

one place, where some loose and brittle flakes projected above the otherwise greatly pulverized soil, the rock appeared to have dipped 78° S., but I was unable to satisfy myself whether this was the actual dip or was only accidental. There is much gypsum and salt amongst these ruined mountains.

June 7th. Ascending a little flat glen, we debouched upon an extensive plateau, sandy, hard, and excellent for travelling upon, with a thin sprinkling of jappak scrub, and furrowed by kulan tracks and local rivulets, though almost entirely level, or with extremely small and flattened undulations. On the south the plateau is bordered by a low ridge and its ramifications. To the east the country appeared to be levelled and easier; but I preferred to travel round these hills on the west side so as not to approach too closely to Bonvalot's route. At the northern foot of the mountains, or rather amongst a labyrinth of small hills which exist there, we came upon one of the contributory glens of the Sasik-jar, running north-east and containing a thick, reddish, muddy stream, but perfectly fresh. Here, on its left bank and in an open space encircled by low hills, we pitched Camp XIII. At 1 p.m. a gale sprang up from the west, the wind blowing at the rate of 11 m. in the second, and this was followed by a lively fall of snow. The latter produced a peculiar effect upon the stream, in that the volume dwindled to a trifle, while the water acquired a peculiar flavour that made it undrinkable. The altitude here above sea-level was 4058 m. Hence the ascent from the lake is very gentle, seeing that its surface lies at an altitude of 3867 m. Between the region where we then were and the Atschik-köl there must exist a flat swelling with a ridge that acts as a water-divide, separating the water that flows westwards from that which flows eastwards, that is to say to the Atschik-köl and Sasik-jar respectively. From this ridge the surface falls away east and north to the Sasik-jar and the Kum-köl.

On the 8th June we travelled only 10.7 km., partly towards the south-south-east, partly towards the west-south-west, traversing a district which my men called Min-bulak, or Thousand Springs, a name which appears on Roborovskij's map also. Although the distance was but short, this stage proved to be one of the most tiresome of the entire journey. Upon leaving Camp XIII we struck southwards up a scantily grassed glen, shut in by hills of red argillaceous sand, capriciously and strangely modelled, giving the scene the appearance of an ancient ruined town. The going here was still pretty easy, for the grass, scanty though it was, nevertheless imparted a certain measure of firmness to the surface. Hares were numerous; as also were the tracks and droppings of wild yaks and kulans. The slight amount of moisture, derived from the snowfall of the day before, in no way inconvenienced our march.

But gradually the surface proved more and more unfavourable. A host of rivulets gathered into a larger gully running north, and finally entering the water-course beside which we pitched Camp XIII. Continuing up this glen, which had appeared so easy and inviting when viewed from a distance — as I saw it from an eminence it appeared especially flat or but slightly diversified. But in point of actual fact this district turned out to be of the very worst description possible. The transient torrents, scooped relatively deep in the soft argillaceous sand, run incredibly close together, the space between them often being only a decimeter. Thousands of these tiny rills would gather into a large rivulet; and these would form furrows or dry