

when it strikes the Ak-su-darja, it is actually turned back, at any rate on the surface, so much more powerful is the current of the latter river. The adjacent banks show the characteristic steppe and underwoods, and the country behind them is open. In two or three places we perceived fresh tiger-tracks. A little higher up, the river is crossed by the road from Chotan to Ak-su. This road, beginning in the district of Sil on the lower Chotan-darja, follows thence an old bed of this river, which is now completely dry and in part sanded up, passing on the way through dense, luxuriant toghrak woods, which are visible from the lower course of the Jarkent-darja, though they do not reach all the way to it. After crossing over to the other side the road continues up the right bank of the Ak-su-darja to Avat. This town, which is stated to consist of 1024 families under the rule of a bek, contains a bazar. Its irrigation interests are looked after by a *mirab*, or »water superintendent».

Here it may be convenient to add a few further particulars which I gleaned from two or three natives of the locality. It was expected, that the Jarkent-darja would freeze in about 45 days, that is to say, about the 11th December, and the Ak-su-darja about the 21st of the same month. There is always a difference of about ten days between them in this respect, because of the greater velocity of the Ak-su-darja. The ice does not however remain, at the most, longer than three months. In the summer the water of the Ak-su-darja is always colder than that of the Jarkent-darja, though in the late autumn the difference disappears. The maximum summer flood of the Ak-su-darja reaches the confluence two weeks earlier than the summer flood of the Jarkent-darja. The water of the former stream is always turbid, and carries in suspension a large amount of sedimentary matter; whereas the latter, by reason of its more sluggish flow and its smaller volume, occasioning in consequence less extensive erosion of the containing banks, always has the clearer water. The chief topographical names on the left bank of the lower Ak-su-darja are as follows: — Ak-tschakil, Jäti-germe, Sugetlik, Kalaghatsch-jalangi, Masardung, Goro-tschöl-kemisi, Taghar-aghisi, Imam Padischahim-kemisi, Dung-kischlak, Kara-tal; and on the right bank: Aral, Schupurluk, Gais Bek-temi, and Imam Bet Ali Ghasim-masar. In each case the enumeration proceeds up-stream. The two places whose names end in the suffix *kemisi* (»ferry») are crossing places. Higher up, nearer Ak-su, the current is too swift to admit of the use of ferry-boats.

When the Ak-su-darja flood arrives, it advances up the Jarkent-darja as high as Jesi-köl, and no doubt occasions a perceptible »bore» or flood-wave a considerable distance higher up than that; and considering the steeper fall in the bed of the Ak-su-darja and the extremely gentle fall of the Jarkent-darja, it may be assumed, that this flood-wave has not entirely spent itself when it encounters the descending high flood of the latter stream.

As I have already said, the bed of the Ak-su-darja at the confluence is of immense width, so wide in fact that the woods on its left bank appear in the distance like a dark line merely. At their foot however lie, stretching a long way out towards the middle of the river, vast alluvial formations in the shape of immense deposits of silt and sand, of a light grey tint. These are traversed by a side-arm of the river, the main current flowing close in to the right bank. On the