

peculiarity, in that they are served by only one canal, whereas the lagoons higher up are not only considerably larger, but each possesses both an inflow and an outflow channel. Several of them are also to a certain extent artificially made, for the channels which connect them with the river have been dug in places where the subsidence of the bank has left as it were a natural reservoir. The sole object of creating these artificial side-reservoirs is the fishing. Generally they bear the name of the man who dug the connecting channel, and who consequently enjoys the exclusive right of fishing in them. And where we have one of these lagoons not named after a man, as for instance, the Kötäktu-körük, it may be assumed that it owes its existence to a natural overflow.

November 30th. Drop  $\pm 0$ ; transparency, 7.0 cm. at 7 a. m. and 7.0 cm. at 1 p. m. The high-water level ran 1.35 m. above the existing level. There was to-day less drift-ice than usual on the river, owing to the minimum temperature being more than ordinarily high; in fact, the surface was barely half covered with ice, and notwithstanding that the sky was clouded, the greater part of what there was disappeared during the course of the day. The air was still and mild. By evening the few pieces of drift-ice that still remained were both soft and small. Thus, with regard to its winter panoply of ice, the river rather retrograded than advanced.

The Tarim then became unusually straight, making only one or two sharp turns towards the close of the day's journey. The high sand kept us faithful company on the right, at a greater or less distance away, but always visible as a lofty swelling of a yellow colour. In fact, it forms such a conspicuous and all-dominating feature of the landscape as to suggest a mountain chain of northern Tibet, and it exhibits the same rounded and denuded outlines. It is said to stretch uninterruptedly towards the south across the whole expanse of the desert; which indeed is quite likely, for there is nothing to suggest that the sand in the heart of the desert is not unbroken. Towards the close of the day, however, a bend in the river brought us once more close in to the base of the sand at the only spot where it bore a few poplars. We had never been so near it since we left Tokus-kum. The accumulations of sand-dunes attained altitudes of 60 to 90 m. Along the left bank, too, there ran chains of sand-dunes, but they were very much lower in altitude, and while some of them were absolutely barren, others were scantily clothed with vegetation. A day's journey to the north lies the bed of the Ögen or Ugen-darja, with its accompanying belt of forest. Otherwise the country between the two is entirely occupied with low dunes and with what the natives call *tättir* or *töttör*, that is to say sandy soil destitute of water, though bearing tree-stumps and other traces of dead vegetation.

At Ak-daschi there is a break, a gap or valley, through the sand-dunes on the right, the bottom of which is stated to be level and free from sand. This, too, is believed to be the last surviving section of an ancient river-bed, of which no other traces are known. The bare soil between the dunes supports some scanty scrub. Then follow in succession — on the left the densely wooded tract of Jam-alghan; on the right Sägislik-tscheke and Jurgelik-tscheke; on the left the little fishing-lake of Rahmaning-körughi, Örmät-öldi, with three small lakes, and Mülken-