

The Karakoram Pass is the highest in the world which serves the purpose of an avenue of trade between two great regions. In the Himalayas there are higher passes, but they are seldom used and only on special occasions. And having tried 18,550 feet, one is content never to want to go higher than the Karakoram.

His opinion is that:

the Karakoram route is absolutely impassable to anything more than a mere handful of men. Proceeding westward, the next negotiable opening in nature's barricade is that which passes through Gilgit and debouches upon the Pamirs. Between this and the Karakoram route there is little to choose, for though the latter is higher in elevation the former is much more difficult, owing to the narrowness of the valleys and the precipitous character of the existing track.<sup>1</sup>

On his map he uses the following extraordinary names, which are to be regarded as survivals from HUMBOLDT'S time: Kuen lun or Aneuta Mts., and Karakorum Mounts Padishah.

ZUICHO TACHIBANA, who in 1908 travelled at the expense of Count KOZUI OTANI, had the intention to return *via* the Kara-korum Pass and India, but could not obtain permission to do so from the Indian Government.<sup>2</sup> In *Petermanns Mitteilungen*, however, we are told that he crossed the Kara-korum Pass and reached Leh, October 27th.<sup>3</sup> The rest of Tachibana's journey, as his visit to Lou-lan, the old Chinese town I discovered in 1900, falls outside of our regions.

Sir THOMAS HOLDICH points out that the mountains north of India present a good defence against military operations. He says:

Early in the 16th century Mirza Haidar was defeated by the natural difficulties of the country, not by Kashmiri armies — »much, indeed, as a similar expedition to Lhasa was defeated by cold and starvation. No modern ingenuity has as yet contrived a method of dealing with the passive resistance of serrated bands of mountains of such altitude as the Himalayas. No railway could be carried over such a series of snow-capped ramparts; no force that was not composed of Asiatic mountaineers could attempt to pass them with any chance of success.»<sup>4</sup>

Of the Kara-korum road he says:

Here, indeed, in the Trans-Indus regions of Kashmir, sterile, rugged, cold, and crowned with gigantic ice-clad peaks, there is a slippery track reaching northward into the depression of Chinese Turkestan, which for all time has been a recognized route connecting India with High Asia. It is called the Karakoram route. Mile upon mile a white thread of a road stretches across the stone-strewn plains, bordered by the bones of the innumerable victims to the long fatigue of a burdensome and ill-fed existence — the ghastly debris of former caravans. It is perhaps the ugliest track to call a trade route in the whole wide world.<sup>5</sup>

We now again return to the east for a while.

<sup>1</sup> *The Marches of Hindustan*. Edinburgh and London MCMVII, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> *Geogr. Journal*. Vol. XXXV, 1910, p. 448.

<sup>3</sup> *Pet. Mitt.* 1910, I, p. 208.

<sup>4</sup> *The Gates of India*. London 1910, p. 187.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 3.