



*A group of Sart musicians
on the terrace of the author's
house at Kashgar.*

ing their audiences by their talents as story-tellers. Old and young flock to them to give their oriental imagination some nourishment and listen with obvious satisfaction to the beggar's tale, often interlarded with satirical remarks on current events. — The position of women is quite a subordinate one. Their work is entirely confined to the home. They do not visit the bazaar, despite its great attraction, except to make purchases in silence or sometimes to sell things they have made. They do not cover themselves up as carefully as in Russian Turkestan, though you seldom see a young woman moving about with her veil thrown back. Their rough hands testify to the hard work they perform in the quiet of their homes. The women's lack of education is even more marked than that of the men and is further emphasised by the shyness that is a result of their fenced-in life. — Polygamy is very rare owing to the poverty of the people. It is only the wealthier merchants who avail themselves of this privilege. There are, however, whole streets of light women who offer the travelling merchant the joy and consolation he may require during his sojourn, often of several weeks, in a strange town, between two long and arduous journeys. In Khotan a whole class of these consolers is said to be available for travellers under the name of »merchants' wives».

October 6 th. My plan, announced repeatedly and as frequently postponed, of making an excursion south to Yarkand, Khotan and possibly to the Tash Kurghan and Taghdumbash mountains has at last been accomplished. The wish to see the whole southern part of this country that I shall probably not visit again and the hope of being able to have some hunting in the Taghdumbash mountains, famed for their shooting, have always tempted me to make this trip. It is probable, however, that I would have undertaken the trip, even if it had not presented an opportunity like the present of making some interesting ethnographical and perhaps archaeological collections. Once I had discovered that it was possible to cross the Muzart Pass to Qulja later in the winter, I did not hesitate.