

for dinner," said the colonel. "Make room over there, will you?" and down the officer sat, while his wife went to her house. The dinner went on without any break, and the new arrival was treated as if he had been expected for dinner, and had merely come in a little late. Yet he and his wife were new to the post, and had just travelled for three weeks through Siberia, across those awful roads! No question seemed to be asked of the lady whether she was tired or not after her journey, and it never seemed to strike anybody that she possibly could be.

Meanwhile the Chinaman was making himself thoroughly at home. There is seldom any need to tell a Chinaman not to be shy, and there certainly was not in this case. Before dinner, he had arrived while the colonel was out, and had proceeded without any compunction into the Russian's dressing-room, and made every use of his washing and dressing things. And now at dinner he was equally free and easy. He never had to be pressed to take some more to eat, or to fill up his glass; and he talked away incessantly the whole of dinner. Nor did he think it necessary, though the guest of the Russians, to refrain from telling stories very detrimental to them. He thought, I suppose, that these stories would please us; but, coming from such a shifty gentleman, we were able to put them at their real value, and beg him not to trouble to continue.

Colonel Sokolowski had served in the Russo-Turkish war and was very bitter on the subject of it. "Just look at all we went through," he said. "All the thousands of men we lost, and the hardships we had to undergo; and what was the result of it all? What good did we get from it? Nothing; absolutely nothing!" He was now in charge of this portion of the frontier, and had under him, I understood, a regiment of cavalry, a battery of artillery, and a battalion of infantry. He was obliged, also, as the chief of a frontier, to speak two