

Kings, four of whom worship the true God, and each of them wears a golden cross on the forehead ; and they are valiant in battle, having been brought up fighting against the Gentiles of the other three kings, who are Unbelievers and Idolaters. And the kingdom of ADEN ; a Soudan rules over them.

“ The king of Abaschia once took a notion to make a pilgrimage to the Sepulchre of Jesus. ‘ Not at all,’ said his nobles and warriors to him, ‘ for we should be afraid lest the infidels through whose territories you would have to pass, should kill you. There is a Holy Bishop with you,’ said they ; ‘ send him to the Sepulchre of Jesus, and much gold with him ’ ”——

The rest is wanting.

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## XI. SOME ESTIMATE OF THE CHARACTER OF POLO AND HIS BOOK.

66. That Marco Polo has been so universally recognised as the King of Mediæval Travellers is due rather to the width of his experience, the vast compass of his journeys, and the romantic nature of his personal history, than to transcendent superiority of character or capacity.

Grounds of  
Polo's pre-  
eminence  
among  
mediæval  
travellers.

The generation immediately preceding his own has bequeathed to us, in the Report of the Franciscan Friar William de Rubruquis,\* on the Mission with which

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\* M. d'Avezac has refuted the common supposition that this admirable traveller was a native of Brabant.

The form *Rubruquis* of the name of the traveller William de Rubruk has been habitually used in this book, perhaps without sufficient consideration, but it is the most familiar in England, from its use by Hakluyt and Purchas. The former, who first published the narrative, professedly printed from an imperfect MS. belonging to the Lord Lumley, which does not seem to be now known. But all the MSS. collated by Messrs. Francisque-Michel and Wright, in preparing their edition of the Traveller, call him simply Willelmus de Rubruc or Rubruk.

Some old authors, apparently without the slightest ground, having called him *Risbroucke* and the like, it came to be assumed that he was a native of Ruysbroeck, a place in South Brabant.

But there is a place still called *Rubrouck* in French Flanders. This is a commune containing about 1500 inhabitants, belonging to the Canton of Cassel and *arrondissement* of Hazebrouck, in the Department du Nord. And we may take for granted, till facts are alleged against it, that *this* was the place from which the envoy of St. Lewis drew his origin. Many documents of the Middle Ages, referring expressly to this place Rubrouck, exist in the Library of St. Omer, and a detailed notice of them has been published by M. Edm. Coussemaker, of Lille. Several of these documents refer to persons bearing the same name as the Traveller, *e.g.*, in 1190, Thierry de Rubrouc ; in 1202 and 1221, Gauthier du Rubrouc ; in 1250, Jean du Rubrouc ; and in 1258, Woutermann de Rubrouc. It is reasonable to suppose that Friar William was of the same stock. See *Bulletin de la Soc. de Géographie*, 2nd vol. for 1868, pp. 569-570, in which there are some remarks on the subject by M. d'Avezac ; and