

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### GENERAL HYDROGRAPHICAL RELATIONS OF THE TARIM-BASIN.

In the first volume of this work I have given an account of the lower Jarkent-darja, the whole of the Tarim, the intricate arms and channels of the Tarim delta, the eastern waterway through the lakes which is so intimately connected with the Kontsche-darja, the marginal lakes of the Tarim, and the lower Tschertschen-darja, as well as the lake of Kara-buran connected with it. In the first half of this second volume I have described the old dried-up bed of the Tarim, the Kuruk-darja, and the abandoned lake of Lop-nor so intimately associated with it, and finally the present terminal lake of the Tarim, the Kara-koschun, and the newly formed lakes between that lake and the Lop-nor. Having thus dealt with all the materials in detail, it will be expedient, before proceeding further, to take a brief, but general, *résumé* of the river-system as a whole. The temptation is, I confess, strong, to deal with this subject exhaustively, that is to say, to take into account those parts also of the principal river and its tributaries which are situated amongst the girdle of mountains that ring round the basin of East Turkestan on every side except the east; but the task would demand more time than I can conveniently spare, and would, besides, carry me beyond the limits that I set myself for this present work. All that can be expected of me is that I should make available the materials I have collected. The discussion of these, in conjunction with such information as existed already about the upper courses of the rivers in question, I must leave to the geographers who study such things at home. And even for the geographer who possesses an exhaustive knowledge of the whole of the available material, and so is in a position to arrange and group all the observations which have been made during the last few dozen years by a fairly respectable number of explorers in the peripheral mountains, it will be anything but an easy task to compare and collate the upper courses of those rivers with their lower courses, and to analyse the laws under which their volumes decrease as they advance from the periphery towards the centre of the East Turkestan basin. One reason why it is not easy is that our knowledge of the peripheral parts of the area is in fact still rather deficient. For, while some