

broader expanse of gypsum. The background in that same direction, that is towards the north, consisted of a minor round-topped range, seamed with an endless number of miniature glens and watercourses. At one place the lake contracts a good deal, in fact it almost seemed to come to an end; but we soon discovered that a narrow sound connects it with another basin farther west. The shore-line is here very irregular, bays penetrating deeply into the gypsum area and alternating with long, narrow peninsulas. In one or two places there were tiny meadows of fairly good grass stretching between the gypsum platforms; but they were inaccessible because of the water and the marshes. We pitched Camp CXXIII beside a frozen brook that enters a western bay of the lake and at an altitude of some meters above its level. Quite unexpectedly we found that the water in this lake was fresh; though in the eastern basin of the same lake, the Detsche-tso, it is salt. In the middle of the western lake we were able to detect a slight saline flavouring, but in the extreme western end the water was perfectly fresh. A closer investigation showed however that there was nothing remarkable in this, for the western basin possesses an outflow into the eastern basin. Indeed water was entering it even then, as we observed near our camp, not only from the little rivulet from the spring, but also from a number of other springs, which bubble up on that same shore, as well as, finally — and herein lies the key to the puzzle, — from a not inconsiderable river which empties through the northern shore. The brook will certainly carry a much bigger volume during the summer than it was carrying then, perhaps as big a volume as the northern river; but on the other hand it may happen that the lake rises then so high that its two basins are connected across the low, marshy isthmus, and possibly the entire lake is then salt. Under those circumstances the western lake, which is in itself insignificant, will only turn fresh after the two lakes have become separated, and after the western lake has been refilled by the river, springs, and brooks. This view is supported by the fact that the water grows saltier towards the east, though even there the areometer recorded a sp. gr. of only 1.0015. A vast number of wild-geese, and also of wild-duck, were disporting themselves on the northern shore, where several strips of green meadow were conspicuous amongst the gypsum deposits, and where there is also possibly vegetation at the water's edge. This lake would appear therefore to lie in the path of one of their routes of migration.

*Hedin, Journey in Central Asia. IV.*



Fig. 125. LOOKING S 88° E FROM CAMP CXXII.



Fig. 126. CAMPING.