

mountains just mentioned, the western one being called Qizil tagh, the eastern Berber tagh. The slope falls away to the north and tufts of grass grow on it. In the summer the pasture is said to be good. Kirghiz cattle are seen in various places.

We steered a slanting course across the plain to a Kirghiz camp of 7 yurts put up at the foot of the beautiful mountains of Qizil tagh. This time our reception was much better, the yurts were richer and tidier. The camp belonged to Kirghiz of the Torgute-Kuchi tribe. The women in their tall white headdress would hide at first and then let their curiosity gain the upper hand and would venture out to have a look at the strange sahib. Our yurt contains over 50 lambs and small goats, but it is larger and much tidier than yesterday's. Perhaps it is not so bad to have the charming little animals inside the yurt for there are over 15 degrees of frost outside and it is difficult to keep warm. The little heat produced by the fire in the middle of the yurt escapes mostly through a big hole in the roof.

In the evening the sheep, horses and camels returned to the camp, where they settled down under the protection of two fierce dogs. The bleating was indescribable until the careful Kirghiz women let the lambs join their mothers, after which they were brought into the yurt again one by one to protect them from the cold of the night. Long-legged young camels milked their mothers in a comic attitude and the male parent flirted just as comically with his better half, displaying the two long teeth in his lower jaw in amazed delight over his success, which, if you looked at him closely, certainly was surprising — not only to himself, but to any one else. The Kirghiz fetched snow in sacks and melted it in large pots over the fire. From one yurt came the sound of soft music played on a very primitive kind of Kirghiz guitar with three strings — a curiously monotonous melody that we could hear indistinctly in our yurt and that went on far into the night, only interrupted from time to time by the bleating of a stray sheep.

*February 17th.* Yesterday was full of sensational events in the quiet Kirghiz camp. First, my unexpected arrival, later the return of two successful hunters with a »kiyik» they had shot. *Uch Turfan.* Everyone turned out to view the bag. It was amusing to see the pride of the hunters. One, in particular, a thin old Kirghiz with a wrinkled face like a roasted apple, was worth seeing, when with a grand gesture he pointed to himself as the one to whom the animal had fallen. His smile was, no doubt, intended to be modest, but it was so full of self-satisfaction that it was impossible to keep serious. The other had had to carry the animal home and had tied it on to his back with two legs round his waist and two round his neck. At first I took it for a fur he was wearing and looked in vain for the wild goat. The head had been cut off and thrown away to reduce the weight. The men wore soft boots, like ski-ing boots, fastened to their legs by a string wound round the ankles. Their short sheep-skin coats were fastened by a belt, on to which all kinds of hunting gear was fastened and into which they had stuck the ends of their furs. A hollowed-out point of a horn with fat for greasing their guns, a pouch for a couple of bullets, another for powder (?) and the usual knife, comb etc. of the Sarts, were suspended from the belt. On their heads they wore the Kirghiz sugar loaf fur cap and on their backs they carried a gun that is worth describing. The barrel is massive and heavy with straight rifling reminiscent of old muskets.