



*The mint and its staff
at Urumchi.*

fact in conjunction with the attention that the administration has devoted recently to these branches of military and financial organisation, leads one to expect that the factory will in future work at quite a different speed.

After visiting the arsenal we dined on the veranda of the Prince's villa. The service and dishes were exactly the same as in the houses of the mandarins. During the hors d'oeuvres the Prince caught sight of his neighbour, the miller, and invited him with lively gestures to join us. The invitation was accepted by an apparently quite common man. The party was completed by a swaggering Tartar, who acted as my interpreter during Tchao's illness, thanks to the consul's kindness. Apparently he was the unofficial intelligence officer of the consulate and was well informed on many points. This and an unusual supply of foreign words, wrongly employed, of course, gave him unbounded self-confidence. The Prince and the miller drank a great many glasses of very strong Chinese brandy of a poisonous green colour. During dinner some of the mandarin's wives and children, accompanied by servants, arrived to spend the hot afternoon in the Prince's shady garden. The sight of me almost scared them away, but the miller calmed them and they climbed the slope. Unfortunately, as the Prince's guest I had to restrain my wish to photograph this group of gaily coloured and mincing little women.

Urumchi is beautifully situated on the right bank of a river and is surrounded on almost all sides by mountains. The mountains in the E are particularly imposing, rising in a series of chains, far to the NE and dominated by the snowcapped treble peak of Bogdo Olo. The mountains in the S are also high and enclose the town on the west in a long tongue running N along the left bank of the river. In the N, scarcely $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile from the wall of the fortress, there is a chain of low hills that come up to the river and drop perpendicularly into its stony bed. At the foot of this picturesque rock, crowned by a column, lies a convent

*August 12th.
Urumchi.*