

MAGNIFICENT SCENERY

Presently we were taking a bend with magnificent, sheer and dark-grey rocky walls on the right bank, half over-grown with fresh, dark-green vegetation. No words can convey the grandiose beauty of this landscape!

Advantage was taken of the midday rest for a general bathe. Here the river was joined by a little side-valley on the right bank, carrying an inconsiderable little stream. It meandered between vertical, partly over-grown cliff-walls, giving one a glimpse into the halls of the mountain. One felt as if one were looking at the ruins of gigantic cathedrals. I have not seen many landscapes that in point of majestically imposing forms and magnificent perspectives could stand comparison with this part of the Luan-ho valley. Everything was boldly and energetically outlined. One sat spell-bound with admiration and astonishment; and all the time fresh and just as fascinating if not even more beautiful views unrolled along the meandering course of the river. These broad and wonderful bends succeeded one another at regular intervals. The rapids were not dangerous, but the crew had to be constantly on the look-out.

ENTERING THE GREAT WALL

After another enormous S-shaped double-bend we had reached the Great Wall, that also forms the frontier between the two provinces Jehol and Hopei. There lies the little town P'an-chia-k'ou, and there, on the hills on either side, are two grey towers. On the right bank one saw the massive stone-work of the Great Wall meandering over the crests of the hills. Here, too, the landscape is fascinating. The leader of our escort and his men stayed behind here, and in return we got only two fresh soldiers from the garrison of the town, who were to take us to our camping-place for the evening, the little village Ma-chia-yü on the right bank.

OUT OF THE MOUNTAINS

The following morning the sky looked ominous; at seven o'clock the temperature was already as high as 27.6° C., and the air in the valley was as moist and tepid as the inside of a hot-house. But time and again the sun broke through the clouds, and the abrupt little waves of the rapids glittered like gold. The river now became broader and quieter, widening in places to form mirror-bright surfaces. The hills, too, were lower, and retreated from the banks. In one place a whole mass of rock had crashed down from the cliff-top on the left bank, and now formed a regular archipelago of rocky little islands right across the stream, which