

find that even thus late in the autumn they sweep down not inconsiderable quantities of water, and when you further reflect how much greater the quantity must be during the height of the summer, then you can no longer feel any astonishment at the peculiar relief which this highland valley offers with such stereotyped uniformity. Everywhere flat, extremely rounded outlines, the country frequently appearing to the eye quite horizontal, forming a chain of shallow saucer-like depressions, the concavity of which is so slight that the differences of vertical depth are almost inconceivably small, and indeed the basins themselves appear to be well on the way to getting filled up entirely with solid material. In the bottoms of the brooks there is fine gravel, but elsewhere it is all powdery dust; hard rock is nowhere visible.

I suspect, that on the other side of the range which borders the last lake on the north, and after that continues farther towards the east, there exists a latitudinal valley parallel to that along which we were marching. The Arka-tagh still towered up mighty and dominating, the peak P, being especially conspicuous. We were now so close to the Koko-schili, the range on the south, that its summit was hidden behind its lower spurs and offshoots. As a rule it may be said that the streams which gather off the southern mountains into every self-contained drainage-basin carry down far smaller quantities of water than those which come from the north. Moreover the crest of the Koko-schili grows manifestly lower towards the east. Camp XXIX had an altitude of 4772 m., so that it stood lower than lake No. XIX, from which it was separated by an imperceptible threshold.



Fig. 441. LOOKING NE FROM CAMP XXX. THE ARKA-TAGH.

On the whole the rainfall in September was more abundant than in August, and the farther we advanced to the east the more frequently did it snow. For the downfall no longer came in the shape of hail or rain, as it did in the western half of the latitudinal valley, but in the shape of snow, either hard and »pebbly», or fine and powdery. Whilst on our way to Tengri-nor in the beginning of August we had noticed signs of the beginning of the rainy season; and no doubt the same conditions prevail in this respect throughout the whole of the Tibetan highlands, though in the more northerly parts the season will be a little later, and there too the rainy season is not so sharply defined as it is in the south. On the other hand the quantity of precipitation is far less abundant in the north than in the south, owing to the fact that each successive range that the moisture-laden clouds pass over on their way northwards exacts its tribute from them. The rain-clouds always come from the west and north-west, even though the wind on the surface of the earth