

CHAPTER XLIV.

CROSBY, ANGINIEUR, RAWLING, BRUCE.

In the latter half of 1903 a journey was undertaken in N.W. Tibet by O. T. CROSBY. In Tiflis he had met with the French Captain FERNAND ANGINIEUR and they decided to travel together. They started from Polu, and after having crossed a ridge 18,300 feet high, and at the end of another two days' march having again reached a level of 16,500, they turned westward from the way to Rudok two days earlier than ought to have been done, and thus were thrown into the Aksai-chin.

This region had not been anywhere traversed by Europeans, but the compilers of the maps had, as is customary, put in certain features as vaguely reported by natives. These were erroneous, but we, not then knowing definitely our position, were misled by giving some faith to the representations. Finding the mountain system very different from that indicated for what was our actual latitude, and very similar to that indicated for a lower latitude, we were thus confirmed in an error which at the end came near costing our life¹

They followed a valley for 8 or 10 days and discovered two lakes, one drinkable, the other salt. »Both the lakes were new to the maps.» As there is no other map in the book except a very inadequate one, it is impossible to know where those lakes were situated. It is as difficult to find one's whereabouts from the book as I found it to be in those parts of north-western Tibet where I in vain tried to identify Crosby's route. For instance: »Now, ahead of us the mountains closed the way.... The portentous question was, which way? We had evidently passed beyond any opening, if it existed, that would lead us by short line to Rudok. Might we not be near Lanak Pass? That is on the map. Several explorers had crossed it.» Thus, at any rate, it was not the fault of those explorers, nor of the Lanak-la, that Crosby could not know how far from it he was!

Again they reached a ridge of 18,000 feet and came down in a valley which one of the servants from his experiences with WELLBY, supposed was the valley west of Lanak-la. This, however, proved to be wrong.

¹ *Tibet and Turkestan*. New York and London, 1905, p. 82.