

difficulty of access. Where the routes run close together the difficulties are less; where they are fewest and farthest between, there the greatest difficulties are found to exist.

In the foregoing paragraphs I only desired with the utmost brevity to call to mind the most important journeys in that part of western Tibet in which I also travelled; but I have passed over all those which fall outside that area, as for example the explorations that were made by the English members of the Anglo-Russian Boundary Commission on the Pamirs in 1895, Stein's journey, and several others. Journeys made in the extreme east of northern Tibet, and still more journeys in the eastern Kwen-lun, do not for the present concern us in any way, notwithstanding that those regions have been the scene of several distinguished and famous exploring expeditions. I need only mention names like Michaelis, Szechényi and Loczy, Bell, Gill, Bonin, Roborovskij, Futterer and Holderer, Kosloff, Filchner, and Tafel, the last of whom may be expected to bring home with him information of very great importance. The Nan-schan system has been the scene of Obrutscheff's journeys, which count amongst the most admirable that have ever been carried out in Asia and far excel those of any other Russian explorer.

I have already referred in brief extracts to the course of Prschevalskij's fourth and last journey, and will now proceed to quote a few short excerpts from the Russian account of his travels, the only version published. Of the source-region of the Hoang-ho he gives the following characteristics: »Odon-tala has a length of 75 km. and a breadth of over 20, and stretches from north-west to south-east. The whole of that region, which was formerly the bottom of a vast lake, is at the present time a series of marshes, springs, and small lakes. According to our barometrical observations its altitude above sea-level amounts to 4270 m. The depression is surrounded by mountains: for instance, on the north is the Akta and on the south the water-divide between the Yellow and Blue Rivers. Besides, Odon-tala is traversed by various small streams, two of them larger than the others; these are the head-streams of the Hoang-ho. One of them is probably identical with the Altijn-gol of the Chinese accounts. Our bivouac, which was situated three versts east of the confluence of these rivers, was, according to my calculations, situated in lat.  $34^{\circ} 55' 3''$  N. and  $96^{\circ} 52'$  E. from Greenwich. Above the great lakes the valley of the Hoang-ho is 5—10 versts broad and forms a steppe-like plain, thickly dotted over, south of the river, with marshes and small lakes. The grazing was good, but there were no traces of inhabitants. In the source-streams we found a great quantity of fish, belonging principally to the genus *Schizopygopsis*; they probably make their way there from the great lakes . . . . . The country south of Odon-tala again reaches an altitude of close upon 4600 m. In respect of its flora and fauna this region resembles other parts of north-eastern Tibet. The marshy character of the country does not cease until you reach the water-divide between the Yellow River and the Ditschu (the upper course of the Jang-tse-kiang). That divide, which forms the eastern continuation of the Bajan-kara-ula, has an altitude of 4480 m.

The water-divide between the Yellow and the Blue River, where our route crossed it, was almost imperceptible, but nevertheless it impresses a characteristic stamp upon the neighbouring country. To the north of it is a plateau of