

in a fresh latitudinal valley, separated from the big one by a steep minor range. The grazing there was so thin, that it barely tinged the surface yellow; as a rule the ground was perfectly barren. We then climbed north-westwards up to a flat pass having an altitude of 4872 m. There we came across two sheepfolds built of stone, convex as usual towards the west, a proof that nomads do sometimes visit that locality. On the summit of the pass the grazing was somewhat better than usual. In the outlet of a small glen in the southern range (our former northern range) we hit upon a sheet of ice, but so small that it did not yield sufficient water for our caravan; there was no water flowing then from its spring. Descending from the pass, we held on west-south-west and south-west, the valley being wider. On the north it is shut in by a fairly lofty range, flattened and rounded on the top, but turning a very irregular rocky mountain-wall towards the valley. This precipitous face is scored by various steep transverse glens and ravines. Seen from the bottom of the valley it appears to rise vertically, though in cross section it looks, I dare say, something like the accompanying sketch (fig. 128). Along its foot great numbers of kulans were grazing, but we saw no other wild animals.

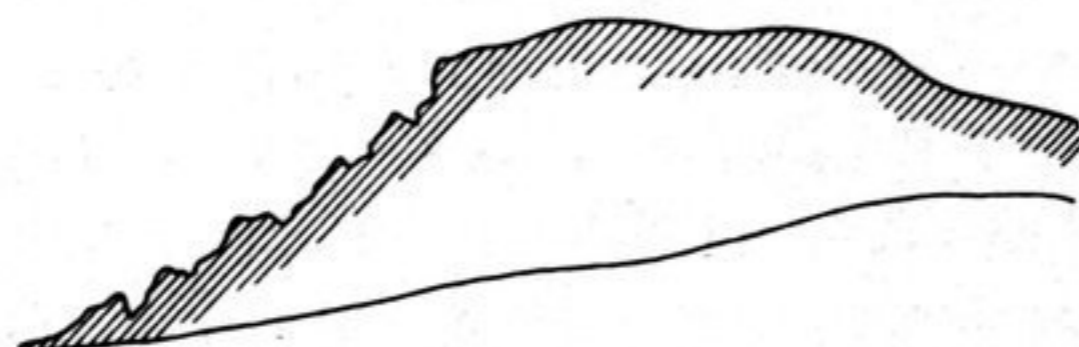


Fig. 128.

Flat though the threshold was that we had just crossed over, it nevertheless exercised a great influence upon the wind. On the east side of the saddle it was warm, almost burning hot, and there was virtually no wind at all; but the moment we stepped upon the threshold we were met by the full force of the wind from the

west, and it brought with it all its attendant discomforts of chilling cold, which rendered mapping a matter of difficulty.

It was evident we were about to experience a change in the orographical arrangement, for a mountain-range now rose at the end of the latitudinal valley we were travelling along. The range which we had hitherto had on our left grew at length quite low, and finally terminated at a broad mountain »gateway» between projecting bluffs; there our latitudinal valley was joined by another coming from the north-west, and then the two, thus united, break through into the big open latitudinal valley on the south. Thus it turned out, that, if we had kept along the southern latitudinal valley, instead of climbing over the first little pass, we should have reached the locality in which we made Camp CXXVII certainly by an easier way, and also by a somewhat shorter way. The reason why the Tibetans took us out of this more southerly road was their inveterate reluctance to let us approach too near to human dwellings. It appeared to be their interest to lead us as far as possible through uninhabited regions, and this was no doubt in accordance with the orders which they had received from the authorities at Lhasa. The intention was clearly to leave upon the minds of the strangers as unfavourable an impression of the country as possible.

The angle between the two latitudinal valleys is dominated by an immense bluff. At its southern base we ascended a terrace or escarpment 4 to 5 m. high, and then found ourselves in a watercourse, down which a stream was flowing, with about 1 1/2 cub. m. of water in the second, breaking against the thick sheets of ice