

Rampart, or Great Wall of Gog and Magog, there is a space of sixty days' journey as I was told. This territory is occupied by wandering tribes of heathen, who eat such people as they can catch, and for this reason no one enters their country or attempts to travel there. I saw nobody in this city who had been to the Great Wall, or who knew anybody who had been there.<sup>1</sup>

During my stay at Sinkalan I heard that there was at that city a very aged shaikh, indeed that he had passed his two hundredth year;<sup>2</sup> that he had neither ate nor drank nor had anything to say to women, although his vigour was intact; and that he dwelt in a cave outside the town, where he gave himself up to devotion. So I went to his grotto, and there I saw him at the door. He was very thin; of a deep red or copper-tint, much marked with the traces of an ascetic life, and had no beard. After I had saluted him he took my hand,

<sup>1</sup> This is an instance of Ibn Batuta's loose notions of geography. He inquires for the Wall of China from his coreligionists at the wrong extremity of the empire, as if (on a smaller scale) a foreigner should ask the French Consul at Cork for particulars of the Wall of Antoninus. Had he inquired at Khanbalik (if he really was there) he might have received more information.

The Rampart of Gog and Magog (*Yájúj and Májúj*) was believed to have been erected by Alexander the Great to shut up the fierce nations of the north and bar their irruptions into civilized southern lands. It is generally referred to Darband on the Caspian, but naturally came to be confounded with the Wall of China. Edrisi (ii, 416) gives an account of the mission sent by the Khalif Wathek Billah to explore the Rampart of Gog and Magog. See the Reduction of the Catalan Map, N.E. corner.

<sup>2</sup> Supernatural longevity is a common attribute of Mahomedan saints. Ibn Batuta himself introduces us to several others whose age exceeded one hundred and fifty years, besides a certain *Atha Awalía* in the Hindu Kush who claimed three hundred and fifty years, but regarding whom the traveller had his doubts. Shah Madar, one of the most eminent Indian saints, is said to have been born at Aleppo in 1050-51, and to have died at Makanpur near Ferozabad, Agra, where he was buried, in 1433, having had 1442 sons, spiritual it may be presumed! (*Garcin de Tassy, Particularités de la Rel. Mus. dans l'Inde*, p. 55). And John Schiltberger tells us of a saint at Hore in Horassan (Herat in Khorasan) whom he saw there in the days of Timur, whose name was Phiradam Schyech, and who was three hundred and fifty years old (*Reisen*, p. 101).