

position (*a*) can never be attained, because the river seizes upon the sand which pours down the leeward side of the dune and at the same time continues its undermining energy. Hence this side of the dune is played upon, *ceteris paribus*, by the two agents of disintegration to twice the extent that the west side is.

On the 22nd May we had a fairly stiff gale from the south-west, its velocity being 7.3 m. in the second. Although the wind does occasionally blow from this quarter at this season of the year, it is very fickle, and its effect is trifling as compared with the overwhelming storms from the east-north-east. In those bends in which we had the wind in our favour we travelled at the rate of 1.52 m. in the second, a very fair rate of speed, considering that the utmost pace at which canoes can travel, and that in still water, is 2.1 m. in the second. It was quite a pleasure to see the banks slip past in this way; a pity though that the landscape was so monotonous, so devoid of picturesqueness. For even with the stupendous masses of sand and their sublime desolation one gradually becomes familiar. At first indeed they impress with a sense of awe and wonder; but after you have had them for your daily associates for months together, they become oppressive, and in the heat of summer produce a stifling sensation.

This day the sand was sometimes quite near to us, at other times farther away than usual, and several royal eagles kept circling above its precipitous flanks. On our left the steppe stretched away as level as the sea at calm, cheerless and grey, arid, dusty, overgrown with grass or short, scanty reeds; it was very rare indeed that we saw a clump of young poplars, and those but ill-thriven. When a »yellow storm» (*sarik-buran*) is blowing, the entire landscape becomes shrouded in the dust-haze; everything is grey and yellow, and the light faint and diffused. In several places we perceived the shepherds' camps around temporary huts, with their flocks and herds of sheep, cattle, and horses. The following names belong to the left bank — Muhamed-kälgen-kotan, Jurt-tschapghan, Ot-kalaghutsch-dung (the Hill where Fire is Kindled, *i. e.* some kind of signal-fire), Kaser Eisa Achun-tschapghan (a canal which starts at Kudscek and here re-enters the river), and Kona-kusch, now uninhabited. On the right we have the little lake of Jallang-dschajir, with the canal of Süsük-kok-alasi, which carries its water back to the river; the canal which supplies it with water is situated higher up. Again, on the left, we passed yet another dried bed of the Tarim, known as the Kona-tarim; it joins the Aratarim just below Tschigelik. I was assured, that seventy years ago one-half of the river's flood used to travel that way, but since then it has gradually gone over into its present channel on the west. But I ought to observe, that the dates one gets in this part of the country are not very trustworthy. One thing, however, is unquestionably true, and that is that the Kudscek, as well as the Kona-tarim, is an ancient bed of the Tarim. Very likely the stream has changed backwards and forwards periodically from the one to the other as they have become alternately choked with sediment, and this it may have done more than once, indeed several times. Both these ancient watercourses thread the country which intervenes between the existing Tarim and the Kontsche-darja. At the time when one or other of these beds was traversed by the undivided Tarim, the lower parts of the river-system had as a whole a more easterly position than now. Since that period the flood has ad-