

glen issues from the left; it originates in a more imposing part of the main range, visible to the N. 80° W. Just before joining the main glen, this side-glen contracts to a narrow passage, and about a dozen paces up it the spring gushes out in the very bottom of the glen itself. The water, which had a temperature of $+3.5^{\circ}$, was perfectly limpid, and had a very slight saline flavour; the areometer gave a sp. gr. of 1.0032. At the point where it gushes out, the spring forms a miniature basin, the water in which was not frozen, though it was frozen only a few meters below it, and finally in the middle of the main glen it formed a sheet of ice 30 m. broad and 80 m. long, and about 5 cm. thick. Under it there was a layer of water. The ice had formed in successive layers one upon the other, while between them were sometimes thin sheets of water; the reason these had not frozen was probably because they had absorbed the salts previously precipitated. The sheet of ice goes on growing bigger during the winter in the same manner as the sheets do at the springs of Altmisch-bulak, and probably survive for a longer period in the spring than the latter do. Around this spring were growing bushes (*balghun* and *bogh-ana*), some grass, and a sprinkling of teresken. The altitude was 2770 m.

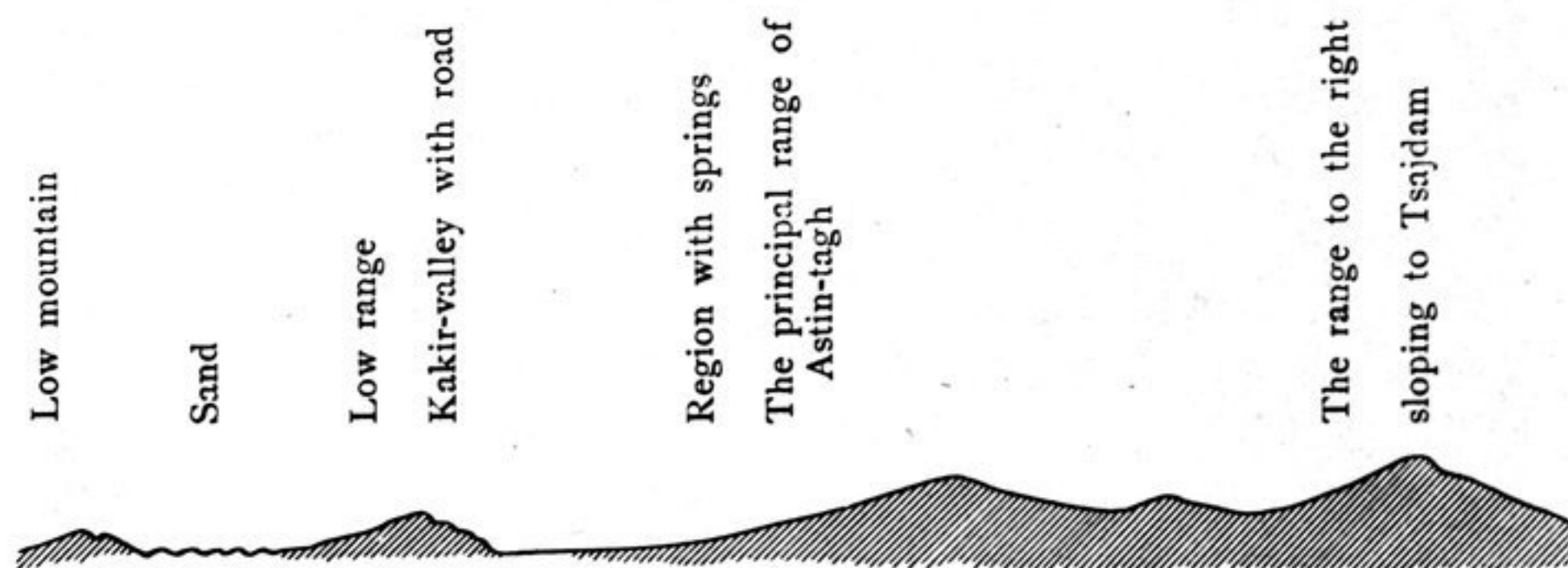


Fig. 252.

Now small and insignificant though the two passes are that lay south and north of Camp CXI, they are nevertheless possessed of great orographical and hydrographical importance. The former directs the water to the basin of Tsajdam, the latter directs it towards the Desert of Gobi, while between the two stretches a flat self-contained basin. It seems probable that the crest with the northern pass corresponds to the Lower Astin-tagh at Tatlik-bulak and Basch-kurghan, and that the range with the transverse glen answers to the Upper Astin-tagh at Basch-jol, although it is doubtful whether they form the immediate continuations of the chains that we crossed over farther west. It is almost more probable that, owing to the great distance between Lap-schi-tschen and Tatlik-bulak, there are one or more interruptions in their continuity. One difference at the points named is that at Tatlik-bulak the Lower Astin-tagh is divided by a transverse glen, while the Upper Astin-tagh had to be crossed by a pass in the summit above Basch-jol. At Lap-schi-tschen on the contrary it is the Upper chain that is pierced by a transverse glen, whereas the Lower chain is not.

At about 6 or 7 km. north-east of the spring we perceived a large mountain-mass; this belongs, I was told, to a special range of foothills, which stretch thence