



Fig. 208. THE WESTERN DUNE-RANGE OF JANGI-KÖL.

narrow, with their major axis stretching from north-north-east to south-south-west. In continuation of each lake, but separated from it by a low saddle or ridge or threshold, is a bajir or depression in the sand, of precisely the same form as the lake-basin, the only difference between the two being that the bajir is without water. The elliptical, concentric arrangement of the mud, schor, and salt in the bottom of some of the bajirs proves that these once contained water. The fact of their being dry shows also that they lie a step higher in altitude than the mother lake, otherwise they too would be filled with water. Finally, the sand-dunes which border each lake and bajir on the east present towards them a steep slope, while the dunes on the west have a gentle ascent. From all this it is not difficult to infer that the surface features of the country, and its other physical characteristics, are determined by the prevailing wind; but to this problem I shall return again presently, after setting forth a richer mass of material for consideration.



Fig. 209. PART OF THE WEST SHORE OF JANGI-KÖL.

The most convenient time for investigating these lakes would have been in mid-winter, when the ice bears, and when it would have been possible to take soundings through holes chopped in it. But just at that particular season I was otherwise engaged, and in the beginning of winter the ice only bears at the outside round the shores. The second occasion on which I had an opportunity of visiting the lakes, namely the month of May, was quite as inconvenient, though for another reason, namely it is then that the east-north-east sand-storms rage with the greatest severity, making it perilous to venture out in the small narrow native canoes. This was the cause of a trip which I took to Gölme-käti on 18th May proving unsuccessful — unsuccessful that is in so far as soundings were concerned. We did obtain