



A RECENT VISIT TO MONGOLIA

By HON. IVOR MONTAGU

Report of a lecture illustrated by lantern slides delivered to the Society on Wednesday, October 10, 1956, Admiral Sir Cecil Harcourt, G.B.E., K.C.B., in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ivor Montagu, who has kindly come to talk to us to-day, tells me that he started life as a zoologist and led zoology expeditions for the British Museum in the Hebrides, Carinthia, Croatia, the Carpathians and the Caucasus in the 1920s. Since then he has worked mainly in the film industry and as a writer, and has visited many countries, particularly in the last ten years, including the U.S.S.R., China, India and Java. In September, 1954, he travelled some 1,200 miles in Mongolia. He brought back, amongst other things, the Mongolian dress which Mrs. Putnam is wearing for you all to see.

LET me at the outset disclaim any expert knowledge of Mongolia, in the sense that I was there with my wife for only three weeks in September, 1954. It appears that I was the first English visitor who had visited the country during the last thirty years, and my wife was told that she was the first Englishwoman ever to make a visit there, but we learned that another English visitor, Mrs. Bulstrode, had been to Urga in 1912. It seemed therefore desirable to try to learn more about the country and its people, and this I have tried to do, so as to be able to put our own experiences into proportion, there being nothing in the English language which depicts the modern state of the country. From that point of view, I apologize if the information I give is imperfect and somewhat superficial, but it is offered as being the only information there is at present available about that part of the world.

And now a few words as to the character of the Mongolian People's Republic. This independent State, as it claims to be (the former Outer Mongolia), lies between China and the vast bulk of the Soviet Union. The Great Wall separates China from Mongolia, but many Mongolians live on the Chinese side of the Great Wall. Mongolia itself is some 600,000 square miles in extent, about seven times the size of Britain and about the size of France, Spain, the Netherlands and Germany together. The population of that area is only 1,000,000, or about $1\frac{1}{2}$ persons per square mile, and it is nearly homogeneous, being comprised mainly of Khalkhas and Oirats. The largest minority is the 6 per cent. of Kazakhs. In the U.S.S.R. there are 250,000 Buriat Mongols, whose culture is different because they live in the forest region and have always been mainly hunting and fishing folk rather than livestock herding, as the Mongols of the plains have been. On the other side of the Chinese frontier there are 1,400,000 Mongolians very much intermingled with Chinese settlers. For example, the Mongol autonomous region in China (former Inner Mongolia), although there are about 1,000,000 Mongolians in it, has a total population of over 6,000,000.

The country itself consists mainly of a vast plateau about 4,500 ft. in



height, though the average height is 6,000 ft. because there are also large higher mountain chains. Geographically, there is to the north the taiga jungle and mountain forest which extends over the whole of Northern Europe and Asia and comes down as far as, or further than, Lake Baikal. Then there are the grassland plains on which there is the characteristic livestock herding, and this changes gradually, as one goes south, into the Gobi. We call the Gobi a desert, but the people themselves insist that it is not; they regard it as a semi-steppe. Where people, livestock and plants exist is not thought of as desert; desert, in the view of the people themselves, is sand only, and it is reckoned by them that only 3 per cent. of their territory is really desert. The Gobi desert, of which our explorers and travellers tell us, is nearly all the other side of the frontier.

The climate varies from extremes of 108° in summer to 80° below freezing in winter. The weather changes with extraordinary rapidity. During the month of September when we were in the country on one occasion the day was so hot that we could hardly do anything but laze about in the utmost heat. By nightfall the temperature had fallen, and next morning the whole landscape was covered with snow. The sun came out and the snow had all gone by the afternoon. On another day, dry, sunny and pleasant, we went to the cinema in a provincial town. When we came out again rain was falling so heavily that we could hardly get back to where we were to sleep because the streams had become torrents and the fords all around were impassable. The next morning the heights of the hills were covered with snow, but the wet all ceased by the afternoon. That uncertain climate is characteristic. The mountain chains interrupt any general gradual change in the weather. There are many large lakes and several rivers. Even in the desert area there could be seen from the air big pools of various colours, possibly due to different plankton in them, so that the Mongolian says: "Only he who does not know Mongolia thinks of it as entirely rolling grassland," though that is the main characteristic and that is what has throughout all recorded history come to be regarded as the basis of the country's economy.

Mongolia is well known to us by the fact that, historically, tribes from there, under the conquering khans, conquered first China, then Central Asia and Khwarezm, ancient Rus, continuing right on into Europe as far as the Adriatic, the then entire known world. This empire, founded in the thirteenth century, lasted only 150 years and then, later, in the sixteenth century, the Mongols were themselves conquered by the Manchurians, and the Shamanism which had been their religion, or absence of religion, had engrafted on it Lamaism from Tibet. From then on the Mongolians became as a people subordinate and they were even beginning to die out in the present century as a part of the Manchurian Empire in China. They obtained formal independence in 1921.

The economy of the country now remains what it has always been, basically livestock herding. There are 26,000,000 animals, which should be enough to ensure that there is no real poverty. I was told that a herdsman and his family can live, fairly, off 40 animals. Most of the herding families we met had herds numbering about 200. In view of the size of the population and the proportion of it engaged in other pursuits, you will

realize that is a basis for an economy which should be able to support them all comfortably.

The basic forms of livestock are five: the horse, the most honoured beast; the camel; the cow, which includes the yak; the goat; and the sheep. I do not know why—shepherds will probably know—there are always goats in big herds of sheep. In addition to the yak and the cow there is an intermediate animal of which I previously knew nothing, called a hainag, a first generation cross which is stronger than either parent in the male, and in the female produces more milk. There is a second generation cross, but it is always a weakling. Breeding is not taken further.

Livestock herding is basic to the economy of the country and represents, according to the present figures, 90 per cent. of the economic life; it is so basic that there is actually a currency in animals. In addition to the coins, which are the mong and the tugrik, corresponding to the rouble and kopek of Russia, there is an animal currency called the bot, one cow or one horse being a bot, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ camels or 5 sheep or goats.

Livestock herding, or what we might call the agrarian economy, is divided into three sections: private arats—arat means herdsman—production associations and State farms. Production associations correspond, to some extent, to collective farms as known in the Soviet Union, but they are looser forms of association and the Mongolians insist that they are different for that reason. Of course, the economic basis is different in as much as the basis of the collective farm is ownership of land in common, and there is no ownership of land in Mongolia, and there never has been in the sense in which we understand it. The herds are owned privately or by the production associations or State farms. There is a strong effort by the Mongolian People's Republic to reduce nomadism as part of the process of raising the standard of living and particularly the standard of culture. It is quite clear that it is much more difficult to have a school or any of the comforts and amenities of civilization when nomadism takes place over a very wide area. We called on several herds-men who had just finished moving to their summer and autumn pastures. They move four times a year. Except in the south, where dryness makes it more difficult to find sustenance for the animals, the distance of seasonal trek is now perhaps only some 15 to 10 miles between one place and another, and the production associations are endeavouring to build up places in which the population can find a school, a shop, a club, reading rooms and so on. The private arats can, when on the move, take advantage of mobile shops or school tents, or they can also leave their children in a boarding school. In some inhabited places the only two buildings one sees are the school and hostel. The children from the earliest age, say from five to six years, will ride to school 30 or 35 miles and back each day. If the herdsmen are moving further than this they put their children into the hostels.

The production associations are stated to include 15 per cent. only of the animals, so that they are more a model, something which is encouraging a direction rather than as yet serving as a basic part of the economy of the country.* The way in which, apart from culture, there is an effort to improve the standard of living, is by the digging of wells and the grow-

ing of fodder and particularly the provision of winter shelter for the animals, none of these having been known previously in Mongolian life.

The State farms, on the other hand, represent the introduction of new forms of production. There never was any agriculture in Mongolia. The Mongolians were taught by the lamas that to dig would result in disturbing evil spirits, and so that was discouraged. Consequently the people grew no grain and no vegetables. Here and there across the plains one sometimes sees a few vegetables growing near miserable huts; these are very few in number, relics of attempts that different Manchurian governors undertook in the past to make Chinese settlements. Also the Mongolians never kept ducks, hens or pigs, creatures that could not accompany nomads on their horseback travels. The State farms are enormous in extent, and there are about one dozen of them. Visiting one, we were asked one morning if we would like to go and see the hay cut, and we found we should have to go a distance of 80 miles to do so. On the State farms, agriculture is beginning, and already there has been produced, we were told, enough grain to supply the people's needs in flour. The people are beginning to eat bread, which they had never previously done, and also to eat poultry and pigs.

There is the beginning of industry. The figures given me were that 60,000 are now engaged in industry, in the form, on the one hand, of craft co-operatives which make building materials and clothing, also felt and traditional craft objects, etc., and, on the other, of State industries, of which the chief are a big modern food factory, factories producing spirits, a wool-washing factory, a Biocombine producing sera for veterinary use, and an electrical power station; there are also coalmines. Mongolia contains big mineral resources, and there is gold in the mountains, together with a large coalfield which is said to contain, at an estimate, some 500,000,000 tons of coal. There is another coalfield (Nalaikha) near the capital, Ulan-Bator, from which supplies for all the power needs are obtained. There are repair stations, but no machine building or anything of that kind. There is a good deal of skilful repair work. In order to make clear to you to what an extent the character of the Mongol has changed, I mention that a traveller who went to the country in 1912 said that "The Mongol never has worked and it is doubtful if he ever will." The very few industrial enterprises in that earlier period were staffed mainly by labour brought in from Russia or China with, occasionally, a few seasonal Mongolian workers who were supposed to be very lazy. One cannot say that is the case now. The Mongols will turn their hands to any job required. When the electric lighting failed in our room, after we had spoken to the maid by means of a few words from the dictionary, along came an electrician and set everything right in a second or two. Again, we were allowed to go travelling in the grasslands. Before we left, there were made for us thick, heavy leather coats, because we were told that if the car became becalmed and benighted and a sudden wind

* Note from the lecturer for this report: A message received from Mongolia since delivery of the lecture states that the production associations have made unexpected progress in the last two years both in number and range of activity that there are now 600 of them and they are now known as agricultural co-operatives.

came we should get chilled and that would be bad. Perfectly fitting, fine leather coats were made for us within a matter of hours, which are now still being worn most gratefully in the English climate. And far out in the countryside, when we were deciding to return to the capital, we found there was difficulty with the car. The chauffeurs with us were really marvellous; they kept up an average of 30 miles an hour across the grass-land tracks, a pace which in the hands of any less expert drivers would have led to speedy wreck. When the trouble with the car was discovered they immediately went off, and although there were no towns visible anywhere or known to us to exist, in three hours' distance they had found the necessary spare part, come back and did the repair. So that the question of Mongols not being willing to work or able to do a technical job does not any longer arise.

Nearly all imports come from the Soviet Union, though the Mongolians are beginning to obtain some from other European countries and, since the change in China, Chinese tea and food is beginning to come back into the country. Some of the articles that have to be made, such as crockery, gramophone records, and so forth, are made to the Republic's order and commission by factories working in the Soviet Union. It is clear that there is an effort to build up light industries using materials regarded as being especially available, and, secondly, a repair base for their transport and so on, but at the same time without trying to become in any sense independent from the point of view of industrial goods.

Now as to the lamas. Every traveller who went to Mongolia in the early days, and up to quite a late stage after the foundation of the present Republic, reported the complete subjection of everybody, not only morally and mentally, but economically, to the system of Lamaism. The actual figures given by travellers in the early days were that 40 per cent. of the adult male population were lamas. One can appreciate the effect on the economy of the country of bearing that enormous weight of population entirely outside the productive processes. During the first period and up to about the late 1920s the number of lamas actually seemed to have increased, or at any rate up to the early 1930s. As far as I could make out the transformation of the country is extraordinarily recent. I had no idea of it. I imagined that Mongolia became a Republic in 1921 and that the people then started to change things; actually, however, it seems that the change is less than ten years old, for various reasons about which I shall not conjecture here. But the main point is that, now, lamas have practically disappeared. Some of the big lamaseries and temples have been turned into museums. When we visited a functioning lamasery in the capital we noticed that all the lamas were sixtyish and, rather cruelly, I asked them what was going to happen in twenty years' time. They answered embarrassedly with a smile and the Buddhist equivalent of "The Lord will provide." It was clear they had no idea what their future would be. Except for a very few, nowadays functioning lamaseries do not exist. In the yurts among the old people one often sees a small Buddha, but the younger generation pays no attention to Lamaism at all, and in conversation about it is indifferent or even jocular. You will have heard previous travellers describe the obos or lamaistic cairns, probably of even

an older origin, on every pass. The cairns are still there, but now have thrown on them, in place of offerings and prayer flags, bits of old tyres, worn-out spare parts and so on. When I said to our chauffeur: "What about putting a stone on that cairn just in case?" he roared with laughter. The fantastic thing is that one has to realize that that change has happened in a country in which almost one in every two of the men now over the age of, say, forty to forty-five, was once a lama.

Another extraordinary item which gives a picture of the changed background and transformation came to my notice. I came upon some statistics showing the growth of craft co-operatives which developed very slowly (as did everything else in the early days of the Republic), and then at a certain stage suddenly began to increase in number. This was at the time when the big lamaseries and temples began to break up. I found that the greater number of craft co-operatives are composed of former lamas, and I assume that Mongolia must be the only country in history that has ever built its working-class out of its priesthood. The improving conditions of the herdsmen gave them no reason to want to go into industry, but the lamas, as they began to leave the monasteries, found forming craft co-operatives the best job for them. So that is what many of them did.

As to administration of the towns, the political system is that characteristic of the Soviet Union and imitated, more or less, in many of the people's democracies; that is to say, the single candidate system at elections, the single "party and non-party bloc," as it is called, but there are elected administrative organs at every level. The local administration is headed by a chairman or mayor centrally appointed, as in many European countries. But councils working with him are elected, about one-fifth of their membership being women. The zones of administration and so forth are organized as follows: there is the capital, Ulan-Bator, and the country is divided up into about twenty-three aimaks—the term derives from the name of an ancient military formation—each aimak being divided up into about forty somons (another military term, meaning in this case an arrow), and each somon is divided into about twenty bags (pronounced to rhyme with rugs). Every aimak has as its "aimak centre" a not very large town. We visited the aimak centre of Arahangai, near the Hangai mountains, called Tsetserleg. Its population is about 4,000 in summer and about 8,000 in winter. There is a fair-sized town (Sain-Shand) which is an air halt on the route to Peking; other largish aimak centres are west, north and east, Kobdo, the best known. They all have hospitals and schools, secondary schools, clubs, libraries, local newspapers. The capital has two daily newspapers; local papers are usually published every other day. There are in the somons medical points, not every one of which has a fully qualified doctor on the staff, but each of which has at least a "feldsher" or trained medical assistants, and the bags have usually a school and a nursing sister, and so on. The administration in this way is linked, parallel, in every area, and the economy is organized from the point of view of a special economic plan for each area, nationally co-ordinated, as in all other countries of this kind. An interesting point is that the plan quotas are graded according to the geographical setting of each aimak. For example, the semi-desert aimaks have a special lower

schedule of wool or milk per animal differing from the amount which is scheduled for other areas. While in Tsetserleg we enquired about the quotas and found that here at least, in this aimak, admittedly one of the richest, they had in September already completed all set deliveries except one. I asked what was that, and found that it was marmot fur. It was noteworthy that in the neighbourhood for the next few days we often saw hunters coming in with big, fat marmots hanging from their saddles.

Communications: Air transport from Moscow to Peking runs across the country, and all sorts of people from all over the world are thus coming to know the airfields Ulan-Bator and Sain-Shand. There is little internal air-passenger traffic, but some internal air post and also a "flying doctor" service. The railway has been completed across from Moscow to Peking, and there is another line in the extreme end of the country, obviously built for defensive purposes against the Japanese when they were in occupation of Manchuria; also there is a short line of railway to the Nalaikha coalfields from Ulan-Bator. There are steamer services on some of the large lakes, but the main modern passenger transport is by lorry. People travel by lorry over what they call the natural roads. There is not much "built" road existing, although there are a number of bridges over the principal rivers. The administrators prefer to travel by jeep because, after all, it is possible to handle a jeep in pretty well any country and any weather. We travelled by car because it was felt we should travel comfortably, with a jeep accompanying us like a lifeboat, so that if anything went wrong with the car then the jeep would carry on. Incidentally, after it was solemnly explained to us that it was forbidden to hunt antelope by jeep, because of the risk of running out of petrol, nevertheless one or other of our two Mongol companions was for ever longing to run off with the jeep in order to pursue antelope. In such case the car would have to continue alone, the jeep catching up long hours later after it *had* run out of petrol! As far as we could see, the pursuit of the antelope in that way is mainly dangerous to the pursuer, because the jeep is jumping about so that the marksman cannot possibly be any menace to the animal during the pursuit. Nevertheless, the huntsman blazes away perilously and fruitlessly, and this is obviously part of the fun. Apparently, the tactic is to try and cut one antelope off from the herd and run it down until it is exhausted. But if the quarry manages to reach the hills before its lungs burst, there it will be faster than the jeep and get away, which in our experience it not uncommonly does.

I should try to give a brief description of the immense plains. These consist of giant bowls, each anything from fifteen to thirty miles in extent, with a ring of hills rising another thousand or two feet higher above the plain. You travel up and over one hill-rim and on across thirty miles of flat, and then up and over the next hill-rim, and so on. The flatnesses are so flat that an eagle sitting on the ground will stay and watch, just turning its head, but not moving in any other way; the bird can see for miles above the flat ground. To my taste the grasslands are most attractive.

Heavy goods, of course, also go by lorry, but the main goods transport is still by camel, and one of the ways in which an arat can earn money is by carrying by camel for his neighbours or for the State. One often sees

a big transport of camels laden with goods and the family on horse-back going along from one point to another. The main reform in the transport system is not any claim to have introduced any particular method, but that everything new, taken together, has enabled the elimination of the urton service, a system of communication used by Genghis Khan and described by Marco Polo, whereby favoured travellers would go from post-house to post-house, getting horses changed at each station. As a form of tax, the inhabitants were obliged to supply horses, and often themselves as companions or drivers, from stage to stage. This system was a hated burden, and one of the earliest policies of reform was the promise that that system would be ended. However, the difficulties of the terrain are such that it was not until 1949, twenty-eight years after the new Republic was founded, that finally, with great rejoicing, it was possible to declare that the urton system had ceased to exist in any part of the country. That is one of the important changes on which the people pride themselves.

A word, in passing, as to the way of life. The characteristic garment is the *del*, as it is called, now being worn by Mrs. Putnam; a garment which is exactly the same for men as for women. The belt is worn by both men and women. The *del* itself is in one colour; the sash can be another colour, with possibly a coloured border, but there is rarely a coloured pattern on the garment. When in the countryside one may wear a coarse or warm felt *del*, but it can be of beautiful silk material for going to the opera and so on. It is an exceedingly warm and convenient garment, it being possible to put whatever one likes in the way of sheep-skin underneath it in winter. The sleeves are very long so that the fingers can be curled up into them and one does not need gloves. If you see such a garment anywhere, from Moscow to Peking, you may be sure its wearer is a Mongol. European clothes are coming in, for factory workers, nursing assistants and doctors and so on, but there are still many who may wear European clothes for their work but in the evening prefer the *del* rather than Western evening clothes.

Another characteristic of the country is the yurt, which probably many travellers have from time to time described. I must confess myself astounded by the convenience and comfort of it in its modern form. So many explorers have described it as horrifying, as a thing of filth and patches. Unfortunately I omitted to take measurements, but it is perhaps 16 or 20 ft. across, and the fact that the sides go up vertically before they start to come together, like those of a bell-tent, enormously multiplies the space within, beyond anything one would expect from experience only with an ordinary tent. It is made of wooden lattice framework, on which one can put as many felt covers as one wishes, and there is canvas round that, so that the rain is kept from making it soggy. There is a stove nowadays, instead of an open fire, which diminishes the dirt; also there is a door to keep the draughts out. The yurt is roomy and comfortable. A flap at the top gives fresh air and sunshine as desired. Everywhere one sees yurts; in towns you often see them with radios and with electric light. As a home, the yurt is a sort of classic prefab. It is said that a yurt can be put up in twenty minutes, taken down in an hour, and carried anywhere on the backs of four camels.

As to food and drink, basically the food remains what it always has been: milk in summer, meat in winter. The meat is dried and nearly always abominably tough. The milk is distorted into a considerable number of shapes and flavours, the most luscious being a sort of solid cream. Butter, to my astonishment, is an entirely new product, and one the Mongolians are only beginning to eat and export. They are beginning to eat bread, cakes and pastries made in the food factories; imported chocolates and sweets from Russia. They like very much the tinned *hors d'œuvre* imported from the Soviet Union. The people drink plenty of alcoholic drinks, mainly the famous fermented horse-milk, *koumiss*. The best and strongest *koumiss* we got was at Ulan-Bator lamasery. A sort of vodka is distilled out of milk, and there are also strange liqueurs brewed out of berries gathered from the mountains. Drinking is doubtless an "occupational disease" of the herdsman. One cannot pass a yurt without going in, and one cannot go in without partaking of everything, especially the *koumiss*! The herdsmen pass many yurts in the course of their day's work, and this may well be why, by the evening, many have become merry.

There is universal education at the youngest level. To the middle school only about half the children go because, as we heard from the herding families themselves, they keep their children back if they themselves are getting too old and have many animals to manage. Hence, only about half the child population goes to the middle school. There are universities with the higher grades of teaching in Russian (but by Mongolians), because there is no point in printing advanced works on physics and on bacteriology and such higher education subjects for the small readership that requires it in so small a population; the rest of the teaching is, of course, in their own language. Russian is a second school language. Incidentally, a number of people, Mongolians of the professional classes, nowadays speak a little English, also having taught themselves so as to be able to read scientific papers or literature; a few, also, French and German.

One of the advances is the change in the written script which used to be a form derived from Uighur. I understand that this (extremely decorative) Old Mongolian script can be written very rapidly when once learned, but it is difficult to learn. A new Cyrillic alphabet has been devised and is now in use (it is not quite the same as Russian Cyrillic) and this is much easier to read and write than Old Mongolian. According to the statistics, only since the introduction of this reform, in 1940, have the extraordinary advances in literacy (from under 1 per cent. to over 90 per cent.), and the educative cultural developments, e.g. science committees, archaeological, veterinary research and meteorological stations—in fact a whole apparatus of modern science—been built up.

Health: There are now all kinds of maternity homes, polyclinics, tuberculosis treatment, rheumatic treatment. By the way, I got into some trouble because my wife is subject to rheumatism and had a bad attack just before we were ready to leave for Mongolia, the worst attack I have known her to have. She knew I was most anxious to go and did not want the planned trip to be abandoned. I encouraged her by saying that

travelling in Mongolia would certainly cure her rheumatism, because whoever heard of rheumatism in the Gobi Desert? When we were passing over one of the vast plains, in the car there was a Mongolian woman doctor with us, and, to improve the shining hour, I asked: "What is the disease most prevalent in Mongolia?" She replied, "Rheumatism!" I imagine that is because of the herds people must be out in all weathers. The second most prevalent disease is tuberculosis. Apparently, the lads when they go into barracks to do their military service, are inclined to develop the disease. However, the epidemic diseases which used to be prevalent have been to all intents and purposes eliminated; the only remnant, so I understand, is plague, now occurring only in one small area, where it is unfortunately endemic in the ground squirrel *Citellus*. Here, even if the people kill all the ground squirrels around, after four or five years they re-establish their numbers and filter back from the perimeter into the town, and it has not been possible to get rid of the disease in that one spot.

Mongolians have their own ballet, opera, concerts, theatre, music circles, cinema. We went to one gala night, where Western and Mongolian music was played, the Mongolian being the more liked. The most remarkable national musical instrument is the *morin-hur*, a traditional stringed instrument with, surmounting it always, a horse's head. It is fascinating to watch a man dressed in a beautiful *del* sawing away at this stringed instrument playing Chopin.

Western sports are being started. Since I returned to England a Mongol People's Republic team has taken part in the world chess championship and come out about sixth in their group, beating France in the first round. Their athletic times and distances are as yet only up to the schoolboy standards of more experienced nations, but as yet such sports have been only very few years practised. Their own wonderful national sports are the main feature of a national holiday, the games, or "Nadom," and arouse an excitement akin to that of our Olympic Games or Test Matches. The three traditional sports on these occasions are wrestling, archery and horse-racing. The wrestling is carried out with preliminary formal prancing, the breast extended forward "like a lion" and the arms outstretched and waving "like the wings of an eagle." One young Mongol who was with us and was for ever playing billiards, now owns a motor-bicycle and says he is arrested every time he goes out on it because he forgets to take out a licence, told me he used to be keen on this wrestling when he was younger but felt that he looked so silly that he had to give it up.

The horse-racing has the fantastic feature that the jockeys are all children; the people say that the race is to test the horse, not the jockey, and the rider must therefore not be strong enough to interfere with the horse. The maximum age of the jockeys is eight or nine years, though I understand the age is twelve in Inner Mongolia (inside China). My friends did not understand when I asked was there a minimum age. If the jockeys are very small their feet may be tied underneath the horse, so as to save them from falling off. The races may cover thirty or thirty-five miles. About a thousand horses start, all having on them these little jockeys, but only about ten or twenty finish, and by then, no doubt, the children

