

mined; this sometimes gives rise to barriers, which help to make the river change its bed. Generally speaking the Jarkent-darja is here more restless and more active. From the deserted channel, the Kona-darja, a big irrigation canal goes off to Maralbaschi, the water being diverted into it in spring by a dam put down at the beginning of the new river, the Kötäklik-darja. In this last the velocity is greater than it has hitherto been, the new channel having been made in 1895 and not yet having formed windings and alluvia. In one place there is a cataract one decimeter high. Forest scanty and rare.

24th September. Ditto — ditto. The windings are only small and insignificant; the bed is deep and narrow, sometimes only 7 to 8 m. across; the terraced banks 1 1/2 m. high; on the left bank, at Ghorung-dung, small sand-dunes with vegetation. Bushes, kamisch, young toghraks standing singly. Cataracts in three places, the last of them 2 dm. high.

25th September. The bed winding but little; the depth reaching down to 6 m.; the breadth in some places only 6 to 7 m. A network of arms, all very short, meet again at the sand-dune of Karaul-dung. At intervals dunes bound by vegetation and 6 m. high. One to two kilometers to the south and south-east the dunes of the Desert of Takla-makan; the surface nothing but sand. Luxuriant forest at Kumatschal only. High terraced banks. The country uninhabited, consequently it yielded only a few geographical names. Generally speaking the banks of the Jarkent-darja, like those of the Tarim, are extremely thinly inhabited; you may often travel for several days without meeting a single human being. Permanently settled localities exist in only a few places, and those mostly beside the lower Jarkent-darja and the Tarim. To the subject of the population I shall however return in a later chapter.

27th September. One bend; otherwise the bed remarkably straight. The Kona-darja reunites with the new river, the old bed being then followed. Solitary dunes, big and barren, at Petelik-otak; the terraced banks up to 3 1/2 m. in height. Depth amounting to 8 m. Magnificent forest, thickets and reed-brakes.

28th September. The bed moderately winding, up to 7 m. deep, old, and energetically eroded; thick, fine forest. A few kilometers south-east of the old arm of Chorum is high sand. A belt of forest, bushes, and kamisch steppe of varying breadth fills the space between the barren sand of the Takla-makan and the right bank of the river all the way down to the confluence of the Ak-su-darja; though the breadth of the forest proper seldom appears to exceed 1 to 2 km. Generally the transition from forest to barren sand is rather abrupt. At the most there is only a strip of tamarisk and scrubby steppe between the two, together with a few solitary poplars. There are often patches of kamisch amongst the nearest dunes.

29th September. The bed very sinuous; small alluvial deposits. Kamisch next the bank. Steppe and bushes predominate; forest is less frequent. Dunes of considerable size at Kanscha-kum. The big sandy desert approaches very close on the south-east. Canoes belonging to the riparian shepherds begin to make their appearance.

30th September. Moderately winding; very slight alluvial deposits; eroded terraced banks up to 4 and 5 m. in height; depth reaching 8 m.; the current narrow and sluggish. Beyond Kijik-tele-tschöl the country is more open and desolate; steppe predominates; no forest, though thin clumps of young toghraks.