they thin out in a remarkable way. By preference they appear to establish themselves on that side of the rocky, stony promontories on which you would expect that they would find the smallest amount of nourishment and would be most exposed to the wind. As a rule, it may be said, that on these stony slopes the fresh and still living balghun bushes grow down at the bottom, only a few meters above the water; a little higher up they languish and appear to be on the point of perishing; while towards the top of the slope they are withered and dried up, nothing being left except the stumps and knots of old roots and stems, often of considerable size. Owing to the frequency with which this arrangement recurs, it cannot be the result of pure chance. The impression is borne in upon the observer, that the bushes which are now withered died in consequence of the recession and subsidence of the lake, with the result that their roots no longer reach down to the level of the water (fig. 225). Those in the middle zone are on the point of losing this connection; whereas those in the lowest zone are still fresh because they are able to satisfy their need for water. It is also noticeable, that the higher up the bushes are situated, the bigger they are, the explanation, no doubt, being that towards the bottom of the slope these are still so young that they have not yet reached the full period of growth, whereas those towards the top were fully mature and perfectly developed before they withered and died. Thus the vegetation also seems to afford an indirect proof, that the Panggong-tso is subsiding, though this stadium is of comparatively recent date.

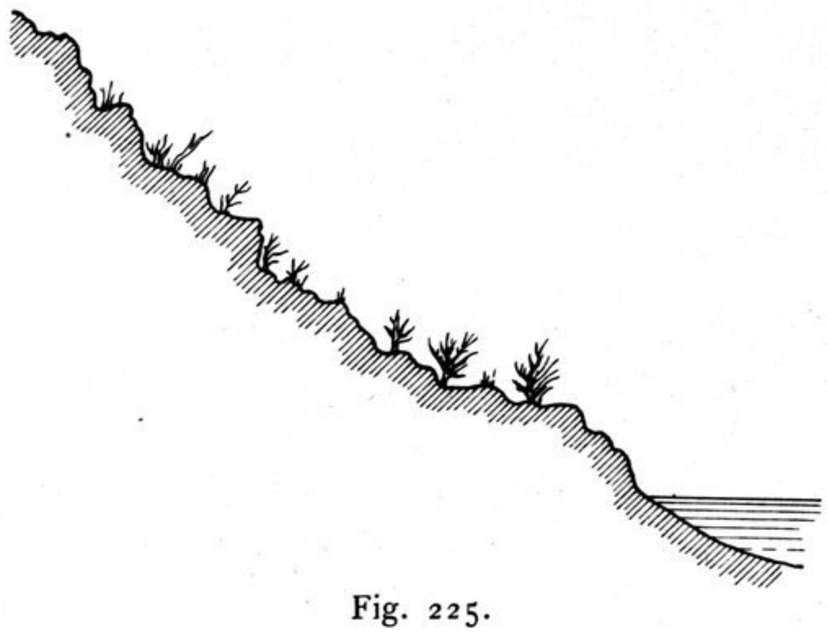

Fig. 225.

Here, in this eastern part of the lake, we soon discovered that the salinity is so slight that it is not even inimical to organic life. Wild-duck were quite common on its shores. And there evidently are Algæ; at all events we saw them cast up here and there on the shore. At low places, where the shore-line curves, we found vast quantities of mollusc shells, and they were bigger than any that we had hitherto seen. In one place we observed specimens of the usual Crustaceans. On the other hand we observed no fish; presumably the water is too salt for them. The grass was on the whole bad; further on teresken and other hard scrubby steppe plants occurred.

On those parts of the southern shore which lie more exposed to the west we frequently observed distinct lines, showing where old strand-terraces had been. In one place there were seven such lines one above the other, the highest of which appeared to correspond to that which we last measured.

A blunted cape occasioned us no difficulty in getting past it, because at the foot of the mountain was a steep scree of stones. Everywhere where they reach all the way down to the water's edge, these stones were panoplied as it were with ice, each individual piece being capped or crowned with a thick, white coverlet, and