

CHAPTER III.

THE NAKTSONG-TSO — EAST AND SOUTH.

The circumstances under which I travelled through this part of Tibet made it impossible for me to gather reliable information. The Tibetans were all the time doing their utmost to induce me to turn back, nor was it in any way to their interest to give me information. Armed bodies of Tibetan horsemen hung upon the skirts of our caravan; but as they took care not to point out to us the best roads, we were often forced to make unnecessary detours. Nor are the names which they occasionally gave me to be implicitly relied upon. For instance, the mountain-range with the rocky gateway was said to be called Jagju, and the promontory to the east of the gateway Tsebguk. To the mountainous country south-west of our route they gave the name of Bogar-dscharingo, and to the lofty snowy range in the same direction the name of Majo-käivi-dogdsching; while the spur south-west of Camp LXXVII was called Tsiding and the isolated mountain-mass to the east of it Danger. Farther south there is said to be a large river known as Tschungö-tsangpo, but of its existence I had no opportunity to convince myself. That such a river does exist cannot be doubted, because the nomads in the camps that we passed spoke of it; but I was unable to ascertain whether it empties into the Selling-tso or into the Naktsong-tso, or whether it belongs to some other basin still farther south.

On 11th September the Tibetans gave us no better guidance than they had done hitherto, and we had to find our way past the Naktsong-tso as best we could. First we aimed south-east, so as to cross over the low isthmus that separates the plain on the west of Selling-tso from the Naktsong-tso. There the altitude was 4693 m., or only 82 m. above the Selling-tso. About half-way between Camp LXXVII and the highest point in that isthmus or ridge there is an old shore-rampart, beautifully and regularly formed, curving like a bow and turning its convex side towards the south-east. This rampart makes a fresh link in the chain of older beach-lines that I found still existing on the western shore of the Selling-tso. The distance between the nearest point of the present shore-line of the lake and the old shore-rampart amounts to 6 km., and demonstrates the extent to which the lake has shrunk; and that the shrinkage has taken place relatively recently is evident from