

the drift-sand approaching from the north-east has not succeeded in accumulating here to any great extent. The detached dunes which stand quite close to the northern shore of the Kara-koschun are also very small.

Next followed a zone in which tamarisks were growing abundantly. Most of them stand on the level ground, and though a few do show a tendency to mound-building, the pedestals are not more than one foot high. To the south-west of each of these last there is a miniature ridge of sand. These tamarisks, like the Kara-koschun itself, are new-comers in the region; this I infer, not only from their tender age, but also from the absence of mounds, for the older these trees grow, the bigger are the mounds upon which they usually rear themselves. At length we saw to the south, from the top of a terrace-like clay hill, 4 to 5 m. high, the clear, blue surface of the Kara-koschun extending from south-west to east, and covered with fields of yellow kamisch. The clay hill in question was likewise crowned with dead kamisch-stubble. Although it was undoubtedly the highest eminence in the locality, there were several others of lower elevation. Were it not protected, as it were, by a coat-of-mail of kamisch-roots, it would long ago have been levelled down by the wind, which has scooped out the ground beside it. Assuming that this kamisch once stood on the level ground, then it is evident that the surface has been lowered and carried away by the wind to the depth of not less than 4 or 5 meters.

I have already described our next camp (XXI) and the route thence to Kumschapghan. I will now give an account of the excursion which we made in March 1901 along a part of the same northern shore from the east to the camp just alluded to.

On that occasion too I had just crossed the Desert of Lop from north to south, from Altmisch-bulak to the Kara-koschun, though by a more easterly line than in 1900. At barely 700 meters from the northern shore of the Kara-koschun, we crossed a distinct shore-line, showing that formerly the marsh was bigger than it is now. Then at about 200 meters from the water's edge we came to a belt of drift-sand, bound together by vegetation, so that the dune-shape is seldom obvious, although the sand is not more than one meter high. Apart from this, schor, which prevails all over the southern part of the Desert of Lop, runs right down to the brink of the water. Close to the water it was wet for a breadth of 10 to 20 meters, and was dotted over with miniature pools. This moist strip indicates that the level had dropped during the winter. We reached the lake on the 17th March, a fortnight or three weeks before the spring flood came down and again filled the whole of its basin. There was kamisch, it is true, in places along the shore, but it was excessively thin and poor. It appeared to be dying, and indeed had died in patches, all that remained being stubble buried under clay and silt. Long stretches of the shore were quite barren, just as desolate as the desert lake of the year before. The reason the kamisch does not thrive here, notwithstanding the copious supply of water, is that the lake, being relatively at a great distance from the river-mouth, is growing salter, owing to the influx from above being less than formerly. All the same, there was kamisch, thick and fairly vigorous, growing out in the lake at a pretty considerable distance from the shore. Besides, there was a sprinkling of köuruk plants amongst the sand, and a few languishing tamarisks, but not a