

sions for a "bagai" are a marriage, the birth of a son, the erection of a new kubitka, and a death. Possibly this struggle for a dead animal is a relic of the time when the ancestors of the Khirghiz really fought to get the prey from one another. Whatever its origin, it is a wonderful training in horsemanship. For some reason, no woman is allowed to see the "bagai," or, naturally, to join in the subsequent feast.

The completeness with which Khirghiz life and character are determined by natural surroundings makes the relation between physiography and life far more evident than in the case of more highly civilized people. If the nomad is to be successful, the keenest of eyesight is necessary to detect cattle or encampments at a distance. I was amazed one day to hear my guide say, "Do you see those cattle off there at the foot of the mountain? They are Chinese animals — yaks." After a long search I found them, mere tiny specks of black, so far away that even with a strong field-glass I could barely distinguish them from ordinary cattle. That my guide should recognize them as yaks shows a keenness of sight equal to that of the most skillful hunting tribes of savages. Other Khirghiz showed equal quickness in detecting smoke, kubitkas, men, and animals at a distance, so that the trait seems general.

His mode of life makes the Khirghiz able to endure hunger, thirst, and fatigue, for these are the necessary accompaniments of long rides in search of strayed cattle. He has no fear of raging fords or slippery passes, and despises the Chanto or Sart of the city, who shrinks from crossing a ford where his horse may lose his footing and be washed down-