



*A woman with her  
children in a village near  
Maral Bashi.*

rather taller in growth here than those seen during the previous days. The wood goes on, more or less dense, as far as the village of Churga utang, where we were to spend the night. About 1 1/4 hours ride from the edge of the wood a small river »Zerkesh» skirts the north side of the road, only containing water in the spring. The river was frozen, but the dirty yellow colour of the ice indicated anything but clean water. The population says that the water is salt and that the river comes from the Qara aq in the neighbourhood of Ordeklik.

About an hour later we came to a still larger river, the Kone darya, also north of the road and flowing quite close to it for a time. The ice prevented my seeing where it came from, but according to the statements of the inhabitants it comes from the east from »Chugautang daryase» and only has water when the latter river overflows. We only travelled 5 paotai to-day. Weather dull and cloudy.

Some kiyiks that showed themselves for a moment close to the road, tempted me to try to reach them on foot with Rakhimjanoff. After tracking them in vain for a few miles we gave it up. The numerous tracks and plentiful »jantagh» grass show what a good hunting-ground this must be.

Churga utang, a small village of 12 houses with 30—40 inhabitants and about 80 mou of fields, grows wheat and maize. The cattle are few and the population poor. Besides farming they have no other source of income except what they earn from travellers. The river Churga utang darya contains water throughout the year, though very little in the spring, and most in summer. It comes from the mountains to the west and flows past Maral Bashi where it is lost in ariqs. Winter lasts 3 months. The snow lies for 20 days at most, when there has been a heavy fall. There are never more than 3 cm of snow, which is strange. About 10 burans during the year, mostly in the spring and coming from the