

which the Murghab, or Bartang as the river is known higher up to the Kirghiz, had cut its way. The passage of these narrow gorges proved exceptionally difficult owing to the results of the great earthquake of February 1911. The huge landslides attending it had in many places completely choked up the river passage and destroyed what tracks ever existed along or above it. The big river, once rivalling in volume the Ab-i-Panja and at one time claimed as the main feeder of the Oxus, had ceased altogether to flow. Strings of deep alpine tarns, with colours of exquisite beauty, had here and there replaced the river and contributed to our difficulties (Fig. 132). In some places detritus was still moving on the slopes like mud and offered no foothold.

On the second march we clambered up to a steep spur flanked on the north by a high ridge of shattered rock which the landslide had bodily carried across from the opposite side of the valley. On descending I sighted the narrow fiord-like lake (Fig. 133) which had been formed in what was before the mouth of the Shedau valley by the same huge barrage as had blocked the Bartang river. Scrambling with much trouble over rock debris heaped up in wildest confusion, we made our way past the northern end of the Shedau lake and along the foot of that enormous barrage.

At last the spur was gained which divides what was the Shedau valley from what had been the Sarez Pamir. On ascending this spur to the south-east the full extent of that great cataclysm revealed itself (Fig. 135). The fall of a whole mountain from the range on the north had converted the Sarez Pamir, once a favourite grazing-ground for the Kirghiz, into a fine alpine lake which, according to a Russian account, was already in 1913 over seventeen miles long and