

cannot throw any light upon the identity of this Nicholas Comanus, or whatever his name was.

### III. COMMUNICATION WITH INDIA.

41. We have seen, in the early part of this Essay, that reason exists for believing in very early intercourse between India and China; but the Chinese annals appear to have lost all sight of this, for their first mention and knowledge of India is referred to B.C. 122, when Changkian, returning from his adventurous expedition to Bactriana, brought back intelligence about various regions in the West. When in that country he observed among the articles exposed for sale certain canes, which struck him as being like those grown in the mountains of Kiongshan, and cloths also which he recognised as the production of the country of *Shu*, i.e., Chingtufu in Szechuen. On inquiry he was told that these articles had been purchased by merchants in the country of SHINTU, otherwise called THIANCHU (Sind or India). This country lay some thousand *li* to the south-east of Tahia or Bactriana, and from all that he could gather could not be far distant from the province of Szechuen, which accounted for the importation of the articles which he had seen for sale. There were three roads by which Shintu might be reached from China; one, leading by the Kiang, very dangerous and difficult; a second by the north and through the lands of the Hiongnu, who would certainly obstruct attempts at communication; and a third, which would be the safest, by Szechuen. The emperor, pleased with the hope of adding to the list of his tributaries in those western countries, sent Changkian to attempt to enter India by the way of Kienwei (Siucheufu in Szechuen), and others by different roads. Indeed some ten attempts in all were made, but they were all as unsuccessful as Colonel Sarell's late attempt to follow in the steps of Changkian.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Demailla* (I can only refer to the Italian translation, vol. vii); *Julien* in *J. As.*, ser. iv, tom. x, 91-2; *Deguignes* in *Mem. de l'Acad.*, xxxii, 358. The Italian translation of *Demailla* is a curiosity. The editor, finding that the Chinese names were distasteful to the readers of his earlier volumes, changes them all into a more pleasing form. Thus Kublai figures as *Vobalio*, Wang Khan as *Giovannio*, Ilchiktai as *Chitalio*.