



*Manoeuvres at Turfan. Fencing
between N. C. O's, bearing
standards, who run forward
from the ranks.*

and the target, rather less than a man's height, was put up at the side of a ditch. The number of hits was below 10 per cent. At the end the commander fired 3 misses, raising clouds of dust, and after each shot the flag was waved and the drum beaten to indicate a hit. He looked rather sheepish and the faces of the surrounding Sarts registered keen delight.

After distributing the more or less obligatory presents to my pleasant host, Ahror Khan, his charming son and his little invalid daughter, we started this morning. The start was slightly delayed by some arrangements made necessary through my having found a new cook to replace the indispensable Izmail. The new man had learnt to cook bad food with two Russian consuls at Urumchi. This was nothing to brag about, but at any rate it was something, though not to be compared with Izmail who had become a master of his art by helping his mother cook pälau in the bazaar at Yarkand and was only employed for a short time by a third-rate Russian merchant. At all events I engaged Hashim on the recommendation of the aksakal. It was characteristic of the Sart character that the aksakal assured me that I need not hesitate in engaging the man and giving him an advance of 20 lan, but when I suggested that he should go bail for him, he flatly declined and he would not even be responsible for a quarter of the amount — a suggestion I made more with a view to testing him than in earnest. *September 30th.
Qara Khoja.*

The road to Qara Khoja is one of the duller in existence, with the exception of a mile and a half E of the Chinese town. We rode past the extensive ruins of Eski Turpan — a fairly large area surrounded by the remains of a huge clay wall and filled with clay walls, towers, lumps, blocks etc. of every imaginable size and shape. It is no easy matter to find your way among this chaos of clay and I will not attempt to describe it. The tall tower of Minar metchet rises close to the ruined town and resembles a modern factory chimney more than anything. Its surface is covered with bricks of varying thickness which form designs in straight lines. Inside, the building has fallen to pieces and is not remarkable either from the point of view of size, architecture or decoration. The date on which the