

CHAPTER V.

HYDROGRAPHIC RELATIONS OF THE JARKENT-DARJA
AND THE AK-SU-DARJA.

Shortly before the actual confluence the Jarkent-darja makes an unexpected turn to the north-west. At the same spot the Ak-su-darja, although its general course is south-east, flows to the east-north-east; then, bending suddenly south to within a few hundred meters of the Jarkent-darja, it approaches the actual confluence from the west-south-west. It seems likely, that this southward bend will, under the pressure of the water behind it, advance still farther in the same direction, so that eventually the confluence of the two streams will probably take place higher up the Jarkent-darja. From the point of junction, the united stream, which henceforward may be called the Tarim, preserves the dominant direction of the Ak-su-darja, that is towards the east-north-east, without being in the slightest degree diverted or affected by the sister stream. In fact, the Jarkent-darja, notwithstanding the considerable volume it carries in the summer, has not been able to form a single loop towards the north. This circumstance alone would justify the supposition, that the Ak-su-darja is the more powerful stream of the two. Indeed, the natives had all along asserted, that at all seasons of the year the Ak-su-darja has a bigger flood than the Jarkent-darja. When on 30th May 1895 I crossed over the latter a little above the confluence, I was amazed to find that, imposing stream though it was at the city of Jarkent, its volume at the crossing measured no more than 7.5 cub. m. in the second. Now on October 26th we obtained a volume of 14.96 cub. m., or precisely twice as much. The period of high water falls exactly between these two dates; and 7.5 cub. m. may be regarded as the spring minimum, for the various dams have then already begun to divert the bulk of the stream into the canals of Maral-baschi, and the double volume of 14 to 15 cub. m. as the minimum for the autumn, for, as I have already said, it was expected that the river would soon begin to rise again in consequence of the re-entry of the water from the irrigation canals. The dams, it is true, are the means of draining enormous quantities of water away from