

broken cascade: all such irregularities and thresholds have been long levelled down by the power of erosion. The volume appeared to be unchanged, though as a matter of fact it had experienced a slight augmentation, for it had been joined by various tributaries, though all of them were small. Towards evening there was an evident increase of volume noticeable, a consequence of the perfectly bright sky which prevailed all day and quickened the melting of the snows. It was in fact more like spring than winter, the mountain air was so bright and exhilarating.

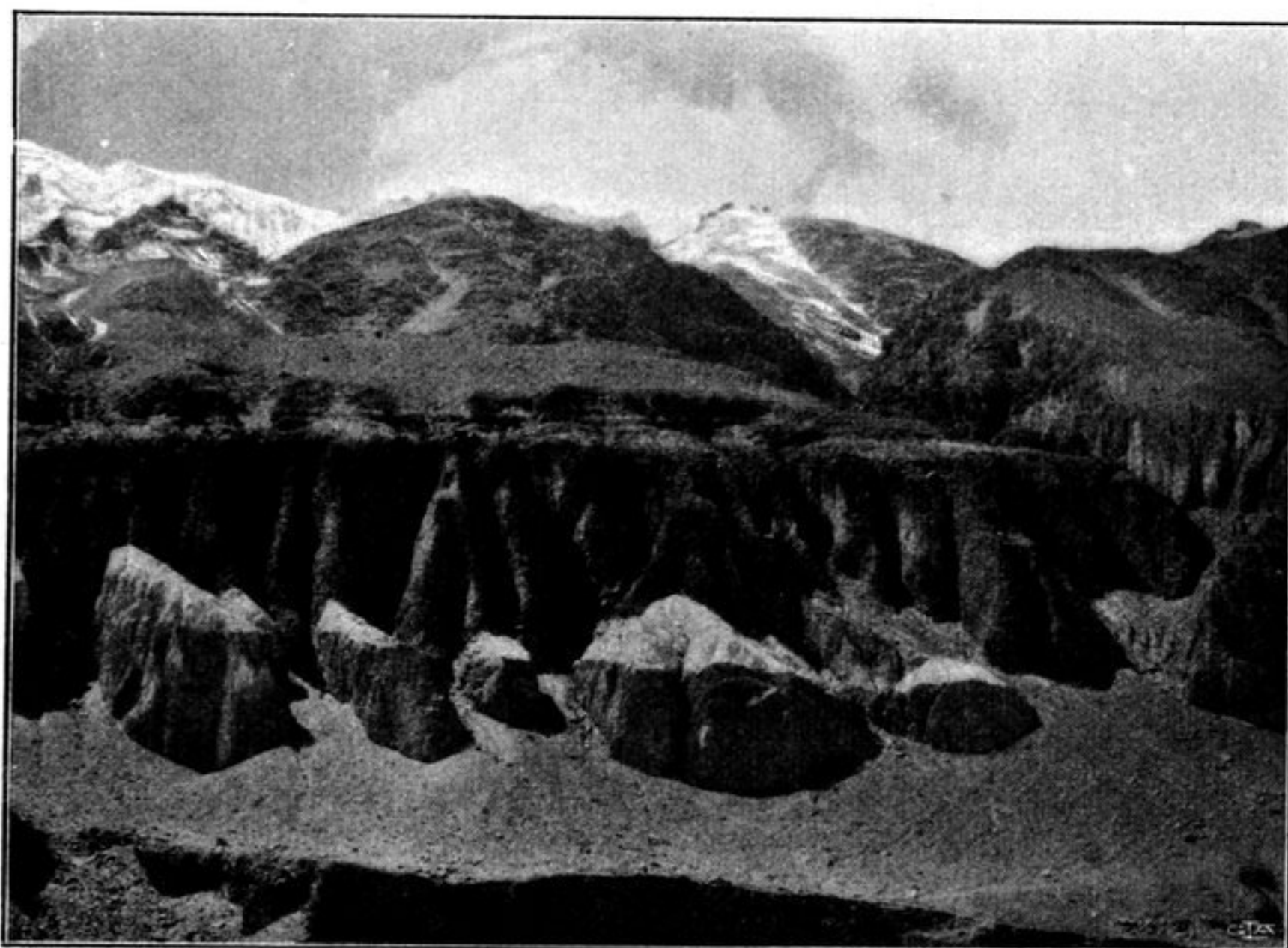


Fig. 326. TERRACE OF GRAVEL-AND-SHINGLE.

Although we were approaching one of the loftiest passes on the earth, the amount of snow still continued to be insignificant. It was only on the very highest summits that it lay heaped up to any noteworthy extent, and from them it streamed down the mountain sides in long thin ribbons, though nowhere did these approach the bottom of the glen. With the exception of one or two small patches of ice in the riparian lagoons, the river Schejok was still unfrozen. Thus both the weather and the snow presaged for us a favourable climb over the Kara-korum. And judging from the general character of the snowfall that winter, we had little grounds for fearing that we should be delayed by snowstorms. On our way back from Srinagar to Leh we had on the 11th March found considerable quantities of snow on the Sodschi-la; in fact the gorge was filled with fallen avalanches, and the snow lay thick and plentiful all the way to Dras. On the Tschang-la too we had found it lying a meter deep or more, though a good deal less in quantity than on the Sodschi-la. If now the quantity of snow continued to decrease in this way towards the interior of the continent, we might expect to find less snow on the Kara-korum than we had encountered on the Tschang-la. And in fact we ascertained that such really was the case. Indeed it would appear to be the rule, that every winter the amount of snow decreases towards the more central parts of the highlands, heavy contributions being levied upon the snow-bearing clouds before they reach those parts.