

The descent started immediately along the same monotonous sunken road. When we came up to the surface for a short time, we saw a great many fissures that cut up the hill in every imaginable direction. The landscape, with many bare hills of löss falling in terraces, was very similar to that I had seen in Southern Kan Su. 45 li from the crest of the hill we came to Szeshui hsien after travelling for a time along a level valley. — The town is, if possible, in even worse condition than Kung hsien. The destruction is said to have been wrought by prolonged, heavy rains, that caused inundations 42 years ago and washed away a great many houses. Several thousand people perished at that time.

*May 29th.* The 110 li we covered to-day were also mostly between walls of löss, but we did not cut through any considerable hills. It was only 10—15 li before Chen-chow that the road finally emerged from the hills into an open plain with many groves of trees. Soon after, to my great joy, I heard the melodious whistle of a railway engine and we soon reached the railway and the extensive buildings belonging to its management. Rickety rickshaws, soldiers in khaki, Chinese speaking broken French, others dressed more or less in European clothes, indicated that we had reached the civilised zone of China.

The villages are as follows: Ehr-shih-li-pu 100 houses, 30 li San-shih-li-pu 60 houses, 40 li Yeng yang hsien, 60 li Ehr-shih-li-pu or Yulung cheng 1,000 houses, 70 li San-shih-li-pu 15 houses, 80 li Hsu shui cheng, 90 li Ehr-shih-li-ho, 95 li Sankua miao 30 houses and 110 li Chen-chow.

In regard to schools 1 tsung and 5 hsiao hsiao tang and a school for training the railway staff have been opened. The latter is called »lung kung shang hsiao tang» and has about 120 pupils. Three Frenchmen have been appointed as masters. There is no technical instruction. — Some Japanese women are engaged and a few Japanese men are also seen.

I spent a far from pleasant night. Behind the thin wall, next to which my bed had been placed, there was an indescribable noise, a regular caterwauling performed by a woman with an exceptionally unpleasant voice and her guests, 2 or 3 Chinese railwaymen. My first request, that they should move into another room, brought the assurance that they would only sing a couple of songs and then stop. When I renewed my request a couple of hours later, they lost their tempers and replied that they themselves were »chiefs» and would now sing seven times worse! A terrible caterwauling arose and went on till about 1 o'clock in the morning. This incident is said to be typical of the frequently provocative treatment of Europeans by the Chinese, whose duties bring them into daily contact with them. — Chen-chow was visited recently by a commission consisting of about 20 mandarins, despatched to select a site for building an arsenal.

*June 3rd.* On May 30th, with a feeling of great contentment, I entered a comfortable railway carriage which carried me in a couple of hours to Kai-feng-fu, the capital of the province of Honan. The line goes over a flat plain. Sand dunes and large expanses of sand indicate the proximity of the Hwang ho. Shortly before reaching the town we crossed the remains of an ancient dam which, in the form of a wall of sand, had offered its opposition to the mighty waters of the river in bygone days. — A large part of this distance from Kai-feng-fu