

Reeds, so called because its fresh reeds are cut to make fodder for the sheep. At the period of high flood, however, a small quantity of water does make its way into the lake. Here again we encountered Lop fishermen, who were just then particularly busy laying in a stock of fish for winter use. Over against the district of Kosch-kotan we discerned traces of a tiny *togh*, or »dam», in the mouth of a canal completely overgrown; its purpose was to prevent such water, as entered a lake on the inner or landward side of it at the high-water period, from finding its way back again into the river. Muhamed Kulluning-uji is the name given to a hut which ceased to be inhabited six years ago. After that comes the district of Karghajakti. In two or three places we observed dried fish-skins hanging on poles on the banks. These *nischan* or »notice-boards» are set up in particular at the entrances to the frozen *bulungs*, or »bays», that lie on the inner side of the alluvial peninsulas, and are intended to mark the fishing-grounds. Where one of these signs is put up, nobody has any right to fish except the man or men who in pursuance of ancient custom enjoy the privilege of fishing there. The river-bed still continued to be plentifully strewn with *kötäk*, or »drift-wood». In one place a poplar, which had been undermined, stretched out over the river for fully one-third of its breadth.

Meanwhile a noticeable change has come over the river ever since it emerged from the sand; it is now quite settled and steady as compared with the wild and unbridled torrent which races through the desert. The fact is, it is only the stretch between Kätschik and Mus-asti that is merely 4 years old; further down, below Mus-asti, the channel is 15 years old. Accordingly, in proportion as we advanced, after leaving the latter place, the local topography became increasingly wealthier in names. The natives of this district have observed, that during the past two years the river has carried a far smaller volume than it did previously, a circumstance which my Lajlik boatmen ascribed to the construction of the big Kandi-arik canal at Jarkent. But no one single canal could produce such a striking difference as that they indicated. Indeed there is nothing surprising in the river diminishing in volume for a couple of years; that is no more than might be expected from climatic variations, especially (in this case) a smaller precipitation amongst the mountains.

November 25th. Rise, 0.67 cm. Transparency, 6.6 cm. at 7 a. m. and 5.2 at 1 p. m. Banks, 1.65 m. high; high-water level, about the same. The temperature of the water, which was now approaching the freezing-point, decreased at a slower rate than heretofore. The natives maintained, that the colder the water the more rapidly it flows, and as an actual fact it would appear that, *ceteris paribus*, the current does possess the greatest power when at  $+4^{\circ}$  C. Here the sinuosities of the river are not very killing, the curves being short and abrupt. The river-bed still preserved the characteristics which it recently exhibited; the poplar woods were luxuriant, but came to an end towards the close of the day. We frequently touched the sand, especially on the left bank; but the dunes were clothed with vegetation, except in one place, where they were bare and barren. Here the river is known by yet another name, Chirki-darja, after a man who formerly dwelt on its bank. Over against Tajir-bajning-kotan is the large well-built, inhabited homestead of Ütschköl. Igis-uj, however, another homestead, founded 15 years ago, was abandoned after eleven years' occupation, its owner having betaken himself to Kutschar. Beside