sinks, leaving a saline deposit on the inside of the pan. This process is repeated until a layer, some four inches thick, and corresponding to the shape of the pan, is formed, when the salt is removed as a hollow cone ready for market. Care must be taken to keep the bottom of the pan moist; otherwise, the salt cone would crack, and be rendered unfit for the rough carriage which it experiences on the backs of pack animals. A soft coal, which is found just under the surface of the yellow-soiled hills seven miles to the west of Pai-yen-ching, is the fuel used in the furnaces. The total daily output of salt at these wells does not exceed two tons a day, and the cost at the wells, including the Government tax, amounts to about three half-pence a pound. The area of supply, owing to the country being sparsely populated, is greater than the output would lead one to expect."—H. C.]

NOTE 6.—The spiced wine of Kien-ch'ang (see note to next chapter) has even now a high repute. (*Richthofen.*)

NOTE 7.—M. Pauthier will have it that Marco was here the discoverer of Assam tea. Assam is, indeed, far out of our range, but his notice of this plant, with the laurel-like leaf and white flower, was brought strongly to my recollection in reading Mr. Cooper's repeated notices, almost in this region, of the *large-leaved tea-tree, with its white flowers;* and, again, of "the hills covered with *tea-oil* trees, all white with flowers." Still, one does not clearly see why Polo should give tea-trees the name of cloves.

Failing explanation of this, I should suppose that the cloves of which the text speaks were *cassia-buds*, an article once more prominent in commerce (as indeed were all similar aromatics) than now, but still tolerably well known. I was at once supplied with them at a *drogheria*, in the city where I write (Palermo), on asking for *Fiori di Canella*, the name under which they are mentioned repeatedly by Pegolotti and Uzzano, in the 14th and 15th centuries. Friar Jordanus, in speaking of the cinnamon (or cassia) of Malabar, says, "it is the bark of a large tree which has fruit and *flowers like cloves*" (p. 28). The cassia-buds have indeed a general resemblance to cloves, but they are shorter, lighter in colour, and not angular. The cinnamon, mentioned in the next lines as abundantly produced in the same region, was no doubt one of the inferior sorts, called cassia-bark.

Williams says: "Cassia grows in all the southern provinces of China, especially Kwang-si and Yun-nan, also in Annam, Japan, and the Isles of the Archipelago. The wood, bark, buds, seeds, twigs, pods, leaves, oil, are all objects of commerce. . . . The buds (*kwei-tz'*) are the fleshy ovaries of the seeds; they are pressed at one end, so that they bear some resemblance to cloves in shape." Upwards of 500 *piculs* (about 30 tons), valued at 30 dollars each, are annually exported to Europe and India. (*Chin. Commercial Guide*, 113-114.)

The only doubt as regards this explanation will probably be whether the cassia would be found at such a height as we may suppose to be that of the country in question above the sea-level. I know that cassia bark is gathered in the Kasia Hills of Eastern Bengal up to a height of about 4000 feet above the sea, and at least the valleys of "Caindu" are probably not too elevated for this product. Indeed, that of the Kin-sha or *Brius*, near where I suppose Polo to cross it, is only 2600 feet. Positive evidence I cannot adduce. No cassia or cinnamon was met with by M. Garnier's party where they intersected this region.

But in this 2nd edition I am able to state on the authority of Baron Richthofen that cassia is produced in the whole length of the valley of Kien-ch'ang (which is, as we shall see in the notes on next chapter, Caindu), though in no other part of Sze-ch'wan nor in Northern Yun-nan.

[Captain Gill (*River of Golden Sand*, II. p. 263) writes: "There were chestnut trees . . ; and the Kwei-Hua, a tree 'with leaves like the laurel, and with a small white flower, like the clove,' having a delicious, though rather a luscious smell.