



THE HIMALAYAS.

ASIA.

Area, including Malaysia, about 17,213,380 square miles, about one-third of the land surface of the globe; greatest extent from east to west, 5,200 miles, and from north to south, 5,300 miles; population, about 795,000,000.

Asia is bounded on the north by the Arctic Ocean; on the west by the Ural Mountains, Ural River, Caspian Sea, Mount Caucasus, Black Sea, Sea of Marmora, Mediterranean, and the Red Sea; on the south by the Indian Ocean; and on the east by the Pacific Ocean.

It is the largest and most populous of the great divisions of the globe, and is particularly interesting as having been the first abode of man, and the scene of most of the important events recorded in the Bible.

Its great physical features are as remarkable as its extent, the rivers being of great length, and only equalled by some of the largest in America; while its mountains are the highest in the world, and its high table-lands are nowhere equalled for their vast extent or height above the sea.

The two great chains of the *Himalaya* and *Altai Mountains*, extending across the broadest part of the continent from west to east, under various names, form the most striking feature of the continent, and divide it into three regions, viz., a great northern plain, sloping towards the Arctic Ocean, through which the *Obi*, *Yenisei*, and *Lena* rivers flow; a central mountainous region, which is subdivided by other mountain chains; and a southern slope towards the Indian Ocean, divided into three great peninsulas. Between the two great ranges the slope is mainly eastward, and this vast valley contains the minor parallel chains of the *Thian Shan*, *Kuenlun*, and *Karakorum* or *Mustagh*, and the mountains of China, forming the

basins of the great rivers *Amoor*, *Hoang-ho*, and *Yangtse-kiang*; a smaller western slope is shown by the course of the *Amoo* and *Sir*, flowing into the Sea of Aral. From the Himalayas and their continuations east and west is a southern slope, as shown by the courses of the rivers *Mekong* or *Camboja*, *Saluen*, *Irrawady*, and others in Farther India; the *Ganges*, *Brahmaputra*, and *Indus*, in Hindostan; and the *Tigris* and *Euphrates* in Asiatic Turkey.

Besides the great chains already mentioned are the *Yunling Mountains*, between China and Thibet; the *Hindoo Koosh*, a prolongation of the *Karakorum* range, running along the north-westerly boundary of Kafiristan into Afghanistan; the *Elburz* range, extending from the *Hindoo Koosh* to the southern extremity of the Caspian Sea; the mountains of *Armenia*, among which is the celebrated *Mount Ararat*; the parallel chains of the *Taurus* and *Anti-Taurus Mountains*, in Asia Minor; and from the eastern extremity of the *Taurus* range, the mountains of *Lebanon* extend southward in two ranges along the coast of the Mediterranean, and are continued by smaller chains to the *Sinaitic Mountains*, at the head of the *Red Sea*.

The *Himalayas* are the highest mountains of Asia and of the world, about one hundred and twenty of their peaks rising over 20,000 feet in height. *Mount Everest* is 29,002 feet, and *Kanchinjunga* 28,156 feet high. The *Karakorum* or *Mustagh* range is another stupendous chain, scarcely inferior to the *Himalayas* in magnitude.