

the geographical knowledge of the Greeks was doubled in extent in the course of a few years. In order to define more accurately that which we have termed the mass of materials added to the sciences of natural philosophy and physical geography by the different campaigns and by the colonial institutions of Alexander, I would first refer to the diversity in the form of the earth's crust, which has, however, only been more specially made known to us by the experiments and researches of recent times. In the countries through which he passed, low lands, deserts, and salt steppes devoid of vegetation (as on the north of the Asferah chain, which is a continuation of the Thian-schan, and the four large cultivated alluvial districts of the Euphrates, the Indus, Oxus, and Jaxartes), contrasted with snow-clad mountains, having an elevation of nearly 20,000 feet. The Hindoo-Coosh, or Indian Caucasus of the Macedonians, which is a continuation of the North Thibetian Kuen-lun, west of the south transverse chain of Bolor, is divided in its prolongation toward Herat into two great chains bounding Kafiristan,* the southern of which is the loftier of the two. Alexander passed over the plateau of Bamian, which lies at an elevation of about 8500 feet, and in which men supposed they had found the cave of Prometheus,† to the crest of the Kohibaba, and beyond Kabura along the Choes, crossing the Indus somewhat to the north of the present Attok. A comparison between the low Tauric chain, with which the Greeks were familiar, and the eternal snow surmounting the range of the Hindoo-Coosh, and which, according to Burnes, begins at an elevation of 13,000 feet, must have given occasion to a recognition, on a more colossal scale, of the superposition of different zones of climate and vegetation. In active minds direct contact with the elementary world produces the most vivid impression on the senses. And thus we find that Strabo has described, in the most perfectly truthful characters, the passage across the mountainous district of the Paropanisadæ, where the army with difficulty cleared a passage through the snow, and where arborescent vegetation had ceased.‡

* I have considered these intricate orographical relations in my *Asie Centrale*, t. ii., p. 429-434.

† Lassen, in the *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenl.*, bd. i., s. 230.

‡ The country between Bamian and Ghorî. See Carl Zimmermann's excellent orographical work *Uebersichtsblatt von Afghanistan*, 1842. (Compare Strabo, lib. xv., p. 725; Diod. Sicul., xvii., 82; Meun, *Meletem. Hist.*, 1839, p. 25 and 31; Ritter, *Ueber Alexanders Feldzug am Indischen Kaukasus*, in the *Abhandl. der Berl. Akad.* of the year