

desert, but only schor and clay desert, as I ascertained when crossing the Desert of Lop the second time. The relative levels in this long-drawn-out depression are doubtless such that, were the Bulundsir-gol sufficiently full, its water would flow without hindrance down either to the existing Kara-koschun or to the northern, now dry, depression of the Lop-nor. But to say, that the »old Lop-nor» — in any case a very indefinite term — reached in the form of a bay as far as the Atschik-kuduk, is, as I shall prove later on when I come to discuss the levels of the Desert of Lop, an altogether meaningless statement.

With the view of completing my description of the southern shore of the Kara-koschun, I will now adduce what I learnt from a man of Abdal, who had several times journeyed between that town and Sa-tscheo on the *astin-jol* or *tschöl-jol*, and who also accompanied Kosloff. At first, he said, he kept along the south shore of the marsh until he came to Kurgek, situated on the same shore, where fresh water was obtained from the lake; there was also grazing there, but not fuel. The ground is saliferous, and at intervals there are mounds. Southwards there is no sand. The second station is called Partscha-schor, also on the shore of the marsh, and it had grazing and a sprinkling of young tamarisks. At the time of low water the lake is salt, but it becomes fresh when the high water pours into it. Latschin too is on the shore of the marsh; the district there is *jaman-schorlik*, that is strongly impregnated with salt, and there are layers of salt in the soil. In the autumn the high water is said not to get so far as that place, because it spreads so slowly over the marsh that it freezes before it reaches Latschin. On the other hand the spring high-water (*mus-suji*), which has no such enemy as the frost to contend against, does get all the way to Latschin. This place is said to be situated on the continuation line of the glen of Hunglughu in the Astin-tagh, but no stream ever reaches it from that quarter, not even after violent rains. The fourth station Tschindejlik, is a saline spring, or more correctly two, situated at the foot of a terrace, where the ground is schor. There are jardangs there; and kamisch and tamarisks grow round the springs. Between the last two stations there is some sand. The view north from Tschindejlik embraces nothing but hard, dry schor, which injures the feet of both horses and asses; but there is no trace of either water or kamisch.

Whilst travelling from Kara-koschun to Tatlik-bulak I crossed over this belt of schor, and noticed the fact to which Kosloff calls attention, namely that there is no fuel. He says »the traveller must carry a supply of fuel with him, for the first days out (i. e. from Abdal) there is none to be found.» In view of this it is difficult to understand what Littledale means by the following description of his first camp on the southern shore, going from Abdal, »There are distinct evidences of the swamp having been at one time much larger than it is at present, and judging from the number of the roots, there must have been a considerable forest where there is now nothing but arid desert.»*

Along the line by which I crossed the southern belt of shore I did not find even *one* root of any sort. There are few regions in the centre of Asia which are

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