

The Geographical Journal.

No. 5.

MAY, 1893.

VOL. I.

A JOURNEY ACROSS TIBET.*

By Captain H. BOWER, 17th Bengal Cavalry.

IN 1890 I returned from Turkistan, after an absence of fourteen months, thoroughly bitten with that love of travel which comes to all who have once experienced the charm of wandering amidst strange peoples in unknown lands. The biggest blank on our maps of Asia was in Tibet. The southern and eastern parts were partially known through the explorations of various native surveyors; but north of Nain Singh's route, as far as Chinese Turkistan, absolutely nothing was known. A few conjectural lakes were dotted about our maps, but these seemed to have been put in to satisfy the artistic taste of map designers, so if permission could be obtained, I determined to endeavour to cross that unknown stretch of country. Their Excellencies the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief gave the scheme their warmest approbation, and Dr. W. G. Thorold, of the Indian Medical Service, having volunteered to accompany me, I left Simla for Kashmir to make arrangements.

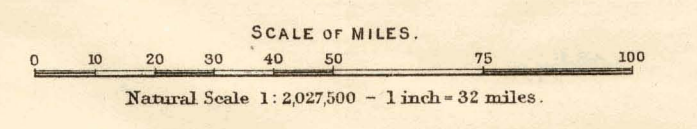
On starting for an unknown country it is often a difficult thing to decide as to what transport is the most suitable. Yaks, which are largely used in crossing the high passes of the Himalayas, have the advantage of being almost insensible to cold, and are not much affected by altitude; but the disadvantages are, that they march very slowly, are liable to get footsore, and will not eat grain; therefore they cannot be taken to any place where grass is not obtainable. Sheep are useful, and can carry a load of from 30 to 40 lbs.; but, owing to the winter having been an exceptionally severe one and the spring having been backward, none in sufficiently good condition to start on a long journey were obtainable. I had therefore to content myself with ponies and mules.

My time at Kashmir was very fully taken up in buying animals and clothes, fitting pack-saddles, &c.; but at last, on April 17th, 1891, I

* Read at the meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, February 20th, 1893. Map, p. 480.

SKETCH MAP OF TIBET AND WESTERN CHINA

showing the explorations of
CAPT. H. BOWER, 17th BENGAL CAVALRY
1891-92.



Captain Bower's route in red.
Camps shown in red and numbered, thus 109.
Camps where latitude observations were taken, thus 80.
Passes are shown thus x
Heights in Feet.
Gomba - Monastery.
La - Pass.
Cho - River.
Tso - Lake.
S.P. - Snowy Peak.

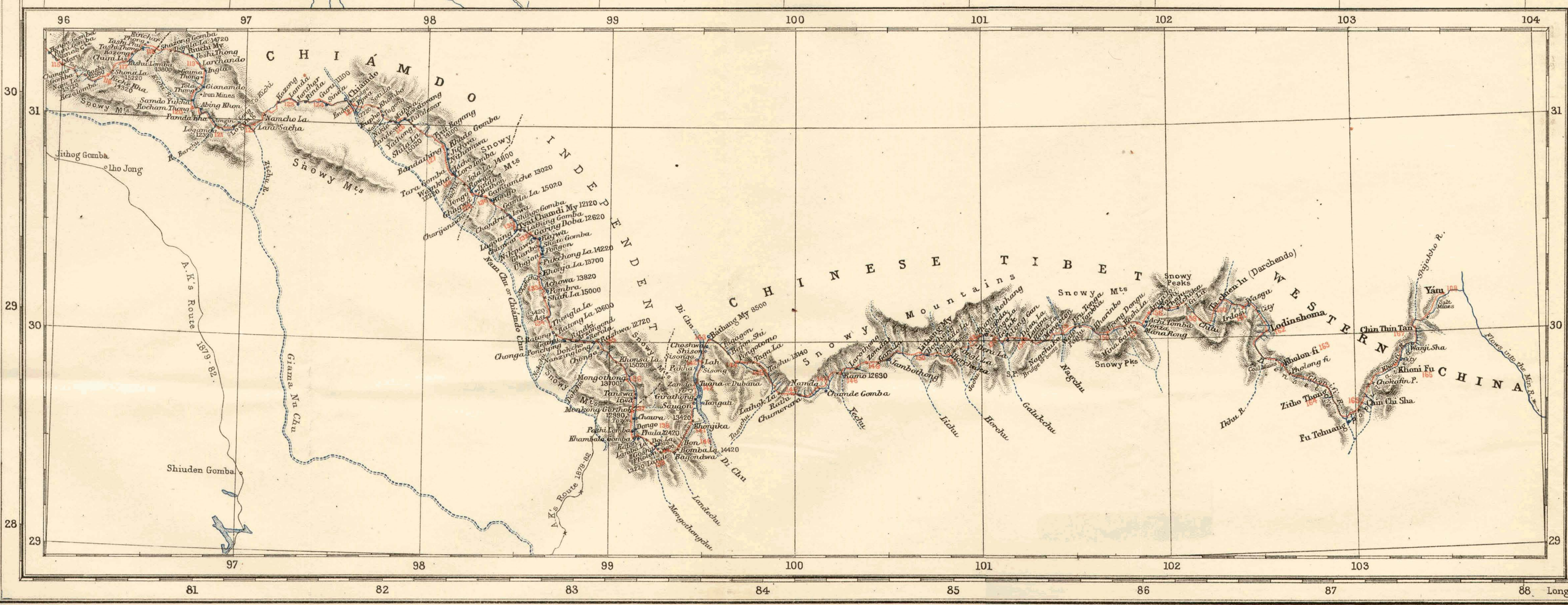


Table of Latitudes observed
at Camp 2 Lat. 34° 25' 30"

8	33.55.10
13	34. 8.35
20	33.48.33
23	33.36.57
28	33. 3.52
32	32.42. 6
37	32.11.24
41	31.56.11
44	31.39.23
49	31.37. 4
51	31.29.48
76	32.44.22
80	32.35.51
81	31.58.39
98	31.55.22
102	31.56.43
107	31.58.16
110	31.38.52
115	31.12.44
120	31. 2.23
125	31. 4.53
132	30.30. 9
137	29.40.28

was able to set out for Leh, whence the final start was to be made; Dr. Thorold had already gone on. On the road the Zoji La Pass had to be crossed. Though only 11,300 feet high, it was rather difficult to get over, as a great deal of soft snow was lying, and our baggage had to be made into very small parcels and carried by coolies; while the ponies, on which there were no loads, were assisted by men, one being told off for each pony. After crossing the pass we entered Ladakh, and, before long, monasteries, praying wheels, and heaps of stones with sacred inscriptions, brought home to us the fact that we were in a Buddhist country. Leh was reached on June 1st, and we halted there until the 14th, making final preparations for our start into the unknown.

The party marching out of Leh consisted of Dr. Thorold and myself, a native sub-surveyor, my Pathan orderly, a Hindustani cook, a Kashmiri, and six Arghoon caravan drivers. On the road we paid a flying visit to Hemis Monastery, as the annual festival was going on there, and had an opportunity of seeing a Lama masked dance. This was one of the quaintest and weirdest sights I have ever seen. Round and round went these hideously-masked figures in slow measured time, while a hidden choir chanted in true cathedral style.

The Buddhist religion as seen in Tibetan countries has nothing in common with the pure morality preached by Gautama Buddha. The doctrines of the founder are too abstract for the average Tibetan mind, and this has led to innovations which have developed until the grossest superstition, little better than African fetishism, and bearing hardly any resemblance to the original precepts, is all one meets in the stronghold of Buddhism.

From Hemis we went to Chang Chemmo, where we picked up the depot of supplies that had been sent on, and then continued our way towards the Lanak La Pass. At first I thought we would have had difficulty in finding it, as a man who had been enlisted on his having offered to guide us there turned out to be totally ignorant of its position, and confessed that he had never been there. However, a Ladakhi, who had come with some hired transport, said he knew where it was, and being promised a reward, agreed to show us. Under his guidance we reached it, and crossed the frontier on July 3rd. The Kashmiri was completely knocked up from mountain sickness on the road and had to be sent back.

After crossing the frontier we kept on in an easterly direction to the Mangtza Cho Lake, which we reached on July 7th. The lake is a fine sheet of water of a deep indigo-blue, lying at an elevation of 16,540 feet. The water is salt, and the Tibetans come from Ladakh and Noh to gather the salt which is found in incrustations round the edge. We were fortunate in meeting no one, as had we met any of the inhabitants they would most assuredly have objected to our going further into their country, and difficulties might have arisen.

After leaving the lakes we kept on in an easterly direction up a wide open valley. Away to the north, standing out in the clear atmosphere and sparkling in the bright sunshine, magnificent snowfields were to be seen, while in front of us a range running north and south appeared to block the way completely. The Ladakhi, who had agreed to take us five marches further on, wanted to return; he said he was utterly ignorant of where we were or where we were likely to get to. However, when he discovered that he was to be held to his bargain, and would have to go on, whether he knew the road or not, he took the guidance of the caravan, and led us over the apparently formidable obstacle by a pass which, though 18,400 feet high, was still very easy. Descending the pass we found ourselves on the banks of a large lake, with several islands dotted about its surface, lying at an altitude of 17,930 feet, the highest lake we found in Tibet, and probably the highest in the world. To the south, a snowclad range, and on the other side low undulating hills were seen. Owing to the fact that the streams coming down from the snows enter at the south, the water at that end is much fresher than at the other; and as is invariably the case when fresh water is met with in these regions, gulls, bar-headed geese, and Brahminy ducks wheeling in the air uttering their discordant cries, gave life and animation to the scene. Leaving this lake behind we kept on, and in two days' time came to another large lake, close to which, finding a ravine containing fresh water and abundance of grass, I decided to halt for a day in order to rest the ponies. Here, as on many occasions, I found myself deceived as regards distance by the clear atmosphere. Thinking the lake to be about 3 miles distant I started for it, taking the necessary instruments to ascertain the altitude of its surface; but imagine my disgust to find that instead of being 3 miles off it was really about 9.

Next day we continued our way eastwards, and a very long, weary day it was. There was no water on the road, and in the afternoon the poor animals kept rushing into every watercourse, only to find them dry. Darkness came on before we had found any water, and convinced that wandering on in the dark indefinitely would not do, I gave the order to halt and started for the lake, picking my way over mud. On reaching the edge I tasted the water and found it as salt as the sea. We next tried digging, and got a little water which, though slightly fresher than the lake, was still of no use as a thirst quencher. There was nothing to do but to go to bed thirsty and trust that water would be found next day. Towards morning we were awoke by a hailstorm beating on our tents. A kettle was at once filled with the hailstones, and before long we were enjoying a cup of tea. Feeling thoroughly refreshed, we loaded up and continued our journey. Before going 5 miles we found a large spring of fresh water discharging an enormous volume into the lake; the poor animals who, alas, had received little benefit from the hailstones, simply rushed into it, and stood there drinking their fill.

While we were pitching camp, a black spot was made out on a distant hill-side. On bringing a glass to bear on it we found it to be a nomad's tent, round which some sheep were grazing. I at once sent over two men to procure guides if possible, and generally to make inquiries as to the route, etc. They returned, saying that there were no men at the tents, but only five women, who said that in five days we should reach the headquarters of the Khamba people, and that tents were to be met with all the way.

Next day we moved our tents over the river and pitched them close to the nomads. As we approached two men, who evidently had been hiding when my men had gone over, advanced to meet us. They were dressed in sheepskin robes, on their feet they had bright-coloured woollen stockings coming up to the knee and soled with yak's hide; their hair was in matted locks hanging down on each side of the face. Slung over their shoulders were long matchlocks with two-pronged rests on the end, and in their belts, stuck diagonally across the front of the body, they had straight swords in scabbards, ornamented with silver incrustations and turquoises; in their hands were long spears. These men were very anxious to know who we were and where we were going. I told them we were merchants and had lost our way in the mountains. They said that in a south-easterly direction lay Khamba, which was thickly inhabited by nomads; but they dared not take us there, as if they did they would assuredly have their throats cut for bringing strangers into the country, and the people would be sure to oppose us. In reply to my inquiries as to a road running east, they denied the existence of such a road; but they offered for 40 rupees to guide us in a southerly direction to a place called Sakhi, on the Leh-Lhasa road. Though this did not suit my plans at all, I pretended to fall in with the idea, and said, "All right; but it is a pity you cannot show us a road running east, in which case I would have given you more than double the amount." They then retired, but reappeared in about an hour, stating that after consultation amongst themselves they had discovered that there was a road running east, and were prepared to make a bargain to guide us for ten days along it. They were quite effusive in their friendliness, assuring us that they had deceived us at first under the impression that we were the advanced guard of an army; but now they had discovered their mistake and meant to be honest and above-board. A bargain was concluded with them, and under their guidance we resumed our march in an easterly direction. In three days we found ourselves on the banks of Lake Aru Cho, a noble sheet of water lying at an elevation of 17,150 feet. In every direction wild yak and antelope in incredible numbers were to be seen; but no trees and no signs of man. This peaceful-looking lake, never before seen by European eye, seems given over as a happy grazing-ground to wild animals—a veritable sportsman's paradise.

For one march we travelled north along the western edge, then turning east, leaving the lake behind, crossed a ridge and descended to a pool of water where we camped. During the night our new guides managed to desert. To attempt to follow them was out of the question, so there was nothing to do but endeavour to make the best of our way by ourselves. The great anxiety now preying on my mind was the uncertainty of finding water, as we had no one who knew the country. However, luck seemed to favour us in the most wonderful way, and day after day, when we were beginning to despair of finding any, we suddenly came on a spring or a pool of fresh water.

Another constant difficulty was the straying of the ponies. They had to be turned loose at night to graze or they never would have been able to march next day. Often when we got up in the morning one or two were missing, and search parties had to be sent out to seek for them. On one occasion six donkeys and eighteen ponies disappeared in the night leaving us perfectly stranded. We had to halt for four days scouring the country all round before they were recovered, and until they were found I much dreaded that nomads had stolen them.

Thus we journeyed for some weeks. The country was all of the same character—rounded, undulating hills with wide open valleys, and here and there sharply-defined snowy ranges. Game consisting of wild yak, kiang, Tibetan antelope, and gazelle, was exceedingly plentiful, and almost always in sight. But no signs of man were visible. At last on August 22nd the tracks of a party of nomads were seen. I sent two men to follow up the tracks and endeavour to obtain guides and supplies. The nomads received them with levelled matchlocks; but their hostility was overcome, and a bargain was nearly concluded when some other nomads suddenly appeared and opened fire on my men, the only result being that one bullet broke the leg of a Tibetan's pony. Though the nomads having fired off their matchlocks were quite at the mercy of my men who had breechloaders, these did not return the fire, as I had given them strict orders not to fire unless absolutely obliged to.

The character of all these nomads is much the same—greedy, faithless, and suspicious. Their suspicions do not attach only to foreigners; every camp seems to view every other camp as not only a possible but a very probable enemy.

After this provisions began to run out, and game unfortunately became scarcer, so all hands had to be put on reduced rations, and kiang, an animal something resembling a mule that we had formerly scorned, had to be shot for the pot.

Before many days were over more nomads were seen, and from them we managed to obtain some supplies; but they all viewed us with much suspicion. As we advanced the inhabitants of the tents came on with us, and before long we found ourselves escorted by about a hundred men

all armed with matchlock and sword. They endeavoured to induce us to halt, but I declined to do so until some responsible headman was met with. In this way we journeyed until August 31st, when we camped at a height of 15,621 feet. Early in the morning a poor mendicant Lama came over to our tents to ask for charity, and also probably to spy. He said that we had been wrongly informed as to the roads; the one to the south led to Tashi Lunpo (Shigatse), and to reach Lhasa it was necessary to go through a depression in the hills to the east. As this was more in accordance with my own observations, I came to the conclusion that he was telling the truth, and so we started off in that direction. The valley was studded with black tents, and herds of sheep and tame yak were grazing in every direction. Goa and kiang were also to be seen; but the former were very wild, the latter were in troops, and decidedly inquisitive. On reaching the head of the valley, we followed the bed of a rivulet fed by springs, which took us on to some high plateau-like ground, where we met once more our old friends, the Tibetan antelope: we had not seen any for some days, and it is evident that they do not often descend below 15,000 feet, and are decidedly scarce below 16,000 or 17,000 feet. In the night heavy rain fell, coming from the west.

On leaving camp next day we went through a narrow defile that opened out on a wide valley in which was an enormous lake. As we were approaching it, three mounted men caught us up; one of them appeared to be a sort of headman. He wanted to know all about us, and was not the least satisfied on being shown the Chinese passport, as he said that the year before, two Russians (by whom I presume he meant the two French travellers, M. Bonvalot, and Prince Henry of Orleans) had come into the country, also provided with a Chinese passport; that immediately afterwards information had come from China that a passport had inadvertently been issued, but that no notice was to be taken of it, and all Europeans were to be rigidly excluded. He then wanted us to halt while he communicated with some of his superiors. That I refused to do, and, at the same time, told him that our only reason for taking the Lhasa road was the necessity for obtaining provisions, our real intention being to go more to the north, and if he would supply everything wanted, we would continue travelling east and would pass to the north of Lhasa. However, he would not agree to this, and said he had heard from Lhasa that an English invasion of Tibet by the Chang was expected, and he suspected our party of being the advance guard. Near our camp there were three upright stones resembling those on Salisbury plain, and close to them were the foundations of several rectangular stone houses. I was much astonished at seeing them, as the highest flights in the architectural line that we had seen up to date were some old sheep pens; these had evidently been something of a very different class. In the evening more Tibetans arrived, and having

pitched their camp a little distance off, came over to try and induce us to halt, but being unsuccessful in their endeavours, departed.

Next day, soon after leaving the last camp, we found ourselves on the banks of a large stream flowing into the lake. Although it was cut up into many branches, it took us some time to find a ford, and then we only got over with difficulty; all our bedding and baggage got wet. Another stream, further on, though it did not hold nearly as much water, was almost as difficult to cross, owing to the stony nature of the bottom, and force of the current. After crossing it, we turned up a valley on the south, and camped. While we were pitching tents, a number of men, all armed with sword and matchlock, came up, and going a little bit ahead of us, camped. They were followed by a lot more, who camped on the other side, thus hemming us in completely. I sent two men to ask what they wanted, and received an answer that this was their country, and they were moving about in it—an answer that it was impossible to take exception to.

After a night of very heavy rain we continued our way up the valley. The following morning, as we were preparing to start, a zoung, or official, turned up, accompanied by a lesser light. He went to the Dokpas' tent, and sent four men to ask us who we were, and what we wanted in the country. To this I answered that, if he wanted to know, he had better come over himself, as I was not going to be interrogated by menial servants. On receiving my message the great man, accompanied by the lesser light, and a dozen of unwashed hangers-on, came over to our camp. I took them into my tent, and seated them on yakdans, after which they rather abruptly opened the conversation by asking, "Who are you, and what do you want here?" In reply to which I said, "We are English; we have come from Ladakh, are going to China; and here is our passport. We don't want to go to Lhasa, and have only come south to obtain provisions. Give us provisions and a guide, and we will continue our journey east."

The answer to this was that if we attempted to proceed they would be obliged to oppose us, as if they did not do so they would certainly lose their heads. If we fought and killed them, well it was just as good as being executed in Lhasa. They were absolutely immovable in this resolve, and I have not the slightest doubt would have attempted to stop our progress by force had we resolved to go on at all hazards. So I judged it better to come to some understanding with them, and after arguing over every trifling point and much circumlocution the following treaty was drawn up:—

(1) We were to be taken to a place three marches off in either an easterly or southerly direction, where water and grass were plentiful.

(2) Arrived there we would halt fifteen days, in order to allow matters to be settled in Lhasa, and allow any officials who might be sent to see us.

(3) During our halt we were to receive daily one sheep, 12 lbs. of flour, 12 lbs. of tsampa, and 1 lb. of butter; these things were to be supplied at a rate which they said was under market rates.

(4) The safety of ourselves and our property was guaranteed, and the value of anything stolen was to be paid to us.

After the treaty was drawn up, before they left I gave them each a small present, and hinted at the possibility of other and more valuable ones being forthcoming in the event of things being satisfactorily arranged.

They were both men of a very superior type to the wandering Dokpas: intellectually and physically they were fine men, and about both there was an air of pronounced individuality. As regards their dress, they wore the same kind of dingy red woollen garments ordinarily worn by Lamas; across the shoulder they had belts, on which were strung miniature shrines, about 7 inches by 4, containing prayers, etc. Their hair was in pigtails, much ornamented with turquoises, etc., and brushed well back from the head; quite a different style to the Dokpa fashion, where the pigtail is only an adjunct to a very rugged shock-like mass of hair, innocent of brush, comb, soap, or water. They made light of Chinese influence in Tibet, saying the only ruler in Tibet was the Deva Zhung (Central Government of Lhasa; the term is also sometimes applied to the Talai Lama). In the evening very heavy rain fell, and as no dry yak dung was to be found, we had great difficulty about cooking anything, and were reduced to burning the ridge-pole of a tent.

On September 5th our friends, the Tibetan dignitaries, were not ready to start with us, evidently indulging in that luxury, known in India as a Europe morning; but a small boy was sent to show us the way towards the place we had agreed to halt at. Marching in the same direction as ourselves was an enormous caravan, consisting of about four hundred yaks, fifty horses, and several thousand sheep. In reply to our inquiries they said they were a party of merchants, Chinese subjects, that their home was one month and a half distant, and that having brought goods into the country, they had exchanged them for live-stock which they were now taking back. However, some of the Tibetan officials' followers who had caught us up told a different story, saying that they were Chukpas (brigands), and that all the animals were the produce of industry in other paths than those of commerce, and the further apart we camped the better. So acting on this advice, after the sheep in wolves' clothing halted, we continued our march for another 8 miles, and camped on the banks of a stream flowing into a large lake. Numbers of nomads' black tents were to be seen in every direction.

Next day, a few miles after leaving camp forty-nine, we crossed a narrow neck of land between two lakes, the northern one of immense

size, while the southern one was of extremely irregular shape, having branches running up valleys in every direction, and islands, some of them fairly large, scattered about its surface. It was of singular beauty; and to the south a high cone-shaped peak, capped with snow, threw its shadow across; but what made the great difference that exists between it and other Tibetan lakes was the freshness of the water. Grass grows right down to the edge, and the invariable adjuncts of fresh-water gulls, and terns, wheeling about uttering cries, gave a feeling of life and animation contrasting strongly with the death-like solitude hanging over the salt lakes. It is almost impossible to get the correct names of places or lakes in Tibet, as every Tibetan lies on every occasion on which he does not see a good valid reason for telling the truth. Sometimes I have asked half-a-dozen men separately the name of a lake and received half-a-dozen different answers. The names I have put on my map are those in favour of which slightly more evidence was forthcoming than for others; but still some of them, including those of these lakes, may turn out to be erroneous, when further explorations have made us better acquainted with the country.

After leaving our last camp we crossed a narrow neck of land about the size of, and somewhat resembling, a railway embankment, with a lake on each side. A Tibetan, in the course of conversation with one of the caravan drivers, stated that the large lake on the north of which we were continually getting glimpses and occasionally extended views, was called Tengri Nor by Mongols and Tengri Cho by Tibetans; but I fear he lied. However, whatever the right name might be, there was no doubt of its being a noble sheet of water, stretching out east and west to an enormous distance; it seemed more worthy to be called an inland sea than a lake. But like all the Tibetan lakes, it showed signs of once having been larger than it is now; some of the lakes appear to have dwindled to about half their original size. Between it and our camp were some large lagoons of fresh water fed by streams coming down from the hills.

The escort seemed to grow in size every hour. Parties pouring out from all the side valleys fell in and came on with us. Though possibly they were not all intended to form a guard of honour, I thought it best to regard them as such, and hugged myself over the idea that we were being treated as distinguished guests. They were a quaint-looking lot, with long rifles terminating in a prong-like rest, to one arm of which was attached a red flag. Straight swords in scabbards encrusted with silver and studded with turquoises, stuck crossways in the front of their belts, prayer wheel in hand, dirty sheepskin raiment, hats that must have been introduced by a designer of garments for a burlesque, shock heads, pigtails, short stirrups and miniature steeds, all made up a picture, that though longing to photograph, I judged it wise not to for fear of exciting their suspicions.

From our camp a road ran southward to Lhasa, and people were continually passing backwards and forwards; one party said they were going to meet the dignitary of high rank that was expected out to interview us. As my passport was for Chinese Turkistan and mountains to south and west, I anticipated that when read, we should be allowed to take the way to the north and no other. The Tibetans sent over more supplies, consisting of a cake of brick tea, two pounds of butter and two sacks of nice dry cow-dung, but no flour or suttoo, those things not having arrived. However, they came next day, and brought a cake of a sort of Tibetan cheese; as Nebuchadnezzar said of the grass: "It may be wholesome, but it is not good." A plenipotentiary that I sent over to the Zoung's camp to fetch fuel, reported on returning that the old man had hinted that when permission came from Lhasa to proceed, he expected a trifling *douceur* in return for his trouble in providing a guide. So, rejoicing to find that he was civilised enough to understand the nature of a *douceur*, I sent a message that he need not fear on that score; as my knowledge of Tibetans increased my delicacy about suggesting gratuities decreased in beautiful arithmetical proportion. In order to try and find out the real name of the big lake, I instructed a caravan driver to get into conversation with the passers-by on the road and find out from them. The whole of Tibet could not have been instructed to give false answers, so barring the natural tendency of the people, there was nothing to prevent the real name being got at; but that natural tendency struck me as a pretty difficult obstacle when he returned, having interviewed several parties and got different names from each.

The Zoung paid us a state visit in the evening, and was very pressing in his inquiries as to where we had first met inhabitants. Evidently the arrival of Europeans had not been as quickly reported as it should have been, and he wanted to punish the delinquents; but, as we were dressed in Ladakh raiment, and the people always prefer to look at strangers from afar off, our not being spotted as Europeans was hardly to be wondered at. Next day, when we were starting off to pay a return visit to our friends, a messenger came over from their camp, asking us to postpone it, as they were very busy owing to important news having arrived. We were naturally curious as to what had happened, and the messenger showed no unwillingness to be communicative. It appeared that the Chukpas, whom we had passed on the road, not content with the enormous numbers of animals they had collected, had made another raid, and after killing several men had driven off two hundred yaks, fifty horses, and an enormous number of sheep. Such goings on close to Lhasa were unheard-of and occasioned great excitement. Meanwhile the Zoung was busy organising parties in order to endeavour to recover the stolen property. I suggested that as the Chukpas' herds were close by, the best plan would be to seize them; but it appeared that they had been

lifted in Kangri, a country away to the east, and as the Deva Zhung received a tax on each head driven through the Lhasa country, they were regarded as inviolable. However, as the Chukpas on their part undertook not to raid in the country near Lhasa and had broken their bond, I should have thought the Lhasa people would have been justified in breaking theirs also; but the Zoung looked at it differently. His idea was that the Chukpas having committed a breach of good manners, was no reason for his also doing so; but at the same time he would not hesitate to execute them if he got a chance. A Lama came to visit us, and was very strong in information regarding the names of places and other geographical facts; but the names and the facts differed very considerably from those given by other people. On the whole I was inclined to think him fairly truthful. He called the big lake in front Garing Cho, the district we were in Naksung Sittok; and to the east lay Doba, Numru Sera, and Nakchu. In the latter Shiabden Gomba is situated; from there two roads run towards China, one on the north to Sining, or as he called it, Gya Zilling, and a more southerly one of which he knew nothing. Chukpas abounded on the Sining road, and the general custom was for travellers to wait at Shiabden Gomba until several hundreds could be collected, and then cross the dangerous zone together for mutual protection. From Namru, a road runs to Lhasa, by which it would be possible to go straight into the sacred city without meeting a soul; but for us the Zoung and his small army put that out of the range of practical politics. Our arrival had created tremendous excitement. First of all, rumours spread that an English army was coming, next that it was only a party of Chinese travellers; and lastly, the true one, that we were English, but our objects were peaceful.

On September 27th the Kushok of Naksung, the expected colleague, turned up, and sent a man to call me over to his tent. I replied that if he wanted to see me he had better come to my tent. As I had waited twenty-one days for him, it was the least he could do. He came over, as I knew he would, the message having been simply an attempt to see if I could be bullied. Like all high dignitaries, he rode a mule, and held a bright red umbrella over his head. The latter much puzzled my orderly, who could not make out whether it was to keep off the sun or the rain, there being no signs of either at the time. The other Lhasa swell and our two old friends also came with him. My tent was prepared for their reception by neatly-arrayed yakdans, covered with scarlet blankets, to serve as seats. As soon as all hands were seated, business was promptly opened by the question, "Who are you, and where do you come from?" To which I replied, "We are English travellers; we had intended to pass more to the north, but, having run short of provisions, had steered towards the south, confident that, owing to the friendship existing between the British and Lhasa

Governments, we would receive every assistance." The answer to this was, that Tibet was forbidden ground to all strangers; that the only thing they would permit us to do was to return the way we had come at once; and as for the friendship existing between the two Governments, that was no reason why the people of both nations should not stick to their own countries. I then told them that it was of no use talking if they were going to introduce the subject of returning the way we had come.

Next day they came back again, and invited us to dinner the following day, an invitation which we accepted with much pleasure. On arriving at their camp, we were ushered in, and, after being seated on raised carpets, tea was produced. They drank it in Tibetan fashion, mixed with salt and butter; but, having found out from our servants the European fashion, they gave us some plain. After a considerable consumption of tea, bowls of mutton, boiled with rice and onions, were brought in. It was really excellent; but eating rice with chopsticks is an art that requires practice. The lower end of the tent was full of the denizens of the neighbouring ones, who walked in and out as if they were members of the great man's family. The whole scene had a very patriarchal air about it; and I was much struck with the respect shown by the common people to their superiors, continually bowing and sticking out their tongues when spoken to, that being the Tibetan mode of salutation. Before dining, and after the repast, the conversation turned upon the road we were to take. They maintained that if they allowed us to advance they would be executed on returning to Lhasa, while I stuck to my former statement that I would not go back a yard. Before leaving I invited them to dine next day with us. They agreed, and we made our exit amidst much bowing. They were pleasant, intelligent men, but exceedingly obstinate. When I pulled the Chinese passport out of my pocket, and asked them what was the meaning of the Amban's presence at Lhasa, if that was not to be read or to come into the discussion. They replied that the Amban was allowed to live at Lhasa as a visible sign of the friendship existing between the two countries; but Tibet was in no way under China. At the same time they produced a letter that had been sent after them from Lhasa, in which they were instructed to take no notice of any Chinese passport, but send us back the way we had come.

Other visits were exchanged. They asked many questions about England, and were much surprised to hear that it was surrounded by water, and that people went to it in ships. They had not the faintest idea what a ship was, and asked if it went through the water touching the bottom the whole way. Like true nomads they were particularly curious also about the water and grass.

Eventually they agreed to the following bargain :

We were to go back eight marches, and then travel east by a more northerly route. The Kushok was to accompany us for twelve marches, and after that we would be guided by four men, whom he would supply. We were to receive twenty ponies, 2160 lbs. tsamba, thirty sheep, 60 lbs. butter, 1100 lbs. barley, nine pairs pubboos (Tibetan boots). In return for all these I agreed to hand over 800 rupees.

As soon as the treaty was concluded, men were sent off in every direction to collect the supplies, and the headman of Shildut, who had been our original jailer, returned to his home. He was a nice old man, and I felt quite sorry at his departure. The rest of our time at Gaga Linchin was principally taken up taking over stores and transport animals. The ponies were sturdy beasts, about 12-2 hands, but were all a trifle long in the tooth; however, "never look a gift horse in the mouth," and if they lasted for three months, that was all we wanted. The Kushok rather astonished me one day by expressing admiration of our beards, and asking if we had any medicine that would make his grow. As anything like a decent beard is almost unknown in Tibet I should have thought a hairless face would have been more admired. The Lama was very anxious to know if we had any English poisons. Poisoning is very prevalent in Tibet. If one offers a man tea, he generally refuses it, unless someone first drinks a portion in his presence; and when offering anything to eat or drink a Tibetan invariably ostentatiously takes some in order to show there is nothing to be afraid of. We were also asked if gold, pearls, and rubies found a place in the European pharmacopœia, and much surprise was expressed when Dr. Thorold assured them that they had no medicinal value. The Talai Lama is regularly dosed with medicines composed of those ingredients, so there is little to marvel at in Talai Lamas all dying young.

The tales Tibetans tell and I really think believe are sometimes most marvellous. We were told of a country not far off where men lived, who possessed only one arm and one leg, but no one would allow that he had seen any of these interesting people, and they would not even say in which direction the country lay, or how far off it was. Another wonderful country was one on the road to China, where the people had pigs' heads, but as with the other tale no one present had ever been there or seen the inhabitants thereof, though nearly everybody knew some one that had. Another story we were told was about a lake away to the north called Tso Ngom Mo, or the blue lake,—so large that it took thirty-five days to ride round. Formerly no lake existed, but some Chungpas lifted up a large flat stone and water immediately gushing out overran the country. An animal is found in the lake and nowhere else whose skin is of fabulous value. Once a year one has to be sent to the Emperor of China. Should it be omitted by any chance, several dignitaries would lose their heads, but no one seemed very clear about who were the dignitaries who were to be thus summarily punished for

neglect of duty towards the Sun of Heaven. I fancy the lake meant must have been Koko Nor, but it is terribly hard work trying to get geographical information out of Tibetans, for when, as in exceptional cases, it does occasionally happen, a vein of truth runs through their statements, it is so fine as to be almost impossible to discover.

Everything having been arranged, on October 4th we started to retrace our steps, and on the 12th, leaving our old route, we struck north.

On October 18th we managed to get over a snowy range that had been staring us in the face for several days. The pass was 18,768 feet high. There was not much snow on it, but the wind was bitterly cold, and no one took sufficient interest in scenery to linger on the top. After descending, the Tibetan yak-drivers wanted to halt at a place where there was very little grass and no water, but I insisted on their coming on until we got to water. A few miles further on we found a spring and camped. I then let them all go with a small gratuity, which much astonished and delighted them, the Tibetan custom being to requisition transport and pay nothing. We were now dependent on our own animals for carriage, the tow-rope being fairly cut and an uninhabited country in front. I sincerely hoped there were not going to be many high passes to be crossed, as nothing takes it out of horseflesh so much as struggling over high passes under heavy loads. Our old friends, the Tibetan antelope were once more to be seen. From the good service they had done us, in the commissariat line, I looked on them with respect.

It would take too long to tell of all the vicissitudes of our daily marches before once more we met inhabitants. The guides turned out to be quite ignorant of any road, and were only anxious to take us as far away from Lhasa as possible. Water was almost unprocurable, as what fresh water there was in the country in summer, was now all frozen, and fuel was not procurable in sufficient quantities to thaw it. The cold got daily more and more intense, the thermometer going down to 15° below zero with a wind that made us spend the nights in continual dread that the tents would be carried down. Minus 15° may not appear to be startlingly cold to those who have been in Canada, but with a temperature like that, the effect turns upon wind or no wind, and on the Chang a wind is almost always blowing. Day by day our animals knocked up and had to be abandoned or shot. When at last inhabitants were met with we all felt that a very few more days without assistance would have exhausted our marching powers.

On November 14th we met with nomads once more, and on that day for the first time for five months we camped below 15,000 feet, an occasion which, as water was abundant, I celebrated by washing, an eccentricity on my part that absolutely horrified the camp followers. It was a ceremony that, owing to the scarcity of water, we had only been able to perform at irregular intervals. From that time on we were always

able to obtain transport from the inhabitants from stage to stage, and one great anxiety was removed. As we proceeded eastwards we began to get among a more disagreeable people. Part of our route lay in Chinese territory, part in territory under Lhasa, and in some places the inhabitants owned allegiance to neither. Thieves abounded, and it was difficult to avoid getting into a row. In one place a man drew a sword on Dr. Thorold, and in another thirty men were discovered at night lying hid close to the camp, evidently intending to rush it as soon as they were certain we were all asleep. It is needless to say that we did not give them an opportunity of doing so. However, beyond losing some packages which were stolen, we reached the neighbourhood of Chiamdo without having had any trouble. During all the expedition, from start to finish, we never—though sorely tempted on several occasions—used violence to the natives.

On approaching Chiamdo we were met by a church dignitary, evidently of very high rank, arrayed in red garments, ornamented with gold embroidery and with a yellow cap on his head. On getting near he dismounted, and presenting a scarf of welcome said that the Amban had sent him with a request that we would be good enough to halt for a little at a house close by. I agreed to this and he galloped back whence he had come. We proceeded more leisurely, and on arrival at some barn-like buildings close to a bridge dismounted, and were ushered in, numbers of Lamas crowding round us. We were kept waiting there a few minutes, and were getting very impatient at the delay, when the Amban appeared. He was an extremely girlish-looking youth in appearance, manners, voice, and everything about him truly feminine: his mincing gait as he advanced, holding out his hand in a most extraordinary but no doubt very fashionable manner, quite took me aback. As soon as we were all seated, he asked whence we had come and where we were going. After being told he suddenly rose up and went out leaving us with the Lamas, a much more stiff-necked and difficult lot to deal with. They were a strikingly able and intellectual looking set of men; the two head ones especially had faces that would arrest attention anywhere. Education and the habit of ruling had no doubt done a good deal to mark men gifted by nature with talents above the ordinary run of their fellow-countrymen. They plunged at once into business and said, come what may they would not allow us to proceed along the road to China passing through Chiamdo, but they would give us every assistance if we would go by the route passing to the north which had been followed by M. Bonvalot and his companions. I told them I was determined to go straight on, and would not turn to the north for any one; as for Chiamdo, that it happened to be in the way was unfortunate, as I did not care a bit about seeing it, and if they liked I would promise not to enter any monastery; but we were going to China: this was the straight road, and I would go by it, and no other. They would not

agree to this at all and began tharetening, saying: "Advance, if you dare; we have three thousand men with guns and will soon stop you." I said, "All right; if you want fighting, you will get it; but straight forward we are going." Voices were being raised; both parties getting very angry, and it looked as if the fighting was going to begin then and there, when the Amban entered and peace was restored; he got the Lamas to leave the room, promising to settle the question with us. He was very easy to deal with, and inclined to agree to anything, but was terribly afraid of the Lamas; it was very evident that his authority was only a mere shadow. The arrangement come to with him was that we were not to enter the town, but to skirt it, rejoining the road on the further side. Soon after he had taken his departure he sent a man over saying he would like to have a talk with us quietly when no one was about, and would we receive him some time after dark. I sent back a message saying we would be delighted to see him at any time that he cared to come. About 9 P.M. he came over, and after we had seated him and given him tea, the conversation began. He assumed an extremely confidential tone, and said he would like to do everything in his power for us: that the English and Chinese were like brothers, and great friendship existed between their respective Governments, but the Lamas were a very turbulent set, and he really had no power at all, otherwise he would have taken us into Chiamdo and shown all the hospitality that was in his power. He trusted that we would realise the position he was placed in, and pardon his apparent want of friendliness. I told him that it was quite apparent what sort of people he had to deal with, and we quite understood the position he was placed in.

A few miles after passing Chiamdo we came to a village and halted, the Chinese Mandarin and about a couple of dozen monks escorting us. I determined to halt there for a day, but the monks objected strongly and once more began talking about the three thousand men with guns that they had, and threatened to bring them if we were not out of the place by daybreak. But it was only an attempt to intimidate us. We halted for the day and saw nothing of the three thousand musketeers, whose existence I began to consider rather problematical. But before we left, these extremely warlike monks who had been threatening us steadily, all appeared, and making humble obeisance sued for remuneration for the assistance given. What assistance they had given I failed to perceive, but as it is of vital importance in Tibet to conciliate the priesthood, I gave them some money and we parted the best of friends.

From Chiamdo to Batang the travelling was not very difficult, but the people in one or two places were exceedingly good hands at pilfering; any small unconsidered trifle left lying about for a minute disappeared. In this country Buddhism seems much more strongly impregnated with Hinduism than further east. On the stones composing manes

figures of Hindu gods are often seen, and in one house I saw a brass image of Ganesha. At the same place, on our arrival, the headman of the village meeting us inquired of the caravanbashi of what religion we were, and was told Buddhists. The headman hearing this said that he was very much pleased, as the only comfortable place for us to put up in was the idol house, but that their idol was very touchy, and if any one other than a Buddhist was to enter his house he would punish all the inhabitants of the valley. Though this idea of our being Buddhists had not been spread under my sanction, I determined more fully to utilise it by taking observations for position under the cloak of Buddhist ritual. Endeavours to take observations by stealth had previously failed, as had been evinced by stones landing round me during the operation. Now new tactics were adopted. The caravan drivers, all Mohammedans but thoroughly conversant with the details of the Buddhist religion, were mustered on the roof of the house, and put to chant the proper formula, while at intervals a bell was rung and a fire stirred up. Covered by these observances I manipulated, with the assistance of Atma Ram, the sub-surveyor, a theodolite and bullseye lantern, and thus managed to fix the position; while an odour of sanctity was spread round me that lasted for some time.

Between Achowa and Asi is a stretch of country much frequented by chukpas, the brigands of Tibet; there they lie in wait for caravans. We saw nothing of them, however, and they are very different men to what I take them to be if they would attack by daylight a caravan known to contain breechloaders. Many of the people from these parts fought against us in Sikhim, and have returned to their homes spreading tales of the marvellous effects of English rifles.

From Batang to Ta Chen Lu the road had previously been explored, and I have nothing new to add to what other travellers have written. What astonished me most was the enormous amount of tea met with on the road being taken to Lhasa, and the cheap price of gold at Litang, fourteen to one being the relative value of silver and gold.

At Ta Chen Lu, where there are three French Catholic missionaries, we entered China; meeting with Europeans once more was a great pleasure. I cannot say how much I am indebted to the missionaries for all the assistance they so kindly rendered in making arrangements for our onward journey; and whatever our religious views may be, no one can refuse a tribute of admiration to gentlemen of education who voluntarily exile themselves to a pestilential spot like Ta Chen Lu, in what they consider the performance of their duty.

From Ta Chen Lu we went to Ya Tu, on a branch of the Min River; thence by raft, boat, and steamer to Shanghai, which was reached on March 29th; then on to Calcutta and back to Simla, after an absence of twelve months and a half.

The caravan drivers returned to their homes in Ladakh *via* Pindi;
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parting with them was a painful business, and I shall ever think kindly of the men to whom I owe so much, and to whose steady, uncomplaining hard work the success of the expedition was principally due.

I shall conclude by a rapid glance at the general geography of Tibet.

The population of Tibet proper, *i.e.*, the country under the rule of the Deva Zhung, may be estimated at four millions. Chinese Tibet, including the province of Amdo, together with Kham, which is really governed by its own chiefs, and owns only a nominal allegiance to Lhasa, may be taken as holding another four millions, thus giving a total of eight million Tibetans, half in Tibet proper, and half outside it, of whom, probably, nearly half a million are monks. When one regards the size of the country in which these eight million people are contained, it is evident that it is very sparsely populated.

There are several reasons for this: the first is the custom of polyandry, which is largely, though not universally practised; the second is the large number of monks, who, though probably only nominally celibate, are forbidden to marry; and thirdly, although the country, especially in the East, could support a larger population than it does at present, still the greater part is only capable of supporting wild yak and antelope.

The whole of Central and Northern Tibet, and almost the whole of Western Tibet is known as the Chang. It consists of a high tableland with hills, mostly of a rounded character; but here and there sharply defined snowy ranges are met with. The mountains have a general east and west tendency, but no defined watershed exists; rivers may be met flowing in almost any direction, and all terminate in large salt lakes. These lakes appear to have been at one time much larger than they now are, as unmistakable signs that they are drying up are to be seen. An idea of the physical configuration of the country may be gathered from the fact that for five months we never once camped at a lower altitude than the summit of Mount Blanc; and all the enormous stretch of country we covered in that time contained not a single tree. The greater part of this Chang is, of course, uninhabitable for the greater part of the year, and most of the places that would afford grazing in summer are too far distant from suitable winter quarters to be availed of by the nomads. But round the edges a few are to be met with, living almost entirely on meat and dairy produce. Very rarely do they get anything in the way of flour, a very little "Tsampa" being the only starchy food their tents ever boast, and that is regarded as a luxury to be partaken of sparingly.

In South-eastern Tibet the country is of quite a different character; deeply-cut valleys, steep, well-wooded hills, and rivers that eventually find their way to the sea being the characteristics. The population is a settled one, living in houses and growing crops, but in character there is little difference between them and the nomads—faithless, immoral, cowardly, and untruthful; to those they are afraid of they are servile,

but to those they are not afraid of insolent. Their faithlessness and unreliability has often been shown in the way they have deserted the French missionaries, to whom they owed so much, whenever there was any sign of a disturbance. Their physique is distinctly good, and they appear to be able to stand almost any amount of cold and hunger; less industrious and skilful than the Chinese, they are still an active, lively people, and at first one is inclined to regard them as simple and light-hearted, but they are only simple as compared to their neighbours, the Chinese.

The dress of the common people consists generally of a long sheepskin robe very dirty and greasy; this is hitched up by a waist-belt during the day so that the upper part is very full, and the lower part hangs down like a kilt. At night they take off the belt and allow the robe to come down to their feet; it thus serves the double purpose of clothes by day and bedding by night. In warm weather, or what they consider warm weather, the right arm is bare, being thrust out of the coat; in the front of the waist-belt thrust across the body, a straight sword, in a scabbard ornamented with silver and inlaid with turquoises, is carried. On their feet they have boots, made of brightly-striped woollen cloth, coming up to the knee and kept there by garters. The love of ornaments and jewellery is a very marked trait in their character, and the amount of the precious metals used up in the country in that way must be very great. The richer people affect red woollen cloth and various-coloured silks.

As the Chinese in the country take unto themselves wives of the country, there must be a certain admixture of races, particularly on the main route to Lhasa, where there are a few Chinese stationed at each of the rest-houses; but the children seem to grow up thoroughly Tibetan, and travelling through the country one does not see any people having the aspect of half-breeds, though on inquiry people who are the result of these mixed marriages are pointed out. The fact that the Tibetans do not allow Chinese women to come into the country is of itself enough to show how shadowy are any claims the Chinese may have to the supreme sovereignty. I do not suppose anyone will advance the theory that the order issues from the Peking Government.

The rainfall and snowfall are fairly heavy, and during the short summer crisp grass springs up, exceedingly nourishing, as is often the case with grass growing upon a soil covered during a considerable portion of the year by snow. This grass maintains large numbers of yak, Tibetan antelope, and kiang, though it is difficult to conceive on what they subsist during the long winter months. Bird life is poorly represented, and the only game birds that appeared to breed there are the Tibetan sand-grouse and bar-headed goose; though in Eastern Tibet pheasants and partridges are numerous. Insects are scarce, a few butterflies and some bees of a sort that live underground being

about the only representatives of the tribe that we met with. A few of the butterflies were met with at an altitude of 17,600 feet, and it seems marvellous how anything so fragile could live on those bleak, wind-swept plateaux.

Of flowering plants one hundred and fifteen species were collected. One was found at an altitude of 19,000 feet, probably the highest altitude at which any flowering plant was collected. These one hundred and fifteen species contain twenty-eight natural orders, an unusual number, I believe, for such a small collection.

Round the edge of this great plateau a few nomads from the neighbouring lower country graze their herds in summer; but the interior is never visited except by occasional wandering bands of brigands who find it a convenient place whence to issue forth and surprise the nomads, and to retire to if pursued by the Lhasa authorities.

Towards the east after descending from the Chang a country of quite a different character is entered. The rounded, undulating bare hills give place to steep, well-wooded mountains; and in the deeply-cut valley rapidly-flowing rivers, with a general tendency in the same direction, and not in salt lakes, eventually find their way to the sea, while yak, antelope and bar-headed geese are succeeded by stags, pheasants and partridges. The country bears a great resemblance to many parts of Kashmir, and in beauty is at least equal.

Before the reading of the paper, General R. Strachey, who occupied the chair, spoke as follows:—This being a special meeting, there is no ordinary business to transact. Captain Bower will now give you an account of his very adventurous journey across Tibet. He may be said to have commenced his apprenticeship to travelling in these extremely difficult countries in what I believe was a chase after the murderer of Mr. Dalgleish, who was associated with Mr. Carey, one of the Gold Medallists of this Society. The country through which this journey was made is Tibet, a huge mountain mass covering an area as large—if not larger—than the continent of Europe, excluding Russia, and the length of Captain Bower's journey from the point of departure to its termination in China, is about 3000 miles. The journey, I need hardly say, was not like walking down Piccadilly; for at least half of the distance he was never below 14,000–15,000 feet. Very often it was above 15,000–16,000 feet, with the occasional diversion of passing a range of mountains larger than the Alps—larger a good deal than the Caucasus—a very large portion of the country being without inhabitants or vegetation, the most dreary and dismal country—so far as natural productions are concerned—that is to be found in the world, short of absolute sandy desert. I, probably, beside Captain Bower, am the only person here who has been into Tibet proper; but my experience was obtained upwards of forty years ago.

After the reading of the Paper, the following discussion took place:—

Mr. H. SEEBORN: Captain Bower has spoken very briefly and somewhat slightly of the birds which he found on this great journey. You will be interested in hearing that the small collection, entirely consisting of game birds—for they had not cartridges enough to allow them to shoot anything which they did not think fit to eat—is perhaps the most interesting collection which has ever been obtained, if we

except the collections of game birds which have been obtained on the various journeys of Colonel Prjevalsky in the northern part of Tibet. They consist of only seven species, but all of extreme rarity. We have first Bonvalot's Eared Pheasant, a very handsome bird, with a great deal of white upon the tail, which has only once been previously obtained, and that but quite recently, by M. Bonvalot and Prince Henri of Orleans, almost in the same locality. The second is L'Abbé David's Eared Pheasant, which was only known for a great many years from the solitary example in the British Museum, of which the exact locality was not known, but which was afterwards obtained in considerable quantities at Moupin by L'Abbé David, the great French ornithologist. Another very interesting bird is a kind of Snow Partridge. Although it is not a true partridge, it is very nearly allied to them, forming a link between the snow partridge and the grouse. It was only previously known from two or three examples obtained by Count Szchenyi, the Austro-Hungarian traveller, who made an unsuccessful attempt some years ago to reach Lhasa from China. Then there is Dr. Anderson's Pheasant, an equally rare bird, discovered in Yunnan, the typical example of which is in the Calcutta Museum, the only other two specimens which are known to exist being sent alive to the Zoological Gardens in London from some part of Western China, the exact locality being unknown. There is also General Prjevalsky's Partridge, allied to an Himalayan species, and which was discovered by him on the Nan Shan Mountains, which, you are aware, lie to the east of the Kuen Lun; and Dabry's Blood Pheasant which was discovered at Moukin by the French Consul at Hankow; and, finally, three examples of the Tibetan sand grouse, not brought home by either Captain Bower or Dr. Thorold, but which they frequently saw upon the journey—a bird closely allied to the sand grouse, and which has made two great migrations to Europe within the last five and twenty years. The Tibetan Sand Grouse was discovered by Lord Gifford some years ago, who, you will remember, was the elder brother of one of the greatest Indian ornithologists, the late Lord Tweeddale. The collection, though extremely small, is of most unique interest.

General J. T. WALKER: It is scarcely necessary to remind an audience like this of the importance attached for many years past to our knowledge of the geography of Tibet, a region little known partly because of political difficulties raised by the Lamas in regard to any Europeans travelling through their country, but mainly because of the formidable nature of the country itself. It is enormously elevated, the plains reaching 18,000 feet above the sea-level, and mountains rising considerably above that. Tibet is most accessible from the south, the Himalayan regions; but all attempts on the part of Europeans to enter the country from that direction have failed owing to the opposition of the Lamas. All Europeans who have entered the country hitherto, until Captain Bower made the remarkable expedition of which he has given us an account this evening, have entered from the north. From the north Huc and Gabet entered and made their way down to Lhasa, the only Europeans with one exception who ever reached Lhasa, a century ago. Then the celebrated Russian traveller General Prjevalsky, two Englishmen Messrs. Carey and Dalgleish, two Frenchmen M. Bonvalot and Prince Henri of Orleans, and, later, the American traveller, Mr. Rockhill, all crossed that great belt of Tibet to the north, a belt of country stretching over 20° from east to west, with a breadth nowhere less than 100 miles, often much more, whose height is nowhere less than 14,000 feet, and which is entirely uninhabited, so that when travellers pass through it they have to take all the necessaries of life with them. Captain Bower entered Tibet from the west, on a line considerably north of that taken before by Pandit Nain Singh in his travels, and he has explored at least 800 miles of country never before touched by any European, or even by any of

the Asiatic explorers of the Indian Survey Department. His courage and enterprise have enabled him to perform a very successful journey, and I think we are all greatly to be congratulated on the result of his efforts.

Mr. DELMAR MORGAN: The paper we have listened to is one not only of great geographical interest but of great importance, because it shows what may be done by a European in the Trans-Himalayan country. It has been stated, and frequently reiterated, that access to these regions is impracticable owing to the obstinate exclusiveness of the natives or their rulers, and that if it is to be explored at all in the interests of science it must only be by trained native surveyors. I have always been of opinion, and have before remarked here, that these natives, however valuable some of their work may be, and however carefully trained in the use of instruments, cannot bring us that accurate information as to these countries which we require. They seem to lack that spirit of critical inquiry, and that fertility of resource, that distinguish the European traveller, and open to him as if by magic the most jealously guarded regions. Of the native surveyors, the only one to travel along a route parallel to Captain Bower's was Nain Singh in 1874-5, and since then there have been no attempts to open Tibet from the Indian side except by the Pandit A K, and to reduce the limits of that wide tract of unknown land marked as a blank on our maps between the 30° and 40° parallels. All the information we possess concerning it comes from foreign sources—from the Russian traveller, General Prjevalsky, from the Austrian Count Szchenyi, from the daring expedition of Prince Henri of Orleans, and M. Bonvalot, and lastly from Mr. Rockhill, whom we are to have the pleasure of hearing next Monday. All these travellers coming from the north succeeded in crossing the most difficult and dangerous parts only to be turned back when they reached the Lhasa governed district. The lesson that may be learned from their narratives is that there are no insuperable obstacles to entering these regions beyond the hardships and privations incident to travel in a very elevated region, and in a wild almost uninhabited country. The real difficulties begin when the traveller reaches a short distance from Lhasa, and Captain Bower's journey, resulting in a great access to our geographical knowledge, strengthens the conviction that the difficulties in the way of its exploration have been greatly exaggerated, and proceed not from the exclusiveness of the natives, nor from Chinese intrigues, but are rather due to the apathy and indifference at home. There seems to be a fear of diverging from beaten tracks and departure from established precedent. The earlier stages of Captain Bower's journey coincide very closely with those of Messrs. Carey and Dalgleish, but unlike those travellers who turned northward when they reached the Tibetan plateau, and descended to Keria, Captain Bower continued nearly due east and explored that long chain of lakes heard of by Nain Singh, but hitherto only roughly marked on our maps. He has brought us some very valuable geographical information and has also shown us what are the conditions under which travel may be successfully prosecuted in these regions; he has further confirmed the statements of General Prjevalsky and Mr. Rockhill that vast numbers of wild animals exist in these regions, a fact denied some years ago by so eminent an authority as our Chairman to-night. It is to be hoped that the Geographical Society will take to heart the lessons given us this evening, and, abandoning their indifference to the exploration of these regions north of the Himalayas, seriously take in hand the task of exploring and mapping the yet unexplored portion of North Tibet.

Note.—It is a remarkable fact that the last European to travel along the same route as that taken by Captain Bower was Père Desideri, of the Society of Jesus. His starting-point was also Leh, and he travelled to Lhasa in the company of a Tibetan princess. This was in 1715. No European has, to the best of my know-

ledge, attempted to follow in his footsteps till the other day, when Captain Bower and Dr. Thorold reached a point within a few marches of Lhasa.

Mr. D. FRESHFIELD: At this hour I can say but very few words, and I rise principally to express my regret at the absence of my predecessor in office, Mr. Markham, who has done so much to interest the public in the exploration of Tibet. I think we must all feel at times, however keen Africans we may be, that there is pleasure in a change of scene. To-night we have been transported from the plains and palm-groves of Africa to a country which is not a field of missionary enterprise, but which is instructing us in Theosophy, where we do not look down upon low forms of civilisation, but up to, perhaps, the most perfect form of home rule that exists on the face of the earth, to a country nominally owing allegiance to Peking, but practically governed by the local priesthood. Ever since I read Charles Lamb's letter to his friend Manning, sympathising with him on being amongst "cold, insipid, smouchy Tartars," Tibet has had a peculiar interest for me. We all have to thank the Indian Government for having to a certain extent made a new departure in sending home an officer with leave to describe what he has seen, and also for having removed some of the obstacles to the publication of the descriptions given of Tibet by its native servants. One of them, Chandra Dass, has in a report now in print informed us, how not being under the same difficulties as Europeans, he penetrated into Lhasa and saw all its golden monasteries and temples, and took tea with the Grand Lama himself. I hope this work will soon be in your hands, and then you will be able to appreciate it.

This day week we are going to have another paper on Tibet—owing to the necessity of meeting travellers' conveniences we are obliged to put them close together—we are going to return to this country under peculiarly interesting circumstances, for the Council also have made a new departure, and have invited a most enterprising American traveller to come over to address you. Next week, therefore, we hope to have Mr. Rockhill, who invaded Tibet from the eastern side, and made two remarkable attempts to get to Lhasa or through to Darjiling, who will give us valuable information supplementing that given to us to-night. Under these circumstances before long we may be able to present a volume on Tibet to our Fellows, which will furnish a mass of information as to this remote, ancient and primitive region, which will not yield in interest even to the more romantic narratives of African travel.

General STRACHEY: It is not necessary for me to invite you to thank Captain Bower for the extremely interesting account of the remarkable journey he has made, through a country that is perhaps one of the most difficult in the world. I would say a few words as to the result of this journey from a geographical point of view, as it strikes me. From about long. 91° Eastern Tibet is traversed by a great network of rivers flowing eastward into the ocean; from about 80° the water flows in the opposite direction to the Indus. Between 80° and 90° there is a great area from which no water escapes to the sea, and through this region Captain Bower's journey has been made, and it gives us for the first time information from actual observation we have long wanted, and supplies what I may call a sample of Central Tibet, and shows that the old maps of the country, as obtained from the Chinese, are fundamentally correct. It is a great region covered with lakes with no flowing streams. What Captain Bower has really done is to give us for the first time direct evidence of the truth of the main features of that wonderfully great map which is due to Chinese geographers, and is a wonderful illustration of the extreme ingenuity of that remarkable people. You will, I know, thank Captain Bower for his extremely interesting paper, and recognise the courage and perseverance which has enabled him to carry through this remarkable exploration.

CAPTAIN BOWER'S PLANTS.—The following note on the plants collected during Captain Bower's expedition has been presented by Mr. W. T. Thiselton Dyer, C.M.G., C.I.E., Director of the Royal Gardens, Kew :—

Kew, Feb. 25th, 1893.

There were about one hundred and thirty species. The whole collection will be carefully worked out for the 'Annals of Botany.' There is a large proportion of Himalayan plants, including many described by Sir J. Hooker and Dr. Thomson, and Jacquemont, a Central Asian element, and a touch of North China. There are about half-a-dozen absolute novelties. One a curious new grass, *Agropyrum thoroldianum*. There is a new iris, *I. Thoroldi*.

Dr. Thorold says that the collection included every plant that he saw. In that case the generic flora must be very meagre.

CAPTAIN BOWER'S MAP.—The position of camps marked thus ● was obtained by astronomical observations and dead reckoning. The heights were taken by hypsometer.

The map is reduced from official documents issued by the Survey of India Department.

FURTHER ROUTES IN THE EASTERN DESERT OF EGYPT.*

By ERNEST A. FLOYER, Leader of the Scientific Expedition
despatched by H.H. The Khedive of Egypt.

It was not until February, 1891, that the Government of His Highness The Khedive decided to despatch an expedition to continue the explorations begun in 1887. Rendezvous was made at Assuan, where everything was prepared by the care of His Excellency Wodehouse Pasha, Governor-General of the Frontier; and on February 13th the expedition started. The existing maps contradicted each other on many essential points, and it was decided to follow that of the British War Office, which laid down one or two definite wells which the Arab with us recognised, and to which he was ready to conduct us. Abrak was a well which was known to have a great store of sweet water, and for Abrak we steered on leaving the Nile Valley. The first day we moved a short distance up the Bab el 'Ajjaj, the "Pass of the Sand-driving Wind," and camped to collect stragglers.

The rocks on either side of the valley, which broadened out at 8 miles from Assuan, were chiefly diorite, granite, and dolerite. At 14 miles the valley forked. We left the Hud † Valley on our right, and

* See *Proceedings* R.G.S. 1887, p. 659. Map p. 480.

† The prophet Hud, identical with Heber, fourth in descent from Noah. His tomb is near Mirbath in Yemen.