

CHAPTER VIII

A SHOOTING EXPEDITION

PEREIRA now prepared for a shooting expedition in the mountains of Western Szechwan, a wild, mountainous country covered with dense scrub and bamboo, except on the higher slopes, and uninhabited except for a few visiting woodcutters and Chinese farmers. The shooting grounds were at altitudes of between 7000 and 13,000 feet. The game comprises boar, bear, roe, leopard, giant pandar, pandar cat, serow, wild dogs, and (on the highest ground) takin and blue sheep. What he particularly wanted to get was a giant pandar or pandar bear, as no European had ever shot one. But shooting in this region was not easy, as the jungle was thick and the local hunters were not keen and knew little of the habits of the game or where to find them. And for a man like Pereira with a weak spine the physical exertion of climbing very steep slopes and forcing a way through dense bush was great.

Although warned by the magistrate that the region was infested by brigands, Pereira left Kiungchow on July 19. As he could get no mules or chairs he engaged thirteen carriers, and he and his boys walked. Leaving the Lan-ho the path