

than commonly numerous. And it is indeed probable that in winter, the season it was then, the river is fed by spring-water only, whereas in the rainy season it will swell to a more than usually important stream.

Soon the river leaves the foot of the southern mountains and crosses the bottom of the valley to the mountains on the north, and we kept faithfully to its left bank. But before the relatively warm spring-water had got very far it became so far cooled that the ice-sheets which lined it at the side increased in breadth, until finally the stream, and it was very broad, was frozen right across from one side to the other. In some places the recently arrived spring-water could be seen spreading out over the ice-sheets, and was itself sometimes frozen. In this way the ice increased in both thickness and extent; and the process goes on, I have no doubt, all the winter through, until at last the bottom of the valley becomes literally choked with ice, though there will always certainly be occasional open emissaries by means of which the spring-water flows on farther.

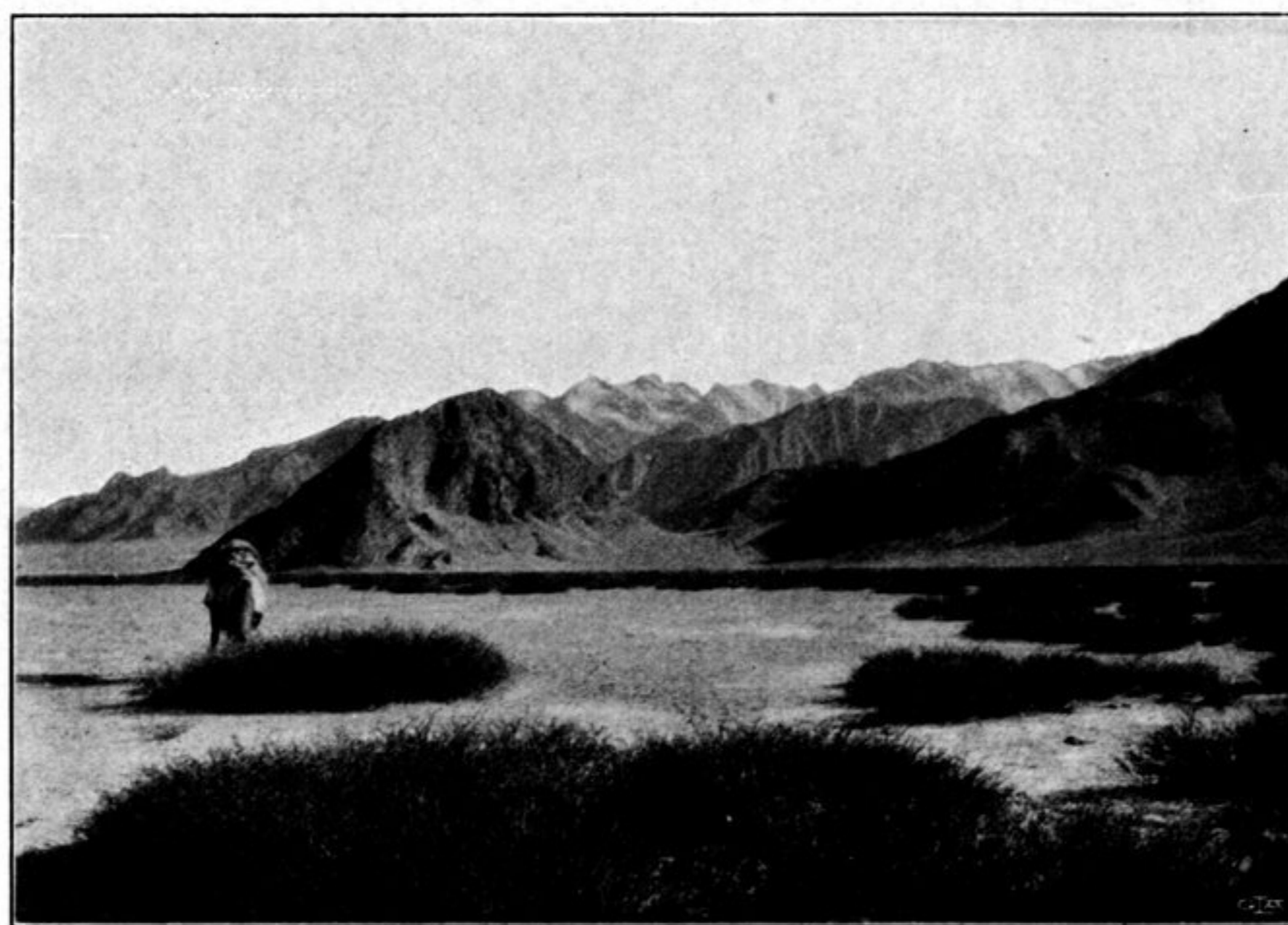


Fig. 157. LOOKING SE FROM CAMP CXXXV.

The range on the south is dominated by several peaks; one of these, a double peak $M_4 N_4$, was pretty close to us, and bore a sprinkling of snow. On the nearer side of the range rises a smaller detached part of the range, that is to say a free-standing ridge. Several similar foot-hills line the base of the northern range, and between them the glens debouch upon our latitudinal valley. At Camp CXXXV thorny bushes were growing, but the grazing was wretched; perhaps this was because the ice spreads out every year over the bottom of the valley. The absolute altitude reached 4485 m., or 100 m. lower than the preceding camp. We had now therefore left the highest part of the Tibetan plateau behind us, and were to descend gradually, but steadily, towards the west. This district is called Sumdel.

November 26th. In proportion as we advanced westwards the wind seemed to be changing. This day there actually came gentle puffs from the east, and