

these lowland valleys and in the spring they sow great fields of grain, leaving men to tend and irrigate them, and on their return from the summer pastures reap their crops. We camped over night at Gulcha, July 1-2. It rained heavily during the night, and the temperature stood at  $54.5^{\circ}$  F. at 6 a. m.

Leaving Gulcha, we fell in with a long Kirghiz caravan, on its way to the Alai Valley. It was very gay, yet full of pomp and dignity. Each group was headed

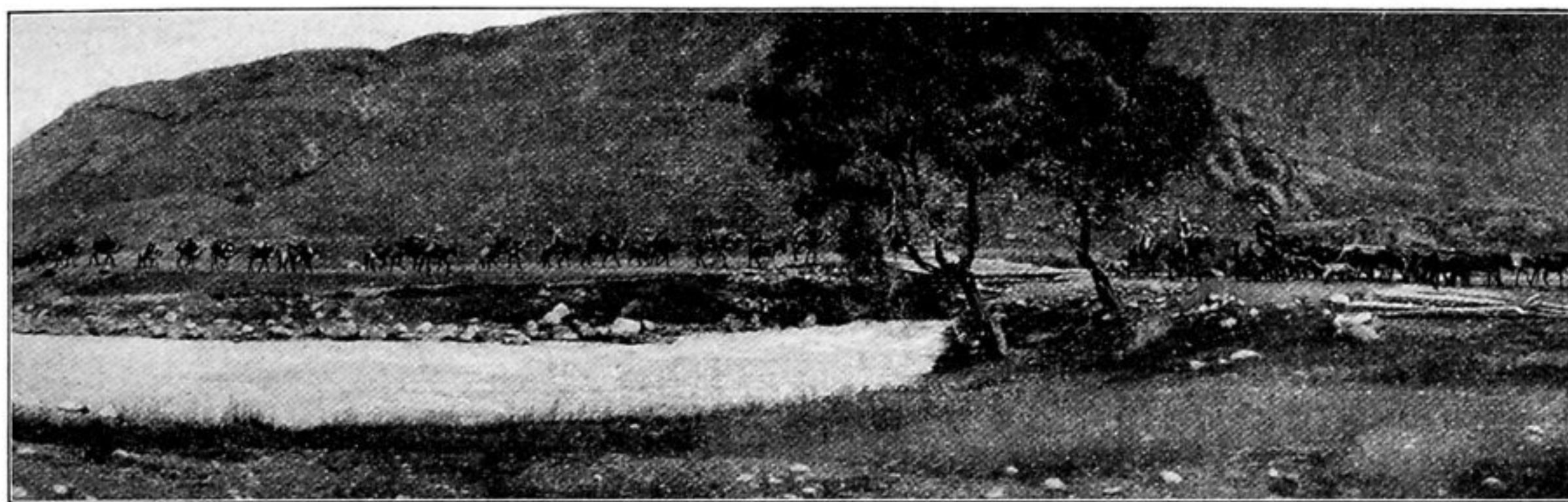


Fig. 83.—A Kirghiz Caravan on its way to the Alai Valley.

by the men driving their herds of cattle, horses, and camels, and their flocks of goats and sheep. Behind them came the women, all attired in their best, some in cloth of gold or silver, and ornamented with jewels. They rode in single file, each on a stallion draped with brilliant embroideries, and each leading two or more camels laden with the household goods, and draped over all with carpets of rich design. Such is the wealth drawn from the fertile pastures of Fergana. (See fig. 83.)

All day we continued winding up the valley, frequently fording the stream. There were at first no trees on the hillsides, but frequent groups of picturesque mountain willows and crooked poplars along the edge of the stream (fig. 84). No wild animals were seen; only a few vultures and flocks of pigeons very like our domesticated variety. Toward the end of the day we entered a granite gorge and rode a long time above the roaring torrent. Occasional glimpses of the slopes high up above the canyon showed thin forests of bushy cedar trees.



Fig. 84.—A Poplar Tree in the Taldic Valley.

Our camp the night of July 2-3 was at Suph Kurgan, where the trail forks, one branch leading over the Taldic pass, the other over the Terek Davan. During the summer there is but little snow on the Taldic, and that route is used when the Terek is impassable, owing to high flood. In winter the streams are shrunken and the Terek is the best route. That night it rained heavily. Temperature at 6 a. m.,  $40^{\circ}$  F.

The next day we were still winding up the valley, sometimes along the stream-bed, sometimes along the top of the canyon. A new variety of foreground