

Nomadic  
migration  
towards  
T'ien-shan.

The wide belt of the Dzungarian desert separates the Barkul basin and the T'ien-shan slopes adjoining it east and west from the Mongolian grazing grounds in the Altai. Yet the conditions prevailing in the latter as a result of the disappearance of Chinese political control had reacted upon the authorities responsible for the safety of Barkul. Large tribes of Muhammadan Kazaks, of Turkish speech and descent, had after some fighting with Khalkha Mongols been forced during the last three years to seek refuge in the south. The Chinese administrators had not been able to refuse them access to the pastures afforded by the T'ien-shan slopes between Urumchi and Barkul. But they manifestly felt very uneasy about the presence of these nomads along the range dominating the main lines of communication with China, and had done their best to limit their numbers in the area east of Urumchi. None of the Kazaks had been allowed to reach the grazing grounds east of the Barkul lake, and in the hills to the west through which we subsequently passed on our way between Barkul and Ta-shih-t'ö (Map No. 31. c. 1) we heard only of two sub-sections of seven hundred and eight hundred tents, respectively, being established.

Chinese  
apprehen-  
sion of  
nomadic  
movements.

I observed with interest the instinctive apprehension with which my kind hosts at Barkul were watching the moves of these unwelcome arrivals from the north and the administrative measures by which they were endeavouring to secure that they should 'settle down' in the area allotted to them. Their efforts were evidently prompted by the traditional fear, only too well founded on the experience of centuries of Chinese history, that these nomadic 'barbarians', once set moving by attacks of their neighbours, would not be content to remain in the area to which they had received admission, but would soon set out in search of grazing grounds more to their liking—or of loot, perhaps, even more attractive. It was not to be expected that they would obtain either without the use of force against other tribes already in possession. Thus tribal movements might be started, gathering avalanche-like in volume, like those mighty migrations that in the past had swept across Central Asia, subverting peace and order in the civilized regions either of China or the West.

Transport  
supplied by  
Kazaks.

One of the administrative measures adopted to secure due recognition of Chinese authority among the new arrivals was the obligation imposed upon the Kazaks of supplying pony transport for officials, couriers, &c., travelling on the routes that branch off from Barkul. The use of this transport (no doubt, gratuitously exacted in the case of local officials) was pressed upon me by the kindly district magistrate, and I was glad to take advantage of it on our journey to Guchen, in place of some of our hard-ried animals that particularly needed care. To this assistance, for which, needless to say, adequate remuneration was paid by me into the hands of the Kazak owners, we owed our easy and rapid journey to Guchen, close on two hundred miles covered in nine consecutive marches. It moreover had the advantage of enabling me to obtain some glimpses of a people affected by what seemed a curious, if faint, reflex of those great tribal movements which since the days of the Ta Yüeh-chih, the later Indo-Scythians, and probably long before them, had moved along the great Dzungarian passage land.

Racial type  
of Kazaks.

The Kazaks whose ponies we picked up from successive encampments near our route were without exception fine upstanding men of brave bearing (Fig. 293); their features were singularly free from marked 'Mongolian' characteristics. In this respect they differed quite as strongly from the Kirghiz, with whom I had become familiar in the western T'ien-shan and on the Pāmīrs,<sup>2</sup> as from the Mongols on the Etsin-gol and Kara-shahr river. The rapidity of our journey left no time for the collection of adequate anthropometrical data. But the impression I gained was that this Kazak stock contained a large infusion of 'Caucasian' blood, derived perhaps from a population of the 'Homo alpinus' type, which is best represented in Central Asia by the 'Galchas' of the valleys adjacent to the Pāmīrs and forms a main constituent in the population

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Serindia*, iii. pp. 1300, 1358.