

tion; there were fish, and there was water. But on what do the fish themselves live? We saw not a trace of water-weeds or other vegetation, no crustaceans or insects. Perhaps the mud on the bottom contains some organic matter that affords them nourishment. The white flesh of these fish was poor eating.

Late in the afternoon we steered back to the camp on the island, where SADIQ and ROZI, while awaiting our return, had erected an awning over their resting-place. On the way home we found a channel 83.5 m wide and 0.38 m deep; and we decided to follow this the next day.

The Quruq-tagh was clearly visible, though in quiet, subdued colouring, from N 45° W to N 16° E.

On this evening, too, there was a magnificent sunset, in shades of umber-brown, violet, pink and blue. The sun itself was orange, and bright orange also its reflection in the still-shining lake.

A humorous bird was sitting somewhere near by and emitting from time to time loud cries, suggestive now of a lowing cow, now of a braying donkey, and again of the short, piercing signals of a steamer or a motor-car. It was presumably a bittern, for this bird (*Botaurus stellaris*), as HUMMEL noted, is not uncommon on the banks of the Konche-darya in the region where he made his collections. In Turki the bittern bears the characteristic name of *köl-buqa* or «lake bull». The people along the Konche-darya declare that it has the curious habit of inflating its throat with air and emitting its penetrating cry six or seven times. This effort is said to exhaust it to such a degree that it becomes for a time almost paralysed, and can be taken with the hands. They say, too, that a substance used as a remedy for consumption can be extracted from some part of its body. Meantime, in our camp on the lonely island in Lop-nor, we much enjoyed the bird's far from melodious serenade.

THE NEW LOP-NOR

The next day the sky was turquoise-blue, and the lake as smooth as glass. We reconnoitred along the channel we had found, but it grew shallower and disappeared. We had tried the depth of the water in every direction, but everywhere we had been stopped by a barrier that in places came right up to the surface of the water. It was clear that a sounding of the whole lake ought to be carried out in late autumn, when the flood had emptied itself into Lop-nor and made the northern half navigable as well as the southern.

My dream that it might be vouchsafed me in my lifetime to navigate the «wandering lake» in its new northern bed had certainly been fulfilled, and for this I had every reason to be thankful. On the other hand, my hope of being able to make a prolonged voyage on Lop-nor had not been realized, though CHEN and I had at