

N. 55° W. rose a more imposing swelling of the Akato-tagh, probably the same as that which when between Julghun-dung and the mouth of the glen I had observed to the N. 22° W. On the far side of the minor ridge there is again a latitudinal valley, situated consequently between the Akato-tagh and the Astin-tagh, and forming orographically the immediate eastward continuation of the kakir of Usun-schor; although it is uncertain, as I have said, whether farther to the west there may not exist one or more self-contained basins like that of Usun-schor and Kala-köl. With regard to its relief, this latitudinal valley is at any rate of quite a different character from Usun-schor, for it is decidedly broken and diversified by a number of small mountain bosses and hills. We now saw that the gorge, in which we had been compelled to turn back, terminated in the little latitudinal valley between the Akato-tagh and the minor ridge to the north-east of it.

Between the two passes that I have described we climbed up to the principal pass, which afforded us the view I have just sketched. We now entered the upper end of a transverse glen, which on the whole appeared to run parallel to the *cul-de-sac* gorge, and to be equivalent to it, and like it probably also terminates at an impassable barrier. To obtain a perfectly clear conception of the general orography of the Akato-tagh is almost impossible by reason of the capricious surface-formations, and one can only be sure of those glens and passes that one has actually traversed. Even when we stood on the principal pass, we did not derive the impression that we were on the summit of a distinctly outlined mountain-range running from north-west to south-east. On the contrary we seemed to be looking upon a number of parallel crests or ridges running from south-west to north-east; this is more particularly true of those parts of the Akato-tagh which lie to the west of our route. A peculiar illusion is also borne in upon one when standing on the top of the main pass, in that the strange system of argillaceous mountains by which one is then surrounded convey the impression of being very inconsiderable in point of elevation, so that one almost hesitates to call them mountains at all; while of the energetic features of the vertical relief one sees practically nothing. When one is, on the other hand, down in the glens, the impression is quite different; for when at Camp CIII we found ourselves surrounded by gigantic swellings and vertical mountain walls. The illusion is of course simply the result of the extreme narrowness of the eroded glens, which are also so deeply sunk that it is only from the bottom that their true relief becomes apparent.

Had the only object of this present excursion been to explore the eastern Astin-tagh and Anambaruin-ula, it would of course have been much the simpler plan to have made a detour right round the Akato-tagh, that is to have marched south-east from the Ghas-köl, to have doubled the south-eastern extremity of the Akato-tagh in Tsajdam, and then to have gone north, and approached the Astin-tagh travelling on perfectly level ground. But I preferred the more difficult and irksome road over the Akato-tagh in order that I might have an opportunity to check the delineation of the orography of the region shown on the map of the Russian General Staff, for *a priori* it appeared to me to be in the highest degree improbable. I have already pointed out that that map erroneously gives to the Ilve-tschimen and the Akato-tagh the name of Tschimen-tagh. But an even worse mistake is made