

few years later (1339) we find William of Modena, a merchant, dying for the Faith with certain friars at Almalik on the banks of the Ili. John Marignolli mentions that when he was in Malabar about 1347-8, his interpreter was a youth who had been rescued from pirates in the Indian seas by a merchant of Genoa. And from the same authority we find that there was a *fondaco* or factory, and warehouse for the use of the Christian merchants, attached to one of the Franciscan convents at Zayton.

106. But the most distinct and notable evidence of the importance and frequency of the European trade from Cathay, of which silk and silk goods were the staple, is to be found in the work of F. BALDUCCI PEGOLOTTI, of which an account and extracts are given in the present collection. That the ventures on this trade were not insignificant is plain from the example taken by the author to illustrate the question of expenses on the journey to Cathay, which is that of a merchant carrying goods to the amount of some £12,000.

107. To the same period of the Mongol domination and active commerce with the west, belongs the voyage, about 1347, of the Moor, IBN BATUTA, to China, which forms a part of this work.

But, as regards Christian intercourse, missions and merchants alike disappear from the field soon after the middle of the fourteenth century, as the Mongol dynasty totters and comes down. We hear, indeed, once and again of friars and bishops despatched from Avignon; but they go forth into the darkness and are heard of no more. For the new rulers of China revert to the old indigenous policy and hold foreigners at arm's length; whilst Islam has recovered its ground and extended its grasp over Middle Asia, and the Nestorian Christianity which once prevailed there is rapidly vanishing and leaving its traces only in some strange parodies of church ritual which are found twined into the worship of the Tibetan Lamas, like the cabin gildings and mirrors of a wrecked vessel adorning the hut of a Polynesian chief. A dark mist has descended upon the farther east, covering MANGI and CATHAY with those cities of which the old travellers told such wonders, CAMBALEC and CANSAY and ZAYTON and CHINKALAN. And when the veil rises before the Portuguese and