

that these in their turn originated in the Tokus-tarim, whose lowermost reaches here found their way into the Kara-koschun. But upon examining the neighbourhood further, we soon found that the hydrographical relations were by no means so simple as that. The stream in question emptied itself into a series of smaller lakes, while from the marsh to the south two arms issued, going west and north-west. Thanks to the tamarisks and steppe-plants which grew in them, their bottoms were firm, and allowed us to cross over them. After that we were able to continue a good distance towards the west, skirting these arms on the south, as well as the small lakes into which they emptied. But we were again soon stopped by another arm flowing towards the north. This we could indeed have crossed had it been necessary, but not very far west of it there was yet another arm bigger than all the others put together, with a volume of fully 4 cub.m. or more. It was about 10 m. broad, had a mean velocity of about 0.5 m., and a mean depth of 0.8 m., all these being autptic estimates. As it was absolutely impossible for camels to get across this stream, our road was completely barred: we were in a position in which we were surrounded by water on every side — marsh, lakes, pools, and actively flowing currents. Within a very small area the water was thus streaming towards every quarter of the compass, except east and south-east. It was like an orbital movement, a *maelström*, gravitating everywhere towards one centre. During the hour we were detained here whilst a reconnaissance was being made, we actually saw a fresh arm form on the south, and flow slowly, very slowly, across the level schor, which grew darker and wetter as the little tentacle meandered northwards. It was clear, that the greater part of these hesitating streams were destined eventually to make for the north. Here then a fresh overflow was taking place before my very eyes; the Kara-koschun was palpably spreading northwards across the barren desert.

Our next concern was to select a place for our camp where we should not be drowned out during the night, or completely inclosed by fresh streams that might form. Next day we had no choice but to retrace our steps towards the north-east, in order to get out of the treacherous labyrinth. Passing Camp No. CLXVII, we shortly afterwards left our former route to the south and directed our steps to the north-north-east across the schor, which was dotted over with sporadic desert plants and in two or three places had miniature accumulations of sand. At length we reached the continuation of the channel that stopped our way, or rather the chain of small lakes into which it broke up. From Camp No. CLXIX we could see very extensive sheets of water to the west. Clearly there was nothing for it; we must make a detour round these newly formed parts of the Kara-koschun. We discovered later, that it would have been a shorter road, had we gone round the Kara-koschun east and south instead of following the crooked path we did pursue. But we were more than recompensed for our toilsome march by the discoveries we made, discoveries which confirmed the idea I threw out in 1896.

On 23rd March the relatively large lake beside which we had encamped soon contracted into a narrower waterway, with thousands of little bays and »sidings», in which we could distinctly see how the water pressed forward to every low-lying spot in the vicinity, while at the same time every irregularity of the surface that projected in however slight a degree formed a small island or holm. Here and there along