

as flat as a table top. In that direction there is no sand visible, not even the smallest or most rudimentary dune. Consequently the sand which the storms sweep across the desert from the north-east and east-north-east does not stay here, but is driven on farther. Except for an infinitesimal quantity detained by the belt of vegetation alluded to, the main mass is blown straight out into the lake.

About half-way along the north shore we came upon another hut, divided into two rooms, and built, like the others, on the sand, though this stood almost upon its very surface. Glancing southwards, we might have imagined ourselves on the shore of an oceanic bay: the wide expanse of water disappeared in the mist and of the opposite shore not a vestige was visible.

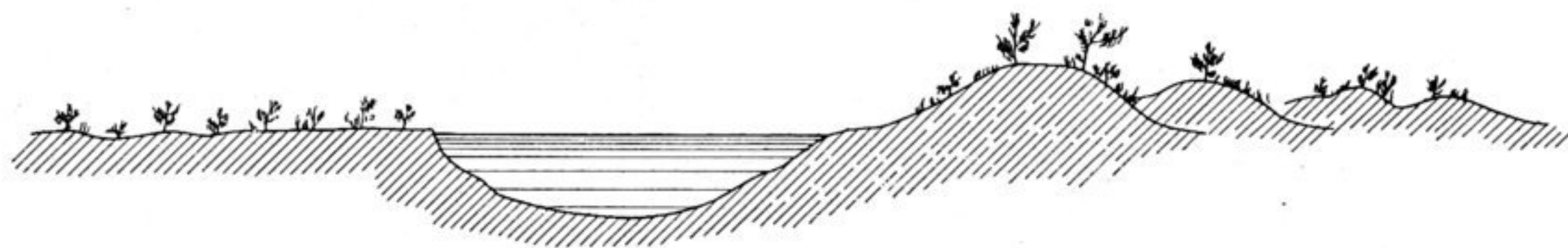


Fig. 117.

Then, crossing over the root of a cape, we came to another smaller lake. On the right we passed a hollow, resembling in shape a very short river-bed, but so deep that the water in it was of a dark green colour; it was clearly very much deeper than the adjacent lake, with which it had recently been in communication, for they were united by a channel one meter broad and half a meter deep, and running N. 10° E., though the connection is now severed. Eventually this lake too came to an end, that is to say it turned off to the south, and we then passed on to a stretch of barren schor desert, and a second depression resembling an old river-bed, deep and full of water, but completely cut off from the lakes. A certain amount of sand had accumulated on its north-east shore, and there the tamarisks were growing on mounds nearly two meters in height (fig. 117). As we proceeded we passed on our left several shallow sheets of water, small lakes and pools, all barren and salt, and there were two or three also on the right. As a rule the ground consisted of hard, rough schor, which seriously hampered our march. We passed several broad, shallow trenches, recently formed by overflow water. This however had not got very far towards the north before it was absorbed by the thirsty ground, which was perfectly dry at only one or two dozen meters from the water-line. Sometimes however, in spots that lay a trifle below the water-level, the moisture showed on the surface as darker patches upon the grey saliferous clay. We pitched Camp No. CLXVII amongst some tamarisks, encircled by low dunes. Judging from the signs we saw there, the locality was frequented by wild-boar, antelopes, foxes, and hares; while wild-duck were numerous, and frequently flew off to the north. In the vicinity we discovered a little lake, whose water had a specific gravity of 1.0058.

On 21st March we discovered another lake-basin immediately south-south-west of our camp, with an abundance of kamisch growing in two of its bays. Tamarisks and other vegetation were more general than they had been, as also traces of game. Along the shore were several small lagoons disconnected from the lake. The country thereabouts appeared to have been recently overflowed. All these scattered sheets