

October 25th. During the last 43 hours the river only dropped 1.65 cm. The transparency amounted at 7 a. m. to 23.6 cm. and at 1 p. m. to 19.4 cm. At Matan the scarped banks were 2.84 m. high. This place consisted of five homesteads or families, who, besides owning 30 sheep and 12 cows, grow wheat and barley at Bisch-täräk-köl. These people call the great desert to the south Terkerken, and report that it is 40 km. to the high barren sand-dunes. A short distance from the right bank lies the lake of Tala-köl, or Desert Lake. It may be worth mentioning, that the road from Matan to Avat traverses the *beklik* or »beg's district» of Goro-tschöl, which embraces some 700 families, and Ara-gerem, a village which is immediately subject to Avat. Between Matan and Ak-su the road touches, or crosses, or passes through the following: — the village of Üjme, a *kona-darja* or old river-bed, the villages of Kum-arik, Telve, Kum-basch, and Topluk, the masar of Kuschtsche-gumbesi, the *lenger*, or »station»-house, of Bisch-arik, situated on the main high-road, Ibrahim Häkim-lengeri, Jangi-darja (an arm of the Ak-su-darja), Tolan-köbrügi, and finally Jangi-schahr, the Chinese quarter of Ak-su. In the spring timber is generally floated down to Ak-su from the forests higher up the stream. It was on the basis of experience gained in that connection that our guide was able to estimate the time we should take to drift down to Avat.

At Matan it was expected that, in accordance with its usual practice, the river would begin to rise in about ten days, or early in November; for it is then that the overflow from the irrigation canals begins to make its presence felt, through the subterranean springs and watercourses, in the Jarkent-darja. The river here would begin to freeze, I was told, in about 40 or 50 days, but it would be two months before the Ak-su-darja froze; for, owing to its greater velocity, it is always at least ten days behind the slower-moving Jarkent-darja in feeling the full effects of the frost. The forests in this locality harbour stags, antelopes, roe-deer, wild-boar, hares, lynxes, pheasants, and various other varieties of game, though the tiger is said not to show himself there. None of the natives had ever seen a wild camel in this neighbourhood; whence it would almost seem as though this special inhabitant of the desert never ventured to approach the streams of the Tarim system. The only spot where the wild camel occurs in any numbers is around the point where the Kerija-darja finally becomes lost in the sand.

The Jarkent-darja still preserved its specific peculiarities, though the bends were not particularly sharp. Almost everywhere the high-water banks were plainly distinguishable, and the actual current meandered zigzag backwards and forwards from side to side of the river-bed, though its edges were often masked by steppe vegetation and underwoods. During the day we passed five abandoned loops, containing pools and islands. The local name for these small lagoons of stagnant water is *darja-taschkan-köl*, i. e. »lake which the river has flung away». Sometimes, in addition to the usual kamisch, the alluvial deposits next the convex parts of the banks, are also diversified by sand-dunes. In all probability these are spots which escape inundation at high water, otherwise the stream would wash the sand away before it had time to accumulate. Besides, those parts of the river-bed which are destitute of both vegetation and drift-sand bear unmistakable signs of having been under water. As a general rule, at the period of full flood the river-bed is brimming full from bank to bank.