

served tea in two wooden tubs, which was poured into wooden cups that everyone produced from the folds of his clothing. The wooden bowls of the lamas were ornamented in silver. Judging by the readiness with which this refreshment was devoured, no one could have eaten anything before the service.

In the morning sunshine Kura looked considerably more attractive than I had imagined from my impression during yesterday's rain. In the S you see the Ag'has mountains. In their winter garb they seem to be quite close to the lamasery and it is hard to believe that it takes a day and a half to reach them. In the N the Khumakhei chain of mountains runs quite close, also covered with snow, at any rate at present. In the E and W an open plain as far as you can see.

At first the road goes ENE. In the course of the day the direction changes more and more to the north; quite three-quarters of the way is NNE and the last mile and a third go due N. The large herds of cattle belonging to the lamas graze on the plain to the E of the lamasery. Here we crossed five small water-channels, of which only two can swell into rivers, the others being merely streams conducting water from the Khumakhei-su. Near these small river beds the soil shows a slight tendency to be boggy. After a ride of about three miles we had grassy hills on the left near the road, the foothills of the Khumakhei mountains. Where they retreat from the road, small parts of the chain of mountains are exposed at a distance of about $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile. After another four miles the road enters undulating ground. The unevenness of the ground increased and the ascents and descents became steeper and more difficult. The southern spurs of the mountains gradually give way to the main chain which is clearly visible, though at a considerable distance, and are replaced by these undulations in the ground that are in the nature of spurs of the mountains and go in a southerly direction. Between these spurs we often crossed small water-channels winding along by the side of the Tekes. The largest of these are Bashqaragai, preceding the mountain of the same name, and after it two rivers called Taragudju-su. The fine sunny weather was succeeded by a cold, piercing wind and a dense fog that lay close to the ground. At times it descended, so that we could only see a short distance in front, at others it dispersed, only to return soon. The road leads by a sharp ascent to the white-capped chain of mountains, among which the typical triangular summit of Burga rises above the surrounding peaks. As the ascent becomes steeper, the beds of the rivers grow deeper and the slopes more inaccessible. Very frequently we found boggy places, though they were not large in extent. One of my Chinese soldiers got stuck in the largest, 2—300 paces square, and his companions had to help him to get the horse out. There was grass on all the slopes. In the distance we often saw Kalmuk camps of 3—5 yurts and here and there a herd of cattle or a trodden track indicated their proximity. To reach the height of Bashqaragai, or rather, the mountain beyond the river at its foot, we had to climb for 18 minutes at a stretch. Towards the end of the day the road turned northward into a wooded gorge, at the bottom of which a small water-channel, Bugra-su, winds. We were now in the actual chain of mountains. The road goes northward, ascending rapidly, for a mile or two. The sides of the gorge become higher and higher. At a rather more level spot on the slope of the mountain on the left stood a couple of sooty Kalmuk