

of the transverse glen that we were making for. The ascent is fairly easy and evenly distributed. From off the encircling mountains, which are relatively low, various watercourses, then however dry, run together into a bigger one which enters the main stream of the great latitudinal valley, though *its* volume was then insignificant. Close to the point where this valley bends round towards the north and passed our Camp XV a large ice-sheet had formed from springs which trickle out in the bottom of the valley. The main valley lies east and west, and the mountains which border it on the north appeared, when seen from it, to be fairly low, and so continued as far as we could see towards the west. In that direction there must somewhere be a low pass, forming the water-divide between the basin of the Atschik-köl and this the actual baschi of Sasik-jar. In the same direction the main valley appears to narrow.

Our side-glen also contracts, until finally it is very narrow, and is bordered on its eastern side by fantastic pinnacled cliffs, frequently with precipitous faces. Apart from some sappy moss, there was practically no vegetation. Camp XVII was made beside a little spring at an altitude of 4668 m. Here there was a green schist dipping 35° N. Otherwise the entire day's march ran through soft formations, there being fine gravel in the watercourses only.

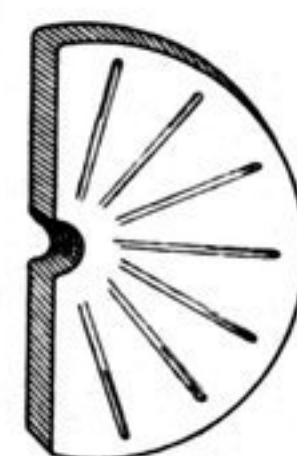


Fig. 334.

June 18th. All night long snow fell and the wind blew from the north-north-west; but we had now reached the high altitudes where it snows all the year round. In the morning the entire country was buried under a white coverlet; but it had already begun to melt away, as we could see from the swimming brooks and torrents, which came racing down from every direction into the valley stream; this last must then have had water even in its very lowest part. The brook that coursed down the glen, which we now began to ascend, had water clear as crystal, flowing over a bed of fine gravel. Here again the flanks of the mountains consisted exclusively of soft disintegrated material, with a few blades of grass, apart from which the only vegetation was mosses and lichens. We reached without difficulty the flat, regularly formed, and rounded pass; its altitude was 4779 m. Upon the top my Cossacks built up two mounds of stones; I mention this in case any European should in the future select this same road. Thus we had now crossed over this latitudinal range, which is quite certainly identical with one of the parallel ranges of the Arka-tagh system that we had already crossed over farther to the east. My observations in this region go to show, that it is not pierced by any of the head feeders of the Sasik-jar. The most important of these are on the contrary situated in the latitudinal valley north of the range, and thus flow latitudinally, one from the east, the other from the west, uniting immediately above Camp XV. The range in question is on the whole rather uneven, sometimes swelling up into stupendous craggy masses, as for instance above Camp XVI, and at other times being rather flat and relatively low, as at the pass by which we had just crossed over it. How far it continues towards the west it is difficult to say; but probably it is identical with one of the pierced ranges that we had to deal with south-west of the Atschik-köl.

The configuration of the range in the immediate neighbourhood of the pass suggested the inference, that several of the watercourses which we had seen on the north