

current, its velocity being 0.17 m. in the second. It proceeded towards the north and north-east, where the vegetation was thick and luxuriant. Large areas of both *jäkän* and *kamisch* were broken off level about 25 cm. above the water-surface, and as the broken stalks all pointed towards the west and south-west, it was manifestly the wind which had mowed them down. This pointed to the occurrence of an early spring storm, before the ice broke up, for the water would not be resistant enough to serve as a fulcrum against which the stalks could be snapped. The ice was said to have broken up here in the beginning of March, whereupon the surface, owing to the influx of the spring-flood, had risen; but quite recently it had begun to drop again, and during the last few days had subsided pretty rapidly. Still a drop of 25 cm. since the break-up of the ice is unexpectedly large, especially as only two days before we had been told in the northern part of the Kara-koschun, that the water there was unusually high. It is not likely that the northern and the southern waterways are everywhere separated by a strip of firm land, such as would allow one-half of the lake to stand at a higher level than the other half in virtue of a greater influx. This might indeed be conceivable were the left arm of the Tarim greater than the right arm; but, as an actual fact, the Kum-tschapghan arm, which goes to the northern waterway, is smaller than the Tusun-tschapghan arm, which leads to the Sate-köl, where this big drop took place. Possibly a large percentage of the water of the Tusun-tschapghan finds its way northwards by winding passages, and the Sate-köl is also possibly in great part cut off from the north, so that in reality it does drop more quickly than the other part of the marsh. It is likewise just possible, that the broken stalks were survivals from an earlier year, when the levels were different.

In point of area the linked lakes Sate-köl and Gölme-kätgen-köl must be the largest sheet of open water in the whole of the Kara-koschun, considerably larger in fact than the Kanat-baghlaghan-köl. But there is a great difference between the two basins. In the latter there is water all the year round; it is however ten times as deep as the Sate-köl, which receives no farther influx after the early summer, so that it contracts, becomes salt, and dries up completely, exposing the hard yellow clay, which cracks into polygonal saucer-like patches, with upturned edges. The *kamisch* and *jäkän* are shrivelling up, and survive only in the *jangal* in the deeper water. This will explain why the vegetation in these linked lakes is so thin and poor. Fifteen years ago, before these lakes were formed, their sites were dry land; but when the central parts of the Kara-koschun became overgrown with *kamisch*, the water there was literally forced to flow over into the adjacent parts, and it was then that these lakes originated. The southern lakes dried up completely for the first time in the summer of 1898, though they filled again in the following autumn. Since then the water has diminished at an increasing ratio, and in the year of my visit not one of the fishermen of Tusun-tschapghan had been over tho these regions. The year before there were still some fish, but that year they had completely disappeared, having no doubt a premonition that the day of these lakes is past.

Unfortunately my plans never allowed me time to go round the eastern end of the Kara-koschun, and not even a single living native has ever visited that part