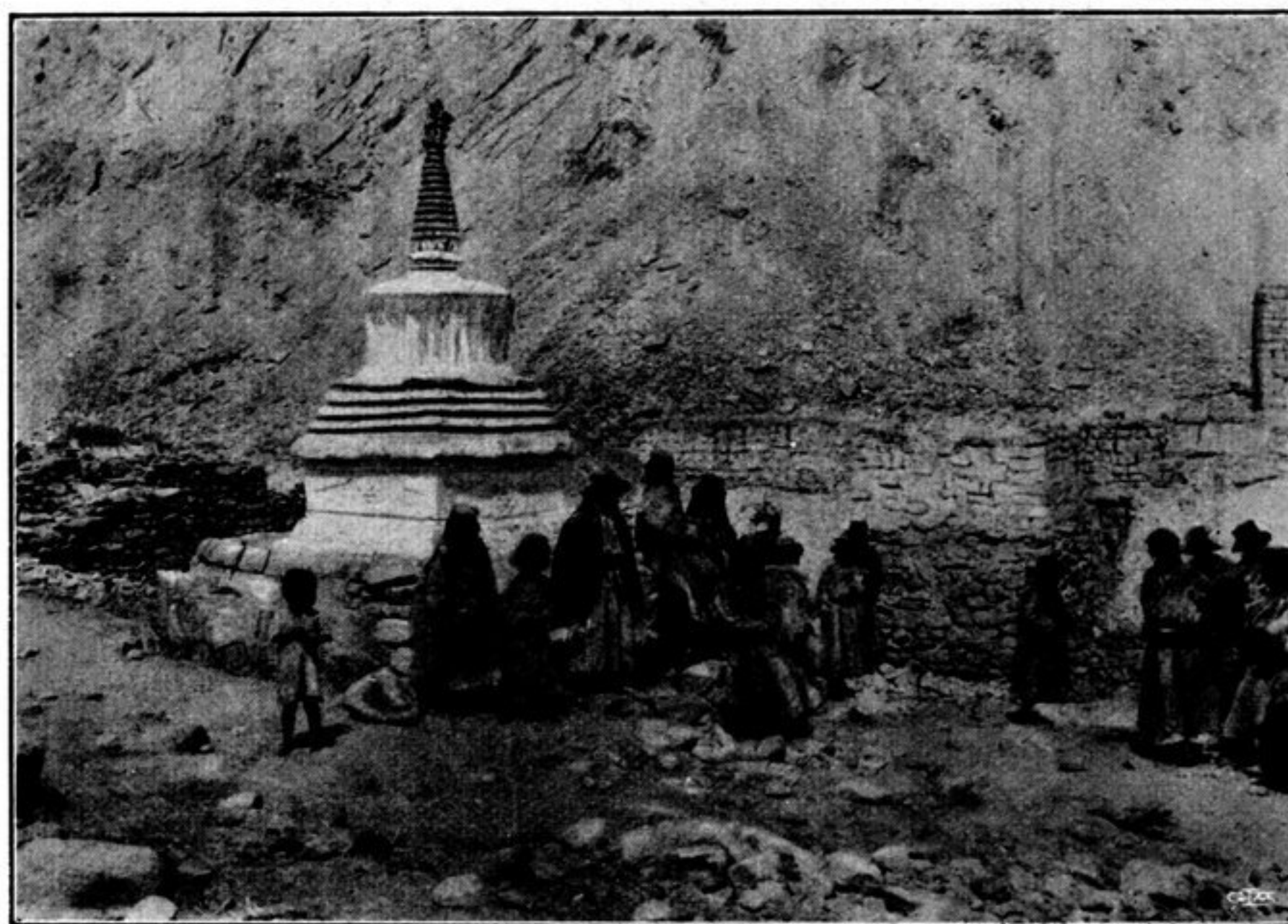


until we had got over the pass, where we made the usual pause for taking observations, that, in the neighbourhood of the frozen and snow-covered spring of Soltak, we overtook the long black line of the »yak plough», which was in places almost hidden in the deep furrow it had itself made through the snow. The caravan had been busy all night forcing a path through the snow-drifts, which in some places, more especially the hollows, lay to a depth of two meters. After an eleven hours' march we reached at dusk the stone hut of Dag-nagbo, the coolness of the evening being very noticeable after such a warm and strenuous day. We had only one solitary case of snow-blindness, the sufferer being one of the Burjat Cossacks; but after a few days he was better.



313. A TSCHORTEN AT DRUGUB.

On the 10th April we covered the last stage of the common road that we had travelled over in December, namely to Drugub. Notwithstanding the great quantity of snow on the Tschang-la, the last piece of the road had none at all. Even at Dag-nagbo the snow was thin and sparse. The snowfall during the night had indeed made the ground white, but this had rapidly thawed again. Up towards the pass the sky now looked threatening and the summits of the mountains were wreathed in heavy snow-clouds. Nevertheless the caravan of yaks returned home, starting as early as possible before the track which they had made should get snowed up again. At Drugub we spent the night in the same quarters as before, and made the beginning of our preparations for the climb over the Kara-korum. We took with us both yaks and horses, as well as a troop of trusty Ladakis. None of them had ever been over the Kara-korum in winter, so that they were uncertain as to which route ought to be chosen. The shorter was said to be that past the glacier-arms of the pass, though it is often blocked with ice, so that under the most favourable circumstances only a narrow passage is left open between the front of