

hair-raising series of stone steps. The place was called Nan-t'ien-men (The South Gate of Heaven).

Splendid mules and sturdy little donkeys passed with their burdens, and sure-footed boys trotted along, carrying their belongings in baskets hung from the ends of bamboo poles which jerked up and down in time to their springy steps.

Leaving one more little village behind us, we came out into a broad, open valley of gravel and sand. The river was the Chao-ho, a tributary of the Pei-ho. There was a fortification on the crest of one of the hills. The ferry-boat was too small for our car, so our baggage was carried across by coolies. The thick and yellow water glided swiftly over the river-bed. The depth was only about two feet, and the breadth about fifty meters. The lightened car moved out into the river; but when the water got into its igniting-apparatus it came to a standstill in the middle of the rushing stream, and the ferry-coolies had to push it across.

THROUGH THE GREAT WALL

On the other side the road led up through a narrow defile in a valley; and after a while we reached Ku-pei-k'ou, one of the »gate-towns» in the Great Wall. This place is situated on the border between the provinces of Hopei and Jehol, and is noteworthy as being the point of departure for the »Emperor's Road», which leads over what was once Mongolian territory to the Summer Palace in Jehol.

On both sides of the valley the Great Wall wound its way over the tops of the ridges; and to the right and left of the road it was crowned with watch-towers like truncated pyramids. Between grey block-towers a steep street led up into the town, while upon the gate itself was a temple decorated with two stone dragons. Here the houses were roofed with black tiles; and white and blue sun-blinds were stretched above the open stalls, where red apricots lay piled up in heaps.

So we swayed and bumped through Ho-p'ing-men, where the river swirled at the foot of the wall. The sentry at the gate made no attempt to stop us, and no customs officials asked impudent questions about our baggage. In this district the Great Wall is built of dressed stones below and dark bricks above. The Ho-p'ing-men is shut at night, and in this way communication between China proper and Manchuria is cut off.

»THE EMPEROR'S ROAD»

The next rocky defile was unpleasantly steep and narrow, and we had to drive very carefully in order not to risk breaking a spring or a rear axle. At the village Liang-chien-fang we stopped for a time to look at all that remains of an im-