

of moderate elevation. In the direction in which the latitudinal valley terminates, that is north-east of the lake, the shore is extraordinarily flat. There it gleamed as white as snow; it is however covered with salt and gypsum powdered to dust and perfectly dry, as was evident from the thick white clouds, which, blown up from the shore by the westerly wind, hung in the throat of the valley like the steam that escapes from a locomotive (fig. 89). The Lakor-tso is at the present time a rather small lake. Its water is of a dark green colour, its tint being especially beautiful and vivid, though at the time we saw it, it was streaked with white-crested waves. The deep colouring of the water was rendered all the more conspicuous by being framed about with the ring of pure white shore, sometimes wide, sometimes narrow.

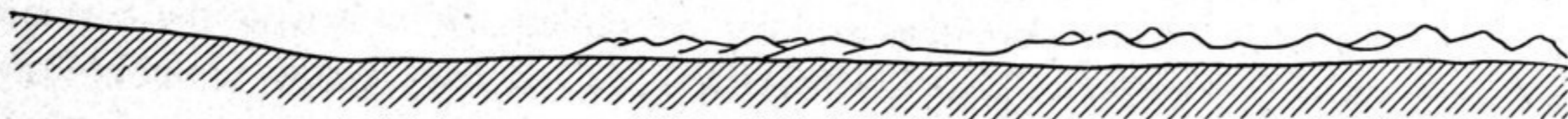


Fig. 90.

The range on the south of the latitudinal valley is rugged, craggy, and bizarre. Its last transverse glens have been modelled with great energy, and separated from one another by steep fantastically shaped offsets. At length that range comes to an end in a sharp, pointed promontory, at the foot of which small knobs of gypsum, only a couple of meters high, project above-ground. When seen from the south, the extreme western section of the range presents the appearance of a very steep, often precipitous, wall, or rather a steep staircase with high steps or treads. Upon reaching the promontory which I have just mentioned, we left the latitudinal valley, and soon afterwards entered its neighbour on the south. Indeed it may be said that »our» latitudinal valley actually comes to an end on the western shore of the lake, for the pass to the north-west, which I have recently mentioned, lies so high that it makes a distinct boundary to the valley in that direction. It is only the northern part of the lake that belongs to that latitudinal valley, for the lake itself lies in a depression, upon which three or four latitudinal valleys debouch from the east. Accordingly the regular orographical structure, which we had repeatedly observed during the immediately preceding days, comes there to an end, and gives place, as we shall soon see, to a different type of formation, although even then it was not difficult to detect signs of the prevalent law, that all the mountain-ranges are drawn out from east-south-east to west-north-west.

A few hundred meters west of the pointed end of the southern range there rises from the floor of the valley a round, dolphin-backed, detached butte of no great size, with, so far as we were able to see, its western foot standing close to the edge of the lake. Hence we may assume, that on that side of it (the west) the beach-lines run particularly close together. Between the end of the range and this butte, which, properly speaking, is the western extremity of that same range, there opens a broad »gateway» giving an uninterrupted view of the flat country to the south. A high and well-developed rampart, of precisely the same consistency and appearance as that which lies highest in the valley, runs diagonally across the »gateway», like a threshold or bridge, abutting at each end upon the base of the