

found in only one place, namely in the vicinity of Taschtan Kullu. From this spot a road leads direct to the Jäkän-boldschemal on the Tarim, a path which Toktasin Bek had travelled over, and which, he said, runs through rudimentary scattered sand of no great altitude; in some places the ground is perfectly bare.

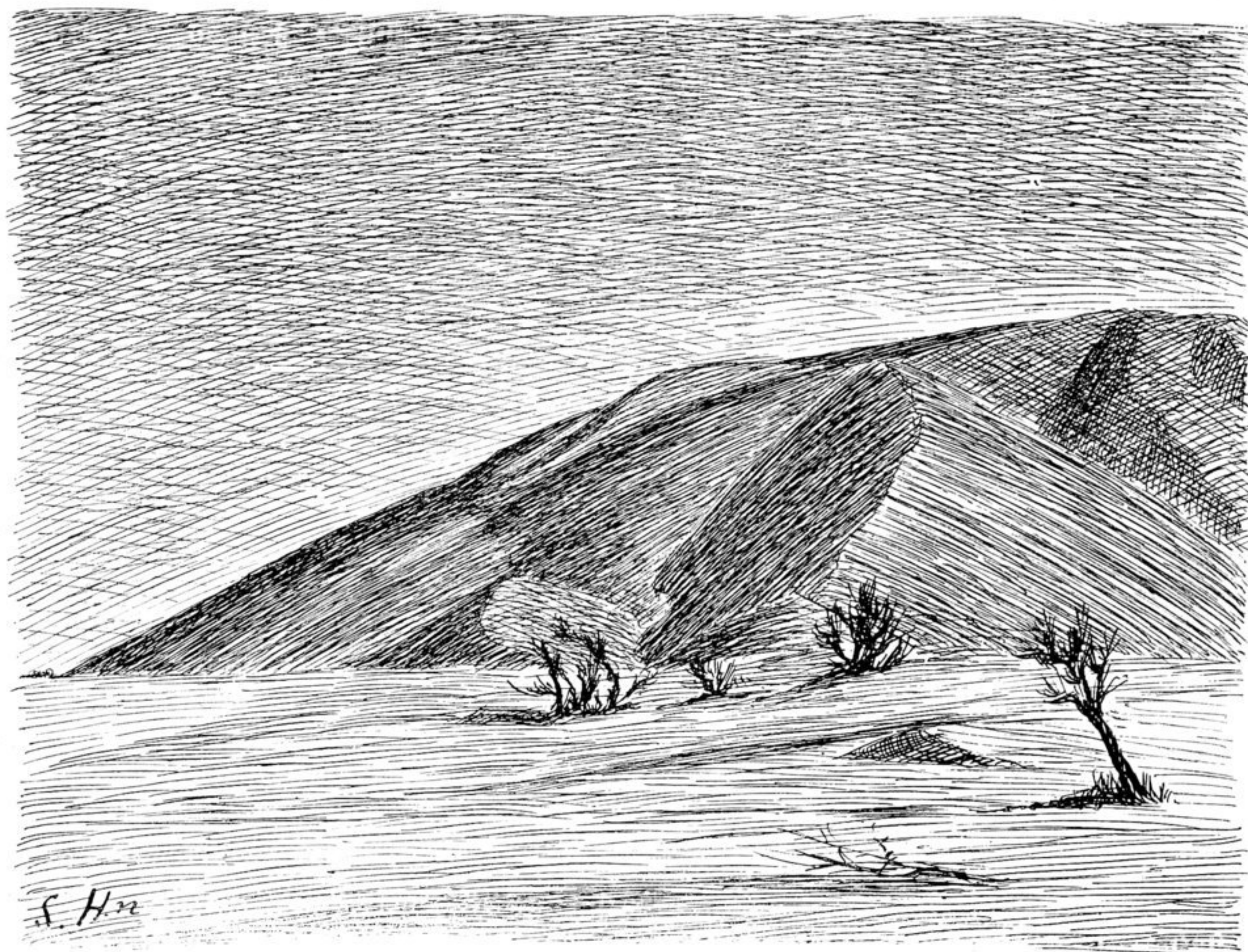


Fig. 359. THE WESTERNMOST PROMONTORY OF TAGH-KUM.

Thus our very first day's march of 28.6 km. had been instructive. In the first place, it was evident that Toktasin Bek had not exaggerated when he said, that it is only 30 years since an arm of the Tarim used to flow through that channel: the freshness of the vegetation is sufficient corroboration of his statement. I did not however succeed in learning any details about the river's migration to the east; but judging by analogous instances in the case of the Tarim, it may be supposed that in the beginning a small branch made its way at the side, and that afterwards, at some high-water period, the river flung itself all at once over into the eastern bed; after which the mouth of the western arm became stopped up with mud and sand, and upon this the vegetation established itself, and so augmented the firmness and solidity of the new rampart. Further, at the extreme south of its course we found young forest, but higher up, at the place where we encamped for the night, forest of mature age, a proof that the forest had at some time travelled down the river, thus attaining different periods of growth at different points in the river's course. The same thing occurs again beside the Tarim above Tschigelik-uj. Dead forest does