

say, generally, that the giant of the Alps is, after all, but a dwarf, when compared to various points of the Cordilleras of America and the Himalayas of Asia. In the Tibetan chain the mean height of the cols or passes is computed, by the brothers Schlagintweit, at between 16,000 and 18,500 feet.

But if we would obtain a tolerably accurate idea of the orographic configuration of the immense Asiatic continent, we must not leave out

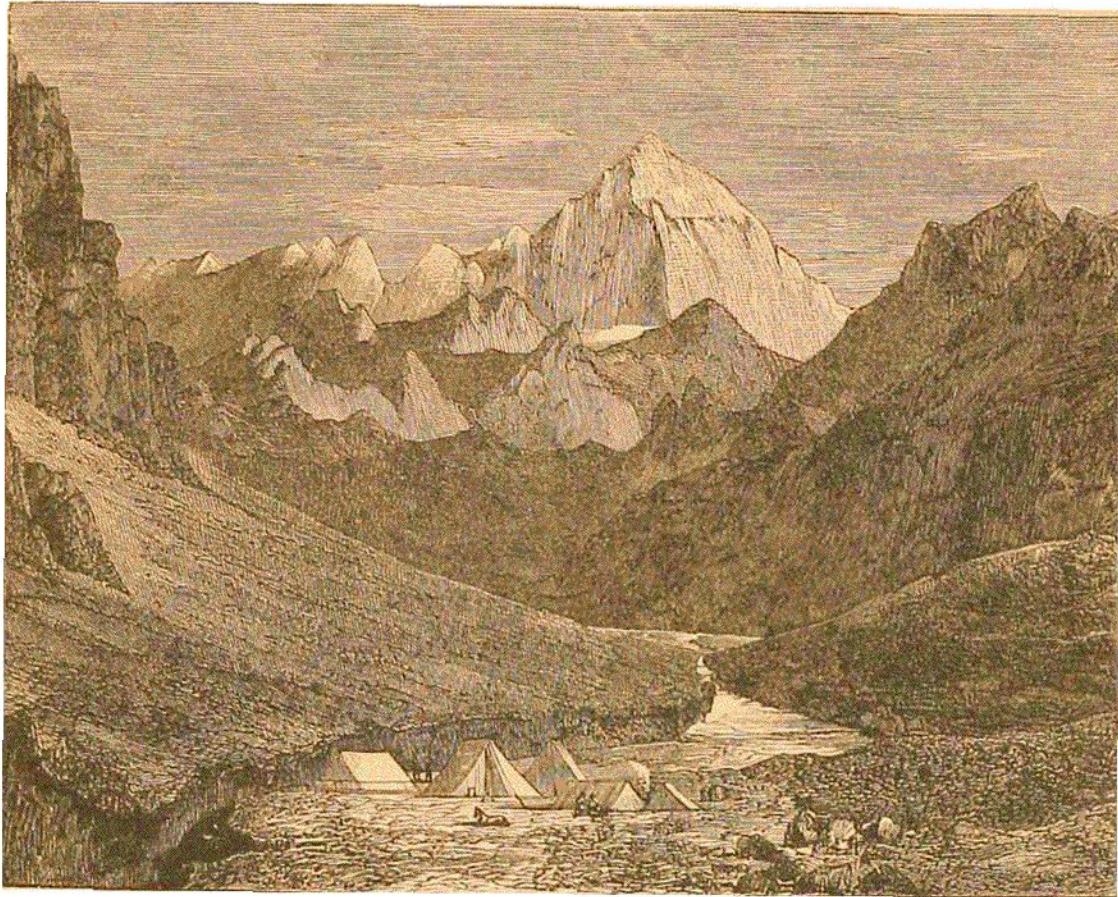


FIG. 64.—ONE OF THE NOON COON PEAKS, TIBET

of consideration the great central table-land lying between the two systems of the Himalaya and the Altaï. This vast protuberance of the soil, as Humboldt expressively calls it, stretches in the direction of S.W. and N.E. across Tibet and Mongolia. Four great chains run from west to east, in the line of the terrestrial latitudes. We have already described them, but, for the reader's convenience, repeat the enumeration here. To the north, on the frontiers of China and Siberia, rises the group of the Altaï; to the south, the majestic belt of the Karakorum and Himalayan Mountains, where we