

north-west, snow-topped range rose over range in clear purple distance. The nearer of these was the Kiang-lah, which forms the axis or water-shed of this meridian; its south drainage being to the Arun river, and its north to the Yaru-Tsampu: it appeared forty to fifty miles off, and of great mean elevation (20 000 feet): the vast snowy mountains that rose beyond it were, I was assured, beyond the Yaru, in the salt lake country . . . The most remarkable features of this landscape were its enormous elevation, and its colours and contrast to the black, rugged, and snowy Himalaya of Sikkim. All the mountains between Donkia pass and the Arun were comparatively gently sloped, and of a yellow red colour, rising and falling in long undulations like dunes, 2 000 to 3 000 feet above the mean level of the Arun valley, and perfectly bare of perpetual snow or glaciers. Rocks everywhere broke out on their flanks, and often along their tops, but the general contour of that immense area was very open and undulating, like the great ranges of Central Asia, described by MM. Huc and Gabet. Beyond this again, the mountains were rugged, often rising into peaks which, from the angles I took here, and subsequently at Bhomtso, cannot be below 24 000 feet, and are probably much higher. — I repeatedly looked from it (the Kinchinjunga) to the high Tibetan mountains in the extreme north-west distance, and was more than ever struck with the apparently immense distance, and consequent altitude of the latter: I put, however, no reliance on such estimates. — I had been led to believe that from Donkia pass the whole country of Tibet sloped away in descending steppes to the Tsampu, and was more or less of a plain . . .» At Donkia he thinks that 19 000 feet »is not below the mean level at which all the snow melts that falls on a fair exposure to the south . . . Forty miles further north (in Tibet) the same line is probably at 20 000 feet; for there much less snow falls, and much more melts in proportion.»

To the N.W. of Donkia he climbed the Bhomtso, 18,500, from where he again had a very commanding view, but on account of the great distance he cannot make out the situation of the different mountains north of the Tsangpo. »For thirty miles north no mountain was above the level of the theodolite, and not a particle of snow was to be seen: beyond that, rugged, purple-flanked and snowy-topped mountains girdled the horizon, appearing no nearer than they did from the Donkia pass, and their angular heights and bearings being almost the same as from that point of view. The nearer of these are said to form the Kiang-lah chain, the furthest I was told by different authorities are in the salt districts north of Jigatzi.»

In these words we hear, as it were, a whispering of greetings from the eastern, still unknown parts of Nien-chen-tang-la, a suspicion of a new world of mountains, »nova quædam series elatiorum, nivosorumque montium ad Boriâ», as Georgi says of a more easterly part of the same system. Quoting Georgi Major RENNELL says that from the top of Kamba-la »may be seen towards the north a range of still higher mountains covered with snow».¹ Hooker is so careful and

¹ Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan etc., London 1785, p. 102.