

questioned why, he went on, without prompting or further questioning, to say: —

“When I was a boy and first went with my father to hunt, or to care for sheep, all the springs were larger than now. Where they now flow a quarter of a mile, they then flowed half. Reed-beds that are now a foot high were then two, and there were more of them. And there were more wild animals; we saw three or four then for one now. I think it must be because there is less water. It used to rain hard enough to form running streams six or seven times a year, and now it does so only two or three.”

After speaking thus of the decrease in rainfall during the past four or five years, without taking due account of the difference between the impressions of a boy and of a man, he went on to something more important and reliable.

“And long, long ago, before the time of my grandfathers, perhaps in the days of the old forts at Ying-pen and Pochinza, there must have been much more water. In the high mountains there are many places where little stone shepherds' huts, with the roofs all fallen in, stand in valleys where nobody has ever known of there being any water. And all around them are the droppings of cattle. The nearest water is sometimes five or ten miles away. Surely nobody would ever build a house in such a place. So I think there must have been running water in the valleys when the houses were built. How many such houses have I seen? Oh, many. I never counted, but the mountains are full of them.

“And then, away from the great mountains there are dry springs everywhere, places where the salt deposit of a spring