

of 33° . Dry tamarisks, probably smothered by the sand, are common at the southern end of the lake. In two or three spots on the east shore there exist wells, which are made by the shepherds in the summer; but the water they yield has a saline flavour, though not so strong, it is said, as the water in the lake itself. Sometimes the inhabitants of Jangi-köl graze their sheep around the shores of Basch-köl, though more frequently they go to the Kontsche-darja.

Oblong in shape, Basch-köl measures 15.9 km. in length and 1.345 km. in breadth, its minimum breadth being one km. and its maximum 2 km.

On the south-south-west the lake is bordered by a gigantic »saddle» of sand, from the top of which one can perceive, farther on in the same direction, a *bajir*, or »depression», which is not more than 1 km. long, and $\frac{1}{2}$ km. broad. In the middle this consists of moist *schor*, though sparse scrub grows round its margins. It is cauldron-shaped, being surrounded on all sides by steep dunes of immense size, so that it resembles a former lake-basin into which the drift-sand has failed to penetrate. Upon first beholding one of these strange depressions, embosomed amid the sand-dunes, one is amazed that it was not long ago filled up level with the adjacent country; instead of which one finds that its bottom is not only free from sand, but actually in places moist. As however the depression is elongated in shape, like the lake, and lies exactly on the line of continuation of the latter, it is evident that the two must bear some intimate relation to one another. Beyond this *bajir* of Basch-köl there is nothing but an inextricable chaos of dune-crests, a perfect »sea» of sand, where, notwithstanding that some few of the dunes have an equally steep descent on both faces, indicating the prevalence of winds from two directions, it is yet possible to make out a certain degree of regularity, such as could only result from the prevalence of wind from one settled quarter. At the first glance this regularity is perceived to consist in the equal intervals at which the dune-accumulations lie from one another, the intervals appearing to be shorter than those which I observed between the similar swellings of sand in the heart of the Takla-makan Desert in 1895.

Upon directing our steps towards the east, and climbing to the summit of a dune-accumulation which was at least 100 m. high, we had a more extensive view of the

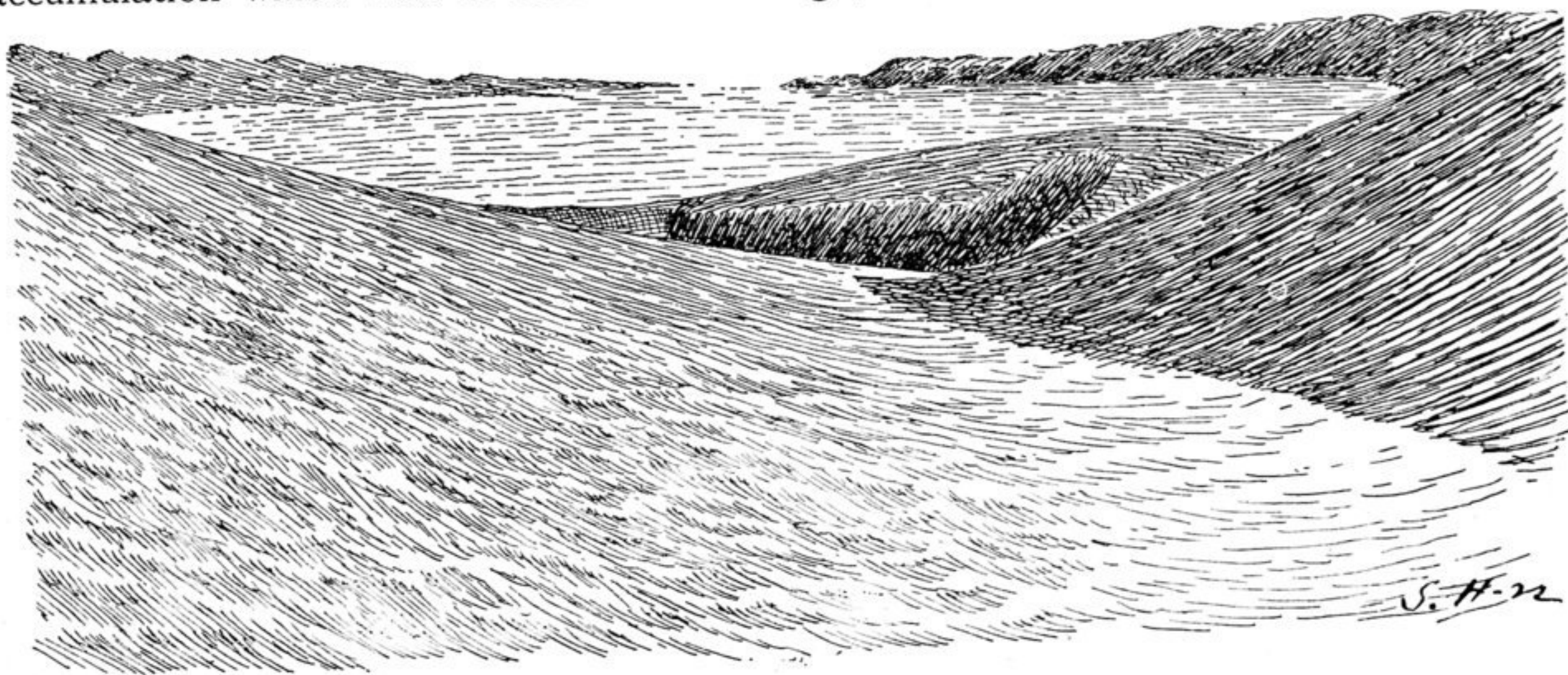


Fig. 202. JANGI-KÖL LOOKING NNE. FROM ITS SOUTHERN THRESHOLD.