

We crossed the Tschivilik arm on the ice just below the bifurcation, and then plunged into an old and thick forest full of broken branches and wind-falls which have in the course of time accumulated amongst the trees. Then for a pretty long distance we kept on the left bank of the Kuntschekisch-tarim, or Kuntschekar-tarim as it is called by the natives of Jangi-su, an older river-bed, marked with exceptional distinctness as an elongated hollow fenced in on both sides by dense forest. After emerging from this, the track crosses alternately steppe and bush-covered ground, though sometimes the surface is quite bare and full of hollows and depressions, ancient scarped banks and erosion terraces, left by desiccated lakes and river-arms. A salt pool we came to is known as the Kisil-su. As a general rule the word *kisil* indicates that the water is salt, just as *kara* and *ak* (spring water and water from melted snows respectively) imply that it is fresh. Once more approaching the Kuntschekisch-tarim, we found on our right a very large boldschemal, containing a frozen pool, with forest on its margins. We encamped in the district of Kumluk, where there was a hut standing beside yet another abandoned loop. Thus this river too has left on its banks indications of changeableness, and of its tendency to shift its channel.

Here the Kuntschekisch-tarim, or the Eastern River, is called also the Kok-ala or Ara-tarim, meaning the Middle River, i. e. between the Tschong-tarim and the eastern Ilek. It is fed by two »roots» or »source arms» from the left bank of the Tarim, namely one at Kudshek near Ullugh-köl, the other at Kara-tschatsch below Jangi-köl. But it derives its greatest supply from the Laschin-darja, which joins it over against the above-named Kisil-su. Thus the Kuntschekisch-tarim is considerably smaller at Kumluk than at Arelisch. Of the multiplicity of sources possessed by the Laschin-darja I have already spoken when describing my journey through the reedy lakes of the Tarim. From Kumluk the nearest village, or *mähallä*, is Jangi-su, barely half a day's journey away; the track thither crosses the Laschin-darja and passes through the districts of Kön-asti and Kok-angis. Travelling south-west from Kumluk, you cross three rivers, namely the Kuntschekisch-tarim, the Laschin-darja, and the Tschong-tarim, but travelling north-east you cross one only, namely the Ilek or Bos-ilek. At the high-water season the Kuntschekisch-tarim above the Laschin-darja is said not to rise to the same notable extent as other rivers, which no doubt depends upon the fact that independently of the seasons it derives a pretty steady supply of water from the Kuntsche-darja.

On the 21st February we continued towards the north-west and west-north-west along the left bank of the Kuntschekisch-tarim. The river is discernible only from the thick belt of forest which accompanies it, for the path we chose runs a little distance from it over steppe, and through clumps of forest and excessively trying thickets of tangled bushes (*tiken* and *kongurtschak*). A district beside the river is called Jegren-sulak. The steppe-land is traversed by a narrow winding watercourse, though it was at that time dry. A short distance to the right of the track is an unbroken chain of sandy ridges and mounds, with tamarisks and *kötäk*. Opposite to Matija-jatghan we threaded our way through a belt of low dunes, which have their steep faces turned towards the west; in the intervals between the dunes there is an abundance of dead *kamisch*. On the right lies the district of Usagh-kötörma.