

islet close the south-east shore. Both these lake-basins are, beyond doubt, like so many others in Tibet, reminiscences of a long vanished glacial period.

My sole object in recalling the fact to which I have adverted above was to show that the regions visited by the English expedition were already relatively well known before. But, the object of the expedition having been accomplished, why was not the opportunity seized of furthering the cause of geographical exploration? Candler points out in his book, and quite justly, that then for the first time within a century an opportunity presented itself of solving the problem of the connection between the Tsangpo and the Dihong or Brahmaputra. How long have not geographers reasoned about and discussed the problem of the lower course of the greatest river of Tibet, whether after its issue out of the mountains through what in point of size is one of the most magnificent transverse gorges in the world, it drains the woods and valleys of Assam and then mingles its waters with those of the Ganges in the vast delta of that river near the metropolis to India, or whether under the name of Irawadi it directs its course through Burma to the confines of the continent.

Recently however it has been agreed that the Tsang-po and the Brahmaputra are one and the same river. Lieut.-Col. Waddell has in an original way endeavoured to prove the fact etymologically, both the Tibetan and the Sanskrit name signifying »Brahma's son».* He localizes its great fall, probably one of the most beautiful and one of the most imposing on the earth, in $29^{\circ} 36'$ N. lat. and $94^{\circ} 47'$ E. long. At the foot of the fall, where the water boils and thunders amid clouds of scattering spray, stands a monastery, a pilgrim resort, buried in sub-tropical greenery. A devil king, represented in the usual Tibetan manner, dwells in the frothing columns of the waterfall itself, and the forces of nature which are there displayed before the pilgrim's eyes are in a high degree calculated to render this demon sovereign an object of submission and dread. But as yet no white man has seen that wonderful region: there still remains a pretty wide gap between the reconnaissances which have been carried out by the Pundits from the north and Englishmen, especially Needham, from Assam. Thus one of the greatest and most attractive of geographical and geological problems still awaits solution in the »breaching» glens and gorges of the Indo-Chinese rivers, especially that of the Brahmaputra; for this stream is not merely remarkable geographically in its mysterious sweep round the eastern end of the Himalayas, but it also occupies an important place from the historical and religious point of view. So far as human knowledge reaches backwards in time its never slumbering waters have been indissolubly associated with the destinies of the Tibetans and the races of north-east India. With regard to this problem Waddell says: »It is, however, the Lower Tsangpo Valley, below the Ferry, which is the most interesting and important, both from an economic and a geographical point of view. For the Tsangpo, the central river of Tibet, is now proved almost beyond doubt to be the upper source of the great Brahmaputra river of Assam, and along its banks therefore would be the natural inlet to this country from the Indian plains, whilst in the Lower Tsangpo valley would seem to lie the richest and most genial tract of

* *The Falls of the Tsang-po and Identity of that River with the Brahmaputra in The Geogr. Journal*, vol. V, p. 258.

Hedin, Journey in Central Asia. IV.