

read, however, that Chingtsu of the Ming dynasty (1402-1424) despatched vessels to the islands and countries of India, Bengal, Calicut, Ceylon, Surat, the Persian Gulf, Aden, and the Red Sea, expeditions to which reference has been made in a previous page, and which do not seem to have been in any degree commercial. This, however, is the last notice with which I am acquainted of Chinese vessels visiting Malabar and Western Asia.¹

58. The Arabs at an early date of Islam, if not before, had established a factory at Canton, and their numbers at that port were so great by the middle of the eighth century that in 758 they were strong enough to attack and pillage the city, to which they set fire and then fled to their ships.² Nor were they confined to this port. The city now called Hangcheufu, the Quinsai and Khansa of the middle ages, but known in those days to the Arabs as KHANFU,³ was probably already frequented by them; for, one hundred and twenty years later, the number of foreign settlers, Musulman, Jew, Christian, and Gueber, who perished on the capture of that city by a rebel army, is estimated at one hundred and twenty thousand, and even two hundred thousand!⁴ Of course we must make large deductions, but these contemporary statements still indicate a large foreign population.

59. In the eighth century also the Arabs began to know the Chinese not only as *Sinæ*, but as *Seres*, i.e. by the northern land route. The successes of Kutaiba, who in the time of Khalif Walid overran Bokhara, Samarkand, Farghana, and Khwarizm,

¹ *Deguignes*, i, 72.

² *Deguignes*, i, 59, ii, 503; also in *Mem. de l'Acad.*, xlv, 545. In the latter essay, *Deguignes* attributes this out-break to the Arab auxiliaries mentioned further on.

³ *Khanfu* was properly only the port of Hangcheu or Khansa, called by the Chinese KANP'HU (a name still preserved as that of a town half a league north of the old site), and by Marco Polo *Ganfu* (i, 74). The place is mentioned as a coasting port in Chinese Annals under A.D. 306; as the seat of a master attendant in 706; and as that of a marine court under the Mongols (*Klap. Mem. rel. à l'Asie*, ii, 200 *seqq.*). The name of the port seems to have been transferred by the early Arabs to Hangcheu; for there seems no reason to ascribe to Kanp'hu itself the importance here assigned to *Khanfu*. Indeed, *Abulfeda* says expressly, "*Khanfu*, which is known in our days as Khansa."

⁴ *Reinaud*, *Relations*, etc., i, p. 64; *Masudi Prairies d'Or*, i, 304.