

## CHAPTER II.

## MANCHURIA TO PEKING.

“Epirus’ bounds recede, and mountains fail ;  
Tired of up-gazing still, the wearied eye  
Reposes gladly on as smooth a vale  
As ever Spring yclad in grassy dye :  
Ev’n on a plain no humble beauties lie,  
Where some bold river breaks the long expanse,  
And woods along the banks are waving high,  
Whose shadows in the glassy waters dance,  
Or with the moonbeam sleep in midnight’s solemn trance.”

ON September 3, after a three weeks’ rest, we set out once more on our travels, heading this time towards Tsi-tsi-har. The roads were to be comparatively level and good, so we were able to return to the use of carts, and travel over twenty-five miles or so daily. But the season was bad, rain had been falling constantly, and in consequence the roads—of course, none of them metalled—were simply quagmires. Even just outside Kirin we stuck for a couple of hours in a hopeless mass of mud, and delays more or less lengthy were constant. But we had three mules to each cart, and when one was badly stuck we harnessed on a team from another to help, and in this way managed to get over more ground each day than the state of the roads would have led one to believe possible. At about twenty-four miles from Kirin we crossed the Sungari by a ferry, and kept along the right bank of the river. The hills became lower and lower and the valleys wider as we proceeded, till we soon found ourselves in open undulating country, very richly cultivated and thickly inhabited. The crops, now in