

*The Face of Manchuria* ch. i

skid violently ; once I thought escape was impossible, as a large cart crashed into our side, missing my arm by a hair's-breadth, but we strove—I hope not unsuccessfully—to imitate the Chinese imperturbability of appearance. During one of our halts for repairs we were overtaken by the above-mentioned bus, and, behold ! there was the Chinaman still on the back of it, trying to take a nap. We passed and repassed the vehicle, and he was always in the act of *trying* to sleep in some different attitude, but apparently never succeeding—the only Chinaman I have ever met who failed to sleep in any attitude whatever !

These plains are very fertile, and as soon as spring comes there is a steady stream of workers to be seen arriving from China proper, especially from the province of Shantung, to which they return when the harvest is ended. Many come to accumulate enough money during eight or nine years to buy land and bring their families up to live here. In fact we met some emigrants already arriving with all their scanty possessions. The Chinese Government is now waking up to the importance of colonisation on the borders of the empire, in order to check the sure and steady pressure of the Russians from without.

As we approached Hulan we came to another river to be crossed, but not nearly so large a one as the Sungari. Few foreigners come to such an out-of-the-way corner of the empire, so people came hurrying out to see us, calling to one another, “Come and see the shaggy women !” “These shaggy women