

scape is therefore very monotonous, and this was especially the case during this day's march; there were literally no outstanding features of any kind to arrest the eye. On the right we passed a large pool, which thrusts out two bays towards the north-east, and is entered by what was then a very small brook. On the whole the surface appeared to slope towards the north. It was only in this direction that we saw any big snowy mountains, though it was often difficult enough to distinguish them from the white clouds which hung above their summits. Pools occurred here and there at intervals, and the ground bore a thin sprinkling of grass. Everywhere, more or less thickly scattered over the surface, were loose fragments of a hard tuff-like rock, plentifully studded with air-vesicles.



Fig. 114. A CAMEL SINKING IN SOFT GROUND.

The wild animals we saw that day embraced kulans, orongo antelopes, bears, wolves, foxes, and marmots. In fact, wherever the latter occur one may be pretty certain to find bears as well. The altitude of Camp LI was 4,997 m.

September 17th. North-west of this camp the country assumed a very unexpected character, not at all conducive to the comfort of the caravan. The undulating surface was as it were paved with sharp-edged fragments of tuff of all sizes, which formed a continuous covering, without permitting so much as a square foot of the underlying surface to be seen. Very often this tuff pavement thrust sharp points up through the soft ground, and against these the camels wounded their feet till they bled. And if by any chance there did happen to occur a strip of ground free from this »pavement», the opportunity was seized upon by the earth-rat, a very common rodent in these regions, to dig out its burrow. All day the country was in this way like a roughly paved street. The ground remained frozen until well on in the forenoon, and the fragments of rock thus became fixed fast in the soft soil; but when the sun began to thaw the ground, the latter turned terribly miry. We