

a canal from the left bank, and this widened the stream until finally the entire current precipitated itself through it. A small, and wholly artificial, cause for such a great effect! The new arm is therefore called Assan-tschapghan-tarim. Nevertheless a portion of the stream still continues to find its way into the Bos-köl. A little farther down another arm, the Oghu Dschanghu Vär-di-tarim, leads off from the left to the now dry lake of Chodai Vär-di-uktusu, but rejoins our Tarim at Kaken-dijni-dschaji. In this locality the river manifests a certain tendency to flit to the left; it is almost as though it had covered the country on the right with alluvial deposits and were now seeking a passage at a lower level on the left, that is to the east, where indeed it used to flow formerly, and that perhaps at several different epochs. After that we passed the lower and larger outflow canal of Bos-köl (the upper one is now empty), and then, on the left, a shorter arm of the Tarim three years old, which empties itself into the Kaken-dijni-dschaji. Beyond that the river divides, the right arm being the larger, though both arms enter the lake of Schukurne-köli. Here the river is again very uncertain as to its path, violent, divided, and of no great depth, forming shallow, reed-grown lagoons, which, strictly speaking, are nothing but expansions of its bed. The lake of Schukurne is said to be an extensive sheet of water, and even to penetrate some distance into the desert. That is to say, it is in part a desert lake and in part a reedy lagoon, and consequently belongs to both the types of lake which we are discussing. We next crossed the shallow, reed-grown lake of Talashti-köl, and then the lake of Sattovaldi-köl, this latter with a large sandy island, Sattovaldi-kijik-atghan-dschaji.

On 31st May we found ourselves, soon after starting, in a shallow, contracted, winding *ilek*, or »channel», which empties itself into the lake of Taltikti-köli, the main portion of which we left on our right, surrounded by low sand and tamarisk-mounds. The waterway was thickly beset with kamisch, rushes, and water-lilies; it took us south-east to the Jäkänlik-dschaji. On both sides there were small patches of sand, partly separated, partly covered by the recently arrived water. Finally we emerged from this intricate and stifling watery passage into the large lake of Nias Bekni-köli, called also Attamne-köli and Nias Bekni Attamne-köli. Like the lakes in the desert, this extensive sheet of water is for the most part open and free from reeds, and encompassed by low sand held together by vegetation. But while the desert lakes extend from the north-north-east to the south-south-west, these Tarim lakes stretch from the north-west to the south-east. The position of the former has been determined by the wind; but in this part of the delta of the Tarim, where the entire surface has been levelled and flattened out by the sedimentation of the water, the wind possesses no power, at all events in this respect. In general these Tarim lakes are of the same depth as the river itself. The greatest depths we obtained, for example, in the lake of Nias Bek amounted to 3.63 and 4.59 m. Thus they no doubt coincide with original depressions in the ground; but their topography and depth render it probably that they stand in some sort of relation



Fig. 154. LAKE BETWEEN THE BANKS OF TWO OLD RIVER-BEDS.