

point our river is joined by the Avul-gölme-kadaghan-ilek, a branch emanating from the Tajek-köl. Unfortunately it was not possible to measure its volume anywhere, for it is entirely hidden amongst the kamisch, and is in fact more like a lake overflow. There was but a narrow channel open through the reeds, with a moderate current running through it. It is an interesting fact, deserving of mention, that the Kok-ala of the Arka-köl is not the only stream that issues from the eastern chain of lakes. Even though the outlet of the Arka-köl should become stopped up with reeds and other material, the water will always be able to find its way out through the Tajek-köl arm that I have mentioned, and possibly there are several other similar arms hidden amongst the reeds. Here our Ilek, or the Jangi-tarim, was 7.48 m. deep. On its west side lies the little marginal lake of Karaune-tokkan-dschajir; and above it are some poplars of medium age. On the east bank there are nothing but tamarisk-mounds and small outliers of sand scooped out of the river-bends. Another marginal lake, quite close to the west side of the river, is called Töllöndöniköli. At a sandy bend (Kum-tscheke), called Kötöröma, we measured out in the middle of the stream the great depth of 12.55 m., the greatest I have ever measured in any river in the Tarim system, and indeed the second deepest sounding I have taken anywhere in the whole of the Lop country. In the large desert lakes on the right bank of the Tarim the greatest depth was only 11 m. Absolutely the deepest sounding I ever took along any of the traverses I made either by land or by water through the Lop country was one of 14.0 m., which I got at Markat (vide p. 182). East of the 12.55 m. sounding the Tajek-köl gave a depth of 9.52 m. These three deep places lie pretty nearly on the same latitude, and all of them west-south-west of the basin of Lop-nor. Thus they occur along an elongated depression which lies parallel to the Kara-koschun; and this, even after allowing for the general slope southwards, is considerably deeper than the southern depression which forms the terminal reservoir of the Tarim system. The existence of this northern depression accounts for the origin of the many lakes situated on precisely the same latitude. That these extend north and south, and not in the east-west line of the depression, is due to the effects of the wind, of the drift-sand, of the long chains of dunes held together by vegetation, and of the ramparts which the rivers throw up. But I shall have occasion to return to this depression again, when I come to consider the newly formed lakes which the Kara-koschun has recently sent out towards the north. For the present I will content myself with pointing to the curious fact, that the Ilek at the point I have indicated is more than twice as deep as the deepest spot in the Kara-koschun, or 12.55 m. as compared with 5.15.

Another little lake on the left bank is known as the Uja-vakkan-dschajir. Poplars appear again at Kök-toghraq, on the right bank, where they stand in a clump. At the same time they are more numerous also on the left (eastern) bank, some of them, fresh and vigorous, standing close beside the river, others, dwarf, gnarled, and stumpy, being scattered amongst the small dunes and ridges of tamarisk-mounds. From one of these last, which was lofty and commanding, I took a general view of the locality. To the east lay the broad open expanse of the Tajek-köl, terminated on the east by the thick reeds, and these in their turn are bordered by the dunes and tamarisk-mounds amongst which I travelled in 1896. West, north-