

Three weeks we remained here, paying off the mule-men who had brought our baggage from Mukden, and arranging for carts to continue our journey round Manchuria. The chief attraction we found in the place was an arsenal recently set up here entirely by Chinamen, and managed by them alone, without any European guidance or supervision whatever. Here we found magazine rifles, gatling guns, and field-guns being turned out in a very creditable fashion. We called on the manager, who himself conducted us round the workshops. It was he who had started the place, and we were fairly astonished to find such a really creditable establishment in the heart of Manchuria, many hundreds of miles from the coast, and in a country where there were neither railways nor waterways, nor even good roads for the carriage of the heavy and delicate machinery. Mr. Sung, the manager, had something more than mere imitative genius; he had also some notion of invention and adapting. Having brought up an initial plant of machinery, he had with that made more; and he had himself invented a magazine rifle. Coal he obtained in the neighbourhood, and a certain amount of iron too, but most of the latter had to be imported. He was very civil to us, and invited us to dinner, where we met some other officials of the place.

Chinese dinners are of the most elaborate description, and this one was no exception. Course after course was served up, till we must have had between thirty and forty of them, including such delicacies as sea-slugs, sharks' fins, and birds-nest soup. The Chinese are remarkably good cooks, and, though the dishes are often served in a way which is not very palatable to Europeans, there is no doubt that the actual cooking is excellent. There were, for instance, little suet dumplings, so beautifully cooked and so light that they almost melted in the mouth like jelly. Some of the dishes of vegetables were also extremely good, and I especially