

CHAPTER XIX.

RYDER AND RAWLING.

The struggle of one hundred years for and against the channel between the two lakes had not been sufficient to clear up the problem, and it is not exaggerating to say that none of the Europeans who had visited these lakes had really understood and scientifically analysed their geographical and hydrographical importance. It is with a feeling of relief we read the short description given by Major C. H. D. RYDER.¹ He has not definitely settled the controversy, which was not his object, but his narrative is classic and the picture he gives of the lakes and their relations with the Satlej at the time of his visit, could not have been given in a more distinct, plain and conscientious way.

His journey up, in company with Captain C. G. RAWLING, Captain H. WOOD and Lieutenant F. M. BAILEY, falls in the last months of 1904. So they visited the lakes in the middle of winter, which, for solving hydrographical problems, is the most unfortunate season of the year. So far as I am aware theirs is the only European expedition which has seen the lakes frozen, with only one exception, for father DESIDERI arrived in »Toscioa» on December 1st 1715 and reached the first population beyond Maryum-la on January 4th 1716. As Desideri was on the highest places of his journey on November 9th, he must have visited the lakes at the end of November or at exactly the same time as Ryder and his comrades.

Ryder crossed the Maryum-la on November 26th and continued north of Gunchu-tso (11 miles long, 2 or 3 miles broad), »completely frozen over, and having no outlet at all». Then he crossed »several low passes and generally undulating ground», which seem to have been not water-parting passes between Gunchu-tso and the Manasarovar, but only secondary ones. On November 30th he came in sight of the Manasarovar, to which he gives the Tibetan name Tso Mabang, and which was frozen only 100 yards or so round the edge, in spite of the water being fresh. But, as I found three years later, the depth of the lake is considerable, so it could hardly

¹ »Exploration and survey with the Tibet frontier commission, and from Gyangtse to Simla via Gartok.» Geographical Journal Vol. XXVI, October 1905, p. 369 et seq.