

CHAPTER XVIII.

A LATITUDINAL VALLEY STRETCHING EAST-SOUTH-EAST.

On *February 8th*, we proceeded 8.1 km. S. E., descending from 4,896 m. to 4,874 m. or 24 m., which is as 1:338. The night temperature was down at -28.3° and the weather was very favourable. The good grass soon ceases, but the other plants continue. The soft ground lies in very flat, nearly imperceptible, undulations, and is traversed by a large number of very small and shallow erosion beds, most of them containing some snow. On the slopes of the mountains to our left, the old beach-lines of the lake are very readily visible and they continue still some distance up the valley. In fact we, therefore, were only a few meters above the surface of *Shemen-tso*. The tracks of kyangs and *Pantholops* antelopes were very numerous. A little farther on we found an antelope that, perhaps only a few minutes ago, had been caught in a trap. Tibetan hunters must, therefore, be close by. On the eastern side of a grass-covered, very flat and low hill of soft material, we camped at the side of the principal erosion bed of the valley, which contained a frozen pool of fresh water. About 1 km. west of *Camp CCCXXIV*, the antelope hunters had their two tents. These were the first human dwellings we had seen since we left *Shayok* 64 days ago. The tents were inhabited by 9 persons, 2 men, 2 women, 3 girls and 2 boys. Their camping place was called *Rio-chung*. Two or three days' march farther on in this valley, were the gold mines of *Gätsa-rung* and *Bota-rung*. No other hunters' tents existed in this district. To the S. S. E., it would be about 8 or 9 days to the next tents, belonging to nomads from *Senkor*. To the E. S. E., up the great valley, we would have some 20 days to nomads; the ground would be favourable, only one pass to cross, grazing and water to be had everywhere. On the whole, they did not seem to know very much about the country in that direction. Our hunters possessed only 150 sheep and 4 dogs, but no yaks or ponies. On their wanderings, all their things, even the tents, are carried by sheep. They pass the summer in a region called *Yildan* situated 5 days S. W., and belonging to