

and so contribute to the levelling up of the basin. The ground, where dry, was hard and easy for marching on, but soft and boggy where moist. The finely pulverised material of which it consists was originally glacier clay, brought down by the numerous streams that flow off the mountains to the north. Camp XXIV, close to the shore of lake No. XVIII, had an altitude of 4920 m.

This lake was the largest we had hitherto seen in this latitudinal valley, namely some 40 km. long, though only 8 to 9 km. broad. Like all the lakes in our latitudinal valley it stretches from east to west. Its water was less salt than that of the preceding lakes, but was as bright as crystal and of the most glorious green and ultramarine blue colour, the latter indicating the deepest parts. Along the shore is a strip of sediment; but except for that the ground is strewn with fine schistose detritus, with light pieces of porous slag or tuff of a reddish colour.



Fig. 439. LAKE XIX; LOOKING E FROM CAMP XXVII.

The mountains on the northern shore are spurs of the mass I, J, of the Arkatagh, and often leave free next to the lake a rather narrow strip of shore, though sometimes they or their detritus screes reach all the way down to the shore-line. In the same mountain-mass originate the brooks that we crossed over. On the prolongation of one of these spurs there has been formed a triangular peninsula, with a small detached eminence in the middle of it; nevertheless the peninsula is so low at its »neck» as to favour the formation of a lagoon. At intervals along the northern shore there are small islands; islands however are rare in these lakes. For a pretty considerable distance the outline of the lake is rather irregular, being diversified by a number of peninsulas, islets, bays and lagoons. Three small promontories projecting towards the south-east form so many continuations of the hills on the shore and at the extreme tip of each is a small island.

The temperature fell now to a minimum of -12.6° and of a morning all the freshwater lagoons were frozen over, while tiny pieces of ice were floating on the brooks. Under what circumstances these lakes become ice-bound is not easy to ascertain. Any lake that is not saltier than lake No. XVIII will certainly freeze, although by reason of its size, and probably its relatively great depth, it will be late before it does so. Moreover the freezing of all these lakes will be retarded by the violent westerly winds, which sweep across them unhindered. The different lakes will freeze at different times, according to their depth, extent, salinity, and their greater or less exposure.