Narrative of the Yangtze expedition read by Barton to the Royal Geographical Society, based on his journals

Publication/Creation

1861

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Yangtsze River
1862
account prepared for
the Roy. Geogr. Soc.

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Western Manuscript
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Accession Number
350792

Having been honoured by an invitation from this Society to give a few extracts from my Diary of the exploring expedition through China up the Great Yangtse River during a period of Five Months and hearing some of you had watched with interest the progress of our little band which was composed of Captain Blakiston R.A., myself & Col. Sarel 17th Lancers, with attendants. Mr. Scherezchewsky our interpreter. 4 Sikhs of the 11th Punjab Infantry and 4 Chinese Servants I will state first to you our intended route - which was - to follow the course of the great river as far as Wan x even Chung King in the Province of Szchuen, then march to its Capital and obtain passports from the Viceroy for Tibet, thence proceed West over the lofty mountains skirting the Western border of China and proceed to Lassa, thence continue our course West, following the unknown Valley of the Berhampooter along the Northern slopes of the Himalaya range to the Lake Masarawa where we should strike the road and so

Having been honoured by an invitation from this Society to give a few extracts from my Diary of the exploring expedition through China up the Great Yangtse River during a period of Five Months and hearing some of you had watched with interest the progress of our little band which was composed of Captain Blakiston R.A., myself & Col. Sarel 17th Lancers, with attendants - Mr Scherechewsky our interpreter. 4 Sikhs of the 11th Punjab Infantry and 4 Chinese Servants I will state first to you our intended route - which was - to follow the course of the great river as far as Wan & even Chung King in the Province of Szchuen, then march to its Capital and obtain passports from the Viceroy for Tibet, thence proceed West over the lofty mountains skirting the Western border of China and proceed to Lassa, thence continue our course West, following the unknown Valley of the Berhampooter along the Northern slopes of the Himalaya range to the Lake Masarava where we should strike the road and so

Bandung Hoofdbeheerder

the North which, draining this mountainous territory, become themselves large rivers before their junction.
The most important of these are the Min Kiu-sung and Ho-kiang from the North which are Rivers Thun-kuei and Kiang lau ho arise in the Province of Kiei-Chow and discharge their waters from the South. Leaving Sychuen it traverses the whole length of the central province of Ho-peh but diffusing down to the South East to receive the waters of the great Tung sing Lake whose confluence as large as the river, forms to swell it into nearly double its size.
This Lake, the largest in the Empire, is fed by large rivers from the South which drain the province of Ho-nan and separated from the sources of the Canton river by only a few miles of high land and to the West anastomosing with the latter from the road between Canton and the upper Yang tse by which the trade between Sychuen and the North West provinces has been, and still is, carried on with Canton. Its course is then to the North East, bounded by a range of hills to the South, as far as Han-Kow where the River Han falls into it from the North.

Sketch
Mouth of Pozas Lake

The next important tributary is that of the Poyang Lake the River again dipping to the South East to form a junction – This supplies a vast body of water – being formed by large rivers draining the great basin of the Province of Kiang-si and it is through this Lake that the water communication between Canton and Peking is carried – Thence the noble river winds its course North-east towards the Sea through the Provinces of An-hoei and Kiang-su – the great Imperial Canal crossing it at Ching-Kiang foo 180 miles from its mouth and from here to the salt water it gradually widens to 20 Miles –

Having given you a brief outline of the River I will now endeavour to give you a short account of our travels on its upper waters –

On the 11th February 1861 our little party embarked on board H.M. Steamer "Atalanta" by the kind permission of Admiral Sir James Hope who allowed us to accompany his naval expedition to Han-kow which was for the purpose of opening the River to trade – to place Consuls at Ching-Kiang fu Kew Kiang hien and Han Kow the new Ports – and to come to some amicable understanding with the rebels at Nankin –

Sketch of Chung Wood

For a description of the river as far as Han Kow I must refer you to Oliphant's admirable work written when accompanying Lord Elgin in 1858 I will only add that from the several delays caused by the vessels grounding - we expended one month in getting to Han Kow - this gave us ample time to land and shoot & visit the Taipings and the country in their hands

The subject of the Taiping rebels who held at that time 80 miles of the river viz from Nan King to Ou King has been so often treated on before that I will merely relate a few facts to prove the misery caused by these heavenly brethren -

At Ching Kiang - for we were detained a week and amused ourselves by wandering over the country, which abounded in game, with our guns - this one beautiful City contained 600,000 inhabitants and was the most flourishing on the river as a mercantile port owing to the grand Canal crossing the river at this part - but the rebels when they evacuated it 2 years ago left it a heap of ruins and it now contains but 2,000 chiefly Imperial soldiers -

We mounted a lofty hill at the back which overlooked the city and its extensive suburbs and beheld a scene of desolation - a helpless wilderness of

Kaufmann

heaps of ruins. the numerous white walls & gable ends resembling one vast cemetery - a few wretched poor in tatters were wandering about the ruins in search of firewood - the country was cut up & lined with extensive earthworks and trenches and dotted with numerous ruined Villages and Hamlets - We rambled for many miles over uncultivated farms with the deserted roofless buildings showing marks of fire and destruction - the little gardens in front were choked with weeds and brambles - the great dams for irrigation thrown down and among the blackened walls of ruined villages and dismantled temples, we often came upon the skeleton of some human being, lying upon rotting straw, its bleached bones showing through many parts of its threadbare clothing -

At Nankin we spent a few days and witnessed even greater distress and misery -

We found a Celestial King a miserable Canton Coolie dressed in silks and satins of many colours his satellites and soldiers robed in Ladies' dresses the lost of prior victories - In the habitable part of the City we met their captive women & observed on the average five of these to one man -

Tambo - Tolorise Sketch

The whole population were in abject misery, badly clothed and half starved - their features wore a sad careworn look and their dwellings were hovels of revolting filthiness nine-tenths of the great City surrounded by a noble wall 50 Feet high and 20 Miles circumference is a mass of jungle interspersed with piles of ruins and not one building of importance is standing -

The surrounding country was totally deserted orchards of peach trees and dismantled cottages showed where once stood a happy thriving village encircled with terraced rice and wheat fields and now all is a desert waste as far as the eye can reach

We visited the Tombs of the Mings - monuments of the departed glory of the early Emperors sacred to the memory of all Chinese and these had not been spared - a heap of porcelain bricks marked where once stood the handsomest Pagoda in the Empire the far famed Porcelain Tower

We visited "Woo hoo" once a city of vast extent but now in the hands of the Taipings is almost deserted - we walked through 2 Miles of brickbats 3 feet deep the remains of a great suburb and entered the City for the purpose of

purchasing Chow Chow - Here we witnessed scenes too humble to describe - in the main street were heaps of reeking filth on which were lying dying squalid children - pining forth their expiring cry for food - In the roofless houses were crouched the starving — hundreds - in one I counted 10 dying human creatures and 3 corpses, these, lying in stinking straw & exposed to the then drifting rain and snow - suffering from revolting diseases and starvation, were crying forth their supplications unheeded by the soldiers and passers by - one Mother was supporting the cold dropsical body of her child - it had died for want of food -

After passing "Au-King" the highest point in possession of the rebels how pleasant how cheering was the contrast - behind us we had left a desert, a howling wilderness, a once fertile land now a barren waste - a people once thriving industrious tillers of the soil, a happy well fed race now an idle vicious starving mob - grovelling in filthy crimes and revelling in hideous blasphemies devastating the country with fire and sword for no other purpose than for plunder

Locusts in the human form devouring both man and beast. And now we had entered the land of the Imperialists everywhere teeming with life & industry trading junks and fishing boats speckled the surface of the waters. The country on both banks was green and fresh with young wheat. Populous villages skirted the water edge, the people well fed, fat & healthy. The old women working at the loom buffalo & oxen at the plough. Farms & hamlets dotted the undulating country surrounded by stacks of corn. The labour was everywhere seen in the fields and all nature smiled in happy contentment.

I mention these facts as many persons in England fancy the Taiping rebels to be Christians and if successful would do much for advancing the Protestant Faith in China. I think what I have stated here seems to prove the contrary and it would be well if a foreign Power assisted the present Government in subduing them. In such a case many would return to their former occupations and provinces would again be under rich cultivation.

Sunk - Sketch of
Skipper

Sketch.

30 Chang Pate.

On the 11th of March we arrived at Han Kow & after obtaining a proper junk or travelling boat & getting our passports - ~~with~~ sealed by the Viceroy of Un-Chang the Admiral leaving the rest of the squadron and taking us in tow left on the 13th to explore the river as far as the Tung-ting Lake distant 150 miles which was accomplished in 3 days - The full account of this part of the River is given in his report - The Country between Han Kow & the Lake is for the most part flat to the North but ranges of hills skirt the Southern bank approaching the river and terminating in bluffs and again receding - the whole country was under rich cultivation and the hills were terraced to their very summit -

The astonished Natives as we steamed slowly past the Towns of Kung-Kow & Sing-li lined the river bank peopled every junk and raft and swarmed upon the house tops to feast their eyes upon the fire ships of the red devils -

We arrived at the picturesque city of Yo-Chow on the 16th situated at the mouth of the great Tung-ting Lake on a red sand cliff and

The fall of Cuzco

Sketch of Floods

occupying one of the most important positions for trade all produce from Ho-nan as well as the greater part from Szchuen via the Tai-ping Canal passing directly under its walls. Here the Admiral bid us good bye and leaving us to our own resources steamed back to Han-Kow.

On the following morning we left the mouth of the Lake and entered the Upper Yang tse which is only half the width of the river below the Lake. and now we began our slow and arduous journey of from 12 to 20 miles a day by means of sailing, tracking, poling from the bank, and sculling according to circumstances. making fast to the muddy walls of the shore at night.

Our course for some days was through a vast level country. the whole under rich cultivation chiefly wheat beans and millet.

The River is here most tortuous and its banks are steep walls of alluvial deposit 20 to 30 feet high. the country is thinly populated and the villages are built with reeds owing to the annual overflow of the river in June. but after the crops are harvested.

Sketch Net of Deck

Sketch Mid ship halt

These inundations had left large swamps and lakes which abounded with wild fowl - affording us capital sport as well as furnishing our table the country was also well sprinkled with pheasants and generally after breakfast we landed with our guns following the course of the trackers in search of game - The river also afforded us the best of fish from the dace to the sturgeon while an occasional Bullock for 6 Shillings added to the Larder and vegetables were to be had in — abundance -

We found the natives here very civil and ready to supply us with chickens and eggs, rice & flour at moderate prices but as we got higher up the prices rose 500 per cent - they always shewed great timidity on our first appearance and would often run away but soon gaining confidence pressed upon us in crowds to examine our odd dresses and white skins and wonder why our hands and faces should be darker than the covered portions of our persons and often the terms (Ho-sum) Monkeys and (Fang Quaty) foreign devils escaped their lips - in passing

through the villages & towns the mob would become so unruly that the use of the stick was often necessary to keep them at a respectful distance -

These crowds would be of the most motley description old women would leave their spinning wheels — children their top - gentlemen & shopkeepers their houses - labourers deserting their ploughs & oxen would come running from all quarters to the focus of attraction while vagrants and beggars mingled with the crowd - all squabbling, jostling and fighting to get sight of us and it was impossible to land near a at large town without undergoing this suffering - on visiting officials and entering cities - chairs were always sent for us with a guard

The first high land we came to was on the right bank - 3 distinct ranges of hills from 500 to 1000 feet high which from their peculiarities we named the Camel's hump Ass's ears and Boulder range - At some distance above the latter are 2 smaller hills surmounted by temples which we christened the great and little temple hills - At the foot of the latter stands the walled town of Shih-show (stone head)

on left bank of river where we arrived on the 23d of March - we ascended the hill which is composed chiefly of red granite and found the temple in ruins and containing heaps of earth with joss or gods perched on platforms round the walls - the City we looked down on was also in ruins and nearly the whole wall thrown down - $\frac{3}{4}$ths of the interior was occupied by kitchen gardens - along the foot of the hills the country was inundated and the deserted houses on mounds dotting the expanse of water formed numerous islands - the surrounding country was a vast level -

As we proceeded we often came to the river embankment of great age and strength which takes the general course of the river but often diverges some miles inland where the river takes a sharp bend - this great work which extends many hundreds of miles is kept up by the government to protect the valley of the Yang tse from inundation - its general width at the base is 100 yards and the summit about 30 - we observed that the repeated deposits from the annual overflow had raised the intermediate land to within a few feet of its top while the

Sketch.
Nia Sze

country which it protects remaining at its original level is some 40 ft from its summit – at the Town of Ho-hia the river had made great inroads into this work which was undergoing extensive repairs – on the 28th of April we arrived at Sha-She – the port of Kin-Chow – & we ascended the lofty Pagoda to survey the country and the view from its summit is enchanting – the country the same extensive level was dotted with white sails but the water being hidden from view they seemed as if moving among green fields – numerous lakes were every where to be seen and canals and ditches divided the country as our hedges do in England –

We were visited by the Officials of Kin-Chow who brought their families to see us – one a military Mandarin brought his Grandmother Mother Wife & Children – some of the Ladies were pretty & elegantly dressed – presents of Tea Sugar and Flour were brought us –

Soon after leaving this and proceeding West the country changes & becomes undulating the embankment was seen no more and distant hills serrated the horizon – as we neared I-Chang

Sketch angular inch

Sketch ~~[illegible]~~
Gauge

the dim blue outline of lofty ranges opened up in the N. W. direction -

On the 31st March we reached I-Chang having ascended a distance of 1000 Geographical miles from its mouth and 360 above Han Kow and had found sufficient water for large steamers being never less than 3½ fathoms in midchannel - we had also arrived at the termination of the low country for to the West and North West were range above range of lofty mountains - during our stay here we were the wonder of the place - the banks were thronged with thousands of Braves & Soldiers while the water seemed alive with pleasure boats containing gentlemen and merchants with their wives & children bringing with them their Chow-Chow and sweetmeats to spend the day upon the water and the whole scene resembled a Thames regatta day -

On the 5th of April we again started and after passing 3 miles above the city we suddenly came to the great I-Chang gorge and our course from North suddenly became West and from a

Mouth of Gorge.

Photograph of Mr. Lawrence

noble expanse of water 1000 yards wide the river becomes contracted to 250 yards.

As we entered slowly against a stream of 5 miles per hour the contrast was strikingly grand. we had been for 2 months in an open country ascending a wide quiet stream and we had suddenly entered dark narrow gorges through lofty mountains where the water rushes with impetuous speed over hidden rocks. the banks on each side towered above us 500 ft. in sheer perpendicular walls. in some parts huge masses of rock seemed to overhang the summits. deep gorges opened on each side with water falls taking leaps of 200 ft some jetting from the cliffs midway between the summit and the water dwindled into feathery cascades before reaching the bottom. others descended from the very summits of the walls which enveloped in mist gave them the appearance of water spouts issuing from the clouds and others escaped from mouths of caves and tumbled over grassy slopes. as we ascended after passing a custom house station the gorge becomes still narrower. the walls 800 ft. enveloped in mist

Ver Sorgl

and in many parts the water resembled a boiling cauldron
large caverns pierce the rock in several parts some on
the water level wherein were fishing boats at anchor
while others were entering their dark regions - some
100 Ft. high were inhabited by Lama Hermits the
only access being a chain & rope from the water -
We sometimes passed a little hamlet with terraces of
cultivation where the formation of the cliffs would
allow of it and occasionally a Buddhist Temple
perched on a beetling rock 500 Ft. above us - at
every turn the scenery altered and varied - the
rocks were thrown into and assumed all imaginable
shapes - arches across gorges dark & misty & caverns
admitting daylight from the top from which
escaped screaming birds of prey -
After emerging from the gorge the country becomes
more open yet mountainous and well wooded with
oak fir & cedars - we passed well built Gentlemen's
houses almost buried in cover - pretty granite
bridges spanned the gullies in their gardens and
grottos tastily covered with creeping plants
occupied conspicuous positions - but the stream
begins to be obstructed and divided by masses of

1st Rapid Sketch

Sketch

granite over and between which the water foamed and tumbled with a great noise and we had now arrived at the First Rapid - many of which we had to ascend during our upward course - these can only exist during a few months in the year when the river is low and disappear at its rise on our return many no longer existed the river having risen considerably -

The ascent is often attended with danger the towing line sometimes dividing and the boat being driven back with great velocity against some rock and dashed to pieces - we passed the wrecks of some of these unfortunates at all these rapids a village is stationed and the people gain a living by assisting the crews in dragging their boats up them -

After the ascent of 2 rapids we approached the great Lucan gorge and on entering we seemed to leave the day light - this is a deep rent in the mountains the strata corresponding on both sides and appears to be of hard grey lime stone it is far more grand than the last - the passage being narrower - the walls more lofty and the

Sketch
Newham Gage Coal
Hand Box Gage

water deeper - close to the cliff finding no bottom at 20 fathoms -

After ascending many rapids and passing through 3 more gorges viz the Mitaw - Wu-shan and Wind-box - we arrived on the 13th April at the walled city of Lui Chou the first important place we had come to in Sychuen after leaving Hoopeh - the boundary between these Provinces being marked by 2 ravines in the Wu-shan gorge some 30 miles below It has a small tributary immediately below it - like other cities of China it looks pretty from the water with its many colored temples and pagodas but within are narrow streets reeking in filth and everything disagreeable The officials here were very civil but had heard nothing of the Tien Tien treaty

On the following day we left for the town of Wan 40 miles higher up -

The surrounding country which is more open - the hills not so lofty and receding from the river was beautifully cultivated from the banks to the very hill tops looking green and

or Bellow Force

Sketch
Genl. character of Rem

Sketch
Farm Houses.

refreshing and forming a great contrast to the rugged and dark gorges we had just passed through - the valleys were well wooded with oak chesnut and a tree producing a nut called the Tungtz very poisonous from which the natives extract an oil amud these shady retreats are hamlets and villages totally different from those seen in Hoopeh and other Eastern Provinces and resembling somewhat the Swiss Architecture Besides wheat and beans we found the Poppy and Tobacco extensively cultivated - it was then the Opium harvest and women and children were employed in lancing the pods and collecting the tears of the previous night's incisions into earthen pots - The poppy is very largely cultivated in this province and we were told that they hoped shortly to produce sufficient to supply the whole country - For more than 200 miles in succession the river banks & terraced hills produced little else but this drug & tobacco but as we proceeded further the crops were gathered and we were not able to judge of its growth beyond as the harvest is over in the

beginning of May. It is extensively smoked by men women & children. our Boatmen whose pay per diem was but 100 cash or 5 pence could afford to indulge in this luxury after the day's toil & they would rise in the morning hale and hearty and ready for the fatigue of tracking under a boiling sun for 16 hours.

I never witnessed any pernicious effects from its moderate use and although when used to excess it has the same injurious effects on the brain as ardent spirits. yet it has this advantage over the latter that it soothes rather than excites the exhausted powers both mental & physical and the disgusting exhibitions so common in this country are not seen among the people of the interior of China.

The native Tobacco is also much used by all classes but it is of an inferior quality to that from Manilla & Cuba.

The River becomes wider above Qui-chow averaging 200 yards and although obstructed by rapids only one the Sow-ma (Old Horse) was found equal to those among the gorges.

Along the shingly flats and islands we so often passed the natives were washing for gold and at one part the river is called the "golden reach"
Two Miles below Wan is one of the extensive flats which was marked out by the Government into lots and let out to the washers who were in great numbers

We arrived at Wan in the evening of April 16th and had attained a distance of 1250 miles from Shang hai - the following morning we received visits from the Officials who informed us that it was impossible to proceed by land to Chung-ku as the whole country was in the possession of rebels and robbers - we proposed to the General that we should lead his army on to battle and cut our way through but he would not listen to it and recommended our following the river to Chung-King 200 miles further West -

We left Wan on the 18th and the following day came to the Village of Hu-Lin - 2 Miles below this 3 Gentlemen boarded us & entering the cabin immediately prostrated themselves before us bumping their foreheads 3 times on the deck - they then

informed us that they were Christians from the village above where some thousands of the same persuasion were living that they had heard of our approach from boats preceding us and had been sent by the head men to meet us and invite us to stay with them a day & rejoice that the Church would no longer be persecuted since the true Christians from the West were travelling the length of their land in their native costume without disguise and without fear – As we neared the village the banks became lined with people dressed all in their best while others more eager to welcome us came off in small boats and crowded on board to boro before us and it was in vain that the Revd. W. Scheresheowsky our Interpreter told them we were but men like unto themselves and that it was very wrong to do so. their reply was always that we were the holy men from the Western Ocean who had first brought the glad tidings and respect and reverence were due to us he then tried to explain to them the difference between the Roman Catholics and Protestants

which they could not understand saying we all worshipped the same Jesus Christ & his Mother

The larger junk containing the rest of the party being far behind we gratified them by visiting their Chapel - sedan chairs were in waiting and we landed under an imperial salute of 3 Guns while crackers & fireworks were let off without number

No common Coolies carried our chairs but the gentlemen of the place who squabbled among themselves for this honour. as we passed through their narrow crowded streets fireworks and bombs were exploded by a procession in front almost suffocating us with the smoke -

We found their Chapel a miserable Building containing the usual Romish decorations but they told us that the Mandarins had recently destroyed their little Church and that they had not got the heart to rebuild it -

In spite of our remonstrances the same prostrations were performed by these proselytes of the Romish faith - considering it a great

privilege and repeatedly asked our blessing
It was sad to see the disappointment depicted on
their faces when we told them time would not
permit us to partake of the banquet they had
provided for us - on returning to our boat they
heaped presents of all sorts of chow-chow upon
us and begged us to report to the Bishop of
Chung-King the shameful treatment they
had received from the Mandarins -

This is only one of the many instances which
we witnessed of the good these Catholic
Priests have done in China -

These good men leave their country
never to return - they sacrifice all the comforts
of home and civilized society - bidding farewell
to all earthly happiness and social enjoyments
they plunge into the very heart of this heathen
land subjecting themselves to its sickly
influence - living in wretched dwellings on
scanty fare and often hunted from city to
city by the enraged officials in criminal
dread of assassination yet fearing no evil
but rather suffering persecution and death

Sketch The Pow Chow

than neglect the work they had taken in hand
If our Protestant Missionaries ~~are~~ in China
were to follow the example set them by these
zealous men instead of living in comfortable
residences near or in the very heart of the
European settlements with every luxury
around them the Missionary societies of this
Country would now be able to boast & rejoice
that the enormous sums annually expended
are not entirely wasted.

On the same day we passed the great rock
temple and village of "Shih pou Shai or
House of the precious Stone" this rock stands
solitary and is 250 ft high with a sheer
perpendicular face. a Lama village
stands on its summit the only access to it
being by a handsome 9 storied Pagoda
built into the rock and reported to be 1500
years old.

The country between Wan & Chung King
is beautifully varied in some parts the
mountains slope easily to the water and
are well wooded with plantations of orange

and tropical vegetation mingled with that of a colder climate - the Poppy was everywhere to be seen and we passed several Iron & Coal Mines

On Sunday April 28th at 3 P.M. we arrived at Chung-King - this City is of vast extent and divided by the clear waters of the Ho-Kiang - each portion being built on steep sand cliffs surrounded by a wall of 50 Ft - this double city is the most important in Sychuen for commerce as well as a military station and it was here our little expedition was only saved from total destruction through the vigilance of Monsignr. Desflèche the Bishop

On the morning of our arrival as we were about to visit the Tan-tai a heated and excited messenger delivered to us a letter from the Bishop begging us not to leave our boats and to arm ourselves at once as he had discovered a plot that the soldiers were ready to assassinate us on our entering the City and then plunder our boats -

We were not long in preparing for the worst our 4 Sikhs were armed with our double

guns while we had our rifles and revolvers making in all 32 barrels - during this time the soldiers were collecting in masses along the shore and an boarding plank was drawn on board - Another letter soon followed the first saying that 12 O'Clk. was the hour they intended attacking - so we made ready to slip from the shore as soon as the fight began and the leaders were picked out as the first to bite the dust -

The hour came but no attack and we supposed that our warlike appearance cowed them ~~back~~ for Col. Sarel had put on his uniform - had they fought we must have been overcome by numbers but the Whitworth ball would have told fearfully among such a mass - the following day the Authorities had quieted the people and Blakiston and Sarel visited the Prefect leaving the boats in charge of myself & Sikhs -

Finding that here as at Wan the land route was held by the rebels we continued our ascent of the river as far as Seichow

thence hoping to reach the Capital by ascending the river Min.

On the 4th of May we left the inhospitable people of Chung-King and arrived at Suchow on the 18th distant 1750 miles from Shanghai we passed many walled cities the most important being Ho Kiang Suchow and Kiang-an.

The scenery of this portion of the river surpassed in beauty any yet seen. the people are a stronger and finer race and depend on themselves for safety having strong redoubts near their villages to flee to in case of necessity the opium had been harvested and the terraced hills were green with young rice & Indian corn.

At Suchow we witnessed another instance of the rotten state of the government. the City gates were closed against their own Militia who had arrived to protect the place against the rebels and a letter from the Prefect informed us that if these entered they would doubtless ~~[illegible]~~ overcome the

Imperial soldiers and sack the city - a great fight took place between the Braves of Yu-nan and those of Sychuen which lasted 8 hours and their officers came over to us for protection when the battle was over the slain were dragged to the bank robbed of their clothes and pitched into the water -

These braves were always a great annoyance to us and we were often in danger of being robbed and murdered by them - among their own people they can do as they like - entering their houses or boats - examining every article and taking away what they please - this they tried with us but were always so roughly handled that they saw plainly we were not afraid of them - one of us when out walking and far away from the boat happened to be surrounded by them and one more bold than the others tried to trap him but he was immediately felled in the usual English manner but in the best of good humour laughing heartily at his prostrate foe - the crowd immediately responded with roars of laughter leaving their companion to slink away as best he

could and so the tables were turned in our friend's favour - on another occasion one of our party while shooting quail in the ripe cornfields found himself in danger from 300 of these ruffians who were much surprised when they found him making double shots - but when he took a 50 cash piece which is about the size of a penny and pitching it into the air blew it completely away they looked upon him as a being with miraculous powers and probably fancied the same might be performed on themselves if they misbehaved - it was by these means and showing no fear that they feared us and I believe that 10 judicious Englishmen might travel the length and breadth of the Empire without very much danger one thing which all classes believed in was that with our binocular glasses we could see through city walls and several feet below the surface of the earth and had the power of discovering any mineral wealth.

But to return to Suchow the accounts which we had heard regarding the rebels proved here to be too true numbers of headless bodies continually floating past us from the river Min - Our boatmen

City of Ping-chow

positively refused to proceed up this river and there was no help for it but to track the boat ourselves which some of our party did not seem to see and so it was decided we should ascend the Gold Sand river which the Yangtze is called above Suchow with a forlorn hope of getting into some quieter district - the river above Suchow becomes very narrow and passes through a very mountainous country but we always found deep water after ascending 25 miles we came to a very remarkable gorge 14 miles in length where coal crops out from its precipitous walls - at every turn and in every direction were galleries worked by the natives some of these were 800 feet from the water and the coal descends in baskets sliding on stout ropes to the junks below -

On the 25th May we arrived at Pingshan the farthest point reached by the expedition and here after repeated ineffectual attempts to obtain land transport our crews refused to proceed further we made up our minds to take possession of a temple well positioned for protecting ourselves against an attack and spend a few months in the hope that the country might then become quieter -

All preparations having been made for leaving our boats the following morning - we sat down to dinner when suddenly a noise like the shouts of a legion of maniacs rent the air and we instantly armed ourselves thinking the people were making a rush at the boats but we found the rebels were pouring down the hill at the back of the city and attacking it the whole hill side was lighted up with hundreds of lanterns and the city walls became also suddenly illuminated with torches at each of the embrasures -

The yells and cries from the combatants and the explosions of gingalls and cannon were so great that we could scarcely hear each other speak. I had only just time to jump into my boat when our crews cut us adrift and from the darkness of the night and the din of the battle we could neither see nor hear each other and consequently our boats became separated myself and one Sikh only occupying the smaller - It was an anxious night for all for wherever we attempted to make fast to either bank an explosion of gingalls drove us away - during the night however we effected a mooring on the Zu-nan side and myself and

Wielki Miaw Tzu

Sikh were standing on the house watching the battle when several men rushed at our boat and after firing 3 heavy gingalls within 15 yards obtained a footing on our junk but we soon cleared the deck and got away with the loss of one only of our crew - the next morning we picked him up on the opposite bank having taken to the water for safety - at day break seeing no trace of the other boat I slowly dropped down the stream to search for it when a few miles below the Town to my great joy I discovered her safely at anchor under a beetling cliff -

Thus after ascending 1800 miles of this River exploring and surveying 900 miles beyond any expedition save the Jesuits in the Chinese costume & penetrating to the Western border of the Empire for we were only a few miles from the country of the independent tribes the Maoutze and having accomplished the worst of our journey - the densely populated portion of China - we had to abandon all hope of carrying out our original plan of reaching India via Tibet and returned to Shanghai after an absence of 5 Months -

But although failing in accomplishing our grand object yet our labours had thus far been

cessful for we had discovered that the great coal
gage if properly worked would supply sufficient fuel
for all the steamers in China. that the valleys of
the mountains produce abundance of corn - tea -
silk and opium which in quieter times would
be quadrupled and Shang hai must become
the emporium of this great artery - also that at
certain seasons the river is navigable for light draught
steamers 1800 miles -

In a geographical point we had discovered
that the North boundary of the Province of
Yu = nan runs the right bank of the river at
Ping - shaw which the present maps represent
as 100 miles to the Southward - we had also
come to the conclusion that there was no
imperial rule in China - that bands of rebels
and robbers were devastating the country in all
directions - in the Eastern provinces were the
Taipings in the South West the formidable band
of Mussulmen - in Sy - chuen the Tu - fei and
in how many others we could not
discover but many no doubt and they have no
connection whatever with each other - we also

found that the followers of the Prophet were very numerous and Roman Catholics were every where to be met with at all times and at their own risk to assist Europeans.

At Ping-shaw we were visited by a Chief of the independent tribes and a few of his followers - we found them a taller stronger and much darker race than the Chinese - their heads were completely shaven and they had a turban peaked in front they were without the high cheek bone and small almond shaped eye of the Chinese - their features resembling somewhat the natives of India - from them we received marked kindness and they told us if we could get into their country there would be no difficulty in reaching India the Chinese thought we were in some way connected with them and called us the White Mantze -

All the sketches which you see will appear in a narrative of the expedition now in course of preparation for the Press and a Map of the River is now being made from the survey for the use of future Travellers on this great river -

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