

However irregular the distribution of the deposited sediment, it acts at any rate as a lining to the lake-basin, and forms a receptacle whose own superficies gradually becomes more and more impermeable, and in whose reservoir the inflowing water tends to persist for a longer and longer time. And the effect that this imported sediment produces is still further enhanced by the atmospheric dust which the storms occasion. This dust falls everywhere; but whereas that which lies on the arid ground is blown away by the next storm that comes, the dust which drops into the lake settles to the bottom, and remains there. Thus the atmospheric dust is likewise a contributory factor to the filling and levelling up of the basin of the Karakoschun, as we shall see in Vol II.

Nevertheless this lining of the lake-basin is not carried sufficiently far to put an end entirely to the absorption that goes on. The clearest proof of this is the existence of the fresh springs which trickle forth at the foot of the sandy neck that parts the Jangi-köl from its first bajir, and then give rise in the latter to a *daschi* or »salt pool», the water in which, owing to the heavy evaporation and the character of the ground, is extraordinarily salt. Precisely the same thing is repeated at the foot of the sandy ridge which separates the Tana-baghladi-köl from its first bajir. I was told that the bajir which extends south-south-west of the Gölme-käti also contains a salt-pool; this however I did not see with my own eyes. But we do have a beautiful example of the same thing in the relations which exist between the Toghraklik-köl and the depressions which form its continuation. These five depressions we saw distinctly, far below our feet, when we climbed to the top of the dune-mass which stands 560 meters from the west shore of the Karaunelik-köl, towering up to an altitude of close upon 90 m. above the level of the lake. Measured from the same point of view, the base of the leeward flank of the dune was about 185 meters distant in horizontal projection, and it is just at that spot that the deepest trench which runs through the chain of depressions is found. The direction which this trench pursues forms however an exception to the general rule. The half of the Toghraklik-köl which lies embedded in the sand does, it is true, stretch in the usual north-north-east and south-south-west direction, but its second bajir extends from north to south, though the other three lie along the usual line. The departure from the rule in the case of the second bajir is of course occasioned by the position of the axis of the dunes, and in this section their advance, for some reason or other, has not been uniform along the whole line. All these bajir depressions contain pools of excessively salt water of no inconsiderable size, and for this reason the natives designate them the Toghraklik-kölning-daschi or the Salt-pools of the Poplar Lake. The name itself indicates that the Toghraklik-köl is their »mother» lake, and that it is from it they derive their water. Their shores are absolutely barren; there does not exist a single trace of vegetation, new or old. Were it not for the inflow which is continually being received from the lake, or rather from the river, these pools would at this season dry up completely in a couple of weeks. The pool in each bajir lies nearest to its eastern side, and is encircled by a ring of almost black mud and ooze, still moist, having on the west a breadth of about a score of meters, though on the east it narrows to a few meters only. The presence of these encircling rings proves that the level of the pools had fallen some decimeters since the Tarim was in high flood; and as the same con-