

CHAPTER IX.

THE KANJUTI RAIDS.

"Are not the mountains, waves, and skies a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? should I not condemn
All objects, if compared with these? and stem
A tide of suffering, rather than forego
Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm
Of those whose eyes are only turn'd below,
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow?"

BYRON.

IN the spring of 1889, the exploring fever came strong on me again, and, seeking the advice of Mr. Ney Elias, a journey across Tibet, by much the same route as that afterwards so successfully explored by Captain Bower, was suggested to me. I had begun to think over details for this and plan out the journey, when my hopes were utterly shattered by the stern refusal of my commanding officer to allow me to go, and I was left in despair to wile away the dreary hot-weather months in an Indian cantonment, spending hour after hour in looking out for microscopic atoms of dust on my men's uniforms or saddlery, and in watching horses being groomed and fed and watered. But just when I was most despairing, a ray of hope came. A telegram was put in my hands, and this proved to be from the Foreign Office at Simla, asking me to undertake an exploration on the northern frontier of Kashmir. Here was the very chance I had been longing for. I went straight up to Simla to see the foreign secretary, Sir Mortimer Durand, and received instructions regarding my mission.