

med. Beyond Säfar the roots of Naser Bek's genealogical tree cannot be followed. The natives themselves were disposed to trace the existing population of that part of the country of Lop, which is known to both Chinese and Mongols as Lop-nor, and the natural centre of which is Tikenlik, in contradistinction to Kara-koschun, which is the name of the southern Lop country — they were disposed to trace them back to two *atta*, or »ancestors», of the seventh degree, namely Säfar and Kujuk. Naser Bek and several other families in Tikenlik, Junus Bek and several others in Laj-su — have all sprung, together with yet others, from Säfar; while the people who dwell at Ullugh-köl, Jangi-köl, Ak-tarma, and various other places trace their descent from Kujuk. On the other hand, the present inhabitants of Tusun-tschapghan are said to bear a great resemblance, in their features, their dress, and their

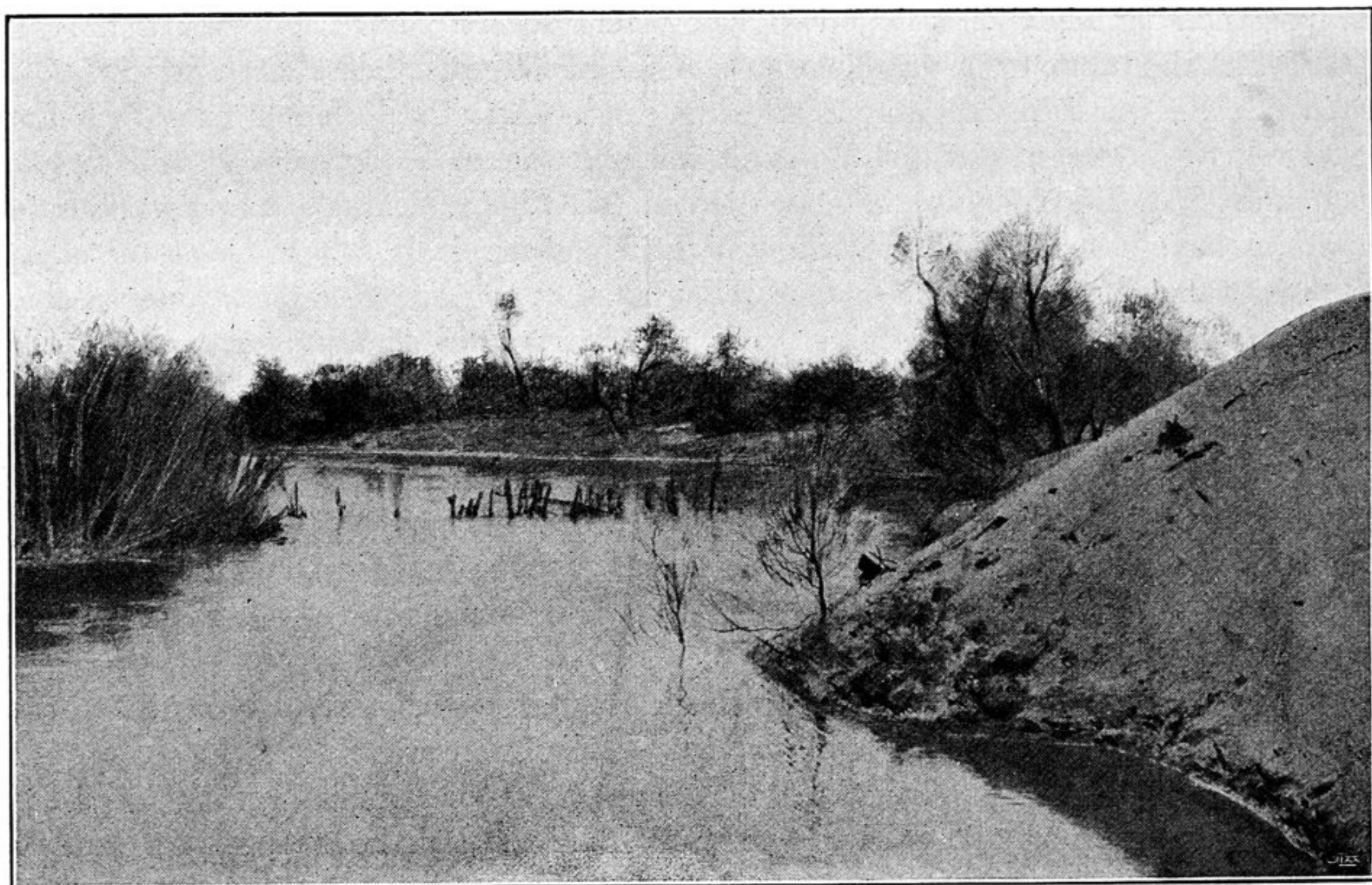


Fig. 445. THE TRACES OF AN OLD DAM IN KALMAK-OTTOGHO.

manner of life, to Mongols. It cannot for one moment be doubted that the Lop people are a mixed race, showing both eastern and western affinities. Local tradition believes that the pretext which first brought Säfar to Tikenlik was the search for fresh fishing-grounds, the lakes beside which he had previously dwelt having dried up. The village of Lop near Chotan is said to have been founded by Lop-men from the neighbourhood of Tscharklik, who fled before an epidemic; it may be affirmed, with almost equal certainty, that the village of Lop near Kara-buran was likewise founded by colonists from the region of the old Lop-nor. The natives have a common apothegm — »Kirk jil ärne bakte, kirk jil järne bakte», meaning, »Forty years it travels, forty years it keeps its place»; that is to say, the river does not remain constant to one channel for longer than forty years at a time. This