

Wood was there in the winter, but heard that in summer the lake swarmed with water-fowl. [Cf. Captain Trotter, p. 263, in *Forsyth's Mission*.]

The Pamir Steppe was crossed by Benedict Goës late in the autumn of 1603, and the narrative speaks of the great cold and desolation, and the difficulty of breathing. We have also an abstract of the journey of Abdul Mejid, a British Agent, who passed Pamir on his way to Kokan in 1861:—"Fourteen weary days were occupied in crossing the steppe; the marches were long, depending on uncertain supplies of grass and water, which sometimes wholly failed them; food for man and beast had to be carried with the party, for not a trace of human habitation is to be met with in those inhospitable wilds. . . . The steppe is interspersed with tamarisk jungle and the wild willow, and in the summer with tracts of high grass." (*Neumann, Pilgerfahrten Buddh. Priester*, p. 50; *V. et V. de H. T.* 271-272; *Wood*, 232; *Proc. R. G. S. X.* 150.)

There is nothing absolutely to decide whether Marco's route from Wakhán lay by Wood's Lake "Sirikol," or Victoria, or by the more southerly source of the Oxus in Pamir Kul. These routes would unite in the valley of Táshkurgán, and his road thence to Kashgar was, I apprehend, nearly the same as the Mirza's in 1868-1869, by the lofty Chichiklik Pass and Kin Valley. But I cannot account for the forty days of wilderness. The Mirza was but thirty-four days from *Faizabad to Kashgar*, and Faiz Bakhsh only twenty-five.

[Severtsof (*Bul. Soc. Géog.* XI. 1890, p. 587), who accepts Trotter's route, by the Pamir Khurd (Little Pamir), says there are three routes from Wakhán to Little Pamir, going up the Sarhadd: one during the winter, by the frozen river; the two others available during the spring and the summer, up and down the snowy chain along the right bank of the Sarhadd, until the valley widens out into a plain, where a swelling is hardly to be seen, so flat is it; this chain is the dividing ridge between the Sarhadd and the Aksu. From the summit, the traveller, looking towards the west, sees *at his feet* the mountains he has crossed; to the east, the Pamir Kul and the Aksu, the river flowing from it. The pasture grounds around the Pamir Kul and the sources of the Sarhadd are magnificent; but lower down, the Aksu valley is arid, *dotted* only with pasture grounds of little extent, and few and far between. It is to this part of Pamir that Marco Polo's description applies; more than any other part of this *ensemble* of high valleys, this line of water parting, of the Sarhadd and the Aksu, has the aspect of a *Roof of the World* (*Bam-i-dunya*, Persian name of Pamir).—H. C.]

[We can trace Marco Polo's route from Wakhán, on comparing it with Captain Younghusband's Itinerary from Kashgar, which he left on the 22nd July, 1891, for Little Pamir: Little Pamir at Bozai-Gumbaz, joins with the Pamir-i-Wakhán at the Wakhijrui Pass, first explored by Colonel Lockhart's mission. Hence the route lies by the old fort of Kurgán-i-Ujadbai at the junction of the two branches of the Taghdum-bash Pamir (Supreme Head of the Mountains), the Taghdum-bash Pamir, Tásh Kurgán, Bulun Kul, the Gez Defile and Kashgar. (*Proc. R. G. S.* XIV. 1892, pp. 205-234.)—H. C.]

We may observe that Severtsof asserts *Pamir* to be a generic term, applied to all high plateaux in the Thian Shan.*

["The Pámír plateau may be described as a great, broad, rounded ridge, extending north and south, and crossed by thick mountain chains, between which lie elevated valleys, open and gently sloping towards the east, but narrow and confined, with a rapid fall towards the west. The waters which run in all, with the exception of the eastern flow from the Tághdúngbásh, collect in the Oxus; the Áksú from the Little Pámír lake receiving the eastern drainage, which finds an outlet in the Áktásh Valley, and joining the Múrháb, which obtains that from the Alichór and Síríz Pámirs. As the eastern Tághdúngbásh stream finds its way into the Yarkand river,

* According to Colonel Tod, the Hindu bard Chand speaks of "Pamer, chief of mountains." (I. p. 24.) But one may like and respect Colonel Tod without feeling able to rely on such quotations of his unconfirmed.