

Preface to Volume II

It's a poor memory that only works backwards.

- Alice in Wonderland (White Queen).

Significance of the past emerges if it gives meaning and context to uncertain world. Similarly the past can be appreciated in the context of geography and resources that influence cultures, traditions, patterns of migration, and trade routes. Their historical background helps us evaluate viability of the forces that lead to certain actions, their trajectories, and shaped their consequences. By the same token, information, including literary devices, trivia and anecdotes, helps us reconstruct the focus of the deeper concerns. By looking at the conceptual continuity and development of thought behind such focus we judge relevance in the lives of the bearers of these thoughts. All together, all manners of methods, materials and devices contribute in the evaluation of the past that continues to be influential.

Mahendra Kumar Jain

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