

been thrown some 18 years before when the Tartar cataclysm had threatened to engulf it. The Tartars themselves were already becoming an object of curiosity rather than of fear, and soon became an object of hope, as a possible help against the old Mahomedan foe. The frail Latin throne in Constantinople was still standing, but tottering to its fall. The successors of the Crusaders still held the Coast of Syria from Antioch to Jaffa, though a deadlier brood of enemies than they had yet encountered was now coming to maturity in the Dynasty of the Mamelukes, which had one foot firmly planted in Cairo, the other in Damascus. The jealousies of the commercial republics of Italy were daily waxing greater. The position of Genoese trade on the coasts of the Aegean was greatly depressed, through the predominance which Venice had acquired there by her part in the expulsion of the Greek Emperors, and which won for the Doge the lofty style of Lord of Three-Eighths of the Empire of Romania. But Genoa was biding her time for an early revenge, and year by year her naval strength and skill were increasing. Both these republics held possessions and establishments in the ports of Syria, which were often the scene of sanguinary conflicts between their citizens. Alexandria was still largely frequented in the intervals of war as the great emporium of Indian wares, but the facilities afforded by the Mongol conquerors who now held the whole tract from the Persian Gulf to the shores of the Caspian and of the Black Sea, or nearly so, were beginning to give a great advantage to the caravan routes which debouched at the ports of Cilician Armenia in the Mediterranean and at Trebizond on the Euxine. Tana (or Azov) had not as yet become the outlet of a similar traffic; the Venetians had apparently frequented to some extent the coast of the Crimea for local trade, but their rivals appear to have been in great measure excluded from this commerce, and the Genoese establishments which so long flourished on that coast, are first heard of some years after a Greek dynasty was again in possession of Constantinople.\*

10. In Asia and Eastern Europe scarcely a dog might bark without Mongol leave, from the borders of Poland and the Gulf

---

\* See Heyd, *Le Colonie Commerciali degli Italiani*, etc., passim.