

CHAPTER XXI.

AUTHOR'S REPLY TO KOSLOFF'S CRITICISMS. KRAPOTKIN, GRENARD.

I now pass to the second section of the chapter in Kosloff's work which is written to controvert Richthofen and myself; but with this I shall be able to deal briefly, because it does not contain very much that is new, and but little that has to do with the real Lop-nor question. Still there are one or two statements that require an answer. The section opens thus: »Setting aside the arguments which Sven Hedin bases upon the Chinese map, which, as we have seen, it is impossible to make use of for determining the geographical coordinates of any of the places entered on it, I now proceed to examine the other proofs which Sven Hedin has brought forward to support the hypothesis, that the lakes which he discovered must be surviving portions of the ancient Lop-nor.»

In a note to the word »discovered» he adds, »or rather described, for these lakes are mentioned by M. V. Pjevtssoff in *Trudij Tibetskoj Ekspeditsij*, vol. I, p. 317.» Upon turning to the passage referred to, we find, »In the year 1880 the Kontsche-darja, 35 versts above its mouth, broke away to the south-east, and, entering a deep valley, turned towards the south, confining itself to a *single* channel. On its way through the valley in question the river formed four deep lakes, Tschiminlik, Sogot, Tal-kejtschin, and Tokkum-kul, from 5 to 7 versts long and from 2 to 3 versts wide, their banks being overgrown with tall reeds.» The position assigned to these four lakes on Pjevtssoff's map agrees fairly well with the lakes which I discovered. But as we have seen in the first volume of this work, their names are incorrect, for the largest lakes in the eastern waterway are called the Avullu-köl, Kara-köl, Tajek-köl, Arka-köl, and Sadak-köl, with which is connected a series of smaller lakes; whereas Sogot, Tal-kitschin, and Tokum-köl, have nothing whatever to do with the lakes I discovered, for they all lie quite close to the bank of the Tarim. According to his itinerary, Pjevtssoff visited neither the one nor the other of these series of lakes, for he travelled along the *right* bank of the river. He would seem therefore to have confused the two chains of lakes, of the existence of which he was told by the natives. As a matter of fact, he had not the faintest inkling of the existence of the large lakes which I *discovered* in 1896.