

When however he did come across true snow-clad mountains with dominating peaks, he does designate them, both in text and on the map, by the proper term. In this respect the relief is clearly of the same character in the part of Tibet through which he travelled as it is in the regions which I explored; that is to say, the mountainous parts that bear glaciers and perpetual snow project like islands above the otherwise more gently undulating surface of the highland »ocean».

When we consider that portion of Wellby's journey which falls within the high plateau proper, we find that the country in the west is in general more deficient in water, more desolate, and salter than it is farther east. My own observations made on the way between the Naktson-g-tso and the region immediately east of Tsanger-schar was pretty much the same. On the whole however Wellby's latitudinal valley would appear to be richer in grass than my latitudinal valley of 1896; this may be due to the more northerly position of the latter and its greater absolute altitude. Wellby, like all other Tibetan travellers, observed that the salt lakes are shrinking, and in the case of some of them he speaks of distinct terraces. To those who do not know northern and central Tibet from their own experience, it must sound like a paradox when they read of himself and his caravan suffering from want of water. One would expect that a mountainous country with such stupendous altitudes would be the very last to suffer from lack of water; and yet such is the case. In this respect western Tibet is more unfortunately situated than eastern Tibet, and the northern half of the highlands more than the southern. The actual high plateau is in some localities little better than a desert.

However here, as in other parts of the country, the rainy season comes during the latter half of the summer, and the farther Wellby penetrated towards the east the oftener does he speak of violent rains, frequently occurring in short, sharp squalls, followed by hail and snow. At the same time it must be observed, that not only are the rains heavier in the east, but the rainy season as a whole is more definite and so to speak more concentrated than in the west. He speaks also of continuous — in fact of almost daily — storms of great violence, at the same time telling us only exceptionally where these storms came from. Fortunately we know from our own and other travellers' experience, that they blow from the west; we know that northerly storms also occur, although these are seldomer.

Wellby likewise complains very often of the soft nature of the ground, and of its being incapable of supporting the weight of the caravan animals, and this contributed more than anything else to destroy his caravan. But with regard to this the only reflection he makes is, that a night's fall of snow, covering the ground to the depth of four inches or more, renders the surface very much worse the following day; for when the snow melts, the water penetrates into the already softened ground.

It is noteworthy, that Wellby and his caravan were affected to such a degree by the intense insolation that they were forced to rest during the heat of the day and make their daily marches in two instalments. I confess I have never suffered to that extent from the hot sun even on still summer days, and moreover look upon it as double toil having to encamp and load up twice in the course of one day. But possibly the climatic conditions are in this respect more pronounced in the part of Tibet which Wellby visited than in other parts of the country.