

runs south-east, and my satisfaction was great, when, on April 4, after following the left bank of the river for three days, I found that, just as the Chinese and Richthofen claimed, it empties into a long lake, whose eastern shore-line we followed for three days. The people living in the neighbourhood of Lop-nor call its four basins Avullu-kul, Kara-kul, Tayek-kul and Arka-kul, but the Chinese call the whole region Lob-nor, a name which, in the tract around the south lake, is absolutely unknown. I found the lake to run north to south, while the Chinese Lob-nor is mapped as running east to west. But even this circumstance has a natural explanation. Since the whole Lob-nor district lies nearly in the same horizontal plane, the hydrographical distribution must be extremely sensitive to any change in level. There are two constant factors effecting such changes, namely, the easterly sandstorms, which are especially violent in the spring, filling the basin and pressing the lake westward, and the sediment carried down by the river. That the lake formerly really extended eastward is shown by the fact that the eastern shore is skirted by a series of already isolated salty pools and marshes, as well as deep bays which will soon be isolated, and by a narrow belt of forest in which three separate growths may be distinguished—in the east, dried-up dead forest; in the centre, fresh forest with tall trees; and nearest to the present shore, young forest. Thus we see that the forest travels with the lake westward. The superfluous water continues through Sadak-kul and Nias-kul to the river Tarim. There are still other proofs that the southern lake must be of modern formation. It lacks every trace of forest, while the whole Tarim system, all the way down to the ancient Lob-nor, is very rich in poplars. The forest has not yet had time to extend to the new lake. Furthermore, the eighty-year-old Lob chief, Kunchikan-bek, told me that his grandfather, Numet-bek, had lived in his youth on the shores of a lake in the north, and that then there were only deserts to be found in the region of Abdal. Finally, I might mention that Marco Polo, who travelled through the city of Lob, does not say a word about any lake.»*

My address to the Royal Geographical Society called forth a certain amount of criticism from Mr. Delmar Morgan, who after the paper spoke as follows: — — — »Now Dr. Sven Hedin, a pupil of Richthofen, has discovered a lake confirming the views of this eminent geographer, and he claims that this and no other is the true Lob-nor. After studying the arguments adduced by him in support of this conclusion, I must, with every respect to one who has personally visited the region in question, be allowed to differ, and I think it would be premature to alter the position of the lake on our maps before more complete surveys have been made, especially as a recent traveller, Mr. Kozloff, a member of Pevtsoff's expedition, passed through this country and made no change in the position of the lake, but, on the contrary, confirmed the general accuracy of Prschevalskij's observations. Among the arguments brought forward by Dr. Sven Hedin, he says that Marco Polo made no mention of the lake. But it is well known that Marco Polo mentioned very few of the natural features which he must have come across in his travels. Besides, the route he took would have taken him a considerable distance to the south of Lob-nor, and

* *The Geographical Journal*, March 1898, Vol. XI, No. 3, pp. 240 ff.