

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE JUMALAK-DARJA TO TOKUS-KUM.

Lower down, in the district of Atschal, where the river describes two loops to the right, a branch called the Atschik leads off through the opposite bank, and at Süsük unites with the Kitschik-ögen (called the Kuruk-ögen in its upper part), which in its turn mingles with the Tscha-jan at Taraschi above Dung-kotan. Except for a stagnant pool or two, the upper part of the Atschik-darja was then quite dry, though in its lower course there was enough stationary water to reach up to a horse's saddle-girths. This was of course a survival of the high-water overflow of the previous summer, though, as it happened, this had been less abundant than usual; so that we may perhaps look upon this Atschik as a moribund artery. At the right side there were here two abandoned loops.

From this point the great river is called the Jumalak-darja, or the Round River, a name bestowed no doubt because of the sweeping curves which it proceeds to describe. Next on the right we have the Ak-kumning-jughan-köl, the most extensive of all these marginal lagoons, — in fact, it is so broad that a man, shouting on the one shore of it, could not be heard on the opposite shore. On the left the country is called Tschong-aral or the Great Island, owing to the fact that it is embraced by the Kitschik-ögen, the Jumalak-darja, and the Atschik-darja. At our camp, Tschong-aralning-toghrighi, a fluvial artery, the Kakde-darja, struck out southwards, but having been for several years disused, it has in the interval become choked up again. It was down this watercourse that the Kara-akin formerly sought its way back into the main river; now however it crosses it and continues on farther to the east. One of the districts beside the Kakde-darja is known as Töttör-kotan. Here about thirty years ago a big *togh*, or »dam», is said to have been constructed for the purpose of retaining the water in its ancient channel. A pretty long way to the south there is said to be another old watercourse, known as the Opghan; this, embedded amongst the drift-sand, is no doubt identical with the Atschik-darja or the Arka-darja.

After leaving Atschal the river again alters its character, in that it becomes extremely narrow; in fact, it bears a close resemblance to the terminal portion of its course just above Tschegelik-uj. It is for all the world like a dug canal, inclosed between banks which in general are 2 m. high, covered with an extraordinarily