

had been a vestige of Christianity in China, the positive assertions of the Mahomedan eye-witnesses were held to put beyond question its existence in the country called Cathay. It was suggested that the name of an empire conterminous with China might have been extended also to the latter; and it was decided that the investigation should be carried out, so as both to remove all shadow of doubt, and to ascertain whether a shorter line of communication with China could not be established.

As regards the Christians who were held so positively to exist in Cathay (*i.e.* as we shall see by and by in *China*), either the Mahomedan informants simply lied, as they have a way of doing, or they were misled by some superficial indications. For as they themselves never pay respect to images of any kind, when they saw in the Chinese temples a number of images not altogether unlike our representations of the Mother of God and some of the Saints, they may possibly have thought that the religion of the country was all one with Christianity. They would also see both lamps and wax lights placed upon the altars; they would see those heathen priests robed in the sacred vestments which our books of ritual call *Pluvials*; processions of suppliants just like ours; chaunting in a style almost exactly resembling the Gregorian chaunts in our churches; and other parallels of the same nature, which have been introduced among them by the devil, clumsily imitating holy things and grasping at the honours due to God. All these circumstances might easily lead a parcel of traders, especially if Mahomedans, to regard the people as professors of Christianity.¹

¹ So easily that the alternative supposition might have been spared. The like confusion has often occurred, and the Jesuits themselves have here shown why. According to De Guignes, the Chinese describe the sovereign and people of the (Eastern) Roman Empire as worshippers of *Fo*, or Buddha, and as putting his image on their coins. De Gama, in his report of the various eastern kingdoms of which he heard at Calicut, describes the Buddhist countries of Pegu, etc., as Christian. Clavijo sets