

5th century;* they were translated into Armenian, Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac; and were reproduced in the verses of Firdusi and various other Persian Poets; spreading eventually even to the Indian Archipelago, and finding utterance in Malay and Siamese. At an early date they had been rendered into Latin by Julius Valerius; but this work had probably been lost sight of, and it was in the 10th century that they were re-imported from Byzantium to Italy by the Arch-priest Leo, who had gone as Envoy to the Eastern Capital from John Duke of Campania.† Romantic histories on this foundation, in verse and prose, became diffused in all the languages of Western Europe, from Spain to Scandinavia, rivalling in popularity the romantic cycles of the Round Table or of Charlemagne. Nor did this popularity cease till the 16th century was well advanced.

The heads of most of the Mediæval Travellers were crammed with these fables as genuine history.‡ And by the help of that community of legend on this subject which they found wherever Mahomedan literature had spread, Alexander Magnus was to be traced everywhere in Asia. Friar Odoric found Tana, near Bombay, to be the veritable City of King Porus; John Marignolli's vainglory led him to imitate King Alexander in setting up a marble column "in the corner of the world over against Paradise," *i.e.* somewhere on the coast of Travancore; whilst Sir John Maundevile, with a cheaper ambition, borrowed wonders from the Travels of Alexander to adorn his own. Nay, even in after days, when the Portuguese stumbled with amazement on those vast ruins in Cambodia, which have so lately become familiar to us through the works of Mouhot, Thomson, and Garnier, they ascribed them to Alexander.§

Prominent in all these stories is the tale of Alexander's shutting up a score of impure nations, at the head of which were Gog and Magog, within a barrier of impassable moun-

* [On the subject of Moses of Chorene and his works, I must refer to the clever researches of the late Auguste Carrière, Professor of Armenian at the École des Langues Orientales.—H.C.]

† Zacher, *Forschungen zur Kritik, &c., der Alexandersage*, Halle, 1867, p. 108.

‡ Even so sagacious a man as Roger Bacon quotes the fabulous letter of Alexander to Aristotle as authentic. (*Opus Majus*, p. 137.)

§ *J. As. sér. VI. tom. xviii. p. 352.*