

## The Soochow Creek

In our article on the Soochow Creek in this issue reference is made to the delay which its deplorable condition is causing to shipping. It ought to be added that this and kindred effects are imposing upon Shanghai a very much higher cost of living than need be. Since Manchuria made the export of its grain to Shanghai a matter of the greatest difficulty, the flour mills here have largely worked with Canadian and American wheat, and the difficulty experienced by the mills situated on the creek is simply appalling. In ordinary circumstances the wheat would be loaded direct from the steamer into lighters and sent up the creek to the mills, arriving there within a few hours. But now days elapse before the supplies reach their destination. The mills have thus to pay heavy demurrage on either lighter or steamer or both; and even then it is matter of the greatest difficulty for them to get the grain which is needed. This demurrage adds to the cost of the flour which the consumer buys, and there is no hope of eliminating this item. To land grain at one of the wharves, load it on carts or lorries and transport it by land would be uneconomical. These mills are having a very bad time just now, while others, doing a different kind of business, are even worse off and a few have had to shut down. In exactly the same way as with grain, market produce from the country is held up so long that its price must necessarily be inflated, and so it comes about that because of an acamedic obstinacy we and our Chinese fellow residents suffer in respect of the high cost of living.