

the water was frozen and the ice was strong enough to bear, thus forming a bridge right across the lake. The ice was in different places 13.4, 13.7, 14.3, and 15.2 cm. thick, so that here we might easily have convoyed the caravan across, as indeed I had intended to do, so as to avoid the impassable promontory which I have before spoken of. But a reconnaissance told us that the southern side of the lake was even more difficult than the northern; for it thrusts out three rocky capes, which a pedestrian can only pass with difficulty, while the lake contiguous to them is 1 to 2 m. deep. Besides, a little west of the narrow passage in the lake a glen debouches, which again would have been impracticable for camels. Another transverse glen opens out upon the northern shore, with a pinnacled summit at its head, and in its vicinity there is reported to be a pass, which is time and again made use of by wayfarers who are reluctant to risk the steep cliffs that overhang the lake on the north. Yet even that pass is impossible for camels; accordingly we had no alternative but to make the attempt to get somehow or other round the difficult passage, otherwise we should be forced to go back as far as Bal and take the road via Niagzu.

From the appointed rendezvous on the broad, flat peninsula the shore-line continues towards the north-west, and after that towards the west-south-west. The eroded watercourse that issues out of the recently mentioned big northern transverse glen is 2 to 3 m. deep and generally 10 m. broad, but at that time it did not contain a single drop of water. After that the strip of shore narrows again considerably and bushes once more make their appearance at the foot of the cliffs. The bushes seem to thrive best amongst the gravel on the slopes, but are usually absent entirely on the level beach. On the southern shore the bushes are more plentiful than on the northern shore, at all events in this part of the lake. We pitched Camp CXLII amid a little clump of balghun bushes, which furnished us with an inexhaustible supply of first-rate fuel.

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