

immediately contiguous to the river; east of it, all the way to the edge of the drift-sand, there is said to extend *tättir* and *täkäs-jer*, or »level ground».

Next we passed on the left a fifteen-year old bed of the Tarim, then dry; this rejoins our waterway at Tokus-attam, a village which thus stands on a strip of land between the Tarim and the branch that forms these lakes. It is evidently the masses of deposited sediment which constrain the river to convert itself into lakes, and *vice versa*. The stream, hitherto deep and narrow, divides here and becomes shallow, flowing sometimes through thick, luxuriant kamisch, sometimes amongst bare silt-beds, and finally issues into the Schukurne-köli. This lake is sparsely overgrown with *jäkän* (sedge), and is extremely shallow, so shallow indeed that it was as much as ever it would do to float our triple canoes. At the end of the lake we entered a narrow watery passage amongst the reeds, and here came in from the right the branch from the old bed of the Tarim which I have mentioned. Indeed the little water strait amongst the reeds is said to have once been itself a bed of the Tarim. The current in it was painfully slow; in the lakes no current at all was perceptible. At Scharkurun — a name indicating either that rapids are formed there at the time of high flood or existed there formerly — the current again became livelier. There were no rapids at Scharkurun at the time of our visit. After that we crossed over a little lake called Kok-ala-köl. On the whole the distribution of the water here was pretty much the same as it was in 1896. The village of Tokus-attam still occupied the same position, and still numbered 5 ujlik (15 individuals); in addition there were eleven other families then living in Tscharklik.

The 20th June was a bright day, with a brisk breeze from the north-east; and though it blew away the fine dust, it was not keen enough to clear the air of the swarms of gad-flies. Our route lay through a series of shallow lakes, all overgrown, and through narrow *tschapghans* or channels cut through the dense reeds, in which there was often a very lively current. The first lake was Üsüm Kullu-daschilik, of whose shore we never obtained a glimpse, so dense were the reeds. This we crossed towards the south-east, but after that we steered towards the east. In Kötsch Kullu-köl, which nowhere exceeds 3 dm. in depth, no movement of the

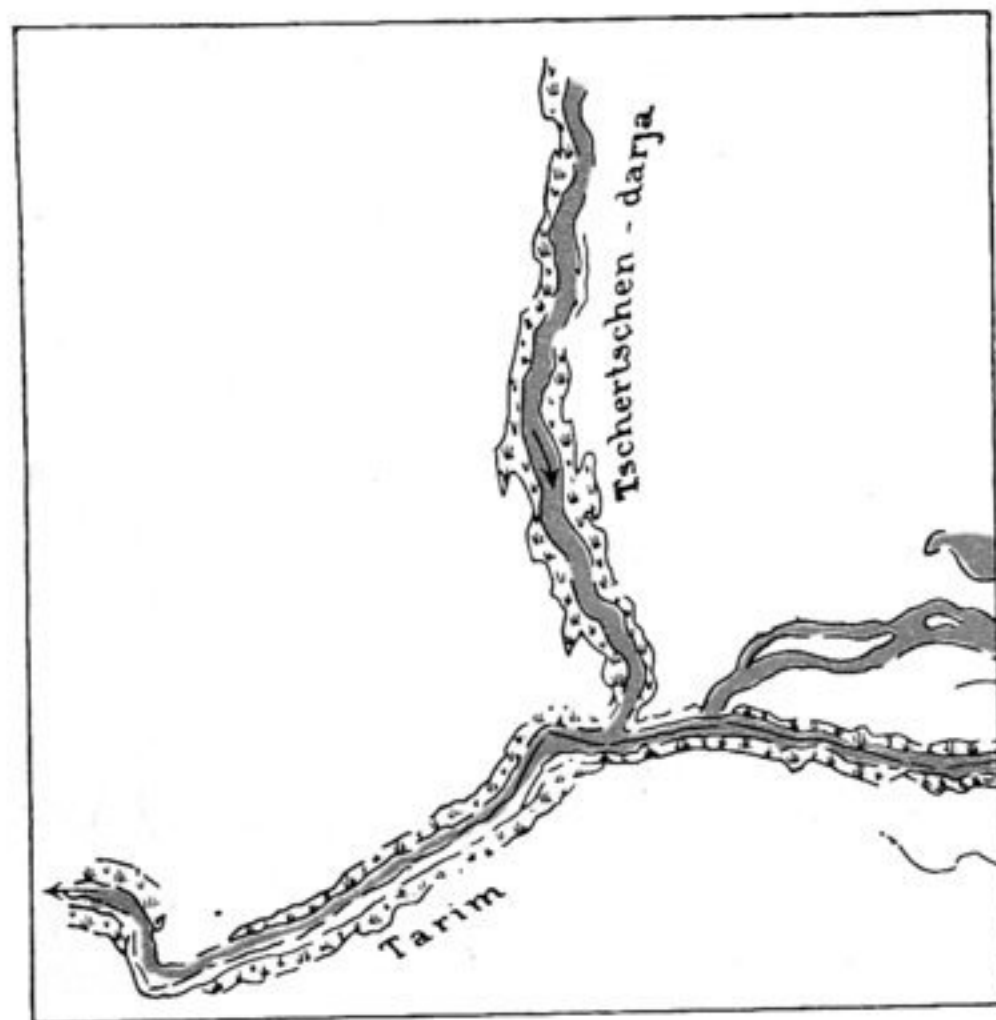


Fig. 194. CONFLUENCE OF THE TSCHERTSCHEN-DARJA WITH THE TARIM.

water could be detected. The kamisch was extraordinarily dense as well as extraordinarily vigorous, but the *tschapghans* were for the most part cut through the *jäkän* (sedge), no doubt because it is easier to keep the passages open through sedge than through kamisch. The water was clear and the lake bottom consisted of bare sand; I failed to observe any Algæ. The depth increased a little, though it still remained less than 1 m. In the Ojman-köl there was a very extensive piece of open water. Kalmak-ottogho, on the other hand, with its meandering channel, can only be described as a close and sweltry marsh. This name, meaning the Dwelling-place of the Kalmucks, is said to go back to a time when the locality was dry