

leaving Lanak La, and had probably been made by some nomads who had wandered in this direction.» A short distance farther on in the same latitudinal valley they crossed a number of very shallow freshwater lakes, the mud in the bottom of which was however so soft and treacherous that a part of the caravan nearly got lost in it.» This appeared to be the nature of the soil for some distance round the lake; we judged that its size varied in accordance with the rainfall. From this lake two routes were open to us, one running in a somewhat northerly direction, through a good, grassy, watered valley, which we should have liked to have taken; but as the other route led almost due east, we took it, and perhaps made a wrong decision, for we came to a dried-up country, with small salt lakes, and had to dig deep in a dry river bed for water.» By this, although they were only 150 miles from Lanak-la, they had lost 18 out of their 39 caravan animals. Wellby gives the following characteristics of the country as he saw it from a hill in that locality. »South-east of us lay a fine range of snow-mountains, and I reckoned that if we could manage to steer just north of these, there would be no more difficulty about water to annoy us. All the ranges, large and small, seemed to run east and west, and it struck me how much more difficult, for this reason, it would be to traverse Tibet from north to south. Directly south of us, some sixty or eighty miles off, was another magnificent snow-range with enormous white peaks. Some six or eight miles south-east was a dark blue salt lake, with two other smaller ones nestling close to it, and in the nullah immediately south of us grew grass which, for this country, was rich. Far away to the north again loomed another mighty snow range.»

After that they crossed over an easy pass in the latitudinal valley, 17,000 feet high, and then approached another saltwater lake, which was frozen in the middle only. There a flock of wild-geese were resting. As wild-geese are mentioned pretty frequently by various travellers in connection with the freshwater lakes of Tibet, it may be assumed that they cross over the highlands by several different routes.

The following remarks by Wellby are fairly characteristic of the highlands of Tibet: — »A climate like this at such a height struck us as truly marvellous. After seventeen degrees of frost by night, we found ourselves basking in the open in a temperature of 106 degrees, showing a variation of ninety degrees in the twenty-four hours. At 7 p. m. again, the thermometer registered as much as forty-eight degrees Fahr. . . . Owing to the impossibility of marching with the sun so powerful, we decided to make two short marches each day, one of three hours in the very early morning, and the second during the afternoon. . . . Our route, as far as we could make out, lay over a large open plain with but scanty grass, and far off we could see a hill standing out alone conspicuously, a useful landmark for us to march on to. Without a distinct feature to make for, the caravan would very often zig-zag down a broad valley and perhaps cover a mile or two more of ground than was necessary.»

Between camp No. 35 and camp No. 36 they crossed a not inconsiderable river flowing towards the north-east and north, which probably emptied itself into some lake. From the 29th June he notes that the lofty range to the north continued to be distinctly visible, »and we conjectured it must be a part of the Kuen Lun.»