



*Crossing the Belnyng Tupese pass.*

3 women, 3 children and 3 men; a tiny person lay crying in a cradle behind, and round about, filling half the tent, were 30 or 40 sheep. The other kibitka was still less inviting. My entrance was not welcomed with cries of delight, as I had expected, but an old woman yelled something unintelligible that sounded like abuse. The mountains were shrouded in heavy leaden clouds and snow had been falling for some time. There was nothing for it, but to resign ourselves to a corner among the sheep and make ourselves as comfortable as we could. Unfortunately, we had not enough bread and meat to »treat« our hosts, a poor and old Kirghiz shepherd and his family, of the Kuchi tribe. They did not disguise their delight in accepting a couple of loaves and some sugar. Evidently they would have welcomed some meat, for they got busy with the bones that had fallen on the ground in the kibitka. Poor people, they lead no easy life up in the mountains with no water but melted snow and a little fuel in the shape of bushes that grow here and there. Most of the cattle they herd does not belong to them, but to the people in Kelpin.

*February 16th.* I spent rather an original night. There were 12 grown-up people, 4 children and about 40 sheep under one roof. It was such a tight fit that you could not stretch out your legs, and I had two heads on the fur that I had thrown over my blanket, one of the children's and, I fancy, the other the old woman's — I must confess that I had no wish to turn down my fur and see who it was. Once someone pushed my