

quently lost the information that they possibly might have been able to give us. We found at their camp two yaks' skulls and other bones, and their trail seemed to indicate that they had gone off to the east, the direction from which they had also come. I have no doubt they make use of an easier pass than that by which we subsequently crossed over the southern range. They come up into these northerly mountainous regions in order to provide themselves with yak meat for the winter; but they seldom or never go farther north than this; at any rate we had hitherto observed no trace of human beings south of the Arka-tagh.

On the 18th July we pushed on south-east up the rather narrow glen. It was now that we actually began the climb which was to take us over the biggest of all the mountain-ranges in this part of central Tibet. In order not to weary the caravan unnecessarily, I had sent out, whilst we were resting, a couple of scouts, who came back and reported

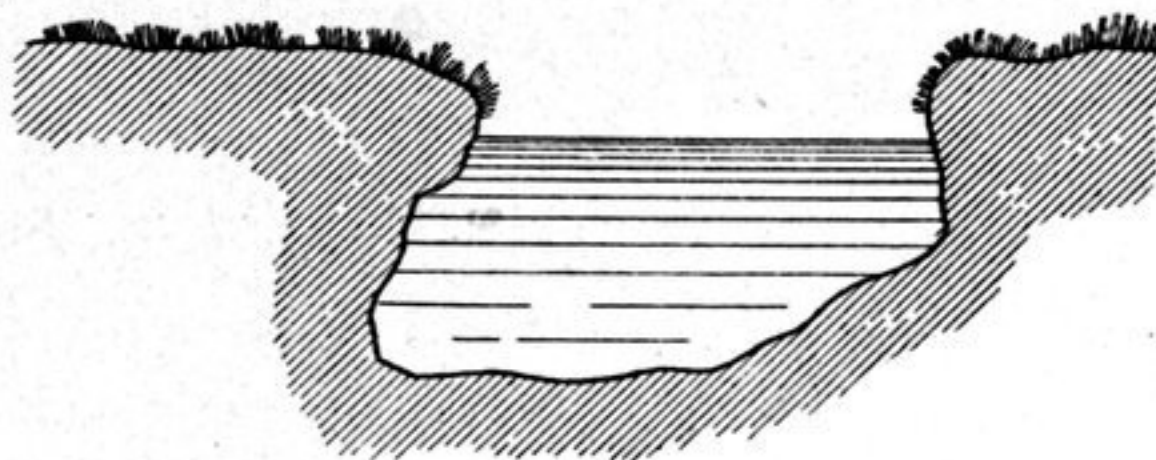


Fig. 366.

that this route was practicable. The glen, which is squeezed in between rather high hills, those on the right side being especially big, afforded excellent going: it was very rarely that the surface was soft and marshy. Here too a great number of springs bubbled forth, some of which gave rise to basins, great or small, while others ran off as thin rivulets and made their way directly into the main stream of the glen. This clings at first to the hills on the right bank, but higher up, where the glen contracts, it crosses over to the opposite side. Here, where it was divided into a big arm and several smaller ones, of cold, semi-transparent water, we crossed over it. At noon its volume amounted to at least 10 cub.m. and on towards evening it increased still more. After that the glen describes a curve towards the south, while the hills on its left bank become low and flat; and amongst them, after we had once more crossed the river, we found it very comfortable marching. From this point of vantage we had an excellent view of the glen, which now grew broader and broader, the stream breaking into several arms, the greater number of which were however still frozen over. These sheets of ice are formed on the spring-water during the autumn and winter, but they were then so soft and rotten that they would undoubtedly all melt away during the summer. If they do not do so, they would have been thicker and more extensive than they actually were. The muddy bottom of the glen both underneath these patches of ice and at their sides was extremely soft and treacherous. The grass still accompanied us, although it was both scanty and poor in quality. On the right of our route, that is to the south-west, we now beheld in all its majesty the great snowy mass C, D, E, F., and to the east-south-east a dome-topped, free-standing snowy mountain, which even at the beginning of the previous day's march had appeared to us to be quite close at hand, although we failed to get near it even on this the second day. The glen now expanded into a large open arena, and we forded its stream for the third time at a spot where there was not a vestige of ice. After that we kept along the foot of the mountains on the right side of the valley. Soon we came upon a small triangular lake in the entrance to a side-glen. By this the grazing was again growing good; the soil con-