



Kirghiz women at work.

Being short of cartridges and films I despatched a Kirghiz, recommended by Nasumbatoff, to Qarashahr to fetch some from my cases. Armed with a letter from Nasumbatoff's father, he and a Kalmuk are to make the journey there and back in 12 days, changing horses two or three times a day at the expense of the local inhabitants. I have only to give them money for their food, which they will probably not have to spend, and a present. — Besides Numgan I have taken another Kalmuk into my service. He speaks Russian poorly, but Nasumbatoff has promised to replace him on my return by another, who knows the language better. I require an interpreter principally for my journey through the Yulduz valley, but apart from that it is too much for two men to manage the eleven horses and five sheep that we are taking with us. The cook has enough to do with his kitchen and my sleeping kit, and Numgan will be busy chiefly in tracking game. In populated districts there are always some inquisitive locals who can be employed on various jobs, so that you can do with fewer men there.

We moved about twelve miles to the SE to-day to a spring close to where the river Aghias comes out of the mountains. The road is excellent over the grassy plain. We encamped just below a fir wood on a beautiful slope with a lovely view northward across the Tekes valley and the Khunakhei mountains in the distance.

A little below our camp there was a block of stone on the left bank of the river, about 1 m 30 cm in height and 20 cm in breadth and depth. A human face with a distinct mouth, nose, eyes, cheeks and chin was carved in the SE side. Below the face you could trace some unevenness in the stone which might easily have been an inscription, but was very indistinct. The light was bad and I am afraid that my photographs will not come out. At this time of year the stone should be photographed early in the morning or at 1—1.30 p.m.

Late at night a noisy little stream broke through the ice at the bottom of the gorge, next to which we had encamped. The snow that melts during the day up on the fells, only forces its way to the Tekes valley towards evening, and there is much more water in the mountain streams in the evening and at night than in the morning and during the day.

*May 15th.
Camp at
Ketsu-su.*