

The first loop below Karaul touched the great highway at a spot called Nias Hakim Bek-tüşken, the name commemorating some chance rest there of the well-known governor of Chotan in Jakub Bek's time. Consequently the river has not in this place altered its course for at least twenty years. In this way the historical names prove not seldom helpful to the physical geography and its interpretation. Here the river becomes divided for a short distance, though the left branch is quite insignificant, and only carries water at high flood. At Kan-toghi there is an old dam, put down for the sole purpose of protecting the highway against inundation; for we have now reached the regions in which inundations occur with great readiness and frequency, and we get a foretaste of the inland delta of the Tarim. The next noteworthy place on the great highway bears the name of Kosch-muge. Jalghus-toghruk, the »Solitary Poplar», is a name which would only occur in a locality in which a poplar is a rarity and calculated to attract a certain amount of attention. In a similar way Kair-kotan, or the »Alluvial Hut», has its own tale to tell of an overflow which occurred here some time or other. All these names mark places on the great caravan road on the left bank of the river. On the right the Tarim sheds off the arm Basch-tam, which skirts the edge of the high sand, passing behind a small isolated belt of sand (*partscha-kum*, a »piece of sand»), but only carries water at the period of high flood. After passing through the lake of Teis-köl, the Basch-tam arm re-enters the river just above the spot where we encamped that night. From the left two artificial canals are led off to Dängsur-köl, a small lake densely packed with reeds, or rather a riparian morass, but is carried beyond it so as to supply certain pasture-grounds, whence the overplus of water is said to find its way back into the river of itself. Each canal is spanned by a bridge, one of them provided with a parapet; this is where they are crossed respectively by the great highway, which from this point gradually diverges from the Tarim. On the same side of the river we likewise passed a *kona-darja*\* (abandoned forty years ago), which within less than a day's stage again joins the existing bed. From this point onwards the current flowed faster, indeed it was as much as it could do to avoid breaking into rapids. In the expansions of the river and transverse extensions we felt the mass of water unmistakably gliding over cross-ridges or thresholds, now almost worn down to the level of the river-bed. A minor high-water branch runs between the right bank of the Tarim and the Basch-tam arm, but rejoins the former at Kara-dung; on the left there is a loop abandoned seven years ago. Here then we have an exceptionally clear proof of the river's continued deviation to the right, that is towards the southwest. We have the old channels on the left of the river, and on its right the two new arms, which, although they are at present only filled at the season of high water, will probably in the future each in turn be traversed by the main body of the river.

December 7th. Drop,  $\pm$  0. m.; transparency, 8.3 cm. at 7 a. m. and 9 c. m. at 1 p. m. The stream still continued to flow at a good rate, occasionally swiftly, so that we rapidly left the banks behind us. The drift-ice was very abundant and

\* Farther on we shall learn more about the subsequent history of this watercourse. At Seit-köl I was told, that this reputed *kona-darja* of 40 years back is in reality only an overflow channel, which has succeeded to a canal that was dug twenty years ago by a certain Assan Bek.