



*The arrival of Nasumbatoff  
and his troops  
at my camp.*

ditions. The saddle is Chinese, rather heavy, but good. The stirrups are mostly Kirghiz. The equipment is stuffed into two large pockets, «Khojuni», that are thrown over the back of the saddle. Their dress is the Kalmuks' usual shabby garb; the only thing that distinguishes the soldier, besides his weapons, is the apron-like garment with Chinese characters sewn on to it and a coloured band along the edge. They are armed with small Mauser carbines with 1 cartridge. Some of them are equipped with a wooden support for hunting. The guns are neglected and in bad condition. Cartridges are carried in one or two small leather pockets on a leather strap round their waists. Nasumbatoff showed me some drill on foot and on horseback with long, light lances. They are similar to those I have seen among the Chinese troops. The lances are thrust alternately with one hand, the other acting as a support, while the man, by loudly ejaculating «sha», apparently puts more energy into his thrust. On horseback the same fencing action is carried out at a gallop. No shooting could be done for want of cartridges, but I saw a couple of soldiers practising sighting in a very clumsy manner.

After dinner, in the course of which Nasumbatoff and his comrades in arms emptied the contents of two leather bottles they had brought with them, the Kalmuks performed some dances and music. The dance consists mainly of very clumsy movements of the shoulders and arms before and behind the upper part of the body, which remains more or less immovable. It is difficult for them to do any dancing steps in their enormous boots and they move very little with small steps. It is really only a slight turning movement on the same spot. Their string instruments, the Kirghiz «dumbra», are played without a trace of talent. A Kirghiz got quite a good melody out of the same primitive instrument, played with some feeling, while the excellent Kalmuks contented themselves with a few simple chords. Their singing consisted of a single melody sung in chorus by 6 or 7 men of varying