

in the bottoms of the three glens until it reaches points a couple of hundred meters above Basch-kurghan, and consequently it is only there that the vegetation is at all vigorous, indeed on the margins of the brooks it is even quite thick, namely grass and kamisch; but it thins out rapidly as one advances up the dry glens, until there is nothing left except scanty scrub.

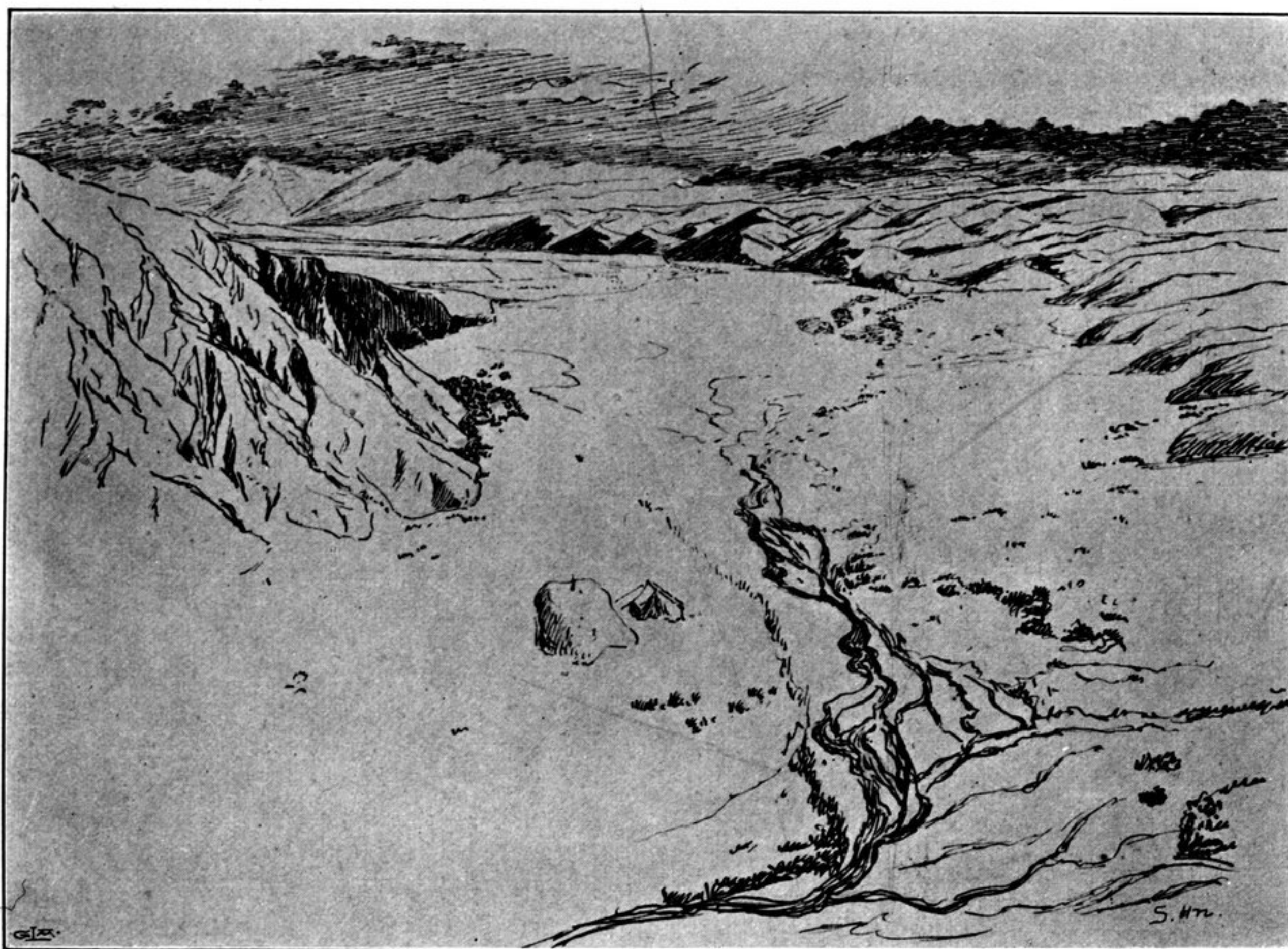


Fig. 14. LOOKING SOUTH-EAST FROM BASCH-KURGHAN.

That part of the main range of the Astin-tagh which we now had before us on the south is called the Tschokuluk-tagh. To the south-east of Basch-kurghan it forms an imposing mass, and has a salt spring at its northern foot, beside which nevertheless an abundance of reeds grow, known as Kamisch-bulak — not to be confounded with the spring of this same name that I have previously mentioned. Between Basch-kurghan and the spring just alluded to the ground rises by a series of low, rounded crests and ridges of soft material of a bright yellow colour. Above the spring (Kamisch-bulak) there are said to be two passes, Arkarlik-davan and Tschokuluk-tus-davan, which however are of no importance and are only used by hunters. All the water of this region, whether originating from rain-showers, or from the melting of the snows, or issuing from natural springs, flows down into the basin of the Kara-koschun, although, as I have said, it hardly ever gets down as far as the lake itself. Thus we had crossed the lowest chain of the Astin-tagh without climbing over any pass, only by traversing the breach of the transverse glen of the Kurghan-