

to divert the vulgar. Such, if this be true, was the honour of our prophet among the populace of his own country.\*

45. A little later we hear of Marco once more, as presenting a copy of his Book to a noble Frenchman in the service of Charles of Valois.

This Prince, brother of Philip the Fair, in 1301 had married Catharine, daughter and heiress of Philip de Courtenay, titular Emperor of Constantinople, and on the strength of this marriage had at a later date set up his own claim to the Empire of the East. To this he was prompted by Pope Clement V., who in the beginning of 1306 wrote to Venice, stimulating that Government to take part in the enterprise. In the same year, Charles and his wife sent as their envoys to Venice, in connection with this matter, a noble knight called THIBAUT DE CEPOY, along with an ecclesiastic of Chartres called Pierre le Riche, and these two succeeded in executing a treaty of alliance with Venice, of which the original, dated 14th December, 1306, exists at Paris. Thibault de Cepoy eventually went on to Greece with a squadron of Venetian Galleys, but accomplished nothing of moment, and returned to his master in 1310.†

During the stay of Thibault at Venice he seems to have made acquaintance with Marco Polo, and to have received from him a copy of his Book. This is recorded in a curious note which appears on two existing MSS. of Polo's Book, viz., that

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instalments of one fourth, to be retrenched from the pay due to him on his journey in the suite of our ambassadors, with assurance that anything then remaining deficient of his instalments should be made good by himself or his securities. And his securities are the Nobles Pietro Morosini and MARCO PAULO MILIOÑ." Under *Milioñ* is written in an ancient hand "*mortuus.*" (See *Appendix C*, No. 4.)

\* Humboldt tells this (*Examen*, II. 221), alleging *Jacopo d'Acqui* as authority; and Libri (*H. des Sciences Mathématiques*, II. 149), quoting *Doglioni, Historia Veneziana*. But neither authority bears out the citations. The story seems really to come from Amoretti's commentary on the *Voyage du Cap. L. F. Maldonado*, Plaisance, 1812, p. 67. Amoretti quotes as authority *Pignoria, Degli Dei Antichi*.

An odd revival of this old libel was mentioned to me recently by Mr. George Moffatt. When he was at school it was common among the boys to express incredulity by the phrase: "Oh, what a Marco Polo!"

† Thibault, according to Ducange, was in 1307 named Grand Master of the Arblasteers of France; and Buchon says his portrait is at Versailles among the Admirals (No. 1170). Ramon de Muntaner fell in with the Seigneur de Cepoy in Greece, and speaks of him as "but a Captain of the Wind, as his Master was King of the Wind." (See *Ducange, H. de l'Empire de Const. sous les Emp. François*, Venice ed. 1729, pp. 109, 110; *Buchon, Chroniques Etrangères*, pp. lv. 467-470.)