

coming, we sat down to the main business. First of all, a great soup-tureen was placed on the table, filled with a good substantial soup. "No ceremony, gentlemen; *je mange énormément*," said the colonel. And he proceeded to ladle himself out a good helping, and every one round the table then did the same. Each of us had at his side six bottles of wine and beer, and these we were expected to attack indiscriminately. "You're drinking nothing," shouts out the colonel, as he stretches across the table and fills my glass with claret. Before that was finished, another officer would fill my glass—the same glass!—with sherry. Then the colonel would insist upon our trying the beer. Meanwhile course after course of the most substantial dishes were being served up. Each one helped himself from them, but in addition one or other of the officers would cut off a huge slice and put it down in one of our plates. The hospitality was genuine and most hearty; but how we got through that evening was a marvel to us. We had been leading a hard, healthy life lately, so had good appetites, and were able to keep fairly well in line with the Russians in the eating way. But the drinking was terrible.