



INDIAN PROCESSION.

ASIA.

LESSON CXXIX.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY.

1. ASIA is the largest of the five grand divisions, and is the home of more than half the population of the globe.

2. The northern part of Asia consists of vast lowland plains; the central, southern, and western portions rise into immense and lofty plateaus, which are crossed by the most elevated mountain-chains on the surface of the earth.

3. The loftiest range is that of the Himalay'a. Mount Kunchinjün'ga, in this range, is 28,176 feet high, and is the most elevated land on the globe.

4. The climate of Asia varies greatly: in the north, it is intensely cold; in the middle, it is cold and dry (owing to its elevation); and in the south, it is hot and moist.

5. Throughout all southern and southwestern Asia, the rains fall with extreme violence at particular seasons of the year. At Calcut'ta, the mean annual quantity of rain amounts to 81 inches.

6. The principal articles of cultivation and of commerce are rice, barley, millet, and wheat; the vine, olive, tea-plant, and poppy; coffee, and sugar-cane; the orange, lemon, mulberry, and tamarind; indigo, pepper, and cinnamon.

7. Among the wild animals, in the south are the elephant, rhinoceros, tiger, leopard, panther, jackal, and apes; in the north, fur-bearing animals, as the sable, ermine, fox, etc.

8. The birds of this division are, in general, noted for their beautiful plumage; they include paroquets, parrots, the peacock, golden and silver pheasants, etc.

9. The crocodile, python, and cobra-de-capello are the most noted reptiles. Crocodiles are very numerous in the River Gan'ges. The cobras are venomous serpents; the pythons are like the boa-constrictors of the New World.

10. Minerals are very abundant. Diamonds are found in Hindoostan' and Sibe'ria; other precious stones, in India and Sibe'ria; gold, in Sibe'ria, India, Chinese' Em'pire, and Japan'; silver, in Sibe'ria, Chi'na, Eastern India, Japan', and Turkey; platinum, in Sibe'ria; tin, in Eastern India and Chi'na; copper, iron, lead, in several countries; quicksilver, in Japan', Chinese' Em'pire, and Ceylon'; coal, in Chi'na and Hindoostan', and in other parts; salt, in most countries.

11. Japan', Chi'na, and Hindoostan', are the most populous countries in the world; the other parts of Asia are not thickly peopled; and Sibe'ria is remarkably destitute of population.

Questions.—1. What is said of Asia? 2. Describe its surface. 3. Loftiest range? Mount Kunchinjün'ga? 4. Climate? 5. Rain? 6. Articles of culture? 7. Wild animals? 8. Birds? 9. Reptiles? 10. Minerals? 11. Populous countries?