

the rivers issuing from the lake we found the water ten times as clear: they leave their sedimentary matter in it, and this will in time fill it up. Proceeding upwards from the mouth of the Laschin-darja towards its source, the local topography bears the following names: Kemi-salik, Jantak-alghutsch, Irete-kojghan, Kutuk Begiköli, Tunglung-tschapghan, Arkalma, Dural (which is thus touched by an arm of the river), Kan-toghu (the Royal Dam, a name that points to some sort of administrative river-engineering in times past), and Ak-dung, the point already mentioned as that where the Laschin-darja breaks away from the Tarim and its kamisch lakes (see pp. 183—184).

Setting out from Säkitma we paddled farther on up the river. This continued very winding all day. Every now and again alluvial deposits and sand-banks projected above the surface, a proof that the level was at that time dropping. A peculiarly eccentric loop bears the name of Kumluk, although there is no sand visible. Laschin-kadaghan on the right bank is said formerly to have been a lake; there was there a boldschemal, then on the point of being abandoned, although it still possessed free communication with the river, indeed there was a current entering it and an island still remaining in the ring of the loop. At Matijas-söretmesi in the district of Kumluk we recognised again one of the camps of our February excursion (see p. 425). The embers and ashes of our camp-fire still remained, and I thus obtained a good and reliable point of connection with the map of my former journey. The name Haid Kullu-dung is given to a hill on which the man Haid Kullu once had his hut. Then for a space the river flows relatively straight towards the west. On the banks fields of kamisch alternate with magnificent toghrak forests; bush underwoods are less general, tamarisk-mounds are absent, sand occurs, in the shape of two or three rudimentary dunes, in one solitary spot. This tract, lying between the spreading river-arms, is fenced in as it were against the great sand. The people who now live at Mandschar-baschi used about ten years ago to dwell at the huts of Matijas-jatghan. During the course of the day we passed several shepherds' camps. One bek owned a flock of 1300 sheep, pastured at two different places. The shepherds spend the winter and spring beside this river, but it was about time for them to proceed to the Tarim. The district beside an extensive bend in the river is called Tömür Bekning-ghaghal-tasi. Upon reaching Modschuk-kotan we were once more in touch with the route of our former excursion.

On the 3rd May the scenery still continued monotonous, and the river preserved the same character as before, the only variation being that some bends were more sinuous than others. At the first bend there are on the north bank some small dunes and tamarisk-mounds, and at the second bend the river is joined by one of the arms of the Kontsche-darja, which issues at Jäkänlik. It was at that time dry, but is said to carry water in its upper reaches, that year being the first in which the water had failed to get down to the Kuntschekisch-tarim. After that point the south bank is called Jirim or Atschik-sudake-uj. The toghrak forest is here vigorous and of a good age. Tschapal, a place beside a tiresome bend, is now in ruins, though it was inhabited fifteen years ago. Then for a considerable distance the river maintains a straight course. Here is, on its north bank, the bushy region of Kirtschin-kotan, where I encamped in 1896. In the bed of the old desiccated lake of Attamet-