

wards; its formation is already prepared, and its progress will be facilitated, by the two lines of mud-banks, which already indicate the channel in which the river will eventually flow. And when the northern part of the Kötäklik-köl is in this way filled up, it will be the turn of the southern parts to undergo the same fate; and the process will of course be rendered easier through the ability of the prevailing wind to project the sand forwards to the water-line. The masses of sand describe here, within a limited area, a species of circulation. Travelling south-west, they are seized upon by the water, which deposits them in the form of sand-banks; then, after the lake has become filled up, and the flanks of the sand-banks have become exposed and dried, the sand once more begins its wandering in the shape of something intermediate between fluvial dunes and desert-dunes, or more correctly after a brief *intermezzo* as fluvial dunes they will continue their migration in the form of ordinary desert or continental dunes. This is precisely the same process that we have already found going on beside the Tarim below Karaul, though on a larger scale and there occasioned by a different cause, namely the river's own migration towards the right.

Seeing however that the flowing water is endeavouring to obliterate the lakes, it may sound like a contradiction when I said, that I found the lakes below the Lajlik-darja greater in 1900 than they were in 1896. But it must also be borne in mind, that all the way from the embouchure of the Lajlik-darja right down to the Karaunelik-köl, there does not exist, properly speaking, a single yard of river-bed, but only lakes, and these are so extensive that the current is seldom perceptible. Thus the sedimentary matter of the Lajlik-darja is arrested, and settles only in the northern part of the Karaunelik-köl. If, then, as we shall indeed find to have been the case, there has been an increase in the quantity of water during the four years, the increase must be shown in the expansion of the lakes on all sides, the water penetrating amongst the dunes, dead forest, and kamisch. Now the country is so extraordinarily flat and level, that even a slight augmentation in the amount of water is sufficient to give rise to a very extensive expansion of the water areas, and so shallow are they, that I only once obtained a depth of 5.5 m. But since the river in this way keeps on thrusting its bed farther and farther southwards, absorbing one after the other the lakes that lie in its path, its channel must obviously be more pregnantly developed the farther north it lies; and in point of fact I did subsequently ascertain that the Sadak-köl was in 1900 considerably less than it had been in 1896.

Above Camp. No. XXXII the river was rather winding until we reached some small lakes. These again contained numerous sedimentary deposits, and the channel of the stream was everywhere distinctly perceptible through the tranquil water. After that the river is first broad, then narrow, having already filled up the lakes that formerly existed here. On both sides it is bordered by high barren dunes. The velocity amounted to 0.67 m. in the second, the water foaming off the bows as our canoe-men plied their paddles with a will against the current. There was a satma on the right bank, but it was, as it happened, uninhabited, its owner having gone to Tscharklik. This is the most important place in the Lop country, and the majority of the inhabitants usually go there at this season of the year to cultivate