

CHAPTER XXIV.

FROM LEH TO THE KARA-KORUM.

It only remains for me to describe briefly the last portion of these three years of travel, namely the journey from Leh over the pass of Kara-korum to Karghalik. This route has, as is well known, been traversed by numbers of Europeans, and what I have to say about it cannot lay any claim to novelty. But the plan of this work requires that I should describe the western part of Tibet, where the highland is narrowest; for in vols. III and IV I have dealt with the interior of high Tibet. For my own part I was anxious to make some acquaintance with western Tibet after having visited so many other parts of that immense highland region. I was desirous to compare the orographical moulding in the west with the arrangement and general morphology of the northern, eastern, and central parts of the region.

I returned to Leh on the 25th March and left it again on the 5th April, taking with me a caravan of yaks and horses, those of my own men who still remained in my service and a number of Ladakis, who knew the road across the Kara-korum. These men were however to return as soon as we came into touch with Mussulmans who could furnish us with a fresh relay of caravan animals. There is a regular, though small, traffic between Leh and Jarkent, and several of the inhabitants of the little Ladak town have visited

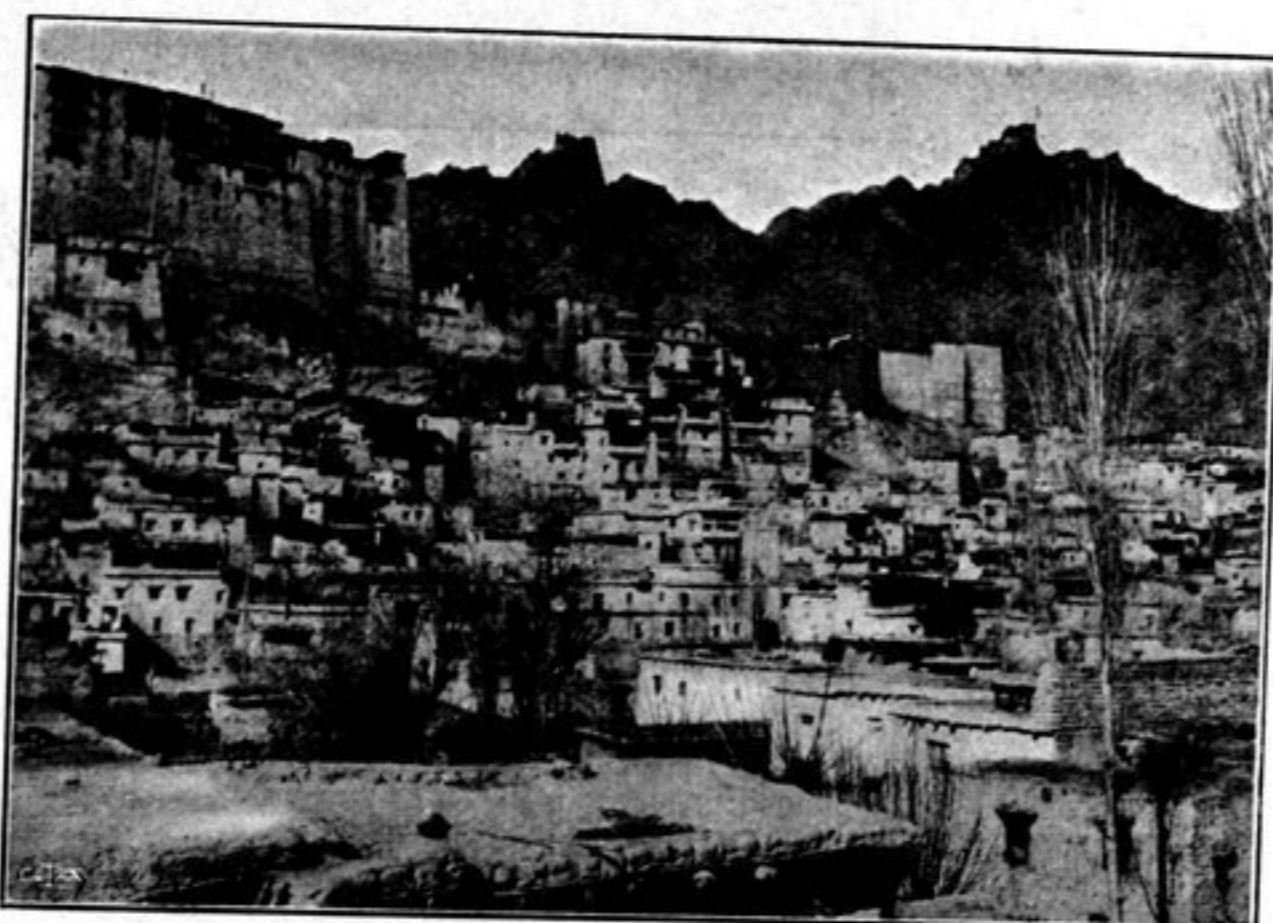


Fig. 304. LEH.

the East Turkestan city. At first we retraced our own footsteps across the Tschang-la to Drugub; but I myself took a different route at starting, and went past Hemi, being desirous to visit that celebrated monastery.

The first day therefore I journeyed to Tschuschot (Shushot). In the beginning I followed the road which I have already described, past the long stone kists down to the bank of the Indus, and at Tschoglangtse-tsangpa crossed over the river by two