

though it is certainly very low and flat, for in that direction there exists nothing to hinder the view; that is, the valley is open towards the south-east.

All the way down from the pass the country was perfectly barren, and all traces of animal life were of course absent. All that we saw of this nature in the Akato-tagh were the white and mouldering bones of a kulan in a narrow gorge, into which the animal had probably come in order to die in peace. In the latitudinal valley we now came across the footprints of a bear about a month old; the creature had evidently made its way down towards the transverse glen already alluded to.

By means of a flat and easy pass we crossed over the minor parallel range, which came completely to an end immediately west of our route. On its northern side we discovered a distinctly marked track, which my guides believed to have been made by Tungans. It is just as likely however that it was used by Mongol pilgrims. We were soon to discover its continuation and to come across proofs that human beings really had formerly visited these desolate regions. From the point where we crossed it the road alluded to ran towards the N.  $33^{\circ}$  E. and in the opposite direction towards the south-west, and consequently towards another part of the Akato-tagh than that in which we crossed over the range. May we venture to suppose that by following this mysterious path we should be led to an easy pass over the Akato-tagh? No; it seems to me more conceivable, that the route it follows runs along the northern foot of the Akato-tagh and crosses that range by the easy pass south-east of Usun-schor. After getting over four other dry ravines, we encamped in a fifth (Camp CV), where we obtained water from some small snowdrifts. The altitude was 3455 m. The ravines in question run towards the east, and gradually converge into a large outflow channel. North of the camp we had some small hills, and amongst them teresken scrub was fairly abundant.

The day's march proved to us that the northern slope of the Akato-tagh is very different from the southern. Up as far as the pass clay still continued to be predominant, and at Camp CIV the dip was  $31^{\circ}$  towards the S.  $30^{\circ}$  W. But in the principal pass an excessively weathered rock cropped out, possibly granite; it appeared to be bedded, although indistinctly, at  $70^{\circ}$  to the N.  $70^{\circ}$  E. On the northern face the clay contains a large admixture of gravel and coarse sand, and these appear to consolidate it, and so prevent the origination of the wild and fantastic surface features which we found on the southern, and especially on the south-eastern, face of the Akato-tagh. Another difference between the northern and the southern slopes is that, whereas the latter is about 30 km. long, the former is only 3 to 4 km. Nevertheless the kakir valley at the northern foot lies higher than the Tschimen valley at the southern foot. A similar difference, although less pronounced, may also be observed in the vicinity of the pass of Usun-schor.

December 22nd. We now had to cross over the eastward continuation of the great kakir valley, but by reason of the broken nature of the country this proved to be more complicated than we expected. From Camp CV we directed our course towards the east-north-east and soon came to another watercourse running towards the east; this picks up all the other watercourses in the locality, and developing into a large saj, follows the northern foot of a small ridge, a sort of offshoot of the Akato-tagh. This glen runs first towards the east, but gradually turns away