

robust, and as the rainfall is adequate and the soil unsurpassed in fertility, the crops in the cultivated plains, and the forests in more mountainous parts are magnificent. Moreover, Manchuria is spared the one great drawback to most countries in which the winter temperature falls as low as  $30^{\circ}$  or  $40^{\circ}$  below zero Fahrenheit. The snow-fall is not so heavy as to prevent traffic, and the winter season is in fact the time when the greater part of the traffic is carried on, for then the swamps are frozen, the muddy tracks of summer are converted into hard, firm roads, and carts can trundle over them as on the best macadam. And if crops are prevented from maturing for half the year they are at any rate all the fuller on that account when they do ripen. The moisture is retained in the ground, and forms a sort of reservoir to moisten the roots, while the warm sunshine of the spring and early summer acts on the upper growth.

The configuration of the country is no less favourable to development than the climate. The Russians have already cut off from Manchuria its northern coastline which includes the valuable port of Vladivostok and the important