

CHAPTER IX.

THE WATERS TO THE NORTH OF THE KARA-KOSCHUN.

Of the long course of the Tarim which we have hitherto followed bit by bit through East Turkestan, there remains now only a very short portion for me to describe. But instead of proceeding to describe straight away the embouchure of the river into the marsh of Kara-koschun I have preferred to record in chronological order the observations I made in its vicinity. This will however in no wise impair the general view, but will on the contrary facilitate the use of the atlas, which it is the object of this explanatory text to accompany as faithfully as possible.

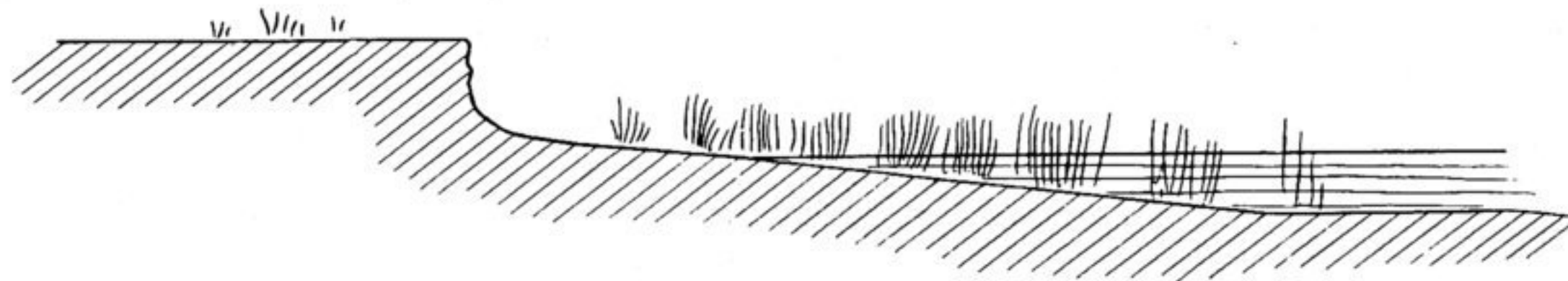


Fig. 82. VERTICAL SECTION OF THE SHORE AT CAMP XXI.

Let us, then, turn to the 2nd April 1900, when, after crossing the Desert of Lop from north-east to south-west, we approached the northern shore of the Karakoschun, and made our Camp No. XXI. Here we had before us a pretty extensive sheet of water, the basin of Kanat-baghlaghan-köl, and as it was of a dark green colour, I thought it might be of considerable depth, deeper perhaps than the Karakoschun. The region was completely uninhabited, not a sign to indicate that human beings ever visited that part of the world. But as I was resolved at all costs to take a series of soundings across the lake, we improvised a sort of raft out of the pack-saddles of our camels and *tulums*, or »goat-skin bags», for holding water. It is true, there was *kötäk* of both *toghrak* and *tamarisk* in two or three places, but although this appears to be as light as cork, it nevertheless sinks in water; for soft, porous, and cracked though it is, its every pore and crevice is packed full of drift-sand. Although the grey split wood is excellent for burning, it is unsuited for raft-building.

Next morning the wind blew with a velocity of 9.9 m. in the second from the N. 57° E.; and was therefore just right to carry us across the lake. Accordingly we made our way N. 60° E. along the shore. The opposite or south-