

Mountain. Its flanks are bare, barren, and desolate, and on the southern flank a rather large quantity of sand has accumulated, sometimes in dunes of some magnitude. Here short transverse glens open out on the south; in one of the last of these, broader than the others, there was a small lake fed by springs. The river winds all the way close to the foot of the Kara-tschoka; when it clings close to the cliffs it is narrow and deep, and when it recedes from them it becomes broad and shallow, and is filled with sediment. Its volume was probably 2 cub. m. in the second, and it was only frozen over where it spreads out into bays and at the bends. On both banks the grazing was good, and farther on the balghun bushes often formed thick clumps. As we proceeded we crossed over a number of extremely shallow watercourses without vegetation, issuing from the Piaslik-tagh and entering the main stream. These evidently carry water only after rain in the mountains, though, strange to say, none of them form definitive beds, but shift and change their courses from one eroded channel to the other. A larger watercourse makes its appearance however over against the little lake just mentioned; it issues from a larger glen in the southern mountains, then visible to us in the S. 1° E. This glen can hardly be any other than the transverse glen, orographically so important, of At-atghan, leading from the latitudinal valley between the Tschimen-tagh and the Kalta-alaghan, a transverse valley that we shall become better acquainted with on our next excursion. This same glen forms the boundary also between the Tschimen-tagh and the Piaslik-tagh, though orographically these two form one and the same range.

On the right hand we passed a second mountain butte, though a good deal smaller and flatter than Kara-tschoka; moreover it is more than half smothered with sand. Between these two mountains stand, on the level ground, several independent, regularly formed, crescentic dunes, and these we passed immediately on our right. These dunes too turn their steep, concave, leeward sides towards the east, though the west wind, which was then blowing, had produced an abrupt edge on the west side of the dunes near their summit.

Finally we left behind us the eastern projection of the Kara-tschoka, with its black and green schists, just where the river turns to the north-east; this soon became lost to sight, though the dark lines of balghun bushes and other vegetation betrayed the course it took. The river flows towards the little lake of Tschimen-köl, at the foot of the Akato-tagh, but never succeeds in reaching it, for it is lost in the dry saj, its waters no doubt spreading out in several arms over a wide area.

Then followed open, flat, barren saj, seamed by several shallow watercourses. The region to the south is reported to bear the name of Kötäklik, and through it a path leads to Bokalik. Probably this goes by way of the transverse glen I have just mentioned. In the south-east rises a great swelling of the Tschimen-tagh, called Kisil-tschap, pierced by a transverse glen of the same name; some of the peaks were powdered with snow. Just as the Ilve-tschimen forces the river to deviate to the south, so the Kisil-tschap forces it to turn back towards the north, driving it up against a part of the Akato-tagh that is especially flat and low, a part that we had crossed over in the summer. East of that depression the Akato-tagh once more swells up, as we have already found, to a vast dome-shaped ridge, after which it sinks down towards Tsajdam, and finally dies out there.