

In addition, the country possesses also a considerable number of shepherds, whom I have not counted along with the village population; indeed it is difficult to arrive at any sort of a rule for estimating the numbers of these people even approximately. While travelling along the Kerija-darja, between Kotschkor-aghil and Koschlasch, I myself estimated the shepherds there at about 150. Beside the Nija-darja their number is certainly much greater because of the lively pilgrim traffic to the shrine of Imam Dschafer Sadik. The shepherds are relatively few alongside the Tschertschen-darja; but on the other hand they are numerous in the forests of the Chotan-darja above Buksem. Beyond all comparison the greatest number of shepherds live however beside the lower Jarkent-darja and the Tarim. The observations that I myself made in the course of my drift down that river are of little use for



Fig. 269. GATE OF KARA-SCHAHR.

our present purpose. It is true that on 65 different occasions we saw either shepherds with their flocks or one or more shepherd huts; but in every case it was purely by chance: we could of course only see objects that were visible from the river, so that huts which stood behind the clumps of forest or behind the thickets entirely escaped our observation. But whenever we did come into direct contact with these people, I always noted down their numbers, and found that there were on an average 8 families in each settlement. Let us suppose that there are 300 of these settlements along the river; we then get 2400 families, or about 10,000 persons. This calculation takes into account however only the narrow strip of land that runs immediately alongside the river; while as a matter of fact the entire breadth of the belt of vegetation on both sides of the stream is given up to the sheep industry, the water for these animals being drawn from dis severed or abandoned parts of the river, from boldschemals, lakes, or from wells dug in what are otherwise dry riverbeds. This belt of vegetation is especially broad in the region below Schah-jar, where the industry is in such a flourishing condition; for there the Mus-art-Intschkädarja contributes so largely to the distribution of the water. The entire strip of country which is thus occupied by shepherds may be set down as being five times broader than the narrow strip immediately beside the river of which I first spoke. Hence we may estimate the number of shepherds living alongside the lower Jarkent-darja and the Tarim at about 50,000 individuals. Nor would it be an exaggeration to set down the shepherd population of the entire country at 100,000 souls, reckoning not only those who dwell beside the rivers, but also those who use the pasture-grounds of the oases.