

not risen so high even at the high-water period of the preceding autumn, for under ordinary circumstances the autumn flood is wont to be considerably bigger than that of the spring (mus-suji). In spite however of the expansion of the Tschivilik-köl, complaints were rife that the fishing is deteriorating, because the lake threatens to be encroached upon to such a serious extent by the kamisch.

The Jätim-tarim had already begun to subside; and in two months it would be *kuruk* (dry), that is without current, though pools survive in its bed all summer. In this condition it remains for fully two months, then in the end of August, or beginning of September, a fresh flood comes down. During the winter the level drops again considerably, as we have seen, for instance, during the past February, when the ice-sheet sagged in the middle. All these statements confirm the opinion I had already formed, that the meridional portion of the lower Tarim has begun to turn back again towards the east. And if any doubt on the point remains, it will be instantly removed, when we call to mind the presence of the dry river-bed, the Ettek-tarim, on the west, and the new channel, the Jangi-tarim, on the east.

Using the Tägirmän of Schejtlar as a base for our operations, we spent the 28th April in making two or three excursions in the neighbourhood. First I got Muhamed Emin and another fisherman to paddle me to the hut of Scharkurun on the Ettek-sala, the real beginning of the Ilek, and from there I went over on foot to the Kara-köl. The distance measured 4145 m. — 5554 paces in going and 5551 paces in returning — so that this method of counting one's paces does give pretty reliable results. The strip of land between the Ilek and the western shore of the lake we crossed in a north-easterly direction. It is divisible into three zones. (1) A western, with scattered toghraks of medium age, kamisch, living tamarisks, tamarisk-mounds, little pools of salt water; in four of the deepest places the water came bubbling out of the ground without having any surface connection with the water at the side. (2) The middle zone is *tschöl*, or »desert», with dunes of respectable size, their steep faces being in every case turned towards the south-west, dead tamarisks on high mounds more or less linked together by ridges of sand, dead kamisch in places, and in one or two spots level schor ground, showing that here there was once a sheet of water. (3) In the eastern zone the dunes grow lower, and finally give place to kamisch-fields, which become thicker as the lake is approached; then come two or three marshy arms, and finally the lake itself, with dense kamisch and small sheets of open water. Not far from the shore stands the satma, Kara-köldeki-satmasi, in which Muhamed Emin took refuge with his family and live-stock when the last Tunghan revolt threatened to extend through East Turkestan; but as soon as the danger was over, he returned to Schejtlar.

The weather was anything but favourable for a reconnaissance, for a karaburan from the north-east, which set in about 1 a. m., continued to blow all day. It was full twilight, and objects which were quite close at hand appeared like shadows, or as if they were looked at through muddy water. The sky moreover was thickly clouded; the driving dust penetrated everywhere, so that in the morning every object in the tent was smothered with it. Under these circumstances our lake excursion was somewhat risky, the gunwales being only one decimeter above the water, and as the waves were 1¹/₂ dm. high, it was not long before our canoes