

shall return again later on. I will here only add, that the locality where we found the stake is fully 27 km. from the northern shore of the Kara-koschun, and that the ground slopes southwards the whole way from the former to the latter.

On the terraced banks of the channels near which we pitched Camp No. CLXIV we failed to detect any traces of plant-life; even the kamisch-stubble which is so plentiful in the northern lake-basins was absent. But the presence of the mollusc-shells makes it probable, that vegetation grew there formerly.

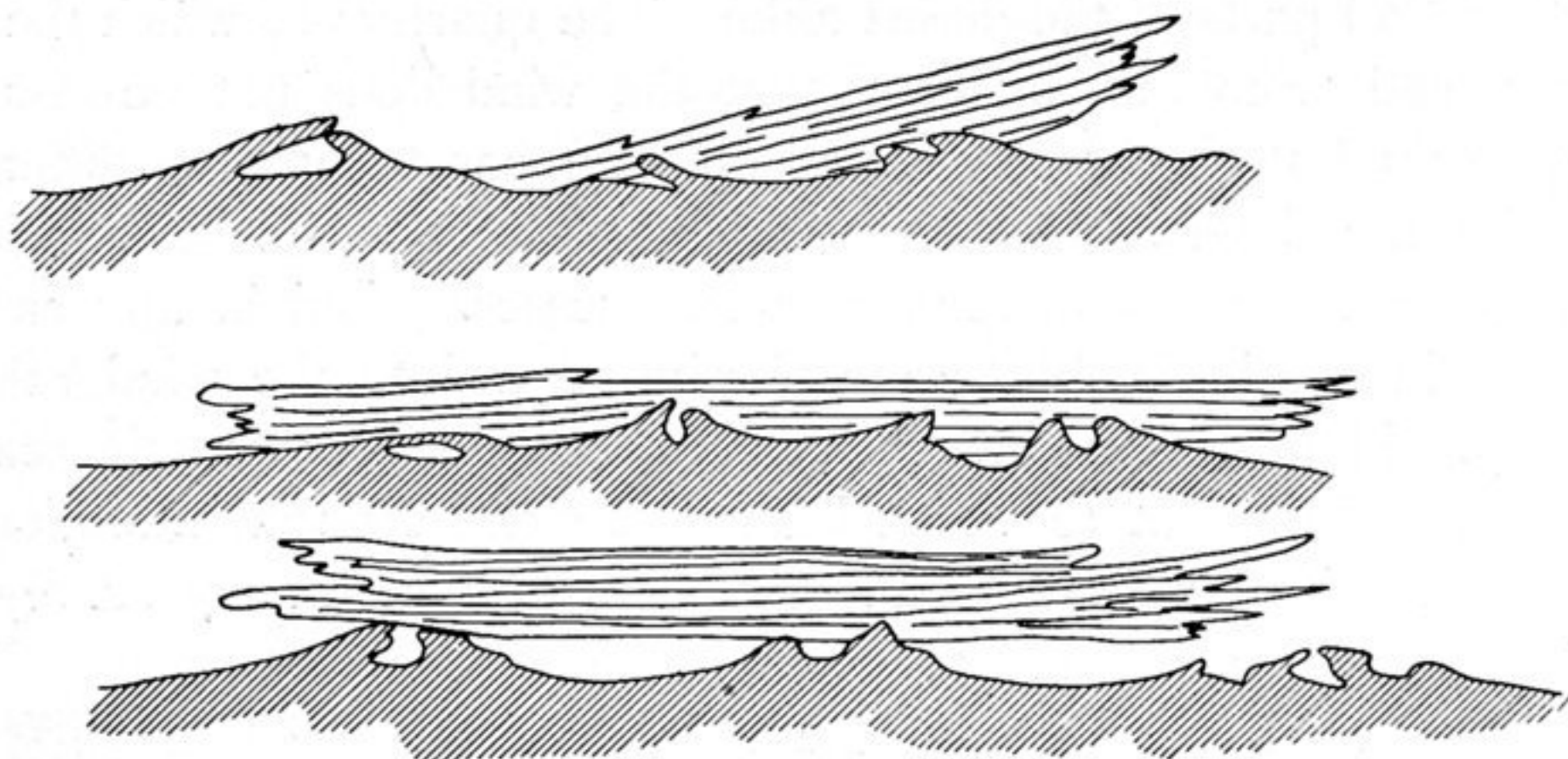


Fig. 154. POPLAR TRUNKS IN THE SCHOR DESERT.

During the latter half of the day's march we passed ten poplar trunks of different dimensions, two or three being of unusual circumference. Most of them were more or less buried in the schor, two only half buried, and two others almost entirely free and lying on the surface. These tree-trunks, which occurred at considerable distances apart, were drift-wood, and had been brought there by the Tarim, and had then floated about on the lake until they grounded. They could not very well have come from the south, at all events during the Kara-koschun period. In the Kara-koschun itself there are no signs of toghrak drift-wood; the poplars which now float down the Tarim ground in the Kara-buran, and east of that lake there are none to be found. The more probable explanation is, that the toghrak-trunks I am speaking of belong to the period when the Tokus-tarim emptied itself into the Utschu-köl, for poplar-forests did grow along that river-system.

On the 16th March we travelled 16,271 meters, towards the S. 2.27° W., the surface descending 2.172 m. from the last preceding camp. Hence we were now distinctly approaching the depression in which the lake of the Kara-koschun is situated. During the first half of the day's journey the desert exhibited the same features as before; but eventually a change took place, and the indications of former shore-lines became more and more distinct. We crossed three quite narrow belts of tamarisks, extending south-west, that is parallel to the present shore of the Kara-koschun. Towards the north-east however and at no great distance they appeared to thin out and come to end, unless they were gaps which we noticed in that direction. The first and most northerly of these tamarisk-belts appeared to accompany