

one wishes to free himself from an accusation, he appeals to the accuser to produce his gun, and kissing the muzzle places it against his left nipple and bids him fire. This throws the responsibility upon the accuser, who on this proof of innocence retracts his calumny. All the people here are brave huntsmen, but they have a great respect for human life, and are very much afraid of death.

“They are a very hardy and healthy people, and have no diseases except a kind of ague called *bazgak*. They have a great horror of small-pox, which they call *yamán* = ‘the evil.’ If the disease should appear amongst them, the whole community immediately abandon the locality and leave the afflicted with only one attendant and a supply of food. If the patient recovers, he is not admitted to society till the expiry of forty days. When the Amír conquered the country he summoned the Chief of Lob to Káshghar; the old man had never seen the disease and got it there; and he was so frightened that he set out to return home, but died on the road; and when his attendants returned with the intelligence the people all ran away from them till the forty days were passed. Snake bites are very common, and the people have an efficient remedy for it; they catch a frog, rip open its belly, and tie it over the wound; this affords immediate relief. Another remedy is a sort of gum or fungus found at the stumps and on the boughs of the *toghrác* or “poplar” tree; there are two kinds called *cará* and *ác* or “black” and “white” *toghrágho* respectively; the black is the kind used; it is powdered and mixed into a paste with water or spittle and so applied to the wound; it affords immediate relief. There is one kind of snake called *dúr*; its bite is immediately fatal; nothing cures it. People say that if the *Mullá* repeats the *Kalima* and breathes *dam* upon the wound, a cure is certain. God only knows; but in Lob he never arrives till the snake-bitten is dead.

“The wild animals of Lob are the wild camel = *yáwa thuga*.”——“Yes. I have seen the animal myself.”——“No, I never killed one myself. I have seen one which was killed by huntsmen of the camp to which I belonged. It is a small animal, not much bigger than a horse, and has two humps. It is not like a tame camel; its limbs are very thin, and it is altogether slim built. I have seen them on the desert together with herds of wild horses. They are not timid, and don’t run away at the sight of a man. They do nothing unless attacked; they then run away, or else they turn and attack the huntsman; they are very fierce, and swift in their action as an arrow shot from the bow; they kill by biting and trampling under foot, and they kick too like a cow. They are hunted for the sake of their wool, which is very highly prized, and is sold to Turfán merchants.

“Another animal is the wild horse = *cúlán*. It is the size of a pony, has high withers and a narrow barrel. It is only hunted for sport. Another is the stag = *búghú*. It is hunted for its antlers, which are taken to Turfán for the Bajin market. There are besides, the tiger = *bar*, the wolf = *chona*, the panther = *molún*, the lynx = *súlesún*, the fox = *aratu*, and the otter = *súyup*. All these are hunted for their furs, as are the swan = *codáy*, and the pelican = *caráchílán*.”——“Yes. This is a swan’s skin (shewing one bought at Káshghar), and comes from Lob. It is the only place in this country where the bird is found. There are immense numbers of wild fowl of all sorts on the lakes, and they breed there.

“The customs of the people of Lob are much the same as those of the Kirghiz, but there is one which is met nowhere else. During the spring and summer seasons the young people are in the habit of racing along the river. A party of six or eight maids forms up on the river, each in her own skiff; and a party of as many youths forms up on the bank, each on his own horse. At an agreed signal they all start off to an appointed goal, the maids paddling down the stream, and the youths galloping along the bank. If the maids win, they select a partner for the night from amongst the youths, each in the order of her arrival at the winning post; similarly if the youths win, they chose their companion in turn from amongst the maids. The contract only lasts for that night, and the couplings vary with the chances of each successive race, though often the same partners meet. If a girl becomes pregnant, she points out the author, and he marries her.

“There are innumerable camp and pasture grounds in Lob, but the principal permanent camps are Ara Mahalla, Lyso, Kará Kochún, Jarálik, Sálíh-Akhún, Kalmák Úldí, Khitáy Keldí, and Khatt Koydí. This last is towards the south-east, and is the limit of Khitáy territory