

the earth appear to be merely an abstract and popularisation of those of Ptolemy, of whom he speaks as the most godlike and wisest of men. He brings out in his compacter statements still more distinctly the erroneous notion that the Indian Sea was an enclosed basin terminating beyond the Gulf of the Sinæ. Here the Terra Incognita that lay east of the Sinæ, and the Terra Incognita that ran south of the Indian Sea in prolongation of Ethiopia, met and formed an angle. But the Sinæ themselves were the remotest denizens of the habitable world. Above them to the north and north-west lay the Seres and their metropolis; all east of these two nations was unknown land full of reedy and impenetrable swamps.¹

11. If we now turn to the SERES we find this name mentioned by classic authors much more frequently and at an earlier date by at least a century.² The name indeed is familiar enough to the Latin poets of the Augustan age, but always in a vague way, and usually with a general reference to Central Asia and the farther east.³ We find, however, that the first endeavours to assign

¹ All this is merely abstracted from Ptolemy. See the passages of the latter in Note II.

² There are two mentions of the Seres which *may* be much earlier. One is in a passage ascribed to Ctesias, which speaks of the Seres as people of portentous stature and longevity. The passage, however, is found in only one MS. (of the Bibliotheca of Photius), and is attended by other circumstances which cause doubt whether it is really from Ctesias (see Muller's *Ctesias*, p. 86 *seq.*, and his *Geog. Gr. Minores*, ii, 152). The other mention is found in a passage, or rather two passages, of Strabo. These also allude only to the longevity of the Seres, said to exceed two hundred years, and Strabo at the time seems to be quoting from Onesicritus (*Müller's Strabo*, xv, i, 34 and 37). The date of Ctesias is about B.C. 400; Onesicritus was an officer of Alexander's (d. B.C. 328). *Smith's Dictionary of Gr. and Rom. Geography*, article *Serica*, would lead one by its expressions to suppose that Aristotle had spoken of that country, which of course he does not. The reference is to that passage where he speaks of *βομβύκια* being wound off from a certain insect in the Island of Cos. See the passage quoted in Note IV at the end.

³ Seneca is still more indefinite, and will not commit himself to *any* view of their locality:

"Et quocumque loco jacent
Seres vellere nobiles" (*Thyestes*, 379);

whilst Lucan *does* commit himself to the view that they were somewhere at the back of Ethiopia. For, apostrophising the Nile, he says:

"Teque vident primi, quærunt tamen hi quoque, Seres" (x, 289).