

the information I received, which made it extremely unlikely that any old river-bed existed, except those we had already become acquainted with near the Tschertschen-darja. This river has indeed changed its bed, but it has done so only locally and within narrow limits. As Tatan lies at an altitude of 1180 m. and Jangi-köl at 880 m., the river would naturally have flowed in this direction, did not the Kara-koschun lie at 867 m., so that the greater fall points towards this last. There is also a very appreciable fall between the foot of the mountains and the river: for instance, from the point where the Tschertschen-darja issues from the mountains to Tschertschen it amounts to 1200 m. Thus the channel which this river has cut through the desert is deeper and more definite than the bed of the Tarim, and consequently is not subject to such great oscillations as those which affect this latter. Roborovskij's statements, about the old river-bed in the desert 65 km. north of the existing Tschertschen-darja, had led me to deduce a parallelism between this stream and the migration of the lake of Lop-nor to the Kara-koschun; but after visiting the region myself, I must perforce abandon the idea of the Tschertschen-darja's migration. Yet I cannot claim that I have completely solved the problem. For a complete solution a fresh crossing of the desert is necessary, namely from Begelik-köl to Läschkär-satma, for there is just a possibility that there does exist some old river-bed in the desert, and that it may now be for the most part buried under the sand. In the sequel I shall have to return to this question again.



Fig. 333. THE TSCHERTSCHEN-DARJA AT KENG-LAJKA.

The ice which covered the Tschertschen-darja was expected to continue for another two months. When it breaks up it gives rise to an imposing spring-flood (*mus-suzi*); and although this augments to a noteworthy extent the volume of the lowest Tarim, it is only for a short time, and in spite of this the Kara-koschun goes on steadily diminishing. The spring-flood is followed by the high flood of the middle of summer, caused by the melting of the snow in the mountains, and then for a season the volume swells to such a prodigious extent that the river is impassable. This increment enters the Kara-koschun just at the time when the inflow from the Tarim is at its minimum.