

abundance of creeks, sounds, bays ramifying in every direction, as well as islets and holms, consisting generally of dunes rising more or less directly from the water. A sheet of water exhibiting such capricious outlines could only originate in a desert that lies on the whole horizontal, has its surface at the same time furrowed into grooves by the erosive action of the wind, and possesses jardangs, or clay ridges, and terraces, as also dunes. The water was perfectly clear and slightly salt, though both camels and horses drank it with enjoyment. Here were no traces of Algæ or molluscs, though we did see one small solitary fish, which, having been brought against its will by the current, would seek in vain for sustenance in that barren basin.

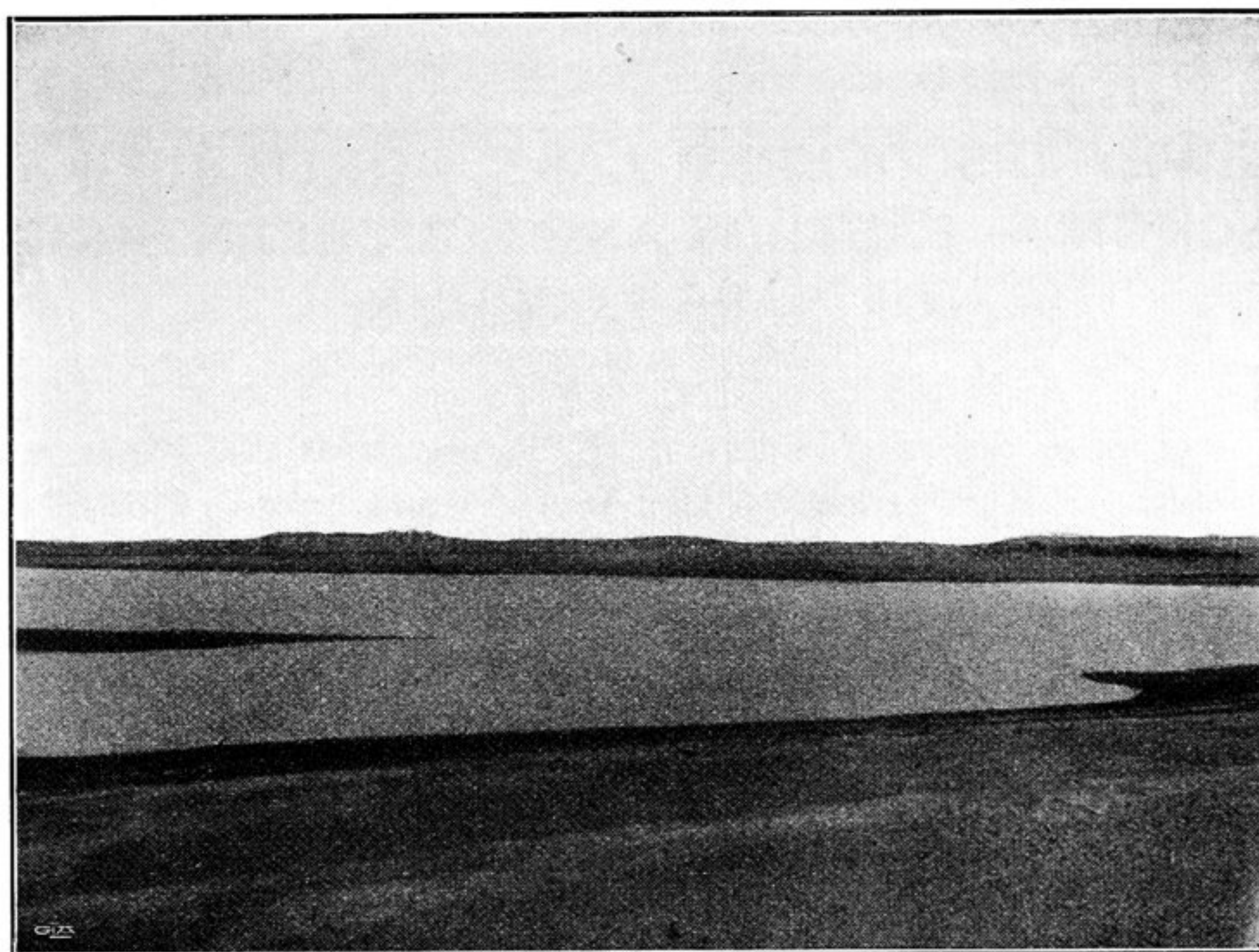


Fig. III. PART OF THE NEW LAKE TO THE NORTH OF KARA-KOSCHUN (1900).

So far as we were able to see, the point where we struck this lake was at its northernmost bay or projecting finger. Thence a pretty extensive sheet of water stretched to the east, disappearing from sight behind the dunes, which probably screened yet other and more distant expanses. We thereupon followed along the zigzagging shore, seeking for a place where we might get across, for we were anxious to reach the pasture-grounds of Kara-koschun as soon as possible. For half a kilometer the shore ran to the south-west in an almost straight line, and here the lake contracted to such an extent that it was more like an insignificant canal, being only a few meters broad. It was plain, that the water had found here a connected groove, scooped in the surface by the wind. This narrow sound issued into a larger basin, with a solitary tamarisk standing on its shore amongst a few scattered kamisch stalks. The water in this basin was rather fresher. Our course was determined by the contours of the shore, and accordingly we now inclined to the west-south-west. On the left we had basins of varying size, and on our right dunes with their steep sides turned towards the south-west. There were