

information about Western Christians, by the Patriarch of his own country, which was a Nestorian kingdom, twenty days' journey from Cathay. The imperfections of interpretation made it difficult to acquire information of interest from this personage. He spoke, however, of the Great Khan, and of his having dominion over nine potent kings.¹ This seems to be the same envoy who is spoken of by the Italian philosopher and mathematician, Paolo del Pozzo Toscanelli, in a letter addressed in 1474 to his friend Fernando Martinez, canon of Lisbon, of which the writer afterwards sent a copy to Columbus, when replying to a communication from the latter on the great object of his life. The statement of Poggio that the envoy came from a Christian ecclesiastic seems much more probable than that he came, as Toscanelli thought, from the Great Khan himself. But it remains a difficult problem to say whence he did really come. It would seem as if some tribe of the Kerait or the Uigurs had maintained their Christianity till near the middle of the fifteenth century.²

112. To this period also belong the notices of Cathay which were collected by JOSAFAT BARBARO, and are recounted in the history of his Embassy to Persia. Whilst he was on this mission, the Lord Assambei (*i.e.*, Uzun Hassan, a Turcoman chief, who,

¹ See the extract from Clavijo above. This notion may be taken from some traditional title bearing reference to the oldest division of China under Yu (B.C. 2286) into *Nine Provinces* (*Chine Moderne*, p. 37); also in the division of the empire under the Mongols into 12 sings (*infra*, p. 270): three of these, Solangka, Corea, and Yunan, were considered exterior, the other *nine* to constitute *China Proper* (D'OHSSON, ii, 478). *Nine Provinces* was anciently a name applied to China Proper (*Chine Moderne*, 211; and *Vie de Hiouen Thsang*, p. 298).

² See the letter in Note XV. The curious statements in Varthema about Christians of *Sarnau*, a country towards Cathay, with whom he travelled in the Archipelago, are here brought to mind. I think Mr. Badger has referred to this passage of Poggio; but I cannot turn to his edition now. The letter of Toscanelli is extracted from "*Del Vecchio e Nuovo Gnomone Fiorentino, etc., di Lionardo Ximenes della Comp. di Gesù, Geografo di sua Maestà Imp.* Firenze, 1757", pp. lxxxi-xcviii.

Another traveller, who returned from the Indies in 1424 after wandering there for twenty-four years, by name Bartolomeo Fiorentino, related what he had seen to Pope Eugenius at Venice; but, unfortunately, nothing of this narrative seems to have been preserved (see *Humboldt, Examen Critique*, etc., i, 260).