

It seems so likely that the latter part of the name *Pe-MACHING* ("White Maching") might have been confounded by foreigners with *Máchín* and *Manzi* (which in Persian parlance were identical), that I should be disposed to overlook the difficulty that we have no evidence produced to show that Pemaching was a place of any consequence.

It is possible, however, that the name *Acbalec* may have been given by the Tartars without any reference to Chinese etymologies. We have already twice met with the name or its equivalent (*Acbaluc* in ch. xxxvii. of this Book, and *Chaghan Balghasun* in note 3 to Book I. ch. lx.), whilst Strahlenberg tells us that the Tartars call all great residences of princes by this name (Amst. ed. 1757, I. p. 7). It may be that Han-chung itself was so named by the Tartars; though its only claim that I can find is, that it was the first residence of the Han Dynasty. Han-chung fu stands in a beautiful plain, which forms a very striking object to the traveller who is leaving the T'sing-ling mountains. Just before entering the plains, the Helung Kiang passes through one of its wildest gorges, a mere crevice between vertical walls several hundred feet high. The road winds to the top of one of the cliffs in zigzags cut in the solid rock. From the temple of Kitau Kwan, which stands at the top of the cliff, there is a magnificent view of the Plain, and no traveller would omit this, the most notable feature between the valley of the Wei and Ch'êng-tu-fu. It is, moreover, the only piece of level ground, of any extent, that is passed through between those two regions, whichever road or track be taken. (*Richthofen*, MS. Notes.)

[In the *China Review* (xiv. p. 358) Mr. E. H. Parker, has an article on *Acbalec Manzi*, but does not throw any new light on the subject.—H. C.]

NOTE 2.—Polo's journey now continues through the lofty mountainous region in the north of Sze-ch'wan.

The dividing range Ta-pa-shan is less in height than the T'sing-ling range, but with gorges still more abrupt and deep; and it would be an entire barrier to communication but for the care with which the road, here also, has been formed. But this road, from Han-chung to Ch'êng-tu fu, is still older than that to the north, having been constructed, it is said, in the 3rd century B.C. [See *supra*.] Before that time Sze-ch'wan was a closed country, the only access from the north being the circuitous route down the Han and up the Yang-tz'ü. (*Ibid.*)

[Mr. G. G. Brown writes (*Jour. China Br. R. As. Soc.* xxviii. p. 53): "Crossing the Ta-pa-shan from the valley of the Upper Han in Shen-si we enter the province of Sze-ch'wan, and are now in a country as distinct as possible from that that has been left. The climate which in the north was at times almost Arctic, is now pluvial, and except on the summits of the mountains no snow is to be seen. The people are ethnologically different. . . . More even than the change of climate the geological aspect is markedly different. The loess, which in Shen-si has settled like a pall over the country, is here absent, and red sandstone rocks, filling the valleys between the high-bounding and intermediate ridges of palæozoic formation, take its place. Sze-ch'wan is evidently a region of rivers flowing in deeply eroded valleys, and as these find but one exit, the deep gorges of Kwei-fu, their disposition takes the form of the innervations of a leaf springing from a solitary stalk. The country between the branching valleys is eminently hilly; the rivers flow with rapid currents in well-defined valleys, and are for the most part navigable for boats, or in their upper reaches for lumber-rafts. . . . The horse-cart, which in the north and north-west of China is the principal means of conveyance, has never succeeded in gaining an entrance into Sze-ch'wan with its steep ascents and rapid unfordable streams; and is here represented for passenger traffic by the sedan-chair, and for the carriage of goods, with the exception of a limited number of wheel-barrows, by the backs of men or animals, unless where the friendly water-courses afford the cheapest and readiest means of intercourse."—H. C.]

Martini notes the musk-deer in northern Sze-ch'wan.