

CHAPTER XXIV.

SURROUNDINGS OF THE RAKAS-TAL.

Following the shore of the Rakas-tal southwards from Camp 223 to Camp 225 and 226 one finds, to begin with, comparatively low hills in the east and a very narrow, gravelly slope between their foot and the shore. There are no lagoons at all, unless the narrow strips of water should be regarded as such, which at two or three places have been swept over the low beach wall by the waves. At Camp 225 the rock *in situ* is limestone and quartz in $49^{\circ}\text{N}.75^{\circ}\text{E}$. A little farther south we have sandstone in $41^{\circ}\text{S}.25^{\circ}\text{E}$. and sandy slate in $60^{\circ}\text{S}.40^{\circ}\text{E}$. Still farther south we find phyllitic schist in $37^{\circ}\text{N}.60^{\circ}\text{W}$., at the place where the narrow passage of the lake opens out to the large southern basin. Here the rock falls rather steeply to the lake. The rocks are much folded but as a rule the fall is towards S.E.

The direction, which so far has been S.S.E., becomes now S.E. fairly straight, and the open shore at the foot of the hills is narrow as before. Above the naked rock wall the hills are rounded as at the eastern side of the neck. After a while the rocks come to an end and the shore plain gets wider, corresponding to the depression of Putse at the eastern side. The shore forms a very regular, lightly curved line with a low sand wall. The ground is composed of sand and some gravel. Walking along this shore it is impossible to become aware of the three islands in the southern part of the lake; they seem to be parts of the mountains on the southern and western shores. This explains why different travellers have given different accounts of them. From the hills above Gosul-gompa they are very well seen.

Near Camp 226 solid rock is again found, namely, harzburgit, diabas and a quartzitic mass, all in 73°S . This was, so far as my excursions allowed me to observe, the only place on the southern half of the neck, where rock appeared *in situ*, which does not of course exclude the existence of a solid rock-skeleton in the interior of the neck, though hidden by detritus.

The southern shore of the Rakas-tal is very fatiguing, for the rocks reach the immediate neighbourhood of the lake and as a rule one has to ride or walk amongst the gravel at their foot. The first sharp promontory, pointing to the N.W., consists