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RECOLLECTIONS
OF
NORTHERN INDIA;
WITH
OBSERVATIONS

ON THE
ORIGIN, CUSTOMS, AND MORAL SENTIMENTS
OF THE HINDOOS, AND REMARKS ON THE COUNTRY, AND PRINCIPAL
PLACES ON THE GANGES, &c.

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according to Hinduism, of the deity, who is many, but yet essentially one. Most of Bengal is formed of mere stripes of fine alluvial land between the different branches or outlets of this noble river, and is thus intersected by the numerous channels by which the Gunga flows into the sea, so that, in almost every place, it is possessed of abundance of water carriage, and plentifully supplied with great varieties of fish. The tide runs up all these branches of the river to a great distance. The Hughli, the branch on which Calcutta stands, is the most westerly; while the largest, or main branch, is the most easterly, and, flowing by the city of Dhaka, unites with the main stream of the Bramhaputra before it enters the Bay of Bengal. The mouths of the Gunga, therefore, including the Bramhaputra—or, as it is called below its confluence, the Megna—indent the whole coast for about two hundred miles. The lower parts of Bengal are usually called the Sunderbans; a name derived from a tree of the name of Sunder, found in these parts, and the Sanscrit word, Bana—a forest. The whole district, as we have already noticed, consists of narrow stripes of land, formed by the deposit of the river, that run out towards the sea in points which terminate in sand banks, still in the course of formation, and probably destined, before long, to be covered, in their turn, by mud, and afterwards by a rank vegetation. The greater part of the Sunderbans is yet uncultivated, but very far from being untenanted.

Crocodiles, such as abound in the Nile, as well as the more common species of alligators, are here to be met with in great numbers, and also tigers and rhinoceroses, huge boa constrictors and other monsters, with various kinds of formidable wild animals, not usually found near the haunts of men. Myriads of waterfowl of almost every kind, usually to be met with in such places, from the gigantic adjutant crane, down to the smallest species of waders, that prey on the more minute insect tribes, luxuriate in this hotbed of nature. Creeping and flying insects make every spot seem instinct with life, both night and day, changing watches according to their natures, so as always to be present to torment.

The buzzing of the torturing mosquitoes keeps one awake through