia, but somewhat similar in appearance. When snow-balling had been described to the king as well as we could describe it, he pulled three or four of these yellow flowers, and threw them at the librarian, who happened to be the most distant of the party. Like good courtiers, all followed the royal example, and soon every one was pelting right and left. These yellow flowers were our snow-balls, and we all entered into the game with hearty good-will. The king bore his share in the combat right royally, discharging three missiles for one that was aimed at him. He laughed and enjoyed the sport amazingly. Before we had concluded, we were all a mass of yellow leaves; they stuck about in our hair and clothes, and on the king's hat, in a tenacious way. What the gardeners must have thought of the matter, when they came to set the garden to rights again, we did not stop to conjecture: it was enough that the king was amused.—He had found out a new pleasure, and enjoyed it as long as those yellow flowers continued in bloom."

MEKRAN.

The geography of many parts of Asia is but little understood. Not having much to do with those distant regions, we are too apt to content ourselves with simply knowing their names and their general position on the map, without a word of inquiry about the face of the country, its mountains, rivers, lakes, harbors, its natural productions, or the character and habits of the people.

The Province of *Mercan*, or, as it is more commonly written, *Mekran*, is one of those remote countries, of which little is probably known to the majority of our readers. It is in the southeast part of the empire of Persia, and stretches along the Indian Ocean, from Cape Jask, near the entrance of the Persian Gulf, to the western borders of Hindostan. It was known to the Ancient Greeks as *Gedrosia*, and its inhabitants or those of them who inhabited the coast, were called "Ichthyophagi," or fish-caters—as if it were anything strange for people on the sea-shore to eat fish.

Alexander, with his army, attempted to return through *Gedrosia*. In the country of the *Orizæ*, who were a semi-barbarous people, the army suffered so much from hunger, thirst, and fatigue, that about 100,000 of them perished.—In *Gedrosia*, those who survived found plenty of everything, and the army was soon replenished and equipped. Everything seemed to yield to the iron will of the conqueror. But he had now arrived at the summit of his glory, and was soon to fall. In *Caramania*, the land of the vine, as the name signifies, he began to lose his strength, by losing his command over himself. He gave himself up to indulgence, and his troops followed his example. His march was a constant carousal.

In the midst of his revels, however, his heart was often filled with intense anxiety for his fleet, which he supposed to be lost. But *Nearchus* was a skillful navigator, as well as an able general. He sailed from the *Indus*, across the *Erythræum Sea*, now called the *Indian Ocean*; passed into the *Persian Gulf* (*Sinas Persicus*), and arrived at *Harmusia*, or *Ormus*. He there learned that *Alexander* was only five days' journey from him, and immediately started with four attendants to meet him. Overjoyed to see his faithful general, and be assured of the safety of his fleet, the monarch ordered him to re-embark and proceed up the *Euphrates* to *Babylon*, where he would soon rejoin him.

In making this voyage, *Nearchus* skirted the entire coast of *Mekran*, and doubtless made acquaintance with the "Fish-caters," for in those days they rarely ventured out of sight of land, and made very frequent harbors.

Caramania, vine land, is now called *Kerman*. *Persis*, or *Persia* proper, is *Farsistan*, and *Susiana*, *Chusistan*, supposed to be derived from *Cush*, one of the descendants of *Ham*, and to have retained the same general name from the earliest ages. *Cush* was the father of *Nimrod*, who is represented as the founder of the *Assyrian* empire.

Mekran, as described at the present time, is divided into two parts by a range of mountains running east and west. The northern part is known as *Beloochistan*, the country of the *Beloochees*. Perhaps we might rather say that little is known

of it, except its name. It is said to be fertile and populous, and to abound in dates and other Eastern fruits.

In the southeast corner of the province, bordering on *India*, is the district of *Russia*. It is almost circular in form and nearly surrounded by mountains, or rather by one stupendous chain, which, like a monster serpent, encircles and incloses it.

This inclosed valley is flat and sandy, but remarkably fertile in every kind of grain. Two small rivers, rising in the mountains near *Bayla*, the capital, traverse the valley and find their way into the sea at *Somneance*.

In the north part of the province there is a district called *Gurmsyl*, very remarkable both for the face of the country and for its great fertility. It is a long, narrow valley, like the bed of a dry river with very high banks, which depends for all its fertility upon the overflow of the *Heermund*, discharging its surplus waters into this valley.

In *Western Mekran* the mountains run nearly parallel with the shore, at the distance of eight or ten miles. At capes *Jask* and *Choubar*, however, they approach very near the coast, and present some very singularly bold promontories.

The rivers of *Mekran* present a singular appearance in the summer months, being almost entirely dry. One of them, called the *Neamkhor*, or *Salt River*, is almost as salt as the sea. The *Bunpoor*, running westerly, traverses the fertile plains of *Lushar*, and after a course of about 200 miles, loses itself in the sand, about forty miles west of the city of *Bunpoor*.

There are mines of lead and iron in some sections of the country, which, if the people had any commercial enterprise might be very valuable. Gold and silver have also been found in the mountains, as well as copper, tin, antimony, sulphur and other sources of wealth and comfort.

The inhabitants are of many different tribes, having independent chiefs. The *Beloochees* are the most numerous. They speak the language of *Persia*, corrupted with that of the *Scinde*, which is the most westerly of the province of *Hindostan*.

THE COLONIAL EMPIRE OF GREAT BRITAIN.—The colonies of Great Britain comprise altogether 3,350,000 square miles, and cost us for management