

At the point where the glen bends to the north-east, it contracts to the semblance of a wild and deep-cut transverse glen, a veritable gorge, grander and more picturesque than any other glen I have seen in that part of Asia, wilder in fact and more rugged than the transverse glens of Dalai-kurghan and the Tscharklik-su. For our exhausted camels this proved an exceedingly tiring bit of road. To go down it was difficult enough; to have attempted to climb up it would hardly have been possible with camels. Excessively narrow and carved to a great depth through the granite cliffs, it makes numerous short bends and windings, and to make matters still worse, its bottom is choked with water-worn blocks that have fallen from the crags above, and in some places are piled up to a great height. In and out amongst these masses of rock winds the stream, although its volume was then hardly bigger than  $\frac{1}{2}$  cub.m. in the second, and it was moreover frozen completely over, the ice being strong enough to bear the weight of our camels. The only places where the current still trickled was down the steep declivities and where the velocity was greater than usual. The only part of the glen along which we were able to march with our camels was in the actual stream, though the gold-miners, who travel with asses, are able to get along on the sides of the talus slopes. Now the granite cliffs drop by fantastic steps to the bottom of the glen, now the brook is fenced in, sometimes on one side, sometimes on both, by scarped terraces of gravel-and-shingle (fig. 143). Occasionally there is a little expansion with a fairly level floor. The glen is throughout destitute of vegetation. It was only in its upper part that we found a little grass and traces of kulans and antelopes; these animals never venture into the lower parts of the glen, for it is visited every year by human beings. On the whole the glen has an extremely gentle slope, though towards the end of the day's march we found some steep steps below the gravel-and-shingle terraces, especially on the right side of the glen.

About half-way down we saw on the right, that is to the south-east, beyond and over the top of the spur that shuts in the glen of Toghri-saj, a range of moderate dimensions, in part covered with snow and without any upstanding peaks. In the opposite direction, to the north-west, we saw no range, although there no doubt is one. The cliffs that fence in the glen of Toghri-saj on that side are precipitous and wild, and are pierced by steep rugged transverse glens, filled with fallen detritus. Camp LXIX had an altitude of 4515 m.

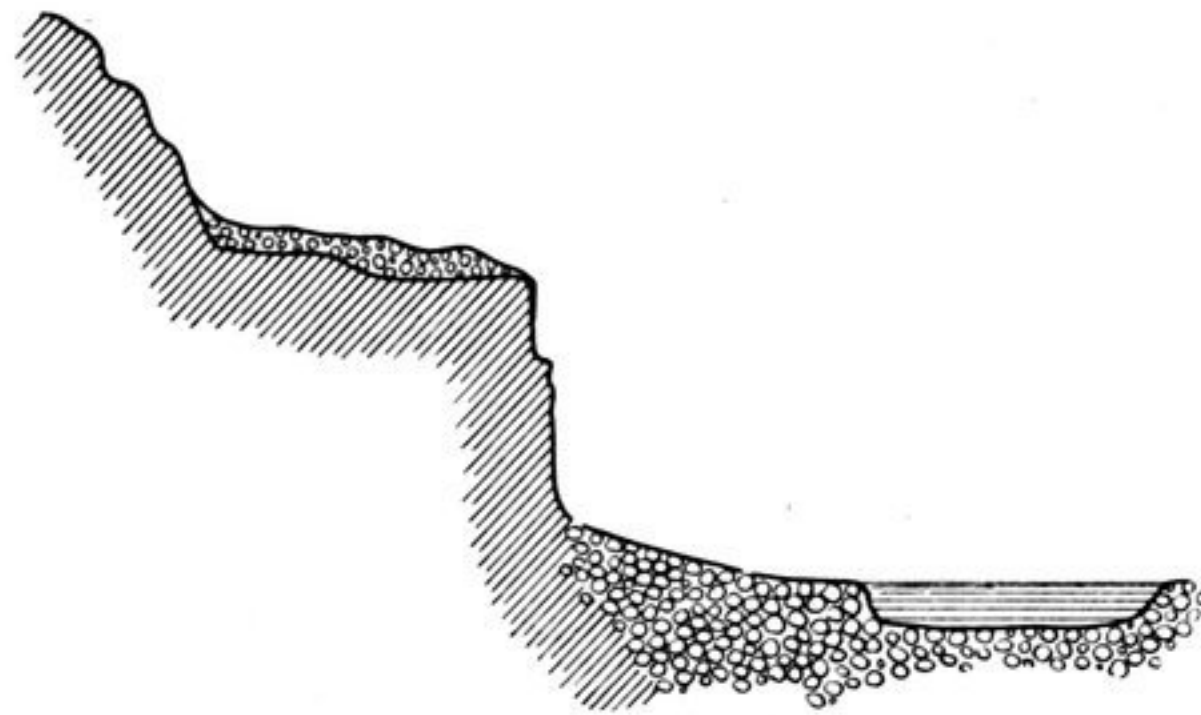


Fig. 146. VERTICAL SECTION OF THE TOGHRI-SAJ.

Granite predominated all day, and was of endless varieties, mostly beautiful fine-grained grey, but also red, pink, flesh-coloured, green, and light green. Besides granite there occurred also conglomerate, crystalline schist, and porphyry.

It is in the narrowest part of the glen of Toghri-saj that the gold-mines are situated. They are visited every year by a number of gold-miners from the south-east of East Turkestan. Two of my men, who had themselves formerly visited the spot on that errand, professed to be able to estimate the number of miners who had