

it very soon returns to it. A similar arm, which breaks through the opposite bank at Tschäläk, is considerably longer, and farther to the south-east lies the tract of Kongartschak-bel, and the woods in which I found shepherds after my journey up the bed of the Kerija-darja in 1896. At Tschege-jejneke there is an abandoned loop, three years old, and now dry; it lies north of the high-water arm recently mentioned. In the middle of it is an island, with a hut on it. It was surprising to find a human dwelling in such a situation, as there exists no visible means of communicating with the adjacent *terra firma*. I suppose the island was cut off from the bank by some caprice of the river. The strip of land between the main river and its right-hand branch is called Kum-aral, or Sand Island, pointing to the presence of sand-dunes. The latter channel re-enters the Tarim opposite an island, and just below a left-hand loop, the river there being fairly broad. Next came the locality of Dungkotan, where the river becomes in an especial manner complicated: it forms a complete figure 8, with a large island in the centre of the bigger loop, while the smaller loop is occupied by alluvial deposits. On the island there are some

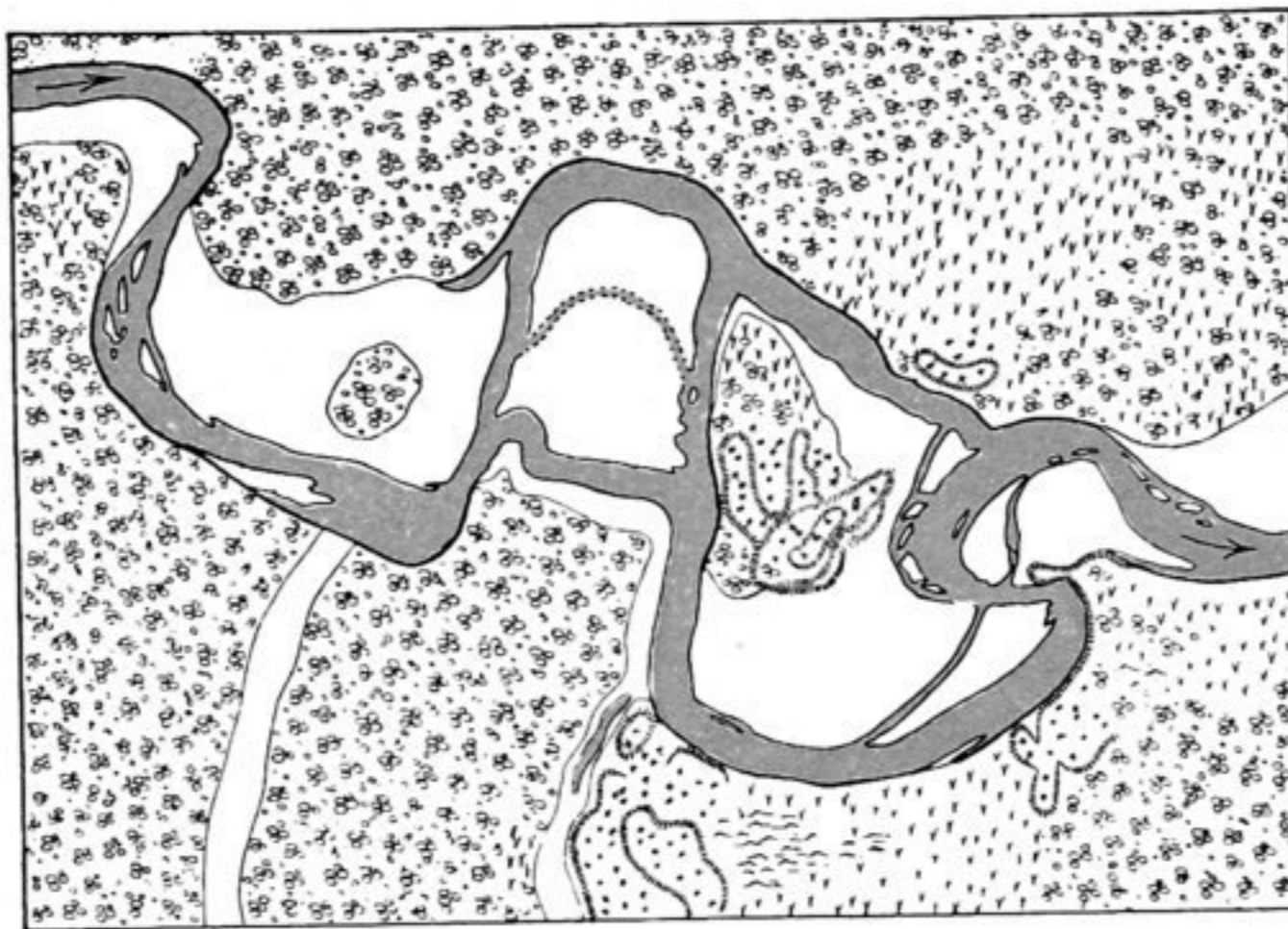


Fig. 91. THE DOUBLE LOOP OF DUNG-KOTAN.

unusually big sand-dunes bearing tamarisks, and themselves visible for a great distance both up and down the river. A very small artery leads off from the lower loop towards the right, and at full flood is entered by a minimum of water, which however speedily returns to the mother stream; when we passed, it contained only a tiny pool. Our camp at Karadaschi was stated to be not very far from the channel in which we first discovered water after descending the Kerija-darja in 1896, though the said channel was now dry. The banks of the Tarim are here composed of sand-dunes, with poplars growing on them, but undermined to such an extent by the river that they form overhanging eaves and broken vaults, within which the roots of the poplars hang exposed. These are often as taut as ropes, proving that they too are anchored to the bottom of the river. The banks were in this place 3.46 m. high, and the high-water mark of the preceding summer stood at 2.36 m. In another two years these poplars will of course be completely undermined and swept away as drift-wood. Thus the river, by its transporting power, serves as an extremely successful agent for the dissemination of the forest. Not only does the water carry the seeds of vegetation to other tracts, but under favourable conditions young poplars and bushes, which get rooted up, are enabled to obtain root-hold again lower down in the spots where they happen to come to a standstill or are flung ashore. As the day wore on, the poplar woods once more showed signs of becoming more plentiful, though they were not indeed so thick as beside the Jarkent-darja. At Kara-daschi we found a canoe.

November 7th. In 14 hours the river rose 1.7 cm.; the transparency was 5.2 cm. at 7 a. m. and 4.0 cm. at 1 p. m. From Kara-daschi the river flows almost in