

## CHAPTER XIV.

### HYDROGRAPHICAL RELATIONS ON THE NORTH OF THE KARA-KOSCHUN.

After that we continued our westward march across heavy and difficult sand. From the point where we doubled the north-west offshoots of the new lakes, we perceived the sand, high and continuous, stretching west as far as we could see. A little beyond the extreme offshoot running west we passed our Camp No. XX of the year preceding; it was easily recognisable from the marks of the camp-fire and the preserved-food tins which we had left there. This gave me a valuable point of connection with our route of the year before. The problems which at that time confronted me would now soon be all solved. I thought at that time that the water was coming from the Schirge-tschapghan, but I now ascertained that it was proceeding direct from the Kara-koschun. Had we the year before only gone a very short distance farther west, there would have been no need for us to cross over the canal-arm, and it was now (1901) so swollen that it was out of the question to think of trying to do so. Had we not discovered the traces I have alluded to, it would have been impossible to recognise the neighbourhood again. The distribution of the water was quite different; the pools and basins of the preceding year had swollen and spread out on every side, and run more together, while the expanses of water to the south-east were greater, and the mud and sand islands fewer and farther between. In the west however, and there only, there was no expansion; hence the level in that quarter was rising. The spot on which my tent had stood, a little below the camp-fire, was now covered with water, and it extended right to the foot of the *jar* in the vicinity.

Let us now compare the results of the observations made at this point in 1900, on 2nd April, with those made in 1901, on 28th March, that is to say in both cases alike *before* the ice-water had begun to enter the marsh. We note first that the contours of the surface, in so far as they affected the distribution of the water, were the same at both dates. The new lake extended just as far towards the north-west in 1900 as it did in 1901, its north-west extremity being in both years precisely the same. But there was this difference, that the water in the depressions was higher in 1901 than in 1900, so that what were islands in the latter year were under water in the former. What the conditions were farther east it