

just at the time we passed was engaged in transporting across the river two or three shepherds and some sheep, and a baj with a couple of horses. These bajs own some 10,000 sheep, then grazing on the right bank; and the ferry-boat, which belongs to them, and is constructed of toghrak planks, and worked by a punting oar at the stern, is used to carry the sheep backwards and forwards.

Just below this point a very large river-bed, known as the Lajlik-darja, is shed off to the right. So far as is known, it does not rejoin the main stream. The small dribble of water which, at the season of high flood, finds its way into this deserted branch, is what is called *taschkan-su*, or »water flung away». I think it, however, not only possible, but probable, that the Lajlik-darja is identical with the Atschik-darja, the bed of which I crossed in 1896 whilst on my way from the Kerija-darja to Schah-jar.

After that the right bank is called Tumurluk, and the left bank Uruk-bälik, whence it is 11 km. to the sand-belt of Kisil-kum. On both banks there are shepherds. Then follow Boghu-baschi on the right, and Kara-toghkak on the left. At Kara-toghkakning-kemisi there is another ferry, with a ferry-boat of the same type as the last I mentioned, 9 m. long, 1.2 m. broad in the forepart and 3 m. in the stern, and capable of carrying over five horses at once. Hereabouts the river was very narrow, and the current so swift that in two or three places it actually broke into rapids. Next on the right we had the steppe of Ak-jar, with a belt of forest, Manan-kotan, standing a little way back from the river. Thence it is about 35 km. to the great sandy desert. The left bank is bordered by a belt of sand, the Ala-kum, which in all probability is somehow connected with the Kisil-kum, and between it and the river lies a tract of country covered with tamarisks, and known as Jol-aghsi, »the Mouth of the Road», indicating that a road here strikes the Tarim. The river then describes a long arc of wide radius until it comes to Läschlik, where it suddenly turns at a right angle. In this locality there are alluvial deposits of vast extent under the left bank.

During the day the course of the river had been towards the north-north-east. The banks were clothed with fields of yellowing kamisch. The soil was saliferous, and white on the surface. Tamarisks were especially numerous. In the immediate vicinity of the river the poplars occurred in small clumps only; the continuous forest still stood a certain distance back from it, and seldom approached it — in sharp contrast to the forests beside the Jarkent-darja. Although the season was so far advanced, the banks still continued to suffer severely from the erosive energy of the current. This is especially the case where they are of a sandy nature, or where the sand-dunes actually reach down to the brink of the stream. In these places they are being incessantly undermined, and we not only saw them, we also heard them, caving in and being carried away wholesale. At times, just whenever the falling earth came into contact with the water, the margin of the river actually appeared to smoke. Where clay formations, or formations of clay mingled with sand, are predominant, the banks do not crumble, they break down in big slices.

November 2nd. During the night the river dropped 3.43 cm.; the transparency was 13.5 cm. at 7 a. m. and 7.6 cm. at 1 p. m., this latter measurement being taken in the Jangi-darja, which was choked with sedimentary matter. At Läschlik