

forded, and even then horses have almost to swim: There is no boat to be had; probably the current is too swift for boats. On the lower Schejok we had passed the remains of a boat, showing that the people there had attempted to keep open the Kara-korum route in summer by means of a ferry.

In this region, which is barren and uninteresting, it is said to rain seldom in summer; nevertheless it is important as being the starting-point for one of the routes to India. Another road also starts from the same place for the pass of Kilian, though it was then reported to be still blocked with snow.

Some thirty to forty Kirgis had been requisitioned from the camping-grounds in the neighbouring valleys, and each man came bringing with him one or two camels or horses, and the mustering of this little force took place in a commendably short space of time, especially as some of the men were said to live at a distance of two or even three days' journey.

On the 29th April the weather was splendid, the sky being bright, and again we began to feel it warm. There was no snow left either in the glen or on the nearest mountains; it was only in the more sheltered places on the banks of the stream that brashy ice still remained, yet even these places were few and far between. The volume of the stream had also increased a good deal, and was then, I dare say, 12 to 14 cub.m.; it was running down its stony bed in a more and more continuous stream and with an increasingly hollower murmur.

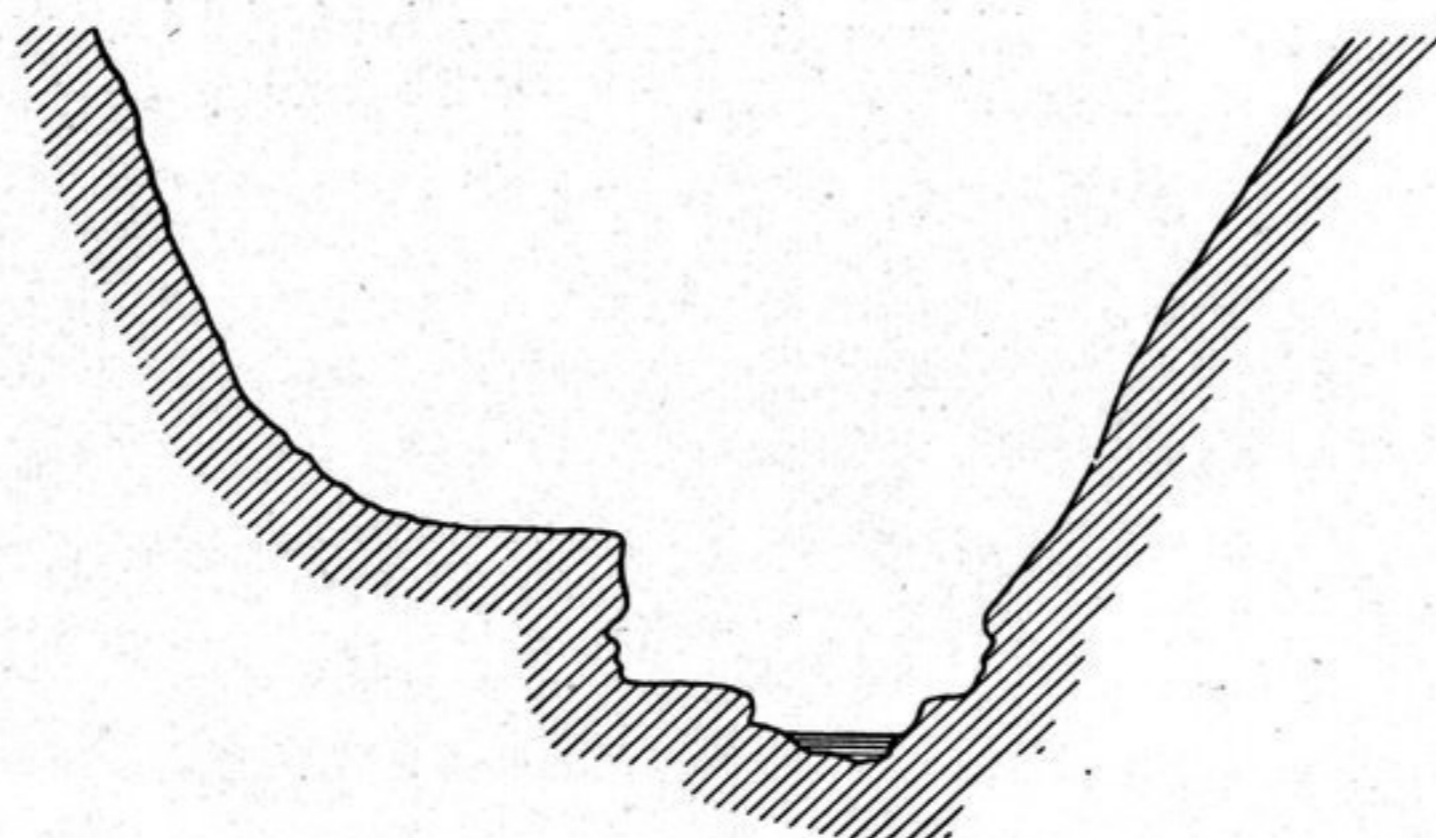


Fig. 340.

After crossing over the height on which the masar stands, and passing a small square fortified wall, a stone house, and a yurt, we twice forded the stream at suitable shallows. That the river is sometimes impassable was clear from a wretched, neck-breaking rocky pathway along the slopes on the west side of the glen. The glen itself gradually assumes the character of a true transverse breach, piercing the wild and sterile masses of rock and growing narrower and narrower, while the crags on both sides rise higher and higher, as well as increasingly steeper. Every now and again they part to let emerge a side-glen through a rocky gateway. These generally form at their outlet a huge gravelly scree, radiating outwards like a fan and having its outer margin abruptly shorn off by the summer flood of the main stream. After that we had the river close at our right hand all the way, though