PREFACE.

The essays comprised in these two volumes were written at different times, under different circumstances, to meet particular exigencies, without any idea of their ever forming a connected work. Enquiries, however, are often made for copies of some of them, but most of the publications in which they first appeared are now out of print, and cannot be obtained. In printing the essays in their present collected form, the immediate object, therefore, is to make them easily accessible. It is believed also that as contributions towards the elucidation of the ancient and mediaeval history of the Indo-Aryans, a subject to which the attention of the learned in Europe is now so earnestly directed, they will prove of some use. Although much written upon of late, the subject is yet very far from being exhausted. And, to quote the language of Milton, "No man, who hath tasted of learning but will confess the many ways of profiting by those, who, not contented with stale receipts, are able to manage and set forth new positions to the world: and, were they but as the dust and cinders of our feet, so long, as in that notion, they may yet serve to polish and brighten the armoury of truth, even for that respect, they were not utterly to be cast away."

The essay on the origin of Indian Architecture was written in 1870 by way of a protest against
the opinion which was then getting very common to the effect that the Hindus had first learnt the art of building in stone from their Greek conquerors. Mr. Fergusson criticised it in 1871, in the pages of the 'Indian Antiquary.' It subsequently appeared as the first chapter of my work on the 'Antiquities of Orissa'; and a second criticism followed in Mr. Fergusson's 'History of Indian and Eastern Architecture.' My rejoinder appeared in my work on Buddha-Gayá, and, in now reprinting the original essay, I have thought fit to embody in it the substance of all the later discussions. Mr. Fergusson's remarks have not been of a comprehensive character, dealing with the subject in all its bearings, such as the public had a right to expect from a ripe scholar and antiquarian of his standing. He seems to overlook, if not to ignore and repudiate, historical evidence, and to confine himself exclusively to the interpretation of ancient lithic remains. Even when he has referred to ancient records, he has not shown that fairness and frankness which were to have been expected from him. Thus, in his most recent work, 'The Câvē Temples of India,' (p. 29,) after quoting a short passage from Fragment 25 of Megasthenes, he says: "Notwithstanding this, Bābu Rájendralâla Mitra in his work on Buddha Gayá, pp. 167 and 168, asserts that the walls of the city were of brick, and as his authority for this quotes the passage from Megasthenes above referred to. Besides being in brick he adds (p. 268), apparently on his own authority, that they were 30 feet in height. In so far
as the testimony of a trustworthy eye-witness is concerned, this statement of Megasthenes is entirely at variance with the Bābu’s contention, for the use of stone generally for architectural purposes in India before Alexander’s time; and pro tanto confirms the statements made above in the text.” Now it so happens that I did not refer to the passage he quotes, nor did I, on my “own authority,” assign 30 feet to the height of the walls of Palibothra. As pointed out on pp. 45—46, I quoted from Fragment 26, and gave the usual reference; my critic thought fit not to verify my quotation, but under cover of an “apparently” to denounce me for imaginary shortcomings. Adverting to my wish not to allow my proof sheets to be criticised before I had finally corrected them, he says: ‘This, for his own sake, I trust, he will do, for as they now stand they will do him no credit as an archaeologist or a controversialist, and he will eventually be forced to retract nearly all he has said in the latter capacity. So far as I am capable of forming an opinion on the subject, the conclusions he arrives at as to the age of the caves are entirely erroneous, and he does not pretend that his explanations of the sculptures are derived either from local traditions, or Buddhist literature, merely that they are evolved from his own inner consciousness. Others may form a different opinion from that I have arrived at regarding his interpretations of the scenes depicted in them; to me they appear only as an idle waste of misplaced ingenuity and hardly worthy of serious
consideration.” (p. 58). Again; "But his ambition to be considered an archaeologist of the European type, led him to neglect a task for which he was pre-eminently fitted, and to waste his time instead in inventing improbable myths to explain the sculptures in the caves.” (p. 60). Such criticisms and abuse pure and simple have been, in regard to me, common enough in his writings for the last ten years, since I had the misfortune to dissent from his opinion regarding the Greek origin of Indian Architecture, and I do not wonder at them. They are, however, by no means ancillary to the ascertainment of truth, nor in any way remarkable as specimens of smart, sensational criticisms. After the samples collected by Disraeli and at a later date by Mr. Jennings, they are tame and common-place enough; only for the sake of Indian archaeology, in the field of which I am a humble labourer, I could wish they had never been indicted. All ideas of literary amenity apart, sneers and revilings have never proved effectual substitutes for argument. They do not even suffice to suppress adverse opinion.

Mr. Fergusson's most recent theory on the subject of Indian Architecture, as given in his last work, runs thus: "It may, of course, be disputed whether or not it was, in consequence of hints received from the Greeks that the Indians first adopted stone for architectural purposes; but the coincidence is certain, and in the present state of our knowledge may be looked upon as an established fact.
At the same time though it is almost equally certain that stone was used in India as a building material for engineering purposes and for foundations, yet it is quite certain that nothing that can properly be called architecture is to be found there till considerably after Alexander's time." (p. 29). If I understand this passage aright, divested of its cloud of words, it means that the Hindus knew the art of building before the time of Alexander, and learnt architecture proper, or the decoration of buildings with carved ornaments and mouldings, after their contact with the Greeks. If this be the meaning, I have attained the best part of what I have hitherto contended for. I have always used the word architecture in its ordinary dictionary meaning of 'the art or science of building,' and not in the æsthetic sense of ornamentation of buildings, as distinct from the mere mechanical or engineering art of piling stones or bricks for making houses. That in his earlier writings Mr. Fergusson also used it in the same sense is abundantly evident from the quotations given in the article, and I have no reason to doubt. In availing himself now of the elasticity and plasticity of the word, he has resorted to the best means available to him to get out of an untenable position. It will now rest with him to show that those who could build with stone towers 85 feet square at the base and 28 feet high, could not design carvings or mouldings, and that when they once saw such carvings and mouldings with the Greeks, instead of copying them, they invented a style exclusively their own.
The article on the Funeral Ceremony in ancient India, when first published, was intended to reproduce the ceremony as enjoined in the Áraṅyaka of the Black Yajur Veda. It has now been extended by some remarks regarding the ceremony that was probably current before that, and also by a note on the origin of the myth about Kerberos, which appears to have been connected in some way or other with the most ancient rite of obsequies.

The history of the Sena Rájás of Bengal was originally published in two independent papers, at different times. To obviate the inconvenience of frequent cross references, these have now been amalgamated into one paper under the title of the Pála and the Sena Rájás of Bengal.

The paper on the Bhoja Rájá of Dhár, published some eighteen years ago, led to considerable discussion, in course of which General Alexander Cunningham pointed out several mistakes and misapprehensions on my part. I have now thankfully acknowledged the corrections suggested by him.

The other essays now appear mainly in the form in which they were first published. Had I the opportunity to write them anew, I should have liked to have altered the forms of some, the style of expression in others, and the opinions and colourings in a few cases. The necessary leisure was, however, wanting, and it was thought that it would be better to reprint them at once as they were, than to wait for a time which might not come at all. Positive errors have
been in all cases corrected, and I have taken the liberty to make some additions, modifications, and omissions in accordance with my present knowledge of the subjects to which they refer.

8 Maniktollah, September 6, 1881.