

vegetation and heated by the sun of spring and summer, prevents local rainfall, and the residuum of moisture that escaped condensation on the mountains is carried on to the colder regions of the north. It is only during the winter that this residuum is precipitated on the plains as snow, and even this melts away by March, awaking to life a varied desert flora, which in turn vanishes under the burning April sun. Thus, excepting the relatively ineffective winter snows, the whole of

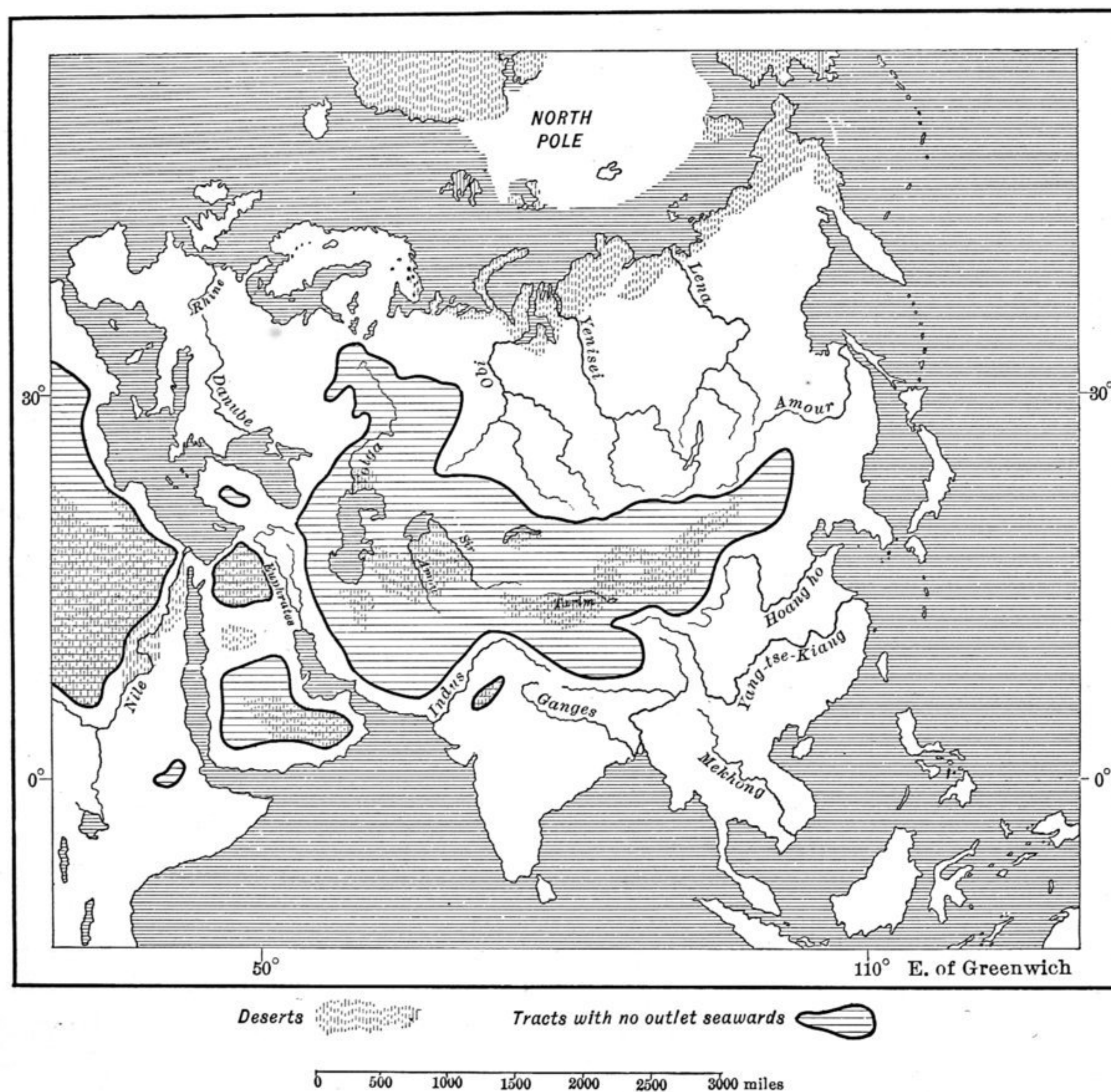


Fig. 1.—Undrained Parts of Asia. (From Élisée Reclus, *The Earth and its Inhabitants*.)

this vast inner-continental region receives waters only from the precipitation over the high mountains that separate it from the peripheral zone, and from such mountains as rise sufficiently high within its own area.

Central Asia, from the western border of Manchuria to the western end of the Black Sea, is a series of great and small landlocked basins. From these no water flows to the ocean, excepting that which the Black Sea loses through the canyon of the Bosphorus, which was not opened to the Mediterranean until the present