

This Saba, then, is the finest island in the world; the Arctic Pole is there, as was pointed out to Marignolli by Master Lemon of Genoa (I suppose after his return to Europe), six degrees below the horizon, and the Antarctic as much above it, whilst many other wonderful astronomical phenomena are visible; women always or very generally administer the government; the walls of the palace are adorned with fine historical pictures; chariots and elephants are in use, especially for the women; there is a mountain of very great height called *Gybeit* or The Blessed, with which legends of Elias and of the Magi are connected; the queen treats the traveller with great honour and invests him with a golden girdle, such as she was wont to bestow upon those whom she created princes; there are a few Christians there; and finally when Marignolli has quitted Saba he is overtaken by a series of gales, which drive his ship (apparently contrary to intention) into a port of Ceylon.

Meinert, the first who commented on Marignolli, is clear that Java is intended by him; Kunstmann as clear that he speaks of the Maldives. The latter idea also occurred to me before I had the pleasure of seeing Professor Kunstmann's papers, but I rejected it for reasons which seem insuperable.

It is true and certainly remarkable that both Masudi in the end of the ninth century, and Edrisi in the eleventh, speak of the *Dabihat* or *Robaihat* (which are apparently errors of transcription for *Dibaját*, and mean the Maldives) as more or less under female government; and when Ibn Batuta was in the same islands a short time before Marignolli's return from China, there actually reigned a female sovereign, Kadija by name, the daughter of the deceased sultan, and who had been set upon the throne in place of a brother whom the people had deposed. Her husband exercised the authority in fact, but all orders were issued in her name. Edrisi also mentions the queen as going on "state occasions with her women mounted on elephants, with trumpets, flags, etc., her husbands and vizirs following at an interval."<sup>1</sup> This is striking; but it is impossible to accept the evidence about the elephants without strong corroboration. These would

<sup>1</sup> *Jaubert's French Trans.*, vol. i, pp. 67, 8.