

amongst the kamisch, though there is a belt of open water next the shore. But the strip of shore itself, down to which the dunes generally advance, is very treacherous and soft; the only places in which you can find firm ground under your feet down to the water-line are where the dunes jut out like capes and peninsulas into the lake. This ring of open water all round the shore proves that the lake was that year considerably larger than it had been previously; and this inference was confirmed by our guides. Had it not been so, the reeds would have established themselves there also. Here there were living tamarisks sticking up above the reeds and growing as usual upon their high conical pedestals. The fauna of the locality was represented by swans, and one or two other species of *Natatores*, by crows, hares, and lizards; while the tracks of wild-boar were more numerous than in any other part of the Tarim system that I have visited. Foxes, wild-duck, and wild-geese also occur, though we did not at this time see any. Fish are especially plentiful, and the reason the natives do not avail themselves of this store is said to be the newness of the waterway (6 years), it being scarcely as yet known to them; besides, there exists no reason why they should yet desert their present fishing-quarters in the Kara-koschun.

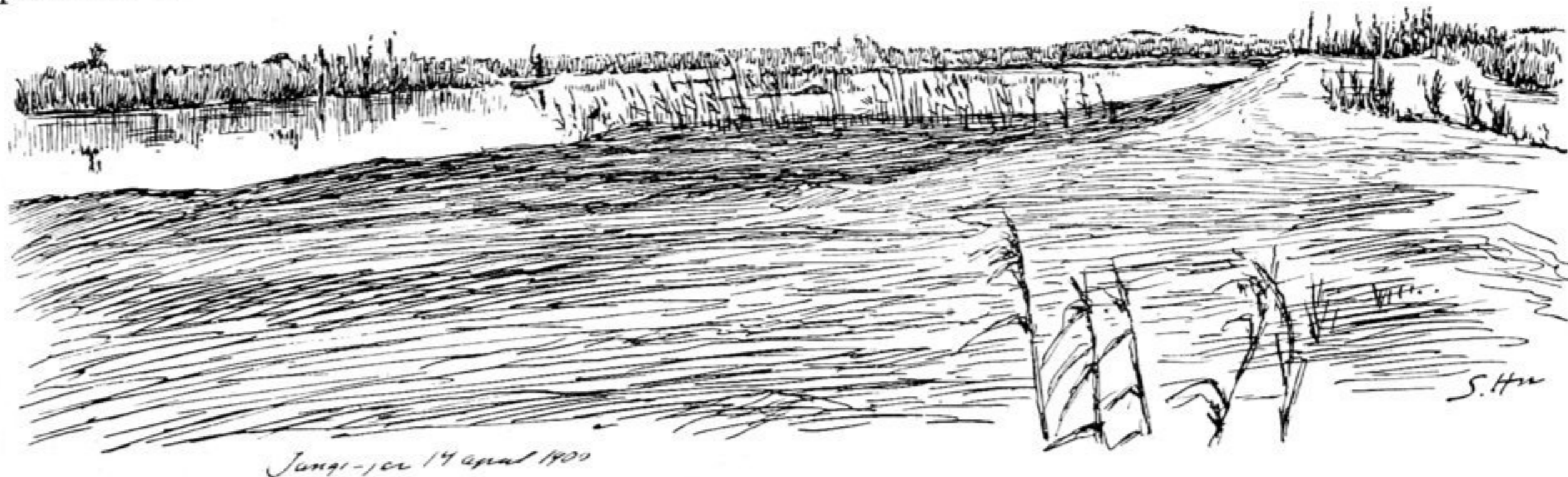


Fig. 382. THE LAKE AT JANGI-JER.

The place in which we encamped is called Jangi-jeer, or the New Place. Here, notwithstanding the name, it is evident there must at some former time have been water, judging from the belt of forest along the southern shore. Yet the intervening arid period had been sufficiently long to cause the belt of forest to die out — a period which must unquestionably have been longer than the period which has elapsed since the Ettek-tarim was abandoned; for, as we ascertained, the forest there has not yet died out. Thus the Schirge-tschapghan branch is a stadium in the Tarim's migration to the south. The water has, it is true, returned, but it has not been able to rekindle afresh the spark of life in the slumbering forest; but it will, if time only admits of it, afford nourishment to the sprouting scions of a fresh forest.

Pitching our camp (No. XXVII) on the shore of the lake where there were several *partscha-köl*, or «isolated pools», amongst the dunes, we at once got our canoes afloat. A couple of boatmen stepped in and went off to reconnoitre; but they returned with the information, that they had not succeeded in discovering the current, in fact it evidently did not touch that shallow sheet of water. Climbing to the top of a dune near the camp, I made out the water extending N. 40° E., and in that direction shut in by dunes and tamarisk-mounds. The real direction must however be