

larity in those dunes that do retain their distinctive individuality, for these latter are not influenced by their surroundings, and the ground upon which they rest is level. There is however one feature which is repeated with unfailing regularity in the case of all the thresholds, and that is, that they descend towards the south-south-west at an angle of  $33^\circ$  ( $32^\circ$ — $34^\circ$ ). On this account an attempt to cross the desert in the opposite direction to the line I chose, i. e. from south-south-west to north-north-east, would encounter almost insuperable difficulties. At all events some of these steep faces could only be surmounted, that is if the traveller had camels with him, at the cost of incredible difficulty and a vast amount of spade-labour.

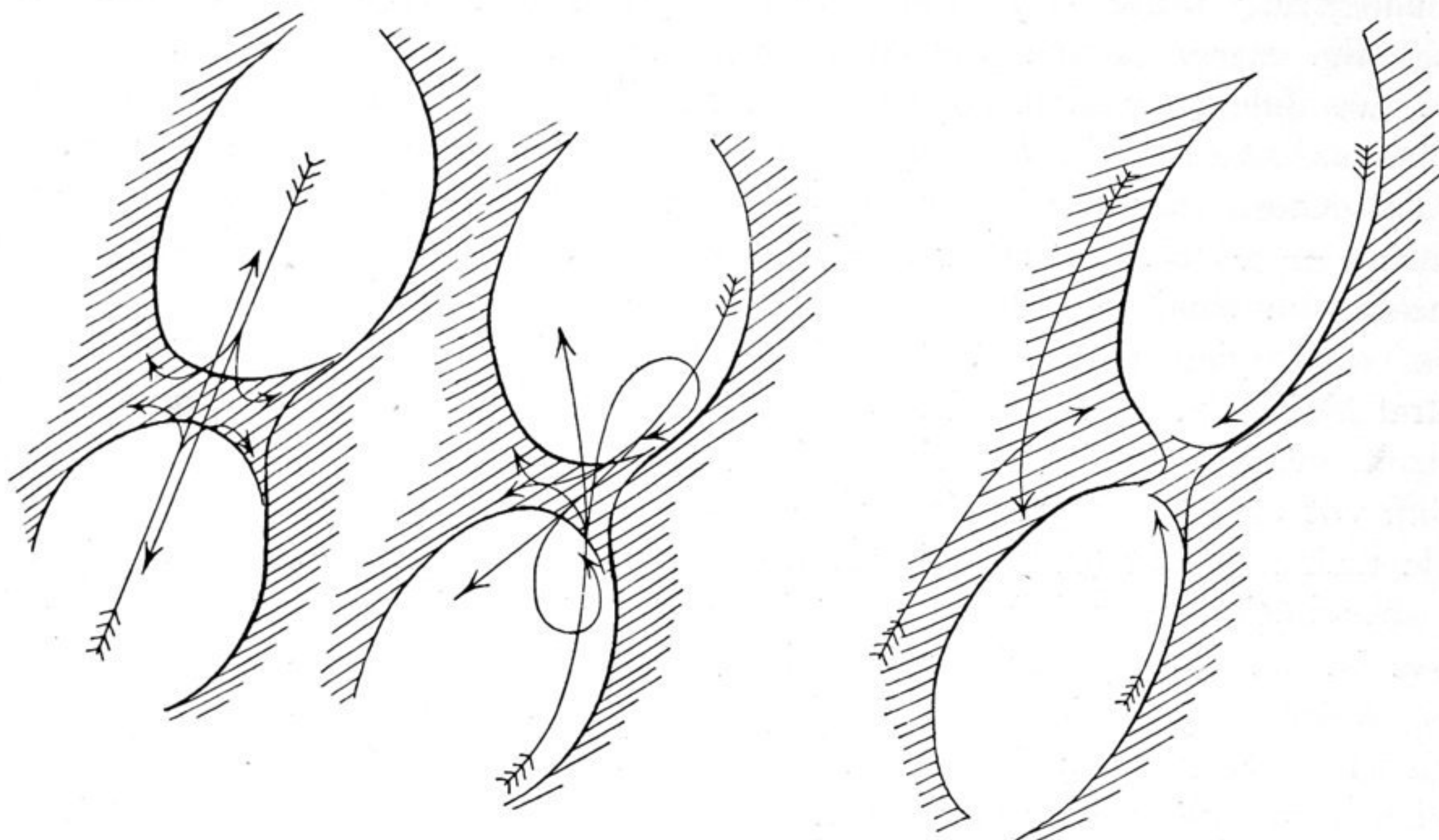


Fig. 265. PROBABLE DEVIATION OF NNE. AND SSW. WINDS OWING TO RELIEF OF DESERT.

The threshold between bajirs Nos. 10 and 11 covered quite as much ground as bajir No. 10 itself, and we were fully prepared to find the sand coming to an end and the sand-free ground disappearing altogether. And this expectation was still further strengthened, when we found that bajir No. 12 was quite small. Moreover it was shorter from north to south than from east to west, and its bottom was almost covered with small dunes, the only part free from them being that which lay next to the eastern leeward flank. In fact these tiny depressions were of little real assistance to us; for no sooner did we get down upon their level floor than we had to begin a toilsome ascent up the next threshold. The threshold at the end of bajir No. 12 was high and difficult. Imagine, then, my surprise, when from its summit I beheld, unrolled at my feet, a bajir of vast size, its farther end lost in the dust-haze. On its right or western side there appeared to be a *tumschuk* or »promontory» of sand, evidently the beginning of a new threshold, which, when completed, will eventually divide this big bajir into two. The floor of the bajir was composed of soft *schor*, covered with dust, and free from sand, except for a group of small ridge-like dunes stretching in the usual direction from north-east to south-west, and situated near the promontory I have just mentioned. Clay terraces peeped out in two places, one near