

At 6000 feet the snow falls regularly every winter.

On the Southern Himalayas, the limit of perpetual snow does not descend below 16,200 feet; on the Northern, it rises to 17,500 feet, owing to the dry atmosphere of Tibet.

Vast glaciers occur in every part of the range above the snow-line, and astound the spectator who ventures into their noiseless solitudes by a weird and truly unearthly grandeur.

Owing to the favourable climatic conditions which the great range enjoys, trees and cultivated grains flourish at the extraordinary elevation of 11,800 feet, shrubs at 15,200 feet. The tea-plant grows everywhere along the southern slope to the height of 5000 feet. Tigers ascend to 11,000 feet, and leopards to 15,000 feet. The herds find an abundant pasturage as high as 18,000 feet.

Above the rich valleys of Nepaul and Bhotan, the Himalaya still maintains its majestic supremacy, occasionally ascending to an altitude of 28,000 feet. In Bhotan it declines to the plains with sudden rapidity, the fall being equal to 1000 feet in a mile. "The valleys are crevices so deep and narrow, and the mountains that hang over them in menacing cliffs are so lofty, that these abysses are shrouded in perpetual gloom, except where the rays of a vertical sun penetrate their depths. From the steepness of the descent the rivers shoot down with the swiftness of an arrow, filling the caverns with foam and the air with mist. At the very base of this wild region lies the elevated and peaceful valley of Bhotan, vividly green, and shaded by magnificent forests. Another rapid descent of 1000 feet leads to the plain of the Ganges."

To the north of Assam the elevation of the Himalaya is still extraordinary, but the climate is mild, the valleys are fertile, and corn and fruit ripen at heights which, in other regions, even under the Equator, would be buried in perpetual snow.

The mean elevation of the range is placed by Humboldt at 15,700 feet.

The principal formation is stratified crystalline rocks, especially gneiss, with large veins of granite, and immense beds of quartz. Be-