

in exceptional places we obtained soundings of 2.9, 3.4, and 2.8 m. But the lake soon contracted and the current became gradually more distinct. The water was perfectly limpid; the depth, 2.45 and 4.82 m. On our right we had dunes of medium elevation, with a belt of gloriously green toghrak-forest at their foot; indeed several of the trees were actually growing amongst the sand, which was threatening to smother them. Entering a narrow river-arm, we found poplars standing in the bed of the stream, but though they still retained their branches and twigs, they

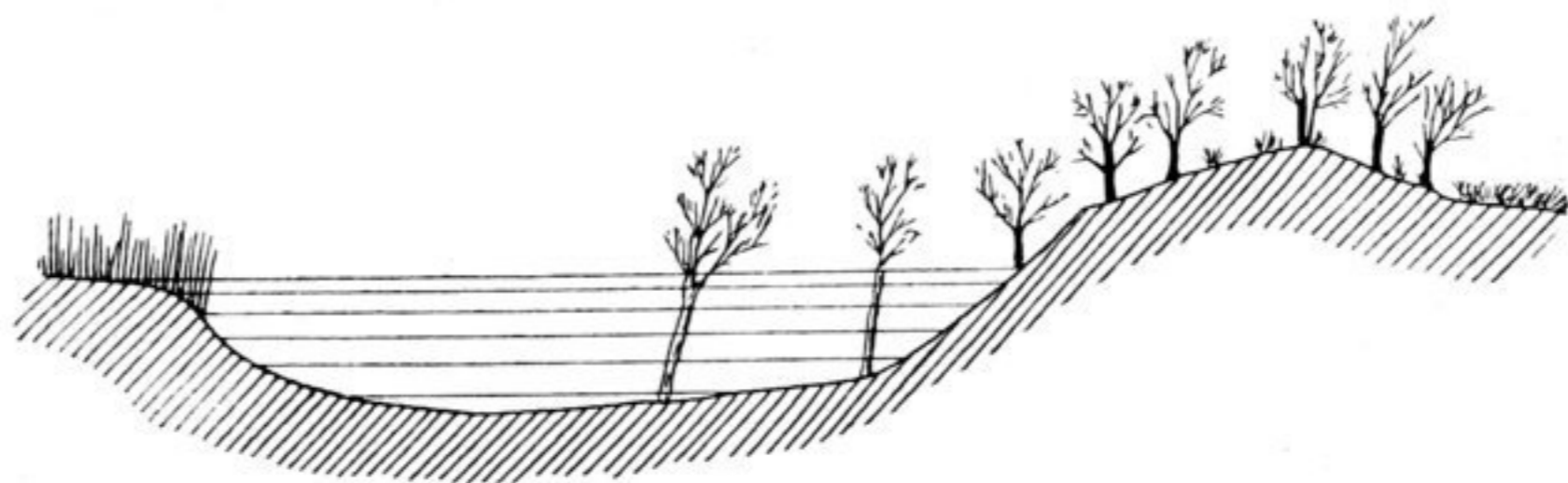


Fig. 404. POPLARS, STANDING IN THE RIVER-BED.

were withered and dead. Seeing that they stand in the deepest part of the channel, one would expect them to have survived the period of drought, for it is incredible that they can have died from excess of water. It is also remarkable, that they still withstand the stream, for its velocity was as much as 1.12 m. in the second, making the water boil off the tree-trunks as it swirled past them. Both these circumstances, the velocity and the trees surviving in the water, are an indication that this part of the river is new. Every now and again the stream expands into minia-

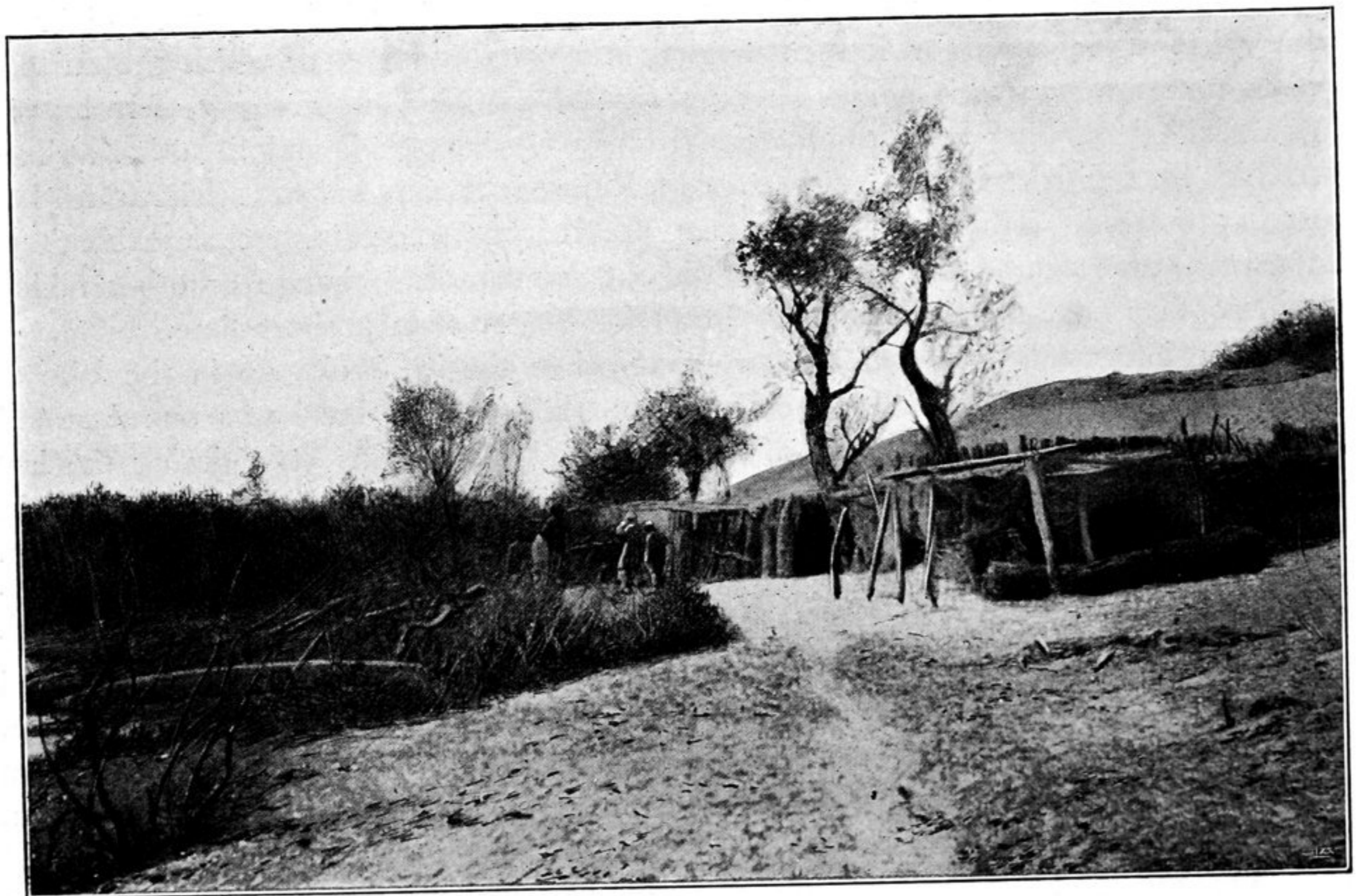


Fig. 405. THE VILLAGE OF KULATSCHA.