

ing of our escort and by rain. Just before we reached the village we had to pass a point, Liu-ho-k'ou, where the water gathered into seething rapids. Here the experienced captain did not dare to trust his boat to the water by itself, and the boys had to wade among the stones of the bed and brake the boat as hard as they could. Otherwise it would have drifted side-on and capsized. Liu-ho-k'ou was the most perilous part we had so far passed, though it was the merest bagatelle compared with our rapids in northern Sweden.

As soon as we had landed below Ch'e-ho-k'ou the crew and our escort hastened to the village to eat their evening meal. We lay at the foot of a steep alluvial fan on the right bank. MONTELL was to take photographs while I made a sketch of the village and the rapids, and off we trudged up the steep slope between enormous boulders. But scarcely had we reached the top when it began to come down in torrents, and we had to rush down again. We were drenched before we got to the boat, where everything was wet and sticky. The rain came spouting down without intermission until we lay down. And in the middle of the night it began again. It came pattering down on the canopy and there was a dripping and a dropping and a trickling all over the boat.

On July 9th we were roused at six o'clock; and when a quarter of an hour later we cast off the rain had stopped. Immediately below the village the river broke into a narrow, corridor-like valley, with steep rocky walls on either side. Here we were sucked along at a considerable speed through an unbroken succession of rapids. The mountain landscape on either side was wild and fascinating — a gorge with magnificent rocky walls. Our attention was torn between the splendid scenery, the rushing rapids and the two young Chinese, who manipulated their poles with wonderful litheness and elegance, thrusting off just at the right moment to prevent the boat from crashing against a projecting rock or bumping into some boulder in the water.

Something between drizzle and thick mist prevailed nearly the whole day, seeping in everywhere. And heavy rain clouds from the Pacific hung white and ragged round the crests of the mountains.

When we had emerged from the narrow, meandering defile, the river formed a series of sharp, rounded bends, still between rather tall and steep mountain-walls. After drifting for an hour and a half we moored the boats at a village called »The Gate of the Rapids«, where the crew had their homes and wives, and where they got a huge armful of pungent smelling onions. Little naked children came down to gape.

We took one bend after the other, and the same regular formations recurred continually. We went bounding lightly over singing, rushing rapids. Rain had ceased, but the sky was overcast. Occasionally one got a glimpse of sun. General drying on board! Cloaks, mattresses, rugs that had been soaked in the night's rain were spread out. Sometimes we passed a little ferry-place, where people and beasts of burden were waiting to be taken over the river.