

had gone, and that the Prince in consequence held them for no better than fools and dolts, and would say: "I had far lieber hearken about the strange things, and the manners of the different countries you have seen, than merely be told of the business you went upon;"—for he took great delight in hearing of the affairs of strange countries. Mark therefore, as he went and returned, took great pains to learn about all kinds of different matters in the countries which he visited, in order to be able to tell about them to the Great Kaan.³

NOTE 1.—The word Emperor stands here for *Seigneur*.

What the four characters acquired by Marco were is open to discussion.

The Chronicle of the Mongol Emperors rendered by Gaubil mentions, as characters used in their Empire, the Uíghúr, the Persian and Arabic, that of the Lamas (Tibetan), that of the Niuché, introduced by the Kin Dynasty, the Khitán, and the *Báshpah* character, a syllabic alphabet arranged, on the basis of the Tibetan and Sanskrit letters chiefly, by a learned chief Lama so-called, under the orders of Kublai, and established by edict in 1269 as the official character. Coins bearing this character, and dating from 1308 to 1354, are extant. The forms of the Niuché and Khitán were devised in imitation of Chinese writing, but are supposed to be syllabic. Of the Khitán but one inscription was known, and no key. "The Khitan had two national scripts, the 'small characters' (*hsiao tzu*) and the 'large characters' (*ta tzu*)." S. W. Bushell, *Insc. in the Juchen and Allied Scripts*, Cong. des Orientalistes, Paris, 1897.—*Die Sprache und Schrift der Juchen*, von Dr W. Grube, Leipzig, 1896, from a polyglot MS. dictionary, discovered by Dr F. Hirth and now kept in the Royal Library, Berlin.—H. Y. and H. C.

Chinghiz and his first successors used the Uíghúr, and sometimes the Chinese character. Of the Uíghúr character we give a specimen in Bk. IV. It is of Syriac origin, undoubtedly introduced into Eastern Turkestan by the early Nestorian missions, probably in the 8th or 9th century. The oldest known example of this character so applied, the *Kudatku Bilik*, a didactic poem in Uíghúr (a branch of Oriental Turkish), dating from A.D. 1069, was published by Prof. Vámbéry in 1870. A new edition of the *Kudatku Bilik* was published at St. Petersburg, in 1891, by Dr. W. Radloff. Vámbéry had a pleasing illustration of the origin of the Uíghúr character, when he received a visit at Pesth from certain Nestorians of Urumia on a begging tour. On being shown the original MS. of the *Kudatku Bilik*, they read the character easily, whilst much to their astonishment they could not understand a word of what was written. This Uíghúr is the basis of the modern Mongol and Manchu characters. (Cf. E. Bretschneider, *Mediæval Researches*, I. pp. 236, 263.)—H. Y. and H. C.

[At the village of Keuyung Kwan, 40 miles north of Peking, in the sub-prefecture of Ch'ang Ping, in the Chih-li province, the road from Peking to Kalgan runs beyond the pass of Nankau, under an archway, a view of which will be found at the end of this volume, on which were engraved, in 1345, two large inscriptions in six different languages: Sanskrit, Tibetan, Mongol, *Báshpah*, Uíghúr, Chinese, and a language unknown till recently. Mr Wylie's kindness enabled Sir Henry Yule to present a specimen of this. (A much better facsimile of these inscriptions than Wylie's having since been published by Prince Roland Bonaparte in his valuable *Recueil des Documents de*