

itself, at any rate on that occasion, peculiarly appropriate. The clouds appeared to come from the west-south-west, but down in the valley the wind blew sometimes from the north-east.

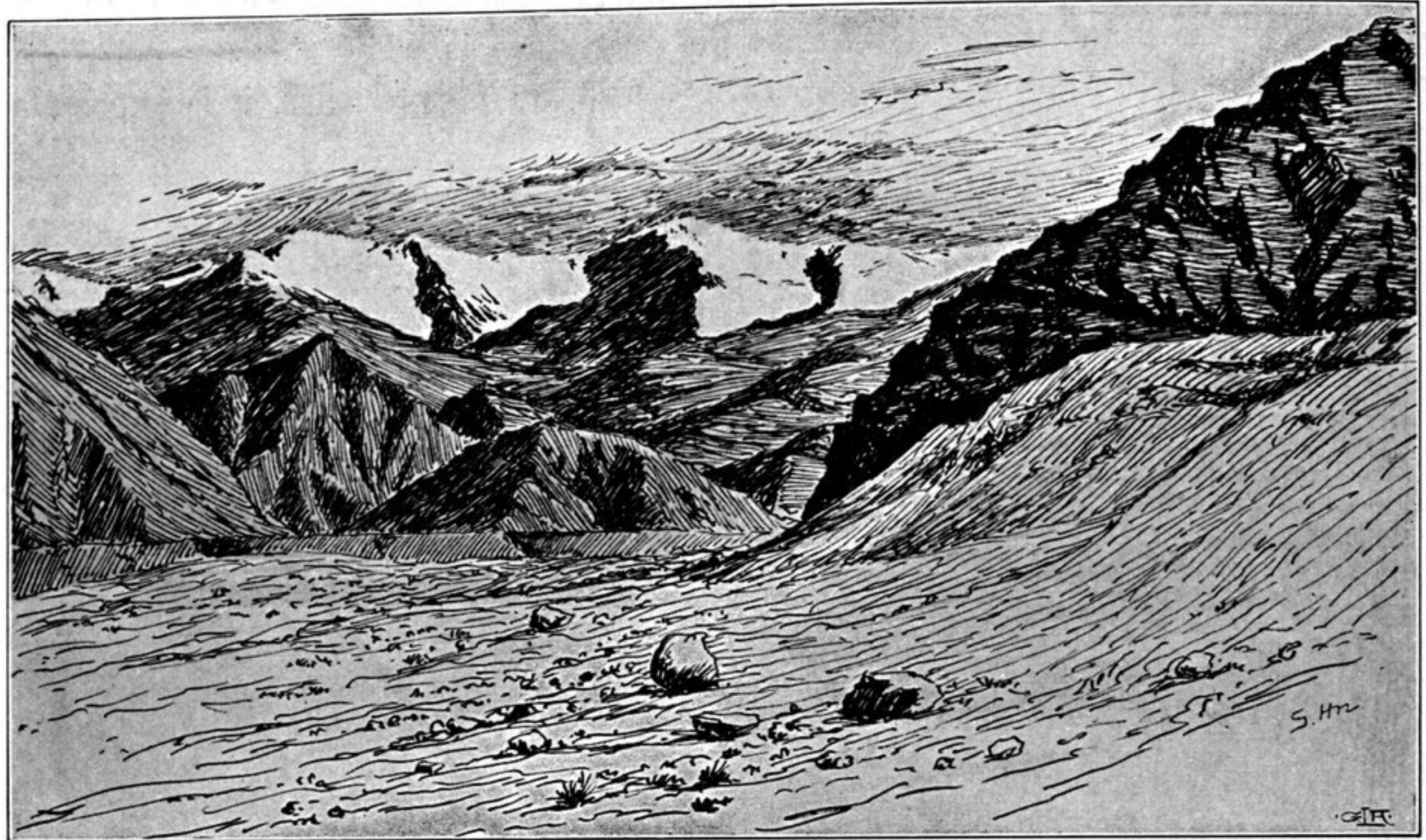


Fig. 40. THE MAIN CREST OF TSCHIMEN-TAGH IN THE UPPER PART OF MANDARLIK.

Although situated in the heart of the continent, the Tschimen-tagh shares in many respects in the characteristics of the peripheral mountain-ranges. Whereas the Astin-tagh and the Akato-tagh are dry, crumbling ruins, the Tschimen-tagh is still, so to speak, a living range, with precipitation, perpetual snows, perennial springs and brooks, pasture-grounds, and animal life. In the arid mountain-ranges the only animals met with are wild-camels and an occasional antelope or wild-sheep; but in the Tschimen-tagh we observed, in addition to antelopes and wild-sheep, also kulans and wild-yaks, hares, foxes, wolves, marmots, partridges and several other creatures. While in the former ranges the springs are situated 12 to 14 hours apart, in the Tschimen-tagh water can be found almost everywhere.

Since leaving the Ghas-köl we had ascended fully 1000 m. Camp No. VIII, at the south end of that lake, had an altitude of 2977 m., Mandarlik lay at 3437 m., and Kar-jakkak at 3984 m. It was here we began to be conscious of the mighty swelling of the Tibetan plateau.

July 22nd. It snowed all day long. In the hollows and glens the snow fell in the form of big buoyant flakes, which vanished the moment they touched the ground, for the earth was warmed several degrees above zero, and in this way became increasingly wetter and more slippery. But up on the heights the snow was granular, and the small, light grains rolled a little distance along the ground before melting. It was only in the higher regions that the snow remained. The snow-clouds came from the south-west.