

across which meanders the Schejok stream. On both sides rise stupendous mountains, half covered with snow; but the bottom of the glen, as well as the lower slopes, were on the contrary quite free from it. Nor was there any ice to be seen, except small patches, and they were soft, in the more sheltered corners of the transverse glens. At length the road trended a little towards the west. Finally, having passed an obo and some small tshortens, we found that we had reached the little village of Schejok, with its simple four-square stone houses. The one that was placed at our disposal possessed a balcony, from which we enjoyed a glorious view of the Schejok valley, a view which we beheld with all the greater interest since we knew that through it ran the road that was to lead us to our greatly longed for goal — Jarkent and East Turkestan.

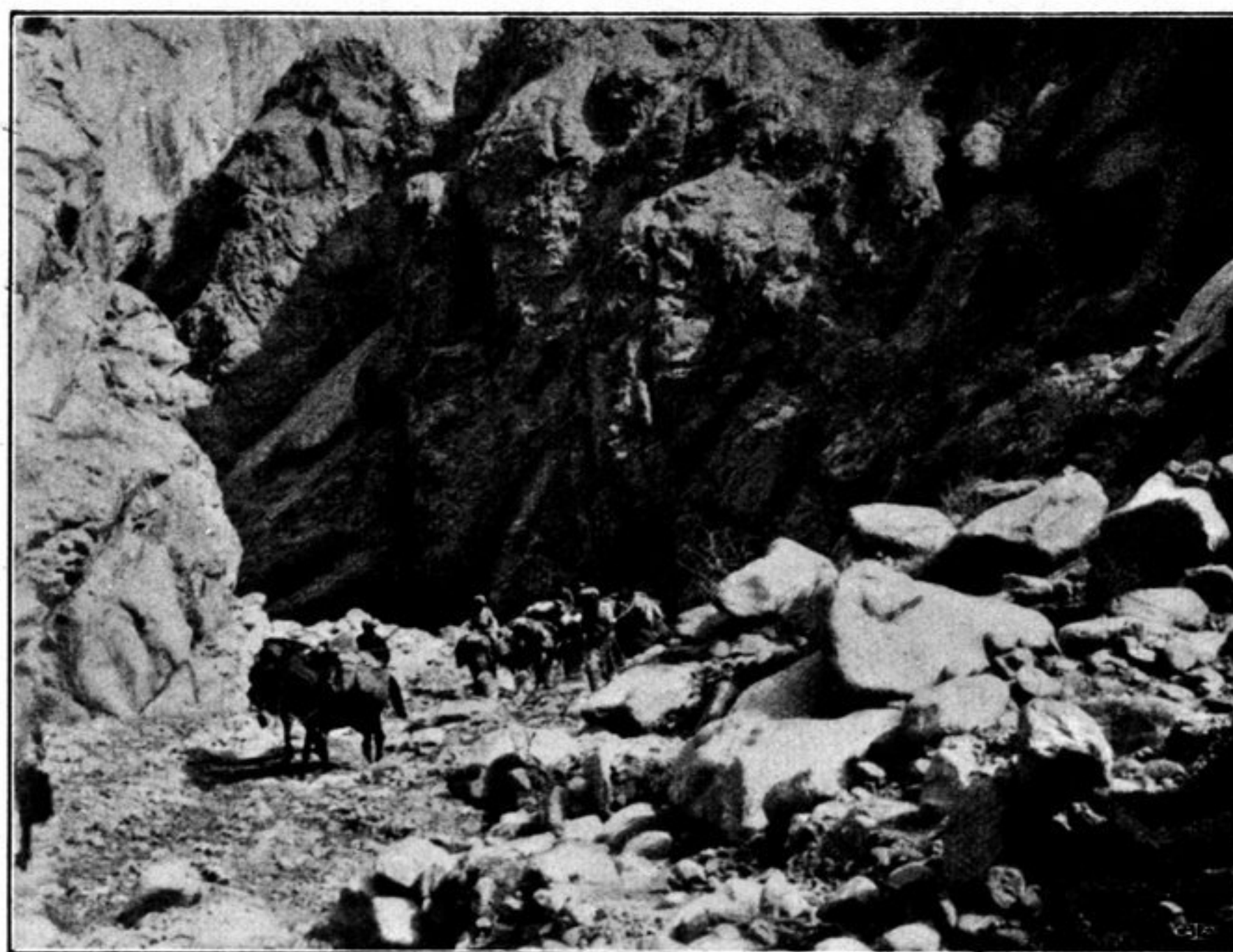


Fig. 320. ANOTHER NARROW PLACE.

All day the sun had not shown himself once, but a little before sunset he just peeped out for a short while. Towards evening all the mountain-tops were draped with heavy clouds. Next day the clouds were so thick that it was never more than twilight; on the mountains it was snowing fast, so that we were unable to see their tops. It even snowed a little down in the village of Schejok.

Here we took a day's rest and organised the caravan that was to accompany us to the pass of Kara-korum. We required 27 horses. Our baggage was now considerably reduced, for we had no longer any need to carry provender with us for such a long time beforehand. Another three weeks or so would see our journey ended. Our courtyard was therefore the scene of the greatest bustle. The animals' loads were arranged in the most convenient manner, and the horses were shod and groomed after the requisite number had been selected out of 30 from Schejok and 30 from Nubra. In the case of a forced crossing of the pass such as that which