

by an easy descent reached Ma-la-yi-kou, a big open valley or small plain with a stream and fair pasturage. At the start a bitter north-east wind had been blowing, but when the sun came out in the early afternoon it was quite hot.

The Yellow River plain was reached the next day after crossing the West Ma-la-yi Pass, 14,490 feet. The Huang Ho, or Yellow River, so mighty and so dangerous in its lower course, was here a small river, 30 yards wide and from 2 to 2½ feet deep, flowing over a gravelly bed. No bridge was here necessary, and Pereira records with justifiable pride that not many other Europeans could say they had forded the Yellow River. He also records that this is perhaps the only big river in China that keeps its name throughout its course. Other big rivers change their names, and small rivers generally have different names at each village on their banks. Possibly the Han River might also keep its name, but Pereira had not seen so much of it as he had of the Huang Ho. Of course the Tibetans have a different name for it. They call it Ma Chu, mother of rivers. Pereira made it 286¾ miles from Tangar.

On the Yellow River the uninhabited region stretching back to Ta-ho-pa is left behind and the country is now inhabited by nomadic Tibetans, and Pereira saw several camps of Yü-rung-wa Tibetans with their flocks of sheep and yaks. Leaving the plain he ascended a bare ridge and encamped by the Tsa-shung-chu, a river flowing from a beautiful lake 3 miles long and 3 miles wide and of a deep blue colour. The pasturage was poor but there were three Tibetan