

such illustration is superfluous when we consider that Rusticiano himself was a compiler of French Romances.

But why the language of the Book as we see it in the Geographic Text should be so much more rude, inaccurate, and Italianized than that of Rusticiano's other writings, is a question to which I can suggest no reply quite satisfactory to myself. Is it possible that we have in it a literal representation of Polo's own language in dictating the story,—a rough draft which it was intended afterwards to reduce to better form, and which was so reduced (after a fashion) in French copies of another type, regarding which we shall have to speak presently? * And, if this be the true answer, why should Polo have used a French jargon in which to tell his story? Is it possible that his own mother Venetian, such as he had carried to the East with him and brought back again, was so little intelligible to Rusticiano that French of some kind was the handiest medium of communication between the two? I have known an Englishman and a Hollander driven to converse in Malay; Chinese Christians of different provinces are said sometimes to take to English as the readiest means of intercommunication; and the same is said even of Irish-speaking Irishmen from remote parts of the Island.

It is worthy of remark how many notable narratives of the Middle Ages have been dictated instead of being written by their authors, and that in cases where it is impossible to ascribe this to ignorance of writing. The Armenian Hayton, though evidently a well-read man, possibly could not write in Roman characters. But Joinville is an illustrious example. And the narratives of four of the most famous Mediæval Travellers † seem to have been drawn from them by a kind of pressure, and committed to paper by other hands. I have elsewhere remarked this as indicating how little diffused was literary ambition or vanity; but it would perhaps be more correct to ascribe it to that intense dislike which is still seen on the shores of the Mediter-

* It is, however, not improbable that Rusticiano's hasty and abbreviated original was extended by a scribe who knew next to nothing of French; otherwise it is hard to account for such forms as *perlinage* (pelerinage), *peseries* (epiceries), *proque* (see vol. ii. p. 370), *oisi* (G. T. p. 208), *thochere* (toucher), etc. (See *Bianconi*, 2nd Mem. pp. 30-32.)

† Polo, Friar Odoric, Nicolo Conti, Ibn Batuta.