

He observed that the rivers of Western Tibet, instead of crossing the mountains at once, often run for several hundred miles in the longitudinal valleys between the chains and parallel with them, until at last, they pierce the mountain-barrier. This is particularly the case with the Indus, »which rising in Chinese territory, runs north-westward behind five ranges of the Himalayas until it reaches its turning-point, when it breaks through them all». Its five great tributaries imitate its example. On the north side of the great watershed he finds the same peculiarity repeated. Thus the Kara-kash River runs for 80 miles along the southern flank of the Kwen-lun Range, before it can escape through the gorge of Shahidullah by a sudden turn. »And the Yarkand River, rising near the Kara-korum Pass, makes a great sweep behind another portion of the same Kwen-lun Range before turning towards Yarkand.»

He noticed how the southern ranges were annually blocked with masses of snow, whereas the northern ranges in Ladak and Tibet received comparatively little. Therefore the traffic was scarcely interrupted in Tibet at elevations of 18,000 feet, while nearer India passes of only 11,000 feet could be blocked for many months. He also finds it natural that very few rain-clouds could penetrate beyond Tibet and over the high northern ranges into Turkestan.

Shaw regards Tibet as »a high barren plateau», and he asks: »but what lies beyond, on the further side of the barren gravel terrace? Is it supported on that side also by a wall of mountains, or does it slope gradually down to the general level, or does it stretch away for any great distance at the same high elevation, and with the same barren character?»¹

This question could be answered only for the western part; farther east the country was still unknown.

In 1867 Shaw went so far as to Ladak. He »entered upon the vast table-land of Tibet in the district called Roop shoo.» But his views as to the »table-land» seem really not to be very seriously meant as he adds, that Rupshu at first sight reminded him of the British soldier's impression of Abyssinia: »Well, if it is a table, it is a table with all the legs uppermost.»

In May, 1868, SHAW again travelled to Ladak, by Kulu and the Bara Lâcha Pass, and visited the Panggong-tso. Dr. CAYLEY, who was the first officer appointed by the British Government as a resident of Ladak to watch the execution of the reduction of custom duties, — had just been exploring so far as to the Kara-kash River.

Robert Shaw left Ladak in September, and took the road of Chang-la, Drugub, Tanksi, Panggong-tso, Marsimik-la. He correctly regards the Shayok as one of the sources of the Indus. »From the Karakorum Pass the Shayok runs nearly directly south towards Ladâk, but, meeting a great range of mountains, turns off

¹ *Visits to High Tartary, Yârkan and Kâshghar, etc.* London 1871, p. 2.