

Caspian, and of the consequent conversion of a Khakan of the Turks and of several minor princes.¹ The progress of Christianity among those nations then remains obscure till the conversion of the Kerait Tartars at the beginning of the eleventh century,² followed by those rumours of Christian potentates under the name of Prester John which continued to reach Europe during the following age. Rubruquis, in the narrative of his journey to the court of Karakorum (1253-54) makes frequent mention of the Nestorians and their ecclesiastics, and speaks specifically of the Nestorians of Cathay as having a bishop in SEGIN or Singanfu (p. 292). He gives an unfavourable account of the literature and morals of their clergy, which deserves more weight than such statements regarding those looked on as schismatics generally do; for the narrative of Rubruquis gives one the impression of being written by a thoroughly honest and intelligent person. In the time of Marco Polo we find Nestorian Christians numerous not only at Samarkand but at Yarkand, whilst there are such also in Chichintalas (identified by Pauthier with the modern Urumtsi, north of the Thian Shan),³ in Sucheu and Kancheu, and over all the kingdom of Tangut, in Tenduc⁴ and the cities east of it, as

¹ There is a still older indication of the existence of Christians, however ignorant, among the Turks, in a curious story related by Theophylactus Simocatta and Theophanes. In the expedition sent by the Emperor Maurice to assist Chosroes II against Bahram near the end of the sixth century, the General Narses sent to Constantinople some Turks who had been taken prisoners. "And these bore marked on their foreheads the sign of the Lord (that which is called the *cross* by the followers of the Christian religion). The emperor therefore inquired what the meaning might be of this token being borne by the Barbarians. And they said their mothers had put it on them. For, once when a virulent pestilence prevailed among the Scythians in the east, certain of the Christians persuaded them to prick the foreheads of their children with this symbol. The Barbarians by no means despised this counsel, and the result was their preservation" (*Theophyl.*, bk. v, ch. 10; see also *Theophanis Chronog.*, A.M. 6081. The latter says, "Some among them who were Christians.")

² See *infra*, p. 179.

³ It occurs to me as possible that the *Cyollos Kagan* (Kagan cyollos) of Marignolli (*infra*, p. 339) may be the same name as the *Chichintalas* of Polo. The position of the two corresponds in a general way, and both may be represented by the *Chagan Talas* ("White Plains") of some modern maps (see *K. Johnstone's Royal Atlas, Asia*).

⁴ See p. 146 *infra*.