

long rows of booths and shops were already thronged with villagers. But a sight more curious to me was the long stream of petty traders whom we passed along the country tracks leading from Kara-kash to Bizin. The weekly market of Kara-kash had been held on the preceding day, and the same traders who had then exhibited their wares there were now hurrying on to Bizin. Badruddin Khan, who usually himself shares these migrations, explained to me the system by which the week-days are divided between the seven main Bazars of the oasis. The "Old" and "New" towns of Khotan, Yurung-kash, Sampula, Imam Musa Kasim, Bizin, and Kara-kash have each a weekly market-day, and as the distances are not great and the succession of the several local markets is conveniently arranged, the traders make it a point to attend all these markets in turn. Ponies carry the bales containing the migratory "shops," and, balanced on the top of the loads, their owners and assistants. Thus that morning the greater part of the petty trading community of Khotan passed me as it were on review. Badruddin Khan knew them all well, goods, ponies and men, and had much to tell of their financial fortunes and personal characters.

I was surprised at the number of foreigners whom we met among these hurrying traders. There were Kabulis and Bajauris, men from Pishin in Baluchistan, and plenty of Andijanis. A few Kashmiris, too, I saw in the straggling procession, but the greeting I addressed to them in familiar 'Kashür kath' (Kashmiri) met with no response. They were the sons of emigrants settled in Yarkand, and had forgotten their fathers' tongue. Among the Afghans, too, it is rare that the children know anything of Persian or Pushtu. Once more I had occasion to reflect on the great power of assimilation exercised by the Turki-speaking population throughout Turkestan. It quickly absorbs races which on Indian soil would retain their well-marked individuality and difference of speech for generations. Whatever the causes may be, this rapid amalgamation at centres like Yarkand and Khotan always presents itself to me as an apt illustration of the historical process by which Turki tribes