

himself there during the two preceding years, for the ants had been more numerous than usual. I should not have mentioned this story, had it come from any other source except these simple Lop-men, whose imagination is so restricted, that they would never invent such a thing unless there were some sort of warrant for it in actual facts.



Fig. 89. A »TSCHAPGHAN» IN THE SUJI-SARIK-KÖL.

Otak-köl is bounded on the north by firm ground, with tamarisk-mounds; its greatest depth was 1.90 m. On the shore of the lake-basin of Tojaghun we discovered three *aghils* (sheep-pens), containing in all 100 sheep, guarded by some shepherds. Strange to say, we had seen nothing of them when marching past that way. The two inhabited places in the Kara-koschun district, namely Kum-tschapghan and Tusun-tschapghan, are said to own altogether 2300 sheep. Nias Baki Bek alone owns 600, and his elder brother 900; but as a rule each man possesses 30 to 50. The animals are grazed partly in that neighbourhood, partly at Mijan. Sheep were kept in Prschevalskij's time also, though not to the same extent. The natives are said to set a greater value upon fish than upon sheep. If they lose a sheep, they take it quite calmly; but if a fish slips out of a net, they are greatly annoyed.

Beside the lakes of Tojaghun and Usun-köl there exist in all three toghraks, about ten years old, and these were the only ones the natives were aware of in that region. These three trees have evidently come from the Tarim and have been transported by the current *viâ* Tschigelik-uj. They prove that there is nothing to prevent poplars from spreading and thriving there, and that it is not the fault of the soil that toghrak forest does not clothe the banks of the Kara-koschun. If only the lake should remain where it is a sufficient length of time, forest will beyond doubt