

has been reported by the Chinese missionary, Mathieu-Ly, who resides in the province Kiany-si. In the year 1834 he writes:—"Many of our Christians will surely die this year from starvation. The Almighty alone can aid them in such great distress. All harvests have been destroyed by the floods. For three years a large number of persons have lived upon the bark of an indigenous tree; others have eaten a light white earth which has been discovered in a mountain. It can only be obtained for silver, and not every one can, therefore, procure it. The people have first sold their wives, then their children, then their furniture, at last they have pulled down their houses and sold the wood. Many of them were, four years ago, wealthy men." The missionary Rameaux, also reported in 1834, from the province Hu-kuang, that many Chinese Christians have sent for him to administer to them the last sacrament, and foreseeing the hour when they were to die from starvation, actually died at that very time. The very dense population and industry which necessarily takes possession of everything, are, in cases of earthquakes and deluges, the cause of these circumstances in China.

The districts where stone-bread has been found are the northern province of Scham-si, the east provinces of Schan-tong and Kiang-nan, on the mouth of the Yellow river (Huang-hu,) the provinces Hu-kuang and Kiang-si, in the valley of the Blue river (Yantsekiang). It is very desirable to know the masses, localities, extent of occurrence of these earths, as well as their geognostic character. The analysis of the two kinds, which the author has obtained, renders it very probable that all similar substances belong to antediluvian deposits, some of which are very probably tripolitan, fresh water bioliths of infusoria, while others appear to be clay mixtures or real clays. (*Letten.*)

*A White Edible Earth of 1834, from China.*—The author obtained in the year 1841, by Humboldt, from Paris, a sample of the edible white earth, sent to Paris by the French missionary in China. One of the two pieces measured two inches in diameter, the other one inch. It has a white colour, similar to chalk, but is as light as *Kieselguhr* or Meerschaum, is somewhat fatty to the touch, not soiling the fingers, but very brittle. The pieces having been broken in those directions which were indicated by a previous crack, some of the internal surfaces had a rusty colour, but only superficially. Acids caused no effervescence. According to the analysis, this earth is merely silicate of alumina, the peculiar lightness of which is striking. If heated, it assumes a gray colour. In fifteen samples no organic mixture could be discovered by microscopic examination, which latter shows also no similarity between this substance and Meerschaum; there is also an entire absence of magnesia. This earth has much resemblance to lithomarge-