

there, it must have seemed like paradise to our weary animals. Unfortunately the severe cold of the night, with a minimum temperature of seventeen degrees Fahrenheit below freezing-point, kept them from much enjoyment of the grazing, such as it was. We humans luckily now had the roots of the hardy scrub known to Tibetans as Burtze to fall back upon for fuel.

Here on the morning of September 9th we left the Ladak route in order to turn south-west to Lake Lighten. From there we should have to start our exploration of the ground westwards, which in atlases generally figures as a high plain with the name of 'Ak-sai-chin desert,' but which the latest Trans-frontier map of the Survey of India rightly showed as an unsurveyed blank. The valley we continued to follow was itself unknown ground; but after a long day's march it proved to drain into the lake, as I had assumed from the first.

The sky had now cleared, and the going was easy, but the ground was very barren. For four days the animals had had hardly any grass; so that the outlook began to be serious. Fortunately after twenty miles we came upon sparsely growing 'yellow grass,' just where the glittering sheet of water was first sighted. There was no fuel of any sort to cook with. But it was inspiring to look northward to the high snowy peaks crowning the watershed towards the Yurung-kash head-waters, with a still higher ice-sheeted cone to the north-west. So I at least found it easier to forget the loss of a dinner. The whole scene, with the far-stretching lake and the rampart of snowy mountains above it, looked strangely majestic and lonely.

As the lake had before been sighted only from one corner in the south, I decided to follow a route by its north shore. It took us at first across a wide delta of detritus deposited by streams coming from the snowy peaks, but now completely dry, and then over low plateaus forming the foot of spurs which descend with easy slopes from the main range. Old shore lines and lagoons almost cut off by sandy peninsulas from the main lake showed that the expanse of the latter was shrinking. Yet with a length of over twenty miles and an average width of four