

After crossing over yet another broad valley, with twelve tents, and large herds, we encamped beside a little brook. By some this place was called Dschalok, by others Schiker, while the relatively important mountains which we saw to the west were said to be called Bontsa. The altitude of Camp LIII was 4845 m. It was here that I and my two attendants were prevented from proceeding farther in the direction of Lhasa; from what we were told, we were five days distant from the holy city, and we were one day's journey from Nam-tso or Tengri-nor. During the five days that we stayed there, it again rained pretty heavily and all the brooks ran full.



Fig. 389. OUR ESCORT.

On 10th August we started on our return journey, accompanied by an escort of Tibetan horsemen. They took us back the same way by which we had come, but knew of far better camping-grounds than those we had found out for ourselves. For instance, in one or two of the smaller side-valleys the grass was far better than any we had seen elsewhere in Tibet. But we did not succeed in gleaning any further intelligence from our guides. They called the country to the west Namru, while to the east lay the densely inhabited regions of Tsamur and Amdo. In consequence of the last rain the road was far more difficult than it was on the way out. Camp LVIII was pitched in a locality called Gonggak, where there were a few fragments of fossiliferous stone scattered over the ground, although it was quite impossible for me to examine into their provenance. Possibly their presence there was a pure accident, for I failed to perceive any hard rock anywhere in the vicinity.

Our Tibetan escort accompanied us as far as the Satschu-tsangpo, for that stream forms, they told us, the limit of the Dalai Lama's authority. The river had in the interval subsided a good deal, being not half as big as when we forded it before, so that this time we got across it without difficulty. We formed Camp LIX a good distance above the first nomad camp that we saw at Gartschi-sängi. Here on