

flow into the Ajiklik-köl, a small freshwater lake lying west of the Ghas-köl, which is reported to be almost entirely overgrown with kamisch and to possess treacherous shores, marshy morasses with an abundance of vegetation. From the eastern end of the Ajiklik-köl there issues an emissary which discharges into the extreme western part of the Ghas-köl. The Sasik-jar and the Kurghan-ileghi are said to unite a long way farther down, and to empty themselves at the north-west corner of the lake. The main stream, beside which we were encamped, forms a delta of flat alluvia projecting into the lake. Seeing how clear the spring water is, it is astonishing to find such a delta; but probably it is due to an intermingling of rain-water, which occasionally comes down by these same spring-fed watercourses. The river was covered with ice 26 cm. thick, clear and full of bubbles. Its bottom was extremely shallow and the country on both sides of it appeared to lie lower than the river itself, though this may have been an illusion, caused by the arched icy covering having been uplifted somewhat by the underflowing current (fig. 205). At the edges of the river the ice-sheets did not touch the bank, but the edge was sharp and tapering as a sword-blade (fig. 206). I was unable to ascertain anything definite with regard to the salinity of the lake. In a specimen of the water which we took as far out as the ice would bear, the areometer gave a sp. gr. of 1,096.

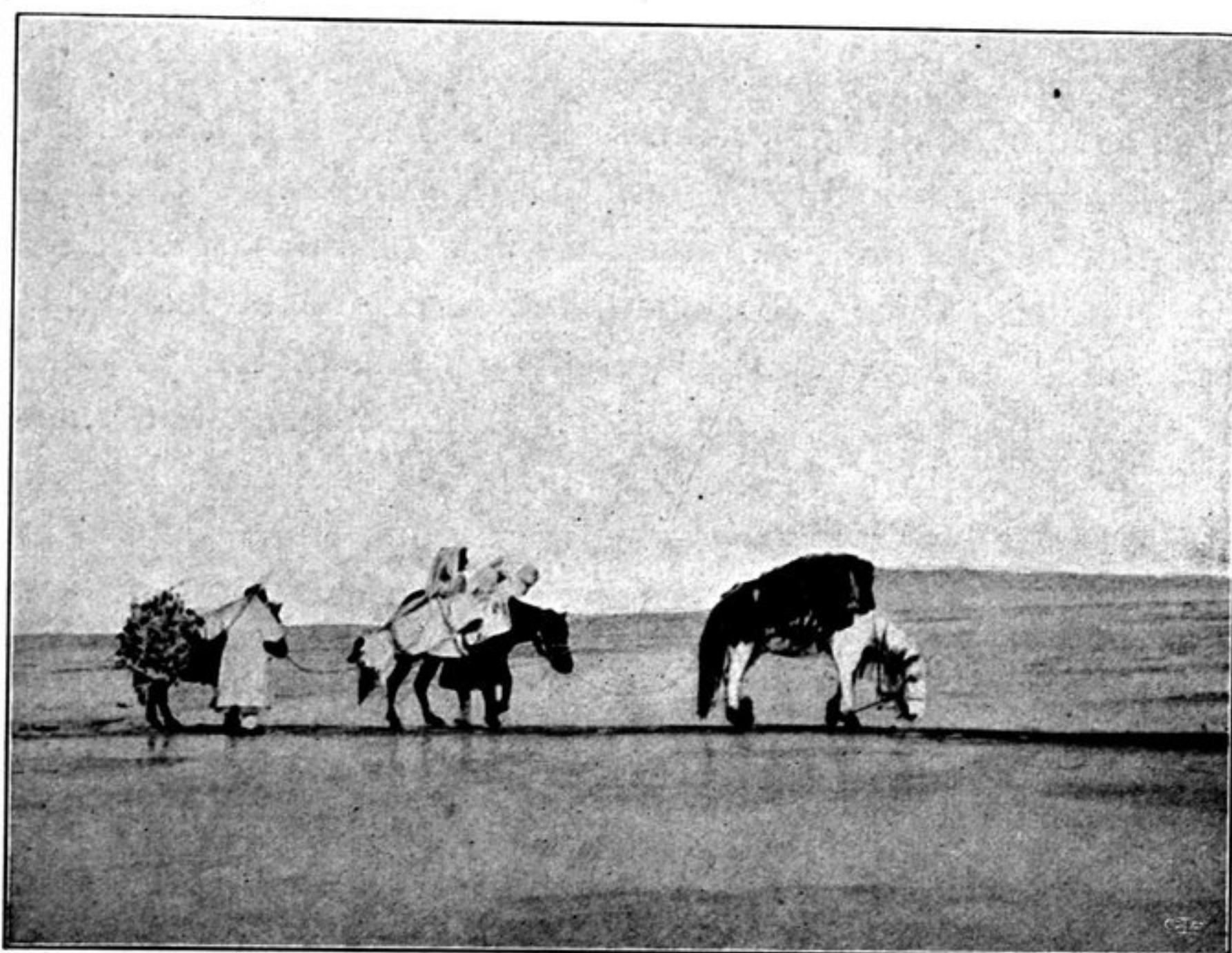


Fig. 204. WE MAKE A SAND PATH OVER THE ICE OF THE RIVER.

Yet as this was taken quite close to the river-mouth, it may be inferred that the water in the eastern parts of the lake must be extraordinarily salt, and it is probable that it never freezes there. If it does freeze, it will be because the fresh river water spreads itself out as a thin sheet all over the lake.

With the view of supplementing what I have said above, I will now add certain information derived from the natives, though this is not always so reliable.