

called *Yáwa Kishi* or "wild people" and delight to live with the wild beasts and their cattle in the thickets and brakes about the marshes."—"No; I have never seen any of them, but I have heard the Lob people talk of them. They are small black men with long matted hair and shun the society of other men. Whenever they see any of the Lob people they run away and hide in the reeds and thickets. Nobody knows where they come from or where they live, and nobody understands their language. They are said to have boats like the Lob people, but they never mix with them. They are supposed to have some settlement in the marshes to the south-east."—"Yes, the country is a very large one, and nobody knows its extent or boundaries, for the people never go out of their own limits, but they cannot be very many, or they would band together and drive out the Musalmán settlers. These people are very timid amongst other men, but, though only armed with bow and arrow and a long pike, they are brave hunters. They keep cattle, but have no cultivation whatever. They wear clothes of a material called *lúf*. It is very coarse and strong, and is also worn by the people of Lob who weave it into cloths of varying texture, some of which are very light and fine."—"Yes. As you say so, the name of the country may be derived from this material, but nobody here ever said so. God only knows the truth! though the distinction is plain enough. We call the country Lob, and the material *lúf*."—"No, I never heard the name Lob Nor. I have heard the names Lop and Lop Kol; they are only the Kirghiz pronunciation of Lob."—"Yes. There are hundreds of families of Kirghiz shepherds scattered all about the Lob camps. They came originally from the Kákshál and Búghú camps away to the north, and are very good friends with the Kalmák."—"The stuff called *lúf* is the fibre of a plant called *toca-chígha* which grows in plenty all over the sandy wastes bordering the marshes. It is not found here (Yángí Hissár), and only grows in Lob. The material made from it too is never seen anywhere but in Lob, and is only worn by the people of that country. It protects the wearer from the attacks of gnats and musquitos, which never alight on this cloth. The plant has a flower and bears a pod like the wild liquorice here. The *lúf* is thus prepared. The stalks are cut close to the ground and stripped of leaves; they are then thrown into a pit full of water, and left there till they rot; they are now pounded with a mallet, and the bark torn off in long shreds; bundles of this bark are again thrown into a pit of water till it ferments and stinks; the stuff is then taken out and pounded till it separates into fibres; these are shaken clear, and spread in the sun to bleach; and finally they are spun into thread and woven into cloth for shirts and trowsers. It is the dress of all the people of Lob, and is made in every campment."

The population of Lob Settlement is reckoned at 1,000 houses, but that of the whole swamp region eastward from the borders of Marálbáshí to the Gobi desert is about 10,000 houses, or, at seven per house, 70,000 souls. There are no permanent dwellings here, nor are there any of the *Khargáh* tents which the Kirghiz call *ác-oe*. The people live in reed huts or else in boats. The reed hut is called *Kippa*, and is a mere frame work of reeds, sometimes plastered with mud. They are dotted about in clusters of three or four or more, and are usually broken up and deserted when the tenants migrate to some other spot. The people are mostly Kirghiz and Kalmák, and their language is a corrupt dialect of the Kirghiz Turki. The Karákoichún District is entirely peopled by Cochín Kirghiz originally from the Nárín valley.

"There is no cultivation in Lob. The people live on fish, and the produce of their flocks and of the chase. In April and May they collect, and eat raw the soft young shoots of a water plant called *súya*; it has a long stem like a reed, but is different both from the *comush* and the *chígh*. The people have immense numbers of sheep, cows, and horses; but the mule, the donkey, and the cat are unknown in the country. They are all now subjects of the Amír, but only pay an annual tribute of twenty-two otter skins, and nothing else. They govern themselves according to their own customs, and have no officer on the part of the Amír to interfere with them. The Governor of Turfán every year sends an agent to collect the tribute and revenue; but the people drive off their cattle into the mazes of the reed swamps, and take to their boats, and the tax gatherers wander about for a few days, and then go away frightened of the country. The arms of the people are the bow and arrow, matchlock, gun, pike, and sword. They always swear upon the gun which, as here, they call *miltic*. If any