

skins. A wolf got caught in the trap (*tosghak*) and dragged it after him on the ice across the lake at the part where it is broadest. At the part indicated the breadth was stated to be such that a man on the one side could just discern a yak or a horse on the opposite shore looking like a tiny black dot. Seeing then that the statements about the lake were so conflicting, I took with me my canvas-boat, intending to send it back to Temirlik when done with.



Fig. 200. VERTICAL SECTION OF THE SAME.

Not far from Tschigelik-kasch we passed some large sheets of glittering ice, formed by the brooks that we had crossed over the day before. On the left we had a stretch of clay hills, which however did not extend very far. After that the surface was again flat, its slope down towards the lake being quite imperceptible to the eye. It was however objectionable to march on, consisting as it did of lumpy schor, cracked and broken into holes and ridges, and furrowed at intervals by watercourses that wind away down towards the lake. Sometimes however riding was rendered easier by the kulan tracks, which crossed one another in every direction and grew increasingly more numerous the farther we advanced towards the south; and to our left we now saw large troops of kulans. It was astonishing that they should stay in such a barren country, where the scanty kamisch, which occurs in patches was eaten off level with the ground. Hares too were plentiful.

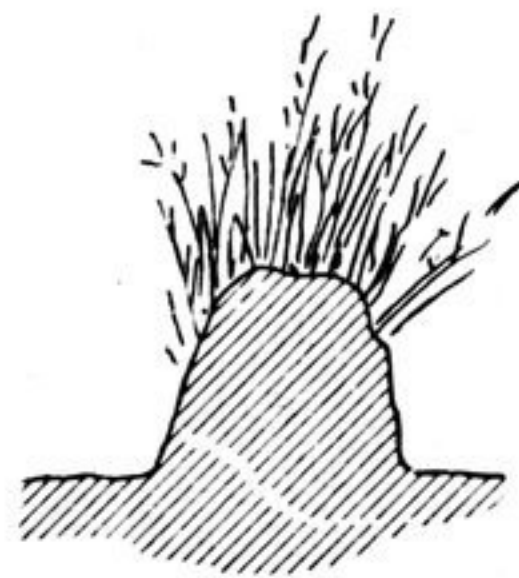


Fig. 201.

Next we traversed at right angles a strip of mounds, crowned by decaying or already dead tamarisks. This strip of vegetation is now situated in the middle of the salt desert that surrounds the lake, and no doubt the lake was formerly bigger and reached as far as where these tamarisks now stand, or else they stood formerly on the bank of some brook which subsequently altered its course. The cause of their dying is of course in either case retrogression of the water. The schor on the southern side of this belt of vegetation assumes a somewhat different appearance. Although it still remains lumpy, it is at the same time soft and dark brown, to the eye quite level and almost *au niveau* with the surface of the lake, which in the far distance looked like a faint white line.

We then crossed over another frozen brook, surrounded by patches of ice, and issuing from the Sasik-jar. From this position we perceived to the S. 74° W. the culminating point of the Kara-tschoka; while to the S. 9° W. rose a peak of the Tschimen-tagh at the right side of the entrance to the glen of Korumluk. But the loftiest mountain in the entire region is the Schia-manglaj.

Then we approached a region of ice-sheets, stretching in every direction; between them were ice-free stretches, in which the soil was so soft and miry that our animals sank in up to the knees. Where the ice bore, it was better to keep to it, but often it was as thin as paper and broke under us. These sheets of ice