

»After emerging from the glen, we proceeded north across a valley that slopes slightly towards the east, and so reached the highest point of a granite ridge, which runs towards the south-west, rising at the same time into cliffs of considerable elevation. Thence, after yet another glance at the valley behind us, we descended and encamped. According to my aneroid, this valley lay at an altitude of 4567 feet above sea-level.»

As the snow now began to thin out, occurring in small patches in sheltered spots, and as his horses were tired, Roborovskij thought it prudent to turn back.

He gathers up the results of his journey in the following words. »This region is a swelling, drawn out east and west, and having a breadth of 120 to 150 versts. Down the middle of it runs a long valley, 40 to 70 versts broad, the centre of which is nothing more than a stony desert. Its absolute altitude is about 4500 feet. On the north this valley is bordered by a zone of heights, likewise sterile, and known to the Turkish tribes of the vicinity as the Tschöl-tagh, meaning the Desert-like Mountains. Their average elevation is 6000 feet above the level of the sea. On the south it is likewise edged by small hills and ridges, the mean altitude of which exceeds 6600 feet above sea-level. The name given to these heights by the people of Lop is the Kuruk-tagh, meaning the Dry Mountains, that is they possess no water.»*

This summary description again emphasises the existence of the »swelling», as well as of low ranges rising upon it; and the two systems of the Tschöl-tagh and the Kuruk-tagh are sharply separated from one another by the long-drawn valley between them.

We now come to the last of the journeys which have to be considered in the present connection. In 1897 and 1898 Holderer and Futterer traversed Asia from west to east, crossing on their way the mountain system we are discussing. Their observations with regard to it are gathered up by Futterer in the following clear general account. He begins by pointing out, that there exists a broad swelling between the detritus slopes and gravelly screes of the Karlik-tagh and the Nan-schan. It consists of granites, crystalline schists, and metamorphosed sedimentary rocks, greatly folded, of Archæan and even Palæozoic age. Several places in the same region afford evidences of volcanic activity, and there are various varieties of ancient volcanic products. Upon this swelling or pediment, which is identical with the P'e-schan (Prschevalskij's Bej-sän) run four more or less parallel ranges of varying altitude. Travelling from north to south, their route took them across the P'e-schan by —

»1). Ein hauptsächlich aus Granit bestehendes Gebirge mit ruhiger Kammlinie und mit vorgelagerten, geringeren Höhen aus steilgestellten Schiefen und alten Eruptivgesteinen. Höchste Gipfel etwa 300 m. über dem Fusse und 2300 m. über dem Meere.

2). Eine Gebirgskette mit zackigen, vielgliederten Gipfeln, die vorwiegend aus Schiefen und umgestalteten, alten Sedimenten besteht. Höhe über dem Fusse etwa 400 m. und mehr; die höheren Teile liegen im Westen. In der 15 km. breiten

* *Trudij Expeditsij Imp. Russk. Geogr. Ob. po Tsentralnoj Asij 1893—95*, vol. 1 pp. 164—169.