

furnish a home to numerous birds and insects. On the more sloping shelves small patches of wheat, barley and peas are seen. Trees of many kinds with their roots grapple with rocks; flowering shrubs cling to every crevice, while ferns and blossoms hang from the damp, over-jutting boulders.

"Everything we see around us has a fascinating interest; even the clumsy junks, rowed by fifty men or more, rushing into view as by magic, and lost as quickly. The men are screaming as they row. One stands in their midst; he looks daggers at this file, and then at that; he stamps his feet and yells and pitches their screaming on a higher key. Each man tugs at the oar with all his force, until the long clumsy timbers bend and creak. I had wondered why we had so much bamboo-rope on board, for our house is covered with immense coils of it, while every boat we see is piled with stacks of rope and cable. At the rapid I saw the need for this, when a thousand feet and more were dragged out by a hundred men and drawn over sharp rocks or through holes worn a foot deep by constant friction. I have never seen a severer or more degrading occupation than tracking a junk up this river, nor one that was less remunerative. Three dollars a month without board cannot be a great inducement, yet there is no lack of sailors ready for the work. Whenever we are to ascend a dangerous rapid—and nearly all are so considered by the natives—a boatman brings out an old, rusty, four-barrelled blunderbuss, rams the barrels full of powder, and stations himself at the side of the boat for the most serious business connected with the ascent. As the boat strikes the first fierce breakers one barrel is discharged into the water. The gun is then dropped upon deck and the sailor tugs for a while at the ropes. When we have swung around and ploughed and plunged sufficiently with little progress, he drops his work, whatever it may be, and fires again. The third and fourth chambers are likewise emptied if the business is continued long enough.

"To those acquainted with the Chinese ideas of demonology this will appear to be the most natural and necessary proceeding. Malicious spirits are in and around all dangerous places, ready to do all manner of mischief. They can be frightened by terrific sounds. In passing all such places the Chinaman beats a gong, explodes fire-crackers or powder in any form. During the day several reports of cannon were heard, and immediately after each one a beautifully constructed paper boat came in sight and passed down on its religious voyage. All this to appease the wrath of the dragon-king."

At Kwei-cheu-foo was a telegraph office with ten operators,