

it showed that it belonged to two different drainage systems. Looking westwards I could see how all the streams draining these undulating red-clay slopes gathered in a big depression which the eye could follow for some twenty miles. There a transverse ridge made it turn off to the north as a gorge disappearing between rugged snowy peaks. The 'River of the Red Water,' Hung-shui-pa Ho, was the expressive name which I here heard applied to the stream which, after breaking through the Richthofen range, fertilizes a great part of the Su-chou oasis.

As my eyes wandered south towards the less serried To-lai-shan range, they soon caught a broad ridge of red clay forming the low watershed between the 'Red River' basin and a still greater one to the south-east. It was the head-waters area of the Kan-chou River. Some twenty miles broad at its head, the valley stretched away unbroken so far to the south-east that the snowy flanking ranges seemed almost to meet in the distance. Seen across such big basins and lying farther away from the pass, the To-lai-shan did not present the same appearance of a towering mountain rampart as did the range of Richthofen. But its individual snow-peaks stood out more boldly, and where they gathered far away to the south in a great massif of glittering ice and snow, the effect was sublime. What, however, I then rejoiced most to see was the well-defined character of the Nan-shan ranges and the open nature of the intervening valleys, of which this wide view first gave promise. It was bound to prove a great advantage for extending systematic survey work.

Though the rays of the setting sun were still passing freely down the great basins and along the ranges, heavy clouds had gathered above our heads. An icy wind played around us, and a shower of sleet soon followed. So we were glad when the surveying work was done and we could follow the baggage. We had now reached the area of gold-mining, up to which one or two men in our escort had confessed their ability to guide us. The network of shallow depressions into which we descended looked terribly bleak, with bare slopes of red clay or slaty detritus. Everywhere we passed abandoned pits of gold-