

into little dark, deep basins. It also possesses a small cataract, 0.55 m. in height, where the water, bluish green and as bright as crystal, plunges down the threshold with a good deal of splutter and froth. We dragged the canoes past it through the reeds. Then follow a series of miniature lakes, with a thousand windings in and out amongst the islets, bays, and tamarisk-mounds, the whole buried in dense reed-brakes, until we came to another little cataract of about 0.57 m. height. Thus within a very short space we had ascended 1.12 m. In the corresponding sections of the existing Tarim there are no such cataracts, but the fall is distributed generally over the entire course of the river, the only lakes it has being some small ones near Kara-buran. From the freshwater lines, which in the largest lake we crossed during the day were distinctly visible at 0.175 m. above the then existing level, it is plain that the volume in this more northerly waterway was considerably larger immediately after the melting of the ice. Thus the level was at this season dropping day by day in the same way as it does in the Tarim.

Once more we plunged into a labyrinth of *tschapghans* so narrow that there was seldom room for more than one canoe at a time to paddle up them, hardly ever for two abreast. These narrow channels are cut through sedge (*jäkän*), packed extraordinarily close together, and backed by tall kamisch. Still we did in places cross open expanses of water, generally in the deepest parts of the basins. In one of these larger expanses we obtained a sounding of 4.01 m., and in a smaller expanse a sounding of 2.90 m. Properly speaking, what we were traversing was one single large lake, called Atta Baj-



Fig. 392. THE FIRST CATARACT IN THE CHANNEL.

deni-köl, which in the course of time has become practically grown up with reeds and sedge. These last effectually prevented us from obtaining any idea of the lie of the shores, as well as from mapping them. It was only very rarely that we caught glimpses of firm land through the reeds, but that may just as readily have been islands. The lake of Öjen-aldi-köl, the Lake in front of the House, is more open, and gave depths of 3.70, 3.00, 4.22, 3.00, and 2.50 meters; so that the soundings we obtained in this lake were but little less than those we obtained in the Kara-koschun (see vol. II).

We encamped at the village of Jäkän-öj, a place of a few huts, with 4 ujlik of about 20 persons in all, though 19 of them were at that moment at Tscharklik, engaged in agricultural work. In the way of live-stock the village owned 100 to 150 sheep, 15 cows, 14 asses, and 6 horses, the last too being also absent at Tscharklik. These four families were formerly settled at Tschigelik-uj, and remembered quite well my visit there in 1896. But they removed from that place in the year following, and founded Jäkän-öj. They are however not settled permanently,