

least a link in the Providential chain which at last dragged the New World to light.*

67. Surely Marco's real, indisputable, and, in their kind, unique claims to glory may suffice! *He was the first Traveller to trace a route across the whole longitude of ASIA, naming and describing kingdom after kingdom which he had seen with his own eyes; the Deserts of PERSIA, the flowering plateaux and wild gorges of BADAKHSHAN, the jade-bearing rivers of KHOTAN, the MONGOLIAN Steppes, cradle of the power that had so lately threatened to swallow up Christendom, the new and brilliant Court that had been established at CAMBALUC: The first Traveller to reveal*

works of all kinds, history, chronicles, philosophy, and other arts, and to apprehend these the Lord opened my understanding. Under His manifest guidance I navigated hence to the Indies; for it was the Lord who gave me the will to accomplish that task, and it was in the ardour of that will that I came before your Highnesses. All those who heard of my project scouted and derided it; all the acquirements I have mentioned stood me in no stead; and if in your Highnesses, and in you alone, Faith and Constancy endured, to Whom are due the Lights that have enlightened you as well as me, but to the Holy Spirit?" (Quoted in *Humboldt's Examen Critique*, I. 17, 18.)

* Libri, however, speaks too strongly when he says: "The finest of all the results due to the influence of Marco Polo is that of having stirred Columbus to the discovery of the New World. Columbus, jealous of Polo's laurels, spent his life in preparing means to get to that Zipangu of which the Venetian traveller had told such great things; his desire was to reach China by sailing westward, and in his way he fell in with America." (*H. des Sciences Mathém.* etc. II. 150.)

The fact seems to be that Columbus knew of Polo's revelations only at second hand, from the letters of the Florentine Paolo Toscanelli and the like; and I cannot find that he *ever* refers to Polo by name. [How deep was the interest taken by Columbus in Marco Polo's travels is shown by the numerous marginal notes of the Admiral in the printed copy of the latin version of Pipino kept at the Bib. Colombina at Seville. See *Appendix H.* p. 558.—H. C.] Though to the day of his death he was full of imaginations about Zipangu and the land of the Great Kaan as being in immediate proximity to his discoveries, these were but accidents of his great theory. It was the intense conviction he had acquired of the absolute smallness of the Earth, of the vast extension of Asia eastward, and of the consequent narrowness of the Western Ocean, on which his life's project was based. This conviction he seems to have derived chiefly from the works of Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly. But the latter borrowed his collected arguments from Roger Bacon, who has stated them, erroneous as they are, very forcibly in his *Opus Majus* (p. 137), as Humboldt has noticed in his *Examen* (vol. i. p. 64). The Spanish historian Mariana makes a strange jumble of the alleged guides of Columbus, saying that some ascribed his convictions to "the information given by *one Marco Polo, a Florentine Physician!*" ("como otros dizen, por aviso que le dio *un cierto Marco Polo, Medico Florentin;*" *Hist. de España*, lib. xxvi. cap 3). Toscanelli is called by Columbus *Maestro Paulo*, which seems to have led to this mistake; see Sign. G. Uzielli, in *Boll. della Soc. Geog. Ital.* IX. p. 119. [Also by the same: *Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli iniziatore della scoperta d'America*, Florence, 1892; *Toscanelli*, No. 1; *Toscanelli*, Vol. V. of the *Raccolta Colombiana*, 1894.—H. C.]