

of Karaul, and they had led the flotilla two days down the Atschik-darja, which at that time (August) was full of water, and then reached their destination in five days more. But they had used their paddles, and consequently travelled a good deal faster than we did, for we were merely drifting with the current. My reason for citing this episode is to show, that the Chinese, who are practical and enterprising people, had also attempted to navigate the Tarim, and avail themselves of this natural waterway. Besides this, I heard of two or three other instances of similar attempts being made on Chinese initiative. But seeing how seldom the example has been followed, it would appear not to have been altogether satisfactory. In fact, the river is too distant from the towns and their agricultural centres, and also from the commercial highways, to be of much real advantage in this way. Add to this, the wearisome preparations which have to be made to procure a sufficient number of canoes, and their relatively small carrying capacity even when they are lashed together in pairs (*kosch-kemi*), with the view both of making them hold more and of steadying them. Under these circumstances it is cheaper to employ the ordinary means of caravan transport.

November 28th. Drop of 1.8 cm.; transparency, 7.8 cm. at 7 a. m. and 7.2 cm. at 1 p. m. Height of the banks, 1.38 m.; high-water level, 0.98 m. In this locality it was not expected that the river would rise any higher before it froze. The reason of this may be in part that the rise, which was occasioned by the return of the water from the ariks, had by this spent itself, and become less noticeable, and in part that the beginning of the frost was now imminent. In the evening the natives declared, that three days later the drift-ice, *kömul* or *kade*, would begin to show itself, and that it would last about ten days, and then the river would become definitively frozen over. However, as it turned out, they were wrong, for on the morning of the 28th the surface of the river was thickly strewn with soft drift-ice, especially in those parts of the stream which moved fastest, where it grated and rasped together. During the day, however, the drift-ice gradually disappeared, and by 1 p. m. was mostly gone, and entirely so by 4 p. m., when there was not a single patch left. Indeed, it would have vanished a good deal sooner, only it was a dull day, the sky being mantled with clouds. This *kade* is believed to frighten the fish out of the current into the *bulungs*, or still, bright bays, along the banks. Consequently, so long as the *kade* lasts, fishing is carried on there with the greatest eagerness; the people being anxious to complete their stock of fish for the winter so long as the opportunity lasts. Accordingly, that day we met several boating parties, especially from Arelisch.

During this day the river was unusually capricious. First it flowed due north-east as far as the Kötäktu-köruk, a little lake embedded amongst the sand-dunes, which, fed by a small channel from the river, is used as a fishing ground. Then it turns towards the west, until it reaches a patch of sand on the left; whereupon it finally wheels round, through a whole series of loops, to a direction north-north-east. The sand at the point where the river turns consists of barren and desolate dunes, connected with two formidable accumulations to the north-west, likewise destitute of vegetation. At their foot, next the stream, lies the lake of Tallik-tokajning-ajaghi-köl, a lake cut off from the river and containing brackish water, here called