were like baths. We managed however to keep afloat by clinging to the shelter of the kamisch, and in that way made a circuit of the open part of the lake; this however, in comparison with the reed-free basins of the Arka-köl and the Tajek-köl, is of very small area. In fact, this lake, the Kara-köl, is considered to be the same size as the Tschivilik-köl, the only difference being that the former is for the most part overgrown with kamisch. The marshes and areas of open water which, on the strength of insufficient *data* I in 1896 took to be the Tschivilik-köl, belong in reality to the Kara-köl. This lake is tolerably deep — 4.30, 5.65, and 6.52 m. — and we neither discovered shallow places nor observed islets of tamarisk-mounds

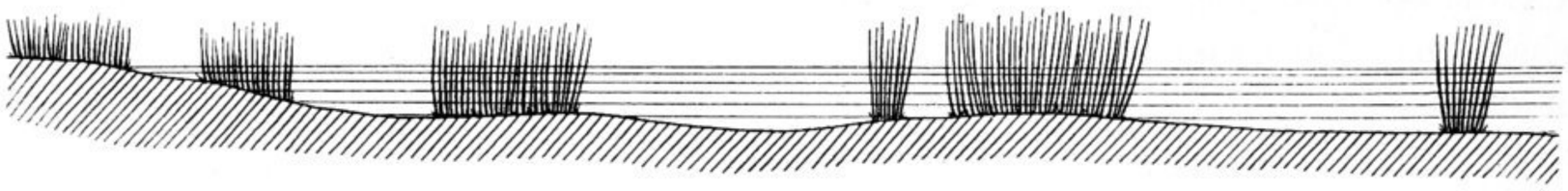
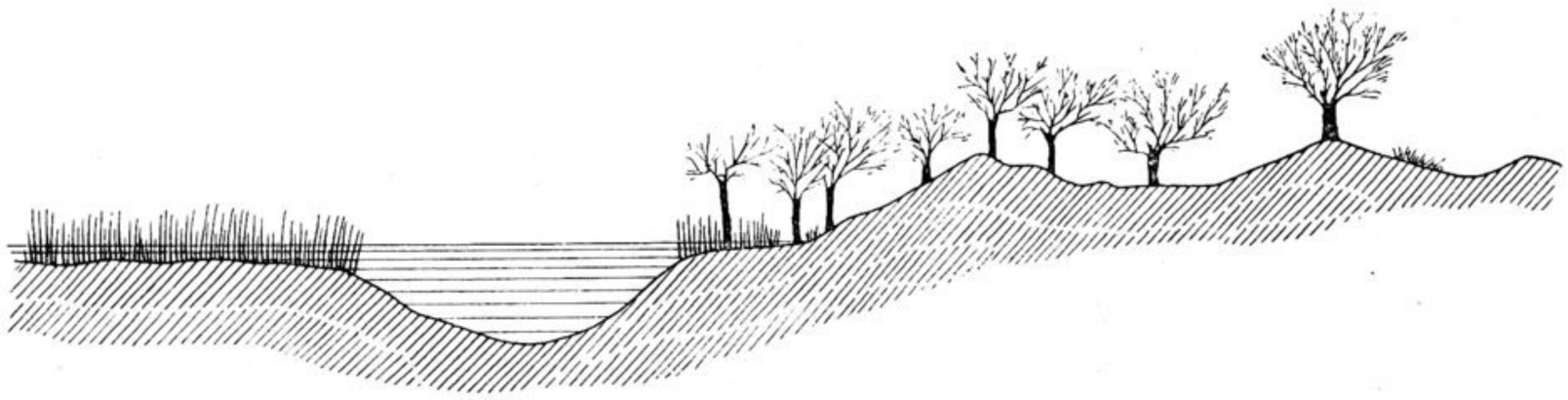


Fig. 426. SCATTERED KAMISCH IN THE OPEN PARTS OF KARA-KÖL.

projecting anywhere above the surface. On the other hand, the reeds frequently grow in 2 to 3 m. depth of water, and stick up in clumps and sheaves. This great mass of kamisch extends southwards until it comes into contact with the kamisch-beds of the Suji-sarik-köl; were it not for this obstacle one would be able to paddle out of the one lake into the other. In fact, the two really constitute but one lake, the only division between them being the kamisch, and their difference of name. The word *köl* means in general those parts only into which canoes are able to penetrate, and fishing and egg-collecting can be carried on. On the east the Kara-köl is separated from the northern part of the Tajek-köl by a strip of land.



WEST Fig. 427. THE ILEK A LITTLE BELOW SCHARKURUN. EAST

In the clear water of the Kara-köl I made an interesting observation. The roots of the kamisch and various parts of decaying vegetation, mingled with clay, ooze, and mud from the bottom, become matted and stuck together in pretty big cakes, which partly swim on the surface, partly float just underneath it, and sometimes are so large that they appear capable of supporting the weight of a man. These the natives call *sim*. Thus in these marshes and lakes there is taking place unceasingly a not inconsiderable formation of turf. Hydrographically this *sim* plays of course an important part. As the result of decomposition, gas is developed; this causes the sim to rise to the surface, and so great is their power of transportation that they even bring with them clay, mud, sand, and other material that have settled