

NAIN SING's journey of 1873—74 gave Saunders a clearer understanding of a part of the Transhimalaya, of which he says: »The Southern Chain of this part of the system is called the Gangri, or Gang-dis-ri, so far as it separates the Sanpu and Indus basins from the elevated lake basin of the Tibetan Plateau.» The Karakorum Range he regards as a continuation of the Gangri Mountains, and he criticises SHAW who denies that Kara-korum is a range, on account of its summit being flat. But Saunders has three arguments to prove that it is a range: its height, its being an important water-parting and, finally, because »its length exceeds 300 miles». In reality it certainly exceeds 1500 miles, but this could not be known in 1877.

Speaking of Shaw Saunders says: »The same author has also comitted himself to the opinion that the Pamir is, instead of a meridional range, a series of latitudinal ribs or ridges running east and west.» When so little was known of countries which had been visited by several Europeans, what could be expected to be known of countries where none had ever been!

Then Saunders more intimately approaches our system: »The Gangri Range is only known at its extremities. It has been crossed in several places between the Ling-tzi Plain and the Manasarowar Lake. But from thence to its eastern termination, where it meets the mountains that divide the elevated lake basin from the basins which succeed that of the Sanpu, it has been crossed in two places only, by the scientific observers, employed in Himalayan exploration. The missionaries Huc and Gabet also crossed the range and describe its difficulties. They name it the Tant-la. Of the passes crossed by the explorers, one is the Khalamba Pass, mentioned by the Calcutta Reviewer, in a part of the range which bears the local name of Nyen-chen-tang-la. The other is the Dam Lhargan Pass, and the two lie between the Tengri Lake and the Sanpu. Several altitudes of the Gangri have been observed above 20 000 feet; as the Aling Gangri 23 000 feet, the Nyen-chen-tang-la, 23,600.»

Thus in 1877 the Transhimalaya was only known at its extremities. In the middle of September 1908 the Times' correspondent in Simla telegraphed, after my return to this place and according to the information I gave him: »The eastern and western parts (of the Transhimalaya) were known before, but the central and highest part is in Bongba, which was previously unexplored.»<sup>1</sup> These versions are very like each other. The Tibet Frontier Commission was the only expedition which, in 1904, had added new knowledge about the Transhimalaya, improving enormously Nain Sing's survey. But it had not entered the unknown country and Saunders' words were as correct in 1908 as thirty years earlier. For Saunders was a sufficiently accomplished geographer to understand that the system had to be *crossed* before it could be *known*. And he did not know of any such crossing between the region N.E. of Manasarovar and the Khalamba Pass. Between these two limits the system remained uncrossed for another thirty years.

<sup>1</sup> Times, September 18th, 1908.