

CHAPTER XV

CHAMDO TO LHASA (2)

SETTING out again on September 15 Pereira left the Nagchuka road and the tracks of Rockhill and Bower, and striking south-west took the road to Shobando, never before traversed by a white man. By a Blondin-like performance he crossed a bridge of three logs over the Zok Chu and then followed up the narrow Kwom Chu valley for 8 or 9 miles. After $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles villages and cultivation ceased and the valley became very stony. At $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles there was a steep ascent between rather bare grass hills about 2000 feet high. At $10\frac{1}{4}$ miles the top of the La-chin La, 14,800 feet, was reached. A steep descent led down to the La-chin Chu valley. Two brush-wood bridges and one log bridge had to be crossed, and at $23\frac{3}{4}$ miles he reached I-ta-shi, a village of six families situated in a narrow valley and surrounded by four or five other small villages and a little cultivation.

Much stone-posing was observable in this valley. It is a favourite devotion of Buddhists. Some of them are remarkable feats of equilibrium. Sometimes one stone, sometimes three or four, would be used; and the most difficult stones