

At length we turned our backs upon that abominable slough, and climbed up to a little threshold, on the other side of which we again found a chaos of broken ground and hills. Our animals were dead-beat from their exertions, and we stopped and rested a couple of hours on a grassy mound. The heat was literally baking, for the thermometer registered 19.6° in the shade, while on the surface of the ground in a dry place it registered 48° . The atmosphere was perfectly still and calm, so that we might readily have imagined ourselves transported to some tropical clime. However there now occurred one of those sudden changes of weather which are usual in high Tibet. Threatening clouds loomed up in the west, and all at once an extremely violent hail-storm burst, and within a minute we were once more plunged into the midst of winter — chilly cold, wet, and windy. After an hour the wind veered round to the west, but did not abate its fury, and it was accompanied by rain; while in the evening the wind blew from the east. Then we continued our way towards the west, and encamped beside a brook at an altitude of 4957 m.

On 19th August we again encountered a very unfavourable country, namely an uninterrupted chaos of fresh ridges and lines of heights, all consisting of the same soft mire. On the northern slopes especially, which were less exposed to the sun, our animals often sank in up to the girths, and we crept on our slow, wearisome journey at a snail's pace. As far as we possibly could, we trod upon the clumps of moss or chips of sandstone, for both were fairly common on these hills. The slopes were seamed with watercourses more or less shallow, all brimming with mire and ooze. From another pass we saw to the north-east the salt lake on the shore of which stood our Camp XLVI. On our way from this second pass to a third pass we crossed over a *thalweg* going down to the lake. Its upper part afforded us comparatively advantageous ground to march upon until we came to the third pass, which reached an altitude of 5211 m. Here then we climbed over the same range which we had found farther east to plunge sheer into the salt lake, and which we consequently had been obliged to cross over there as well. From this third pass we also perceived the great cauldron valley or plain which we encountered on the first day of our journey out. A long way off to the north we beheld the glaciated range, the pass of which was however only 250 m. higher than that on which we were then standing. From the latter a brook runs down towards the north-west, and the ground in its bed was hard and firm enough to bear; at the same time we were able to march without danger on the slightly grassed slopes, the reason being that owing to their steepness they did not absorb the rain-water, but allowed it to run freely away. At last we got down to the level ground of the cauldron valley, and encamped at an altitude of 5070 m.

The next day, the last of this trying excursion, we passed Camp XLV at the distance of a kilometer to the north, and then by an easily recognisable trail reached our headquarters camp. But during our absence this had been moved into a little southern side-glen opening upon the main glen, where the grazing was better than in the main glen. On our journey out we had followed a far easier route than the latter half of that by which we returned, for this took us over too many passes unnecessarily.
