

desolate regions simply to let them graze for a few months in that far-off Tschimen; he for his part had never heard speak of it, and did not believe it was possible. But since the road actually exists, as we have seen, and moreover bears indications of a pretty lively traffic, and since it is nevertheless indicated on Chinese maps, there remains only the great probability, that it was at some former period employed by the Chinese, although it is difficult to see what advantage it can have offered over other great routes of communication between China and East Turkestan. The only advantages that one can at all perceive would be the coolness and the freshwater springs in summer. Those who are versed in ancient Chinese geography will no doubt more readily find the solution of this problem.



Fig. 276. VERTICAL SECTION OF BIG BEND.

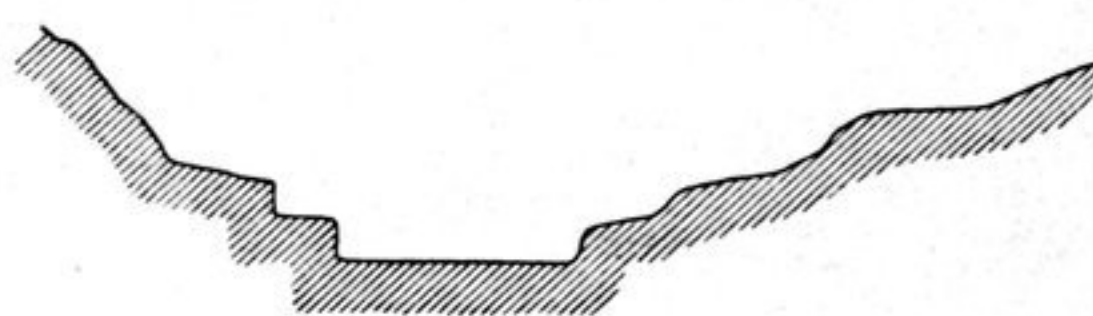


Fig. 277. THE VALLEY BELOW DUN TSA.

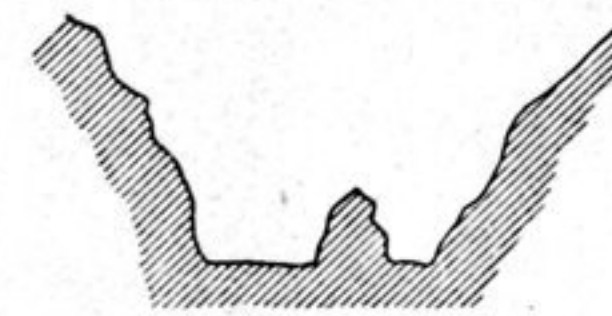


Fig. 278.

January 14th. This day too the glen was enveloped in mist, and the sky covered with clouds. Lower down the glen of Scho-ovo-tu grows still wilder and more picturesque. It is fairly straight and regular, with the exception of a single sharp

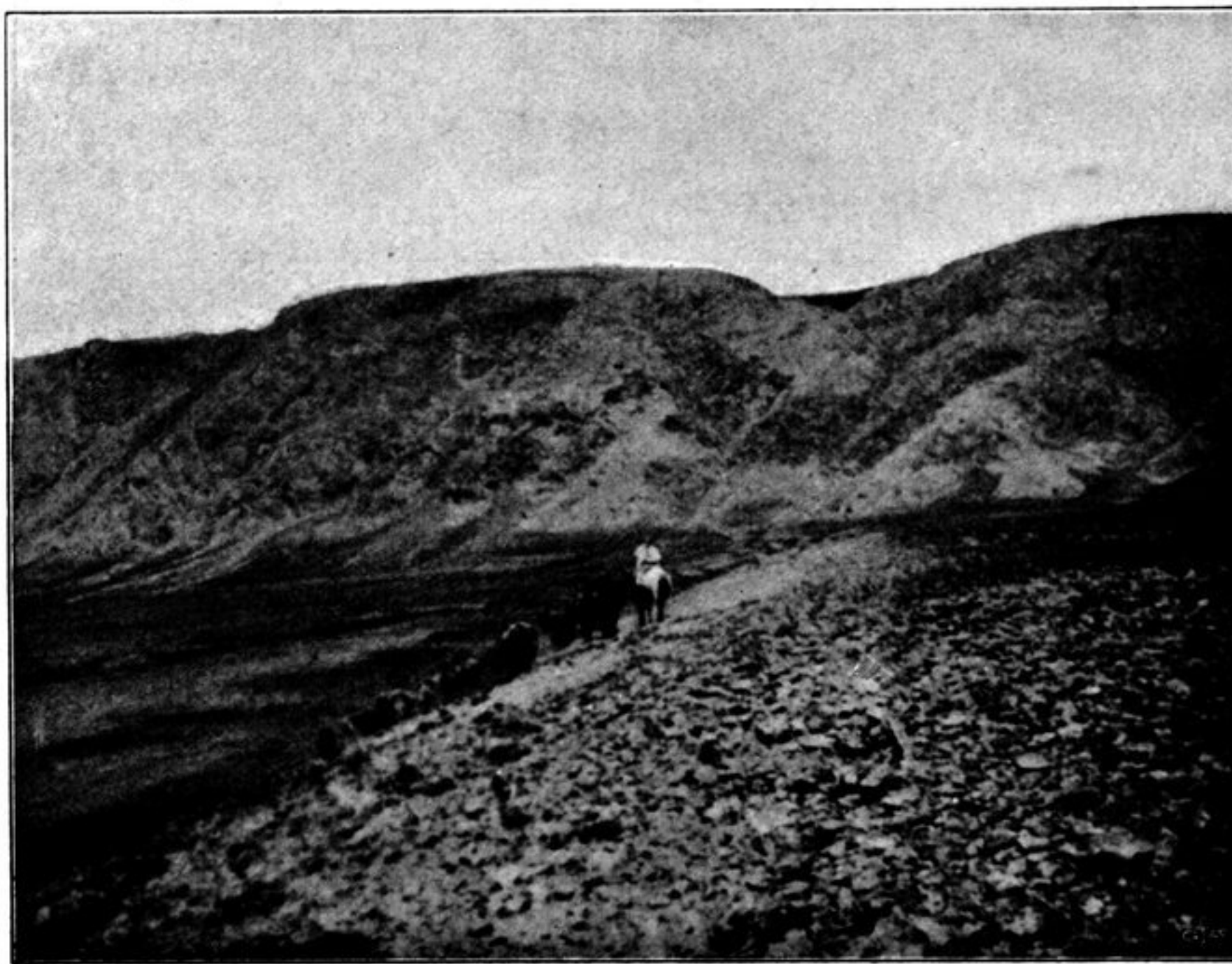


Fig. 279. FROM THE SCHO-OVO-TU VALLEY.

bend (fig. 276). Its slope is rather considerable, and when its brook runs full of water, it must form a series of tumultuous cascades and rapids the whole way down. Erosion has left eloquent testimony of its activity in the high, precipitous escarpments, which overhang it on both sides throughout almost its entire course; and the great in-