

like a chess-board in consequence of these tiny lakes, amongst which we wound in and out, carefully avoiding as far as possible everything in the nature of a pass.

At length our advance was barred by a range of moderate elevation with, to the north of it, a valley running west-north-west. Its bottom, which consisted of sand, although very wet, was nevertheless sufficiently firm to bear us. Here then was the place to turn off west so as, with the aid of our itinerary of the year before, to try and find the lake. A little way down the valley the grass was growing on the right side of its brook, and there we pitched Camp XXII at an altitude of 5069 m. Thus, although for the past two days we had been travelling away from the Arka-tagh, the absolute altitude decreased but little; we were still at an elevation of about

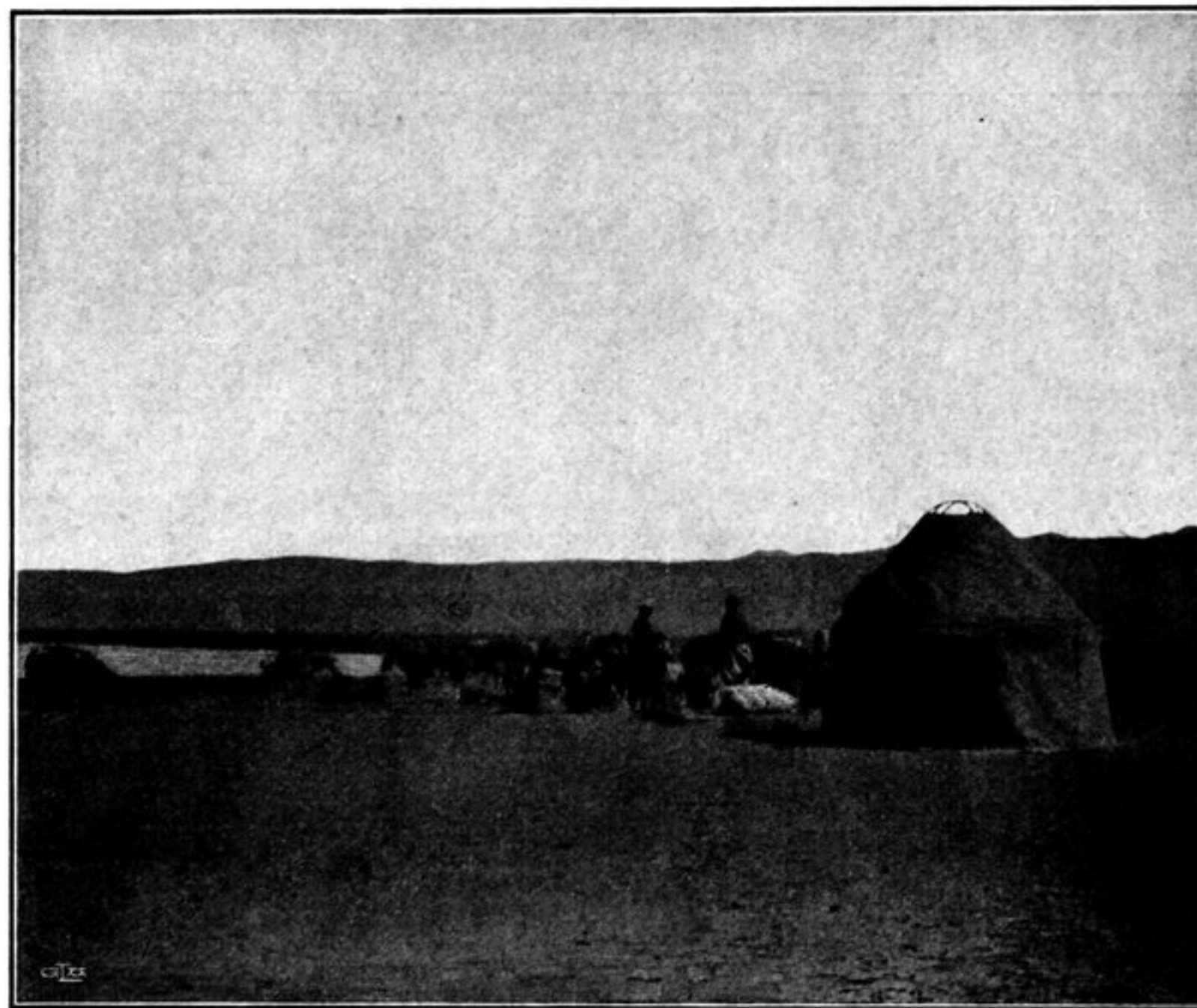


Fig. 341. VIEW FROM CAMP XXIII.

5000 m. The Arka-tagh seems to act merely as a dam or barrier against an ocean of disintegration products which lie heaped up on its southern flank. Hard rock was now a rarity. At one point near the large lake there was tuff, of a red colour, dipping 60° towards the N. 70° E.; but the dip is rather uncertain, for I was not able to decide whether it really belonged to a formation *in situ* or was merely the dip of a mechanical accumulation of fragments of rock. At Camp XXII the same rock dipped 74° towards the N. 10° W., and appeared to consist of beds of tuff overlying other species of rock. The vast number of fragments proves, that over large areas similar beds have crumbled to pieces and become converted into ruins. In this same region we also found thickly scattered over the ground quartz crystals and cairngorms, some with bright, glittering facets, others roughened and with rounded edges.

On the 25th June we had a monotonous march, as is usually the case in these everlastingly uniform, gloomy, lifeless, tedious latitudinal valleys, where even the track