

## CHAPTER VII.

### FROM INTSCHKÄ TO KORAL-DUNG.

November 5th. A rise of 1.9 cm. Transparency 5.7 cm. at 7 a. m. and 4.6 cm. at 1 p. m. The banks were 5.12 m. high, and the high-water line stood at 2.72 m. above the existing level. At first the river flowed pretty straight towards the north-east, the only bends being at Egri-toghrak and Mal-pishti. It still continued to exhibit the same indications of being a relatively newly-formed channel — that is to say, it is narrow, rapid, and full of driftwood sticking up from the bottom, while on the banks are many tamarisk cones, partly undermined by the stream. The country is monotonous and desolate, yellow kamisch steppe being predominant, with tamarisks on their little mounds dotted about it like brown islands. The poplars are still few and scattered, though at the junction of the Kök-tschal-darja with the Tarim they flourish vigorously, as also all alongside the former stream. Below the junction the river resumes its usual appearance, and becomes both broader and slower. The woods were by this practically divested of all their foliage. After a good blow the river is often in great part covered with drifting leaves, especially in the eddies and backwaters, where they accumulate. During the day we passed several sheep-folds, e. g. at Häsemet-tokaj and Podung on the right bank, and again opposite to Opur, where there was a family in charge of 500 sheep. Here the river has yet another name, to wit Kobsak-darjasi, from the district of Kobsak on the left bank. At Bostan there were two shepherds' families. Of course it was only by pure chance that we saw any shepherds or flocks at all, for they generally keep of course to the woods and steppes, and only approach the actual margin of the river when they require to water their sheep, or when their folds happen to be situated on its banks. Hence it was impossible to form any estimate of the numbers of the shepherds on the basis of our own observations. Besides, these forest-dwellers are in many parts so extremely shy that they fled incontinently the moment they caught sight of our ferry-boat.

November 6th. The drop was 1.7 cm.; the transparency 5.6 cm. at 7 a. m. and 4.2 cm. at 1 p. m. The banks were 2.36 m. high, and the high-water level ran 1.98 m. above the existing level. At the first bend we found the shepherd homestead of Bostan. At Dästar a high-water branch breaks away from the river on the left, though