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A Handbook
to the
WEST RIVER



683

WILLIAM BROWN







WUCHOW PAGODA BY MOONLIGHT.

A HANDBOOK TO THE WEST RIVER

Being a Short Description of the
Chief Places of Interest
between Canton &
Wuchow-fu.

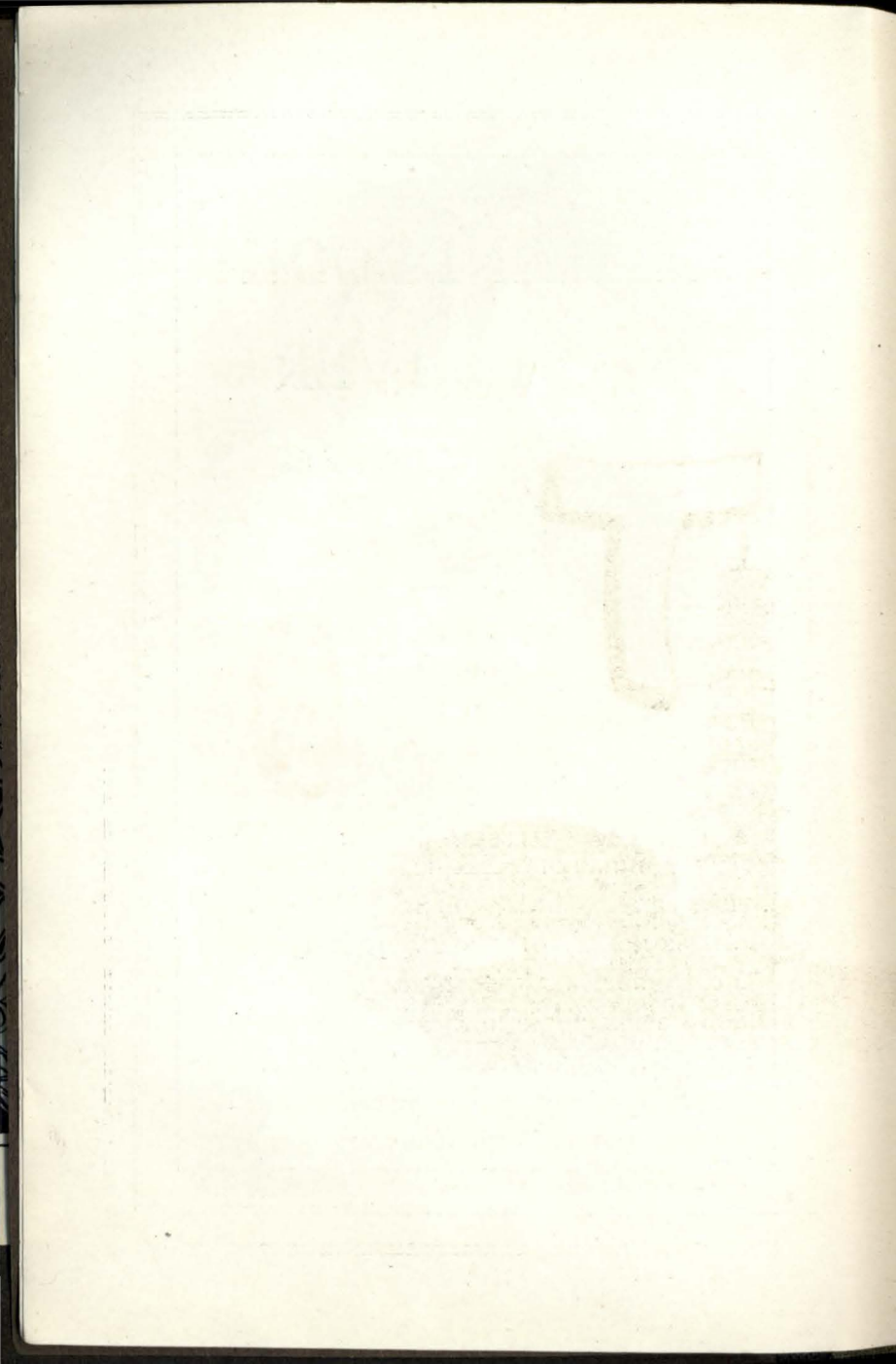


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The West River.



Sam-Shui Pagoda.

THE best place for a short holiday and the best means of getting there? These are the questions which the tourist arriving at Hong Kong with a few days at his disposal, seeks to solve. Few people realize what magnificent scenery there is on the Si-Kiang between Canton and Wuchow-fu.

The beauties of the West River scenery with its high mountain ranges its gorges, its peculiar thread-like continuation

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of lakes one after another, with barriers of high land always ahead ; its pretty green hills rising directly from the water's edge, cultivated with patches of tea, hemp, tobacco, cassia and fruit-bearing trees ; its sloping banks where the high land has receded, leaving a fertile valley, form one of the finest panoramic landscapes to be found in the South of China. In the following pages space will not permit of an adequate description of the varied and glowing wealth of the vegetation, the wild beauty of the mountains and the magnificent scenery of the river.

The Hong Kong, Canton and Macao Steamboat Company, Ltd. offers every facility to those wishing to make this trip. The return journey between Hong Kong and Wuchow, via Canton, occupies about five days. The best way is to proceed by one of this Company's steamers to Canton, from which port the Company, in conjunction with the China Navigation

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Company, Ltd. and the Indo China Steam Navigation Company, Ltd. runs a triple weekly service to Wuchow.



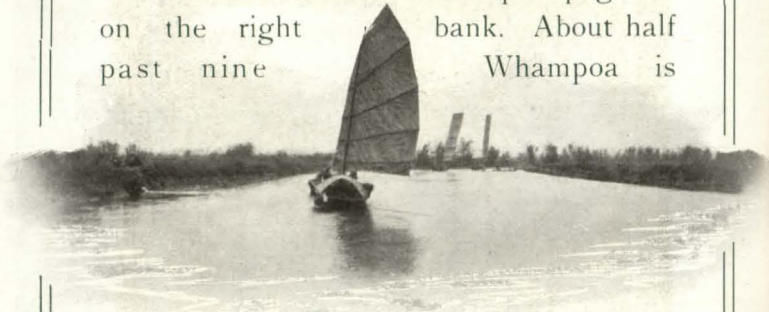
View of Canton Harbour

The "Sainam" and "Nanning," which leave Canton for West River Ports on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, are stern-wheel steamers specially built for

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the West River trade. The saloons and state-rooms are spacious, well-appointed and very comfortable, and the vessels are lighted throughout by electricity.

Leaving Canton about 8 a.m. the steamer makes her way through the shipping down the Front Reach, passing the Inclined and the Whampoa pagodas on the right bank. About half past nine Whampoa is

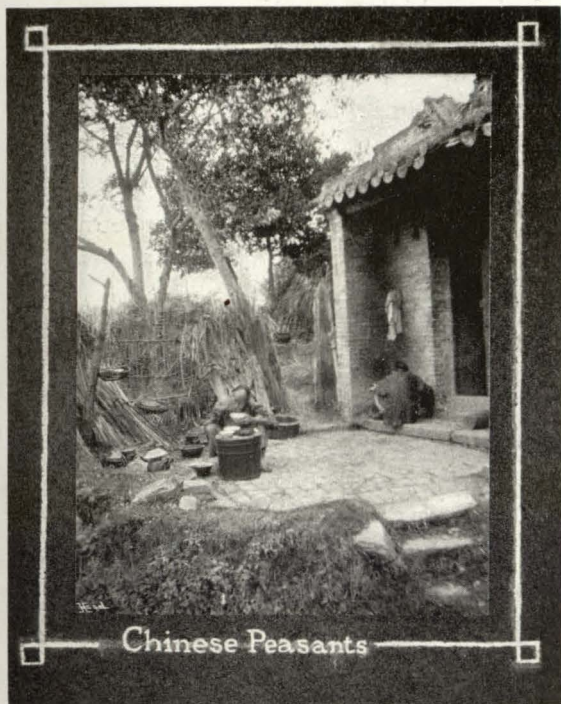


Creek Scene near Kumohuk.

reached, but no stoppage is made there. At Forbes Point, about 19 miles from Whampoa the steamer enters the delta at the mouth of the Pearl and West Rivers. Both banks of the channel are very flat and for many miles nothing is seen but

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paddy and rice fields till the town of Saiwan is reached. Numerous villages are passed in close succession on both banks till about 2 p.m , when we approach Yunki, our first port of call. A few miles



Chinese Peasants

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farther on is Kwai Chow, but the steamer does not call here, it not being a Treaty Port. A fine church, built after the style of the Canton Cathedral shows up prominently at Kwai Chow. It was built by the local officials to replace a French Mission which was destroyed by the inhabitants of Kwai Chow.

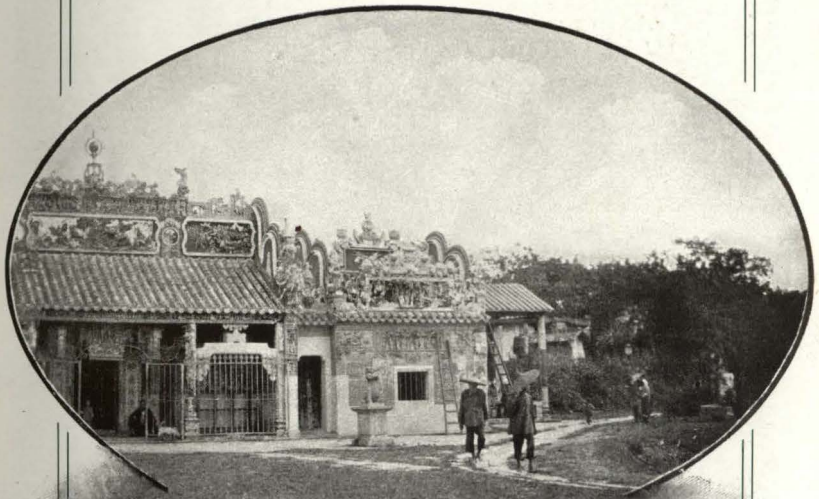
At this point the river widens out and the flat country ends. In the distance can be seen a low range of hills at the foot of which is situated the town of Mah-Ning, where the steamer stops to embark passengers. This place was at one time a hotbed of pirates.

Passing some low hills called the Fist Cliffs on the left bank, we enter the main stream of the Si-Kiang and very shortly reach the town of Kum-Chuk.

Kum-Chuk has a population of about 3,000 people, and was one of the first stages on the West River opened for trade in 1897. The only noteworthy feature of

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the town is the rapids near it, which in summer run with tremendous force at the rate of nearly 20 miles an hour, though in winter they are hardly noticeable.



Joss House, near Samshui.

Kau Kong, the next town passed, is a large and important trading centre. It has at the lowest estimate 100,000 inhabitants. The majority of the houses

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are constructed of stone and the town is built differently from all others on the river, stretching in a long line for nearly



Near Mah Ning.

five miles. Many of the inhabitants, having lived in America and Australia, have brought back foreign ideas with them. At Kau-Kong-Si, the port of Kau Kong,

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a stoppage is made to embark passengers.
The country from this port to Samshui
is well cultivated, sugar-cane and mulberry



Lower Entrance to the Shiu Hing Gorge.

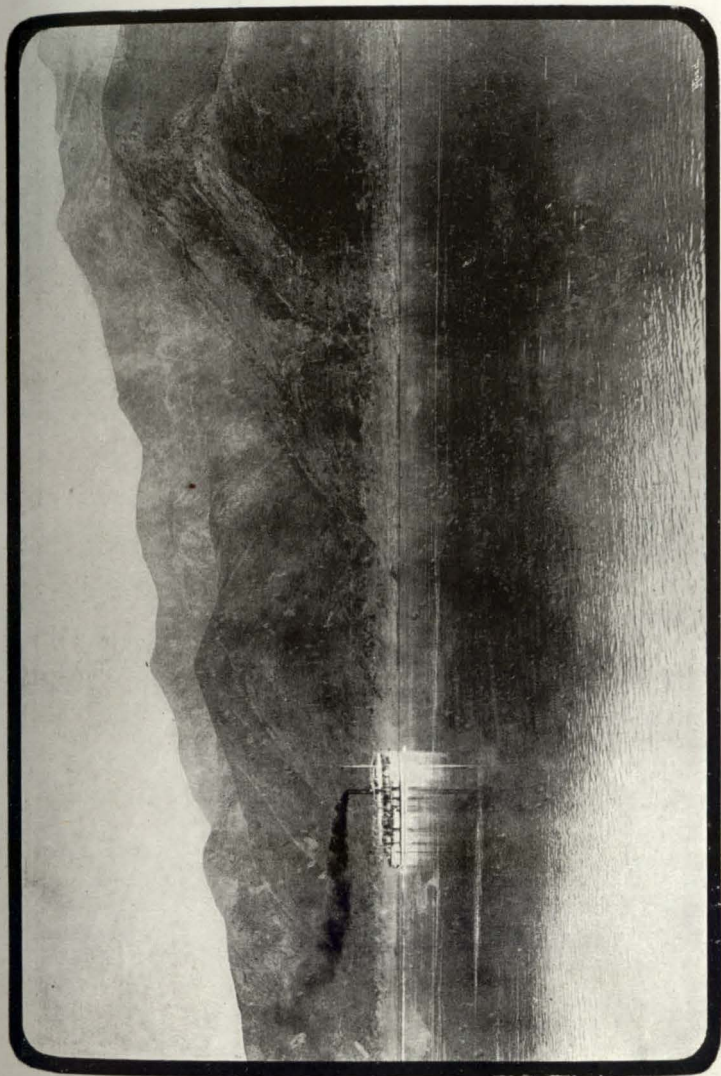
being the chief crops. Leaving Sam-Chow pagoda on the right bank and soon after passing Tai-Ping-Chow Island we see the Kum-Chow pagoda in the distance. The

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country, which hitherto has been more or less flat, now becomes very hilly and picturesque. Passing the villages Fu-Wan, Kam-Chow, Pak Nai and Kumli on both banks of the river, between 9 and 10 p m., we reach Ho-Hau, the port of Samshui.

The walled city of Samshui stands about 2 miles inland and is well worth visiting. Situated at the junction of the West River, the North River and the Fatshan branch of the delta, it thus derives its name of Sam-shui or "Three Waters." A little distance from the town is a nine-storey pagoda surrounded at its base by the ruins of a joss-house. The country around Samshui is an ideal spot for the amateur photographer who can well spend several days among the joss-houses, old gateways and ruins before exhausting his stock of "subjects."

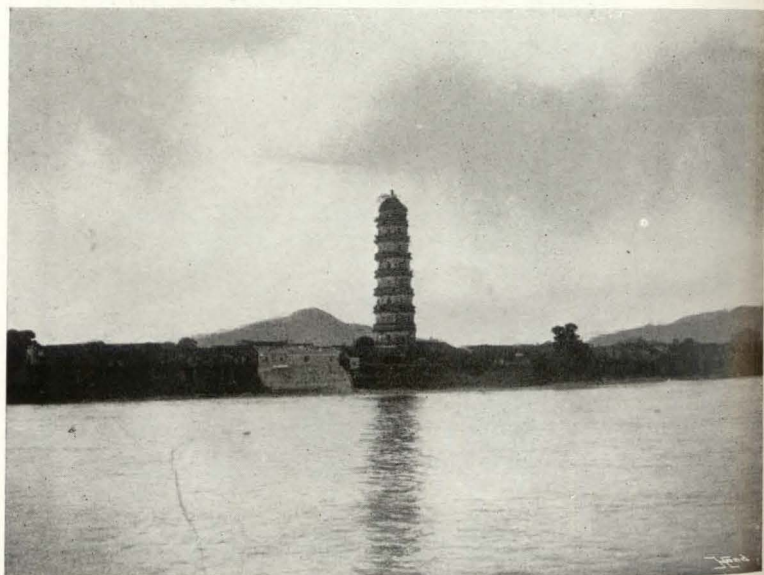
Three miles east of Samshui is Sainam, a flourishing market town of about twenty thousand inhabitants. On the way to



WEST RIVER SCENERY.



IN THE GORGE.



SHIU HING PAGODA

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Sam-shui numerous native craft laden with fruit, vegetables and other freight have been met, but it is not until now that we begin to realize the magnitude of the traffic and trade of the Si-Kiang. Stern-wheel passenger boats, either propelled by manual labour or towed by small steam-launches, are seen making their way up the North River and rafts of fire-wood, and deeply laden junks going in both directions pass us in close succession.

Leaving Samshui, the steamer passes the villages of Ching Ki Hu, Posui, Wing On, and Lok Yum. Should the tourist contemplate visiting the Ting Wo Shan Monastery, he should leave the steamer at Samshui and go by steam-launch to Lok Yum, the best landing place to reach the monastery. This is the third largest Buddhist monastery in China, containing over three hundred monks. The monastery, which is built about 400 feet up the side of a cliff, is approached by means

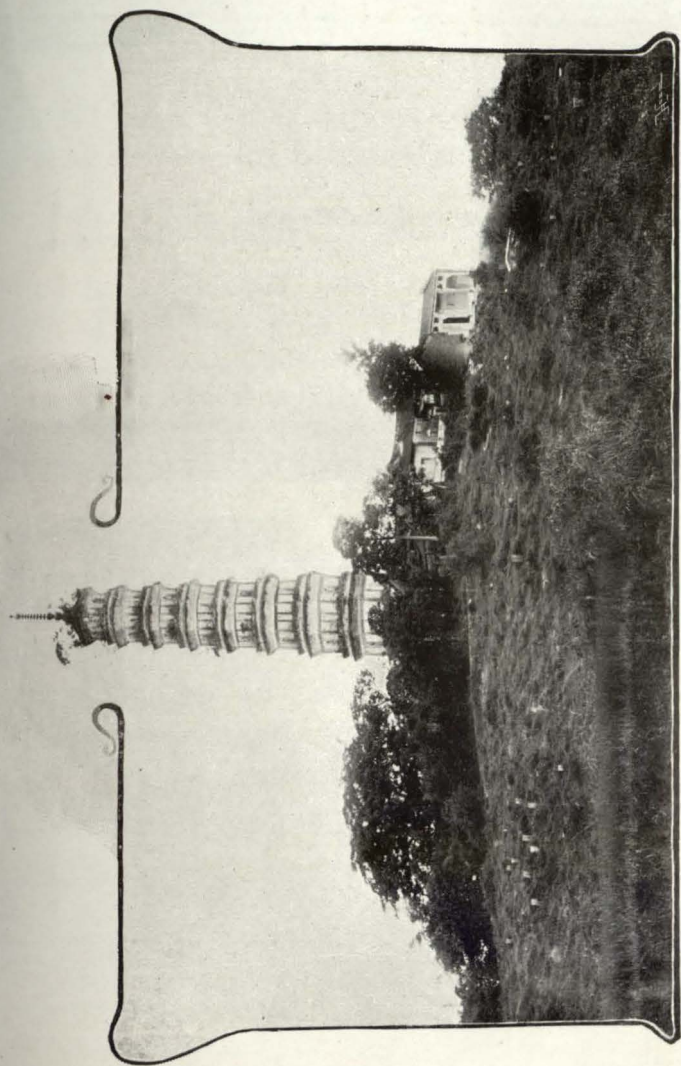
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of steps cut into the rock. With the beautiful waterfalls in the background, it presents one of the most magnificent views to be obtained on the river. The water from these waterfalls is regarded by the monks as sacred and is supposed to possess many virtues. The monks ship it in jars to all parts of China.

At Howlik, a port opened last year for passenger traffic, the steamer makes a short stay. Straight in front of us, rising almost vertically out of the water, the two hills marking the entrance to the Shiu-Hing Gorge can be seen and the lordly Teng-Yu-Shan mountains rise proudly away in the distance on our right.

The country here is very marshy and is a paradise for sportsmen, snipe, duck and other wild fowl abounding.

The Shiu-Hing Gorge, by far the most beautiful and the longest on the river, is entered through a pass guarded on both



WHAMPO PAGODA.



NATIVE PASSENGER BOAT



FISH PONDS NEAR SAMSHUI.

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sides by towering peaks descending almost perpendicularly to the river.

Before us, the dark waters are enclosed by abrupt black cliffs on the one side and by hills rising roll upon roll on the other, extending the whole length of the gorge. During the summer months lovely waterfalls and streams can be seen rushing down the cliffs and valleys on both banks. Beyond its upper entrance the country grows more open, and though still mountainous, the river widens out to nearly a mile. On the right bank stands a Buddhist Nunnery, one of the few on the river, and on the opposite bank, built some distance up the side of the mountain, is a very fine pagoda. Half-an-hour after leaving the Gorge, Shiu-Hing is reached, marked by its stretching suburbs and a nine-storey pagoda.

Shiu Hing, a walled city, built on the north bank of the river, was formerly the provincial capital. Though still of con-

A Handbook to the West River.

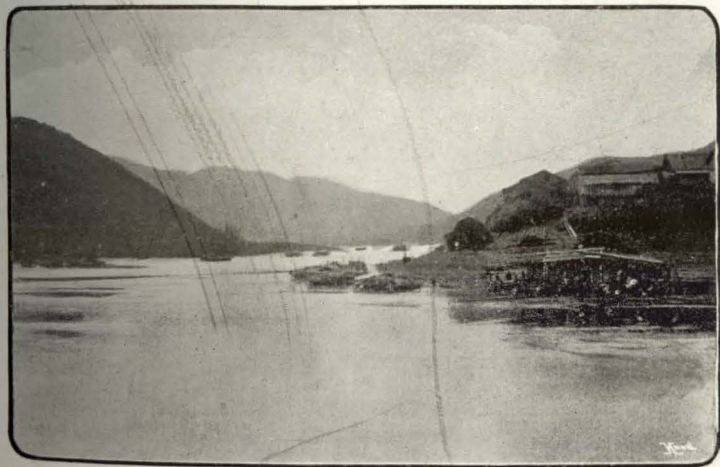
siderable size and bearing many signs of its former grandeur, it is not at the present day a town of much importance. A visit should be made to the Viceroy's Yamen, one or two old temples and some ruins in the town. The houses facing the river, like those at Kum Chuk, are built on piles and in some places on stone embankments.

The Seven Star Marble Hills and Caves are situated a few miles behind the town. Numerous monasteries and temples are built on almost inaccessible places in these hills. A visit to the hills and caves forms in itself a fine trip for those who have not sufficient time to see the whole river.

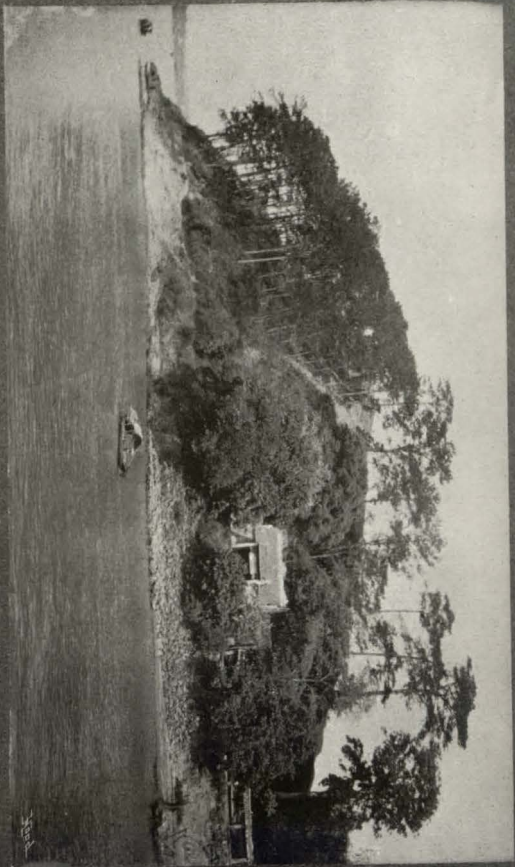
From Shiu-Hing, the river takes a bold sweep to the north-east, flowing through fairly level country backed by distant mountain ranges. Passing several fine pagodas on the south bank, the steamer soon approaches Spike Hill, at the base of which is a very old temple, dedicated



The Cockscomb Rock.



Lo Ting Hau



Entrance to Samshui Harbour

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to the Lung Mo (or "Dragon Mother") and on the top of which may be seen three pirate chimneys, in which it used to be the custom to put live pirates head downwards, and then brick up the top. A very fine archway with some curious native carving stands in front of this temple. On our right, skirting the river, is the thriving village of Fu-Wan, after passing which the steamer enters the Sam Yung or Smaller Gorge.

About two hours after leaving Shiu-Hing we catch a glimpse of Luk-Po, nestling at the foot of some fine hills. Luk-Po is a fairly large and important market town, and the steamer stops here for passengers. The river above Luk Po takes some very sharp bends and its course from North-West suddenly sweeps to the South. Twelve miles from Luk-Po, picturesquely situated at the base of Joss Mountain, lies the town of Yuet Shing noted for its famous temple dedicated to the Lung Mo or "Mother of the

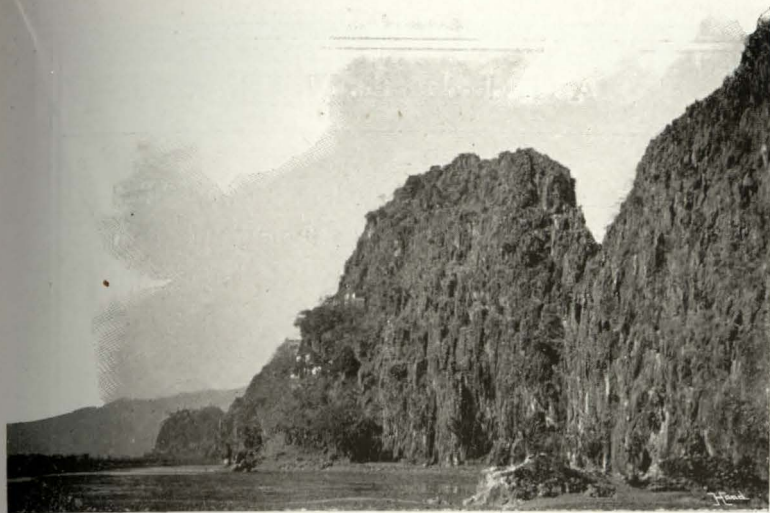
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Dragon." This town is not very important except during the week of the Dragon Festival, when over a quarter of a million people come from all parts of South China to take part in the festivities. The temple, situated in the centre of the town, is said to be nearly 2,000 years old.



Seven Star Marble Hills, near Shiu Hing.

The scenery here is more diversified and interesting than any we have yet seen. On the banks sugar-cane and a variety of fruit trees are seen growing. On the



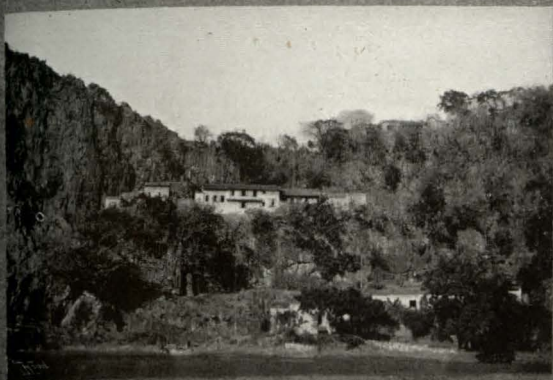
MARBLE ROCKS NEAR SHIU HING.

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left bank in a continuous line are well-tilled farms with farm houses peeping out from among the bamboo groves. An abrupt turn of the river reveals the Cockscomb Rock, a curious soft-marble projection on the left bank.

Surrounded on three sides by hills, with the river in front, is the pretty little town of Luk-To. This is an important market town, and between June and October about thirty thousand piculs of fruit are exported to other ports lower down the river. We pass village after village nearly all alike except as regards size. The red sandy soil of the hills we left in the morning now gives place to a soil of a darker colour, and the country from this point to Wuchow becomes more and more mountainous.

Our next stopping place is Lo-Ting-Hau, a village situated at the mouth of a river leading to Lin-Tan. Facing the village on the left bank of the river, stands the



Monastery in the Seven Star
o — Marble Hills

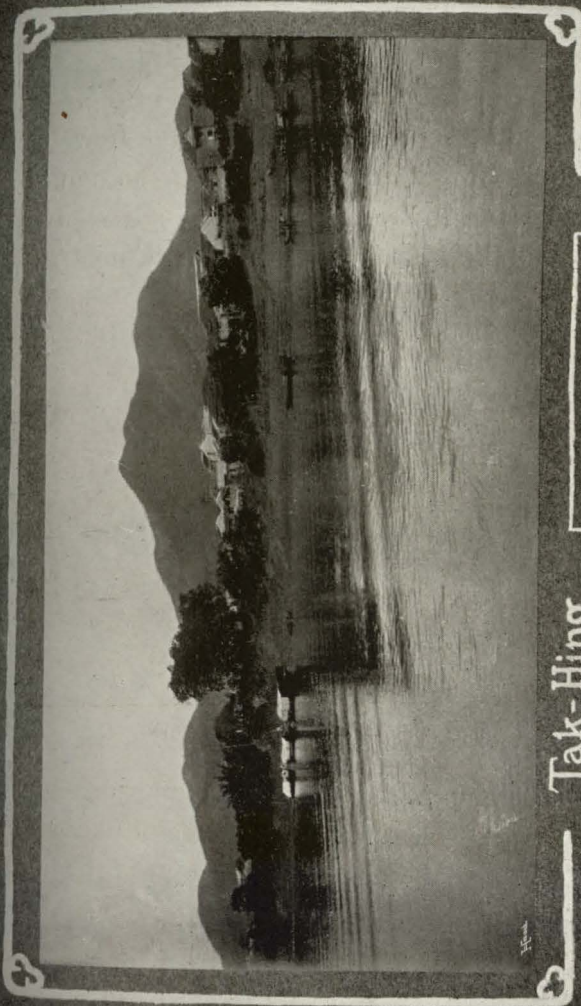


A Chinese Guard Boat.

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scenery. Farther on a wide and well-wooded valley, studded with farms, is reached; both banks of the river being given over to the cultivation of rice, mulberry and sugar-cane. Lin-Tan is governed by a Kai-Fong composed of the chief matting manufacturers. The houses and factories are well built of blue brick and the town is one of the cleanest on the whole river. Enormous quantities of matting are manufactured here and sent down the river in small boats to Tak-Hing, from whence it is exported. Some of the straw used for the manufacture of the matting is grown in the villages near Lin-Tan, but the bulk of it is brought from the Tung Koon district on the East River.

Tak-Hing is the largest and most important city on the river between Sam-shui and Wuchow. Historians trace its foundation nearly eight hundred years back. The Yamen with its prisoners and



Tak-Hing

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some of the numerous temples in the town are interesting. The town itself, however, does not hold out sufficient attractions to tourists to stop more than a few hours while the steamer is loading. China-root,



Joss House near Luk To.

cassia, matting, camphor oil and joss-stick powder are the chief articles of export.

Resuming our voyage, we pass through another short but pretty gorge. Before us, on either side, the mountains rise in varied forms. At every bend of the river,



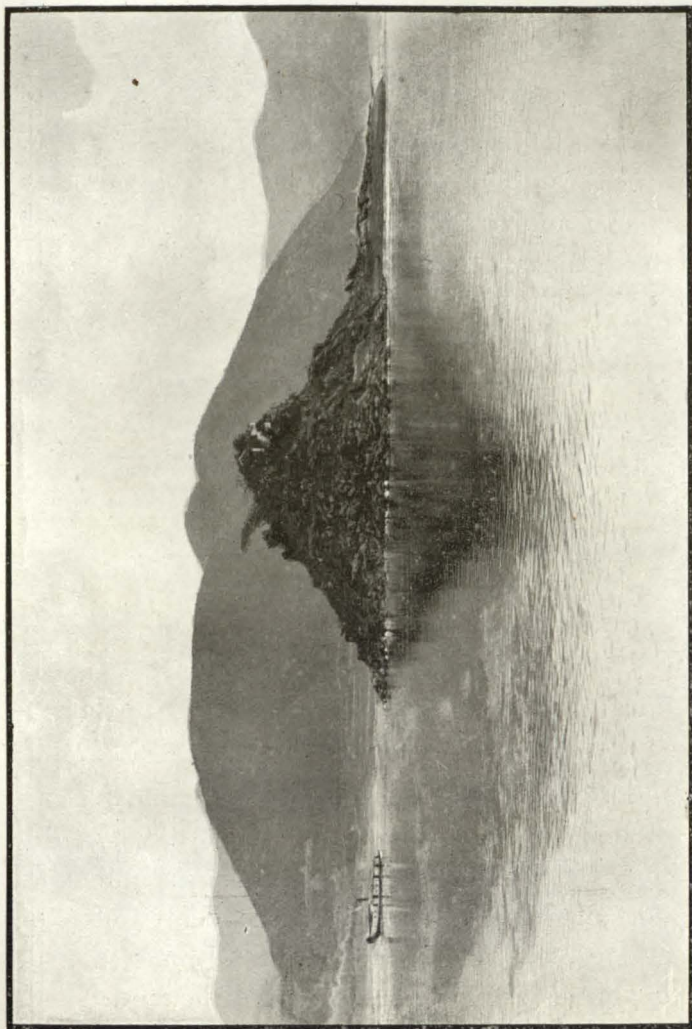
Wuchow Reach



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which is an alternation of hills and valleys, a new picture presents itself. The beautiful river now rushes through a narrow defile, now spreads out into a placid lake and in the distance the Tai-Lik-Shan or "Mountain of Great Strength," some 4000 feet in height, can be seen. The scenery hereabouts is superb. The river sweeping through grassy banks bordered with bamboo groves takes continuous sharp bends and the steamer seems to be steaming across a series of lakes.

Standing above the surrounding hills, the "Monk's Head" can be observed for many miles. About an hour after leaving Tak-Hing we enter the Doshing Reach and pass the "Monks Head" on the left bank. From a distance this rock presents a very striking appearance and it will interest travellers to try and trace out the face on the front of the rock. At the foot of the "Monk's Head" is the last Lekin station on the river in the Province of Kwang-Tung.



KAI LUNG CHOW ISLAND, nr. WUCHOW.

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Just before reaching Doshing, we pass close to the south bank and thus avoid a curious ridge of rocks which stretches nearly across the river and is called by the Chinese the "Fairies Bridge." On



The Ping-Ching Temple, Wuchow.

the right bank at the foot of a hill, almost hidden amongst the trees, stands a very fine old joss-house. Doshing is an important market town and the centre of a large agricultural district. Immense quantities of cattle are exported thence to Canton and Hong Kong.

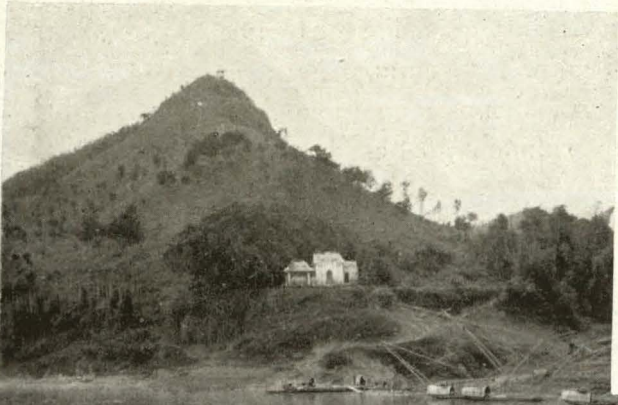


DOSHING,



A LEKIN STATION.

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The Fairies' Bridge Joss House.

It is a small walled town, the military station and the residence and headquarters of the district magistrate.

Four miles higher up the river the Ho Yuen flows into the Si-Kiang. At the mouth of the river is another small military station, Kong Hau. On the banks the ruins of an old fort and some partially buried



A Village Near Lintan

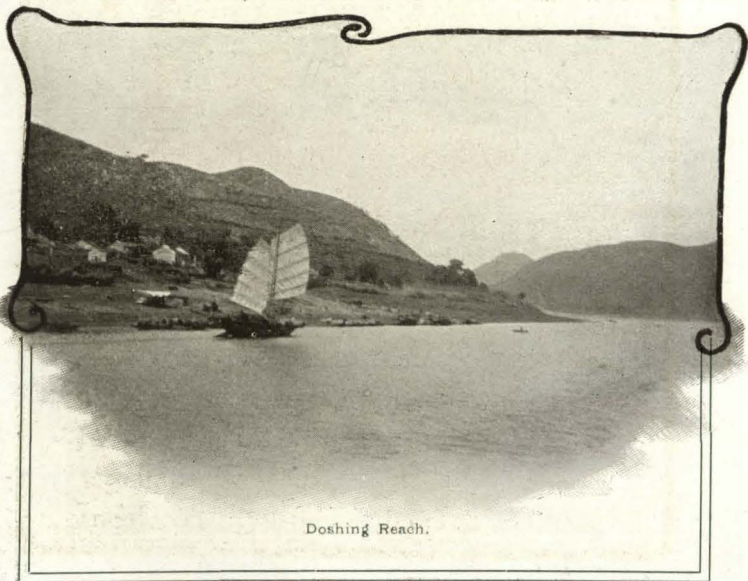


Tak Hing Reach, with the Tai Lik Shan Mountain in the distance.

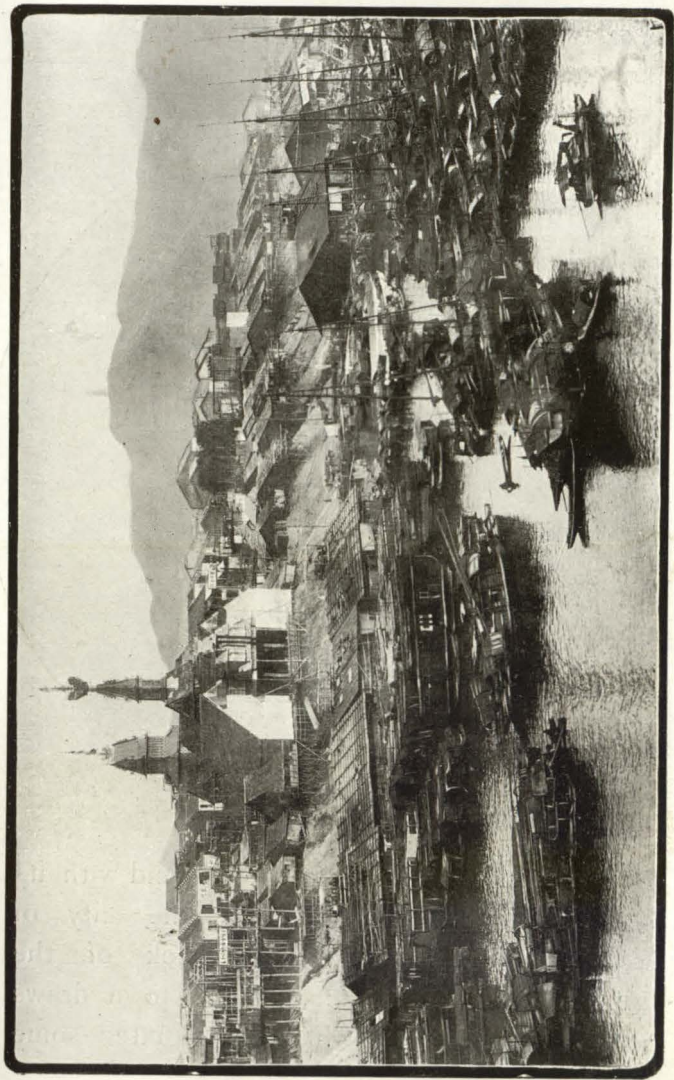
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guns, relics of the Tai Ping Rebellion, can be seen. About 100 miles up this river the Chinese work coal mines. The coal, however, is of a very poor quality, and is mostly used by the steam launches at Wuchow.

Crossing the boundary between the Provinces of Kwang-Tung and Kwang-Si, we enter upon the last stage of our trip. The river here widens to about one mile.



Doshing Reach.



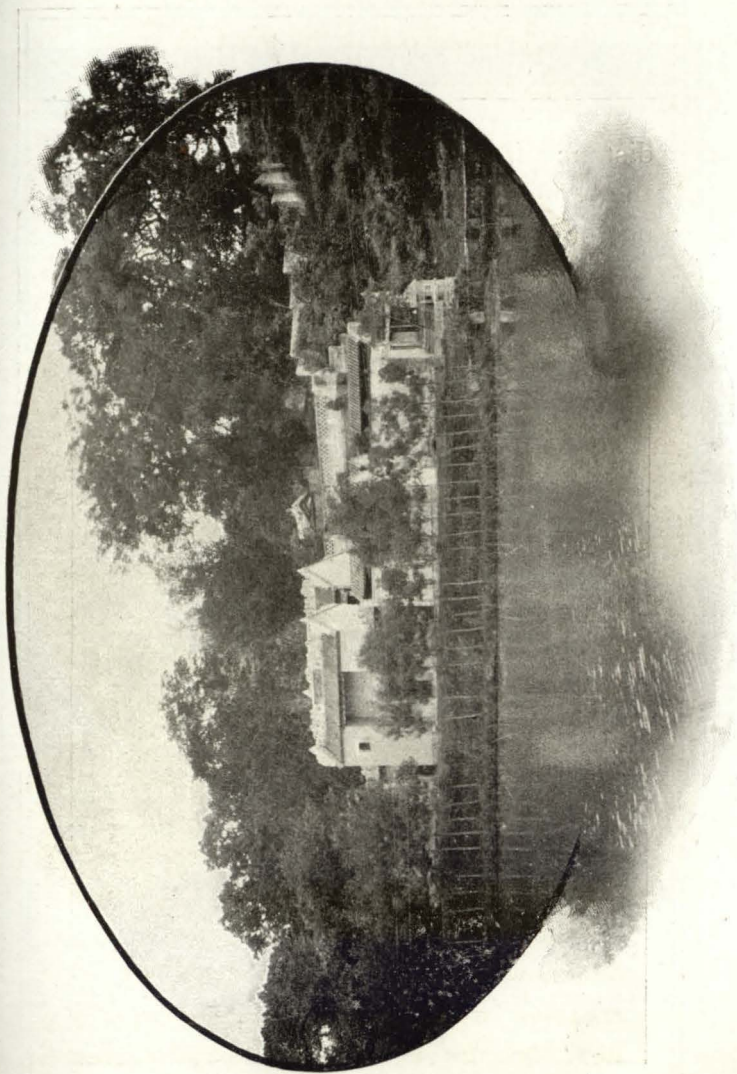
VIEW OF WUCHOW FROM BRITISH CONSULATE.

A Handbook to the West River.



Fish Pond, near Wuchow.

Passing Kai-Lung Chow Island with its joss-house, we approach the city of Wuchow-fu. From the deck of the steamer we notice, as the town draws near, on the north bank, situated some



Temple and Fish Pond, nr. Wuchow.

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distance from the city, the residences of the American missionaries, and farther on, numbers of junks, native craft and steamers loading and discharging.



Grain Boats, Wuchow.



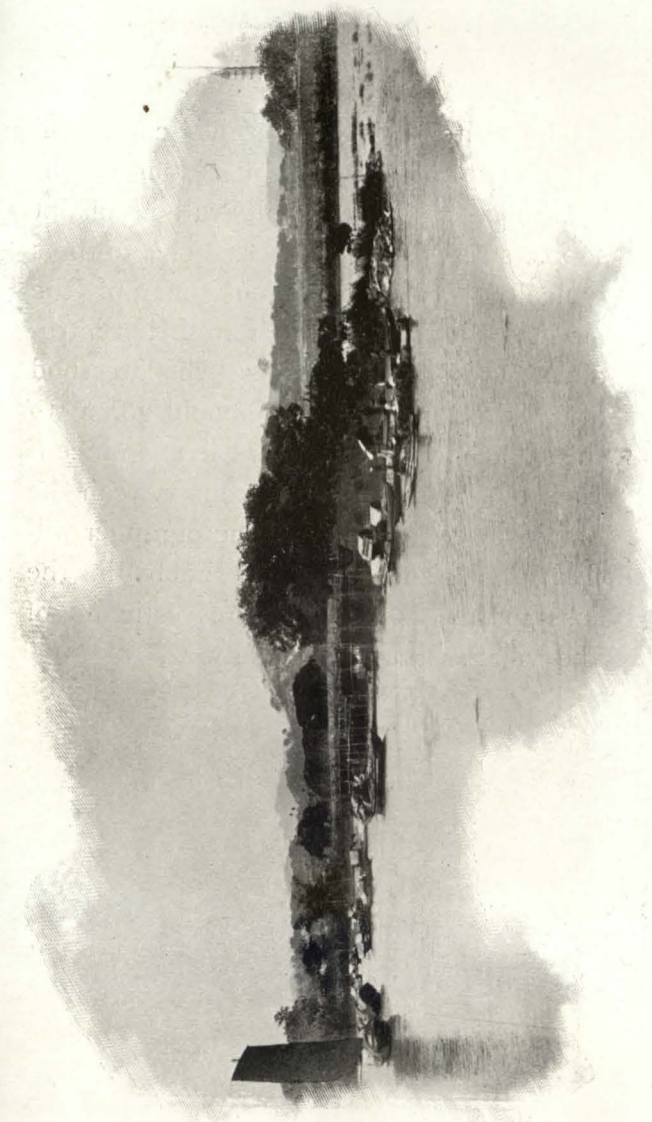
The Hung Shek Temple
Wuchow, Hong Kong

A Handbook to the West River.



Execution of a Pirate at Wuchow.

side of the Fu-Ho stands the British Consulate, with the Consul's residence on the summit of the hill. In the background, built on another hill, is a fine building belonging to the Alliance Mission.

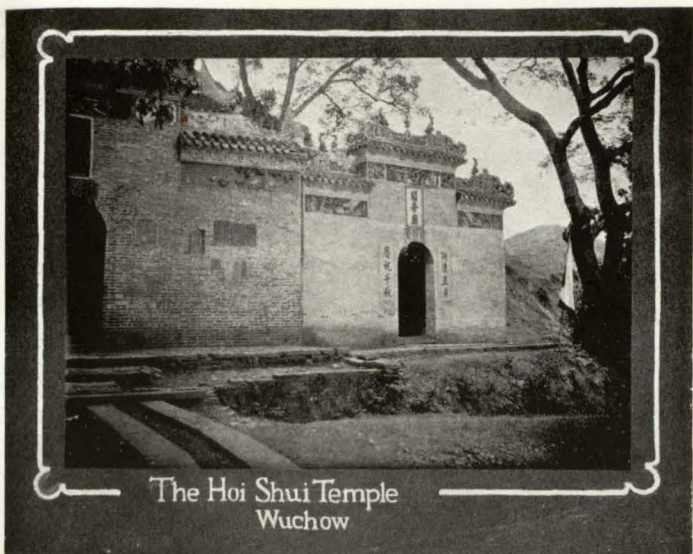


SAIWAN.

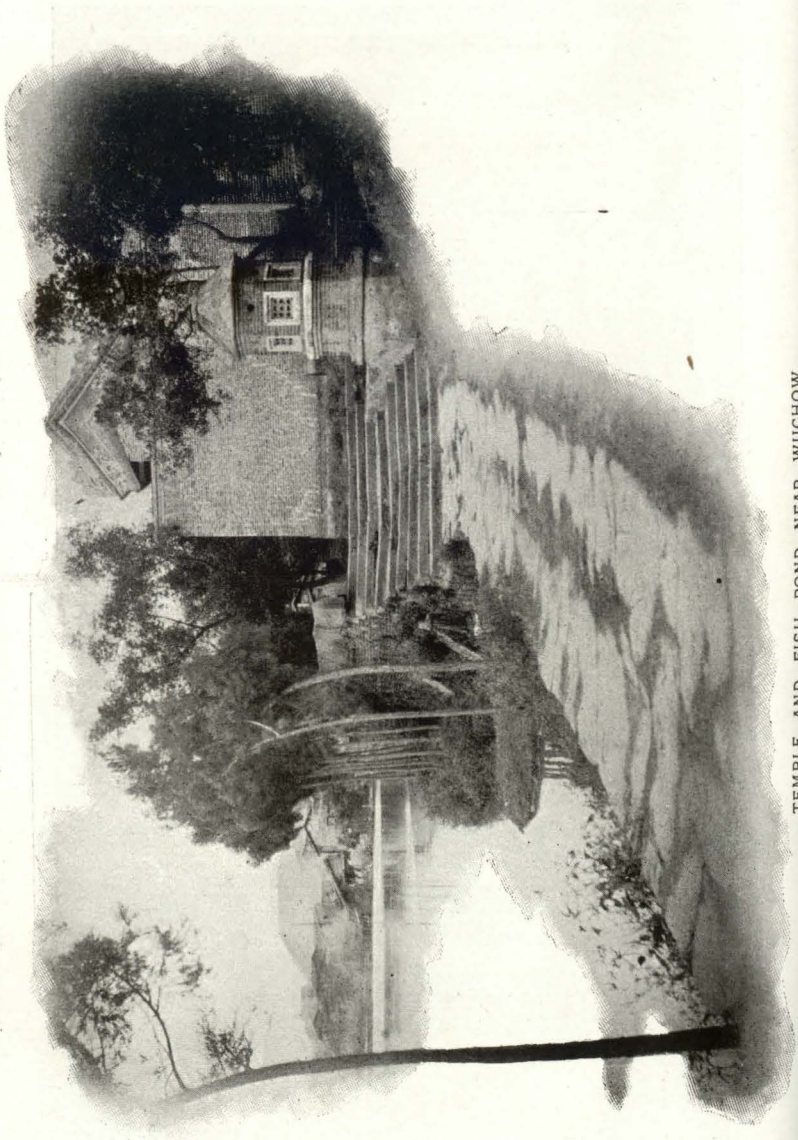
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The visitor, if time permits, can spend one or two days in this interesting neighbourhood, exploring the city with its quaint shops, streets and temples. The town is typically Chinese, without any of the modern alterations which are being introduced into Canton. Those who are fond of walking and climbing should go up to the Wuchow Peak, where a magnificent view of the surrounding country can be obtained. The amateur photographer will find ample scope for his hobby in the joss-houses, fish ponds, and rustic life of the villages around the city.





Entrance to a Buddhist Monastery.



TEMPLE AND FISH POND NEAR WUCHOW.

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View of the New Hong Kong
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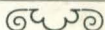
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The Soda Water Factory and Warehouses are not in the picture.



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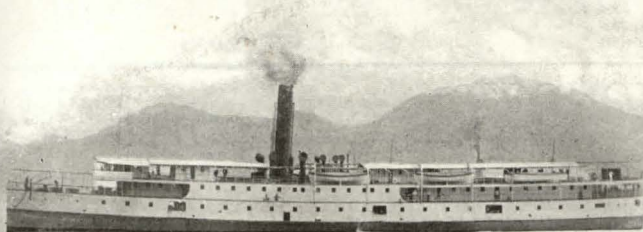


View of the new
DISPENSARY
PREMISES
on the Shameen
with the Soda : :
Water Factory on
the left : : : : :



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Luk-To, Lo-Ting-Hau, Tak-Hing, Doshing, and Fong Chuen.

Departures from Wuchow to Canton every Monday, Wednesday,
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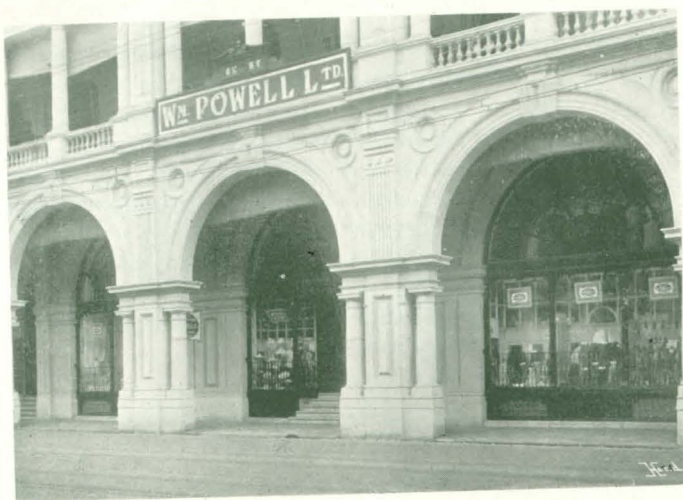
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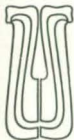

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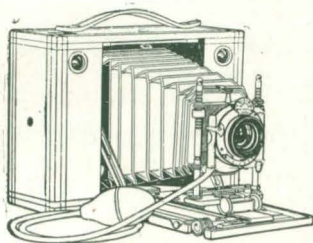
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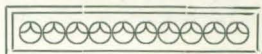
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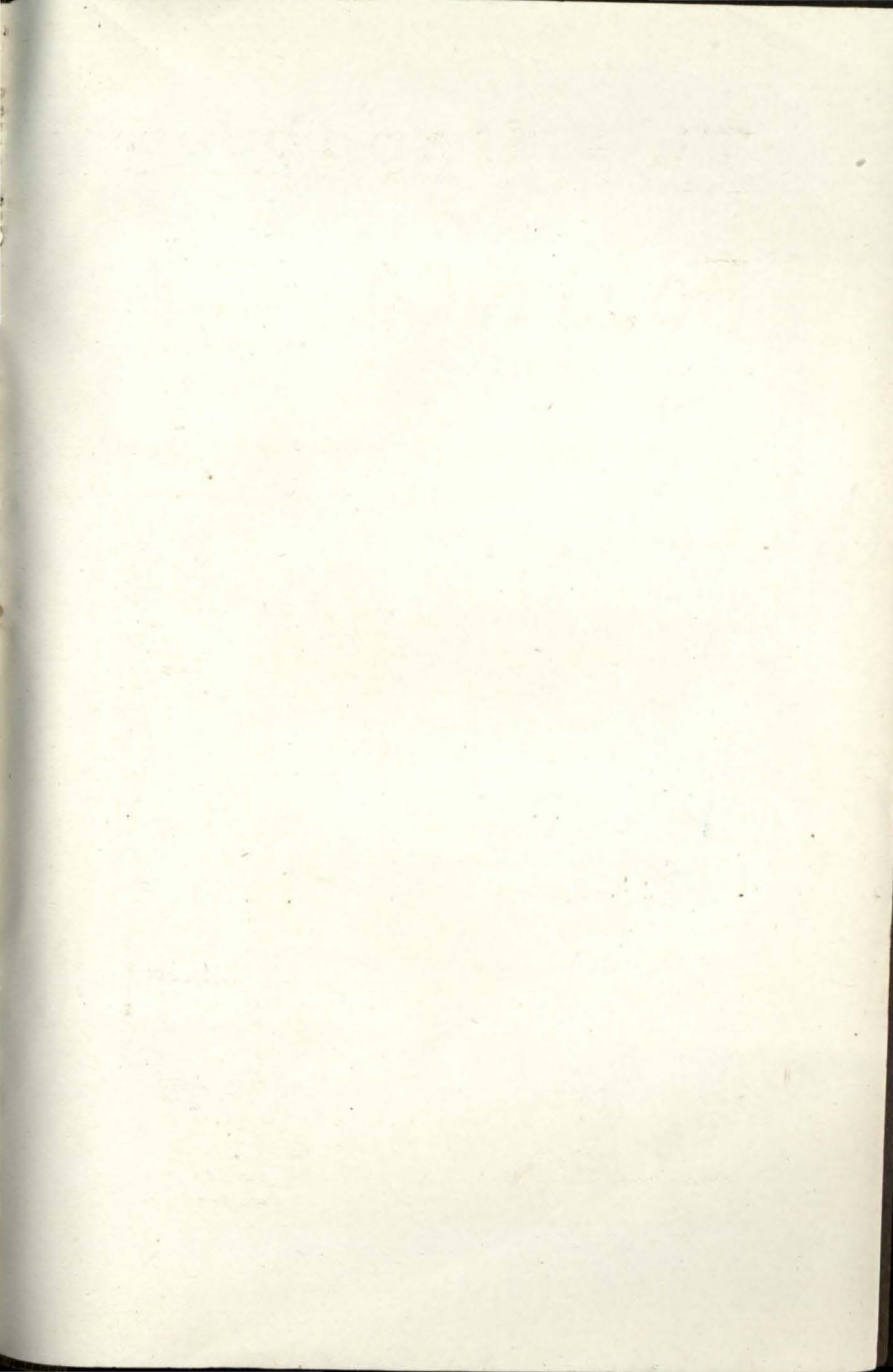
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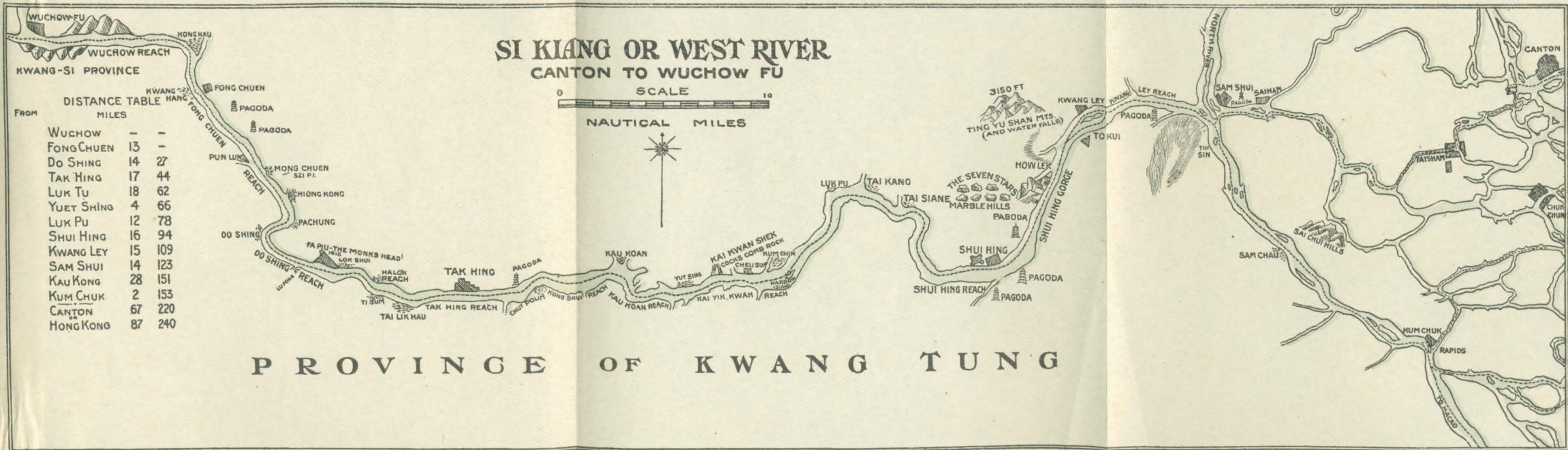
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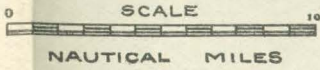








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CANTON TO WUCHOW FU



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KWANG-SI PROVINCE

FROM	DISTANCE TABLE	
	MILES	
WUCHOW	-	-
FONG CHUEN	13	-
DO SHING	14	27
TAK HING	17	44
LUK TU	18	62
YUET SHING	4	66
LUK PU	12	78
SHUI HING	16	94
KWANG LEY	15	109
SAM SHUI	14	123
KAU KONG	28	151
KUM CHUK	2	153
CANTON	57	220
HONG KONG	87	240

PROVINCE OF KWANG TUNG

CANTON

KUM CHUK