

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### JOURNEY OF WELLBY AND MALCOLM.

In this review of exploring journeys in the north of Tibet, I have ignored, as will be seen, the chronological order, preferring to follow a regional division of the area. Prschevalskij's fourth journey has carried us to northern Tibet. South of the region in which he thus worked, and south of the routes traversed by the members of the Pjevtsoff expedition — of which I have given an account in the third volume — runs my own route of 1896. South of this again we find Wellby and Malcolm's route of 1896 in the big latitudinal valley between the continuation ranges of the Koko-schili and the Dung-bure; and I will now pass on to the consideration of the principal geographical results of that journey. In many respects it was a remarkable journey, not the least notable feature about it being its great extent through a perfectly unknown region; and it was attended by the greatest difficulties, and resulted in the partial destruction of the caravan. The starting-point was Leh, and the route chosen was *viâ* Panggong-tso to Niagzu, which place was left on the 18th May 1896. A couple of days later the travellers passed the salt lake of Treb, whence Ladak derives its supply of salt. There Wellby made the same observation as all other Tibetan travellers, namely that the lakes are shrinking and are on the point of disappearing. He says: —

»We were almost tempted to try a swim in the salt water, but on close examination we found the shore sloped down in terraces to the water's edge, where it became soft and treacherous. All this distinctly showed, that the size of the lake must have been for many years gradually decreasing, and one is led to believe that such is the case in regard to most salt lakes in Tibet. The water, we were surprised to find, was not nearly so brackish as the surroundings would have induced one to believe». Strange to say the lake of Treb is elongated from north to south. East of its southern extremity lies the pass of Napu-la, which according to Wellby reaches an altitude of 18,434 feet and according to Deasy of 19,000 feet. A little way east of that pass, in the district of Kerambutabuk, Wellby was prevented by men from Rudok from proceeding farther in the direction of the Forbidden Land. He had the same experience as all other travellers who have attempted to penetrate towards Lhasa, although he was stopped at a greater distance from the city than