

One thing you do however learn from a general view like this: namely you learn more distinctly than in any other way how insignificant a single exploring itinerary is amongst such a boundless and little known mountainous country. How often do we not see the statement made, that we are now fairly well acquainted with the geography of Tibet. For my part, I should prefer to say, that we possess merely a glimmering of the broad, main features of the physical geography of the country; but we cannot boast, that we possess even the rudest reconnaissance map of the *whole* of Tibet. The routes of the travellers — painfully few! — which cross the country in different directions embrace between them a very small percentage of its area, and there still remains an inconceivably vast amount of work to be done in this respect.

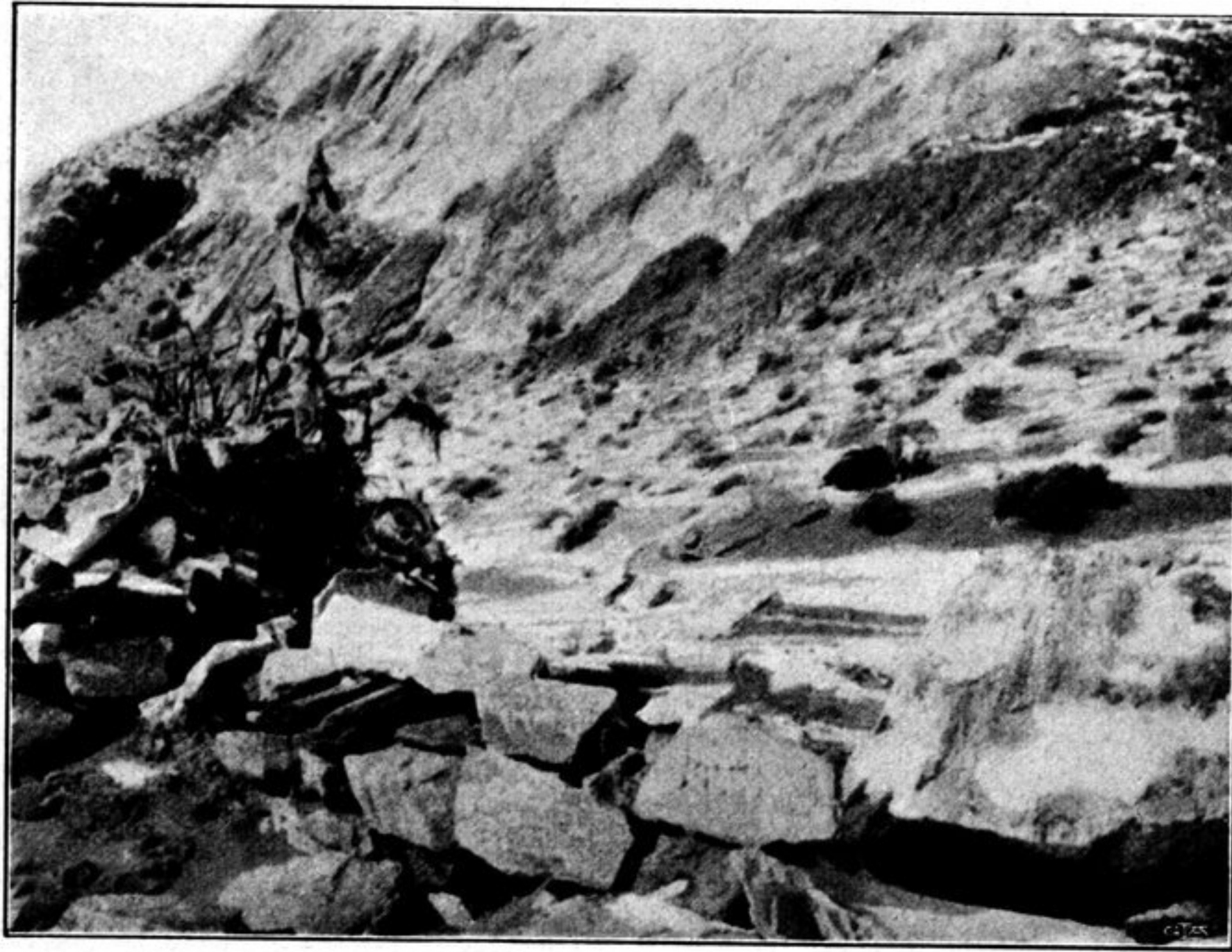


Fig. 75. OBO AT THE FOOT OF ERENAK-TSCHIMO.

When viewed from our higher point of vantage the plain of Rinak-sumdo gave in a still higher degree than before the impression of being a desiccated lake-basin, and it was from there that we first obtained a distinct general view of the many small lakes and marshes which occupy the whole of its southern side, and almost give the impression of being the last survivors of a single large lake, which has shared the fate of so many other Tibetan lake-basins and has disappeared. In the south-east there stood out a fantastic, snow-clad mountain-mass, belonging to the main range which we had had pretty close to us on the south ever since leaving the region of Naktsong-tso. To the north and north-east, that is in the country we were about to traverse, rose a whole series of smaller mountain crests, with pinnacled, serrated forms, putting one in mind of crenelated, fortified walls. Amongst them one detached rocky pinnacle was especially conspicuous, by rising like a gigantic pillar out of the disintegration material. A few hundred meters higher up some smaller patches of snow were still remaining.