

an acute angle. The tamarisks, the cones of which were 2 to 3 m. high, grew very close together, so that it required some care to steer our way through the labyrinth. On the other side of them we came upon thick beds of luxuriant kamisch. Then we crossed at right angles another oblong depression, which unquestionably was an older river-bed. Here then, in this part of its course, the Tschertschen-darja appears to have flitted step by step towards the south. Some vegetation had established itself along the bottom, while certain of the withered tree-trunks which lay separate may well once have been driftwood brought down by the stream. After that the kamisch and tamarisks alternated one with the other. There was also a clump of poplars; but, strange to say, although so close to the river, the trees were dead. Possibly they had died in consequence of some former alteration in the bed of the stream. Their trunks were quite hollow, like reeds. We pitched our camp beside the river, which was frozen to a considerable depth and covered with snow. In this locality, which is known as Keng-lajka, the road to Tschertschen runs immediately along the left bank of the river, where there is a thin poplar forest. Although not more than 6 to 8 meters high, yet being the only trees in a region in which trees of any kind are a rarity, these poplars naturally produce a somewhat impressive effect. The vegetation on the right bank of the river appears to be of the same character as that on the left. Here too there is a desert tract with dunes, though, judging by its name of Kum-tschaval, not without interruptions. Indeed there are said to exist numerous small patches of forest, kamisch, and *kötäk* or dead forest.

The river here was about 100 m. wide, this great width being however solely due to the fact that, after the first freezing, the water flows out over the ice, and then freezes again, and so goes on spreading wider and wider after each fresh overflow. This I infer from the numerous small islands of kamisch which I saw sticking up through the ice, for they would not be able to maintain their ground in the running stream. Three shepherds, who were grazing 400 sheep at Tasch-kitschik on the right bank, told us, that the river had been frozen for 20 days. Thus the Tarim freezes at an earlier date than the Tschertschen-darja, the latter stream having the greater fall, and consequently the greater velocity. In the 25 days immediately preceding the freezing of the river, its surface had been thick with *kömul* or *kade*, i. e. drift-ice. The shepherds expected the ice would remain $2\frac{1}{2}$ months longer. The snow began to fall here seven days before, precisely at the same time as it began to fall in the desert. During the last three days a hard *tagh-schamal* or »mountain-wind» had been blowing. To the south-east we saw, the atmosphere being again clear, a massive portion of the Tokus-davan. The commonest animals at Keng-lajka were wolves, foxes, *molun* (a species of *Felidæ*, probably wild-cat), hares, pheasants, wild-duck, etc. Although the tiger was known lower down, he does not frequent this locality. Owing to the great number of wolves, roe-deer, red-deer, and antelopes are rare, but they are more numerous at Boghuluk, especially the second; in fact the place is named from them. Here there were said to be no wild camels at all beside the Tschertschen-darja.
