



*The Tchengje Fang, commander of a tchi, surrounded by his men at Kucheng.*

This ranking of officers is said to be peculiar to the Manchurians, who include Mongolians under the name of »Mangtchi».

*September 17th.*

*Kucheng.*

A certain quantity of coarse paper is manufactured in Kucheng from straw with the addition of a kind of grass. This material is cut very fine, mixed with some lime and is soaked for 3 or 4 days in holes filled with water. Then it is treated again in a very primitive furnace made of straw or lined with straw in the shape of a stack. The fire is below the surface of the ground and the smoke escapes through the stack. The material treated in this manner is ground in a kind of mill and poured into large square holes filled with water. From time to time the lowest layer is stirred up and the turbid water is caught up with a kind of sieve-like tray made of wisps of straw. The sheets obtained in this primitive manner are dried by being plastered in long rows on the clay walls of adjacent houses and walls. In this way 4 workmen produce daily 1200 sheets of coarse paper, brown, if made of straw, and rather lighter, if old paper has been used. The workmen are paid 32 copecks per day and the paper is sold at 4 tchok for 10 sheets.

There is said to be coal and ammonia 4—5 days' journey N of the town. The coal is brought in large blocks by camels.

*September 18th.*

*Tyenza kai village.*

We started about 5 this morning. I divided my small expedition. My Chinese, who is known as »kapitan» because he speaks the curious Russian that the Chinese in Manchuria have adopted and according to their custom addresses everyone as »kapitan» (captain), was sent with the greater part of our equipment by the arbah highroad to Turfan. I took the road across the mountains with the rest of my men. We had hired 6 donkeys at 1 1/2 lan per head for the loads.