

and one of the old ladies proceeded carefully to mend them. Good old soul, it quite reminded one of more homelike times to be looked after in this way! After mending the socks, the lady said her prayers, and throughout the time I was with them one or other of the old ladies always appeared to be praying.

In the evening all the cows and sheep and goats—mostly those with young ones—which had been left in the encampment, were collected and milked, and one or two young kids brought into the tent to be better looked after. The milk was very rich in cream, and delicious to drink. But the Kirghiz drink whey mostly, and they have a method of rolling the nearly solidified curds into balls about the size of a man's fist, and drying these balls in the sun to keep for the winter or for a journey. Balls of curds like these are not very appetizing, but they are much consumed by the Kirghiz. All the bowls for collecting the milk are of wood, and by no means so cleanly kept as one would like to see; I doubt, in fact, if they are ever thoroughly cleaned. The milk of one day is poured out, and that of the next poured in, and so on for month after month. Still, the milk always seems fresh and good, and it is one of the luxuries which form the reward for travelling among the Kirghiz.

The proprietresses of the tent I was in had their dinner of curds and milk and a little bread, and then, as it grew dark, they said it was time to go to bed. They first said their prayers, then took down one of the piles of bedding (bedsteads were, of course, unknown), and insisted on making up a bed of quilts and felts for me; and then, having made up their own also, and pulled a felt over the hole in the roof in case it might rain during the night, took themselves to their beds, and we all slept comfortably till morning.

On the following day we continued up the valley, and every few miles passed a small encampment of Kirghiz. We