

midges, and mosquitoes. The banks were illuminated with torches and lanterns, as well as lighted by the moon. The air used to grow perfectly still, not a sound was heard, not a breath moved on the face of the waters. The river before us was shrouded in mist. In the evening light clouds of vapour floated up from the banks, the river, the forest; but at night the heat which had been absorbed was again exhaled all around us, and the air grew deliciously cool. Every now and again the stillness of the night would be disturbed by the crisp rippling of the water as it broke against some piece of driftwood, anchored at the bottom of the stream, while at intervals a big poplar would stretch out its arms over the stream, as its leaned itself far out from the bank. The mighty river, having run its course valiantly, having escaped the threatened perils of the sandy desert, having survived its numerous enemies — evaporation, the aridity of the ground, and the thousands of marginal lagoons which like insatiable vampires suck its blood all the way down — here takes up its swan's song, for the distance it still has to travel to its eternal rest in the desert is now short.

And yet the quiet, peaceful night which I have just described was but a deceitful sign. For as early as three o'clock in the morning we heard two or three violent gusts of wind, sufficient to have set our ferry-boat floating off down-stream, had she not been securely anchored by strong cables. These were the harbingers of a north-easterly gale, a *sarik-buran*, which forced us to lie up the whole of the 7th June, though between 10 and 11 o'clock in the night we managed to travel a short distance by moonlight. The river still continued to be embowered in plenteous forest, and was very serpentine. The only local names I noted here were *Basch-karaunelik* and *Ajagh-karaunelik*, each designating a *boldschemal*. The former had been so long cut off that its pool was converted into a *daschi* or salt lagoon; the latter, being fed from the river at high flood, afforded good fishing. In this locality *boldschemal* was used to signify the abandoned loop, and *jarsik* the pool of water that remains in it; though the same word, or alternatively *jarsuk*, is also applied to the water which is left on the inner side of an alluvial deposit, that is between it and the river-bank (*jar*). A silt bank is called *kajir*.

The gale still continued during the 8th and 9th June, only its intensity increased until it became a *kara-buran*. The features of the landscape were blotted out by the dust-haze, the air became full of fine dust, which in spite of everything we could think of to protect ourselves, such as smoking, penetrated our noses, our mouths, our eyes, while of the gad-flies and midges there was not a trace to be seen. On the 9th June the velocity of the wind did not measure more than 11 m. in the second; but then we were screened by the forest, and in point of actual fact the velocity was very much greater. On the third day the dust-haze was inconceivably thick, so that we were barely able to see the opposite bank; nor had we any longer cause to complain of the heat. To a caravan on the march a storm at that season of the year comes as a welcome relief: it cools the air and frees the poor animals from the clouds of insects which torment them. But to our ferry-boat this *kara-buran* proved an insuperable obstacle: it was dead against her and prevented her from advancing a yard. There was nothing to be done except to wait patiently. According to the information I gleaned from the natives, the spring is