

reputation as a merchant — a promise which, of course, I faithfully kept. It was a real pleasure to see the surprise of van Dijk and his faithful servant at my having succeeded, where they had failed, and to listen to the lying explanations of the merchant.

During the night a thermometer was stolen that had been hanging in the yard of the sarai throughout my stay. As it was the last I had, this was a nuisance. I sent for the innkeeper, who was responsible for all thefts perpetrated on his premises according to Chinese law, and threatened to shoot him if the thermometer was not found within the hour. The time came to an end, but no thermometer was forthcoming, so I had my horses brought out and told the hypocritical old fox that I was leaving in a quarter of an hour and would not pay a tchok if the instrument was not found. This worked better and in five minutes it was produced, the old fellow was paid and we parted friends.

Two roads lead from Lanchow to Hochow. One is an arbah road which makes a détour via Anting hsien, Tang-chia-pu and the Media ho. It was said to be 210 li and could be traversed in 4 days. The other road, I was told, went fairly straight in a SW direction and led across the mountains S of the valley of the Hwang ho. I chose the latter as being more interesting and not so well known. Just outside the W gate of the outer town we crossed the Lui t'ang ho, a small tributary of the Hwang ho. It came from the south along a valley between the hill with the four bastion-like towers SW of Lanchow and the former Manchurian fortress, and intersected the W suburb. W of this valley, which is barely  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a mile long, there are well tilled fields close to the town, with fruit-trees scattered about them, and fairly densely populated. They form a belt, a mile or two in width, between the Hwang ho and the hills in the S. A mile and a half from the town we reached the first of the hills after crossing an appreciable cleft, with steep sides, at their foot. We rode up the hills along another hollow. Our course, which had been W so far, now became more and more SW and SSW. Soon we came to a plateau intersected by several ravines. There was a Chinese cemetery on this. Its uniform small yellowish-grey mounds were relieved here and there by a memorial arch or a tall stone slab with a longish inscription. On the left, i.e. in the S, a chain of hills, which had opened SW of Lanchow to make room for a broad cleft, continued in an unbroken row in a W and WNW direction. They formed a fairly large mass of high ridges with a slightly dominating mountain here and there — all bare and grey with soft, curved outlines. As far as we could see, except during the rare moments, when we caught a glimpse of the Hwang ho, the same grey plateau-like hills, intersected by deep ravines, gradually led up to the mountains in the S. In the N the valley was shut in by similar hills that seemed in the W to run into those on our left. Looking back, we saw that the same grey ridges had closed up the valley in the E, too. There were no trees or bushes anywhere.

Having crossed the plateau we descended into a valley with a couple of houses and a few patches of field and trees. The dry bed of a river wound southward at its bottom. The valley was soon left behind and we followed another ravine with almost perpendicular sides that led us up to the hills. We climbed up the mountains gradually along the deep sunken road. At short intervals we passed 3 small villages, Hsitin, Gandia ing with 20 houses and Djang dawan. The cultivation of the fields is entirely dependent on rainwater here.