

CHAPTER X

LADAK LEH TO RAWAL PINDI—FROM YAK TO RAIL-
WAY VIA PONY TRAIL, OVER THE HIMA-
LAYAS, INTO THE VALE OF KASHMIR

WHEN we had seen the sights of Leh and had watched its four thousand people pour along the bazaar, when we had broken bread with the hospitable missionaries, when we had sent the telegrams that quieted fears at home, then came the breaking up of our little force. Mir Mullah had not been willing to brave the Karakoram route; he had left us at the Kirghiz camp, and his prayers by this time were rising again from a Kashgar roof. Lasso (who was here in the bosom of one of his several families) and Achbar, must go with us to Srinagar, for there were no English along the great caravan road from Leh to Kashmir, and we must make shift to speak with the attendants at dak-bungalows.

Because you have probably read Kipling, that word has gone into my text unexplained, but by some scurvy trick of fate you may be outside the Kipling pale; then, for you, dak-bungalow is post-road house. They are open to all white travellers and to big natives. You are supposed to have your own bedding, and it is best to have with you any European food which you chance to crave. The dak-bungalow is a shelter, has several rooms and