

well as the watershed between the Baghrasch-köl and the Kontsche-darja. All the transverse glens, with spring water coursing down them, that open out from the Kuruk-tagh to the south appear to lead up to a single pass in a single chain, and over on the other side of it the surface slopes down to the desert-like lowlands which stretch along the southern shore of the Baghrasch-köl. It is quite possible that on the one side or the other of this principal chain there does lie a smaller parallel chain; but if so, it is of secondary importance and is pierced by the transverse glens of the main chain. Thus, even though we may with some show of justice maintain that the existing maps of this mountainous region are the outcome of imagination, it is no less incumbent upon us to abstain from making alterations in them until by fresh exploration we have acquired fuller information with regard to the orography of the region. But as both the Russian travellers whom I have named, as well as I myself, have ascertained that the eastern part of the Kuruk-tagh consists of several parallel chains, though it is true of very inconsiderable dimensions, there is reason to suppose, that the range splits into several divisions, which radiate fan-like towards the east, in the same way as the Kwen-lun system does, though in its case on an immeasurably vaster scale.



Fig. 26. TOGHRAK-BULAK OR ASTIN-BULAK.

Before I leave the Kuruk-tagh I will point, *en passant*, to the relation which this mountain-range bears to the shifting of the bed of the Kum-darja, or, as I shall prefer to call it in these pages, the Kuruk-darja. What is it we have to consider? We have a mountain-range running from west to east and a river flowing parallel to it, close along its southern foot. Then, disregarding other physical influences, such as secular changes of level and the effects of the earth's rotation, we may ask, what effect does this range exercise upon the situation of the river, — does it repel it or