

ship between notable members of that House.* But the most perplexing knot in the whole book lies in the interesting account which he gives of the Siege of Sayanfu or Siang-yang, during the subjugation of Southern China by Kúblái. I have entered on this matter in the notes (vol. ii. p. 167), and will only say here that M. Pauthier's solution of the difficulty is no solution, being absolutely inconsistent with the story as told by Marco himself, and that I see none; though I have so much faith in Marco's veracity that I am loath to believe that the facts admit of no reconciliation.

Our faint attempt to appreciate some of Marco's qualities, as gathered from his work, will seem far below the very high estimates that have been pronounced, not only by some who have delighted rather to enlarge upon his frame than to make themselves acquainted with his work,† but also by persons whose studies and opinions have been worthy of all respect. Our estimate, however, does not abate a jot of our intense interest in his Book and affection for his memory. And we have a strong feeling that, owing partly to his reticence, and partly to the great disadvantages under which the Book was committed to writing, we have in it a singularly imperfect image of the Man.

72. A question naturally suggests itself, how far Polo's narrative, at least in its expression, was modified by passing under the pen of a professed littérateur of somewhat humble claims, such as Rusticiano was. The case is not a singular one, and in our own day the ill-judged use of such assistance has been fatal to the reputation of an adventurous Traveller.

Was Polo's
Book mate-
rially af-
fected by
the Scribe
Rusticiano?

* Compare these errors with like errors of Herodotus, *e.g.*, regarding the conspiracy of the False Smerdis. (See Rawlinson's Introduction, p. 55.) There is a curious parallel between the two also in the supposed occasional use of Oriental state records, as in Herodotus's accounts of the revenues of the satrapies, and of the army of Xerxes, and in Marco Polo's account of Kinsay, and of the Kaan's revenues. (Vol. ii pp. 185, 216.)

† An example is seen in the voluminous *Annali Musulmani* of G. B. Rampoldi, Milan, 1825. This writer speaks of the Travels of Marco Polo with his *brother* and uncle; declares that he visited *Tipango (sic)*, Java, Ceylon, and the *Maldives*, collected all the geographical notions of his age, traversed the two peninsulas of the Indies, examined the islands of *Socotra*, *Madagascar*, *Sofala*, and traversed with *philosophic eye* the regions of Zanguebar, Abyssinia, Nubia, and Egypt! and so forth (ix. 174). And whilst Malte-Brun bestows on Marco the sounding and ridiculous title of "*the Humboldt of the 13th century*," he shows little real acquaintance with his Book. (See his *Précis*, ed. of 1836, I. 551 *seqq.*)