

mountains and valleys, where water is to be found as well as woods and pastures.

Their houses are circular, and are made of wands covered with felts.¹ These are carried along with them whithersoever they go; for the wands are so strongly bound together, and likewise so well combined, that the frame can be made very light. Whenever they erect these huts the door is always to the south. They also have waggons covered with black felt so efficaciously that no rain can get in. These are drawn by oxen and camels, and the women and children travel in them.² The women do the buying and selling, and whatever is necessary to provide for the husband and household; for the men all lead the life of gentlemen, troubling themselves about nothing but hunting and hawking, and looking after their goshawks and falcons, unless it be the practice of warlike exercises.

They live on the milk and meat which their herds supply, and on the produce of the chase; and they eat all kinds of flesh, including that of horses and dogs, and Pharaoh's rats, of which last there are great numbers in burrows on those plains.³ Their drink is mare's milk.

They are very careful not to meddle with each other's wives, and will not do so on any account, holding that to be an evil and abominable thing. The women too are very good and loyal to their husbands, and notable housewives withal.⁴ [Ten or twenty of them will dwell together in charming peace and unity, nor shall you ever hear an ill word among them.]

The marriage customs of Tartars are as follows. Any man may take a hundred wives an he so please, and if he be able to keep them. But the first wife is ever held most in honour, and as the most legitimate [and the same applies to the sons whom she may bear].