

light-coloured strip, the lake of Kala-köl, and in the S.  $31^{\circ}$  W., at the northern foot of the Akato-tagh and on the nearer side of the Ilve-tschimen, the white surface of the Usun-schor. With this intensely salt lake too we shall become better acquainted lower down.

Leaving the spring, we struck into a gorge, or dry ravine, cleft through the gravel-and-shingle, and running towards the south-west, and after emerging from it, turned to the south-south-east.

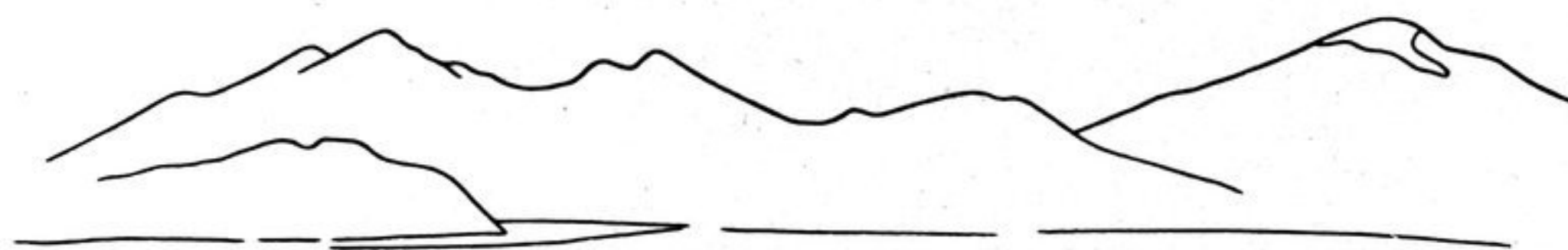


Fig. 29.

At 11 o'clock the sky suddenly clouded, and a sharp shower fell; but it was followed by a hard storm from the south-west, heavily charged with dust and sand. Its onset was peculiar, for it resembled a gigantic bolster, dark brown in colour owing to the dust that it had caught up, and it approached rolling bodily along across the steppe. During the two hours that the storm lasted, we saw nothing of our immediate surroundings, except the track actually under our feet. After the storm had ceased with the same suddenness with which it began, the air cleared all at once, and left none of the fine dust behind it, very different from the storms in the lowlands, after which the air is wont to be thick for a couple of days. It was as though we had ridden through the storm-path of some local mountain wind intimately related to the configuration of the locality.

The part of the Akato-tagh which we here had on the east of our route appeared to stretch towards the north-east or north-north-east, and was pierced by numerous glens. From one of these issues a large watercourse, which winds down S.  $57^{\circ}$  W. to the Usun-schor. Shortly after that we reached the foot of the Akato-tagh, with a gently sloping talus of débris, overgrown with teresken, in front of it; here a slight depression leads up to a small pass. Here too there are some small dunes of drift-sand, blown together by the south-west wind. After that we made our way up a gentle slope towards the south-east and east between inconsiderable ridges, the slope growing flatter and flatter as we ascended, until at length it was more like an ordinary saj; it was covered with sand and gravel, amid which grew a little scanty scrub. The ground was but slightly broken. This led us up to the pass (3208 m.) of the Akato-tagh. The mountain ridges on both sides of the pass appeared to run principally east and west, but are at the same time rather truncated and irregular. Immediately south-east of the pass another glen leads off in the direction of Usun-schor. It is through it that the usual road from Tscharklik to Tschimen runs; this road too we shall become acquainted with lower down. Very soon the two roads unite and form one, which leads towards the south-east between the southern ramifications of the Akato-tagh. These gradually diverged, and we at length came out upon another extensive latitudinal valley, running parallel with the Kakir valley.