

## CHAPTER XX.

### SCHLAGINTWEIT, LASSEN, DREW, H. STRACHEY.

It is of great interest to follow, step by step, the history of human knowledge regarding a mountain system such as the Transhimalaya. I have already been able to show how hard and obstinate the work has been and how difficult the conquest. No other mountain system on the earth can in this respect be compared with the Transhimalaya. The history of Himalaya becomes lost in the darkness of Indian hymns and we recognize it in the classic literature of Asiatic geography. The Kwen-lun is a more modern conquest. And still, on mount Kwen-lun the Chinese mythologists placed the abode of the immortals and of the supernatural beings who govern the surface of the earth.<sup>1</sup> The system is marked roughly on certain maps from about 1730, as will be shown later on. But only some fifty years ago Kwen-lun was proved to exist and was accepted on our maps as an independent system. Concerning the Kara-korum a long struggle has been fought before it was definitely recognized. But the most difficult problem to solve has been the Transhimalaya.

While Himalaya, Kwen-lun and Kara-korum have been mentioned and discussed innumerable times a deep silence has been hanging over the Transhimalaya. No struggle had, before 1909, been fought about it. Most geographers ignored it completely, others accepted silently either d'Anville or Klaproth. Hodgson could draw mountain ranges in Tibet without meeting a word of criticism. What could be said for or against a system, about which nobody had the slightest knowledge?

I am now going to relate in a few quotations the contributions of the brothers Schlagintweit. In their many writings our system occupies a rather humble place. In an article: *Physikalisch-geographische Schilderung von Hoch-Asien* ROBERT VON SCHLAGINTWEIT has given an excellent *résumé*, so far as the country was known in 1865.<sup>2</sup> He reviews the serious start against the unknown heights undertaken by British officers and scholars. Their observation that the snow limit was higher on the northern slope than on the southern of the Himalaya, which gave rise to a good deal of opposition, was believed by Humboldt who also explained the cause.

<sup>1</sup> Klaproth in the *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, Tome XII. Paris 1833, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> Petermann's *Mitteilungen*, 1865, p. 361 et seq.