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HSIAN

THE CAPITAL OF

SHENSI

PAST AND PRESENT.

BY

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N. C. HERALD OFFICE, SHANGHAI.



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H S I A N.

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As is the case with other Chinese words the name of the famous Western Capital (西安) as it is not infrequently called, has suffered from the vagaries of romanisation, appearing variously as Sian, Singan, Sengan, Sigan, Hsingan, and a few other forms as well as that selected for use in this paper. These differing combinations are all used to represent the sounds in the mandarin language of the two characters 西安, which may be translated Western Peace, or, perhaps, the West Pacified. The official rank of the city is that of Fu (府), usually translated Prefecture though since this particular prefecture is the seat of the provincial government of Shensi (陝西) it is known locally as the *sheng* (省 lit *province*) or Provincial Capital. In the Chinese governmental scheme each prefecture is divided for administrative purposes into a certain number of departments known as *hsien* (縣), the control of each of which is exercised from a city within its borders and called by the same name. Thus it comes that the departmental city in each prefecture is also the prefectural city, and as such usually, but not invariably is known by a different name Wuch'angfu (武昌府), the capital of Hupeh, for example, is also (江夏縣) Chianghsiahsien, but these are not two but one and the same. In a few cases the prefectural city which is the seat of the provincial government is formed of two departmental cities within the same walls, and of this exceptional circumstance Hsianfu is an example, since within its walls are included the departmental cities of Ch'angan (長安) and Hsienning (咸寧), the former occupying the eastern, the latter the western section. Hsian is known to history as Ch'angan, the name now applied exclusively to the department as above described. Contemporary writers, however, confused by a limited knowledge of the Chinese system of urban nomenclature, frequently make

of them separate cities approximating in situation.

Access to Hsian is not difficult. It lies on the great cart road from Peking to Kuldja (Ili), north-west, and to Thibet, south-west, the roads diverging a little distance to the west of the city. The road to Kuldja is practicable for carts along its whole length, and it is axiomatic that as roads go in China cart roads are good roads for purposes of transport. The distance from Peking to Hsian by Huailu, T'aiyuan, Pingyang and T'ungkuan is ordinarily accomplished in about a month.

From the south the route to Hsian is from Hankow to Laohok'ou (老河口) by water, thirteen hundred and eighty li, say four hundred and fourteen miles. From thence the distance overland is ten hundred and forty li, say three hundred and twelve miles, across the mountains over a road practicable only by pack animals and coolies for nine-tenths of the way. Alternatively the water journey may be extended to Ching'sekuan (荊子關), a military post town in Honan province, thus saving in land transport at the expense of time. There is another, but longer route from Fanchêng, fifty-four miles below Laohok'ou, through Honan and via T'ungkuan, the advantage of which is that the whole distance may be done in carts.

Hsian lies in the midst of a great plain, of a breadth speaking roughly of ninety miles and a length exceeding two hundred. Five miles to the north flows the Wei (渭, locally called Yü), a swift shallow stream useless for navigation, which rises among the Kansu mountains, traverses the plain from west to east and joins the Yellow River at T'ungkuan. The traveller, accustomed only to the cities of the South, is unprepared for the sight which meets him as he nears his destination. Long before the city walls come into view he sees the top of a massive building, towering storey upon storey, and reminding him forcibly of the factories and warehouses of the west. By one of these

buildings, brick-built and regularly pierced with many windows, each of the four gates is surmounted. There are but four gates, one in each wall, as is the case, with small exception, in all Northern cities, which differ in this and other respects from the cities of the South. In Northern cities the streets, large and small, run uniformly toward the cardinal points, in the South they follow no definite plan, but run in every direction, while the walls seem to have been built and gated at haphazard.

If the traveller enters the city by the West Gate he passes first through the mud-walled suburb (關), a feature absent in the cities of the South, with a distance of less than a mile between the two gates. The suburb is to all intents a part of the city, with its shops, inns, and dwellinghouses, though these are all of a poorer class than those within the walls. Entering under the great tower he finds himself in the Weng-ch'engtze, (甕城子), or space between the inner and outer gates, well called a 'vat' indeed, since the space is small and the encircling walls high, producing the impression that one might have were he to find himself in a gigantic tub. Within this barbican are situated the offices of the officials responsible for the inspection of visitors and for the collection of octroi. On the other side of the way are the sweet water wells, from which apparently the whole city is supplied with its drinking water. How cool and refreshing it is to look into their depths on a sweltering day in summer, how grateful a cup of water new drawn to the traveller who has just left behind him the loess plain, but who has brought with him in mouth and nostrils and ears, in lungs and stomach, everywhere outside and in, the fine insidious powder of which that plain is composed.

The city lies in the shape of a parallelogram, the distance east and west being considerably greater than that north and south. The walls are kept in good repair—for China—and stand perhaps about thirty feet high; the towers on the gates are perhaps as high again. Calculating that something more than half an hour's brisk walking will take one through the city from east to west, we are safe in saying that the circumvallation measures certainly not more than ten miles. The streets do not run straight through in any case; it is questionable whether there is any city in the country, north or south, in which a street from one gate runs directly to that on the opposite side. And this probably

for the same reason that an entrance hall never leads straight into a house, and that a road never follows a bee line, namely, in order to deter the evil influences which would otherwise find their free course unhindered, and so be able with greater facility to work their mischief on the inhabitants. The streets, unlike the roads, however, do not wind about; they are as it were dislocated not far from the middle of their length. They are broad, that is, a couple of carts can pass on the main thoroughfares, but not on the minor ways. The main streets are paved with blocks of granite, worn now into ruts and holes, into which the heavy springless carts roll and bump as they make their way along. The smaller streets are unpaved. The ruts are deeper and in rainy weather take on a character difficult to describe. That part of the Great West Street which lies nearest to the centre of the city is the busiest part. There are to be found the finest shops, the furriers—and the Hsian fur market is unrivalled in China—the silkmen, the porcelain dealers, and, up unobtrusive alleyways, the Shansi banks. There, too, are the pipe dealers, the hatters, the booksellers, the stationers, the confectioners, and indeed all the better-class shops of every kind.

Hsian may be divided roughly into four quarters, of which the north-east is the Tartar city, cut off from the Chinese city by a wall which is carried to the south of the East Gate, so that access to the Chinese part from that side is had through the Tartar city.

Normally that part of the city of Hsian reserved for the nominally dominant race, is a wilderness. Where once stood palaces sheep are pastured, and at the appointed times military examinations are held—the great stone is lifted, the heavy spear flourished, the strong bow pulled and the three arrows shot from the back of a horse galloping in a trench dug out in an open space where once the feet of princes trod. The glory has departed, there remains nothing to show that here once centred camps and courts.

In this wilderness stands a stone approaching ten feet high and apparently of igneous origin, on which at the height of five feet from the ground the figure of a human hand larger than life-size has been worn smooth upon the surface of the otherwise rough rock. This was imprinted, saith legend, by the famous Wu Tse-tien, the only Empress China has ever known; a woman apparently a fit predeces-

sor to her now virtually occupies the Dragon Throne, and by the same right, or lack of it, murder and usurpation. But of her more anon; her burying place in the neighbourhood will call for a more lengthy reference.

The south-eastern section of the city is principally residential, but contains one feature of interest, namely the Peilin (碑林) or Stone Coppice, dating from the Han Dynasty, and the prototype of that at the Northern Capital, Peking. In this enclosure, for there are several one-storied buildings, are to be found, cut in stone, the Thirteen Classics as well as many other records, specimens of calligraphy, etc., etc. Quite a number of men are engaged in taking paper rubbings of these different inscriptions, which are sold by pedlars and in shops; the trade finding its constituency in the officials, merchants and scholars who visit the city on business or for its historic interest. One building, locked against the casual visitor, is said to contain a portrait of Confucius, also cut in stone. The Peilin does not contain the only tablets of interest in the city, but of others we need not here speak. The visitor bent on antiquarian research will find willing and competent guides among the rubbing pedlars who will find out his lodging place ere he has been long within the city walls.

The south-western section of the city is also largely residential. Here are cool streets, lying in the shade of trees that must have sheltered these courtyards from the sun's rays for many centuries past. Here are the homes of men of rank, retired from office or absent at their post in distant parts of the empire.

In this section is the yamèn of the Governor General of the three provinces—Shensi, Kansu, and Hsinchiang (新疆), but since the Viceroy has taken up his residence in Lanchow, the capital of Kansu, it has been occupied by the Governor of Shensi. Before his door is the great bazaar of the city, covering several acres of ground. A stirring scene it is whether in the early morning or in the cool of the day. Here fortunes are told, heads shaved, corns cut, teeth pulled, stories related, advice given, marriages arranged, refreshments furnished, a thousand and one odds and ends bought and sold, debts collected, loans contracted, sweetmeats and fruit vended, monkeys and bears, peep shows and Punch and Judy exhibited, together with an innumerable catalogue of trivial transactions, all in the open air.

The north-western section of the city is perhaps the briskest; in the others the proportions of open space is greater than in this. The westerly part is the habitat of the Szechuanese, who emigrate in large numbers, supplying the neighbouring provinces with coolies, barbers, innkeepers, and artisans, indeed in some of the cities along the southern border of Shensi, the Szechuanese are more numerous than the natives. This is the result of two complementary forces. Famine and rebellion depopulate the Shensi cities, overcrowding sends the Szechuan man to seek a living elsewhere than at home. But the most important feature of this north-western section is the Mahomedan population and their mosques. Of these there are two, one of which it is said by the local Ah-hungs to be the most ancient in China. It was partially destroyed by fire long ago, but a plan of the original building is still to be seen cut on a slab of stone in one of the courtyards. After the rebellion the mosques were allowed to remain, but as I hsioh (義學), or Free Schools, no longer as Worship Temples (禮拜寺) lipaissu). Williamson (Journeys in North China) tells that he found in the vestibules tablets to the Emperor and to Confucius with an outfit for burning incense. But this has been modified in more recent years. The tablet to the sage has disappeared, so has the incense censer. The tablet to the Lord of the Myriad Years remains, but the Ahhung, always ready to conduct a visitor, hurries him past with a shrug, saying, "Don't bother reading that; it's only there as a matter of form." The name Lipaissu has been restored.

The Mahomedans in China are a people racially distinct from the Chinese, though not without admixture of Chinese blood. Their own account of their origin is that three thousand soldiers came from the West (西方) at the request of the Chinese Emperor to propagate the newly-founded religion. At the invitation of the Emperor the strangers settled in the land and were provided with wives of the daughters of Han. Succeeding generations drew on the same source for their sons, but never gave their daughters outside their own community. The feets of their women bear testimony to the truth of this tradition, which may be accepted without hesitation, for the Chinese themselves are no more zealous in deforming that limb. The

Mahomedans in China dwell, as a rule, within the city walls and do not devote themselves to agriculture. They take military degrees, seldom literary ones, and in large numbers act in military capacities in different places.

The population of Hsian has of course been variously estimated by casual visitors. The present writer, who has had some opportunity of judging, is convinced that these are for the most part exaggerated and that any figure larger than a quarter of a million probably errs by excess. Questions of city populations, however, must always remain matters of opinion, more or less well based, more or less well formed.

Hsian is naturally rich in antiquarian interest. Curio dealers are plentiful. Coins dating back to the tenth century of our era are not uncommon in the currency.

While the trade of the city is not inconsiderable, it is largely retail. The great trade emporium of the province is Sanyuan (三源), a departmental city lying twenty-seven miles due north of Hsian. Sanyuan, again, has assumed this commercial importance only of recent years and at the expense of its neighbour, Chingyang (經陽), which lost its trade at the time of the great Mahomedan rebellion, though financial transactions all over the North-West are still conducted in the scale of that city (經平). Trade does not as a rule, favour official cities in China, as witness Sanyuan and Hsian in Shensi, Choukiak'ou and K'ai-fêng in Honan, Hankow and Wuchang in Hupeh, Chouts'un and Tsinan in Shantung, and no doubt there are other examples.

In the centre of the city stands a drum tower, from which a good view of the whole city may be obtained.

There is a popular saying in the neighbourhood, that Hsian is the key, Tung-kuan the lock, and Peking the treasure

(西安爲鑰匙 潼關爲鎖 北京爲寶)

indicating that in the early days of the present dynasty trouble might be anticipated from the West along the great highway. But the developments of the last century have somewhat modified ancient conditions, and the events of the past year have reversed the positions of key and treasure.

II.

South of the river Wei and running parallel with it at a little distance, runs the Tsingling Range (青嶺山), known locally from its position relative to the Hsian Plain or Basin of the Wei as the Southern Range (南山). This range, varying from five to eleven thousand feet in height, divides the basin of the Yangtze river from that of the Yellow River. The full significance of this statement is not apparent on the surface, for the difference between the basin of the Yellow River and the basin of the Yangtze, is the difference between Northern and Southern China, so that this range forms the boundary line between the two families of the sons of Han, differing so much in character, habits, customs, mode of living, and yet with an undeniable race sentiment which binds them together and proclaims them one people. In this the history of the Chinese race stands out in marked contrast to the history of Europe, a contrast which it may be worth while to present in a few words. In Europe the physical features of the Continent have operated to produce nations much opposed to each other in sentiment and character, as, say, France and Germany. In China, despite even greater physical disabilities, the race has maintained its unity. It is not advanced that geographical considerations alone account for a result in Europe diametrically opposed to what we find in China, but whatever other forces have operated, family, dynastic, religious, military, ambition and the schemes of statesmen, they have been common to both China and the West in all save one particular. Had the Christian religion swept Eastward as well as, or instead of, Westward, who can doubt that its disintegrating power would have overcome all the resistance of the conservative forces that fell so steadily before it in Europe? Passing the fact of the manifest solidarity of the Chinese, we pause to notice briefly some of the differences between the Chinese as we find them North or South of the Ch'ingling. In the South the men are lithe, active, clean-limbed, sharp of feature as of temper, and not of striking stature. The Northerner is more phlegmatic, of a heavier build, taller, slower in his movements, fuller in feature and less of a fire-brand. The Southerner is readier to take offence, more easily turned from his purpose. The Northerners are more stolid, plodding, and persistent, not so easily roused, but no less terrible in anger which

is likely to last longer. These characteristics, of course, the women share with the men, but as the rigour of the Northern winter combines with the luxury of the kang, or hot bed, to discount an outdoor life, the contrast is greater in the case of the sex which is not forced to brave the one and resist the other.

To the South of the range a wooden bedstead is used, the kang is unknown, and the toralium is a necessity to the poorest. In the North the kang is built with the house and is no less dispensable than the walls or roof. The toralium, a combined mattress and coverlet, is a comfort with the well-to-do, though the poorest couple start life with one at least included in the bride's trousseau. The kang, of mud, stone or brick, is so built that a fire can be lit beneath. The fuel varies; when coal is obtainable the kang is built to accommodate that. In most places straw and wood are used, but in the country the horse manure gathered from the roads keeps up a smoldering fire which heats the kang surface, so that an unseasoned skin resents the temperature. South of the Ch'ingling, riding and pack animals are seldom met with, save on the Hsian-Chêngtu (成都) road. In the South the work of transport is done by men, and in some parts to a limited extent the women also are burden and chairbearers. Human beings are too plentiful in the South to spare ground to grow food stuff for animals. The Northerner does not make a good coolie, hence the overplus population of Szechuan finds a field in Kansu and Shensi. The Northerner is more at home with animals, and the physical configuration of his country makes their employment more obvious and more profitable.

The food of the people differs on either side of this natural boundary. To the South rice is the staple, to the North little is grown, and that little is of a peculiar kind, though not necessarily of an inferior quality, for which the abundant moisture in which the ordinary rice crop is grown is not required. Flour, millet, maize, are the staples there. Northerners eat mutton, and even beef occasionally, when they eat meat at all, which is not frequently either North or South. Southerners confine themselves all but exclusively to pork. Similarly extra-mural life differs. To the North of the Chingling single houses are uncommon if not unknown. The peasants live in villages within the same walls that encircle the homes of the wealthier farmer and the

retired merchant or official. These walls are seldom a mere figure of speech, but whether built of mud or stone are substantial structures, calculated to give protection against a considerable force, provided it is not furnished with artillery, an adjunct not likely enough to render provision against it necessary. The frequent famines in these districts make brigandage always chronic and occasionally acute, a factor to be dealt with by the country people. In another important, if unsavoury, respect, this mountain range marks a difference, for to the North the coolie with his unmentionable buckets, such a distinctive element in the communal life of the South, plays no part.

The great plain of Hsian is bounded on the West and South, as already mentioned, by the Tsingling Range, which for ages served as an effectual barrier between the kingdoms of the North and South. Even now its passage can only be accomplished from the Eastern and Western extremities of the plain. The road on the West is that to Hanchungfu (漢中府) in the South of the same province, and thence to Chêngtu the metropolis of Szechuan. The road from the West Gate of Hsian runs in a north-westerly direction till the Wei River is reached at Hsienyanghsien (咸陽縣) fifteen miles journey. The stream is swift and shallow, but too deep to ford at any season, the passage is accomplished on large flat-bottomed scows poled across by men. On these boats, carts, animals, travellers and merchandise are taken indiscriminately. The ferry is supported at government expense, but a gratuity is expected, and usually deserved, for on the whole the men are civil and painstaking in their arduous toil. At Hsienyang, itself a capital city in former days, now but a small walled town not of striking dimensions or any apparent importance, the main road to Kansu and Hsinchang, lined on both sides throughout its length with trees by the great Tso, goes off by Ch'ienchou (乾州) Pinchou (邠州) and P'ingliangfu (平涼府) to Lanchoufu (蘭州府), the metropolis of Kansu province, where it divides again, branches going North to Ninghsiafu (寧夏府), a twelve days' journey, West to Hsining (西寧府), six days by cart, or five by pack animal over the hills, the main road continuing to the North-West. With the exception just noted, these roads are practicable throughout for

carts, though it is important to note that the gauge alters North of Huailu (獲鹿) in Chihli on the road from Peking to Hsian, and West of Söchou (肅州) on the Western frontier of Kansu, at which places cart wheels must be changed.

The road to Szechuan proceeds due West from Hsienyang by Hsingping (興平), Wukung (武功), Fufeng (扶風), and Ch'ishan (岐山). At this point, if the traveller bound for the south of the Tsiangling has performed the journey so far in carts, he must make a détour to a place called Kueih sien, where he can hire pack-mules for the remainder of the journey. If, however, he has come from Hsian with mules or coolies, and either can be obtained there, he will go on without interruption, entering the pass south of Paohih sien (寶雞縣). Whether the road over the mountains—the distance is roughly about two hundred miles—is to be described as good or bad will probably depend on the previous experience of the traveller. If his former journeys have been confined to the north of China he has at last struck a really bad road. If he has been accustomed to the Yünan or the Kansu hills he will congratulate himself on the good fortune that brought him to Shensi. There are streams to be crossed, but no one of them is formidable—of course the Wei is crossed again at Paohi or Kueih sien, in the same fashion as at Hsienyang—even so much nearer its source the river is not yet fordable. The highest pass, that at Fenghsien (鳳縣), is over seven thousand feet high, and is managed comfortably in about half a travelling day, the distance counts forty-five li, say thirteen miles. The pack mules on this and other roads in Western China do the whole stage, varying from twenty-seven to thirty or even thirty-two miles, over these mountain roads, without calling a halt of any kind, and that, too, with a minimum load of three hundred and twenty pounds avoirdupois. One muleteer seldom takes charge of more than one animal and usually finds his hands full; such is the vigour and spirit of the animal he drives.

At Ch'ishan an alternate road to Lan-chou branches off viâ Chinchou (秦州), practically only by pack mules. The time occupied by this road is thirteen days, and carts take eighteen by the main road. From Hsian to Chêngtu occupies about a month. To Hanchung the distance is

the same as to Laohok'ou, about four hundred and fourteen miles.

There is another road from Hanchung to Hsian viâ Yanghsien (洋縣) practicable only by men on foot; there are several high passes to be crossed, but communication may thus be effected at a saving of several days; seven are usually required by the shorter route, ten by the longer, mules or loaded coolies taking eleven and fifteen respectively.

III.

South of the Capital, bearing slightly Eastward lies Hsinganfu, (興安府). Between these cities there is a direct road across the range, a poor road and used for little save local traffic. The River Han is divided by boatmen into three great stages each of twelve hundred li, say three hundred and sixty miles, namely Hankow to Fanch'eng,* Fanch'eng to Hsingan, and Hsingan to Hanchungfu. Thus Hsingan becomes an entrepôt for the supply of the adjacent parts of three provinces, Shen-i (to which it belongs), Hupeh, and Szechuan.

The most important highway between Hsian and the coast, that viâ Hankow, runs through Lan'iehhsien, a famous jade producing district, twenty-four miles to the South-east. Beyond this point carts cannot go and fifteen miles further on, the southern limit of the loess is reached, and the passage of the Ch'ingling begins. The passes are high, some rising more than two thousand feet above the level of the Hsian Plain. The road is often steep, narrow and rocky, the streams frequent, though always fordable, save perhaps for a few hours after a freshet in the rainy season. The road passes through Shangchou (商州) a city on the Tan River (丹江) beyond the point to which the river is ordinarily considered navigable; but which is accessible to boats for perhaps one month in the year, when water is most plentiful: probably in August-September. But while advantage is often taken, locally, of the high water to reduce

* Williams's statement (Middle Kingdom) to the effect that the Han is navigable during part of the year to Fanch'eng, falls far short of the fact. The Han is navigable to Hanchungfu through the whole year. When the water is low, navigation is proportionally difficult to boats of large burden, such may have to stop at Ch'engku, twenty odd miles lower down the river Lao-ho-k'ou, not Fanch'eng (Hsiang-yang), is now the port of trans-shipment for the upper Han.

carriage charges on goods by running them into Shangchou by river, there is not sufficient certainty to warrant the possibility entering into ordinary calculations. Lungchüchai (龍駒砦) six stages from Hsian is the real head of the navigation of the Tan River, and is practicable all the year round. The Shensi customs barrier is situated here. From this point to Chingtzekuan (荆紫關) the river runs through a series of gorges, below the latter place it is broader and shallows make navigation more difficult. From July to September the navigation of the section of the river above Chingtzekuan is dangerous on account of the freshets that, without warning of any kind, come rushing down the gorges sweeping all before them. Every season brings its tale of disasters which are looked upon by the native boatmen as unavoidable—as no doubt they are. When once the wall of water appears, rushing madly down, it is too late to do anything; too late often even to save life. The supply of mules at Chingtzekuan is precarious, at Lungchüchai they can always be obtained within a reasonable time. There is a telegraph station at the former place, and at the latter.

Chingtzekuan is a town on the left bank of the river where a bend in its course carries it for a brief distance to within the confines of the province of Honan, the frontier line for some reason not following the river which suggests itself as the natural boundary. There is a customs barrier here which had its origin in a local tax, agreed to by the merchants for the purpose of repairing a bank necessary to the conservancy of the river. When the immediate purpose for which the customs was established was attained, it seemed a pity that such a desirable institution should fall into desuetude, so it has been maintained by the local officials for an obvious purpose.

The distance between Lungchüchai and Chingtzekuan is one hundred and eight miles, just half of the whole water-route to Laohok'ou, eighteen miles below the mouth of the Tan, on the river Han. There is also a land route between these points but report makes it very poor, as is usually the case with roads in China running beside navigable streams. It is used principally by postmen, messengers, pedlars and the like and, as far as Ching-

† Richtofen's statement (Letters p. 106) that the cart road reaches this point is of course a mistake for mule road. The stages are six not five as there stated.

tzekuan at any rate, can hardly be described as a road; it is simply "the way there"?

Below Laohok'ou, a large commercial town close to Kuanghuahsien, (光化縣) there are no rapids on the Han though between it and Fanch'eng there is a shallow with a strong current. Above Laohok'ou rapids are very numerous between Yünyangfu, (鄖陽府) and Hanchungfu, and present formidable difficulties to navigation. From Laohok'ou to Hankow the Han is a broad shallow stream containing channels of some depth, however, winding its way through a flat country. At its mouth it narrows considerably and sweeps with considerable force into the Yangtze, opposite Wuchang and between Hankow and Hanyang. Fifty-four miles below Laohok'ou lies Hsiangyangfu (襄陽府) with its commercial neighbour Fanch'eng (樊城) on the opposite, the left bank of the river. Hsiangyang has recently been suggested as a possible city of refuge for the fugitive court of the Empress Dowager. If this place has been seriously contemplated in this connection—which is at least doubtful—sentimental considerations have probably inspired the suggestion. The principal historical associations of the City are with the era of the Three Kingdoms, (circa A. D., 220) the heroes of which yield to those of no other period in the popular estimation. Around it armies encamped, and within and without its walls prodigies of valour were performed on which the Chinese love to dwell in story, song, and drama. At the present day it consists not of the ideal seventy-two streets (七十二道街) a term by which the populous centres are often described, but of about three, with the official residences and public offices usual in a city of prefectural rank. Fanch'eng alike on land and water, loses by comparison with Laohok'ou, though it has a fairly thriving appearance.

§ Richtofen speaks of an alternative route from Shangchou one day's journey to a place he calls "Manchangkuan", thence by water. The road is said not to be so good but the river larger than viâ Lungchüchai. There is a navigable tributary of the Han, the Chiao (甲河) which joins it at Paihohsien (白河縣) where the Shensi customs barrier for the Han is situated, considerably west of Laohok'ou. This river also affords access to Hsian—it may be to it that Richtofen refers.

IV.

Communication between Hsian and Hankow is possible by cart from Fanch'eng or from Laohok'ou in Hupeh. The distance is the same from either place, namely, eighteen stages. The route lies by Nanyangfu (南陽府), where the two roads join, and Honanfu (河南府). The detour thus made carries the road round the eastern extremity of the Chingling range. It follows the Pai River (白河) for some distance and no doubt advantage could be taken of this waterway as far as Hsinyehsian (新野縣) or even as far as Nanyangfu. The Tang River (唐河) could be utilised as far as Shech'itien (賒旗屯), reducing the land journey even more considerably.

As the banks of the Yellow River are approached the road becomes more difficult owing to the vertical cleavage of the loess, resulting in ravines and gullies which must be crossed or avoided by circuitous roads. At Honanfu the road runs south of the river until it joins the Peking-Hsian highway at T'ungkuan.

From an external or foreign point of view, the roads connecting Hsian with Hankow rank first in importance, but to the Chinese who view all things in their domestic relations, the Peking-Hsian road with its westward continuations north and south is the great highway of the Empire.

About eight miles from the East Gate of Hsian there is a fine stone bridge fully one-third of a mile long. Another eight miles brings the traveller to Lint'unghsien (臨潼縣) which, with the other cities between the capital and the eastern boundary of the province will demand a word later on. T'ungkuan (潼關廳), rather less than ninety miles from Hsian, is a city of sub-prefectural rank built on the right bank of the Yellow River where the three provinces, Shensi, Honan and Shansi meet. Strategically the city is rated highly by the Chinese, and justly so, for to the South rise the hills to which the famous Huashan (華山), one of the five sacred mountains of China, gives its name, while to the North and just outside the city gates, the Yellow River runs broad and swift and deep. The walls are high and kept in good repair, as also are the gates. The city has an alert air about it, albeit it is neither large nor over-busy, as though permeated with a sense of its own importance. It is the residence of a Taotai or Intendant of Circuit with jurisdiction over this and

the neighbouring district of Shangchou. Held by troops under competent officers and armed with modern artillery the pass would possess a certain value for the defence of Hsian against attack from the East and North-east. It may seem trite to say this and to add that without these desiderata the position could not be held against an enemy so furnished, nevertheless the military importance of T'ungkuan is thus exhaustively described. The neighbouring hills are near enough to command the city on the south; the Yellow River is here perhaps five hundred yards wide.

There is an alternative and equally practicable crossing at Tach'ingkuan (大慶關), north of T'ungkuan and a little way south of P'uchoufu (蒲州府) in South Shansi. This ferry is used by travellers en route for Tungchoufu (同州府) and Sanyuanhsien. But if the objective is Hsian, to cross by the northern ferry necessitates the crossing of the River Lo (洛河) and of the River Ching 涇, as well as of the River Wei. The latter stream shortly after the Lo joins it, runs into the Yellow River to the west of T'ungkuan. Hence travellers on the main road going to Hsian, give the ferry at T'ungkuan the preference.

The passage of the Yellow River is accomplished on large roughly but strongly made lighters or scows. The heavy traffic is frequently too great for the number of available boats and men at this and other ferries, and long delays ensue. Those ferries on the main roads are usually maintained at Government expense and are known as Kuantu (官渡).

P'uchoufu lies about twenty-five miles from T'ungkuan. Four stages further on the road passes through P'ingyangfu (平陽府), the region in which the history of China dawned in the myths that glorify the national heroes, the legendary Yao and Shun. Thence by T'aiyuanfu (太原府), the provincial capital, and so eastward to Huailuhsien (獲鹿縣) in Chih'i, to Paotingfu (保定府), the provincial capital, and to Peking.

The road is a good road throughout nearly its whole length, as roads go in China, being practicable for carts, though many travellers prefer to do the section from T'aiyuan to Huailu with pack mules. The gauge of the ruts differs north and

south of the latter city, and there the axles and wheels of through carts must be changed to suit.

There is another road from Hsian to the coast northward which continues from T'ungkuan to Mengtsinhsien (孟津縣) north-east of Honanfu, where it crosses the Yellow River to Huaikingfu (懷慶府), Weihiifu (衛輝府), Changtefu (彰德府), Shuntefu (順德府), and Chengtingfu (正定府), where it joins the Hsian-T'aiyuan road to Peking. This is the route by which the Court is to return to its Northern Capital, the date of arrival being fixed for the next Greek Kalends. To the North-east of Shuntefu, just within the Shantung border, lies Tschou (德州) on the Eastern bank of the Grand Canal, from whence there is ready access to Tientsin by water.

v.

The soil of the Hsian plain possesses many peculiarities and presents some difficult problems, geological and meteorological. Where experts find so much to say for loam and loess as alternative terms whereby to describe that remarkable deposit which has changed the face of such a large area and which gives character to the people and colour to the rivers and seas of Northern China, laymen may be excused a decision on the merits. Whatever be the right of the matter, loess seems to hold the ground against its rival. It was noticed above that the Chingling divided the basin of the Yellow River from that of the Yangtze; it also forms, speaking broadly, the southern boundary of the loess deposit, dividing the region so covered from that which retains its normal elevation and its native nakedness of rock or mould. As to the origin of the loess we may accept the theory of Richthofen that it is the dust of northern Asia, produced under the atmospheric conditions long ago obtaining, and blown abroad over northern China by winds then prevailing, covering its plains and obliterating its little hills and filling up its valleys, as at least a working hypothesis. The loess itself is a fine powdery material, approximating to impalpability, but mixed with a certain proportion of sand. In bulk it is solid, friable, very porous, of a brown colour with a slightly yellowish tinge. The Chinese call it huang tu (黃土), a name applied indiscriminately to disintegrated granite and all other loamy or clayey soils. When blown about

as dust it proves itself most insidious, lying on the lines of the face and filling the nostrils, mouth, nose, and eyes with a light powder. Loess is amenable to agriculture, it is rich in the elements essential to crop life and is not readily exhausted of them. One of the heaviest drains on the farmer's time, strength, and resources elsewhere is absent here, since loess does not need manure. Incidentally an enormous quantity of fuel is thus set free to exercise an important influence on the economic conditions of the people. The roads are kept surprisingly clean considering the number of animals using them daily; old and young of both sexes unite their forces to remove all droppings to be dried for use in the k'ang. In other parts, Shantung for example, this material is carefully hoarded for the fields, and to supply the lack of fuel the surface of the soil is combed clean after harvest, thus depriving the land of an important source of nourishment and so indirectly increasing the poverty of the province. Loess is easily ploughed; being porous the water passes quickly through, leaving the surface soil friable and capable of little resistance to the share. The wells in the loess country are usually deep, for this same porosity carries the rain through the deposit until it reaches the original soil beneath. Toward the western end of the Wei basin water is brought up from a depth of thirty odd *chang*, say four hundred feet. It is this porosity, too, that acts as a set-off to the natural richness of the soil, for unless the rainfall is evenly distributed over the growing months of the year, the surface soil soon becomes dry, and if the seed is not destroyed by early drought the crops are stunted for lack of nourishment later in the season. Thus on the one hand the loess presents great agricultural possibilities, but on the other, the results of dry seasons are correspondingly disastrous.

An important feature in the loess country is the result of vertical cleavage. From some vantage ground the eye beholds a level plain with just a suggestion of undulation in the contour, sweeping to the horizon on every side apparently without interruption. Seemingly it is a country for cavalry, for cross-country riding, for free, unrestrained movement on horse or on foot. Let not the unwary traveller leave the road under the delusion that he can return at will, if but ordinary observations as to direction and rate of travel are made. The loess country is deceptive. It is full of ravines, falling

terrace after terrace to depths varying from a few tens to a few hundred, in some cases it is said even to a thousand feet. These ravines are seldom of any width, in some cases they do not exceed a few yards. The roads usually run several feet, occasionally some yards below the level of the surrounding country, so that carts and pack animals are alike hidden from observation from a height where such is available.

Rivers make a clean sweep of the loess and run on the original bottom, so that they are usually approached down a steep declivity. Here the leaders are taken from the carts, brakes are applied to the wheels and the vehicle restrained as far as possible from making the descent too quickly. On the opposite side of the river carters lend each other their leaders in order to surmount the slope leading to the loess level. In the faces of the ravines caves are dug for dwelling places. They are refreshingly cool in summer, and warmer than an ordinary building in winter; the great drawback is lack of ventilation. These caves are probably more plentiful in the country, they are not obtrusively frequent on the main artery of traffic in the basin of the Wei.

Rain renders the roads over the loess difficult or impassable. The effect is to cover the surface with a damp tenacious clay, which gives readily under the knife edge wheels of the heavily laden carts. When the summer rains are on, carts are useless; they may be detained in a wayside inn for days or perhaps for weeks, unable even with the help of local farm bullocks—whose owners anticipate the harvest by hiring them to the unfortunate carters—to make any progress along the sodden roads.

The liability of loess country to famine has already been mentioned; recent history confirms the ancient annals that famine is not a rare visitant. Under the caption Unusual Occurrences (祥異), the Shensi Topography (陝西通志) mentions many famines, beginning with a drought from the second to the sixth year of Hsuan Wang of the Chou dynasty (周宣王 B.C. 828) during which time no rain fell. In the reign of the First Emperor (秦始皇帝 246-208 B.C.) there are recorded no less than four famines, one of which, however, is ascribed to a plague of locusts. In the second year of Kao Ti of the Han dynasty (漢高帝 206-193 B.C.) such was the severity of the famine

that men were reduced to cannibalism (人相吃), and so under every dynasty and almost in every reign. Of more recent years the famine of 1878 was most memorable both for its extent and its intensity. At the present time there is an undoubted scarcity of food and harrowing tales of want have reached the coast. Happily the winter snows promise a better harvest. Already prices have been reduced considerably, though flour, which may be taken as typical of the whole range of food stuffs in use among the people, still stands at fifty cash a catty, or twice the price of normal years.

The principal crops—two are produced annually—are millet, tall and ordinary, wheat and oats, maize and sweet potato (neither of which is indigenous to China, as witnessed by the fact that their names vary with the section of country in which they are grown), leguminous plants in great variety, ground nuts, sesamum, indigo, cotton, hemp, tobacco, and opium. Fruit is very plentiful, including cherries, apricots, plums, peaches, nectarines, apples in variety, grapes, quinces, pears, persimmons, walnuts, but acid fruits such as currants and gooseberries are noticeably absent.

Of local mineral products there are none, but coal is brought from Yaozhou (耀州).

Neither is there anything distinctive about the trade of Hsian and its neighbouring cities. Hsian itself receives nothing within its gates beyond the needs of its own retail trade, but a certain amount of business is transacted in the eastern suburb. This is quite unimportant as compared with the wholesale trade of Sanyuan, the emporium of North-west China. The bulk of the exports of the region is included under such heads as hides, drugs, tobacco; the imports are such as are usually described as foreign goods, matches, candles, piece goods, cotton yarn, etc., etc., with tea, sugar, opium, silk, paper, crockery ware, and other products of the riverine and maritime provinces. Its furs come from the north and west, the season beginning annually about September.

VI.

As already mentioned Hsian has within its walls a yamèn formerly occupied by the Viceroy or Governor-General of the two provinces Shensi and Kansu—a modern division, made during the present dynasty, of the territory formerly administered as the Province of Shensi. Since the Mahomedan rebellion, however, the

Governor-General has not resided in Hsian, his duties demanding his presence in the West, and since the addition of the New Territory, or Kashgaria, to the Shenkan vicerealty as a province under the name of Hsinechiang (新疆), he has been permanently located at Lanchou, the capital of Kansu. The yamèn formerly occupied by this high officer is situated in the south-eastern section, but not far from the centre of the city, and is known as the Nanyuan or South Court (南院). For many years past the Governor of Shensi has used this yamèn, leaving his own, the Peiyuan or North Court (北院), empty and with the reputation of being haunted. The two yamèns are not far apart, the Peiyuan also is near the centre of the city, in the north-west section, but outside the Tartar City walls.

When instructions to prepare for the reception of the Imperial fugitives reached the high authorities, they decided to prepare these two great yamèns, one for the reception of the Empress Dowager, the other for the Emperor. The Acting Governor, Tuan Fang, retired from the Nanyuan to the yamèn of the Provincial Treasurer, and had extensive alterations made in his own residence in prospect of the new occupants. On the arrival of the Court, however, this arrangement was so far modified that there was no separation of their Imperial Majesties, who took up their abode together in the Peiyuan; which is significant in view of the relations commonly supposed to exist between the virtual and the nominal rulers of the state. Just twelve hundred years ago a usurping Empress reigned over the China of her day from Hsian. The long list of the rulers of the Middle Kingdom do not contain the name of any other woman, and since the Emperor whom she dispossessed survived and succeeded her, the name of Wu Tsê-t'ien has no more right to a place on the roll than has that of Tsz-hsi-tuan-yu-k'ang-yi-chao-yü-chuang-ch'eng-shou-kung-ch'in-hsien-ch'ung-hsi (茲禧端佑康頤昭豫莊誠壽恭欽獻崇熙), Dowager of the Emperor Hsien Fêng whose secondary wife she was.

This usurper Empress, a woman whose maiden name was Wu Chao (武照), owed her position in the seraglio of the Emperor Cheng Kuan (貞觀) of the T'ang (唐), which she entered at the age of twelve, to her beauty and her wit. On Cheng Kuan's death she retired to a

Buddhist nunnery from whence she was brought to play a part in an intrigue at the instigation of the jealous consort of the new Emperor. The plot succeeded so well that the ex-concubine of the father replaced the jealous consort of the son, nor content with the humiliation of the twice-wronged woman to whose jealousy she owed her elevation, she had her feet and hands chopped off and death speedily rid her of her rival. The new Empress, a woman apparently of intelligence and will to match her charms of person, speedily became paramount in the counsels of the Empire and on the death of her husband, the Emperor Kao Tsung (高宗), she permitted his weakling son and successor Chung-Tsung (中宗) to reign but a few months before she relegated him to confinement, openly assuming the functions of government herself. Her rule was marked by vigour and firmness, though her overweening vanity and the contempt for the decencies of life shown in her treatment of the Buddhist priests who enjoyed her favour, were equally characteristic. Intrigue and conspiracy such as invariably haunt the court of a usurper succeeded after twenty years in forcing her to abdicate at a moment when sickness had weakened the will so long accustomed to overcome all opposition. It is no small tribute to her character that she was permitted to retire with honorific recognition of her reign. To her—it will be remembered she was an ex-Buddhist nun—belongs the distinction of being the first Imperial persecutor of the Christian Church in China.

The Dragon Throne, once again set up in Hsian, is now controlled, if not occupied, by a woman whose history, so far as it is known to the public, and even after it has been shorn of apocryphal accretions, suggests comparison on many points with her great predecessor. Distance must not be permitted to obscure the vices of the one or proximity the virtues of the other. The Empress of the Ch'ing has fallen on more complicated times than was the lot of the Empress Wu of the T'ang. There seems to be little in the history of the past forty years with which the China of the future will gratefully associate the name of the Empress Dowager. Under her rule the country has been plunged into war and the capital and palace subjected to indignities unparalleled, and that too, at the hand of the outer barbarian. Her metropolitan province has been overrun

with troops, the walls of her capital pulled down to make way for the railway, the shriek of the locomotive sounding the last wail of an Empire before whose reactionary rulers lie the equally dreaded alternatives of reform or dismemberment. Had her intelligence been a fit mate for her will, the Empress Dowager would never have pursued the shortsighted policy which has plunged her Empire into turmoil and brought the dynasty into disgrace.

The tomb of the T'ang Empress, commonly known as Sanwusze or Wutse-t'ien (武則天), lies between Hsienyang-hsien and Chingyanghsien (涇陽縣). The approach to the burying-place is lined with stone figures of men, sheep, elephants, horses, and zoological nondescripts, such as are usually found at the tombs of ancient Emperors and great officers of State. Quite a few of these stone figures are still erect. They stand in the open country amidst the fields on the south side of the River Ching and not far from the highway between the two cities.

The country around Hsian, north and south of the River Wei, is rich in the burying places of historic personages. Near Hsienyang are some great tumuli, similar to the barrows of the south of England. Local tradition has it that an Emperor of ancient times lies buried there, or it may be Emperors; local tradition is as vague in China as elsewhere and has as many variants, but to prevent the desecration of the sepulchre for the sake of the treasure buried with the deceased monarch, other mounds, similar in size and shape, were built in the neighbourhood of the real grave.

According to the Shensi T'ung Chih (陝西通志) the founders of the Chou Dynasty, Kings Wen and Wu, together with those of their successors Ch'eng, K'ang and Kung, and Wu's wise and energetic brother, Duke Tan (周公旦), lie buried between four and five miles north of Hsienyanghsien. Beside them lies Tai Kung-wang (大公望), the aged councillor to whose wisdom the early Chou dynasty owed so much. There is a story that this old gentleman was of a disposition so benevolent that the fish used to impale themselves on his barbless hook in order to provide him with food. He exercised influence in the supernatural realms, nevertheless, and to this day he is invoked all over the

Empire as Chiangt'aikung for protection from the vagaries of irresponsible spirits (姜太公在此諸神退)

VII.

Outside the gate of the West Suburb (西關) the road forks, one branch giving access to the cities south of the Wei River, the other leading to the ferry at Hsienyang.

A mile or so along the latter and on the left hand side of the road stand the remains of some loess walls which mark the site of a former temple and in the midst of which stands a small building of more recent date. Travellers in North China must have observed that the presence of memorial slabs by the roadside is the first indication of the proximity of a place of any consideration.

Hsian is not an exception, the neighbourhood abounds in them. They belong for the most part to the present dynasty, and a majority of them were erected to perpetuate the virtues of women widowed in early life, who remained faithful to the memory of the departed spouse. It is not impossible, of course, that further evidence of the early establishment of the Christian religion in China might reward diligent search among the innumerable tablets around; but the interest the Chinese themselves take in these stone records, and the intimate knowledge of any that are valuable among them possessed by the experts among the scholars of the district, and indeed of the whole empire, reduce to a minimum the chances of such a find.

Within the walls, about a hundred yards from the road, and not to be distinguished by a casual glance from a score such around it, stands the Chingchiaopei (景教碑), as the famous Nestorian Tablet is known among the Chinese. Like most of the more pretentious of these stone slabs, it stands on the back of a tortoise, so buried in loess débris as to be barely visible. At a little distance on either side stand a couple of slabs very similar in size and appearance from that which stands between them. They are not of ancient date, nor are they of importance from any other point of view.

The traveller who sets out in search of the Nestorian Tablet with a copy of Williamson's *Journeys in North China*, in hand, is probably doomed to disappointment, as may be gathered from what has just been said. The picture there given of the tablet, flanked by other two and all imbedded in a wall as he found it in the

sixties will not serve to guide the seeker now, it would have misled him in the late seventies of the last century. There is nothing standing or in ruins, to suggest such a wall. There is no trace of mortar marking on the stone such as would remain after an enclosing wall had been pulled down. The two stone slabs that stand nearest are not quite in line and are at too great a distance to have been built in with it as they now stand. Semedo, writing shortly after its discovery in the seventeenth century, relates that the then Governor of the Provinces "caused it to be placed upon a fair pedestal, under a small arch, sustained by pillars at each end thereof, and open at the sides," which just as little corresponds with Williamson's description and illustration as does the present condition of the monument. Moreover, on the sides of the Tablet there is some Syriac writing which would have been hidden by such an enclosing wall, whereas the Governor's arch provided against injuries from the weather and at the same time secured that "true lovers of venerable antiquity" might also "feast their eyes" upon the inscription. In short the condition of the Tablet was formerly, and for the past twenty odd years has been, such as to suggest the question whether the slab shown to and accepted by the late author of the *Journeys* as the Nestorian Tablet was really that interesting monument at all.

A photograph of the Tablet was taken in the year 1887 and in conjunction with a sketch of its surroundings, was published in the *Graphic* of that year. A copy of this photograph was sent, a couple of years later, to the Doyen of the Diplomatic Body at Peking, with the request that the Tsungli Yamén might be approached to secure the interest of the Ministers in the preservation of this historic relic of ancient days. This action was taken, at the instance of the late Dr. Williamson, by the Shanghai Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. The Yamén sent a courteous reply, promising to take such steps as might be found necessary to preserve it against injury. What they did was to send a hundred taels to the local authorities with instructions to erect a suitable covering. Just as flowing water is absorbed by the sand, and evaporated by the sun, so public funds in China diminish as they go, and of the hundred taels allotted in Peking only five reached Hsian. This sum was devoted to the erection of a diminutive brick pavilion, something after the model of that

mentioned by Semedo, and which disappeared in a proportionately brief space of time.

The Tablet stands about seven feet high, (unfortunately the measurements are not at hand) exclusive of the dragons that, carved in relief, coil themselves over a small square tablet which surmounts the body of the slab. The inscription on this minor tablet is in larger characters than that below, though the style is the same. It runs:—

中國碑
教流行
大秦景

and may be translated "The stone Tablet (commemorating) the Establishment in China of the Illustrious Religion of Syria." Immediately above these words and underneath the intertwining of the dragons, if dragons they are, that arise from either side, is an ornamental cross, which is not *in situ* the prominent feature it is frequently represented to be. It is not suggested that this cross is the work of a later hand, it occupies a space not easily accounted for on any other hypothesis than that it was originally intended for its present purpose. But the cross is not cut in relief as the dragons are, neither are its lines as deep in any part as are those of the inscription. Indeed this particular figure might easily be overlooked by the casual observer. The characters in the body of the inscription do not differ in form from those in current use, but according to expert native opinion the caligraphy is indisputably that of the Tang dynasty.* At the foot of the slab, and on the sides of it, there are inscriptions in Syriac writing, translations of which will be found with such renderings of the Chinese text as have been published.

The authenticity of the Nestorian Tablet has, of course, been called in question, though apparently only by foreign, never by native critics. The latter approaching the subject from their own peculiar standpoint and ignorant of the broader history of

* In a volume of papers written by the late A. Wylie, and recently published in Shanghai under the title "Chinese Researches," the history, authenticity and contents of the tablet are exhaustively treated. Among other interesting material drawn from native sources a work on caligraphy is quoted, in which the following remarks are made on this particular specimen:—"This tablet is distinguished among the hand writings of the Tang, for its extreme clearness, softness, elegance, and richness."

the Christian religion to which it contributes and to which it must be related at some stage, late or early, unhesitatingly pronounce in its favour. Their decision is largely based on external evidence, a department into which no foreign critic has ever qualified himself to enter. On the other hand scholars such as Wylie and Legge have brought to bear upon it the rich stores of their reading in Chinese history and by the light find evidences of its authenticity, direct and indirect. It is not too much to say that the Nestorian Tablet has been by their labours raised out of the region of discussion and that it now stands a confirmed witness to the presence in the China of the Tang dynasty of a form of Christianity more or less corrupt. However, it must not be assumed that the Tablet is the only witness to this historical fact, for the Chang-an-chih (長安志) or Anna's of Changan, written in the reign of Shen Tsung (神宗) of the Sung dynasty (circa 1076)* mentions among the monasteries and temples of the city those called *Hsien-sz* (祆祠) and since, as a note informs the reader, *hsien* is a modern substitute for 天, Wylie may be right in speaking of the "Heaven Worshippers." And he has certainly given good reasons (*Chinese Researches*) for his conclusion that these Heaven Worshippers were Israelites. As well as, and different from the *Hsien-sz*, the annals mention the *P'o-sz hu-sz*, (波斯胡寺) or Persian Temples and a note to the passage which describes the location of one of them, says that it was built for the Syrian priest Alosz (perhaps a misprint for Alopun, the name of the Nestorian priest who first visited China according to the inscription on the Tablet), by the Emperor T'aitung (太宗) (otherwise known as Chengkuan, 真觀) of the Tang dynasty in the twelfth year of his reign. It is thus evident, and the testimony might be multiplied, that in the early Tang foreign religions gained a foothold in China and among them Nestorian Christianity. Wylie concludes his account of the Nestorian Tablet with these words:—"We have thus glanced at the several points of evidence which appear to us most conspicuous, leaving out of view what is said on the subject by adherents of the Christian faith, foreign or native. We

* The copy before the writer was reprinted in the reign of Ch'ien Lung of the present dynasty (1736-96).

have given extracts from seventeen native authors (and the number might be easily enlarged) respecting this tablet, each of whom has some thing peculiar to say regarding it; but we have not been able to discover the slightest hint of a suspicion as to its genuineness or authenticity. The discovery of the imperial proclamation it contains, also in a book of the Sung dynasty, and the record in two different works, one of the Sung and one of the Tang, of the existence of a foreign temple in the very spot indicated on the tablet, form a species of corroboration not to be overlooked, while the testimony of this work as to other foreign temples is valuable collateral evidence." (*Researches, Historical*, p. 75.)

The inscription on the tablet is lengthy. It begins with a statement of the Being and Unity of God, of Creation, of Satan, the Fall, and consequent condition of man; of the Trinity, but incidentally in its expression reproducing the idea on which the charge of heresy was brought against Nestorius; of the Messiah, virgin-born, of the wise men, of His teaching, of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, of Baptism, of the Sign of the Cross, and of the customs of the Illustrious Religion, but strangely omitting all reference to the Crucifixion.

There follows a section setting forth how the Most Virtuous Alopun from Syria was among the enlightened and holy men who came to China during the reign of T'ai Tsung, founder of the Tang dynasty. A.D. 635 was the year of his arrival at Ch'ang-an (Hsian). The inscription goes on to mention the translation of the sacred books (the Scriptures, these translations are not known to exist), the Imperial interest in the new Religion, evidenced by the issue of a proclamation commending it and ordering the erection of a monastery to accommodate twenty-one priests in the Ining (義寧坊) section of the Metropolis. Then follows a laudation of the Emperor, easily paralleled by the fulsome adulation of James I. with which some Bibles are adorned in England until this very day. After that follows a description of Syria, more brilliant than accurate, and the narrative returns to China and to Kaotsung the successor of T'aitung, and how Nestorianism spread through the provinces in his time. History is continued briefly through several reigns, till the date of the tablet is reached, A.D. 781. At this point an ode is introduced which Wylie translates in seventeen four line stanzas.

It is a précis in the same flowery yet concise style, of what precedes it in prose.

The Syriac inscription is largely devoted to a record of the names of dignitaries of the local Nestorian Church. Of the Nestorians modern China knows nothing. The Shensi *Tungchih* or Annals of the province of Shensi, compiled early in the present dynasty, does not mention their chapels either in the chapter on Temples or in that on Ancient Remains. Semedo relates that when he visited Hsian early in the seventeenth century, he was informed by a Christian that in an adjacent town, which he calls Tamo, "there were some who when they went out of doors, did make the figure of the Cross upon their foreheads and being asked the reason of their customs, they answered only that they had learnt it of their ancestours." Diligent search however proved futile and nothing further was discovered. This seems to dispose of the theory that the Roman Catholics absorbed the remnant of the Nestorians; more probably, as Semedo suggests, many of them became Mahomedans, and no doubt many more relapsed into paganism.

The account of the discovery of the stone as given by Semedo runs as follows:—"In the year 1625, as they were digging the foundation for to erect a certain building neere to the city of Siganfu, the capitall citie of the Province of Xensi, the workmen lighted upon a table of stone about nine palmes long, and more than four in breadth, and above one palm in thickness. The top of it (that is, one of the extremities or ends, of the length thereof), endeth in the forme of a Pyramid, above two palm-s in height, and above one palmes breadth at the Basis. On the plaine of this Pyramid there is a well formed Crosse, the extremities whereof end in flower deluces, after the fashion of that cross, which is reported to have been found graved on the Sepulchre of the Apostle S. Thomas, in the towne of Meliapor, and as they were anciently painted in Europe, of which there are some yet to be seen at this day.

"Scarcely had the Chine-ses discovered and cleansed this notable piece of antiquitie, when excited by the fervour of their natural curiosity, they ranne to the Governor to give him notice of it, who being much joyed at this newes, presently come to see it, and caused it to be placed upon a faire pedestal, under a small arch, sustained by pillars at each end thereof,

and open at the sides, that it might, be both defended from the injuries of the weather and also feast the eyes of such as are true lovers of venerable antiquity. He caused it also to be set within the circuit of a Temple, belonging to the Bonzi (i.e. Buddhists,) not farre from where it was taken up.

"There was a wonderfull concourse of people to see this stone, partly for the antiquity thereof, and partly for the novelty of the strange Characters which was to be seen thereon." Semedo, who was then at Hangchow, heard of this newly discovered treasure in due course, and rejoiced later that he was one of the first among foreigners to see it. "I esteemed it a happy abode, in that I had the opportunity to see the stone, and being arrived I took no thought for anything else. I saw it and read it, and went often to read behold and consider it at leisure, and above all I did much admire that being so ancient it should be so entire, and have the letters so plainly and neatly graven."

Semedo was professedly ignorant of the language to which the unknown characters belonged and only discovered them to be Syriac when he submitted them to one who chanced to be an expert in that tongue. His account was written in Italian; the English translation from which these extracts are made was published in London in 1655.

A little behind the Tablet above described there stands on a pedestal about three feet from the ground a large round stone basin, which has probably suggested itself to every foreign visitor as a baptismal font and a probable relic of early Christianity in China. The stone is of a whitish color, probably crystallised limestone; the basin is much larger than one could stretch round, and is more than two feet deep. It is finished but not polished, and around the inner rim is an inscription bearing date about 1797 A.D., which states that the font was presented to the Buddhist monastery by a certain general officer on his way to the western frontier.

VIII.

Most remote of all the mythological or semi-mythological figures that stand enveloped in the mists of the dawn of Chinese history is the mysterious Fu Hsi (伏羲) whose date is computed at well nigh three thousand years before our own era. His

birthplace is said to lie in the neighbourhood of Hsian. With him the Chinese connect the beginnings of things. He discovered the use of salt, under the influence of which men lost the gills and the hair with which their bodies had previously been furnished. He taught them how to hunt and how to fish, how to split wood for firing and therewith to cook what they took in the chase and from the streams. He taught them the care of flocks and herds, too, and how to twist silken threads and to produce harmonious sounds therefrom. He found family life matriarchal, he instituted marriage and so introduced the patriarchal type which has persisted nowhere so strongly as in China. Men in those days kept their records by means of knotted cords, similar probably to those Cortes found in use in Mexico. Fu Hsi superseded them by written characters and introduced a calendar. The diagrams elaborated in the Iching (易經), the Book of Permutations, the occult influences of which pervade Chinese life, social and political, to the present day, he copied from the back of a turtle that appeared in the Yellow River. Fu Hsi established his government at Ch'enchou (陳州) near K'ai-fengfu in Honan. There, according to local legend, his body is buried, his head at Chengyangkuan (正陽關) in Anhui at the junction of the rivers Ying and Hwai; or is the reverse the case? Near Ch'inchou in Kansu at a village called Sanyangchuang (三陽莊) there is a colossal image of the man whose beneficent influences are thus traceable over a large area. It is said to be naked and brown.

Hsian had its origin in an antiquity too remote for historical certainty. The Yellow Emperor built a city in the immediate neighbourhood and of that the present city is the direct descendant. The locality has varied within the limits of a few miles, the names under which it has been known have changed with every dynasty, and sometimes more than once under the same dynasty. It has been burnt to the ground, only to rise from its ashes again, but the identity of the city has never been lost; that has survived the vicissitudes of history.

The Yellow Emperor, usually called Hsuan Yuan (軒轅), belongs to China's mythical period, for Chinese history in the usual sense of the word does not begin till well on in the eighth century before our era. Nothing is known of him personally, nor of the extent of his Empire,

nor of the nature of his rule. His name, taken perhaps from the name of the soil of the loess plateau,* may mark the transition from tribal chieftaincy to territorial sovereignty. Like their neighbours and racial cousins the Mongols, and like the ancient Hebrews, the early Chinese were shepherds and in that character found their way to Eastern Asia. To this their written language bears witness. A powerful nomad tribe arriving in a district of such amazing fertility as must have seemed to men accustomed to the steppes and mountains of the North and West, might well be tempted to become agriculturalists. Settled habits, increased wealth, permanent dwelling-places, successful defence of the new settlements against predatory tribes, would suggest and facilitate the change from the headship of a people to the lordship of the land they had seized and occupied. Theirs was the yellow earth, did he dub himself the Yellow Emperor?

The Great Yü (大禹 circa 2197 B.C.) whose herculean labours saved the land from flood, divided the country into nine sections. That west of the Yellow River and North of the Chingling was called Yungchou (雍州), a name to which recourse was had under the Sui dynasty, or, alternatively, Kuanchung (關中), a name still applied to the province of Shensi. Under the Ch'in (秦) dynasty the region was first divided into districts for purposes of government, these were known as chün and hsien (郡縣), the latter of which persists. The former has given way to fu (府) which was first applied to Hsian in the reign of Kaiyuan of the T'ang dynasty, (唐開元, A.D. 713) but survives as an alternative term used in writing with terseness and elegance.

The founder of the Chou dynasty, Wu Wang, had a house, apparently a residence (卜宅), thirty li south of the site of the present city. This was the original Hao-ching (鎬京) a name which persists as an alternative designation to Hsian, till the present time. Later, on the downfall of the tyrant Chou Hsin (紂辛 1122 B.C.), this residence formed the nucleus of a city, which was destroyed by the First Emperor of the Ts'in, he who built the Great Wall and burnt the Confucian classics.

Hsian, or Ch'angan, for Hsian as a name for the city dates only from the

* Richtofen.

fourteenth century of our era, was the capital of the Ch'in dynasty, and of the Han dynasty that succeeded it during the reigns of about half its Emperors, when the capital was transferred to Loyang in Honan.

Once again, on the accession of the Tang dynasty, Hsian, then known as Chingchaochün (京兆郡), became the metropolis. When that dynasty fell, the ephemeral dynasties that succeeded it, and later the Sung and other dynasties that held sway over the whole land for longer periods, established their capitals elsewhere.

When the Mings were tottering to their downfall, a native of Shensi, Li Tze-sh'eng (李子成), was driven by famine to brigandage between 1627-1629. Grown bold by success he attempted greater things. In 1642 he captured K'aifengfu (開封府) the capital of Honan; marching westward he forced the passage of the Yellow River at T'ungkuan and after a three days' siege took Hsian, devoting it to three days' pillage. There in 1644 he proclaimed himself as Chuanglieti (莊烈帝) first Emperor of a new dynasty which he called the Ta Shun (大順). Semedo has *Théen* as though it were (天). He found little opposition to the capture of Peking, when the last Emperor of the Mings hanged himself on the usurper's arrival. Meanwhile a Ming general Wu San-kuei was fighting against the Tartars in Manchuria. Tidings reached him that the conquering usurper had massacred his father and taken possession of his concubine. Wu immediately submitted to the Tartars and returned to Peking where, at the head of a mixed force of Chinese and Tartars, he defeated Li. Beaten and driven from Peking Li established himself at Hsian, whither Wu pursued him and drove him out once more. The present Tartar dynasty had made itself secure in the North and henceforth Wu maintained himself in semi-independence in Hsian.

The walls of the present city were built in the early years of the reign of the founder of the Ming dynasty, Hung Wu (明洪武 1368-1399), and at the same time it received the name which it has retained ever since. The dimensions of the walls as given in the Provincial Annals confirm approximately the conclusions of the writer and other visitors. The length of the walls together is forty li, about twelve miles English; their height is three chang,

say thirty-two feet English. In the year 1526 the towers were added to the gates and forty-two years later these were finished with tiles.

The various names under which the city has been known under the different dynasties are set out below in tabular form on the authority of the Provincial Annals. It will be remembered that the Prefectural city includes within its walls the two departmental cities Ch'anganhsien and Hsienyanghsien. These cities also have had their names changed at least as frequently as has the city which together they comprise; but these names need not be set down here. They may be found in the Provincial Annals, or in the Annals of Changan.

| DYNASTY. | NAME. |
|---------------|--|
| Chow 周 | { Hsian lay within the Imperial Demesne 畿地. |
| Ch'in 秦 | Neishih 內史. |
| Han 漢 | { Weinanchün 渭南郡. Neishih 內史. |
| | { Yuncishih 右內史. Chingchaoyin 京兆尹. |
| Wei 魏 | Chingchaozhou 京兆守. |
| Chin 晉 | Chingchaoyin 京兆尹. |
| Sui 隋 | { Yungchou 雍州. Chingchaochün 京兆郡. |
| | { Chingchaochün 京兆郡. Yungchou 雍州. |
| T'ang 唐 | Chingchaofo 京兆府. |
| T'ang 唐 | Yungp'ingchiün 永平軍. |
| After Tang 後唐 | Chingchaofo 京兆府. |
| After Chin 後晉 | Chinch'ang 晉昌. |
| After Han 後漢 | Yunghsing 永興. |
| Sung 宋 | { Chingchaofo 京兆府 in the Yunghsingchun Cir- cuit 永興軍路. |
| | { in the Chingchaofo Cir- cuit 京兆府路. |
| Kin 金 | { Anhsi Circuit 安西路. Fengyuan Circuit 奉元 路 |
| | { Anhsi Circuit 安西路. Fengyuan Circuit 奉元 路 |
| Ming 明 | Hsianfu 西安府. |
| Ch'ing 清 | Hsianfu 西安府. |

Marco Polo describes Hsian under the Yuan dynasty, briefly and probably from hearsay, for he does not seem to have visited it. He calls it Kaurenfu, a name

not readily identified with any of those given in the *Annals*. * Mahomedan writers refer to the city under the name of Kumdum.

IX.

About nine miles from the city of Pin-chou (邠州), to the North-West of Hsian, there is a gigantic image of Buddha carved out of the living rock. The figure is in a sitting posture and measures forty feet in height, a pendant figure comparing well with the stature of a man who might be called tall. It is reputed to have been cut out during the T'ang dynasty (618-906 A.D.)

From a very early date the Dukes of Chou had their seat at Pinchou, but in the course of time came South to a place in the present Fenghsiangfu, now called Ch'ishanhsien (岐山縣), a city on the high-

* It has been suggested that Chingchaofu (京兆府) is meant. This is hardly possible, philologically, but the vagaries of romanisation have always been conspicuous. In this case there is the further complication of the lapse of centuries. Moreover Chingchaofu was not the name of the city under the Yuan, though it was under their predecessors the Kin. Can the adjacent city Hsienyang (咸陽) be intended? That city was formerly important and at a distance may have been confused with its neighbour. Sounds have of course changed since those days. Would it be possible that these characters could have been approximately so rendered by an Italian in the thirteenth century?

Yule, in his edition of Marco Polo, quotes Richthofen as having told him that on the Roman Catholic Fathers in Hsian denying that Polo had ever visited that city and that it had ever been called Quensanfu, he asked a native what the name of the city was during the supremacy of the Yuan. The man replied with much distinctness, Quensanfu. Richthofen, a non-Chinese speaker, would have been safer to trust the Fathers than his own ears. He could have set all doubt at rest, however, by asking for the Chinese characters, which he does not seem to have done. In the second year of the Emperor Yuan Shih of the Han dynasty (漢元始) the population of Hsian is given as 195,720 families (戶) or 682,468 persons (口), and that of Ch'angan as 80,800 families or 246,200 persons; the average per family would thus work out at about three persons. At that time Changan was situated a little under four miles to the northwest of the present site; then, as now, measurements were made from and to the great door of the magistrate's yamen.

way from Hsian to Ch'engtu. It is a quiet country town, with a prosperous, contented look about its broad main street and its spreading umbrageous trees. The river Wei rolls by, a murky yellow flood, a few miles to the South and not far from the point at which it leaves the hills for the plain. The Dukes of Chou owed allegiance to the Emperors of the Shang (商), or Yin (殷) as their dynasty was variously called, who held sway over the China of these days from 1766 to 1151 B.C. Shou (受), known to history as Chou-hsin (辛紂), was the last of his line, a debauched tyrant, the puppet of the favourites of his harem. The grossest barbarities ministered to their pleasure. It is related of him that he ordered a wise and honest minister to be eviscerated to ascertain whether there was any truth in the popular belief that exceptionally wise people had an extra orifice in the heart. When the son of a man whom he hated fell into his hands he made broth of his flesh and sent a basinful to the father. Shameless indecencies were the ordinary amusements of the court. Ch'ang, Prince of the West and Duke of Chou (昌公, 西伯), remonstrated with his sovereign, but without effect. A sycophant denounced him and the Duke was thrown into prison where he lay for two years. Then the people bribed their monarch with a present which included a beautiful concubine. Released from durance, the loyal Duke resumed his remonstrances but, as before, without avail. Ch'ang was succeeded by his son Fa (發) who proved the worthy son of a worthy father. The time for expostulation came to an end. The Emperor, now under the influence of a woman viler than her predecessors, seemed lost to every sense of shame as a man, and to have forgotten his responsibilities as head of the State. Fa led the nobles against their debased lord, defeating him near Menchin (孟津), on the right bank of the Yellow River near Honanfu, Chouhsin's capital. Fa became founder of the new dynasty of Chou, establishing his capital at Ch'angan, the Hsian of more modern days; he is known as Wu-wang, the Martial King (武皇). The Dukes of Chou were the typical rulers upon whose virtues Confucius never tired of descanting. He was not an originator but a transmitter, not an author but an editor, seeking only to expound the words and ways of these ancient worthies to the degenerate moderns of his own time. Such

records of their lives as have come down to us are too scanty to enable us to form an adequate notion of the character of the men themselves. They lie in the shadow of the Sage whose glory they were. What we do know warrants the conclusion that they must have been of a stamp to set them in marked contrast to their interpreter. They were men of action, enterprising, loyal to the sovereign so long as he stood for the national ideals, patient even with the crimes they abhorred, hopeful of reform while hope was dying a lingering death, but relentless when the time for action came. No shirkers of responsibility, they were dukes not in name only but in truth, ready to die if need be for the people and for the country, but preferring to live, and determined to live, if so High Heaven might purpose, to establish order and liberty on the earth. Confucius was run in the philosophic mould, subjective, introspective, meditative, self-centred, subtle, penetrating, sententious, cold, and aloof even from his family, a man of limited humanity, who attached an exaggerated importance not so much to personal dignity as to the minutiae of etiquette, whose ironical fate it was to contribute little but this last to the life of his country. Chinese history would have taken a different course, it may well be assumed, had the influence of the Dukes of Chou been transmitted through a medium other than the callous pedant whom the Chinese fatuously dub the Fellow of Heaven and Earth.

Fifteen English miles to the East of Hsian and on the same side of the River Wei, lies the city of Lint'unghsien (臨潼縣), under the shadow of Fleet Horse Mountain (驪山 Lishan). The First Emperor of the Ch'in (秦始皇) lies buried there. This is the man who sought to blot out the past and to begin anew the history of China, with himself as the founder of a line of kings to endure for ten thousand generations. Forty-five years later his dynasty was replaced by the Han. Equally futile was his scheme to protect his country from the ravages of the Tartar and the Mongol by surrounding it with a wall. A man of ideas he! The wall remains more or less entire, but the Mongol and the Tartar have taken turns upon his throne. His burial place was the work of his son and successor. It measured fifty feet high and a mile and a-half in circumference. Its splendour passed into a proverb. "The underground bazaar of the Emperor

of the Ch'in" (秦皇地市). The roof reproduced the Celestial dome, the floor with its quicksilver rivers was the earth in miniature. Enormous candles of seal (魚人) fat illuminated the scene. Secrecy was secured by the simple expedient of building the labourers in the tumulus that covered the tomb.

At a little distance from the South gate of Lint'unghsien in a cave at the Northern foot of Lishan there is a thermal spring. It is too hot for use at its mouth but baths have been made through which the water flows, the temperature decreasing as it goes. An ancient directory to the baths says that in order to avoid scalding, three suitable animals must be offered in sacrifice on entering. The First Emperor when on a visit here built a cairn with an inscription. The Emperor Wu Ti of the Han dynasty (漢武帝 B.C. 140-87) extended the building and added ornamentation. At the present time there are several buildings on the spot available for visitors. These have been erected from time to time by wealthy merchants and officials, with whom it is a favourite resort. Accommodation with facilities for cooking is gratuitous, and there are separate buildings containing baths for men and women.

There are other thermal springs at a place called Tanyütang, twenty-four miles south of Hsian.

Eastward from Lint'ung is the city of Huachou (華州) which contests with the next city, Weinanhsien, (渭南縣) for the credit of having been the birthplace of the Mahomedan rebellion. Both cities are in ruins, containing little more than the indispensable public buildings. In each case the returning population and trade have centred in the western suburb, which are probably as busy now as were the cities themselves in former days. Continuing Eastward the road next touches Huayinhsien (華陰縣) a small place quite outshone by the village of Huayinmiao (華陰廟) less than two miles further on. These places take their names from their proximity to Hua Shan (華山) one of the five famous mountains of China. The story runs that the Emperor Kang Hsi of the present dynasty, a man somewhat resembling Haroun Al Raschid in his taste for wandering through his realms, rested here one night and dreamed that he had seen a magnificent temple on the spot. Later on he had just such a temple as he had seen erected there. The buildings are extensive

and look clean and well kept, though of course they are no more imposing than is any of the architecture of China. The inns, whereat is provided entertainment for man and beast, are numerous and commodious, though the great popularity of Huayinmiao as a resting-place depends neither upon situation, historic association, beauty of architecture, nor upon religious facilities, but upon the presence of a number of women in each inn from whom the temple bonzes are said to enjoy a handsome revenue. As a rule the hostleries of China are free from any ostentation of vice. Huayinmiao is quite an exception.

A SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER.

After Gordon had broken the back of the Taip'ing rebellion, in the execution of a British policy which time has not confirmed as wisdom, the Imperial forces made a speedy end of armed opposition to the Manchu dynasty in the maritime and Southern provinces. But the country had been shaken throughout its length and breadth, and did not readily regain the equilibrium lost in its recent throes. The machinery of government had been thrown out of gear, commerce paralysed, and even agricultural interests, always the last to suffer outside the immediate area of disturbance, shared generally in the consequences of prolonged unrest. Rebellions broke out sporadically, symptomatic of the deep-rooted diseases from which the nation suffered. A horde of mounted insurgents known as the Nienfei (捻匪) were the most threatening with which the government had to deal. Freed from his engagements in the South through the defeat of the Longhairs (長毛 ch'ang mao), as the Chinese call the Taipings from their repudiation of the queue and partially shaven head, the distinctive mark of Chinese submission to the Tartars, Tso Kung-pao met and scattered the Nienfei somewhere not very far from Hankow. Following them North, he dispersed them everywhere, stamping out the last trace of that rebellion. A mightier task awaited him, the story of which is so intimately connected with Hsian and its daughter cities of the plain—to use the Hebrew figure—that a brief outline of its events must be given here.

The importance of the Ch'ingling range from a social and economic point of view has already been mentioned. From a political and military standpoint its importance is no less. Speaking generally, it

may be taken as the Northern limit of the Taip'ing victories. Progress beyond a line continued through the Chingling eastward to the sea was small, if indeed progress there were at all. All North China was prepared against the rebels. Villages and towns were fortified, city walls renewed, forts were built on points of vantage, volunteers armed and drilled. As in other parts, so on the Hsian Plain. In Weinanhsien according to some authorities, in Huachou according to others, a certain Chinese gentleman enlisted a number of Mahomedan braves to defend his property and his person. On their dismissal when the scare had subsided, a dispute arose about payment. No doubt the ex-postulations of the chagrined braves were more forcible than polite. The magnate laid a trap for his recalcitrant henchmen and had them massacred, in whole or in part. Gathering their forces from far and near, the Mahomedan community made common cause with their betrayed brethren, and retaliated by reducing the city to a wilderness and slaughtering the men, women and children indiscriminately. So runs the story. Another is to the effect that when preparations were making for the defence, the use of a certain bamboo coppice for the supply of spear shafts was accorded to the Chinese, but refused to the Mahomedans, who seized by force what they required. Both tales are probably based on fact. The difference between the Chinese and the Mahomedans is not religious merely, it is racial. The relations of the two peoples have never been cordial; there is always tension, sometimes friction, even when they are at peace. It seems more probable that at Huachou the fire was kindled that devastated the provinces of Kansu and Shensi, and Kashgaria, from 1861 till 1878. The rebellion made no progress south of the Ch'ingling. A few years earlier, however, in 1856, an attempt had been made to massacre the Mahomedans of Yunnan, in the south-west corner of the Empire, but they had retaliated with such success that the standard of revolt was raised and for some years they held the major portion of the province, defeating every attempt of the Imperialists, whose hands were tied by the Taipings at the coast, to reduce the rebels and repossess the cities they had taken. The Mahomedan leader was a man called Tu Wen-hsiu (杜文秀) a native of Talifu, of which city the followers of the Prophet formed fully one-third. Tu was known abroad as the the Sultan Suleiman; the

Mussulmans of Yunnan are known as Panthays.

Gordon's success against the Taipings gave the death blow to this rebellion also. As soon as Imperial troops could be spared from the maritime and riverine provinces bodies of them were dispatched for service in Yunnan. The Mahomedans offered a stubborn resistance, but the Imperialists steadily reduced the province to order. Tu poisoned himself after the defeat he knew must be final, dying as he reached the camp of the victorious Imperialists. This was in 1872. Thus for ten years or more these formidable rebellions were contemporaneous. Apparently they were not organically connected, but were related only through a common sentiment of contempt and hatred which crushing defeat in the North and in the South has not purged.

Tso opened up his campaign in Shensi against the hitherto successful Mahomedans in 1868, after seven years of success had attended the rebel arms. The whole country west of the Yellow River and North of the Ch'ing-ning was in their hands. The following year saw the province of Shensi pacified and its government reorganised. In 1871 Tso was brought to a standstill outside Suchoufu, (肅州府) thirty-six stages beyond Hsian, where he had to deal with the mutiny inevitable among unpaid troops. Two years later, in 1873, Suchou fell but no further advance was made till 1876 when a rapid march brought the Imperialists to Urumtsi, called Tihuachou (迪氏州) by the Chinese, but popularly Hungmiaotse (紅廟子) the Red Temple. The road lay for a great part of its length, thirty-six stages in all, through a desert where water was only obtainable at intervals sometimes as great as forty miles. Commissariat difficulties at this stage were surmounted by a simple expedient to which recourse was had probably for the first time in the history of warfare. Tso turned his soldiers into farmers for the nonce, sowed wheat, waited for the harvest and pushed on. The year 1878 saw the complete subjugation of the Mahomedans and the end of the rebellion.

Tso was Governor-General of Shen-Kan at this time, as well as Generalissimo of the Imperial forces. He repaired the road from Hsian to Kuldja, Ili (伊犁), as it is known to the Chinese, lining it on both sides with willows, the bulk whereof has long since been sacrificed to the narrow

utilitarian ideas of the Chinese for which, doubtless, poverty is largely responsible.

The Mahomedan rebellion arose to the East of Hsian, sweeping westward with irresistible fury and leaving only desolated cities in its track. Hsian itself was an exception, the city was inviolate, Richtofen credits the city walls; locally it is said there was an arrangement made between the leaders that the intermural Mahomedans should not leave the city and that their persons should be respected; on their part the rebels were not to attack the city.

Why did the Mahomedan rebellions fail? Success seems to have lain within their grasp alike in Yunnan and the Northwest. The Mahomedans whisper with a scowl that their leaders betrayed them. They have not relinquished the hope of attaining independence.

In 1896 one of their rebellions assumed formidable dimensions in Kansu and was only reduced after it had made considerable headway in the neighbourhood of Hsining (西寧府). The situation in that province is always full of possibilities, the Government never without cause for apprehension of its Mahomedan subjects. It is not impossible that the ultimate collapse of the 1861-1878 rebellion was due to the leaders lost—"just for a handful of silver he left us, just for a ribbon to stick on his coat"—but the true causes of the defeat of men who had been in successful rebellion for seven years lay deeper. Betrayal may give the final blow to a lost cause, causes are not lost by betrayal. Superficial elements of superiority in character notwithstanding, the Mahomedan on the whole does not reach the high average of the Chinese, and character tells. The wonderful staying power of the latter and their numerical and administrative superiority all contributed. In leadership also the advantage lay on the same side, the seven years of the rebellion had not produced one man to oppose Tso. The Chinese had a positive idea for which they fought, the maintenance of a government that has continued for centuries surviving every change of dynasty. The Mahomedans had but the negative sentiment of hatred to the people among whom they lived, but who had neither assimilated them nor yet had yielded anything of national character to their influence.

Despite the disintegrating forces before which other races have been sent under, the Chinese have maintained their solidarity unimpaired through centuries,

may, millenniums. Rival dynasties have shared the country or have contested for the supremacy. Civil wars have sent the people through weary years. Warriors and statesmen have raised the standard of revolt. Oppression has forced the people themselves to rebellion. Able and beneficent rulers have bequeathed the sovereignty to their weak and immoral sons. Unscrupulous ministers have laid heavy burdens on the patient necks of a long-suffering people, incompetent ones have exposed the national unity to the heaviest strains, internal and external. The national sentiment has survived it all. Whatever divisions have taken place have been

temporary. Rival dynasties have been short-lived and the country has always reverted to its integrity after a brief interval of disunion.

On the other hand while absorbing power is almost characteristic of the peoples of the West, China stands for the opposite capacity. The men of Han (漢人) as they love to call themselves, have never absorbed either the aboriginal races they displaced, or subsequent arrivals among themselves. Like the Jews, they are a people apart without affinity for the other nations of the earth.

THE END.



