



Fig. 12. Camp on the Dunda-gol

ing teeth. We therefore put in to the bank and took a twenty minutes' rest in front of a blazing fire.

At twelve o'clock we reached a spot of unequalled beauty and charm. Perhaps I exaggerate, and it may be that our delight was due to the fact that for months we had been travelling through the vastest desert region in the world. If this little stretch of the Dunda-gol had been situated in India or in Sweden we should presumably have been not so struck by it. But we were not spoiled in respect of idyllic landscapes. It seemed to us that the meandering river had borne us to a fairyland and an enchanted wood.

The river was no more than twelve or fifteen meters in breadth, and for a good twenty minutes the current flowed in an almost straight line northwards. Here, especially, it resembled a cut canal between steep and vertical banks two and a half meters in height, that in places — where they were root-bound — were even overhanging. On the banks grew dense woods of magnificent poplars. Here and there the interlacing branches actually formed an arch over the river. It was like gliding into a tunnel with inlet golden mosaic in the roof. The shades of yellow stood out brilliantly, even in the diffuse light that seeped through this natural roof. We glided silently and slowly into the recesses of the wonderful wood. One had impulses to shriek with delight. We used up all the most potent expressions in the Swedish and Danish languages. Only occasionally did my sailor need to dip his paddle to keep our vessel parallel with the banks. Otherwise we simply