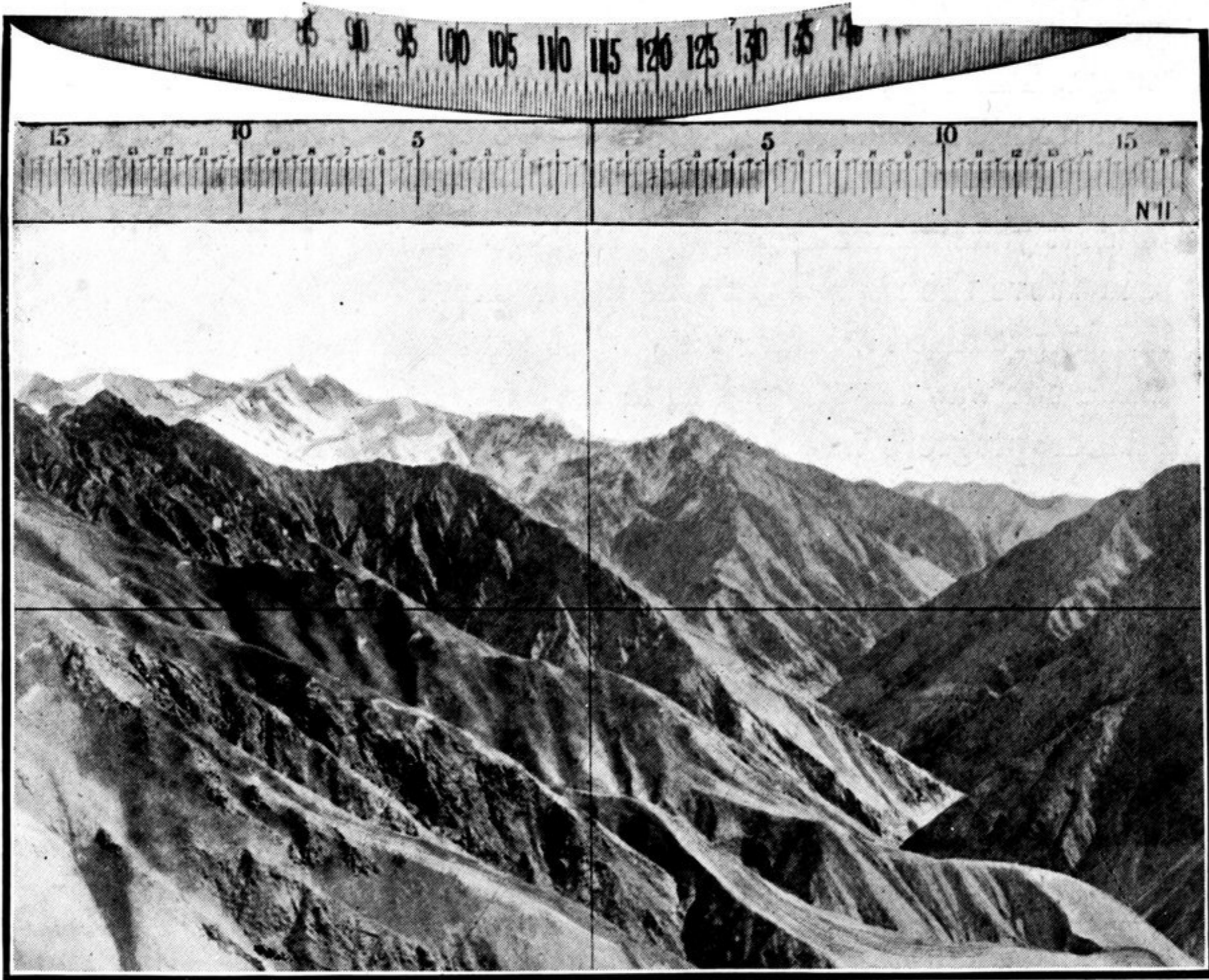


has cut its way past Muztagh, was absolutely clear from the view before us. But there remained the chance of the river-bed itself offering the desired passage. This hope occupied my mind as I descended by a difficult track just practicable for yaks to the left bank of the river, at the point known as Issik-bulak, "the hot spring." On the sheer cliffs opposite



VIEW UP THE YURUNG-KASH GORGE, WITH SPURS OF PEAK K. 5 ON LEFT.

my camping-ground, and at a height of about 300 feet above the level of the river-bed, I could see a hot spring issuing in considerable volume. The hill people are said to bathe in its water when the winter makes the river easily fordable. The half-a-dozen herdsmen of Omsha, who had joined me on the way, unanimously declared that they had never passed beyond this spot, and that the gorge further up was inaccessible for