

*Bazaar street at Osh.*

closed part of the hive rests on the horse's neck, where, at any rate at first, while the saddle is new, it lies and chafes the skin. On the inside the saddle is covered with felt or pieces of felt, on the outside with strips of carpet or braid. It is fastened to the horse by a long girth with two rings, tied by a short, narrow strap on one side of the saddle. The load, often consisting of several small cases, is fastened quickly and very skilfully by means of a soft Kirghiz rope of goat's hair, 24 feet long. A couple of our new horses only allowed themselves to be saddled after much resistance, especially my white which defended itself with its forelegs and hind legs. The Cossacks might never have succeeded, but the Sarts, particularly the leader, who had recently returned from 12 years' hard labour in Siberia and on Sakhalin, were very clever and achieved the impossible.

At the last moment I was able to engage a «yigit» recommended by Colonel Kuropatkin, the adjutant of the District Commander, who was just returning. I gave him 50 roubles to equip himself and in the evening he turned up at our camp No. 2 in the village of Qaratay. He had bought a claret coloured horse, but had not had enough money for a saddle, so had improvised one of straw cushions. He looks smart and pleasant, is a Chinese subject from Kashgar, but does not speak Chinese. He provides his own horse and his wages are 20 roubles a month with everything found for himself and his horse. Before starting I rode round to my courteous former host and ate the traditional dastarkhan followed by a dish of mutton that tasted very well after a morning of packing and worry. Accompanied by him I set off. On reaching the great highway to Kashgar he dismounted and wished me a safe journey. As far as I was concerned, it began with a slight mishap. In order to cool my horse I rode through the water along a swiftly flowing ariq with steep banks. Suddenly the horse shied towards the bank, but jumped awkwardly and both of us — horse and rider — were thrown into the ariq. Luckily, my camera did not suffer, but all the papers I had on me were soaked, and the water even penetrated into my compass and inside the glass of my watch. I had particular trouble with my notebook, the index tabs being detached