



Fig. 1. THE TOGHRAK-BULAK OR ASTIN-BULAK.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE KONTSCHÉ-DARJA TO THE FOOT OF THE KURUK-TAGH.

I started for my first excursion to the Desert of Lop on the 5th March 1900. My principal object was to investigate and map the old dried-up river-bed, the beginning of which I had observed starting from the Kontsche-darja in 1896,* and the continuation of which towards the east was confirmed by Kosloff at two points during the Russian expedition of 1893—95, under the leadership of Roborovskij. To the river-bed which he noted Kosloff gave the name of Kum-darja, or the Sand River; he regarded it as an older channel of the Kontsche-darja. His acquaintance with the

* See my map in *Petermanns Mitteilungen*, Ergänzhft. 131.