

that the water would have flowed into the western part of the lake, instead of as hitherto into its eastern part. It is possible the great lake may have had a shallow »threshold» across its middle, and so have become in the course of time divided into two basins, of which the eastern basin subsequently dried up, while the western basin gradually contracted on its eastern side.

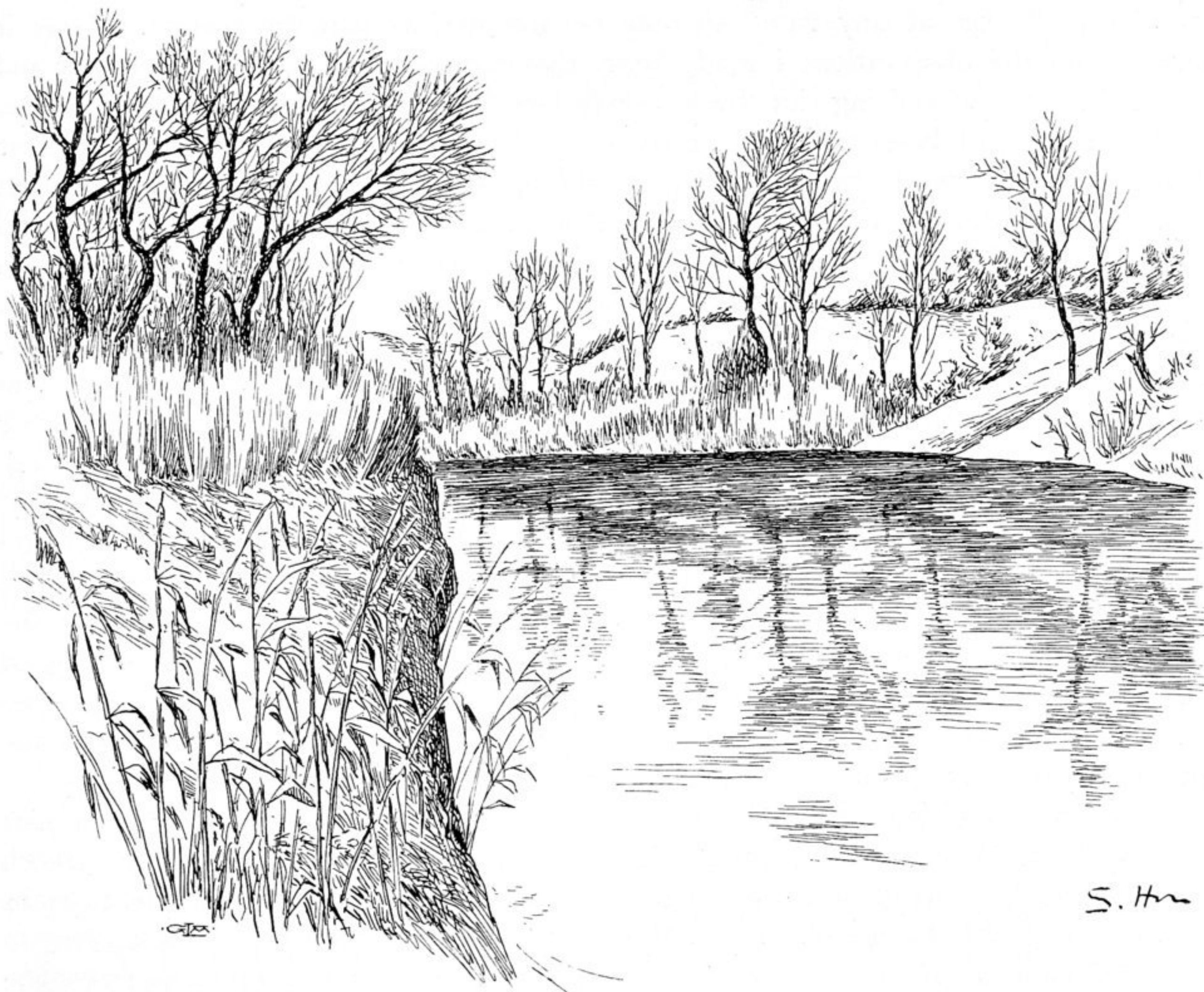


Fig. 158. THE ILEK AT ÖRDEK-JAGHUTSCH, THAT IS BEFORE ENTERING THE AVULLU-KÖL.

However there is no need to have recourse to speculations of this character, for there is another explanation which in an admirable manner agrees with the observations we made in this interesting desert, the surface features of which, as well as its other geographical problems, are so intimately connected with the wind. But in order to trace out this explanation, it is not enough to follow the direction of the water, as I did in 1896; it is also necessary to obtain a more general idea of the surface-relief, and especially of the conformation of the desert. Upon comparing the old Chinese maps with our modern maps, we are astonished to find that a part of the lowermost Tarim has a meridional course, whereas the river taken as a whole formerly flowed almost due east. At that epoch the shortest, as well as the most pronounced, line of fall was from west to east, and one would naturally suppose that any change in the position of its bed would result in the