

mist still hung about the glen and to some extent prevented us from seeing. We only did a very short stage; but the country was picturesque and interesting, and the pass by which we crossed was more accentuated than any we had seen for a long time. Leaving on the right Tschang-tsen with its broader *thalweg*, we set our faces north-west and proceeded to climb up to the pass of Scho-ovo-tu, also pronounced Scho-voto or Schovot. The ascent, over soft earthy slopes, soon became quite sensible, and was even very steep for a short distance just under the pass. It is there that grass begins to show, but over on the northern side it soon became more abundant. The pass, which has an altitude of 3667 m., forms a sharp knife-back, on the summit of which only one, or at the very most two, camels are



Fig. 269. THE WAY UP TO THE PASS.

able to stand at once. The northern declivity is amazingly steep; in fact it was like standing on the verge of a precipice, and we were quite unable to see the level bottom of the valley far below. At the first glance it looked to be an impossibility to get camels down that breakneck acclivity alive. The torrent that runs down from the pass gave us not the slightest aid. The descent into the glen below was by means of a path on the left of the torrent, winding down by a countless number of short, steep zigzags, and at the bottom it brought us once more into the bed of the torrent. The descent was rendered still more difficult because of the quantity of gravel, of medium size and resting on an earthy basis, with which the path was strewn: the animals slid down it as upon wheels. If a camel were to lose his foothold whilst descending there, he would inevitably roll all the way to the bottom. The slopes and spurs on the northern face of the mountain are also covered with soft earthy material; the bare rock only makes its appearance at the foot of the declivity. Upon getting down we marched in the gravelly bed of the water-