

## II. CHINESE KNOWLEDGE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

28. Having thus set forth such indications as we can of acquaintance with China from Greek and Roman writers, we shall now collect such notices of the Greek and Roman territories as we are able to find in translations from Chinese sources.

It was under the Emperor Hiao Wuti, of the Han dynasty (B.C. 140-86) that the Chinese first had relations with the countries west of the Bolor mountains, and even the *discovery* of those regions is ascribed by Chinese writers to this period, though the correctness of that idea may well be questioned. The Yueichi, a people believed to be of Tibetan race, and who became known in the west as Indoscythians, and at a later date as White Huns, had been driven from their seats, somewhere between China and Khotan, by the great Turkish race of Hiongnu. After some intermediate halts, they had arrived first in *Tawan*, or Farghana, and afterwards in *Tahia*, or Bactriana, where they destroyed the Greek dynasty and settled themselves. The Chinese Emperor was desirous of opening communication with them in order to excite a diversion against the Hiongnu, the constant disturbers of the Chinese frontier, and about B.C. 135 he sent for this purpose a party under an officer called Chang-Kian. On their way they were caught by the Hiongnu and kept prisoners for ten years. Chang-kian then escaped with some of his comrades, but adhering to his mission succeeded in reaching Tawan, where he was well received by the people who were acquainted by fame with the powers and riches of China, though they had never had any direct communication with that country. Finding that the Yueichi had gone south to Bactriana he followed them thither,

of Asia except Samarkand and Memphis (Cairo). By the Massagetæ it was established with excellent laws in olden time." (*Ib.*) Somewhat later (p. 86) he puts *Chatagia* in India as mentioned above. Indeed geography for a Greek writer must have been in a state of very midnight at this time, when a historian who ventured to treat of Timur and Shah Rukh (Σαχρούχος) was fain to say of *Cheria* (Herat): "in what part of Asia it was situated, whether in the land of the Syrians or the land of the Medes, he could not ascertain. But some thought that anciently Cheria was Ninus (Nineveh) as Pagdatine (Baghdad) was Babylon" (*Ib.*, p. 68).