

the intermediate traders who carried silk from the east to the west, and they inform us that these Asi threw every obstacle in the way of direct communication between the Chinese and the Romans. The latter, we are assured, were exceedingly desirous of such communication, but the Asi, who were very inferior to the people of the Roman empire in the arts of weaving and the quality of dyes, feared to lose the profits of agency and manufacture entirely unless they retained a monopoly of the trade. The statement is no doubt incorrect that *all* silk was passed on to the Romans in a manufactured state, or if true, could only have been so for some brief period, but the anxiety of the Romans to rid themselves of dependance on the nations of Persia for the supply of silk is fully borne out by the story which Procopius and others relate to the introduction of the silkworm into the Byzantine territories by two monks in the time of Justinian (circa 550).<sup>1</sup> The country from which the monks brought their precious charge is called by Theophanes simply that of the Seres, but by Procopius *Serinda*. China may be intended, but of this there can be no certainty. Indeed it is possible that the term was meant to express a compound like our *Indo-China*, some region intermediate between *Serica* and *India*, and if so not improbably *Khotan*.<sup>2</sup>

20. There are among the fragments of the Greek historians other curious notices of intercourse with the Turkish tribes of Central Asia in the days of Justinian's immediate successors, which, though they do not bring up mention of the Chinese under any denomination, are in a degree relevant to our subject, because they show the Byzantine empire in contact and intercourse with nations who occupy a prominent place in the Chinese annals, and introduce the names of some princes who are to be recognised in those also.<sup>3</sup>

as intermediaries in the silk trade, i.e., the people of the country whose centre is Samarkand.

<sup>1</sup> See extracts in Note VII.

<sup>2</sup> D'Anville suggests that *Serinda* may be a compound name, but identifies it with *Sirhind* in North Western India. This name I presume however to be Persian, and to date from comparatively late times. Gosselin will have it to be Srinagar in Kashmir. The Ravenna Geographer puts *India Serica* in the North of India on the Ganges and Acesines (*Rav. Anon. Cosmog.* Berlin, 1860, pp. 45, 48).

<sup>3</sup> See a sample of these narratives in Note VIII.