

paddle underneath it. Below the bridge the velocity was 0.4 m., above it only 0.12 m. The forest here is often especially thick and luxuriant. Sometimes the river is serpentine, then again for considerable distances it flows tolerably straight, presenting at such times quite a picturesque panorama, its dark and silent waters winding through thick reed-beds and lofty forests.

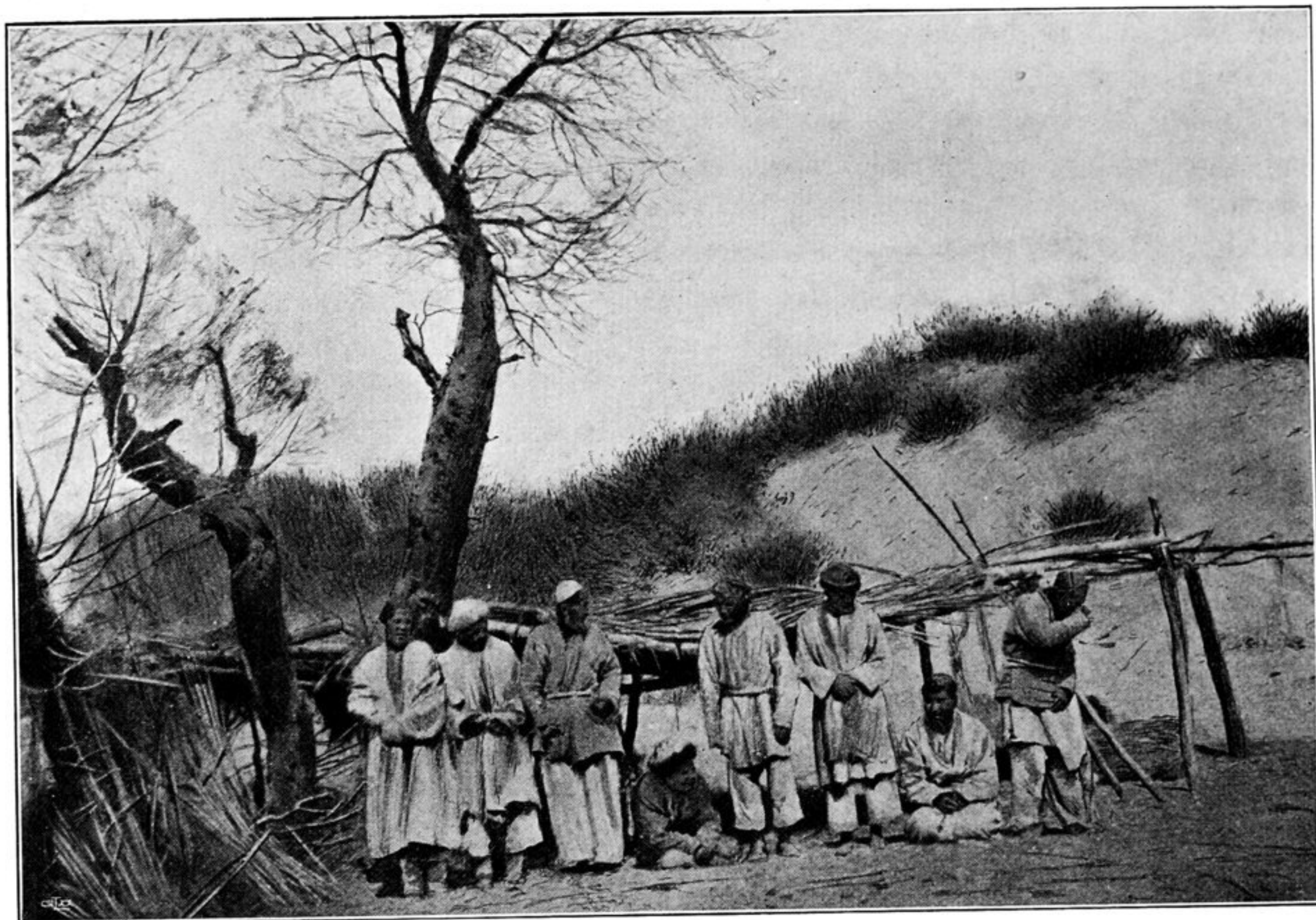


Fig. 407. THE INHABITANTS OF KULATSCHA TOGETHER WITH MY CANOE-MEN.

The huts of Kum-tscheke still stood at a sharp bend of the river, on the high left bank, the sand of which is bound together by vegetation, and were inhabited by the same two families (one *ujlik* of nine persons; none at Tscharklik) as four years previously. These people possessed 30 sheep and two horses, besides some cows, dogs, cats, and poultry. Besides, they were looking after 300 sheep belonging to a *baj* in Tscharklik, who happened to have just arrived to fetch his spring wool. Here I learned that the level of the Märdäk-köl was half a *kulatsch* (86 cm.) higher than on the occasion of my first visit; from which it is to be inferred that the whole of the eastern system had experienced a similar rise, though this is not very probable. The lake sends out one emissary (*sollak-su*, i. e. a stream without discharge) towards the north-east, and is, besides, continued in a series of lakes all the way to the Sadak-köl, where we had observed its outfall. Nevertheless the Märdäk system of lacustrine waterways is said to be entirely cut off from the river in the height of the summer. When the *Ilek* begins to drop, a portion of the water in the Märdäk-köl flows back to it; it is the remainder that gets cut off, and this turns rather brackish during the summer. Wild camels are reported to show them-