

any diminution of volume. Nor is there in the course of the year any great difference between the absolute maximum volume and the absolute minimum volume in the lowermost Tarim, for its waters are gathered from so many regions, separated from one another by such vast distances, that the varying amounts of precipitation which fall over this immense area doubtless counterbalance one another, so that the final amount will be pretty constant; that is in so far as these regions are not subject to the oscillations of the »Brückner periods». The Kontsche-darja in particular is remarkable for the constancy of its volume; indeed this is to only a slight degree affected by the amount of precipitation that falls within its catchment area (unless the departures from the normal are spread over especially long periods), as also but slightly too by the annual formation of ice and its subsequent spring thawing.

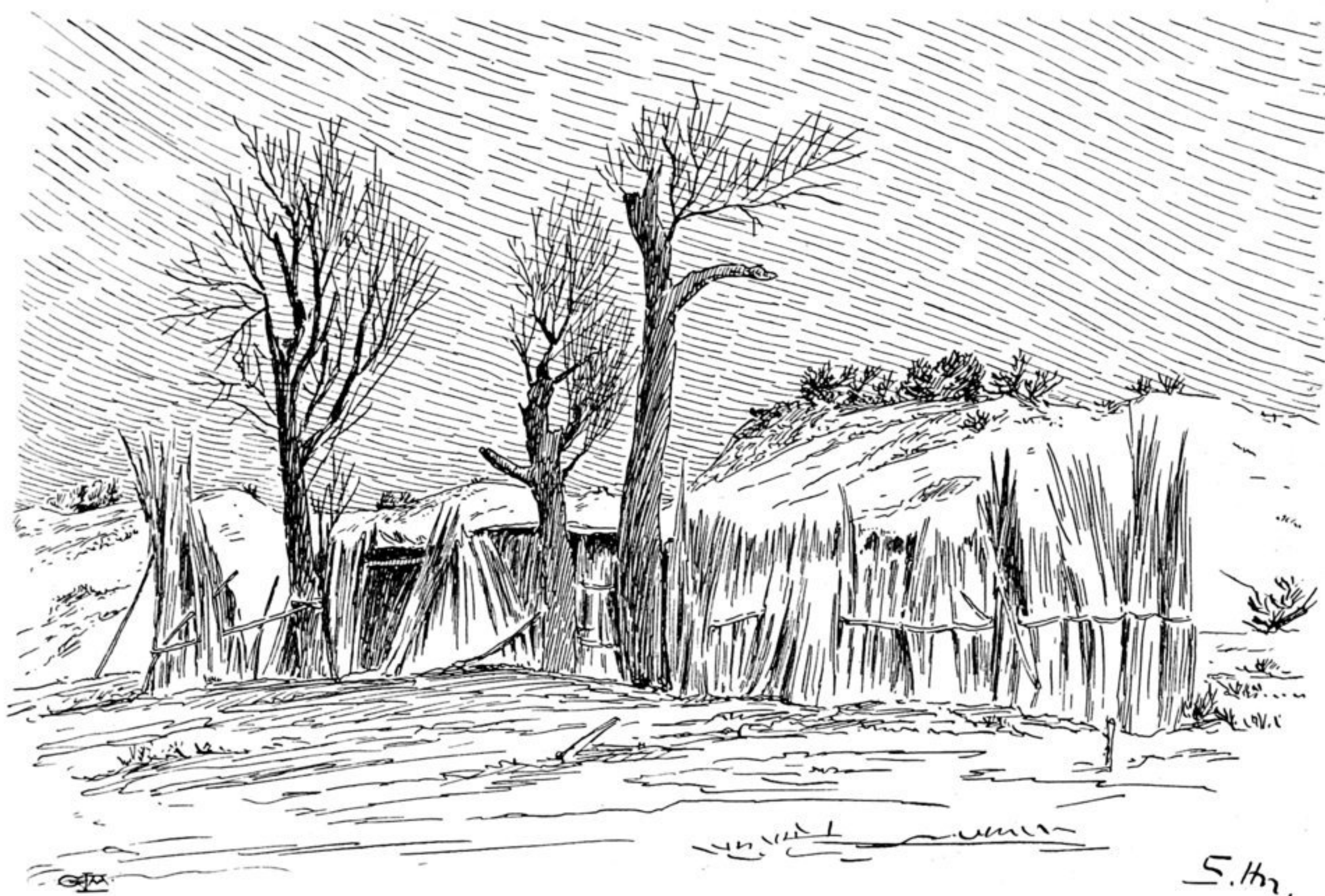


Fig. 173. SAND-DUNES BOUND BY VEGETATION, AT KULATSCHA; KERIJA-DARJA.

All this goes to show that the terminal basin of the Tarim system must maintain a pretty constant area; at all events its waxing and waning only admit of being observed after the lapse of a considerable interval of time. So far forth therefore this lake is more advantageously circumstanced than, say, Lake Balkasch or the Ala-kul; though less advantageously than the Baghrasch-köl, which as it were stores up its water from year to year, while in addition to this its position never changes owing to the steep gradients of the »stream-line»* between the equidistant contour lines of its trough-shaped basin.

* »Stream-line» is the scientific term for the perpendicular between two contour lines.