

shift their position and are reformed in other situations. Besides all this, the configuration of the country is such as to make it extremely difficult to travel across it; both dry land and lagoons are so overgrown with reeds, that mapping would be the reverse of easy. To examine it on foot would be extremely difficult, while canoes are only of use on the lakes and lagoons.

For a considerable distance from and below Kätschik the river-bed is only four years old. Hence its course lies through a desolate region, where there are but few names to record; and as the new, rapid, and muddy stream is little suitable for fishing, its banks are seldom visited by the Lopliks. The old (former) river-bed lies to the north, that is to the left, and has been the chosen highway of the stream for a period of 40 to 50 years, or as far back as the older men of the locality are able to remember. But at the present time its entrance is choked with sediment, and not one drop of water finds its way into it, even at the period of high flood. Its direction is however distinctly indicated by the beds of luxuriant reeds which accompany it; but except for the delicate young reed seedlings, which were just beginning to establish themselves on its sedimentary deposits, its channel is perfectly bare. The new four-year old river-bed was pioneered by a series of lakes, linked together by short connecting channels in the way we have seen exemplified in the case of the Kara-akin. Gradually more and more of the stream found its path along the chain of lakes, until finally the entire volume poured itself through them. And it is quite conceivable, that in a precisely similar way the river will eventually make its passage through the fluvio-lacustrine system of the Kara-akin.

The road from Kätschik to Karaul passes through Toghrak-mähallä (12 families), a place dependent for its water-supply upon small *tschols*, or »pools», in the bed of a

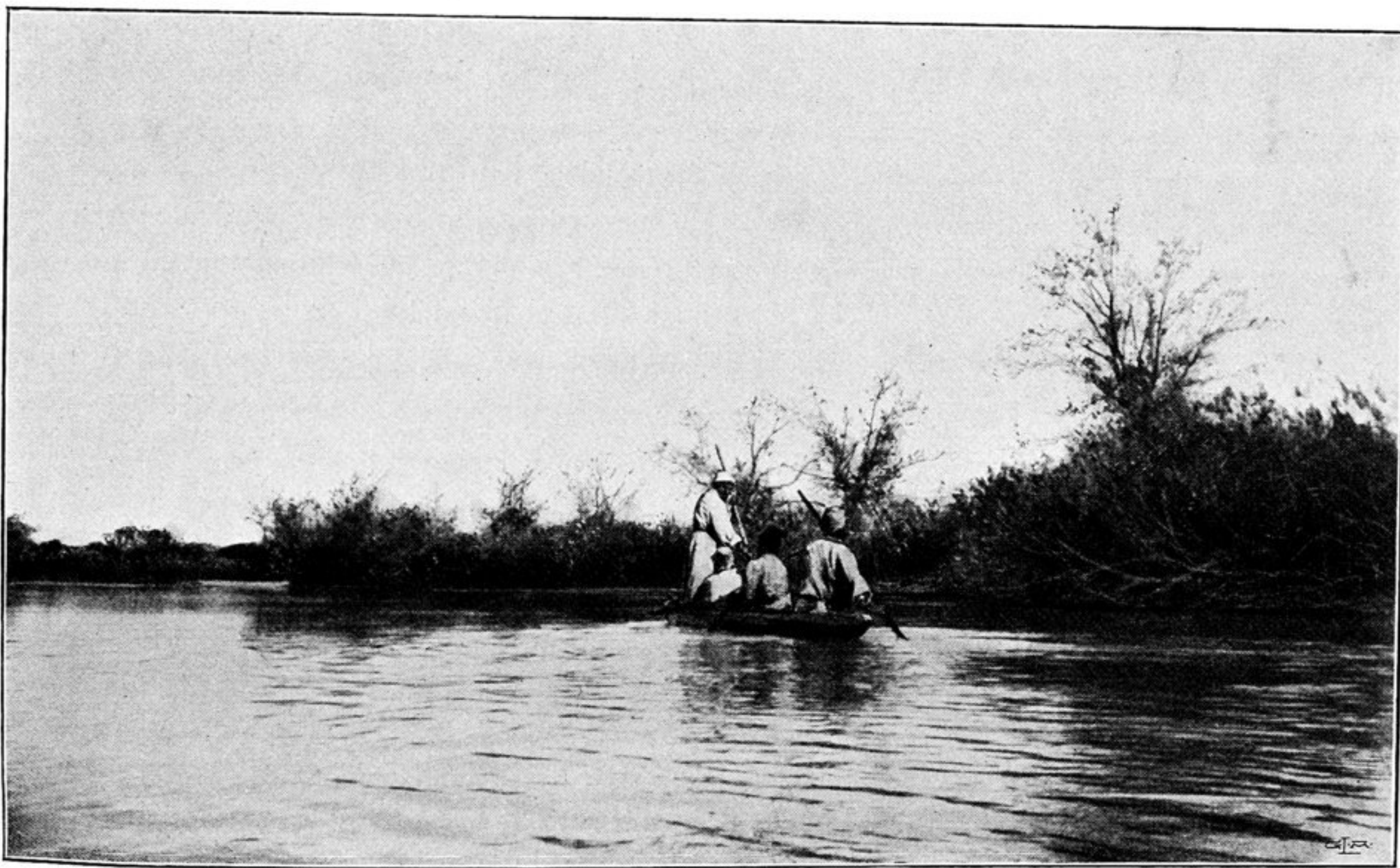


Fig. 105. THE JUMALAK-DARJA OR NEW TARIM, 21 NOV.