

would not be right therefore to compare 4.25 m., the maximum depth of 1896, with 5.15 m., the maximum depth of 1900, and say that the lake was 90 cm. deeper at the latter date than at the former. The bathymetrical value is in both cases purely accidental. On both occasions I of course measured the places which appeared to be the deepest; still, that would not preclude the existence of even deeper depressions in other places not far away.

Next comes the lake of Ajagh-köl, pretty large in size, which is said to have contained water for 25 years. Before the water came, and it came from the south, the site of the lake is said to have been perfectly dry and barren land. The name, which means properly the Foot Lake, that is the »lowest», »outermost», merely points out the lake which at some time or other was the last, or the most easterly, in which fishing was carried on. But, as I have already said, this is now deserted by fish and fishermen alike, no doubt in consequence of the deterioration in the quality of the water.

Crossing a series of small basins, with a depth of not more than 0.50 m., we came to the Lakone-teresi-kalghan-köl and Schaptik-köl, and finally to the Kanat-baghlaghan-köl, this the largest not only in 1896 but also in 1900. True, the reeds had spread, and their distribution was altered, to such an extent that I should never have recognised the lake again, had not one of my canoe-men, Jaman Kullu, who accompanied me on the earlier trip, and who was with me again now, convinced me that we were travelling over the same route. In 1896 I obtained in this lake soundings of 2.85, 3.15, 3.10, and 2.10 m.; on this occasion (1900) the deepest places were 1.70, 2.50, and 2.05 m. These figures do indeed admit of some comparison, seeing that the soundings were taken in both cases in the deepest parts of the same basin. The mean of the former series is 2.80 m., and of the latter series 2.08 m. Thus there can be no doubt that in the four years the lake had grown shallower; so that in this case it was not pure chance that the lake was found to be 72 cm. shallower in 1900 than in 1896. As the lake grows shallower, the kamisch spreads more and more, and it was there shooting up in parts of the lake which formerly were too deep for it. Consequently the area of open water has decreased considerably since 1896, and yet this was the largest continuous sheet we saw during this present trip. We forced the canoes as far through the kamisch as we possibly could. When we were at length unable by our united efforts to force them any farther, we set fire to the reeds, drawing back until they had cooled down, after which we continued again. In the end however we were obliged to desist: it was quite impossible to proceed farther. The old strong reeds had been broken down by wind and storm in sheaves so big and thick that we could easily have walked upon them without any risk whatever of dropping through, nor was there any side-passage through these hard, coarse reed-stalks where it would have been possible to work the canoes. Behind this impenetrable barrier lay the lake-basin of Turkomak-köl, which I crossed over in a canoe in 1896, but which is now everywhere inaccessible. Its name will soon be forgotten. Jaman Kullu estimated the distance between the point to which we now penetrated and the point we reached in 1896 to be equal to the distance between the eastern end of the Lakone-teresi-kalghan-köl and the point where we were now stopped. Accepting the data given by my velocity-instru-