

in an Indian bazar. Traders in Russian chintzes and Khokand cutlery occupied the verandahs in one street and did business in a more leisurely manner. All transactions were for cash and Tungas were the circulating medium. The whole business of the market was over and everybody had left the place by early evening.

These weekly markets are a remarkable feature in Central Asia. Colonel Yule in his 'Book of Marco Polo,' remarks that "market days are not usual in Upper India or Cabul but are universal in Badakshan and the Oxus Provinces. The bazars are only open on those days and the people from the surrounding country then assemble to exchange goods, generally by barter." Marco Polo in his Chapter LIII. mentions a great market held at a large place on the road to the kingdom of Mien, when the people of the country round come on fixed days three times a week and hold a market. In the Shan towns visited by Major Sladen, he found markets held every fifth day. This custom, he says, is borrowed from China and is general throughout Western Yunan. Burnes, in his travels to Bokhara, mentions arriving at Karran a village 16 miles distant from Kurshee on a market day, "for in the towns of Turkistan, they hold their bazars on stated days as in Europe. We met many people proceeding to the thing, but not a single individual on foot—all were equestrians. A stranger is amused at seeing a horse literally converted into a family conveyance, and a man jogging along with his wife behind him. The ladies are of course veiled like most females in this country: they prefer blue cloths to white as in Cabul, and are sombre looking figures." This corresponds very much with the Kashghar custom, except that the ladies, who have the reputation of being independent and disposed to have the upper hand, are not content to ride meekly behind their husbands, but generally have their own pony, on which perhaps may be seen paniers full of melons, on top of which the woman rides astride with a child behind, while the husband follows more humbly mounted on a donkey.*

Having expressed a desire to see something of Kirghiz life in the interior, we found every arrangement made for a ten-days' trip, by our friend Mohamad Khan Khoja, who sent his younger son, Moosa Khan, to take care of us. Moosa Khan is a fine manly intelligent youth of two and twenty, a keen sportsman, and, as we found, a most pleasant companion.

Leaving the valley of Artysch, we passed through a gorge into an immense valley which comes down from the Terek pass, and then entered the Tungi Tar or narrow defile as its name implies. Here we found a good line of fortifications erected on a well selected point, where a few resolute men could keep a large body of invaders in check.

Passing through this defile, along the frozen river bed, over which the wintry blast came with cutting force, we emerged upon a very broad valley almost wide enough to be called a plain, on the other side of which rose the snow clad peaks of the Aksai range, and we saw the Tian Shan mountains before us in all their glory. It was impossible not to feel a strong thrill when beholding this magnificent scene. On the lofty plateau, and on the northern slopes, lies Atbashi, the great grazing ground of the Kirghiz tribes, and there was the trysting place of the nomad Chiefs, who every spring, as we are told by the author of the *Rozaat-i-sufa*, assembled to hold their *kurultai*, or open air parliament, to settle their affairs, and to arrange plans for the summer's campaign. The plain on which we found ourselves was said to be well grassed in summer, but at the time of our visit was covered with snow. Here and there a few scattered domes of mud or sun-dried bricks told the last resting place of Kirghiz Chiefs. In the sheltered corner of a valley, a cluster of round felt tents might be seen, and as we rode

* NOTE.—In America the conversion of the animal into a family conveyance seems to be more complete than anywhere else, if we may believe the following account given in the *Times*:—A FAMILY PONY.—"Yesterday," says a Southern Colorado paper, "we saw a man, a woman, a goodsized boy, two babies, five or six blankets, a buffalo robe, and two strings of chili on a single pony. Every available inch from his ears to the root of his tail was 'taken.' The poor animal was very small; thin as a towel rack; of a sickly, pale colour; and one fore leg was about five inches shorter than the others—the knee joint of that leg was very large, and we supposed that the missing part of the leg was driven in there by the weight above, so that when it was relieved the leg would stretch out again like a turtle's head. In fact, nearly all his legs were short, and the crookedest convention of legs that we ever saw. Taken altogether, it was the most amusing horse and load we ever saw. Incredible as it may seem, the wiry little animal passed us on a trot."