

entirely in the course of the year—were the lake not constantly fed by the Tarim. As an actual fact, the evaporation here will be even greater than in the Lake of Aral, for not only has the Kara-koschun an incomparably smaller area, and is surrounded on all sides by desert, but its evaporation is enhanced by its vegetation, its considerably greater elevation, the freshness of its water, and the constant wind that blows. Since then the river drops to its lowest level in the summer, and its evaporation in June is certainly not less active than at Nukus, the marsh should not be especially far from actually drying up every year, or at all events it should dwindle to a comparatively insignificant residue, as indeed the natives aver that it does. If the Kara-koschun goes on shrinking at the same rate as it has shrunk during the last 25 years, it will sooner or later become nothing better than an ephemeral pool, drying up completely in the summer, filling again in the autumn, remaining frozen all winter, perhaps even becoming dry again sometimes in the spring, and once more filling with water after the ice melts. Yet before anything of this kind comes to pass, it is probable that the above-mentioned changes will have already taken place; that is to say, the remnant of the marsh will have become converted into a marginal lake of the character and rank of the Karaburan, and the Tarim will empty itself into the recently formed lakes to the north, which again, in the fulness of time, are in their turn destined to disappear.

The life of the existing Kara-koschun is therefore ebbing fast; it is like a flickering flame which leaps up for a moment when fresh oil is poured into the lamp, but after that droops again, and threatens to go out.

I have already given an account of the measurements of the river which I made on four different occasions at Jurt-tschapghan. All we know about the volume at this point is, that the Tarim on 21st April 1896 had a volume of 61 cub.m., on 13th April 1900 of 86 cub.m., on 25th June 1900 of 39 cub.m., and on 3rd April 1901 of 141 cub.m. Arranged according to the seasons, and subject to the condition that the general volume of water was the same in each of the three years quoted, these *data* furnish a regularly descending curve, steep in the beginning of April, but growing flatter as the year goes on. Were I, using these data, inadequate though they be, and relying also upon my own observations in other districts higher up the Tarim, as well as upon the verbal information of the natives — were I to attempt to draw up a provisional sort of table, it would assume something like the form which follows:

	Cub.m. per second.		Cub.m. per second.
3rd April	141	Beginning of July	35
13th »	86	Middle » »	30
21st »	61	End » »	25
Beginning of May	57	Beginning » August	20
Middle » »	53	Middle » »	20
End » »	49	End » »	30
Beginning » June	45	Beginning » September	55
Middle » »	42	Middle » »	80
25th June	39	End » »	110