

One peculiarity which the lower Tarim shares in common with several other flat-land rivers, such as the Hwang-ho and the Po, is its tendency to elevate its banks and form marginal ramparts, where the fluvial mud and dust are arrested by vegetation. These are the outcome of the river's desperate attempts to protect itself against premature extinction. During the high-water period the level of the Tarim lies for great distances rather higher than the level of the adjacent lowlands, a circumstance which greatly enhances the easy formation of marginal lakes.

We have seen that even the Jarkent-darja forms boldschemals not far below Lajlik, indeed one may say shortly after emerging upon the lowlands; that is to say it cuts off and abandons its own »ripe» bends. On the whole this tendency may be said to increase as the river proceeds towards its termination. In the lowermost part of its course these abandoned dead-water loops are extraordinarily numerous; in fact they are so many that it is impossible to calculate their numbers. In a drift down the river such as mine one probably sees only a portion of the existing boldschemals, for the oldest ones are masked by vegetation. In order to obtain a map that should claim to be complete in respect of the boldschemals, marginal lakes, side-channels and river-branches, the character of the banks, the routes, huts, shepherds' encampments, and so forth, it would be necessary, not to drift down the river merely but also to travel along both its right and its left bank, an undertaking which I scarce think any man will willingly submit himself to.

5th June. Although the river shrinks below the kamisch lakes to an inconsiderable and dwindling stream, below Arghan, after receiving the influx of the Tschivilik district, it swells out to more imposing dimensions. The course is not particularly winding. Magnificent forest on the banks, reputed to be about 100 years old. Many boldschemals, frequently in pairs. The river is augmented by the two arms, the Kulatscha and the Almontschuk-kok-ala, coming from the Ilek on the east.

6th June. The river not particularly winding. Magnificent forest, often undermined, at the bends. The terraced banks as much as 4 m. high, and the depth considerable. The river is thus sharply defined, a characteristic common to all the arms of the lower Tarim. We observed a similar conformation, though even more distinctly marked, in the Ugen-darja.

10th June. The river in part perfectly straight, in part forming deep bends; boldschemals and jarsiks numerous. On the banks thick forest or steppe; small strips of sand in places. Here the high desert sand nowhere approaches the right bank; for since the existing bed was formed, the desert sand has been able to advance away from it. At Schirge-tschapghan the river derives an accession of water from the Ilek and the eastern chain of lakes, the lake from which it last issues being the Karaunelik-köl, which plays an important part as a water-distributor. From it the water flows westwards to the Tarim and eastwards to the Tokus-tarim; at the present time the first-named is shrinking, the latter increasing. The Tokus-tarim flows almost parallel to the last section of the Tarim, and like it empties into the Kara-koschun. Indeed it looks as if the Tokus-tarim will in time usurp the place of the Tschong-tarim, and carry the united flood of the entire system, a circumstance that is to some extent connected with the migration of the terminal