

Indian surveying assistant, R. B. Lal Singh, to proceed with the topographical tasks I had planned. By exceptional efforts this indefatigable old travel companion succeeded in extending our Nan-shan surveys over an area quite as large as that mapped in 1907. Meanwhile, with my crushed leg still feeling the strain very badly, I managed at last to get myself carried down in a litter to Kan-chou.

It was in the same sadly crippled state that I set out by the third week of August 1914 for the long-planned journey through the 'Gobi' of the Pei-shan, the desert of 'the Northern Hills' as the Chinese call it. The journey was to take me back to the northern portion of Chinese Turkistan for the work of the autumn and winter. The route chosen for it had never been followed before by any European traveller. It was to acquaint me with a desert area which in parts still remained unexplored. The approach to it lay past the small oasis of Mao-mei, where the rivers of Kan-chou and Su-chou unite to form the Etsin-gol of the Mongols. It is in the wide bed of the Etsin-gol, practically dry for a great portion of the year, that all the waters descending from the Central Nan-shan find their way northwards before they finally lose themselves in a basin devoid of drainage, just as the Tarim does in the marshes of Lop-nor.