

CHAPTER VII

TO MOUNT OMEI

PEREIRA now had an interlude from his main plan. He turned off south from Chengtu, on June 20, with the object of shooting and of climbing Mount Omei, another of the sacred mountains of China.

On first leaving Chengtu the fertile plain was covered with paddy fields which extended everywhere. The whole plain was watered by countless rivers, canals and irrigation channels; and with trees and bamboos was a beautiful sight. Large flocks of duck are reared in the paddy fields, and it is a common sight to see a man driving some thirty to forty ducks from one field to another.

The inns, tea-houses and restaurants on the big roads are among the best in China; and in some inns mosquito curtains are provided. It rained every night so that the roads were always muddy. And after leaving Kiungchow on June 23, he left the big main road and travelled by difficult small roads towards the mountain, passing over undulating ground and low hills. Rice and maize were the chief crops; and there were plenty of trees, mostly firs, and bamboos.