

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JOHNSON'S JOURNEY TO KHOTAN.

When Sir RODERICK MURCHISON opened the season 1864—65 in the Royal Geographical Society he could say in his address:¹

Since the institution of this Society our acquaintance with the countries adjacent to Hindustan . . . the Himalayas, Nepaul, Tibet, Kashmir, Kabul amounts to a geographical revolution. The names of a few of the more prominent labourers in this wide field may be mentioned . . . Sir George Everest, Sir Andrew Waugh, the brothers Captain and Dr. Gerard, Colonel Richard and Major Henry Strachey; Colonel Strange, Colonel Thuilliers and Captain Montgomerie. The physical geography, botany, and natural history, including the phenomena of glaciers in this region, have been specially illustrated by the labours of such men as Dr. Joseph Hooker and Dr. Thomson, and, above all, of the late Dr. Hugh Falconer, and Captain Godwin-Austen.

At the opening of the next season he could even formulate a part of his address thus:²

During the years which the Survey has been directed in these regions by Capt. Montgomerie, he has informed us that the whole of the Karakorum and Mustakh range has been defined, forming the boundary between Little Tibet and Turkestan; and that the altitude of the peaks for 450 miles varies from 21,000 to 28,300 feet, a very much higher range than that of the Himalayas to the south of Ladak and Little Tibet.

Here Mustakh is the name of the western, Kara-korum the name of the eastern half of one and the same range, which was believed to be defined in the whole of its run. This opinion, that the Kara-korum was a rather short range, held its ground for some 45 years to come, for as I have mentioned before, even so late as in 1910, British geographers used the term Eastern Kara-korum for parts of the system which are situated on British territory, thus leaving out of consideration the tremendous eastern continuation of the system which is situated within Tibet. Sir Roderick points to the fact that the western parts of the Kara-korum System are much higher than the western parts of the Himalaya. As yet he could not add that, on the other hand, the eastern parts of the Himalaya are much higher than the eastern

¹ *Proceedings Royal Geographical Society.* Vol. IX. 1864—65.

² *Proceedings Royal Geographical Society.* Vol. X. 1865—66, p. 239.