

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SELLING-TSO AND THE JAGJU-RAPGA.

The view which unfolded itself from the point where we turned due south was peculiar and at the same time confusing. Straight ahead of us there were no signs of land, so that we were almost inclined to believe that the river emptied into a bay of the sea. In the far off distance the outlines of the shores became lost to sight in consequence of the refraction of the atmosphere. All we could make out was the range of mountains on the east shore of the lake, but it appeared not to be connected with the earth, but to be parted from it by a cushion of air which was in a state of continuous vibration; the separate parts of the mountains looked like free-standing buttes (fig. 13). And the same thing was true of the camels in our caravan as they marched a couple of kilometers west of the river; their legs were three or four times as long as they naturally are, and yet the caravan appeared to be standing still on the extensive, sun-lit plain.

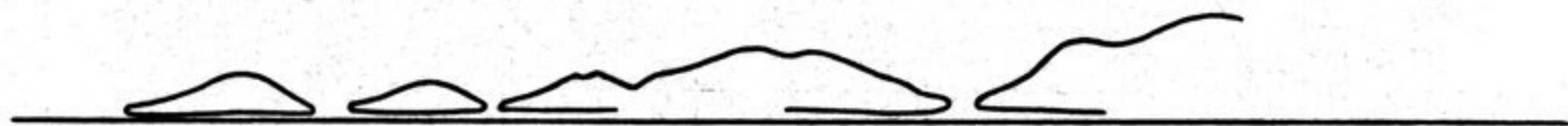


Fig. 13.

At the angle where the right bank of the river merges into the northern shore of the lake there is a blunted promontory of sedimentary matter; it was then flush with the water surface and consequently possessed no eroded edge. Beyond it lay some exceedingly flat sedimentary islands. Paddling round these, we turned west and north-west in the attempt to reach the lake-shore, where some of the men were waiting for us with horses. But we found it impossible to skirt the actual shoreline owing to the remarkable shallowness of the lake on that side, the depth being barely 1 dm. Accordingly we swung out into the lake again, though the water under our skiff still continued to be muddy river water; we had to look a considerable distance to the south before we were able to see the dark blue waters of the lake of Selling-tso, at that time churned into big waves by a wind from the south. Thus the river water was predominant for as far as our range of vision extended, so that throughout the whole of that area, and it was very extensive,