

me, and two were brought up for inspection. I bought one for twenty taels (£5), a good weight-carrying cob, short back and legs, enormous quarters, but with much pleasanter paces than his looks would warrant. I thought he ought to carry me to India well.

We started at 4.10 p.m., and had to cross the river by ferry at the end of the town. The river was about one hundred and fifty yards wide, and three to four feet deep, running through a level country, which would be flooded out if the river rose another couple of feet. The boat, which just held our cart and my two ponies, was poled across by three Kalmaks. On the other side we found a party of Kalmaks, riding donkeys, waiting to be ferried over. They were escorting a Mongol lady, the wife of one of their chiefs, back to her husband; she had been captured in some raid, and was now returning. She was very strong and robust-looking, and had the whole party under her thumb, and was abusing them right and left, because she had just got a wetting in a branch of the river they had crossed. She bustled about, unsaddling her donkey and turning it off to graze, and ordered the rest about, here, there, and everywhere.

At a hundred yards after leaving the ferry we had to ford a branch of the river, some thirty yards broad, and deep enough in places to wet the inside of the cart again. After this we passed over a swamp, and three times our cart stuck. The first time we were three hours trying to get it out of the mud, and it was not till we had taken everything out of the cart, and engaged some Turks to help shove and pull, that we succeeded in doing so. We then got along all right for a couple of miles, when we stuck again, and a second time had to unload everything. We then got clear of the swamp, but stuck a third time in a deep rut! The animals were so exhausted, that it was impossible to get on that night, as it was one o'clock, and we went off to the house of one of the Turks who was helping us, leaving the boy in the cart. The