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A Journey across Tibet, from North to South, and West to Ladak: Discussion

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showed distinctly water-marks high above the present level of the lakes.

We had a fine day for crossing the Chang La, and the snow there had been trodden solid by flocks of sheep carrying grain to Rudok. At night their loads are built up like a wall, to protect the flock from the wind, and from the walls of sacks there are ropes fastened in parallel lines, to which the sheep are tied at night, so that they can be conveniently loaded in the morning. The salt or grain is packed in two bags joined together on the top, which is placed across the sheep's back and sinks into its fleece. A rope is placed under the sheep's tail and another across its chest. The load seems to ride perfectly well, and never shifts. Two or three men will look after as many hundred sheep, each carrying 20 or 30 pounds.

Passing the monasteries of Chimrai and Hemis, we arrived at Leh, in rags and tatters, on November 2, finding quite a genial climate—a tremendous change from what we had been having. From April 26 to October 16 we had never descended lower than 15,000 feet, and for four weeks of that time we had been camped over 17,000 feet. Finding the turns on the Kashmir road were too sharp for my wife's mule litter, we took it to pieces and made a much lighter and shorter one, in which she was carried by coolies the rest of the journey. We just got over the Zoji La in time. Two days later heavy snow fell. We reached Srinagar the middle of November, where at last we obtained the medical advice which our poor invalid needed so sorely. Out of all the animals that left Cherchen, including those we purchased at Lhasa, 160 or 170 in all, only two ponies and six mules reached Srinagar; more just struggled in to Leh, but, as they were incapable of going further, we gave them to our men as backshish.

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Before the reading of the paper, the PRESIDENT said: I am sure all present are delighted to welcome home Mr. Littledale, who has returned from a most adventurous expedition, having traversed Tibet from north to south, and made a very important discovery of new country; and I am sure we all feel deep sympathy with him and Mrs. Littledale in that she has been attacked by a severe illness, no doubt partly brought on by the hardships of the journey and the rigorous climate, but I trust she will, with care, soon recover her usual health again. This is the third time we have welcomed Mr. Littledale on his return from important exploring expeditions in Central Asia. The first time was in 1891, when Mr. and Mrs. Littledale returned from their journey across the Pamirs; the next was in 1894, which will be fresh in most of our memories, when he gave us a narrative of his very remarkable journey across Central Asia. Now we are about to listen to an account of the severe work he performed in accomplishing a very important geographical achievement, traversing for the first time the lofty plateau of Northern Tibet. I will now call upon Mr. Littledale to read his paper.

After the reading of the paper, the following discussion took place:—

The PRESIDENT: I am sure the meeting will be struck by the extraordinary resolution shown by Mr. Littledale in performing so remarkable a journey. A.

great number of interesting points have been raised in the paper. To allude to one, I may first of all mention the flora, which, from Mr. Littledale's account, would appear to exist not at all, for he has only mentioned the *chi* grass and fuel called *bortza*, which may or may not be a plant. But, fortunately, we have present this evening Mr. Thiselton-Dyer, who has, I believe, examined the collection of plants brought back, and I trust he will give us some account of the flora of this region, for I think that the flora of these very elevated Alpine regions is always extremely interesting.

Mr. THISELTON-DYER said that it was a happy circumstance that Mr. Littledale had been able to save his parcel of dried plants from the shipwreck which befell the rest of his collections. Its examination, which is not yet wholly completed, proved extremely interesting. It contained between sixty and seventy species, of which probably ten are new to science. "They were nearly all found in the Goring-Tangu valley (about 16,000 feet) on the south side of the high range of mountains which lie between the Tengri-Nor and Lhasa." The precise position was lat. 30° 12' N., and long. 90° 25' E.

One of the most striking features of the collection is the large preponderance of European genera; one might, in fact, say of British, because the large majority are represented in Britain. Out of between forty and fifty genera, there are only half a dozen of which this is not the case. Five species, *Aconitum Napellus*, *Potentilla fruticosa*, *Myriophyllum verticillatum*, *Taraxacum palustre*, and *Polygonum viviparum*, are actually found in this country. The first is perhaps an introduced plant; the *Myriophyllum* is an aquatic, the distribution of which is usually wide; but the two last are characteristic mountain forms with us. And in *Potentilla fruticosa* we have the most striking link between the two floras, as, though a rare plant, it is undoubtedly native in the north of England and the west of Ireland.

The flora of Western Tibet has long been tolerably well known. Eastern Tibet, on the other hand, was stated by Sir Joseph Hooker in 1855 to be "quite unknown botanically." Since this time our knowledge of the northern belt is the result of the journeys of Prjevalsky and Potanin, of Captain Bower and of Mr. Rockhill. The publication of the collections of the two former travellers was interrupted by the lamented death of Maximowicz. Those of the two latter were worked out at Kew, and the results are published in the *Journ. Linn. Soc.* (vol. xxx., pp. 131-140). Of the flora of the country between the neighbourhood of the Tengri Nor and Sikkim our knowledge is still extremely limited, and is much enlarged by Mr. Littledale's work. Sir Joseph Hooker, in two days' journey, only succeeded in collecting some fifteen to twenty species. In 1882 the Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta, obtained some plants through a native collector, Ngyen Gyatsho, who accompanied Sarat Chandra Das in his journey to Lhasa; the collector did not, however, get further east than Gyatse Jong. In 1890 Prince Henri d'Orleans, like Mr. Littledale, attempted to reach Lhasa from the north, but apparently collected no plants in this part of his journey.

The conditions under which the Tibetan flora exists are perhaps unique. Long ago General Strachey expressed his conviction that flowering plants existed up to 19,000 feet (*J.R.G.S.*, vol. xxi. p. 77). But 18,000 feet appears to have been the highest observed level till the receipt of the collections of Surgeon-Captain Thorold, who accompanied Captain Bower. The conditions under which vegetation can exist in such circumstances are of course extreme. It is hardly necessary to say that there are no trees and no shrubs, nor any plants above a foot high. Very few indeed are above 3 inches out of the ground. General Strachey estimated that in the part of Western Tibet which he visited, "not one-twentieth part of the surface was covered with vegetation" (*Journ. Linn. Soc.*, vol. xxx. p. 101). A very large

proportion of the plants are herbaceous perennials, with long tap-roots, a rosette of leaves lying on the ground, from the centre of which springs the dwarf inflorescence.

The flora as a whole belongs to the Arctic-alpine division of the great northern region. But, as usual, this contains a purely endemic element, and also one related to the neighbouring area to the south, from which it has been perhaps recruited. Of the characteristically Tibetan plants obtained by Mr. Littledale, some had been previously obtained by Prjevalsky, Thorold, and Rockhill. Of the species not exclusively Tibetan, some extend to the Himalayas and the mountains of Western China. Of the typical Arctic-alpine flora, two species may be singled out as representative. *Lychnis apetala* extends to Spitzbergen, and there is a very interesting form of the well-known Edelweiss, *Leontopodium alpinum*, which was also collected by Mr. Rockhill. The total absence of Gentians in Mr. Littledale's collection is remarkable. It is interesting to note that the single fern collected, *Polypodium hastatum*, was previously only known from Eastern Asia (China, Japan, and Corea). Among the new species is a striking grass. Of two fungi in the collection, one is new.

THE PRESIDENT: I think there are very few countries near the borders of British India with which Colonel Woodthorpe is not acquainted. I know he has been nibbling round Tibet for many years, on both sides; and as there are very few people better acquainted with the country beyond the Indian frontier, I hope he will address us.

COLONEL R. G. WOODTHORPE: Rudyard Kipling, in the course of a distinguished literary career, said a few true things, but never a truer than that sentiment which he puts into the mouth of Tommy Atkins, when he says, "If you've 'eard the East a-calling, you won't never 'eed naught else." There is a fascination about the East, and such travelling as Mr. Littledale has told us of to-night fascinates all those who have ever attempted it. I have been exceedingly pleased to listen to Mr. Littledale; I have felt that what I have accomplished has been as nothing compared to his gigantic performances. But though I have done little, I have done enough to appreciate the difficulties and dangers through which he and Mrs. Littledale have passed so bravely and nobly. His anxieties about the apparently impassable mountain ranges ahead, anxieties about food and scarcity of water, and his joy on surmounting these difficulties of them, have found a responsive echo in my breast. He has borne testimony to the good conduct of the sepoy with him. It is an experience which has also been my own. In all these little expeditions I have found the native soldier, whether Pathan, Sikh, or Gurkha, always the truest and most faithful friend the explorer could have, whether on the north-east frontier, or in Afghanistan or Chitral. I have also found my sepoy keen for a fight. Once in Afghanistan I was with a small force which was sent up to turn some Afghans from a mountain-crest which commanded the camp. I happened to have got separated from the rest of the force, with one or two Gurkhas and a Havildar. There were some Afghans in a small *sungar* just ahead, and, as it was more dangerous to remain out in the open than to get in the shelter of the *sungar*, we rushed it. The Afghans, not knowing how small a party we were, bolted down the hill. I wanted to stop till the others came up, but the Havildar said, "I must go out and fight them." I said, "If you do, probably you will get killed." He said, "Never mind; it is absolutely necessary to cut up some of these scoundrels with my kukri." You never need urge these men on; they require, rather, to be kept back. They make it sometimes difficult for an explorer, as they are rather too anxious to fight.

Mr. Littledale told us that the Tibetans thought the telescope would enable one to see through opaque substances. That is a mistake common enough among

all wild or semi-civilized tribes. Last year, on the Mekong, I was asked by a Buddhist priest if a telescope would not enable us to see through a man's clothes to the body. He had a proleptic vision of Prof. Röntgen's discovery. I noticed Mr. Littledale observed how difficult it is to pay money to the men who really earn it. This was our experience. I remember this was the case especially in Chitral, when I made an expedition with Sir William Lockhart. Many of Mr. Littledale's pictures have recalled my experiences there, which were most happy, in company with that most generous and gallant chief and charming companion. There each morning the coolies were brought up to us to carry our luggage, but at night we were not allowed to pay them; we had to pay the head-men, who came up for the money, which never found its way into the coolies' pockets.

Sir HENRY HOWORTH : One of the facts we all ought to know is, that the President, whose modesty prevented him from telling it, has edited a very interesting book about Tibet, written by a famous traveller, Bogle, one of the few men who have reached Lhasa. This particular district is the most interesting enigma in all Asia. I have written fat books about the history of Tibet, and the tribes from the Volga to the Yellow Sea, who, whether they are remote or near, whether Mongolian or Southern Turkey tribes, derive their teaching from Lhasa. I feel that our officials put great bars in the way of Indian civilians making their way across the Himalayas, and since the days of Hodgson, who collected more real information about Tibet than any other civilian, we have never had the opportunity of entering Tibet from the south. It has always been from the north that the attempts have been made, by Rockhill and others, culminating in the journey of our friend. Let me commend to you an older authority, who knew the district well and who fought on its borders frequently, named the prince Haidar. This wonderful journey was made, and is described in an extraordinary book published by a great traveller, Mr. Ney Elias, months ago. It was written by a kinsman of the man who founded the Empire of India, and is entitled the 'Tarikhi Rashidi.' It is a disappointment to some of us that Mr. Littledale was only able to get within 43 miles of the Mekka of this Central Asiatic world; although we have accounts from older days, it would be interesting to know what life goes on there now. It is a great puzzle to know how these wild tribes and the Mongols from Lake Baikal to the Volga can understand and become attached to such an intricate and elaborate system of theology as that hidden behind the lama medium—a sort of Blavatskism gone mad. We do hope very much indeed that Mr. Littledale will make another venture, whether he takes his wife or not on such a dangerous journey. I think a man who could get within 43 miles of Lhasa would probably succeed next time. I am sure he would bring back a great many valuable lessons for us. We have hardly any notion now of what goes on there, beyond one or two accounts derived from Lamas who have found their way to Bhutan. We want some man with the power of picturesque description and also a great hunter, for Mr. Littledale was the first man to bring the wild camel to England, and those who have not seen it should go to the Natural History Museum, and see it there stuffed. You will pardon my having intervened this discussion, but I have taken much interest in this journey and the history of the country Mr. Littledale has traversed. It has been a delightful revelation to myself, and I could not help recalling to your memory that your President, with all his versatile gifts, did a wonderful thing for some of us when he edited that wonderful account of Lhasa I mentioned.

Mr. DELMAR MORGAN : I should like to pay my tribute of respect to the memory of General Walker, whose loss Mr. Markham has referred to this evening. Having been personally known to General Walker for many years, and associated with him

in some of his geographical work, I have always been impressed with his great knowledge and scientific attainments. I feel sure that the whole Society must feel his loss very deeply.

The paper we have just heard contains very many points of interest. We cannot but feel interested in the cordial reception which Mr. Littledale mentions as having been given by the Russian authorities. I am told that one of those who assisted and forwarded his journey in every way was that well-known traveller Colonel Grombchevsky, and it speaks very highly for him that, notwithstanding the disappointment he felt when exploring some years ago the valley of the Upper Yarkand, near our frontier, when he asked, but did not obtain, permission to enter British territory, he should have welcomed our traveller. Another point of view, the commercial, after what Mr. Littledale has told us, is of importance, with reference to the great trade in wool, and I think it would be a good thing were Englishmen to keep an eye on that trade. Yarkand has been for many centuries known as a trading centre, and it is from there, if I am not mistaken, that the wool from which the celebrated Kashmir shawls are made comes. From the geographical point of view, Mr. Littledale's paper is of great importance. His route—or hardly a route; it is more a track, made for himself across the most inaccessible part of Northern Tibet—lies a little to the west of the route of M. Bonvalot and Prince Henri of Orleans, and a little to the east of the journey made by M. Pevtsoff, who succeeded Prjevalsky in 1890, and who, starting from the oasis of Nia, crossed that very high range, which is known locally as Akka-Tagh, and marked on some maps 'Prjevalsky' range.

The PRESIDENT: I was anxious to discuss several geographical points, suggested by Mr. Littledale's paper, but I fear it is getting late. I will, however, say a few words respecting the chain of mountains which Mr. Littledale actually crossed, and which he mentions as throwing up peaks 20,000 feet high. I am sorry to say that on the map we have to-night that chain of mountains does not appear, which only shows how important it is that further exploration should be conducted in Tibet. I have called that range the northern range of the Himalayan system. I remember Mr. Trelawney Saunders was anxious to name it, and he has done so on a map he drew for me, the Gangri range, after the knot of peaks which connects it with the Korakoram; but Brian Hodgson has called it the Nyenchen-tang-la, as does also Mr. Littledale himself. These mountains are of the greatest possible importance and interest; they have only been crossed by native explorers and by Mr. Littledale opposite the Tengri-Nor, and in the whole length from Tengri-Nor to the Mariam La pass no one has crossed them, so far as we know. One of the last suggestions by General Walker was that a rough survey should be undertaken of these northern parts of the Himalayan system, and I believe nothing in Asia is of greater geographical importance than the exploration of this range of mountains, which I trust geographers will agree to give some name to, and next time we have a map of Tibet in this room I shall take care that they are portrayed upon it.

We now only have to thank Mr. Littledale for his most interesting paper, giving us an account of a journey which has seldom been equalled for its extraordinary hardships and the resolution with which they have been overcome. We have heard from Mr. Thiselton-Dyer that very important botanical results have come from Mr. Littledale's collection of plants, and I must express my own admiration for the splendid scientific work he has done for geography—for the way in which he got up every morning, without, I believe, missing a single one, to take observations regularly, from the time he started until he reached Leh, and his dead reckoning shows that he did his work with most remarkable accuracy. I believe it was only a mile or half a mile out in 850 miles on comparing his dead reckoning with a position

fixed by observation; 200 miles further west the dead reckoning agreed within half a mile of the longitude obtained by an occultation observed by Mr. Littledale, and compiled by Mr. Coles; and at Shushal, near the Ladak frontier, where the survey terminated, there was, after a traverse of 1700 miles, only a difference of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile between Mr. Littledale's position and that given by the Trigonometrical Survey of India. We not only have to thank Mr. Littledale for an extremely interesting evening, but for the valuable scientific work done for geography, and I am sure you will all join in a cordial vote of thanks.

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NOTE ON MR. ST. GEORGE LITTLEDALE'S MAP.—The instruments used by Mr. St. G. Littledale for making his route survey and fixing positions by astronomical observations were—a 6-inch sextant, a 3-inch theodolite, a telescope by Ross, hypsometric apparatus, three aneroids, a clinometer, and a prismatic compass. All bearings were taken with the prismatic compass on a tripod, and the distances were arrived at by pacing the caravan with a stop-watch. Forty-three observations of north and south stars for latitude have been employed for correcting positions, and the longitude of station 107 has been fixed by an occultation of the star and  $\gamma$  Capricorn by the moon. The accuracy of the traverse survey was confirmed in a remarkable degree by the astronomical observations.

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## THE FIRST CROSSING OF THE SOUTHERN ALPS OF NEW ZEALAND.\*

By EDWARD A. FITZ GERALD.

THE South Island of New Zealand, as you all know, is long and narrow, some 500 miles in length by about 100 to 150 miles in width. It lies in a north-easterly direction at about the same distance from the equator as Italy or the Black Sea, so that the mountain ranges might be likened to the Caucasus in respect of latitude. The climate is, however, much milder; snow very seldom falls in Christchurch or Wellington even during the winter months. The whole of my work was confined between the districts of Canterbury and Westland, and the principal object of my visit was, if possible, to discover some feasible tourist route over which horses could be taken from the arid plains of the Mackenzie country to the west coast, so marvellously beautiful with its nearly tropical vegetation and its great glaciers flowing down almost to the sea. There would also be a practical use for such a road, as it would open up to the gold-diggers an easy path whereby they could get their supplies, and at the same time send their produce to the great towns on the east coast. Up to the present day they have had to rely on pack-horses led along the beach, nearly 100 miles from Hokitika—a toilsome journey even under favourable circumstances, but after a great rain, when the rivers are in flood, there being no bridges, one is obliged to stop and wait perhaps a fortnight for fine weather. As the rainfall of the west coast varies from 120 to 150 inches a year, it can be easily understood how

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\* Paper read at the Royal Geographical Society, January 27, 1896. Map, p. 576.