

darja. This artery starts at Jigde-tegisch, and a baj of Sarik-buja, about 45 years of age, remembers, when a boy of ten, quite well seeing the great river flowing along this old bed through the midst of the big poplar woods, which still inclose it. But about thirty years ago a side branch, like that at K ok-k ol, burst through the right bank, and into it the main stream has gradually made its way. In the old bed, which contains the lake of Tschark-asti-k ol, there was still a little water as late as 1896 when I travelled beside it, under the impression that it was the principal stream, and in 1895 it had had quite a respectable current flowing through it. Now, however, its upper part is filled with clay and silt, and is dry for the greater part of the year, though its lower extremity generally contains a little stagnant water. Thus here, again, we have an instance of the river's tendency to shift to the right.

From this locality to the great sandy desert it is stated to be half a day's journey on horseback, but to the Atschik-darja (Arka-darja?) a day's ride, so that this mysterious watercourse must actually run through the desert. The natives expected the river to become permanently frozen in about 25 days, or, say, about the 12th December, and they calculated that its surface would stand some 60 to 70 cm. higher than it did then. After strong ice has formed all along the margins of the stream, there is generally for some days a narrow strip of open water in the middle, where a slow current flows. The melting of the ice in spring, after an interval of $2\frac{1}{2}$ months, always gives rise to a freshet flood of great volume and power. Seeing that we were given the same explanations all the way down the river, it can no longer be doubted that this spring flood must be one of imposing magnitude, and that, owing to the increments it receives on the way, it must increase in volume as it advances down the river. Still, the rise cannot very well be exceptionally noticeable, as indeed we shall see lower down, because of the large quantity of water that is drained off all along the river to fill the numerous marginal lagoons which accompany it. Thus the considerable spring flood of the Kara-koschun is plainly derived from those tracts of the lower Tarim that lie nearest to it.

The baj of Sarik-buja mentioned above owned 2,000 sheep, and he told me, that there were 150 to 200 shepherds, with their families, between Sarik-buja and Dung-satma. Hence in this quarter, too, the sheep-breeding industry is in a flourishing condition. Most of these shepherds are said to keep to the immediate vicinity of the river in winter only; this explains why we found so many huts unoccupied. During the rest of the year they range beside the Intschk a-darja, the Tschark-asti-k ol, and Dumbol, or even penetrate the southern transverse valleys of the Tien-schan.

Tigers are quite common in this part, and we frequently saw their tracks beside the paths. They are caught by means of a spring-trap (*kapghan, tosak*), placed over a hole about $\frac{1}{2}$ m. deep, and hidden under branches and leaves. The illustration on the next page shows how this ingenious instrument is set. The two rows of sharp, interlocking teeth are brought smartly together by means of two strong springs. When the trap is set, the two wings, with the teeth, are held flat down on the ring which constitutes its framework, and there are kept in position by means of a cord, drawn diametrically across the ring, and held by a couple of pins fixed round the framework and one wing in such a way that, when the tiger treads upon the