

camps appeared to be not more than ten days old, and had probably been formed by the three yak-hunters whom I have recently mentioned. Generally, yak-bones were quite common in this locality. On the other hand we saw no living yaks, though we did observe recent droppings. It seemed as if the animals had been frightened away not long before. The kulans too were shyer than usual, although the Tibetans never interfere with them, for they do not eat kulan's flesh. In no part of Tibet that we had yet visited were wild yaks more universal than in this particular region, and in this I saw a fresh proof of the correctness of my inference, that these animals spend the summers in the very highest regions, close up against the perpetual snows.

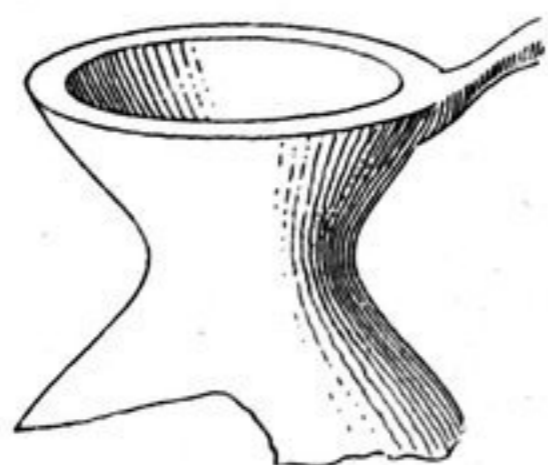


Fig. 370.

Keeping to the right of the pyramidal, free-standing snowy mountain, we proceeded almost due south. In front of us was the flat swelling of the pass. When seen from the distance, the acclivity leading up to it had appeared favourable and convenient; but these high passes in Tibet are deceitful. In one place there was an ice-sheet in the bed of the stream. Several small pools contained fish, including even some that were completely cut off from the river, though it is true the fish were individually small. Partridges occurred near the camp. While the left bank was entirely barren, there was some grass on the opposite or right bank. In five or six places in the vicinity of this camp we saw old indications of Tibetan visitors; at one of these we picked up the handle of an earthenware vessel (fig. 370). If we may argue from this, it would appear that the inhabitants of the extreme north of Tibet are acquainted with this pass, to which destiny had led us. The only thing that would induce them to travel across that immense range must be the prospects of good yak-hunting.

Our new camp stood at an altitude of 5288 m., so that we had ascended yet 164 m. more since we left our last camp. Not very far north of this latter we passed a white and yellowish variety of rock resembling quartzite, and dipping  $53^\circ$  towards the N.  $58^\circ$  E., as also a sandstone or clay-slate, varying from light green to grey and dipping  $17^\circ$  towards the S.  $50^\circ$  W. In one place we observed several loose pieces of a rock strongly charged with magnetic iron; the pieces were perfectly round, and polished, and had bright surfaces. Apart from this we saw hard rock nowhere, nothing but finely pulverised material, except in the river-bed, where there was gravel. I searched, but searched in vain, for indications of a former more extensive glaciation in this region. There were neither morainic ridges nor erratic blocks to betray that glacier arms, which still exist higher up, had ever descended farther down into the glens. And yet this was just the region, where the loftiest summits of the range are still capped with ice, in which one would expect to find such traces.

The 20th July was one of the heaviest days our caravan ever experienced. Very early in the morning the sun showed himself for a space, but no sooner did we get started than the blue-black clouds came driving up from the south-west, shrouding the country in gloom and entirely blotting out the snow-clad, ice-bound summits. The downfall took the shape of hail, snow, and rain, sometimes all three falling at one and the same time. The mere climb over a range so lofty as this is