

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE KWEN-LUN LAKES.

September 16th finally brought us to and beyond the transverse threshold, which is the definite boundary of the self-contained basin that we had crossed ever since the little pass above *Camp VI*. And from there we reached the western shore of the great lake, baptised *Lake Lighten* by Captain Wellby, a name that now, fortunately, is abolished by the Survey of India. The direction of the march, 17.5 km., is chiefly E. S. E., only the last two or three kilometers are to the N. E. From *Camp XIV* we had 11 km. to the threshold, where the height was 5,273 m. or 103 m. above *Camp XIV*, thus giving a rate of ascent as 1:107. From the threshold to the lake the distance amounts to 6.5 km. The lake being situated at a height of 5,095 m., this means a fall of 178 m. or as 1:37, which is nearly thrice as steep as the slope on the western side.

Marching E. S. E. from *Camp XIV*, we cross the mouth of a very considerable transverse valley coming from the north. It took us three quarters of an hour to cross this opening, and during the whole of this time we passed a series of very wide and shallow watercourses, the beds of which were filled with fairly coarse gravel, partly granite. Most of these beds carried no water, but in eight branches, situated in the middle, about 1.5 cub. m. per second came down. In the background of the transverse valley a moderate range covered with snow appeared, and to the N. N. W. a rather high and sharp peak. The range is obviously the same one that stands on the left or southern side of the upper *Yurung-kash* River, or at any rate, ramifications belonging to that range. From the beds in the transverse valley it is easy to see that very considerable masses of water may flow down from the snow-fields of these mountains during the summer. It proved impossible to make out with certainty where this considerable brook went to. As far as could be seen it turned to the S. S. W. On the march from *Camp XIII* to *Camp XIV* it had not been in sight. Judging from the relief and the absolute altitudes of the region, it must, however, flow to the west and join the system of the brook we had followed the last days, and which no doubt belongs to the Lake of *Aksai-chin*. Under such conditions it seems