

came round, they went to the church betimes in the morning, and lo, they found the stone removed from under the column; the foot of the column was without support, and yet it bore the load as stoutly as before! Between the foot of the column and the ground there was a space of three palms. So the Saracens had away their stone, and mighty little joy withal. It was a glorious miracle, nay, it *is* so, for the column still so standeth, and will stand as long as God pleaseth.³

Now let us quit this and continue our journey.

NOTE 1.—Of Kaidu, Kúblái Kaan's kinsman and rival, and their long wars, we shall have to speak later. He had at this time a kind of joint occupancy of SAMARKAND and Bokhara with the Khans of Chagatai, his cousins.

[On Samarkand generally see: *Samarqand*, by W. Radloff, translated into French by L. Leger, *Rec. d'itin. dans l'Asie Centrale*, Ecole des Langues Orient., Paris, 1878, p. 284 *et seq.*; *A travers le royaume de Tamerlan (Asie Centrale)* . . . par Guillaume Capus . . . Paris, 1892, 8vo.—H. C.]

Marco evidently never was at Samarkand, though doubtless it was visited by his Father and Uncle on their first journey, when we know they were long at Bokhara. Having, therefore, little to say descriptive of a city he had not seen, he tells us a story:—

“So geographers, in Afric maps,
With savage pictures fill their gaps,
And o'er unhabitable downs
Place elephants for want of towns.”

As regards the Christians of Samarkand who figure in the preceding story, we may note that the city had been one of the Metropolitan Sees of the Nestorian Church since the beginning of the 8th century, and had been a bishopric perhaps two centuries earlier. Prince Sempad, High Constable of Armenia, in a letter written from Samarkand in 1246 or 1247, mentions several circumstances illustrative of the state of things indicated in this story: “I tell you that we have found many Christians scattered all over the East, and many fine churches, lofty, ancient, and of good architecture, which have been spoiled by the Turks. Hence, the Christians of this country came to the presence of the reigning Kaan's grandfather (*i.e.* Chinghiz); he received them most honourably, and granted them liberty of worship, and issued orders to prevent their having any just cause of complaint by word or deed. *And so the Saracens, who used to treat them with contempt, have now the like treatment in double measure.*”

Shortly after Marco's time, viz. in 1328, Thomas of Mancasola, a Dominican, who had come from Samarkand with a Mission to the Pope (John XXII.) from Ilchigadai, Khan of Chagatai, was appointed Latin Bishop of that city. (*Mosheim*, p. 110, etc.; *Cathay*, p. 192.)

NOTE 2.—CHAGATAI, here called Sigatay, was Uncle, not Brother, to the Great Kaan (Kúblái). Nor was Kaidu either Chagatai's son or Kúblái's nephew, as Marco here and elsewhere represents him to be. (See Bk. IV. ch. i.) The term used to