

heart of the Empire, without acquiring a knowledge of the spoken language.—H. C. The other three languages seem highly probable. The fourth may have been Tibetan. But it is more likely that he counted separately two varieties of the same character (*e.g.* of the Arabic and Persian) as two “*lettres de leur escriptures.*”—H. Y. and H. C.

NOTE 2.—[Ramusio here adds: “Ad und città, detta Carazan,” which, as we shall see, refers to the Yun-nan Province.]—H. C.

NOTE 3.—From the context no doubt Marco’s employments were honourable and confidential; but *Commissioner* would perhaps better express them than Ambassador in the modern sense. The word *Ilchi*, which was probably in his mind, was applied to a large variety of classes employed on the commissions of Government, as we may see from a passage of Rashiduddin in D’Ohsson, which says that “there were always to be found in every city from one to two hundred *Ilchis*, who forced the citizens to furnish them with free quarters,” etc., III. 404. (See also 485.)

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW MARK RETURNED FROM THE MISSION WHEREON HE HAD BEEN SENT.

WHEN Mark returned from his ambassage he presented himself before the Emperor, and after making his report of the business with which he was charged, and its successful accomplishment, he went on to give an account in a pleasant and intelligent manner of all the novelties and strange things that he had seen and heard; insomuch that the Emperor and all such as heard his story were surprised, and said: “If this young man live, he will assuredly come to be a person of great worth and ability.” And so from that time forward he was always entitled MESSER MARCO POLO, and thus we shall style him henceforth in this Book of ours, as is but right.

Thereafter Messer Marco abode in the Kaan’s employment some seventeen years, continually going and coming, hither and thither, on the missions that were entrusted to him by the Lord [and sometimes, with the permission and authority of the Great Kaan, on his own private affairs.] And, as he knew all the sovereign’s ways,