

## CHAPTER XV

### TO THE NISSA GLACIERS

THE only route available for approach to the westernmost head-waters of the Yurung-kash was the one I had first followed on my expedition of 1900, but in the inverse direction. So no detailed account need be given here of the four long marches which took us from Langhru across a succession of high transverse spurs and through barren gorges to Nissa. Nothing had changed in the desolate look of these curiously eroded rugged ranges and the mighty strata of detritus and loess dust which cover their higher slopes. But the narrow strips of vegetation at the bottom of those gorges which push their heads close enough to the snow-line to receive running water during the summer months, looked greener now than I could have expected from the impressions left by my autumn passage six years before (Fig. 56). On the top of the first pass, the Ulughat, close on 10,000 feet above the sea, where an exceptional chance of clear weather had then given a day so profitable for our triangulation, I found the little mound of loose earth and scrub we had heaped up as a 'station mark' perfectly intact, a fresh proof how favourable the conditions of this dry region are to the preservation of even the most insignificant structures. The fame of the 'Pao-t'ai' we had built on the mountain-top had spread far and wide among the scattered little settlements of Taghliks; for Ram Singh had heard it talked of even in the forlorn valley of Pusha.

But if nothing had changed in the weirdly arid look of these mountains, it was different with the atmospheric conditions. Instead of the brilliantly clear sky which in