

## CHAPTER II

### ANDIJAN TO KASHGAR—OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY

**A**N affectionate good-bye to the special car, and we are off for a day's smart, hot drive to Osh. We stop there at the post-house, in charge of a simple Russian whose sick wife looks on while he tries to cook for the travellers. That he can make *chai* (tea) is incontestable. An all-comprehending soup he also makes. As to anything else, we prefer simple fare rather than watch his sloppy preparations. The stable is very near, the flies are nearer, the smells are nearest, and the man's methods are dirty. We do not like him. Even his just division of labour between the cooking of our dinner and the washing of his little child, insistent at certain critical moments, could not disarm our hostility. But the morrow shall bring a change, for we know there are Russian officers at the *sobranje*, or club. To these we make ourselves known and soon are invited to make our beds in a comfortable room.

And now we must stir, for Osh is the limit of wheeled transportation. A caravan must be organised. Colonel Saitseff, local governor at Natcholik, looks at a letter which is addressed, not to him, but to Consul-General Petrovsky at Kashgar. It is our only authorisation, and was given me by the Minister