

that belong to it have their dwellings at the foot of the cliff, though some of them live up in the temple. I paid the latter a hurried visit. The view of the Indus valley from the roof and balconies of the temple is magnificent. The accompanying photographs (figs 277—280) will give some idea of this peculiar temple complex, though it is in no way different from all similar groups of buildings in Tibet and Ladak. The station-house of Tikse lies 3317 m. above sea-level.

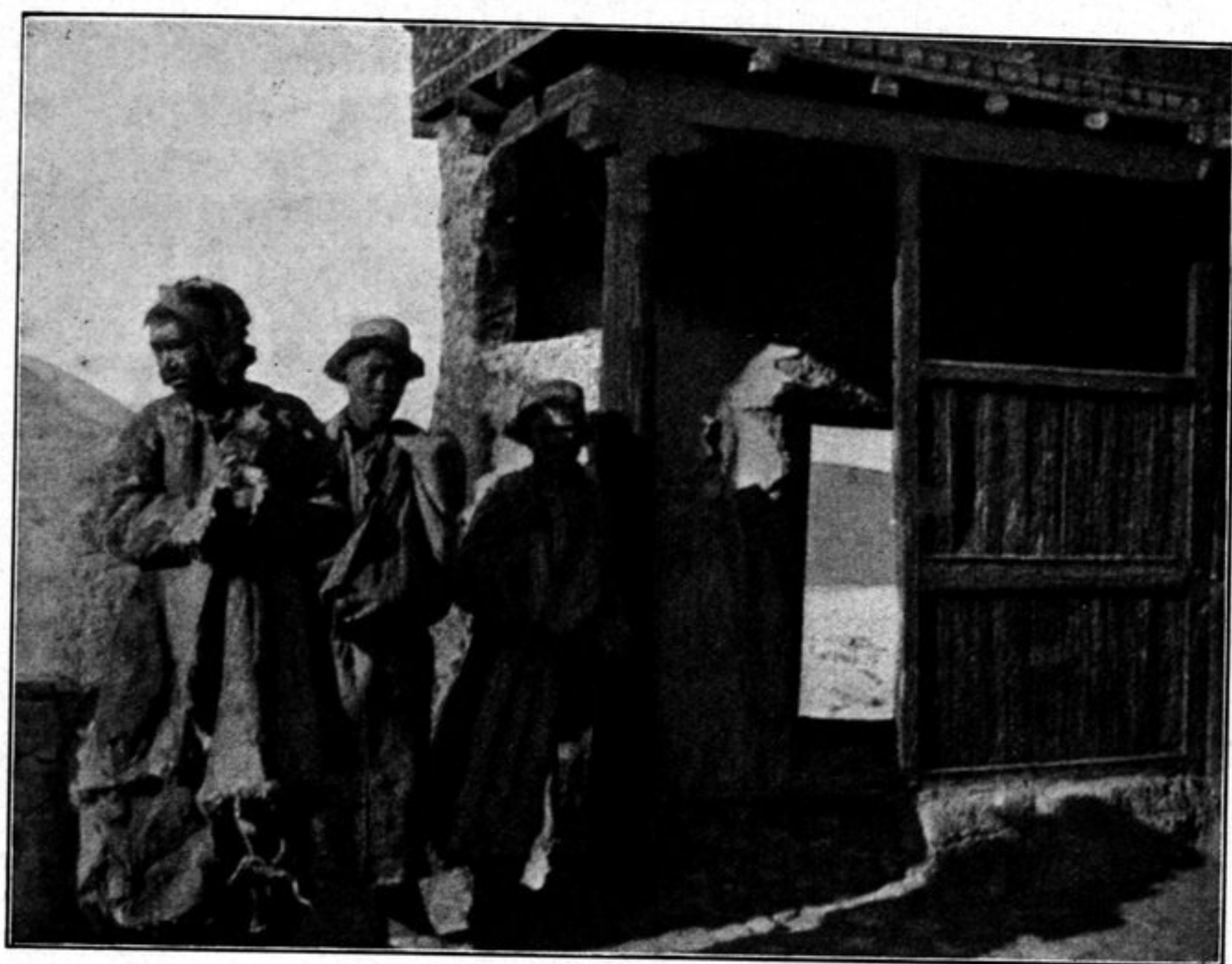


Fig. 282. A GATEWAY OF TIKSE-GOMPA.

Of the last day's ride to Leh there is not much to relate. We again turned away from the Indus, and climbed up the broad sloping expanse or widening of the valley on the right of the great river. Upon it a great number of smaller glens debouch; and along it rise various more or less detached chains of heights and small buttes. The country thereabouts is almost barren and desolate, and conveys the impression of being half a desert; the ground is strewn with gravel. The stone kists are of amazing dimensions; in fact they look like long walls skirting the way-side. At length, after passing through the last little rocky gateway, we caught sight of the castle of Leh, crowning a dominating crag, and at its foot nestles the little town with its labyrinth of houses and courtyards, its long bazaar street, and its avenues of poplar trees. The town lies at an altitude of 3506 m.; consequently we had climbed up nearly 200 m. since leaving Tikse, which itself lies very little above the Indus.

For the next three and a half months Leh was my base of operations. Leaving there my caravan, my attendants, and my baggage during the winter and spring, I myself paid a short visit to India. During my absence the Cossacks continued to take meteorological observations; these have been studied by Dr. Ekholm, and are printed in the Meteorological Section of this work. During my run down into India,