

the main artery of the Tarim. It is stated to begin at Aghis (Kitaj-köbrük), and farther on to unite with the Jaman-ilek. The water it then contained was said to come from an artificial canal, likewise starting at Aghis.

After that the country becomes more desolate and bare; it consists of steppe with *tschige* and tamarisks, while on the left is a belt of barren sand. Farther on is low sand on both sides of the track, and scattered about the sparse steppe are numerous dead tamarisks on their mounds. The track was now running towards the north-north-east and the north-east. At Kärälik we traversed the bottom of a former lake, the greater part of its area lying on our right. It had evidently been fed by a stream of considerable size, for we saw its course quite distinctly marked,



Fig. 3. ANOTHER VIEW OF DILPAR.

though of course without water. This too is said to have started at Aghis, but to have joined the Kontsche-darja at Ak-basch. It has been dry for the last ten years, having been dammed because it robbed the main stream of too much water, and was threatening to drown some pasture-lands lower down. Here too tamarisks, both living and dead, are pretty numerous, some of them with, others without, the usual conical pedestals of earth. Then thin scrubby steppe alternated with low sand and *schor*, or saliferous soil, until we at length came in sight of the poplar forest that grows beside the Kontsche-darja. This district is called Dilpar. On the right of the river lies a shallow lake, or rather a marsh, which derives its water from the river; it is said to be *sollak-su*, or »stagnant water» — a small marginal lake in miniature. Dense and luxuriant kamisch steppe lies all round its shores, and indeed extends generally along the right bank of the river; here we perceived several *aghils*, or »sheep-folds», together with shepherds and their flocks.