

self. Remarkably enough our horses stood the journey well, for although they had had no grass worth speaking about for six days, they all got over the pass satisfactorily. Those of our Ladakis who had travelled that route before were unanimous in declaring that it was an especially favourable year, and that the quantity of snow was very much less than usual at that season. For my own part, I conceived a profound respect for the Kara-korum pass, and see only too well that it is exceedingly unsuitable as a regular means of communication between the interior of Asia and India; in fact, it is surprising that it is ever used at all, for the losses amongst the caravan animals must seriously enhance the price of the wares they carry. As compared with the passes on this route, those on the different routes between Russian territory and East Turkestan are mere child's play. Indeed, not even in Tibet have I anywhere met with such a difficult country as this is. One or two months later this road would of course be very much easier — that is, in so far as the quantity of the snow was concerned; but on the other hand you then have to reckon with the flooded streams that fill the deep glens of the peripheral region.

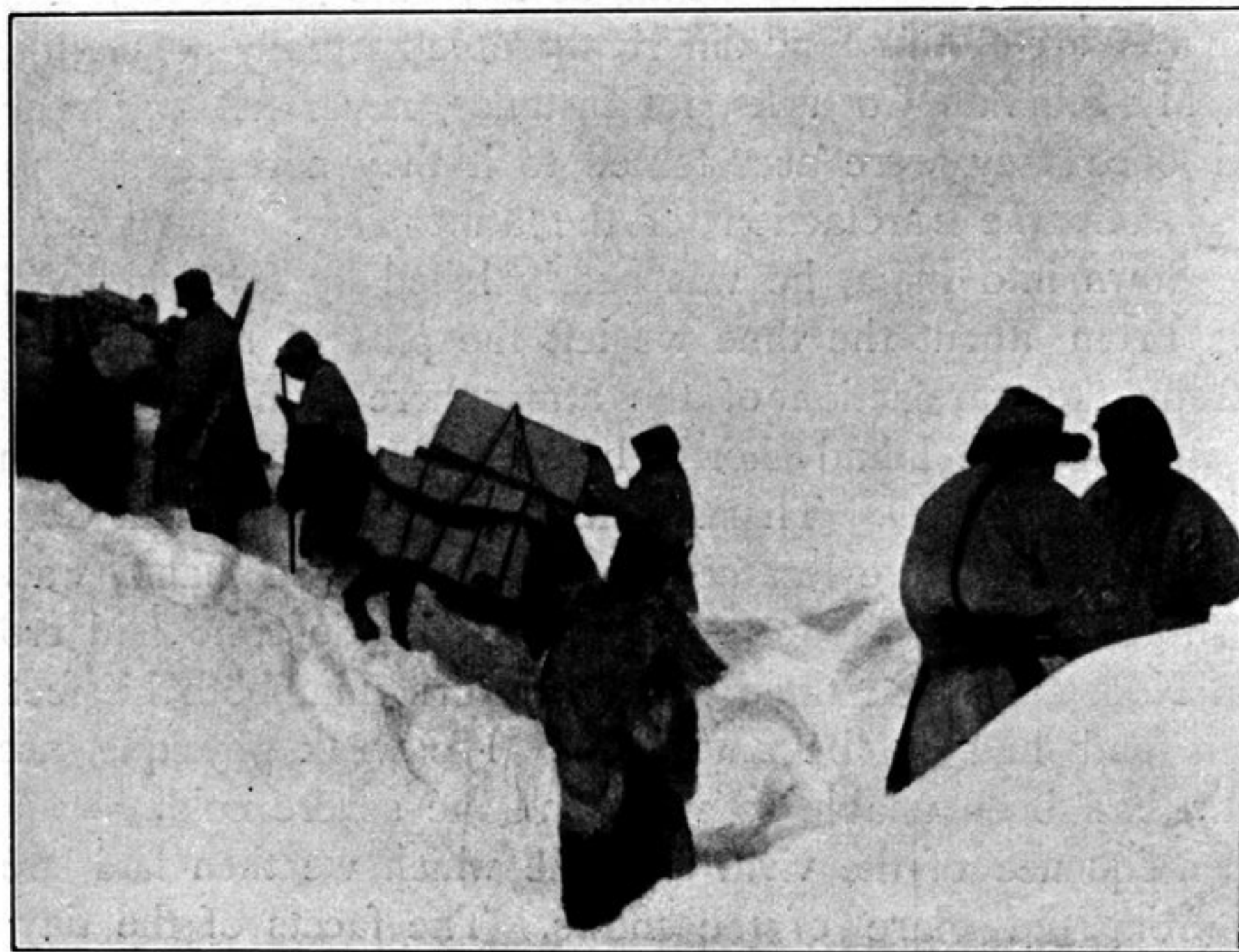


Fig. 336. IN THE SNOW OF SUGET-DAVAN.

The snow came down all night and next morning lay a foot deep in the Tschibra glen, and the higher we ascended the deeper it grew. I started an hour after the caravan, but soon caught it up, for it had got stuck fast in the snow-drifts. For the most part the snow in these drifts appeared to be newly fallen; it was light and but little consolidated and seemed hardly to lie upon any substratum of older, tenacious, compact snow. It is of course very appreciably easier to plough your way through soft, newly fallen snow than through old, hard snow; but all the same it is tiring, and entails great waste of time, especially at such an altitude. We were anxious to get over the new pass. Hour after hour we toiled up through the snow-