

latitudinal valley lies therefore yet lower still, and as it slopes towards the west, there must exist in that direction a depression lower than any that we had struck for a long time. And the very next stage did indeed prove that such was the case. One of my Cossacks, who set out from Camp CVII to make an excursion towards the south, crossed over the southern range by an easy pass and from its top obtained an extensive view of the next latitudinal valley. Towards the west it expands, while towards the east or east-south-east, but at a great distance, it is bounded by a snow-clad mountain, possibly the continuation of the Scha-gandschum. Down the valley runs a stream of not inconsiderable size, and in the valley we perceived three small lakes or pools, besides three nomad encampments, with flocks of sheep and herds of yaks. Beyond that valley the country appeared to be quite impossible for a wearied caravan.

From the summit of the pass, with an altitude of 4,896 m., the surface slopes gently towards the west-north-west, and a fresh watercourse runs close along the foot of the southern range. In the middle of the flat valley there rises from the level ground a steep, isolated craggy pinnacle of the usual rock, with a dip of 26° towards the S. 50° E., though the inclination was not perfectly distinct. On its south-eastern side, and consequently in a position sheltered from the prevailing wind, there was a sheepfold built of stone; and immediately west of it a spring with some grass round it. This tract is called Tschadschap. The valley then continues to broaden out and grow more open, until it resembles a long plain shut in between two parallel mountain-ranges. Of these the range on the north is imposing and studded with a great number of sharp-pointed crags. The other range on the south is of far less magnitude, and exhibits rounded outlines, above which the hard rocky summits project here and there only. A glance to the west sufficed to convince me, that this range would soon come to an end, namely at the edge of the depression of which I have spoken.

We pitched Camp CVII at an altitude of 4,821 m., beside a small brook that issues out of a big transverse glen in the northern range. The upper part of this glen lies parallel with the main glen, so that in this locality the range is double. In its narrower parts the grazing, being better protected, was more abundant. This district is said to be called Dadim. Here we encountered a large number of kulans; at our arrival we counted close upon 200 head. Partridges were plentiful in the side-glens. It blew hard from the west all day, and with especial violence after 2 o'clock, when the sky became dappled with light clouds.

I will mention as a curiosity, which may possibly interest those who have studied the habits and characteristics of the domestic camel, that at this camp two of our she-camels dropped young during the night, each half a year old; they at once died and were devoured by the dogs. The mothers took the matter with unruffled serenity, and ate away with a good appetite all the next day, which we devoted to rest. As these miscarriages took place simultaneously, it may be assumed that they were brought on by one and the same cause. The cold had not been more severe than usual, -15.4° ; but possibly the two camels had drunk too greedily of the icy cold water or eaten something amongst the grass that was injurious to them.