

105° east longitude. The height is nowhere considerable ; and the formation being singularly monotonous—consisting, in fact, of long flat ridges and narrow table-lands—the Altaï exhibits but rarely those majestic landscapes which are the glory of the Alps or the Himalaya. They abound, however, in mineral wealth ; in silver, copper, and iron—in porphyry, syenite, serpentine, jasper, and coal. The Siberian region surpasses the Andes in the extent and value of its gold mines.

But of all the grand Asiatic ranges, the most remarkable in height, extent, and natural grandeur, is the Himalaya.

It consists of three distinct parts—the Hindu Kush, or Indian Caucasus, extending from the Paropamisan Mountains of Afghanistan to Cashmere, the “land of song and roses ;” the Himalaya proper, stretching from Cashmere to Bhotan ; and lastly, the Bhotan and Assam Himalayas : the three forming one magnificent and uninterrupted chain, the loftiest in the world.

The Hindu Kush, so named from a lofty peak north of the city of Cabul, spreads its offsets over the wild countries of Kafferistan, Koonduz, and Budakshan. Defining its boundaries with some degree of exactitude, we may say that it runs from the Upper Indus on the east to the Bamian Pass on the west ; and lies between the 34th and 36th parallels, and the 68th and 75th east meridians. Its loftiest summit is upwards of 20,000 feet above the sea-level.

The Himalaya* extends from the 75th meridian to 95° 40' E., a distance of nearly 1500 miles. No less than forty-five of its peaks are known to exceed 23,000 feet in height. Its passes are all above the altitude of Mont Blanc. Its southern slopes, which are the best known, consist of three distinct regions—the *Tarai*, a grassy, marshy plain ; the forest belt of *Saul Wood* ; and the *Dhuns*, a tract of wreck and detritus, lying immediately at the foot of the true mountains, which raise their sublime peaks far, far above, in a sky of unclouded azure.

* From Sanscrit, *hima*, “snow,” and *ālaya*, “an abode,”—that is, the abode of snow.