

vants carrying lights led me into a small rectangular courtyard, one end of which was formed by a one-storeyed mud house with a flat roof and a kind of mud terrace. The opposite end was bounded by an open mud shed in which two horses were stabled. Wooden beds with pillows and coloured padded blankets stood along the mud walls. Between two trees with glowing red blossoms, planted in large pots, a table stood on the terrace, laden with various sweetmeats and bread; coloured carpets decorated the wall of the house between the windows. Cane-bottomed chairs were placed round the table and I was asked to sit down. Being hungry after the journey, I did not need much pressing to do justice to the greyish, fine-grained, highly spiced bread and the other dishes that consisted of hard caramels, some kind of candy sugar in thin slices, dried fruit, almonds and pistachio nuts, tea and melon. I was greatly and none too pleasantly surprised, however, when after this traditional sweet «dastarkhan» two very greasy dishes of mutton were served, one of chopped mutton with potatoes and onions, the other an enormous dish of pälaw. I was supplied with knives and forks, but my hospitable, dark-complexioned host ate everything with his fingers. The colder the dishes of mutton grew, the more unappetising I found them, but there was no help for it, my host urged and persuaded me, and it would have been a grave insult to leave anything on the dishes. After a great deal of sighing and eating the dishes were emptied and I hastened to bid my host goodnight in fear and trembling lest there should be any more mutton fat.

In the morning I called on Colonel Alexeyeff, the District Commander. He had only *July 30th.* recently been appointed and seemed to be very imperfectly informed, a typical, petty *Osh.* official, afraid above all things of accepting responsibility for anything. He lives in a charming country house on a hill across the river. The park covers 7 1/2 acres of land sloping towards the river with an indescribably lovely view of a verdant and fertile landscape, typical of Ferghana, bounded in the distance by a high chain of snow-capped mountains. The house was occupied at one time by General Skobelev, the conqueror of Ferghana. The park is intersected by small, roaring ariqs leading from the river that flows far below, a reproduction in miniature of the irrigation system of Turkestan. The Russian town, planned on a generous scale with beautiful, shaded avenues, lies on a hill opposite the house of the District Commander about 2/3 of a mile from the native town of Osh. Anyone travelling in Central Asia would be well advised to obtain as little of his equipment as possible in Turkestan. There is little to buy and prices are high.

The native town reminds me of the «old» towns of Tashkent and Samarkand, the same little crooked lanes, roaring ariqs, small mud houses, motley bazaars full of life and movement. Osh, however, is much more beautifully situated at the foot of a mountain, where, as the Sarts and Kirghiz assert, King Solomon administered the law in olden times, a law that has since been replaced by Russian justice. At the top of the mountain there is a small Mohammedan temple visited by thousands of faithful pilgrims.

In the course of the day I moved from my hospitable host's rather cramped courtyard to a big garden at the back of a caravanserai, a kind of inn, where I had plenty of room for my tent, blankets, saddles, packing cases, horses etc. In this shaded garden surrounded