

## Annette M. B. Meakin. In Russian Turkestan. A garden of Asia and its people. 1903.

*British traveler, tourist and anthropologist. Two visits performed in the luxury of a special rail carriage provided by the Governor of Turkestan. Nevertheless, her account is interesting and contrary to many visitors of the time, she is far more interested by the local civilization than by her Russian hosts.*

<http://archive.org/details/inrussianturkes00meakgoog>

Page 38. « ...In Bukhara this department (*note: the dyeing of silk*) is almost exclusively in the hands of Jews .. »

Page 42: «...a permit to enter (Russian) Turkestan is rarely granted to any but Russian subjects and never to foreigners of the mercantile class...»

Page 87: Education is limited to boys of the middle- and upper class. Exceptionally girls of the upper class also are educated. Meakin mentions the case of an upper-class Tadjik lady (wife of a *cadi*) whose mother also is learned and who runs a girl's school in Samarkand.

Page 101-104: Tadjik (Sart) women are fond of silk embroidery. The author does not mention rug weaving.

Page 108-111: «...Whenever we visited a native house our host would... conduct us to what we might call his dining room. A handsome Bokhara carpet generally covered the floor if the house was a rich one, in poorer dwellings, a cheaper carpet from Kashgar took its place...», «...in women quarters the quality of the carpets... corresponded as a rule with the wealth of the husband...»

Page 189. Tatars are another foreign element in (Turkestan cities)

*(Note: One usually calls « Tatar » a Moslem population which occupied southern Russia and Siberia since its conquest by the Turko-Mongol Golden Horde).*

« ...Kashgarians and Dungans are also encountered in the eastern part of the region, especially in Ferghana.... Also Pathans (*Pachtoun Afghans*) are found in the region... »

Page 214-215: «....carpets are manufactured in all parts of Turkestan, but the only kind of any durability or value produced by the sedentary population is the deservedly famous «Bokharan » carpet, which comes from Bokhara and Karshi. It is quite distinct from, and made more uniform in color than, the still more celebrated products of Merv and Pendj deh, which is alas so rapidly becoming extinct....»

*(Note: this statement challenges some old beliefs of Rugdom about who was supposed to weave rugs and who was not)*

Page 231 «...The ( Kirghiz) women not only put up the yurts, but they make the felt which covers them. They also make good carpets....»

*(Note: the Russian made a great confusion: they usually called both the Kazakhs and the Kirghiz by the latter name, perhaps to avoid the possible confusion with their own Cossaks and Caucasian Kazaks.*

*Not that there was a big difference between the Kazakhs and the Kirghiz from the point of view of the racial composition, but the Kazakhs were politically more structured and their leaders claimed Genghiz-khan and his clan as their ancestors (so-called «white bones»). The Kirghiz described in these pages by Mrs Meakin are apparently the genuine ones.)*

Page 225-226.

At a poor Kirghiz village: Twenty yurts, a crowd of camels, 3 cows, and an unknown number of horses and sheep guarded on the neighboring plains. Absolute bareness of these nomad dwellings. The whole furniture is a samovar, a couple of rugs, one small trunk, and a «roll of wadded quilts»

Page 232-233; The Kirghiz raise horses (small, ugly, sturdy), camels and fat-tail sheep (same as the Turkmen's). Cows are rare. The mountain Kirghiz tribes use Yacks as beasts of burden. The poorest engage in agriculture. They often make a living in transporting goods over their steppe.

Page 230, Most Kirghiz practice vertical nomadism, moving their herds from the plain to the surrounding hills at the approach of summer.

Page 269 & 289: Pictures of Sarts of Old Margelan, of a rug, and of Turkmen ladies weaving a large rug.

Page 291: At Merv there are now (in 1902) carpet dealers in the bazaar. (There was none twenty years before, when O' Donovan stayed in the oasis:

«...fresh rugs were continuously arriving on the back of camels.... considering myself somewhat of a connoisseurs in carpets, .... alas, as rug after rug was unfolded, the sad truth was impressed upon me that I had come too late. Cheap work and cheap designs abounded, but the Turkoman carpet of world-wide renown was not there..... Later in the day when we dined with the governor, his daughters took me for a tour of inspection... and showed me the carpets they prized the most. There were not many I should have cared to buy..... Two subsequent visits to the chief carpet warehouse at Merv resulted in our purchasing a couple of small Pendj-deh (*Note: Saryk*) rugs, the only ones of their kind we met with....»

Page 294.

Turkmen elders apparently still made the difference between the lousy rugs, for sale to ignorant Russians, and the real thing. A few miles from Merv, a wealthy Teke Turkmen elder is living in six yurts (one for each of his five wives and his own one, «*..made very snug with handsome carpets..*»)