

as the Church. The record is a very fragmentary and imperfect one, but many circumstances and incidental notices show how frequently the far East was reached by European traders in the first half of the fourteenth century; a state of things which it is very difficult to realise, when we see how all those regions, when reopened only two centuries later, seemed almost as absolutely new discoveries as the empires which about the same time Cortes and Pizarro were annexing in the West.

This frequency of commercial intercourse, at least with China, probably did not commence till some years after the beginning of the fourteenth century. For Montecorvino, writing in 1305, says it was then twelve years since he had heard any news of the Court of Rome or European politics, the only western stranger who had arrived in that time being a certain Lombard chirurgion who had spread awful blasphemies about the Pope. Yet, even on his first entrance into Cathay, Friar John had been accompanied by one Master Peter of Lucolongo, whom he describes as a faithful Christian man and a great merchant. The letter of Andrew Bishop of Zayton, lately referred to, quotes the opinion of the Genoese merchants of his acquaintance at that great seaport touching a question of exchanges. Marino Sanuti, the Venetian, writing about 1306 to propound a great scheme for the subversion of the Mahomedan power, alludes to the many merchants who had already gone to India to make their purchases and come back safely. About 1322 Friar Jordanus, the Dominican, when in sore trouble at Tana near Bombay, where four of his brethren had been murdered by the Mahomedans, falls in with a young Genoese who gives him aid; and in one of his letters from Gujarat, he speaks of information received from "Latin merchants". In the stories connected with the same martyred friars, we find mention of a merchant of Pisa owning a ship in the Indian seas. Mandeville, too, speaks of the merchants of Venice and Genoa coming habitually to Hormuz to buy goods. Odoric, dictating his travels in 1330, refers for confirmation of the wonders related of the great city of Cansay or Hangcheu, to the many persons whom he had met at Venice since his return who had themselves been witnesses of all that he asserted. A