

“In the strength of the Omnipotent God!

“The Emperor of Emperors commandeth:

“We send our envoy, Andrew the Frank, with fifteen others, to the Pope, the Lord of the Christians, in Frank-land beyond the Seven Seas¹ where the sun goes down, to open a way for the frequent exchange of messengers between us and the Pope; and to request the Pope himself to send us his blessing, and always to remember us in his holy prayers; and to commend to him the Alans, our servants and his Christian sons. Also we desire that our messengers bring back to us horses and other rarities from the sun-setting.

“Written in Cambalec, in the year of the Rat, in the sixth month, on the third day of the Moon.”²

The letter of the Alan chiefs, with partial omissions, runs as follows:—

“In the strength of the Omnipotent God, and in the honour of our Lord the Emperor!

“We, FUTIM JOENS, CHATICEN TUNGII, GEMBOGA EVENZI, JOANNES IUCHOY (and RUBEUS PINZANUS),³ with our heads in the dust salute

¹ Meinert (see below) supposes these seven seas to be the Aral, Caspian, Sea of Azov, Black Sea, Sea of Marmora, Archipelago, and the Mediterranean. It may be noted that Edrisi also reckons seven seas besides the Great Ocean, viz., Red Sea, Green Sea (Persian Gulf), Sea of Damascus (Mediterranean), Sea of Venice, Sea of Pontus, and Sea of Jorjan (Caspian). And the Arabian navigators of the ninth century also reckon seven seas between Basra and China. But any such scientific precision is here highly improbable. The reference is more likely to be to the seven annular seas of the Buddhist cosmogony, and done into vulgar English means only that the Pope lived at the “Back of Beyond.”

² About July 1336.

³ These at first sight look like names out of *Gulliver's Travels*, such as Quinbus Flestrin and the like. They are several times repeated in the copies of different letters from the Pope that have come down to us, and the forms vary considerably. We have the following:

Futim Joens, Fodim and Fodin Jovens;
Chaticen Tungii, Chyansam and Chyausam Tongi;
Gemboga Evenzi, Chemboga Vensii or Vense;
Ioannes Jukoy, Iochoy, or Yathoy;
Rubeus Pinzanus or Puizanus.

The last name occurs in two of the Pope's letters, but not in that of the Alans as we have it.

I cannot venture to say what these names are meant to represent, but