

minister of Guyuk-Khan, who were Christians of that tribe, says that they summoned to the court of Karakoram numerous priests of Syria, Asia Minor, *the Alan country*, and Russia. And Gaubil, without apparently being aware of the identity with the Alans of the Asu (or Aas) who are spoken of in the text of the Chinese history which he follows, observes in a note that the country of the Asu, after its conquest, furnished many valuable officers to the Mongols, and that it could not have lain far from the Caspian. The same narrative states that Kublai Khan, when despatching an army against the Sung dynasty of Southern China, desired his general to select the best possible officers, and that there were consequently attached to the army many chiefs of the Uigurs, Persians, Kincha, *Asu*, and others. The anecdote which Marco Polo relates of the massacre of a body of Christian Alans during this very war, may also be called to mind.

Still the numbers and very prominent position ascribed by Marignolli to the Alans in the Mongol-Chinese empire, are, after all allowance for natural exaggeration of the importance of his co-religionists, rather startling. The history of these later princes of the Yuen dynasty does not seem to be accessible in any great detail, but it is easily conceivable that as the spirit of the Mongols degenerated, their princes, as in so many similar cases, came to lean more and more on their foreign auxiliaries, and that these may have been often found in occupation of the highest posts of the empire. Indeed it was one of the complaints against Tocatmur or Shunti, the Emperor reigning at this time, that he gave too much authority to "foreigners of ill-regulated morals."¹

Returning to the embassy of 1338, we find that it was graciously received by the Pope, Benedict XII, one mark of his favour being to create one of the Tartar envoys sergent-at-arms to himself;² that in due time his Holiness delivered answers to

¹ See a learned article by *Vivien St. Martin*, in *Ann. de Voyages* for 1848, iii, 129; also *Rubruquis*, pp. 242, 243, 252, 381; *Carpini*, pp. 709, 729; *Ramusio*, ii, 92; *St. Martin* in *Journ. Asiat.*, ser. ii, tom. v, 175; *Klaproth* in ditto, p. 389; *Jacquet* in ditto, vii, 417-433; *St. Martin*, *Mém. sur l'Arménie*, ii, 280; *Ibn Batuta*, ii, 448; *Gaubil*, *Hist. de Gentchis Can.*, pp. 40, 147; *Deguignes*, iv, 215, etc.

² *Baluzius*, *Vitæ Pap. Avenion*, i, 242.