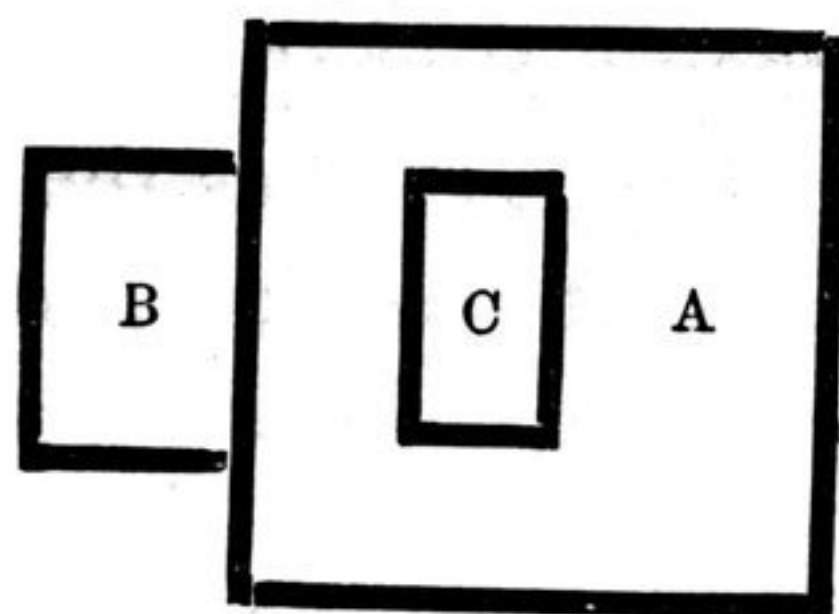


The modern French missions have a bishop in Ch'êng-tu fu, and the city has been visited of late years by Mr. T. T. Cooper, by Mr. A. Wylie, by Baron v. Richthofen, [Captain Gill, Mr. Baber, Mr. Hosie, and several other travellers]. Mr. Wylie has kindly favoured me with the following note:—"My notice all goes to corroborate Marco Polo. The covered bridge with the stalls is still there, the only difference being the absence of the toll-house. I did not see any traces of a tripartite division of the city, nor did I make any enquiries on the subject during the 3 or 4 days I spent there, as it was not an object with me at the time to verify Polo's account. The city is indeed divided, but the division dates more than a thousand years back. It is something like this, I should say [see diagram]. *



A. The Great City.
B. The Little City.
C. The Imperial City.

"The Imperial City (*Hwang Ching*) was the residence of the monarch Lew Pé (*i.e.* Liu Pei of p. 32) during the short period of the 'Three Kingdoms' (3rd century), and some relics of the ancient edifice still remain. I was much interested in looking over it. It is now occupied by the Public Examination Hall and its dependencies."

I suspect Marco's story of the Three Kings arose from a misunderstanding about this historical period of the *San-Kwé*, or Three Kingdoms (A.D. 222-264). And this tripartite division of the city may have been merely that which we see to exist at present.

[Mr. Baber, leaving Ch'êng-tu, 26th July, 1877, writes (*Travels*, p. 28): "We took ship outside the East Gate on a rapid narrow stream, apparently the city moat, which soon joins the main river, a little below the An-shun Bridge, an antiquated wooden structure some 90 yards long. This is in all probability the bridge mentioned by Marco Polo. The too flattering description he gives of it leads one to suppose that the present handsome stone bridges of the province were unbuilt at the time of his journey." Baber is here mistaken.

Captain Gill writes (*l.c.* II. p. 9): "As Mr. Wylie in recent days had said that Polo's covered bridge was still in its place, we went one day on an expedition in search of it. Polo, however, speaks of a bridge full half a mile long, whilst the longest now is but 90 yards. On our way we passed over a fine nine-arched stone bridge, called the Chin-Yen-Ch'iao. Near the covered bridge there is a very pretty view down the river."—H. C.]

Baron Richthofen observes that Ch'êng-tu is among the largest of Chinese cities, and is of all the finest and most refined. The population is called 800,000. The walls form a square of about 3 miles to the side, and there are suburbs besides. The streets are broad and straight, laid out at right angles, with a pavement of square flags very perfectly laid, slightly convex and drained at each side. The numerous commemorative arches are sculptured with skill; there is much display of artistic taste; and the people are remarkably civil to foreigners. This characterizes the whole province; and an air of wealth and refinement prevails even in the rural districts. The plain round Ch'êng-tu fu is about 90 miles in length (S.E. to N.W.), by 40 miles in width, with a copious irrigation and great fertility, so that in wealth and population it stands almost unrivalled. (*Letter VII.* pp. 48-66.)

[Mr. Baber (*Travels*, p. 26) gives the following information regarding the population of Ch'êng-tu: "The census of 1877 returned the number of families at about 70,000, and the total population at 330,000—190,000 being males and 140,000

* My lamented friend Lieutenant F. Garnier had kindly undertaken to send me a plan of Ch'êng-tu fu from the place itself, but, as is well known, he fell on a daring enterprise elsewhere. [We hope that the plan from a Chinese map we give from *M. Marcel Monnier's Itinéraires* will replace the promised one.

It will be seen that Ch'êng-tu is divided into three cities: the Great City containing both the Imperial and Tartar cities.—H. C.]