

by distinct marks on the hillside, was 320 feet above the present level, and at that time the lake covered between 60 and 70 square miles as against its present eight square miles, the small fresh-water sheet included. This change of level is explained by him as being due not only to the erosion of dams, but also to the diminution of the humidity of the air. The salt lake produces various kinds of salt. On the northern shore of the lake, common salt is deposited. This is collected by the nomads who trade with it. It is consumed all over Ladakh, and even in Kashmir. Over part of the plain round about the lake, a carbonate of soda, called *patsa* (Bathsa) by the Tibetans, is found. This is the salt of the poor, and of animals. Another mineral found in the vicinity is called *gurm*. It is a mixture of sulphate of magnesia with a compound of soda. The depth of the lake is only 30 feet at the eastern end, its deepest part.

We had our next camp at Debring, on the southern side of the Thag-lang Pass, and exchanged our yaks from Nyoma for others from Rubshu. Debring is a nomads' camping ground which is furnished with several *mani* walls and *mchod-rten*, although there are no houses.

### CHAPTER III.

#### The Indus Valley.

##### a. LADAKH.

We crossed the Thag-lang Pass (17,500 feet high) on the 19th August, and marched to the village of rGya (13,500 feet high), the first village of Ladakh, on the road from Rubshu. Before entering rGya, we passed by the ancient remains of the village of Rum-rtse (map Ramcha) which is asserted to have been a Mon settlement. When Moorcroft halted here in 1820, the whole population of this little village, who had never seen a European before, fled in terror, leaving their houses empty.

What may be called the necropolis of the ancient Mons of Rum-rtse, is situated on a plain above the trade road, about two miles above rGya. It consists of a number of large single *mchod-rten*, and many well-preserved rows of 108 little *stūpas*. The present inhabitants of Rum-rtse said that all those *mchod-rten*, having been the work of Mons, were not revered by them. The Mons and the Tibetans had nothing in common, they said. Although we examined some of the ruined *mchod-rten* at the site, we did not find any inscribed tablets in them. We took a photo of a rather well-preserved specimen of these *mchod-rten* which was of the so-called ladder type, as we find it represented among the ancient rock carvings near the Alchi bridge. The lower part showed remains of stucco frames which, I suppose, originally enclosed stucco figures of Buddha. This kind of ornamentation is not found on Tibetan *mchod-rten*. If a Tibetan *mchod-rten* has stucco relievos, they represent lions, Garudas and other animals. These are not found round the base, but round the middle portion of the *mchod-rten*. Another of our photos shows some of the well-preserved rows of little *stūpas* (Plate XXVI, b).