

mouth of the former lay a small lagoon, and in it there were actually some fish. A little higher up its bed contained some puddles set about with oozy matter, so soft that it would hardly have allowed a hare to run across it. Above these collections of water the bed of the gully was beset diagonally by one of the usual thresholds of flaky sandstone; that was the only place in which the gully admitted of being crossed over, and this fact was indeed evidenced by a heap of stones built up on the top of the scarped bank. Down this tiny barrier the merest rivulet of bright water was trickling, thus showing that it had its origin in a spring in the bed of the gully itself. In the river directly opposite to this threshold there was a similar threshold, which consisted so far as I was able to make out, for it was entirely under water, of hard sandstone, dipping 27° towards the S. 50° E.

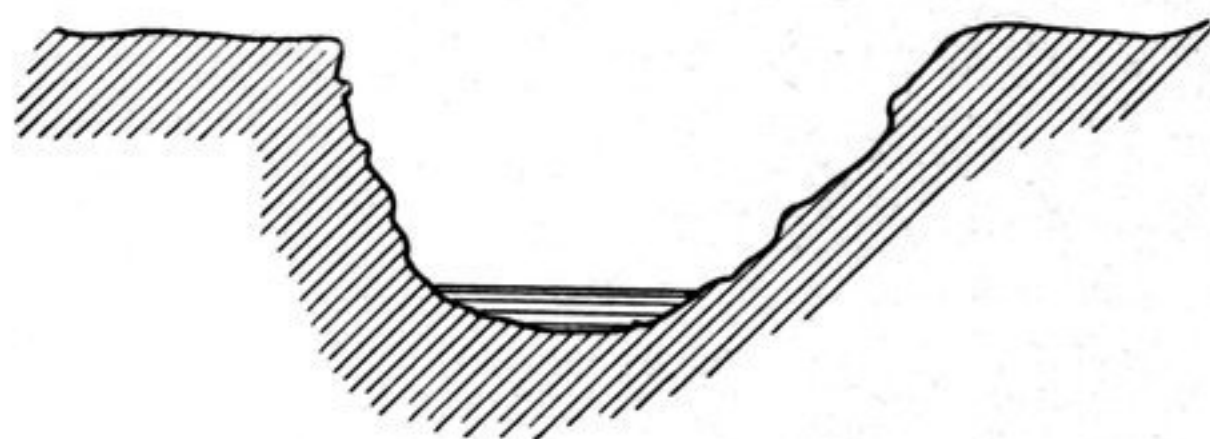


Fig. 11. VERTICAL SECTION OF GULLY.

The mouth of gullies gaped upon us from both sides; but we were seldom able to see more than a few meters up them, for they wind excessively, and the windings are short and abrupt. A closer examination revealed the fact, that each of these gullies is the main trunk, as it were, of an entire system of smaller gullies, all related to it as the branches are to the trunk of the tree in the way shown in the accompanying sketch (fig. 12).

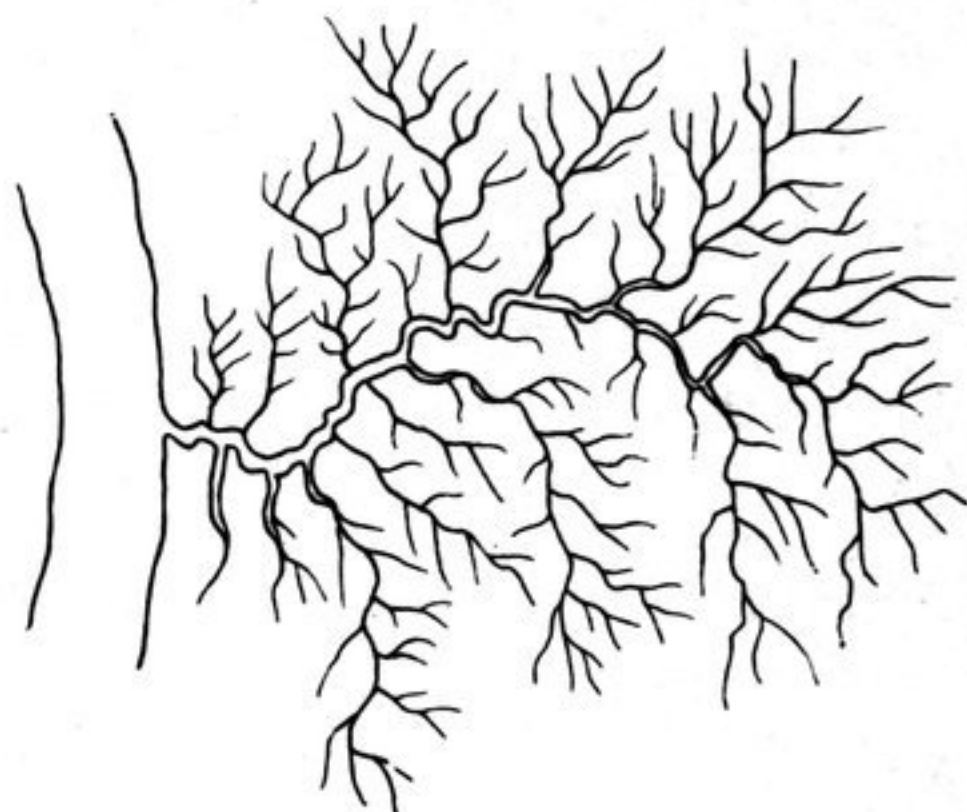


Fig. 12.

If you follow up one of these trunk gullies, you find that it is joined by a great number of smaller gullies from each side, and these again by yet smaller ones. The bed of the trunk gully rises pretty steeply, so that a climb of one or two hundred meters suffices to bring you within measurable distance of its origin, and you perceive yourself standing on the level surface of the plain above the river. Hence it is only a relatively narrow belt of country on both sides of the river which is thus cut up by these deep ramifying gullies. One of my men who rode along the right bank, with the object of keeping us who were in the skiff in touch with the caravan, had consequently to travel a few hundred meters back from the river, where the surface was perfectly level, with the exception of a very occasional watercourse. It would have been absolutely impossible for him to ride close alongside the river. These gullies are of course formed by the local rains, which when making their way down to the river keep scooping out their channels deeper and deeper. The bottoms of very nearly all these gullies were then a little above the water-level of the river, but in only one or two of them was there any water. In the flood period however the water out of the river

After that the river is joined by a number of similar gullies, exhibiting the same fantastic and peculiar shapes. It is there narrower than ever, barely 80 m. across, and with its abruptly scarped banks has much of the appearance of an artificial canal. There too the alluvium is absent, except for a couple of insignificant patches.