

range in question culminates in three great domed summits, S₁, T₁, and U₁. At the northern foot of this range the snow lay thicker than anywhere else, for it was there screened against the sun. Our valley was very broad and open, and was fenced in on both sides by parallel mountain-ranges, each with a gravelly watercourse running along its foot, often fairly distinctly outlined. From Camp CXVI we followed the left-hand watercourse, and soon found that it joins the right-hand one, which appears to be the main drainage artery of the valley. Apart from these, the bottom of the valley is furrowed by a number of rainwater channels, most of them issuing out of the transverse glens of the range on the left. Two of these are of considerable size, the others very shallow. Here again we came upon distinct traces of a road; five horsemen had travelled along it recently. It runs quite close to the southern foot of the left-hand range, doubling one after the other the dark rocky spurs which jut out from the massive R₁, the culminating portion of that range in this locality. We crossed over the soft, rounded continuation of one of these spurs and then a couple of watercourses in which *japtschan* scrub was growing rather abundantly. In a region so barren as that such a discovery naturally afforded a pretext for a rest, during which the men collected all the fuel they could for their camp-fires at night.

Then we travelled east-south-east. To the S. 22° W. we perceived the exit of the main drainage-artery of the valley. At that point the range which we had hitherto had on our right grew lower and lower and at the same time receded from the main watercourse, leaving it a free passage between its eastern wing and the range S₁ T₁ U₁ on the other (eastern) side of the gap. Through this rocky portal we saw to the south yet another parallel range belonging to the Astin-tagh system. This, running south-east or east-south-east, is a large mountain-ridge, and its eastern promontory touches the right-hand side of the main watercourse on the lower side of the gap.

By means of a short reconnaissance I learned that the watercourse in question, after running some distance towards the south-south-west, turns to the south-east, and then, having swung round the south-eastern promontory of the southernmost range, proceeds south-west, and so enters the northern basin of Tsajdam. The glen by which it breaks through is fairly broad, but owing to its very serpentine course we saw, from our line of march, nothing of the flat desert regions of Tsajdam. In this glen again the snow was heaped up abundantly on the barren *kakir* ground.

In this locality the Astin-tagh system, for we were orographically still within its domain, forms a pretty sharp angle. Hitherto we have found that its ranges run regularly towards the N. 60° E.; but now, just west of the great southern transverse glen that I am speaking of, it bends towards the south-east. On the east side of the glen however it again assumes an east-north-east direction; and this applies not only to the range S₁ T₁ U₁ on our right, but also to that which lay to the north of our route. The former range presents a very uneven and fantastic outline, the depressions between its peaks being very pronounced. All the ranges which we have had on the south since leaving the transverse glen of the Mo-baruin-gol — that glen opens out towards the north — may be regarded as foothill ranges of the Anambaruin-ula, an exterior bastion guarding the southern edge of the immense complex.