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Brief Notice of M. Prejevalsky's Recent Journey to Lob-Nor and Tibet, and Other Russian Explorations

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## ADDITIONAL NOTICES.

(Printed by order of Council.)

1. *Brief Notice of M. Prejevalsky's recent Journey to Lob-Nor and Tibet, and other Russian Explorations.* By E. DELMAR MORGAN.\*

AT the meeting of the Russian Geographical Society of the 5th of October, the Secretary, M. Sreznefsky, read a Report received from M. Prejevalsky, of his expedition to Lob-Nor.

Prejevalsky, as we know, returned to Kuldja in the first days of July, and employed his time to the end of August in arranging the collections and materials gathered during his journeys. The scientific results of the expedition hitherto may be summed up as follows:—

1. An itinerary of the route from Kuldja, for a distance of 1200 versts (800 miles), into the interior of Asia.
2. The latitude and longitude of seven points astronomically determined.
3. Barometrical observations for altitude.
4. A series of meteorological observations (taken four times daily).
5. A natural history collection, comprising 3000 specimens, representing 300 kinds of plants; 85 skins of mammalia, 35 of which are of large and medium size; 500 birds, representing 180 different kinds; 50 fish; 150 reptiles; and upwards of 2000 insects. These collections include four wild camels, constituting a scientific rarity.

And, lastly, a journal in detail of the whole of its proceedings.

All the collections were carefully packed and placed in the care of the principal of the Kuldja district, and, in all probability, will be received in the course of the winter by the Museum of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, to be preserved until Prejevalsky's return.

After this brilliant commencement of his journey Prejevalsky rested awhile at Kuldja, and started afresh on his journey to Tibet in the end of August. This second part of the journey of the intrepid explorer is even more dangerous and difficult. Having ascertained for certain the impossibility of entering Tibet from Lob-Nor and the sterile desert which lies beyond the Altyn-tagh, Prejevalsky decided on trying another route, *viâ* the towns of Guchen and Hami, and afterwards taking the direction of Tsaidam and the sources of the Blue River. He hopes to arrive at Lhasa in May or June, 1878, and, after exploring Tibet, he will return to Russia in the autumn of 1879.

The Secretary then communicated the news received from Potanin's expedition. The last letters of this traveller reached the Society about the middle of September. In the first of these, dated the 30th of January, Potanin describes the wintering of the Expedition at Kobdo, and complains of the severity of the climate and the dearth of provisions. Notwithstanding these unfavourable conditions the expedition continued to collect specimens and to pursue ethnological researches. Towards the 15th of March it left Kobdo in two detachments. One of these went direct to Han-chai with the baggage and two hunters, whilst the other, composed of Messrs. Potanin and Rafailof,

\* Translated from the 'Journal de St. Pétersbourg.'

took the direction of Hami and Uliassutai. In order to reach the former of these two places the party followed the route taken last year by the Russian merchants of Kobdo. They crossed the Altai-Nouron Mountains,\* an eastern prolongation of the Altai, by the Pass of Oulen-daban, near the sources of the Barlyk. The passage across the Gobi Desert occupied two days. South of it lies the Chinese village of Santarou (otherwise called Kara-su). At Barkul the expedition halted some days, without, however, entering the town, although the Chinese authorities offered to find them quarters in it.

The last letters received from Potanin are dated the 25th of July, and refer to his summer journey and his plans for the autumn.

"We arrived at Hami," he writes, "the 16th (28th) May. Here, thanks to a letter from M. Shishmareff, Russian Consul at Urga, we were well received by the Chinese authorities, who found us lodgings in the mercantile quarter of the town. We had several interviews with the Governor. Indeed, most of our time was taken up with official visits. So pressing was the hospitality of the Governor that we had some difficulty in leaving this town. When at length we succeeded in taking our departure we resumed our march by the route from *Kometr-Daban*, † by which we had come, also taken by Sosnofsky; but at the northern entrance of the pass we turned to the east, to follow the northern slope of the *Karlyk-tagh*, † an eastern buttress of the Tian-Shan, which is covered with eternal snows. Here we found villages inhabited by the Choutou (Sarpes). At the village of *Nom-Tologoi* † we left the Tian-Shan, taking a northerly direction and recrossing the Desert of Gobi, in order to gain the southern extremity of the *Adjia-Vogdo*, † a spur of the Altai, rising to the height of the zone of the Alpine flora. We crossed the Altai by the pass of the *Karanuron-Daban*, † situated between the valleys of *Saksa* ‡ and *Tsitsiren-gol*. † Then, having crossed the parallel chain of *Taimir-ula*, we arrived at the halting-place of *Djazaktu-khan*. § On the 13th (25th) July we arrived at Uliassutai."

The expedition collected in the Tian-Shan, the Altai, and at different points of the route. Its herbaria are principally composed of mountain-plants, the flora of the plains which it traversed being extremely scanty. It collected fifty kinds of mountain-plants, mostly from the Altai.

The party proposed making an excursion to the sources of the Yenissei. Towards the end of July it intended leaving Kosso-gol, and taking the direction of Lake Ubsa, || and reaching Büsk by the Chouia.

Several members of the Society have made scientific journeys in the course of the summer. M. Raiëfsky went to Riga to pursue his investigations on

\* This chain is marked on Petermann's map in A. Stieler's Hand-atlas as the *Altai-niron*; the pass mentioned in the text is not marked on any of our maps.—M.

† These names are not to be found on any of our maps.—M.

‡ These rivers are not marked on our maps.—M.

§ I find Chasaktu-ula as the name of a range of hills faintly marked on Petermann's map; the station mentioned in the text is probably near these mountains.—M.

|| Lake Ubsa lies to the south of the Tannu-ula range, a ramification of the Altai; it was visited by Atkinson, the Siberian traveller, and he describes the appearance of the lake from the summit of one of these mountains. He appears to have gone over some part of the ground traversed by Potanin, and a reference to the map accompanying his work will assist the reader in tracing Potanin's route ('Siberia,' pp. 442 *et seq.*). The Russian traveller Printz visited Kobdo in 1863, on a mission from his government to endeavour to establish direct trading relations with the Chinese who were established there (see Zapisky, 'Russ. Geogr. Soc. Gen. Geogr.' vol. i. p. 535).

The town of Büsk, near the confluence of the Obi and Katuna in the government of Tomsk.—M.

the production and trade in corn; Baron Osten-Sacken proceeded to Austria, to continue his ethnographical studies; M. Poliakoff went to the place where a mammoth is said to have been discovered, and then to Lake Balkash. M. Sidoroff succeeded in effecting a daring voyage in his schooner, the *Aurora Borealis*, from the mouth of the Yenissei to the coast of Norway. The ethnographical and anthropological expedition of M. Mainof to the Finnish tribes on the Volga, has furnished new data for geographical science. M. Mainof has brought home an important collection of photographs; he has also made a number of anthropological measurements and observations on the habits of the Mordva.

The Society had contemplated the equipment of another expedition planned last spring, at the instance and with the material assistance of M. Sibiriakoff, charged to explore the water-parting of the rivers Ob and Yenissei. Unfortunately this expedition has not been accomplished, owing to the great preparatory labours which it required. These works, which were undertaken by the Society in conjunction with the Ministry of Ways and Means, could not be finished until the end of June. The Department received permission to take part in the expedition, and it is hoped that it will be ready to start towards the end of winter or in the early spring.

The library of the Society has been enriched during the summer by more than five hundred works. The catalogue is in the press, and half the work will be ready by the end of the year. The Secretary of the Physical Section, M. Lomonosoff, has undertaken the catalogue of the extensive collection of maps owned by the Society. The section *Russica*, which alone comprises two thousand maps, is now ready, and the catalogue will soon be issued. On terminating his Report the Secretary presented an extract of Prejevalsky's Report, which he had compiled at the request of the Council of the Society.

The Vice-President remarked in a few words on the high scientific value of the results of Prejevalsky's expedition, and explained the progress in our knowledge of Central Asia, owing to the labours of M. Prejevalsky, Colonel Sosnofsky, Captain Kuropatkin, and other explorers.

M. P. Semenov at the same time noticed a work on the Aralo-Caspian levelling operations, recently published by Colonel A. de Thilo, and proposed a vote of thanks to M. Thilo for the success which had crowned his labours.

M. Mainof encountered no difficulties whilst engaged in his researches among the Mordva, who are more or less under Russian influence; but this was not the case farther in the country, where he met with an almost hostile reception. M. Mainof took a number of anthropological observations, and his collection of photographs is of especial interest to the ethnologist.

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## 2. *A Tour through Formosa, from South to North.* By ARTHUR CORNER.

I had been staying for a few days in the neighbourhood of the Red Fort Zealandia, at Amping, lat. 23° N. long. 120° 10' E., having come over from Amoy with the idea of travelling into the interior of Formosa in order to see something of the other tribes of aborigines, some of whom I described in a journal of my visit to the south in the early part of the year.

I found the fort a mere heap of ruins, huge masses of masonry, which had formed the bastions and other works of the Dutch engineers, lying heaped around the base of the elevation on which the place was built, and only the large tree standing on it, with some Chinese houses, which form so good a land-mark for vessels approaching this otherwise very monotonous coast. The Chinese were breaking out the bricks from the concreted masses with much difficulty to build a modern earthwork about a mile off under the superintend-