

This still continued to be of noteworthy dimensions and to possess gravelly screes in the outlets of its glens, the watercourses radiating over them as before. One or two of them appear to be able to get down to the middle of the latitudinal valley, for we crossed over them; they are however but faintly defined and seldom carry water. The biggest was of course the main watercourse which we had formerly crossed over a couple of times and which so unexpectedly pierces the little ridge in the middle of the valley, instead of flowing to the north or to the south of it. The main range on the south, which still continued to be snow-clad, had now receded to a greater distance; E₄ is one of its loftiest peaks. West of that summit the range is less accentuated and less wild, except for the denticulations and rocky pinnacles rising above its crest; but its flanks are softly rounded. Farther east the rocky needles soar up from it everywhere.

The surface next slopes down to a fresh self-contained depression of the same character as the preceding. Its pyramidal deposits of white gypsum filled the foreground, but we did not see any lake. Nor, strange to say, was there any trace of terraces or old beach-lines on the slopes, and yet these lie exposed to the west. The cause of their absence is no doubt the very gentle character of the slope, where owing to the flatness any beach-lines that may have existed would be the more easily planed away. At the very bottom, however, that is at the eastern edge of the depression, there is a terrace barely two meters high, and close under its foot is a shallow pool, then covered with ice. This was the first place at which our caravan animals were able to drink their fill after a long compulsory fast. Here there were springs, and we soon ascertained, that the ice-sheet wound away westwards like a river between the gypsum platforms. This is all that is left of the old lake. In the extreme east of the depression, where a little grass was growing on loose ground, we pitched Camp CXXXII at an altitude of 4,596 m. The altitude at the little ridge in the middle of the valley was 4,674 m. The rock at the same locality was the usual species of dark limestone, dipping 23° towards the S. 15° W., but it was darker and harder than usual.

November 21st. During the night the temperature dropped to -28.2°, this being the lowest we had hitherto recorded during the winter. It was a glorious morning, the air being quite motionless, though the frost was keen and the colouring wintry. Before we started, we let the animals drink as much as they liked, for in

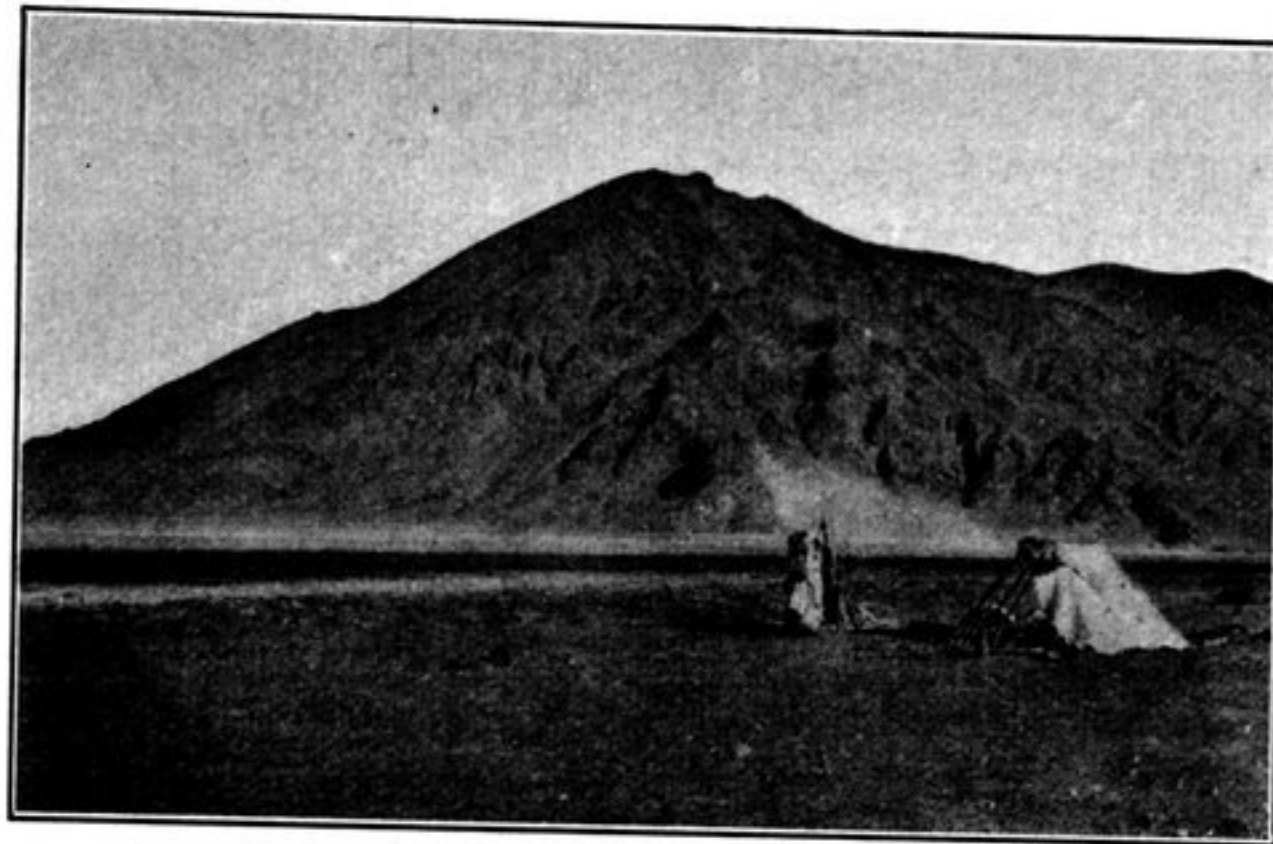


Fig. 144. NE OF CAMP CXXXII.

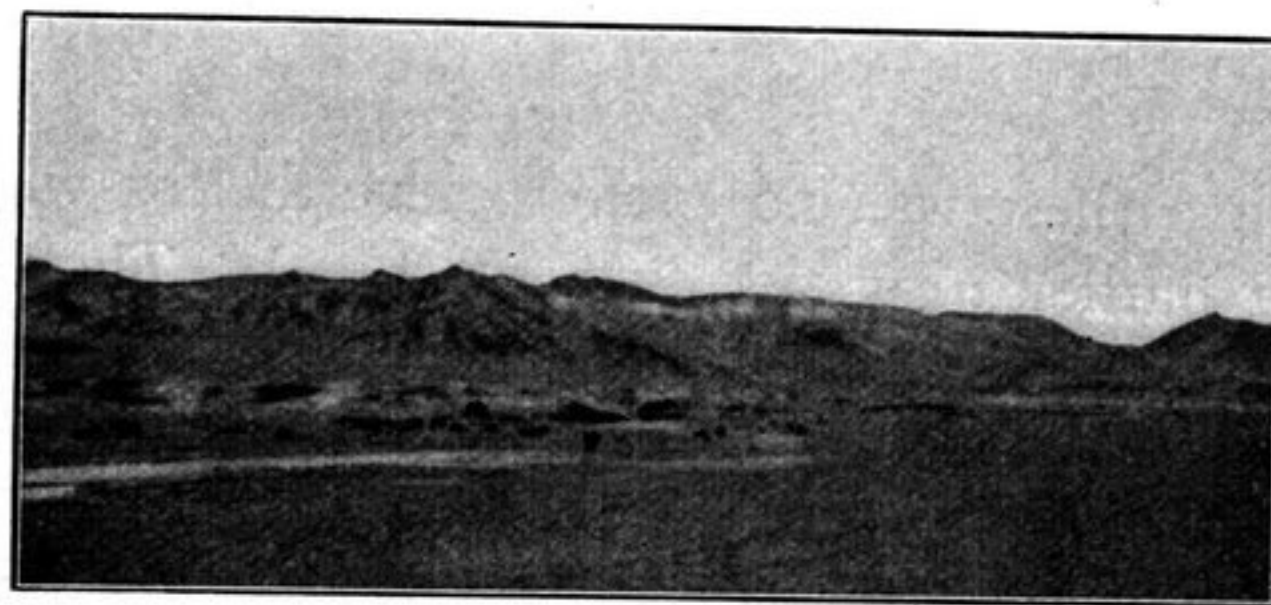


Fig. 145. LOOKING S 53° W FROM CAMP CXXXII.