

when one trod upon them. They formed bigger, broader, and leveller platforms than farther north, but at the same time they were on the whole lower, seldom being as much as 3 to 4 m. in height. Increasingly greater areas were occupied by schor, in places impregnated with salt, and as hard as bricks, and arranged in thin laminae. Mollusc-shells were abundant everywhere, sometimes lying scattered amongst the dust, sometimes embedded in the clay; and sometimes they lay so thickly that the ground was powdered white with them. Once or twice we observed, about one km. to the west, tamarisk kötäk; but the course we followed was almost entirely destitute of organic life. We only saw a couple of pieces of wood, possibly drift-wood.



Fig. 151. JARDANGS IN THE DESERT.

The jardangs still continued to grow fewer and farther between, and finally came to end altogether. The country ahead then consisted, right away to the southern horizon, of perfectly level and absolutely barren schor, containing only a very few hollows, barely a meter deep and with rounded terraces at the sides. In one place I fancied I could make out a row of withered tamarisks to the south-east, and to the south-west three sand-dunes, lifting their dolphin backs above the level line of the horizon. Along our route there was an entire absence of sand. Occasionally one would see a foot-deep accumulation in a hollow, but no dunes, not even of a rudimentary character. Yet the three dunes to the west showed, that we were not very far from the beginning of the belt of drift-sand which we crossed on our more westerly route of 1900. At the point where the jardangs came to an end the surface was in some places as if coated with a hard, tough skin of schor; and in this, in the more sheltered spots, we distinctly observed the fine rippling which is produced on a lake-bottom by the shoreward beat of the waves and on the bottom