

CHAPTER III

ACROSS THE HINDUKUSH TO THE PAMIRS AND K'UN-LUN

AMONG all the manifold influences in culture, religion, race and language for which throughout historical times, but in particular during the Buddhist period, Chinese Turkistan had formed the meeting-place, none have left their impress more clearly upon the remains of its ruined sites than those received from the side of India. There is good reason to believe that in almost all instances these influences had directly or indirectly emanated from that extreme North-West of India which in the centuries just before the time of Christ and for several centuries after had been a chief seat of Buddhist worship and propaganda. This border region between India and easternmost Iran, where the successive conquerors of India in old times had invariably secured their first foothold, has ever since my youth had the greatest fascination for me.

It was a special boon of my life that in the glorious alpine scenery of Kashmir, which forms the most attractive part of that border region, I have, from the beginning of my Indian career forty-five years ago, found the base for scholarly researches and labours which has proved best adapted to my personal tastes and qualifications. There I have spent happy vacations over antiquarian tours connected with work