

to squeeze myself through. All the time I was walking on the débris of the landslide and the bottom sloped down so steeply that it was like walking on a ladder or stairs. Abovehead were several big masses wedged in between the two vertical walls. Yet even this constricted passage grew still worse, so that it was at last absolutely impossible to advance a step farther.

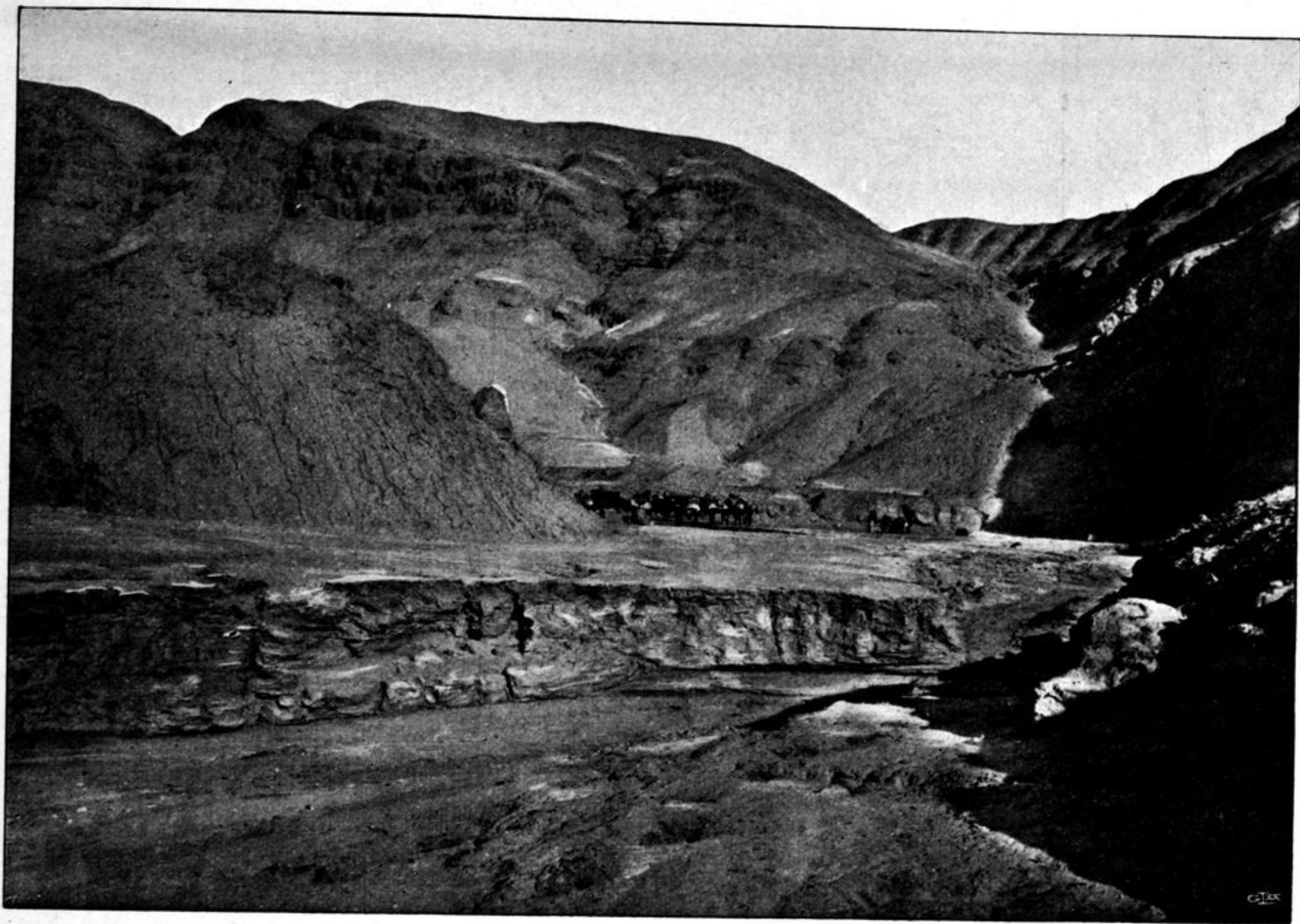


Fig. 224. THE EXPANSION WITH CAMP III.

Thus the pass which we had chosen turned out to be a snare; it was not possible to cross over the Akato-tagh by that route. What the distance was between the point where we turned back and the lower end of the glen it would be difficult to guess, though I dare say it was no great distance. It is probable that, below the difficult passage which I have described, the glen widens out again before entering the great flat latitudinal valley that forms the eastern prolongation of the Usun-schor valley (*kakir*), expanding just before it melts into the Tsajdam basin. From the point where I turned back I sent a man a little way farther down the gorge; but he was stopped at a point where the narrow watercourse was completely blocked up by a recently fallen land-slide. All attempts to advance along the sides were in vain, partly because of their steepness, partly because of their being gashed by impassable torrents. It was as though the sides of the glen had collapsed, and the glen itself become choked with avalanches of solid material, through which the torrent had had to cut its way anew. It is only in a range built up of such soft