

in its bearings, and even in those parts which are not mere lists or figured statements is written in the dryest and most inartificial style, if style it can be called. Devoting successive chapters to the various ports and seats of traffic of his time, and proceeding from the Asiatic coasts of the Mediterranean westward, he details the nature of the exports and imports, the duties and exactions, the customs of business appropriate to each locality, as well as the value of the moneys weights and measures of each country in relation to those of the places with which they chiefly had to deal. Rude essays on various practical matters are interspersed and appended.

The book might have slept as undisturbed under the unattractive title of Pagnini's quartos, as it had done for centuries in manuscript on the shelves of the Florentine libraries, had not the Germans Forster and Sprengel got scent of it and made it the subject of some comment in their geographical works.<sup>1</sup>

Their comments refer to the first two chapters of Pegolotti, the most interesting of the whole, and which I shall give unabridged. I shall also give one or two chapters that follow, having more or less bearing on our subject, and a few additional extracts where the matter seems of sufficient interest.

The notices of Sprengel seem to have furnished the source from which nearly all later writers who have touched on Pegolotti have derived their information, as is shown by their copying an error of the press which makes him in Sprengel's book *Pegoletti*. Even Humboldt, Remusat, and Ritter do this, and the latter assumes besides that Pegolotti had himself made the journey to Cathay, which he describes. For this assumption there is not the slightest ground.<sup>2</sup> It is evident indeed from the

<sup>1</sup> See Forster, *Hist. des Découvertes et des Voyages dans le Nord* (Fr. Trans.), Paris, 1788, p. 242 *et seq.*; and *Geschichte der Wichtigsten Geog. Entdeckungen*, etc., von M. C. Sprengel (2nd ed.), Halle, 1792. I suppose that Sprengel's first edition preceded Forster, as the former says (p. 253) that no one had yet made use of Pegolotti in the history of the Chinese trade. The original of these two chapters is given in App. III.

<sup>2</sup> See *Erdkunde*, ii, 404, and posthumous *Lectures on the Hist. of Geography*, Berlin, 1861, p. 220. These errors are probably derived from Malte Brun (see *D'Avezac*, p. 423). Even the *Biographie Universelle* speaks positively of Pegolotti's having visited all the places mentioned by him