

pony during the years of his prime, and when he is old or stricken, readily disposes of him at the butcher's shop. The practice of eating horse-flesh thus, in some measure, does away with the necessity for veterinary practice. The price of horse-flesh is usually something more than what is paid for beef or mutton, and the dish is by very many deemed a luxury.

The usual grain upon which the Yárkand pony is fed is Indian-corn, but dry fodder (Lucerne grass) is the chief article of diet. Barley is given to the better class of horses by those who can afford it.

The use of ponies in ploughing is referred to elsewhere.

With Mahomedans Solomon is the special protector of horses; before gelding or administering medicine, prayers are addressed to Solomon, the horse doctor also takes the name of Duldul, the horse of the Divinity and Mahomed's horse. Stroking his beard and saying:—"Ba birkut-i-Hazrat-i, Solomon Nubbi, ba hormut-i-burak-i-Mahomadee, ba hormut-i-Duldul-i-Allee, ba in Asp Sehut shavad."

*Vegetable.*—Káshghar is singularly deficient in the variety of its indigenous flora, and the distribution of vegetation generally, as the preceding description will have foretold, is very limited and sparse; yet there are some peculiar features of vegetable growth generally in this country which may be now briefly noted. In the western parts of the country all vegetation is dormant from October till April. It is not till the early days of the latter month that the ground begins to green on the plain, whilst in the hills, according to the elevation, the period of activity is variously postponed to as late as June. We found no wild plants in flower on the plain during all our stay in the country, excepting a few common field herbs in the settlements, and a few wild plants at the foot of the hills as we left the country towards the end of May. Everywhere on the plains we found either the withered stalks of the preceding summer's growth, or the fresh sprouts of the new season.

For convenience of description I propose to notice the flora of this country very briefly under different heads, according to habitat in the hills, or deserts, or plains, or cultivated settlements.

In the hills, and the valleys and plateaux spreading between them, there is a more or less abundant vegetation which supports numerous herds of domestic cattle, as well as an unknown number of their wild congeners. On the Pámir and Alátágh it is described as a rich growth of pasture grasses and flowering herbs with few shrubs and fewer trees. From the description given to me by some Kirghiz shepherds these pastures would appear to resemble those of the Khurásán highlands, and to be mainly composed of different varieties of *Artemisia* and *Astragalus*, with the *Calligonum*, *Hedysarum*, and *Peganum*, the *Ephedra*, *Berberis*, and *Tamarix*, with a smaller growth of thistles, trefoils, crowfoots, &c.; with the crocus, lily, and onion, dispersed amidst the general spread of grasses and sedges. On the hill slopes grows the juniper, and along the water-courses are found the willow, tamarisk, rose, honeysuckle, and its climber, the clematis.

The description is not far out from our own experiences of the valleys at the foot of Alátágh on the north, and the Muztágh range on the south. In the former we found the wider pasture valleys very much as above described in point of vegetation, and in the narrower ones, drained by a river, as the Súghún north of Artosh, we found belts of tall reeds and grasses with detached clusters of poplar, and willow, and celeagnus; and at intervals, in the bed of the stream, thickets of tamarisk, rose, barbery and honeysuckle with its entwining clematis. In the valleys of the Kárákash, Tiznáf, and Yarkand rivers on the south, we found the vegetation with much the same general character. Thickets of tamarisk, buckthorn, myricaria, rose, honeysuckle, clematis, &c., set the banks on each side, or covered the uneven ground with a scattered brushwood, in the spaces of which grew spreads of tall grasses of the *arundo* and *andropogon* species, with now and then fields of *carex*, sedge, or tufty patches of poagrass. Scattered bushes of the barbery and the thorny *Astragalus*, with the *Ephedra* and another species of short tufty *Astragalus* dotted the hill slopes, with a more or less thick sprinkling of the *Artemisia* and the *Peganum Harmali*. In the lower valleys are found the poplar, willow, occasionally the wild fig or *pipal* of India, and generally the *Hololachne*, with the tamarisk and rose everywhere. At the higher elevations the brushwood dwindles and disappears, and the surface is either bare gravel and clay, or it is dotted with tufts of the *Eurotia*