



WEST ENTRANCE TO FENG-HSIEN GORGE, ON THE YANGTSE RIVER.

from bottom to top, and are a mass of luxuriant vegetation. The soil of the plains is said to be as rich as can be found anywhere in the world, and it regularly yields two crops in the year. The climate is moist, and for the most part cloudy, but temperate, and healthful, even for foreigners, though sometimes its humidity has been found a little trying.

What of the people of this richly endowed land? Mr. Wallace says of them :

They are industrious and peace-loving traders, well-to-do, and livelier and quicker-witted than most Chinese. They are fond of pleasure, but are nervous and excitable. Hence they are an easy prey to any rumour that may arise regarding the foreigner, and are often worked upon by the officials, who, from selfish motives, dread the advent of Western progress.

Our Canadian missionary, Rev. G. E. Hart, well describes their progressive spirit, the heartiness with which they consider new innovations, the readiness of the literary classes to throw aside their old systems and ideas and supplant them with Western methods, and their anxiety to introduce machinery for irrigation, mining and railway communications.

They make splendid business men, and in the towns and cities the higher classes have a comfortable, well-to-do appearance. Throughout the country, also, the farms are well kept, and the half-timbered and whitewashed homes are embowered in trees and shrubs. While poverty is not absent, and beggars in all stages of emaciation crowd the roads near the towns, there is not the general air of destitution so common in other parts of China. The people, to quote one writer, are "apple-cheeked, snub-nosed, and round-faced," characteristics that go with a happy temperament and a fairly prosperous life.

But there is one drawback to this Chinese paradise. Over one-third of the cultivated land the poppy flaunts its blood-red bloom. The people are ruining themselves body and soul with opium. Even in the country districts, it is estimated that forty per cent. of the men and twenty-five per cent. of the women are addicted to the opium habit. So much of the land formerly given to the cultivation of rice is now given up to the poppy that the price of rice has increased one-third in the past twenty-five years. The one hope of salvation is, our mis-