

troops over the way at Hunchun, but they were evidently of a temporary description. The rations of the Cossacks consisted principally of black bread, and they received also an allowance of soup-like stew or stew-like soup; but the whole ration was decidedly inferior to what the British soldier gets. Their pay is twenty roubles—about fifty shillings—a month, which would be very liberal if they had not out of it to pay for the whole of their equipment. The amount which actually reaches their pocket was, according to the colonel, about a halfpenny a day! It must indeed require conscription to induce men to go through all a Cossack does for this ludicrous remuneration.

In the evening the colonel had a small dinner-party, when three of the officers of the post and a Chinaman, who spoke Russian, and acted as interpreter between the Russian and Chinese officials, came in. After eating some small dishes, such as sardines and salmon chips, at a side table, and washing them down with a glass or two of vodka, which the colonel informed us was a quite necessary proceeding, to clear our throats for the dinner that was