

with grass, but in many places the granite was denuded. At first both slopes were covered with bushes and thickets, but these soon came to an end on the left. About $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile further on they became very sparse and a little later they ceased altogether on the right, too. A mile or two below our last camping place, everything was green. Small apricot trees in full bloom added to the beautiful colours. There were single, shady trees growing in the bed of the river. We crossed the river a couple of times on poor, rickety bridges.

After running SE for a short distance our course turned E. Soon afterwards we passed a patch of field, the first we had seen since the Kuan-shan pass. The gorge began to widen slightly. We reached the first houses of the village of Hsia wei kuan after riding about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Here the valley was much broader and the mountains lower and less steep. There were tilled fields on either side of the river. When we came to the village itself, half in ruins, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles further on, the landscape assumed quite a different character: a cultivated valley, 1 mile to $1\frac{1}{2}$ wide, covered with numerous trees, and bounded by hills of löss, all the gentle slopes of which formed cultivated terraces. Further E the valley grew still wider. We had left the valleys of Southern Kan Su behind us for good.

Unfortunately, the weather, both yesterday and to-day, prevented me from taking any photographs of this, the wildest and most beautiful part of Kan Su that I had seen. There was bright sunshine to-day, but owing to mist we could see nothing but the nearest slopes of the mountains.

The ground now dipped imperceptibly. The road was still very stony in some places, while in others it had grown hard after the rain. It could, however, easily be adapted for wheeled traffic, though in its present state this is inconceivable between the Wei ho, E of Tsingshui, and the village of Hsia wei kuan. To make the Kuan-shan pass possible for wheeled traffic, a good deal of blasting and other work would be required; on the other parts of the road digging would be sufficient.

About $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles E of Hsia wei kuan we crossed the river Hsi ho for the last time. Here it was 40 feet wide and the water came a little above the horses' knees. The mountains on the right, that had practically disappeared in the distance, drew nearer again and the river flowed on, enclosed between two mountains. About $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile beyond it ran into the river Chen ho, coming from the NW. The latter, which flowed in two arms, 35 and 50 feet wide, was crossed by a bad bridge not far from a large village, Ts'ao chuan, of 80 houses. The road followed the mountains on the left bank of the river in an E, S and finally in a decidedly SE direction. It had a preference for keeping close to the mountains on the right bank. The mountains on the opposite bank retreated more and more and soon appeared as only a faint outline in the distance. Those we had been following also ran at a distance of about $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile from the road towards the end of the day's journey. The bed of the river was marked by a steep slope, 15—20 feet high, on the opposite bank.

The valley was densely populated — there were many villages on the road and still more were grouped on either side of it. On the left whole villages of caves had been made in the soft side of the mountain, which sloped steeply at the bottom. They were far more comfortable than those I had seen in the neighbourhood of Uch Turfan. Here they frequently had doors and two windows with many small panes of paper and a hole above