

gulf again were drifting the ship towards the Ocean; a terrible thing indeed for us who saw what was happening, and in great fear were we. And all this time flocks of those birds called *suspha* followed us flying high over our heads, which was a sign that the Ocean was nigh"¹ (Book ii, p. 132).

2. "For if Paradise were really on the surface of this world, is there not many a man among those who are so keen to learn and search out everything, that would not let himself be deterred from reaching it? When we see that there are men who will not be deterred from penetrating to the ends of the earth in search of silk, and all for the sake of filthy lucre, how can we believe that they would be deterred from going to get a sight of Paradise? The country of silk, I may mention, is in the remotest of all the Indies, lying towards the left when you enter the Indian Sea, but a vast distance farther off than the Persian Gulf or that island which the Indians call SELEDIBA and the Greeks TAPROBANE. TZINITZA is the name of the country, and the Ocean compasses it round to the left, just as the same Ocean compasses Barbary round to the right. And the Indian philosophers, called Brachmans, tell you that if you were to stretch a straight cord from Tzinitza through Persia to the Roman territory, you would just divide the world in halves. And mayhap they are right.

"For the country in question lies very much to the left, insomuch that loads of silk passing through the hands of different nations in succession *by land* reach Persia in a comparatively short time, whilst the distance from Persia *by sea* is vastly greater. For, in the first place, just as great a distance as the Persian Gulf runs up into Persia has the voyager to Tzinitza to run up from [the latitude of] Taprobane and the regions beyond it to reach his destination. And, in the second place, there is no small distance to be traversed in crossing the whole width of the Indian Sea from the Persian Gulf to Taprobane, and from Taprobane to the regions beyond [where you turn up to the left to reach Tzinitza].² Hence it is clear that one who comes by the overland route from Tzinitza to Persia makes a very short cut. And this accounts for the fact that such quantities of silk are always to be found in Persia.

"Further than Tzinitza there is neither navigation nor inhabited country.

"And here I may observe, that if anyone should actually measure the earth's longitude with a straight line running from Tzinitza westward, he would find it to be four hundred marches more or less, taking

¹ With reference to the terrors of the Southern Ocean see *infra*, p. 92 note. Edrisi says: "The Ocean Sea, which is called the Dark Sea, because it is dark, and is almost always in commotion with violent winds, and covered by thick fogs" (i, 87).

² I believe this is the meaning, but the passage is very elliptical.