

they are remarkably rare. In the Kara-koschun itself, the reeds decrease towards the east, until four short days' journey north-east of Kum-tschapghan they thin out rapidly, and soon after come to an end altogether. Beside the Kuruk-darja we found living toghraks at Jing-pen; then dead forest, the trees still standing upright, at first any abundance of it, though afterwards it diminished in quantity. The same remark applies to the old tamarisk and kamisch vegetation. This is however only true of the extreme north of the desert; though it is clear that it was once covered by the waters of the lake. The reason the vegetation decreases, and the reason why it is entirely wanting in the bay-like prolongation of the desert towards the east, which we crossed over in February 1901, is no doubt this, that these parts of the former lake were the first to dry up, coupled with the fact that the water surfaces were then more connected. As we shall soon see, the relations south-west were quite different.

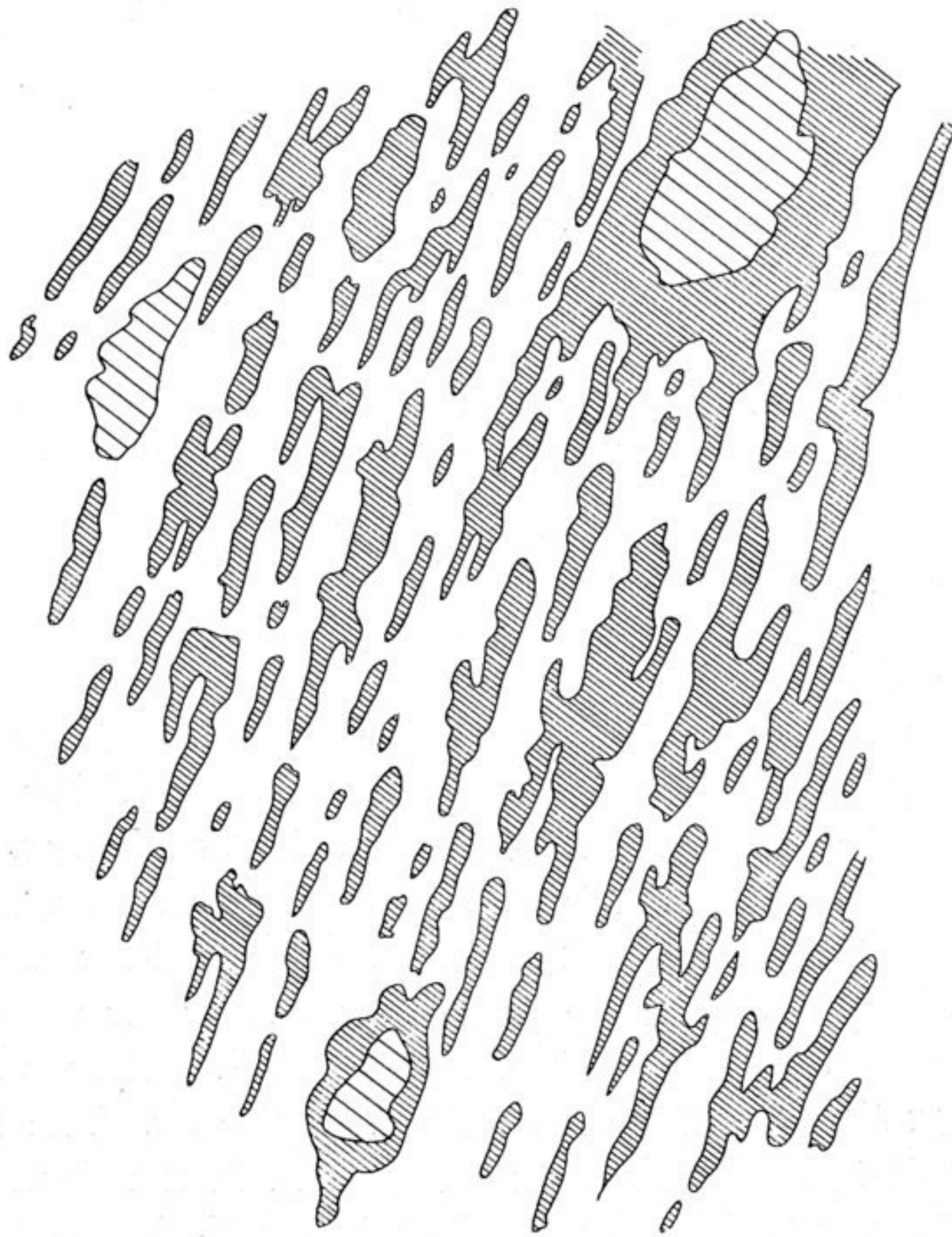


Fig. 138. THE JARDANG DESERT.

In the course of the 22 km. that we traversed on the 28th March the desert underwent changes of some magnitude, both in relief and in respect of its other characteristics. The south-south-west direction became altered, and of necessity, to S. 41° W., owing to the wind-eroded gullies assuming that direction. Their parallelism was perhaps a little less pronounced than it was during the previous day's march, though that idea may possibly have been suggested by the fact that the jardangs were shorter, and that it was seldom possible to keep for so long together