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INDIA

THE WONDERLAND OF THE EAST

[*Reprinted (with Preface) from Vol. III. of REFLECTIONS
ON SOME LEADING FACTS AND IDEAS OF HISTORY;
THEIR MEANING AND INTEREST*]

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PREFACE

IT is with great diffidence that I publish, with no 'previous' criticism, and with 'all its imperfections on its head,' the third volume of my Historical Synopsis. The attempt to give even the roughest and most tentative selection of historical 'landmarks' is attended with ever-increasing difficulty as one descends the stream of time. And though dealing with what I call 'classical history,' I have been obliged, for reasons which I cannot fully explain, to rush this volume through the press with scarcely time to verify the chronology. One reason for this obviously injudicious haste is that I am really anxious to finish the series, and choose some one period for work in the time-honoured 'academic' style.* I was obliged, by loyalty to my own principles, to begin work on the lines laid down in the preliminary volume, and I think that my series, even as far as it has already gone, has shown up some periods of history which call loudly for earnest and patient work at authorities and 'monuments,' so as to clear up doubts and difficulties.† For instance,

* I think it is scarcely fair to call the work a 'compilation.' I have written most of it from memory, sometimes with a dreadful suspicion that I was reproducing the *ipsissima verba* of my favourite authors, but for the most part passing everything through the 'crucible' of an 'individuality' which often seems almost too pronounced!

† Other necessary work loudly calling for attention is that of amending incorrect popular judgments about illustrious personalities.