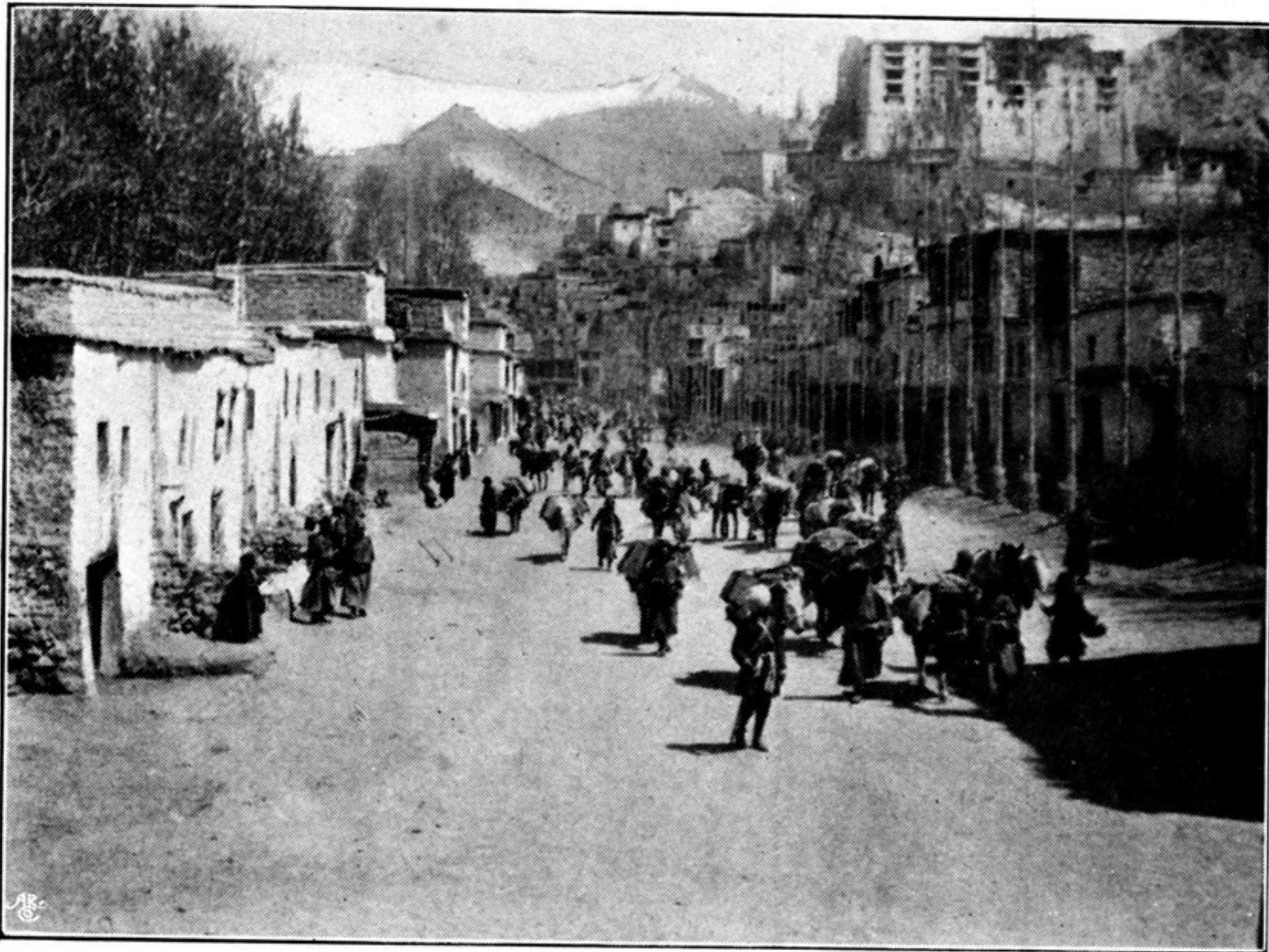


Here also we had to engage some fresh caravan men. We could not give precise information as to our destination and, consequently, some who had formerly been willing to accompany us, now said that their health, or the health of their relations required them to remain at home. In Ladak a traveller collecting a large caravan is supposed to have in view either a journey to Yarkand, or an attempt to reach Lhasa. A denial of the former purpose is equiva-



MY CARAVAN LEAVING LEH.

lent to an admission of the latter, while no statement respecting any third course seems worth considering. Men who have been tempted by the prospect of good pay, seldom refuse to run the risk of involving themselves or their friends in pains and penalties for the sake of a stranger. Those also of our men who were less in dread of the Tibetans, naturally wished to know where we were going. As we ourselves did not know, we could not tell them, and, to compensate for the vagueness of our