

in reaching the summit—the very top of the Ever-White Mountain—and from there I looked out over a billowy expanse of forest-clad hills stretching away on every side, as far as the eye could reach in the direction of Manchuria, and as far as one could see over Corea; nothing but forest, except where the lake lay below me like a sapphire in a setting of rock, and it was only by this and by occasional glints of the river that the monotonous green was broken.

But the lake was the saving feature. It appeared to be about six or seven miles in circumference, and at its farther end was an outlet, from which flowed the main branch of the Sungari. This, then, was the source of that noble river which, a few hundred miles lower down, we afterwards found to be over a mile broad, and which has claims, indeed, to be considered the main branch of the great Amur—a magnificent river excelled in size and grandeur by few others in the world.

I rejoined my companions, and we set off rapidly down the mountain-side, delighted at having successfully achieved the object of our journey, and with the feeling that all our toil had not been in vain. The Ever-White Mountain was not white with snow, and therefore not as lofty as we had been led to expect; it was white, or partially white, with pumice-stone from the old volcano. But it was a satisfaction to have established this fact, and the beauty of its flower-covered slopes and of the meadows at its base, and the solitude of the wonderful lake at its summit, were ample compensation for our disappointment in its height.

Three days later we were back at the place where we had left our mules, and we ravenously devoured some eggs which we managed to secure there. It is said to be good to rise from a meal with an appetite. In those days we always rose from our meals with magnificent appetites. It was the greatest relief, however, not to have to carry a load any longer, and,