

tagh; and but little, if any of it, reaches as far as the Akato-tagh and the Astin-tagh. But the Ilve-tschimen alone is crowned with perpetual snow. The Tschimen-tagh is pierced by several transverse glens, all opening upon the Tschimen valley. The one to the south-west of Temirlik is called Kisil-tschap; the others are, on the east, Soghok-saj, Tschigelik-saj, Gändschuluk, Alim Baj-saj, Korumluk, and Mandarlik. Hunters' paths lead up through several of these glens to the passes at the top. Down each glen courses a brook, originating in the snows, but they all alike disappear under the detritus at the northern foot of the mountains, though they make their reappearance, as we have seen, as springs in the lowest part of the Tschimen valley, for the greater part of its floor is covered by this débris-spread. The same difference that we observed between the Akato-tagh and the Tschimen-tagh with respect to water-supply obtains also between the Kakir valley and the Tschimen valley. The former is absolutely dry and possesses no springs; while in the latter there are at least a couple of small lakes, and farther east the Ghas-nor, with, in addition, perpetual springs. Thus the Tschimen valley forms in this respect also a transition between the dry latitudinal valleys that intervene between the extreme northerly border-ranges of the Tibetan highlands and the latitudinal valleys situated farther south, in which, as for instance in that which I mapped in 1896, there exist entire strings of lakes, big and little. Even at Temirlik we had a sort of taste of the characteristic Tibetan weather, so violent in its sudden and surprising changes. On 11th July, after a still, bright day, a storm burst about 10 o'clock at night. The wind came from the south, but at the same time black, compact masses of cloud went sailing away to the south-south-east; then all of a sudden the wind veered round to the west and began to blow hard, being accompanied by a violent and heavy rain. The thunder and lightning in the Akato-tagh were simply magnificent. In summer the Tschimen valley swarms with midges; about sunset they hover in perfect clouds around the springs. Nor is it until the beginning of September that they disappear.

July 12th. Continuing our journey towards the south-east, we crossed first the Usun-jar, a gully 100 m. broad and resembling those I have described above; lower down it possesses springs and a rivulet, which makes its way down to the principal brook in the valley. Then, after travelling for a considerable distance across the kamisch steppe, dotted over with *balghun* bushes with hard stems and roots, and frequently growing on miniature mounds, we crossed over the ravine of Basch-balghun, which is also fed by springs below the track. About an hour after that the steppe comes to an end, and is succeeded, quite abruptly and without any intermediate formation, by the hard level saj, which is seldom undulating and quite barren. We then turned to the east-north-east, and kept along the edge of the steppe, which appeared to stretch one green expanse all the way to the talus at the foot of the Akato-tagh, and is traversed by all the ravines as well as by the principal brook. Both *kulans*, or »wild asses», and hares were numerous on the steppe. In the south rises the peak V, the culminating point of a bluff of the Tschimen-tagh,

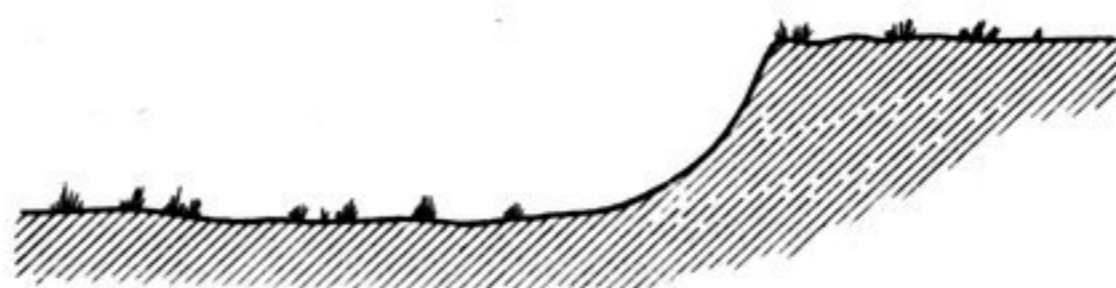


Fig. 31.