

walnut and mulberry trees shown in the photograph opposite page 146. Tea, both sweetened and unsweetened, was served with walnuts. The chief dish was cold mutton, of which each guest took a bone in his fingers. The amount of bread and meat which courtesy demanded should be placed before the Beg and me was, by careful estimate, between fifty and sixty times as much as we ate.

Judging from my experience that day, the life of the Chantos consists chiefly of eating and drinking. And indeed it does. Except for a poor sort of music and dancing, they appear to have no sources of pleasure except those of the body. Eating plays so important a part in life that the omission of the "dastarkhan" becomes an insult. As I was leaving Sanju in slow procession with all the dignitaries of the town, including a Chinese official on a big gray horse all jangling with bells, the Beg suddenly hastened ahead at a gallop, and a servant cantered away in the other direction. Soon a perspiring footman ran by with a forgotten red tablecloth under his arm; and near the last field a horseman with a steaming teapot dashed past. The cause of the commotion appeared on the edge of the desert, where we found the felts, table, bread, raisins, nuts, sugar, and tea of a complete "dastarkhan."

Having finished the hot tea and said farewell to the dignitaries of Sanju, I rode eastward among the barren foothills of the Kwen Lun range to Puski in the next valley, where I rejoined the main caravan. The scenery was like that of Arizona, low, desert mountains covered scantily with weeds or low bushes of the sage type. The perpetual haze hemmed us in, making everything dull and uniformly