

acted as you have heard, they are kept with great care from light conduct afterwards.

Now I have related to you this marriage custom as a good story to tell, and to show what a fine country that is for young fellows to go to!

The people are Idolaters and an evil generation, holding it no sin to rob and maltreat: in fact, they are the greatest brigands on earth. They live by the chase, as well as on their cattle and the fruits of the earth.

I should tell you also that in this country there are many of the animals that produce musk, which are called in the Tartar language *Gudderi*. Those rascals have great numbers of large and fine dogs, which are of great service in catching the musk-beasts, and so they procure great abundance of musk. They have none of the Great Kaan's paper money, but use salt instead of money. They are very poorly clad, for their clothes are only of the skins of beasts, and of canvas, and of buckram.⁵ They have a language of their own, and they are called Tebet. And this country of TEBET forms a very great province, of which I will give you a brief account.

NOTE I:—The mountains that bound the splendid plain of Ch'êng-tu fu on the west rise rapidly to a height of 12,000 feet and upwards. Just at the skirt of this mountain region, where the great road to Lhása enters it, lies the large and bustling city of Yachaufu, forming the key of the hill country, and the great entrepôt of trade between Sze-ch'wan on the one side, and Tibet and Western Yunnan on the other. The present political boundary between China Proper and Tibet is to the west of Bathang and the Kin-sha Kiang, but till the beginning of last century it lay much further east, near *Ta-t'sien-lu*, or, as the Tibetans appear to call it, *Tartsédo* or *Tachindo*, which a Chinese Itinerary given by Ritter makes to be 920 *li*, or 11 marches from Ch'êng-tu fu. In Marco's time we must suppose that Tibet was considered to extend several marches further east still, or to the vicinity of Yachau.* Mr. Cooper's Journal describes the country entered *on the 5th march* from Ch'êng-tu as very mountainous, many of the neighbouring peaks being capped with snow. And he describes the people as speaking a language mixed with Tibetan for some distance before reaching Ta-t'sien-lu. Baron Richthofen also who, as we shall see, has thrown an entirely new light upon this part of Marco's itinerary, was exactly five days in travelling through a rich and

* Indeed Richthofen says that the boundary lay a few (German) miles west of Yachau. I see that Martini's map puts it (in the 17th century) 10 German geographical miles, or about 46 statute miles, west of that city.