

It is here about 40 km. southwards to the great sandy desert, but at half that distance lies the Lajlik-darjasi. This, like the southern Atschik-darja, is reported to carry a little water at the height of the summer, though in autumn and winter it all disappears, except for a few isolated pools. This information points to the two channels being distinct. But whilst travelling from the Kerija-darja to Schah-jar on my former journey I crossed first a river-bed called the Atschik-darja, and after that three minor watercourses. The hydrographic relations here are not clear, but in all probability there is only one principal arm, namely the Lajlik-darjasi, which sheds off the Atschik-darja, and then, subsequently, the minor channels which run north of it.

Above the bifurcation of the Tarim there is on the left bank a sand-dune, Kade-dung, with some poplars. After that we had, on the right bank, Koj-baschi, Sägislik, and Schaklik, and again on the left Matischim-dung and Bitschanlik. Schaklik stands on the boundary between the provinces of Ak-su and Schah-jar. At first sight, it may appear strange that the banks of a river only three or four years old should have attained to the dignity of distinctive names. Yet it is in reality not so very surprising after all; for some of these regions may have borne names already before the river's advent; besides this, there are various reasons which might dictate to the natives the expediency of giving names to these new tracts at an early date. The local nomenclature is determined sometimes by quite trivial occurrences, as Balik-öldi, or the Fish Died; sometimes by some outstanding feature of the locality, as Kade-dung, or the Pole Hill, and Sägislik, or the Clayey Ground; sometimes the old familiar names are transferred from the abandoned channel to corresponding tracts beside the new stream.

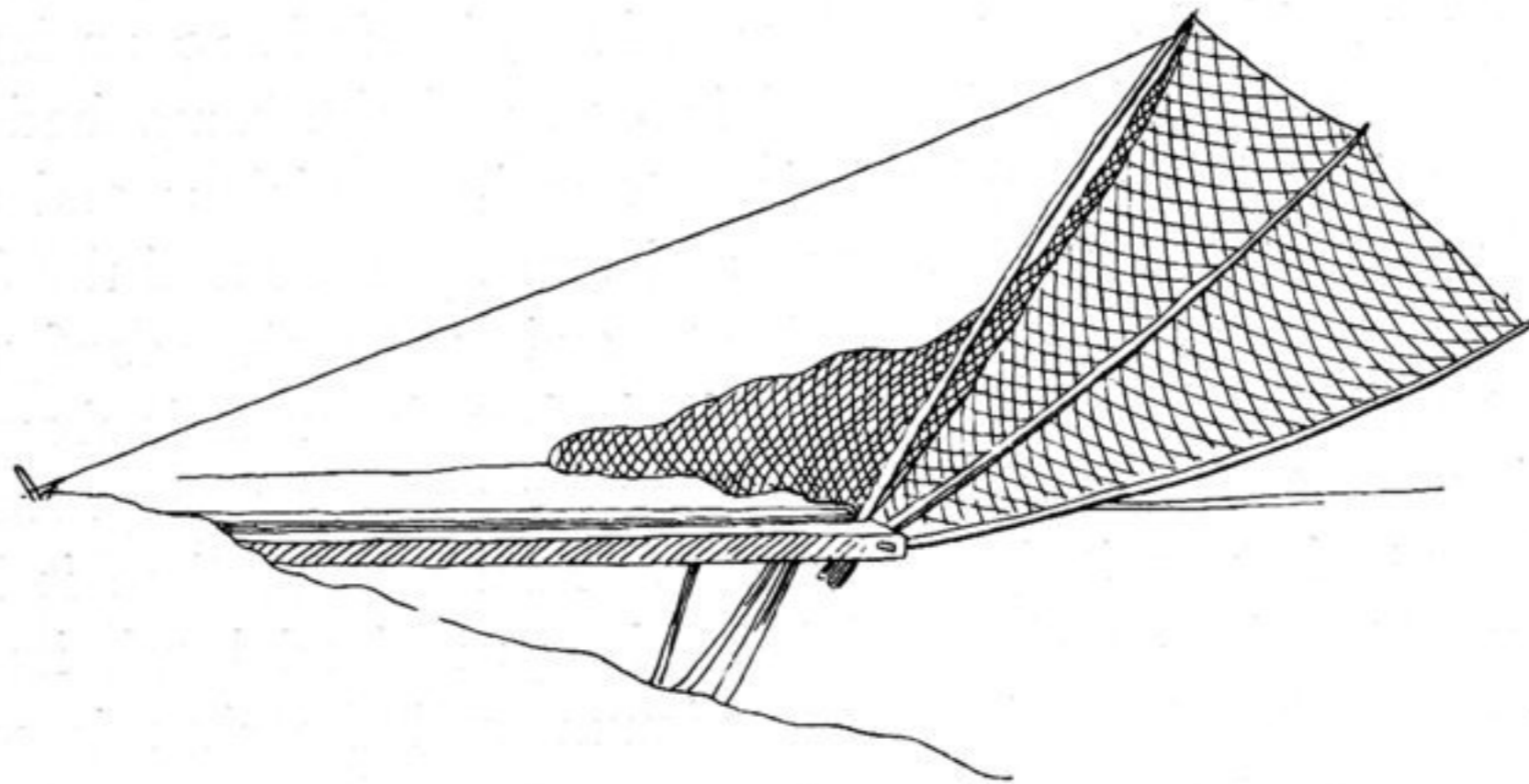


Fig. 88. A »TOR».

In a toghrak wood on the right bank stands the masar of Ala Kunglek Busrugvar, with an oratory and a *kasan-chane*, or »kitchen», as well as the usual *tughs*, or poles with streamers, fixed in adjacent sand-hills. This spot is visited by pilgrims from Ak-su on the occasion of certain Mohammedan festivals. Here we found three shepherds, who expected that the river would freeze in 30 or 40 days, and declared that its level would be then 1 m. higher than it was at the time they spoke. In fact, the rise might begin at any moment. The ice attained a thickness of two feet, and as there was neither boat nor ford, this was the only means they had of get-