

— “In the Tibarenian Land
 When some good woman bears her lord a babe,
 'Tis *he* is swathed and groaning put to bed ;
 Whilst *she*, arising, tends his baths, and serves
 Nice possets for her husband in the straw.” *

69. Of scientific notions, such as we find in the unvarnished Maundevile, we have no trace in truthful Marco. The former, “lying with a circumstance,” tells us boldly that he was in 33° of South Latitude; the latter is full of wonder that some of the Indian Islands where he had been lay so far to the south that you lost sight of the Pole-star. When it rises again on his horizon he estimates the Latitude by the Pole-star's being so many *cubits* high. So the gallant Baber speaks of the sun having mounted *spear-high* when the onset of battle began at Paniput. Such expressions convey no notion at all to such as have had their ideas sophisticated by angular perceptions of altitude, but similar expressions are common among Orientals,† and indeed I have heard them from educated Englishmen. In another place Marco states regarding certain islands in the Northern Ocean that they lie so very far to the north that in going thither one actually leaves the Pole-star a trifle behind towards the south; a statement to which we know only one parallel, to wit, in the voyage of that adventurous Dutch skipper who told Master Moxon, King Charles II.'s Hydrographer, that he had sailed two degrees beyond the Pole!

Absence of
scientific
notions.

70. The Book, however, is full of bearings and distances, and I have thought it worth while to construct a map from its indications, in order to get some approximation to Polo's own idea of the face of that world which he had traversed so extensively. There are three allusions to maps in the course of his work (II. 245, 312, 424).

Map con-
structed on
Polo's data.

In his own bearings, at least on land journeys, he usually carries us along a great general traverse line, without much caring about small changes of direction. Thus on the great outward journey from the frontier of Persia to that of China the line runs almost continuously “*entre Levant et Grec*” or E.N.E. In his journey from Cambaluc or Peking to Mien or

* Vol. ii. p. 85, and *Apollonius Rhodius, Argonaut.* II. 1012.

† Chinese Observers record the length of Comets' tails by *cubits*!