

almost black, and, judging from the crops, must have been of surpassing richness. The houses were all new, large, and well built, and provisions could be obtained in plenty. After rough travelling in uninhabited parts, one really appreciates being amongst men again, and seeing active life all round: and here, as before, we were impressed by the vigour and prosperity of these Chinese colonists breaking through the forest. In Asia one sees plenty of the old age-worn life, but on that continent it is in but few places that one can see the fresh young life of a colony pushing vigorously ahead.

On August 12 we reached Kirin, and the first round of our journey was completed. Kirin is a town of from eighty to one hundred thousand inhabitants, picturesquely situated among wooded hills, on a bend of the Sungari, here, only three hundred miles from its source, a majestic stream a quarter of a mile broad and twenty feet deep. But it rained incessantly while we were there, and the filth and smells of the place, increased in consequence, prevented us from enjoying as we should have done all its natural beauties.