

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SOURCE OF THE INDUS.

During September 1907 I travelled from Khaleb, a plain situated N.W. of Parka and at a height of 4,629m. (15,183 feet), to the source of the Indus.

From Khaleb the road proceeds to the N.30°E. and winds over and between considerable heaps of old moraines before it enters the mouth of the Nyandi valley. The valley is narrow and deep-cut between the mountain sides of conglomerate and sandstone, often with perpendicular sides. Its bottom is full of gravel and blocks. It contains a little river, which, at midday, carried some 4cub.m. a second, near Nyandi-gompa, where a bridge is built. The pilgrims' road from Darchen or Tarchen follows the left bank. The landscape is very picturesque as the mountains have assumed fantastic forms like fortresses and towers, and sometimes the Kailas appears in the openings of gorges, narrow and deep as *cañons*. At the foot of the living rock screes of detritus have frequently accumulated. The rise slowly increases, and here and there the river forms rapids. The volume of water gradually increases towards evening, to 7 or 8cub.m.

An important junction is called Dungleung-do; here, from N.5°W., comes the valley of Dungleung, and from N.70°W. the valley Chamo-lungchen with considerable snow-covered mountains in the background. From here and north-eastwards to the temple of Diri-pu the whole bottom of the valley is full of gravel and blocks of grey granite. At Diri-pu the height is 5,081m. (16,665 feet).

The river of the Nyandi valley is formed by several brooks from the north and west sides of the Kailas and from the meridional valley Tseti or Leh-lungpa, through which the road ascends to the water-parting between the Satlej and the Indus. The Tseti valley is cut through granite, gneiss-granite, and plagioclas-amphibolite. There is a good deal of gravel in the bottom of the valley, and mighty screes from the mountain sides, but there are also pasture grounds, and the road is far better than that of the Nyandi valley. In the background of a greater side-valley from the west, snowy mountains are seen not far away. Several tributary valleys open on both sides.