

terminating in a deep-cut saddle; this was evidently the eastern continuation of the range which lies south of the spring of Urus-kijik-urdi-bulak. The bottom of the cauldron-shaped valley was hard. There was said to be a spring near its western end, the name of which was not known to Grum-Grschimajlo's guide. The range with the deep saddle-pass is situated 17 versts north of Kuruk-aurak. North of it again lies a latitudinal valley, 5 versts across, which was lost to sight towards both east and west; but on the north it is bordered by a fresh range, which he likewise crossed by a pass deeply notched in the crest. This range is rocky; it forms the eastward continuation of the Tuge-tau. Ten versts beyond this chain occurs the broad expanse of sand, with large sand-dunes, which they saw on the journey out. These dunes are in part bound together by saksaul, and in some places are so high that they overtop the low range which stretches north-west on the northern edge of the sandy expanse.

North of the Tuge-tau the country becomes increasingly poorer in vegetation, its aspect generally growing increasingly more lifeless. The rocks too are fewer, their place being taken by rounded, disintegrated ridges. After a march of 60 versts, in great part through an interminable gorge-like passage-way, from which it was not possible to see anything of the adjacent country, they at length reached the spring of Iltirghan. Grum-Grschimajlo concludes in the following words: »Thus it can no longer be said that the extensive region between Turfan and Lop is a *terra incognita* . . . its aspect is quite different from what in our imagination we painted it. Instead of being a desert, Ghaschun-Gobi, partly gravel partly sand, it is in reality an extensive mountainous region.»

On the basis of his own and Prschevskij's itineraries, Grum-Grschimajlo calculated that Teschik-bulak ought to lie one degree north of the inundation area of Lop-nor (Kara-koschun); and that is approximately right.

The highest altitude on the line of route followed by the traveller was in the Tuge-tau, where the relative altitudes are at least 4000 feet, the absolute altitudes 9000 feet. He continues: »This is certainly the highest point in this mountainous region; but it must not be forgotten, that I was only able to explore a very narrow zone, and that not a few indications point to the existence of considerable altitudes farther east. At all events all the latitudinal valleys we crossed on the excursion slope down towards the west, and thither too all the dry torrents are directed, though it is only sometimes that water courses down them. The range of Tuge-tau acts as a water-parting. The crests and ridges which lie south and north of it exhibit, like the Tuge-tau itself, a predominant west-north-west strike, and divide the region into a series of long narrow valleys, several of them parallel to one another, which descend like terraces in both directions, that is to say on the one side towards Lop-nor and on the other towards the depression of Luktschin. The most typical, as also the largest, of these valleys are that of Katar-julghun and the valley which intervenes between the Kuruk-tagh and the nameless range. Not infrequently these latitudinal valleys are crossed transversely by ridges or spurs, generally elevations *en masse* of the bottom of the valley. In these cases there exist, on the east side of the transverse elevations, cauldron-shaped depressions, which some time or other have been the bottoms of former lakes, but are now salt-basins, e. g. the Iltir-