

entirely abandoned, and is converted into a *boldschemal* («deadwater» or «backwater»). One consequence of this activity is that the country through which the river carves its way becomes still further levelled down. In the course of the subjoined description of the Jarkent-darja and the Tarim we shall several times have occasion to dwell upon similar abandoned loops. That the belt of forest which accompanies the Tarim is as broad as it actually is, probably depends in no slight degree upon the river's instability, and its aversion to persist for any length of time in one and the same bed.



Fig. 20. A PART OF THE KÖTAKLIK-DARJA.

A short distance below Schakkal-otak the river shed off on the right an arm which was 10 m. wide at its inception, and was contained between steep banks. Although shallow, it nevertheless carried, for a short distance, a volume of some cubic metres of foaming water, which however speedily found its way back into the main stream. Possibly it owed its origin in the first instance to an artificial canal, which has been gradually widened and deepened by the natural action of the water. The greater velocity of its current was due to the straightness of its bed, and the fact that it lost none of its energy in getting round extensive curves. In all probability the main current will soon gravitate into this short cut. Immediately above the point where it struck off the depth of the main stream amounted to 6 m. and more.

In this particular section of its course the Jarkent-darja displays in general an exceptional degree of restlessness and energy. Not very far below the point of bifurcation I have just dwelt upon, the river divides again, having four years previously carved out for itself a new channel on the right of its former bed. The two arms unite again virtually opposite to Aksak-maral. At the distance of one or two kilometres below the point of bifurcation there is led off from the old bed, the Kona-darja, the big artificially made canal which carries irrigation water to the fields of Maral-baschi. But since the stream abandoned the old channel, the people have found it necessary every spring to construct a dam across the mouth of the