

covered the ruins of Lâu-lan, he would certainly have arrived at a very different opinion.

Before concluding this section of the work I should like to express my sincere thanks to Chaptain P. K. Kosloff for the fair and chivalrous manner in which he has on his side carried on the discussion. For my own part, I look upon the firmness and tenacity with which he clings to his views in the light of an advantage; for if he had not defended them with such warmth, I should never have returned to the Desert of Lop, and so should have missed the discoveries which I was fortunate enough to make there. Consequently it may be said, that our interchanges of opinion have proved to the advantage of geographical inquiry.

In November 1902 I delivered a lecture on my last journey before the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, and at a dinner at the house of the Vice-president of the society, P. P. Semenov, where I met most of the Russian students of Asia who were then living in St. Petersburg, I had a further opportunity of discussing my views with regard to the new phase of the Lop-nor question. I was delighted to find that there was then no longer any opposition to my views, and I am convinced that the Russian geographers have now abandoned Prschevalskij's standpoint, a circumstance which, need I add? does not in the slightest degree detract from Prschevalskij's honour or in any way dim the lustre of the fame which will attach to his memory to distant generations. He was at all events the first European explorer in the Lop country, the first to make us acquainted with its strange geography and its people; nor has his masterly description ever been excelled. The more detailed explorations which his successors have been enabled to carry out, and which have resulted in an accurate knowledge of that part of Asia, have in every case been built up upon the solid foundations that he laid.

On 7th December in the same year I delivered the same lecture before the Royal Geographical Society in London. As on its conclusion Delmar Morgan did not venture to offer any criticism, I conclude that he too has abandoned his former standpoint. On the other hand Prince Krapotkin spoke, and as his speech gave evidence of considerable reflection, I will quote that part of it which refers to the Lop-nor:

»As to his levelling in the Lob-nor desert, and the archæological discoveries which Hedin has made in the country of Lob-nor, they will certainly throw new light on the changes which have been going on in the basin of this great Central Asian lake. With regard to Lob-nor, I will permit myself to remark that I do not think that the lake Kara Koshun — that is, the Lob-nor of Prjevalsky — can be considered as anything else but the present remainder from the great lake Lob-nor. But what appears to me almost quite certain, after Sven Hedin's surveys, levellings, and discoveries, is that there was first a time when Lake Lob-nor covered the whole of the triangular space which is limited on the west by the southward course of the Tarim, on the south-east by the lake Kara Koshun, and on the north-east by the escarpment of the Kuruk-tagh, which runs in a north-west to south-east direction. The place of the Sixty Springs, Altimish-bulak, which had been visited previously by the Russian explorers, and lies, according to their determinations, at an altitude of 3600 feet, stands on the border of the escarpment, and the triangular space between the