

towards the south, the country being flat and undulating. On our left we passed a freshwater pool, still in part frozen over. Then came a tolerably broad, flat latitudinal valley, sloping towards the east; its altitude was 4970 m. Its lowest depression was situated not very far to the east of our route, and was occupied by small shallow lakes, or rather a marsh with occasional sheets of open water. In this locality the grazing was in every way excellent — that is for Tibet — being soft and full of sap; it grew on dry, sandy soil. Indeed up on the Tibetan plateau the best grass generally does grow on sandy soil. Orongo antelopes were also numerous,

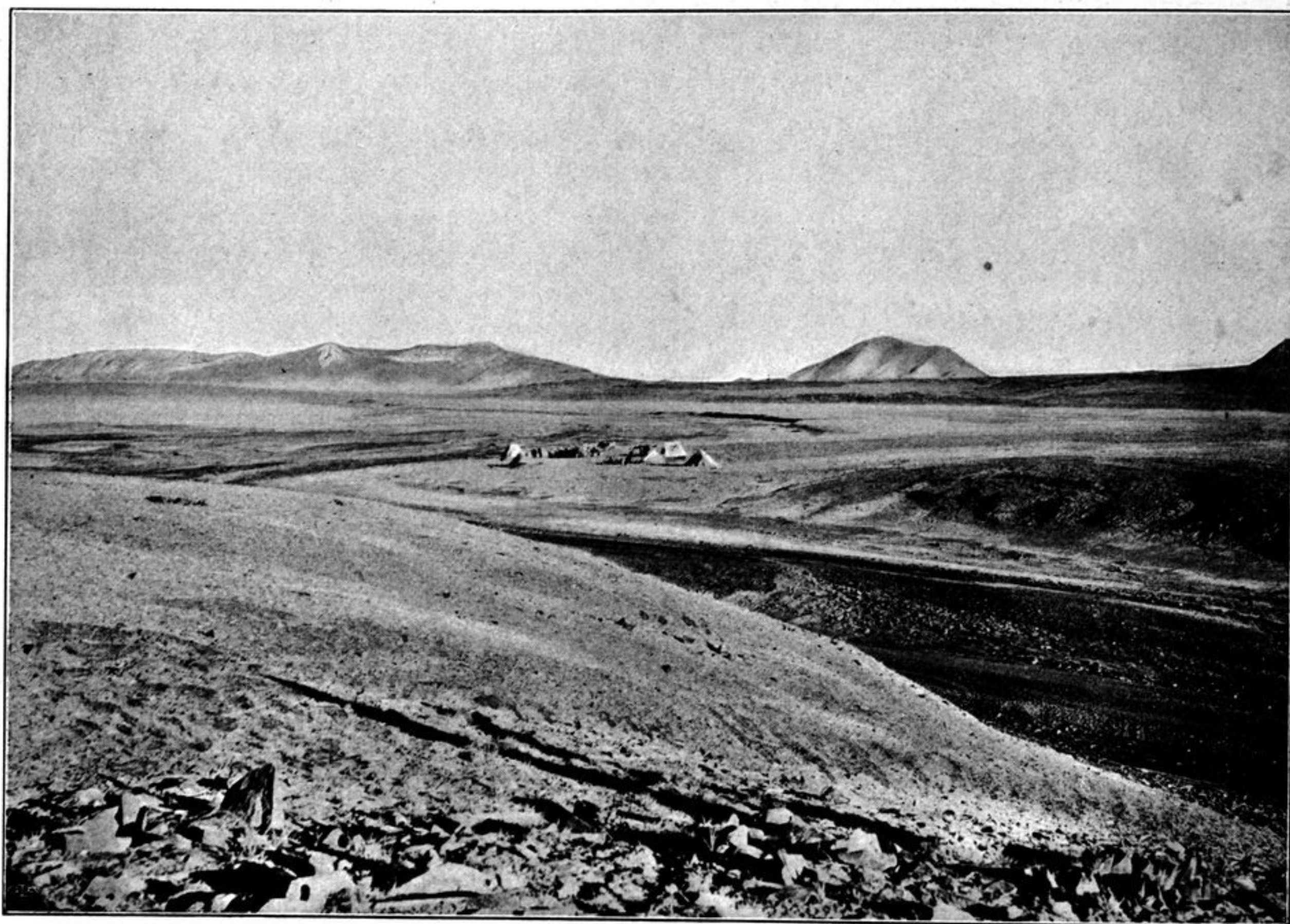


Fig. 354. CAMP XXXI.

and so too were the tracks of wild yaks and kulans. Having marched straight across this latitudinal valley, we slowly ascended towards a small rounded crest with a convenient pass at an altitude of 5056 m. But neither here nor at any other point during the whole of this stage did we come upon hard rock, we did not even see gravel or chips of stone; it was all either fine dust or fine sand. Over on the southern side we struck into a not very deep glen, running down between grassy hills, which picked up various other glens at the sides, until eventually it grew into a larger glen, the ultimate destination of which was a lake that we saw to the south, with a ring of glittering white all round it. At a certain spot in the main glen, where at three different places little springs gushed out, we formed Camp XXXI, at an altitude of 5020 m. Thus we had descended but a mere trifle from the last