

a little to the north of Sístán. The place is frequented in pilgrimage. (See *Cathay*, pp. ccxliv. 156, 398; *Ritter*, II. 204; *Aus der Natur*, Leipzig, No. 47 [of 1868], p. 752; *Rémusat*, *H. de Khotan*, p. 74; *Proc. R. G. S.* XVII. 91.)

NOTE 3.—[We learn from Joseph Martin, quoted by Grenard, p. 170 (who met this unfortunate French traveller at Khotan, on his way from Peking to Marghelan, where he died), that from Shachau to Abdal, on the Lob-nor, there are twelve days of desert, sandy only during the first two days, stony afterwards. Occasionally a little grass is to be found for the camels; water is to be found everywhere. M. Bonin went from Shachau to the north-west towards the Kara-nor, then to the west, but lack of water compelled him to go back to Shachau. Along this road, every five *lis*, are to be found towers built with clay, and about 30 feet high, abandoned by the Chinese, who do not seem to have kept a remembrance of them in the country; this route seems to be a continuation of the Kan Suh Imperial highway. A wall now destroyed connected these towers together. "There is no doubt," writes M. Bonin, "that all these remains are those of the great route, vainly sought after till now, which, under the Han Dynasty, ran to China through Bactria, Pamir, Eastern Turkestan, the Desert of Gobi, and Kan Suh: it is in part the route followed by Marco Polo, when he went from Charchan to Shachau, by the city of Lob." The route of the Han has been also looked for, more to the south, and it was believed that it was the same as that of the Astyn Tagh, followed by Mr. Littledale in 1893, who travelled one month from Abdal (Lob-nor) to Shachau; M. Bonin, who explored also this route, and was twenty-three days from Shachau to Lob-nor, says it could not be a commercial road. Dr. Sven Hedin saw four or five towers eastward of the junction of the Tarim and the Koncheh-daria; it may possibly have been another part of the road seen by M. Bonin. (See *La Géographie*, 15th March, 1901, p. 173.)—H. C.]

CHAPTER XL.

CONCERNING THE GREAT PROVINCE OF TANGUT.

AFTER you have travelled thirty days through the Desert, as I have described, you come to a city called SACHIU, lying between north-east and east; it belongs to the Great Kaan, and is in a province called TANGUT.¹ The people are for the most part Idolaters, but there are also some Nestorian Christians and some Saracens. The Idolaters have a peculiar language, and are no traders, but live by their agriculture.² They have a great many abbeys and minsters full of idols of sundry fashions, to which they pay great honour and reverence, worshipping them and sacrificing to them with much ado. For example, such as have children will feed up a sheep