

influence of prolonged erosion under conditions of great aridity.

At Kuzzil Singer we were the guests of four Chanto brothers, camel-hunters. They and their families are the only inhabitants of the whole region for nearly a hundred miles in every direction. It was they who killed the camel on whose flesh we dined one day. They shot it at Altmish Bulak, where our animals ran away. One of the brothers, the oldest, Abdur Rehim by name, came with us as guide. He led us westward along the northern base of the plateau of Tian Shan to Lake Bagrash Kul. This large lake is peculiar in its archipelago of enormous sand dunes, three or four hundred feet high, standing in the water at the eastern end. Apparently, at some time, the river of Kara-Sher, now the main feeder of the lake, flowed to Korla without entering the lake. Naturally, the water shrank to a low level, as is evident from the dunes which accumulated in what had been the lake-bed. Now the water has risen, apparently because the river has been diverted to it again. We crossed the lake on the ice in a day and a half. There for the first time since leaving Niya, almost five months before, we had the feeling of being in a region where man predominated over nature. On the ice we met carts full of wood and charcoal from the mountains, and driven by surly Dungans. Beyond the lake we came upon encampments of Mongols almost hidden in the grassy plain. And soon we met the Chantos and Chinese of the dirty, mongrel town of Kara-Sher.

Although the Dry Mountains and the Chol Tagh, or Desert Mountains, to the north of them are almost uninhab-