

clouds of dust and sand that were whirled up it was often quite easy to see how the winds deviate in the valleys and glens; in fact, the dust-haze was sometimes so thick that for a short period the air was quite darkened by it. Here however, in contrast with the basin of the Kum-köl, there was no drift-sand, at any rate there was none within sight. Next day the sky was thickly clouded over, but it was not until evening that any snow fell. At two o'clock we had a storm from the west. By this we had again reached drier regions, for in the Atschik-köl basin the surface was nowhere marshy.

This locality was frequented by large numbers of kulans, orongo antelopes, and wolves.

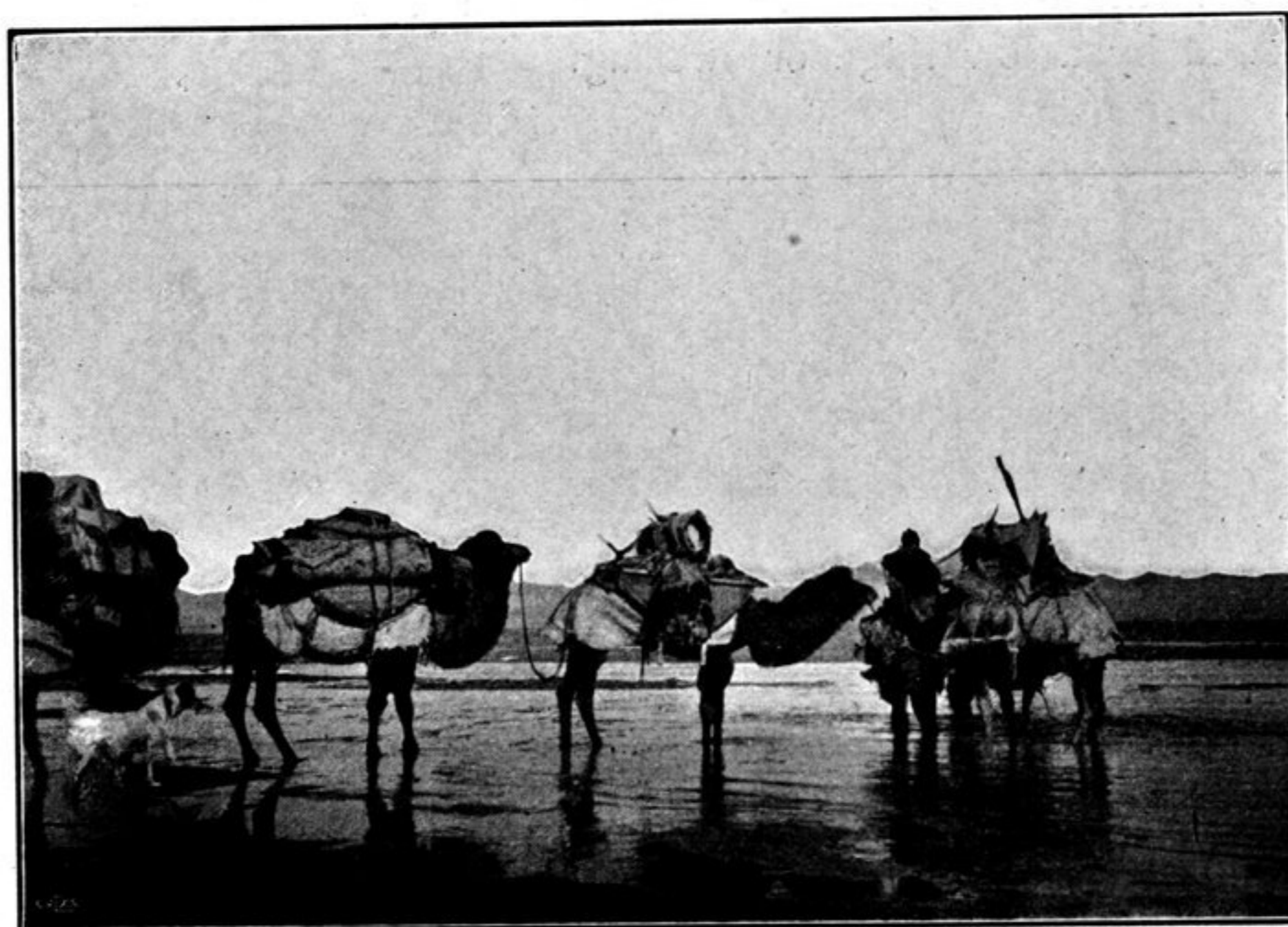


Fig. 132. SOME VIEWS OF THE RIVER OF ATSCHIK-KÖL.

October 5th. Immediately after leaving camp we forded the stream that flows down into the lake from the west; it was there 34 m. broad, and had a mean depth of 0.25 m., a velocity of 0.65 m., and a volume of 5.5 cub.m. in the second. It was full of ice; but the morning being sunny, the ice was soon loosened from the banks after the river began to rise, as we distinctly saw it doing in the branches and side-arms which it forms just there on both sides. It is only occasionally that the river is collected into one single channel; it is generally divided into two or more arms, all shallow, and flowing round flat mud-banks. The bed consists entirely of hard, firm clay, without any admixture of gravel. Strange to say, there were no traces of the formation of erosion terraces, at any rate at the spot where we forded the river. The stream flows quite on the surface in a slight hollow drawn across the plain, and one naturally asks, how it is that the great volume of water — and in the summer it must make a flood of very considerable magnitude — has not succeeded in scooping out for itself a more distinctly marked channel.

The water is almost everywhere clear. The river flows pretty straight towards the lake, without describing any wide curves; but the lake was no longer vi-