

is quite filled up with salt, and even to some extent also with sand and mud — these being introduced by the other streams from the east — then it will be the turn of the upper lake to become salt. But since we know, independently of this, that all the lakes of Tibet are decreasing in consequence of climatic changes, it is to be supposed that there is also a secular diminution of the inflow into the upper of these two lakes, the consequence being that there is also a diminished flow between it and the lower lake. Hence the probable goal towards which the hydrographical circulation of this basin is tending is, that the inflow from the upper lake will some day cease entirely, and that it will then enter upon the same stadium which the lower lake is now passing through; while at the same time the latter will be converted into a dry salt pan, which, through the agency of the wind and the continued weathering, will become covered with soft, loose matter, and possibly also with dunes. Yet a considerable period must elapse before that stadium will begin, for at present there is still a pretty copious discharge from the upper lake.

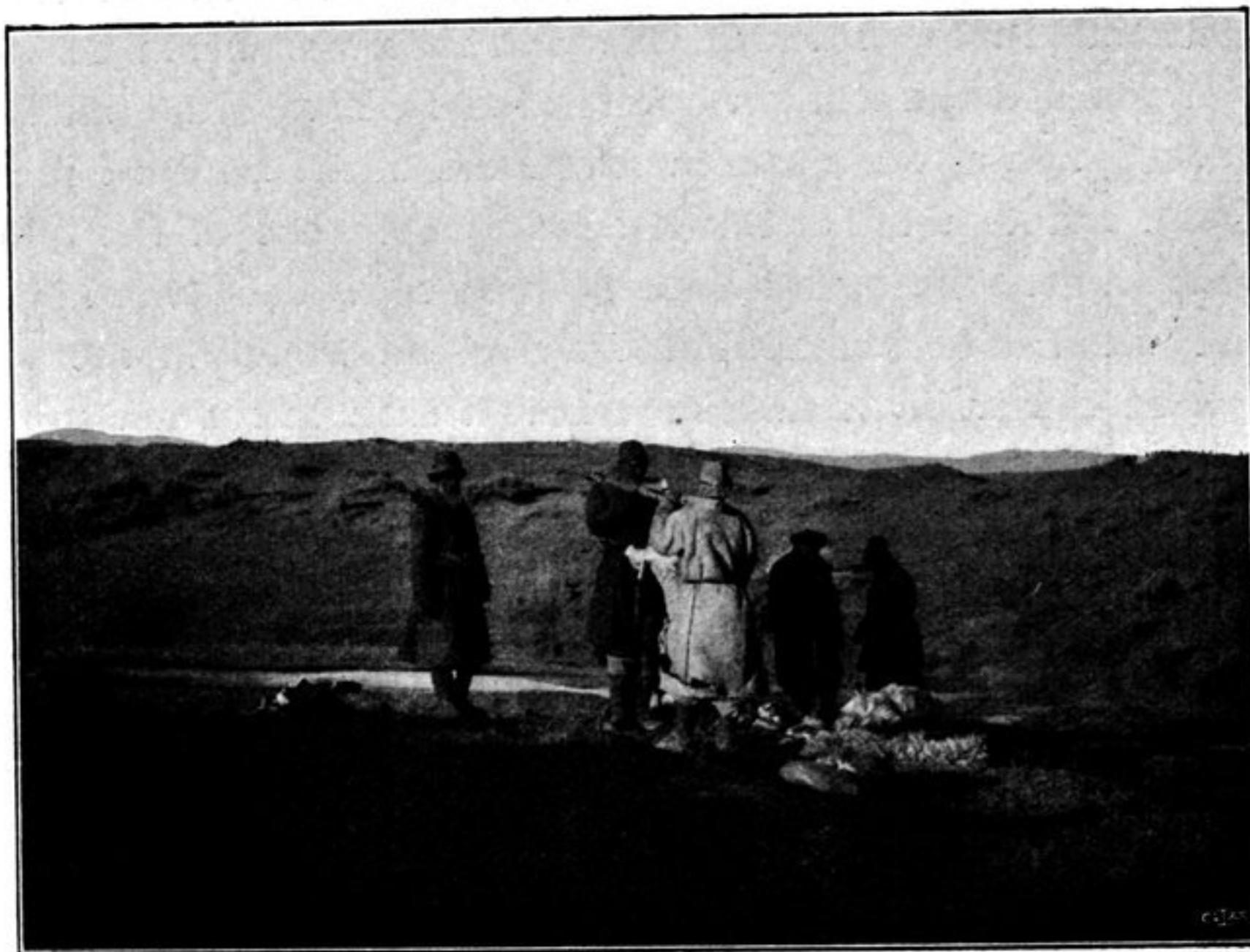


Fig. 85. SKINNING A SHEEP.

If now, as I have supposed, the salt lake for the most part disappears during the winter, then, even before this happens or rather as soon as the lake level has dropped 1.19 m., the shallow threshold between the horns of the estuary will be laid bare; yet not entirely so, for the water will still continue to flow through the trough in the middle of the passage, although in diminishing quantity as the winter advances. At the same time it is of course impossible for the salt water to penetrate into the two basins, which consequently get rid of their salt water, until in the end they probably become fresh. It is not improbable that all inflow into the lower lake ceases entirely owing to the water freezing in the shallower parts of the narrow passage.

In some respects these twin lakes and their basin bear a certain resemblance to the basin of Kum-köl; that is to say there exists a certain symmetry between