

things are concerned, yet you shall never find among them any knowledge or perception of spiritual things.

"The people of that country are not courageous, but stand in greater fear of death than at all befits those who carry arms. Yet being full of caution and address they have almost always come off victorious over their enemies both by land and by sea. They have many kinds of arms which are not found among other people.

"The money which is current in those parts is made of paper in a square form, and sealed with the king's seal; and according to the marks which it bears this paper has a greater or less value. And if perchance it begins to wear from long usage the owner thereof shall carry it to a royal office, and they give him new paper in exchange. They do not use gold and other metals except for plate and other purposes of show.

"Tis said of that empire of Cathay that it forms the eastern extremity of the world, and that no nation dwells beyond it. Towards the west it hath upon its frontier the kingdom of TARSE, and towards the north the Desert of BELGIAN, whilst towards the south it hath the Islands of the Sea, whereof we have spoken above."

NOTE XV.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF PAOLO DAL POZZO
TOSCANELLI TO FERNANDO MARTINEZ, CANON OF LISBON.

(Written 25th June, 1474).

"And now to give you full information as to all those places which you so much desire to learn about, you must know that both the inhabitants and the visitors of all those islands are all traders, and that there are in those parts as great a multitude of ships and mariners and wares for sale, as in any part of the world, be the other what it may. And this is especially the case at a very noble port which is called ZAITON, where there load and discharge every year a hundred great pepper ships, besides a multitude of other vessels which take cargoes of other spices and the like.¹ The country in question is exceedingly populous, and there are in it many provinces and many kingdoms, and cities without number, all under the dominion of a certain sovereign who is called the Great Caan, a name which signifies the king of kings. The residence of this prince is chiefly in the province of CATHAY. His predecessors greatly desired to have intercourse and friendship with Christians, and some two hundred years since they sent ambassadors to

¹ Here Toscanelli is drawing from Marco Polo (i, ch. 81), as again below where he speaks of Quinsai.