

with caution, and for a year was kept prisoner by the Hiun-nu." When he adds, however, "but the relations which he had started brought the cultivated plants to China in the course of the next years," he goes on guessing or speculating.

In his recent study of Čaň K'ien, HIRTH¹ admits that of cultivated plants only the vine and alfalfa are mentioned in the *Ši ki*.² He is unfortunate, however, in the attempt to safeguard his former position on this question when he continues to argue that "nevertheless, the one hero who must be looked upon as the pioneer of all that came from the West was Chang K'ien." This is at best a personal view, but an unhistorical and uncritical attitude. Nothing allows us to read more from our sources than they contain. The *Ts'i min yao šu*, to which Hirth takes refuge, can prove nothing whatever in favor of his theory that the pomegranate, sesame, garlic,³ and coriander were introduced by Čaň K'ien. The work in question was written at least half a millennium after his death, most probably in the sixth century A.D., and does not fall back on traditions coeval with the Han and now lost, but merely resorts to popular traditions evolved long after the Han period. In no authentic document of the Han is any allusion made to any of these plants. Moreover, there is no dependence on the *Ts'i min yao šu* in the form in which we have this book at present. BRETSCHNEIDER⁴ said wisely and advisedly, "The original work was in ninety-two sections. A part of it was lost a long time ago, and much additional matter by later authors is found in the edition now current, which is in ten chapters. . . . According to an author of the twelfth century, quoted in the *Wen hien t'un k'ao*, the edition then extant was already provided with the interpolated notes; and according to Li Tao, also an author of the Sung, these notes had been added by Sun Kuň of the Sung dynasty."⁵ What such a work would be able to teach us on actual conditions of the Han era, I for my part am unable to see.

¹ *Journal Am. Or. Soc.*, Vol. XXXVII, 1917, p. 92. The new translation of this chapter of the *Ši ki* denotes a great advance, and is an admirable piece of work. It should be read by every one as an introduction to this volume. It is only on points of interpretation that in some cases I am compelled to dissent from Hirth's opinions.

² This seems to be the direct outcome of a conversation I had with the author during the Christmas week of 1916, when I pointed out this fact to him and remarked that the alleged attributions to Čaň K'ien of other plants are merely the outcome of later traditions.

³ This is a double error (see below, p. 302).

⁴ *Bot. Sin.*, pt. I, p. 77.

⁵ Cf. also PELLLOT (*Bull. de l'Ecole française*, Vol. IX, p. 434), who remarks, "Ce vieil et précieux ouvrage nous est parvenu en assez mauvais état."