

of veal and lamb, and was fit for the table of the most exacting epicure.

Just as the Khirghiz habits of eating are the result of an environment which compels the people to live on animal food, so their hospitality is the result of that same environment, which isolates them, and at the same time compels them to travel. Habitations are so often moved that special accommodations for wayfarers do not exist. Yet the nomad, in his search for stray cattle, in his business of exchanging animals, or in his rides between the shifting summer camp and the lower valley where he cuts the winter supply of grass, must often spend the night far from home. Everywhere the people are in the habit of receiving guests, and the custom is to pay nothing for entertainment. In spite of his lonely life, the Khirghiz meets the traveler with less suspicion than does the less cosmopolitan villager who lives near a large city. Usually, when I arrived at an encampment, the chief man, who had ridden out a mile or two to meet me, jumped off his horse and gave it to an attendant. Then he led my horse as close as possible to the kibitka which I was to occupy. As I dismounted, he put his hand under my shoulder to assist me. When I touched the ground he raised his cap, a habit learned, probably, from the Russians. Then he took my right hand softly between both of his, and finally stroked his beard, suggesting a prayer to Allah. Often when we met strangers on the road, they turned and rode with us, to do us honor, and to get the news. The isolation of the Khirghiz accounts for their eagerness in this latter respect, and the abundant leisure of the nomadic life accounts for the unconcern with which a man puts off