

CHAPTER VII.

WEI-TSANG-T'U-CHIH.

Turning our attention more particularly to Western Tibet we begin with the »*Wei-tsang-t'u-chih, Topographical Description of Central Tibet*», retranslated and republished by J. Klaproth.¹

The author of this work is a Chinese civil officer, whose duties have brought him to Tibet. He is regarded to be exact in what he says. HYACINTH sometimes asked Chinese residents in Tibet, returning to Peking, where he was Archimandrite at the Russian mission, about the reliability of this work, and they all agreed that it was correct.² The future should prove, however, that much of its contents was wrong. Klaproth found that the real cause why geographical names in Tibet and Chinese Tataria³ were so disfigured on European maps, depends on the fact that these names were badly written on d'Anville's map of China, from which all geographers of a later date got their knowledge. But this was not d'Anville's fault as he gave the names exactly as he had got them on the copies of the Manchu maps, translated and sent from Peking by the missionaries.

The Chinese author mentions from the year 821 A. D. (Ch'ang-ch'ing 1.) the name Mên-chü-lu for Tsangpo, and he adds: »Cette rivière, qui est à 100 li

¹ Description du Tibet, traduite du chinois en russe par le Père Hyacinthe, et du russe en français par M. ***; revue sur l'original chinois, et accompagnée de notes, par M. Klaproth. *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, Tome IV, p. 81, Paris 1829; Tome VI, p. 161 and 321, Paris 1830. For the Tibetan names I have not altered the spelling of different translators. — Rockhill says of Klaproth's Translation: »it is far from being accurate, and the translator's ignorance of Tibetan has caused him to make additional mistakes.»

² In the introduction to this work the following wise words are to be read: »If a writer composes a work on simple hearsay, and does not corroborate the statements he makes by personal investigation, critics may well doubt the accuracy of the facts he has stated. Consequently if in what one has seen, heard, or learnt by report, there be any strange facts, it is necessary that the record of such be substantiated by proofs, so that they may be believed and put beyond doubt.» (Rockhill's translation, p. 21).

³ He correctly writes Tatarie, and not, as usual, Tartarie.