

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THOMAS W. WEBBER.

In June 1864, THOMAS W. WEBBER together with three of his countrymen made a »trip to the higher valleys and across the snowy range». ¹ They went up the Kali river and then into »a considerable valley in Nepal, east of the Kali» and camped at a torrent from the lofty peak of Api, after which they crossed the Tinkar Pass, nearly 18,000 feet. Webber gives a graphic description of the morphological difference between the land they had left to the south and the land stretching before them to the north: a level plateau-land after deep-cut valleys, hillsides without a bush or a blade of grass instead of rich forests and vegetation south, a country with a snow-line of 19,000 to 20,000 feet, after the rivers and torrents of the south. »To the north there was not a tree in a thousand miles, or perhaps ten thousand» (!). — »North-east was a glorious peaked snow mountain, with four subsidiary peaks showing against the sky. This was the never explored Gurla Mandhata, 25,500 feet high, where the snow line only commences at about 19,000 feet elevation.» In front of them was Taklakar.

They had some difficulty in crossing the Koriali river, »Source of Gogra River» as it is called on the map. After some dispute the *Zung-pun* agreed to let them go for a month's trip N.E., provided they promised not to go near the Manasarovar. The unknown country then lay open before them. Colonel SMYTH had never been able to go there and Mr. DRUMMOND had not reached it on his previous trip. It was, therefore, indeed a *terra incognita*. From Taklakar they decided to strike in a N.E. direction, although it is direct east on the map. They were informed »that there was a pass over the great range which we could see in that direction, across the eastern shoulder of Gurla Mandhata, which would bring us out on to the countries east of Manasarowar, where were extensive jungles, frequented by few natives and famous as the haunt of the rarest of all animals, the bos grunniens.» Colonel Smyth had on previous expeditions been told that »across the second range» the country was

¹ The Forests of Upper India, London 1902, p. 74 et seq.