

rain was plentiful and to its great quantity was due the fertility of this yellow soil. (Cf. *A. de Lapparent, Leçons de Géographie Physique*, 2^e éd. 1898, p. 566.)—H. C.]

Though we do not expect to find Polo taking note of geological features, we are surprised to find no mention of a characteristic of Shan-si and the adjoining districts, which is due to the *löss*; viz. the practice of forming cave dwellings in it; these in fact form the habitations of a majority of the people in the *löss* country. Polo *has* noticed a similar usage in Badakhshan (I. p. 161), and it will be curious if a better acquaintance with that region should disclose a surface formation analogous to the *löss*. (*Richthofen's Letters*, VII. 13 *et passim*.)

NOTE 2.—T'aianfu is, as Magaillans pointed out, T'AI-YUAN FU, the capital of the Province of Shan-si, and Shan-si is the "Kingdom." The city was, however, the capital of the great T'ang Dynasty for a time in the 8th century, and is probably the *Tájah* or *Taiyúnah* of old Arab writers. Mr. Williamson speaks of it as a very pleasant city at the north end of a most fertile and beautiful plain, between two noble ranges of mountains. It was a residence, he says, also of the Ming princes, and is laid out in Peking fashion, even to mimicking the Coal-Hill and Lake of the Imperial Gardens. It stands about 3000 feet above the sea [on the left bank of the Fen-ho.—H. C.]. There is still an Imperial factory of artillery, matchlocks, etc., as well as a powder mill; and fine carpets like those of Turkey are also manufactured. The city is not, however, now, according to Baron Richthofen, very populous, and conveys no impression of wealth or commercial importance. [In an interesting article on this city, the Rev. G. B. Farthing writes (*North China Herald*, 7th September, 1894): "The configuration of the ground enclosed by T'ai-yuan fu city is that of a 'three times to stretch recumbent cow.' The site was chosen and described by Li Chun-feng, a celebrated professor of geomancy in the days of the T'angs, who lived during the reign of the Emperor T'ai Tsung of that ilk. The city having been then founded, its history reaches back to that date. Since that time the cow has stretched twice. . . . T'ai-yuan city is square, and surrounded by a wall of earth, of which the outer face is bricked. The height of the wall varies from thirty to fifty feet, and it is so broad that two carriages could easily pass one another upon it. The natives would tell you that each of the sides is three miles, thirteen paces in length, but this, possibly, includes what it will be when the cow shall have stretched for the third and last time. Two miles is the length of each side; eight miles to tramp if you wish to go round the four of them."—H. C.] The district used to be much noted for cutlery and hardware, iron as well as coal being abundantly produced in Shan-si. Apparently the present Birmingham of this region is a town called Hwai-lu, or Hwo-luh'ien, about 20 miles west of Cheng-ting fu, and just on the western verge of the great plain of Chihli. [Regarding Hwai-lu, the Rev. C. Holcombe calls it "a miserable town lying among the foot hills, and at the mouth of the valley, up which the road into Shan-si lies." He writes (p. 59) that Ping-ting chau, after the Customs' barrier (Ku Kwan) between Chih-li and Shan-si, would, under any proper system of management, at no distant day become the Pittsburg, or Birmingham, of China.—H. C.] (*Richthofen's Letters*, No. VII. 20; *Cathay*, xcvi. cxiii. cxiv.; *Rennie*, II. 265; *Williamson's Journeys in North China*; *Oxenham*, u. s. 11; *Klaproth* in *J. As. sér.* II. tom. i. 100; *Izzat Ullah's Pers. Itin.* in *J. R. A. S.* VII. 307; *Forke, Von Peking nach Ch'ang-an*, p. 23.)

["From Khavailu (Hwo-luh'ien), an important commercial centre supplying Shansi, for 130 miles to Sze-tien, the road traverses the loess hills, which extend from the Peking-Kalgan road in a south-west direction to the Yellow River, and which are passable throughout this length only by the Great Central Asian trade route to T'ai-yuan fu and by the Tung-Kwan, Ho-nan, *i.e.* the Yellow River route. (*Colonel Bell, Proc. R. G. S.* XII. 1890, p. 59.) Colonel Bell reckons seven days (218 miles) from Peking to Hwo-lu-h'ien and five days from this place to T'ai-yuan fu."—H. C.]

NOTE 3.—Martini observes that the grapes in Shan-si were very abundant and the