

Latins call August, Zemarchus started from Byzantium with Maniach himself and his company." \* \* \* \*

(*Another*).

"After accomplishing a journey of many days, Zemarchus and his party arrived in the territories of the Sogdians. And as they dismounted from their horses certain Turks, sent as it seemed for that purpose, presented some iron which they offered for sale; this being, I fancy, in order to show that they had mines of iron in their country. For the manufacture of iron is reckoned among them to be by no means an easy art; and we may guess that this was a kind of brag by which they intended to indicate that theirs was a country in which iron was produced.<sup>1</sup> Some others of the tribe also showed off their performances (in a different line). These, announcing themselves as the conjurors away of evil omens, came up to Zemarchus and taking all the baggage of the party set it down in the middle. They then began ringing a bell and beating a kind of drum over the baggage, whilst some ran round it carrying leaves of burning incense flaming and crackling, and raged about like maniacs, gesticulating as if repelling evil spirits. Carrying on this exorcism of evil as they considered it, they made Zemarchus himself also pass through the fire, and in the same manner they appeared to perform an act of purification for themselves.<sup>2</sup> After these performances the party proceeded with those who had been sent to receive them to the place where the Khagan was, in a certain mountain called ECTAG, or as a Greek would say "the Golden Mountain." And when they got there they found the camp of Dizabulus in a certain hollow encompassed by

<sup>1</sup> It may have had a different import. For according to the Chinese authority followed by Deguignes, the tribe which founded the Turkish power shortly before this time had long inhabited the Altai, where they worked as smiths for the service of the Khan of the Geu-gen or Juen-juen; and the Khans of the Turks instituted in memory of their origin the ceremony of annually forging a piece of iron. The presentation of iron to the Byzantine envoys may have had some kindred signification (*Deguignes* ii, 350, 373).

<sup>2</sup> When Plano Carpini and his companions came to the camp of Batu they were told that they must pass between two fires, because this would neutralise any mischievous intentions they might entertain, or poison that they might be carrying. And in another place the traveller says: "To be brief, they believe that by fire all things are purified. Hence when envoys come to them, or chiefs, or any other persons whatever, they and the presents they bring must pass between two fires, to prevent their working any witchcraft or bringing any poison or evil thing with them" (p. 744 and p. 627). In the French note which Busquarel, the ambassador in 1289 of Argun Khan of Persia, presented with his master's letter to the King of France (both of which are preserved in the French archives) it is said: "prianf vous que se vous li envoieez yceuls ou autres messages, que vous vouliez souffrir et commander leur que il li facent tele reverence et honneur comme coustume et usage est en sa court sanz passer feu" (*Remusat*, in *Mem. de l'Acad. Insc.* vii, 432).