

frequent danger after every fall of rain or snow. Yet the great difficulty which this main route of Chitral presented before the good bridle-path was made, could be realized only when we turned round the precipitous rock face near the little hamlet of Kes. A five-foot bridle-path cut into the rock wall or carried over well-constructed galleries and supporting walls was a comfortable track to look down from into the river tossing some three hundred feet below. Reminiscences of the Hunza 'Rafiks' and all their amenities rose before me as I pictured to myself what this route meant some ten years ago. For animals, even unladen, it must have been practically impossible whenever the rising water of the river closed the narrow track over boulders and sand-banks far below by the water's edge.

The boldly projecting spur of Gairat a mile or so beyond had often served as a barrier against invasion from the south. During long and anxious weeks in 1895 the Chitral Mission's escort endeavoured to stem here the threatening tide of Pathan invasion and Chitrali disaffection abetting it. The only visible marks left of that stirring episode were small stone heaps once formed into Sangars. Past the small fort since built behind this natural gate or 'Darband,' I hurried on northward to where the rock-cut inscription was said to exist. The first sight of Tirich-mir, the highest of Chitral peaks, was the main reward of this *détour* (Fig. 13). In imposing grandeur and isolation towered the giant, over 25,400 feet in height, far away in the north, completely closing the background of the broad Chitral Valley and dwarfing all lateral snowy ranges. The line of glacier-clad summits culminating in the Tirich-mir Peak owes much of its grandeur to this apparent isolation and the symmetry of their disposition on either side of the spire-like central peak. A worthy rival to Rakiposhi this serrated ice massif appeared to me, and a worthy theme for all the legends with which Chitral folklore surrounds its inaccessible summit.

The inscription I was seeking occupied a magnificent rock face rising precipitously to at least a hundred feet above the river, fit to receive the records of a 'King of Kings,'