

go to sea—not otherwise.” They also represented that with a fair wind it would take two months at least to cross the sea to Tathsin, and if the wind were adverse it might take two years to make the return voyage, so that adventurers bound for Tathsin were accustomed to lay in stores for three years.<sup>1</sup> Such at least were the excuses made by the chicken-hearted Kan-yng, who was certainly not the man to conquer the Roman empire; he therefore thought better of it, and retraced his steps. Hence at this time no contact occurred between the representatives of the two great seats of civilisation.<sup>2</sup>

37. Sixty years later, however (A.D. 166), in the reign of Hiwanti of the Han, an embassy came to the court of China from ANTUN, king of Tathsin (the Emperor M. Aurelius ANTONINUS). This mission had no doubt made the voyage by sea, for it entered China by the frontier of Jinan or Tonking, bringing presents of rhinoceros horns, ivory, and tortoiseshell. This is not precisely the sort of present we should have looked for, and indeed the Chinese annals say that it was believed the ambassadors had purloined the rarer objects of their charge; just the accusation that was brought against Friar John of Montecorvino eleven hundred years later. It seems likely enough that they had lost their original presents by shipwreck or robbery, and had substituted in the east such trumpery as they were told the Chinese set a value upon. The historians also observe that the embassy came by this southern route, and not by the northern route, which, it is implied, they might have followed; a route which was doubtless debarred to them by Parthian hostility.<sup>3</sup>

About the same time, and perhaps by means of this embassy, the Chinese philosophers were made acquainted with a treatise on astronomy, which had been brought from Tathsin;

<sup>1</sup> This may have referred rather to the difficulty of obtaining provision suited to Oriental tastes. Governor Yeh, when bound a captive for Fort William, laid in seven years' provision of eggs!

<sup>2</sup> Pauthier, u. s.; Remusat, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> Klap. 68-9; Pauthier de l'Auth., p. 32; Id. *Hist. des Relations*, etc., p. 20; Deguignes in *Mem. de l'Acad.*, xxxii, 358. Reinaud supposes that Pausanias may have got his information about the production of silk from the members of this embassy (*supra*, p. xlv).