

pursued our journey, travelling through a chain of long, narrow lakes. Here the route was much easier to find, owing to the shallow sedimentary deposits which border the stream; from these we perceived that the supply of water from higher up was diminishing. The low sand on the south is here planted with scrub, while on the north the dunes are higher and for the greater part destitute of vegetation. Gradually the lake contracted, and we glided into an actual, sharply defined river, where the entire current was concentrated into one channel. We still continued to travel north-west. The banks are clothed with reeds or studded at intervals with tamarisk-mounds, still preserving their integrity. On the north the dunes generally descend precipitously into the water; it is palpable that the sandy desert is here pressing hardly upon this waterway, especially in places where it turns towards the north-west, and thus is directly exposed to the prevailing wind, besides coming into intimate conflict with the dunes that the wind drives forward. At intervals there are small marginal lagoons, or apophyses, from the main river, wedged in amongst the dunes and mounds, and without running water.



Fig. 385. CAMP XXVIII. VIEW TOWARDS THE SE. ACROSS A LITTLE LAKE FORMED BY THE TOKUS-TARIM OR SCHIRGE-TSCHAPGHAN BRANCH.

Choosing a narrow and suitable place, we measured the river in the usual way, by stretching across it a rope marked off in sections of equal length. The results were — breadth, 16.6 m.; mean depth, 1.270 m.; mean velocity, 0.4464 m. in the second; and volume, 9.41 cub.m. in the second. Thus the volume here was only one-third of that which a few days before we had measured at Kum-tschapghan, and only one-ninth of what we had found in the Tarim at Jurt-tschapghan.* These 9.41 cub.m. were derived partly from the Tarim *via* Tschivilik-köl, and partly from the Kontsche-darja, the Ilek, and the eastern chain of lakes. I resolved therefore to spend the next few days in finding out where it did come from, by paddling up

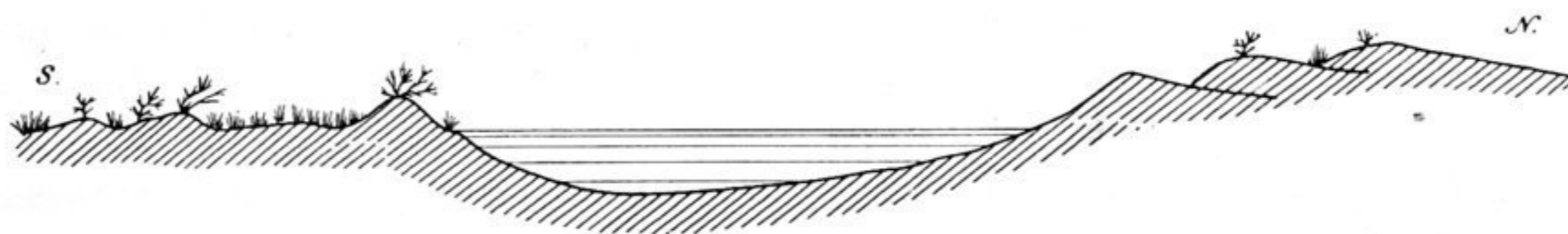


Fig. 386. VEGETATION ON THE SOUTHERN BANK; — DUNES ON THE NORTHERN BANK.

* See vol. II.