

is exported to China. Excellent melons are produced in all parts of the division, and its grapes and green raisins are the finest in the country. They are exported to Káshghar and preserved in the fresh state for winter use. In the desert to the south the wild camel and wild horse are said to be plentiful. The former is described as a small, thin limbed, double humped animal with a very soft warm wool of light brown colour. Huntsmen declare it to be a very vicious animal and extremely swift, and state that it flies at its pursuers with boldness when brought to bay, and attacks with great ferocity, biting and kicking, and when wounded vents its rage upon itself. It is always at enmity with its fellow partners in the wastes of the desert, and hunts the wild horse off its own grazing grounds.

*Lob*.—This is the name of a district on the banks of the Tárím River, which is formed by the union of all the rivers from Yuldúz of Ila round by the western circuit of Káshghar to Khutan and Cháchan. It is a vast region of swamps which succeed each other from the junction of the united streams of Kúcha and Kúrla with the Tárím on the west, and extend thirty days' journey east and south on to the Gobi desert. On the edge of this desert, beyond the inhabited swamp tract, is a lake five days in circuit, and from it a great river goes out to the east. The lake is quite uninhabited, and is in the midst of a desert of white salt at three days' journey from the Lob settlements.

“There are no mountains in Lob, but the ground between the bends of the river and the swamps is thrown into cliffs, and banks, and ridges of sand and gravel. Between these the country is undulating sand, and near the water is covered with reeds and forests of poplar and tamarisk, but there is no willow. Some of the gravel ridges are higher than Kayrágh at Yangí Hissar (about 300 feet), and higher than the Hazrat Begum ridge (about 600 feet), but they are all lower than the Kúrúgh Tágh which separates Lob from Karáshahr on the north, and lower too than the hills which separate it from Cháchan on the south; but these last are a great way off on the desert, and nobody ever goes there or knows anything about them. Why ask what they consist of? Everything here is sand, and salt, and nothing else.” Such in substance is what I learned from a Kalmák of Karáshahr who knew Lob well. I shall quote him and a fellow tribesman, and two officers in the Amír's service, who visited the country during the Turfán campaign, as I proceed with this brief notice of the district:—

“Lob is reached from all directions along the course of the several rivers flowing to it. Thus from Khutan by the Khutan Daryá; from Maralbashí by the Yarkand Darya through Dolan settlements nearly all the way; from Aksú to Ara Mahalla by the Aksú Darya; from Kúcha to the same settlement by the Múzárt Darya, and so on. From Kúrla I know the road well, as I have travelled it several times. It is four days' journey. The first stage is Yárkúrúl, four *tash*, over a sandy waste with reeds, pools, and poplars here and there on the route. Second stage Konchí, five *tash*, across similar country to the Tárím river below where it is joined by a river coming from Kúcha and Kúrla. Third stage, four *tash*, on the desert of sand hills, salt wastes, reeds, and pools. Fourth stage, Kará Kochun, five *tash*, across similar desert to the reed huts of Kalmák and Kirghiz Musalmáns on the river bank. Here Lob begins, and goes east and south along the course of the Tárím. It consists of many settlements on the marshy lakes and their connecting channels. The whole tract is called Lob, but this is Lob Proper. The other settlements to the west form distinct districts and are called Kará Kochun, Lyso, and Ara Mahalla. There are others, but these are the principal seats of population. Everywhere the river banks are low, hardly raised above the river stream, and are covered with broad or narrow belts of *jangal*. This consists of a tall reed called *comush*, and a shorter and different reed called *chigh*, and of the poplar or *toghrác*, and the tamarisk or *yúlghún*; the willow or *súgat* is not seen here.

“Lob was only peopled a hundred and sixty years ago by emigrant families of the Kará Kalmák, Koshot, Túrgut, &c., to the number of a thousand houses. They are now all professedly Musalmáns, and have *Mullá* and *Imám* priests amongst them, but they don't know much about Islam. We look on them with contempt as only half “Musalmán.”——“No, I am not a Kalmák, thank God.”——“Yes, my ancestors were, but I am a Musalmán, God be praised! And my father was before me.”——“Yes, there were other people in Lob before these Kalmák emigrants came, but nobody knows who they are or anything about them. They are