

now and then catching some man, who was out of step or dressing, a tremendous punch on the nose! The men were small—I should not say they averaged more than five feet five inches or five feet six inches—but they were thick-set and robust-looking, and as hard as all Cossacks seem to be.

We were close here to the Korean frontier, so there were numbers of Koreans about. Many are settled in this valley and seem to flourish and to be looked upon with favour by the Russian authorities. They always appeared to me to be rather a dull, insipid race, but they are said to be quiet and orderly, and as the Russians want population to cultivate and improve the land, so much of which is now merely run to waste, they are welcomed to Russian territory to carry out the work which the Russians themselves seem incapable of. Colonel Sokolowski told us that his government were extremely anxious to have all this Eastern Siberia colonized by Russians. They would, and did, give every encouragement they could to settlers; they gave them free farming implements, horses, and cattle, and brought them out from Russia free of expense; but the settlers had no energy or vigour; they accepted all that was given them, and set to work to produce enough to live on, but nothing beyond. "If you English," said the colonel, "had had this country, you would have made a magnificent place of it by now; but our Russians have none of that colonizing spirit you have, and the country is only very slowly opened up." Since that time, however, the Siberian railway has been taken in hand. The Russians are waking up in earnest, and a great future ought to lie before these magnificently fertile tracts of Eastern Siberia. What the Chinese colonists have been able to do on their side of the border is a type of what the Russians could do also. And with a railway to aid in its development, all these regions about the Amur and its tributaries ought to equal the most thriving parts of Canada.