

We also read in the same work (Bk. 74, 2) that 'The Ta-ta were a branch of the Mo-ho (the name the Nû-chên Tartars bore during the Sui and T'ang periods: *Ma Tuan-lin*, Bk. 327, 5). They first lived to the north of the Kitan. Later on they were conquered by this people, when they scattered, a part becoming tributaries of the Kitan, another to the P'o-hai (a branch of the Mo-ho), while some bands took up their abode in the Yin Shan in Southern Mongolia, north of the provinces of Chih-li and Shan-si, and took the name of *Ta-ta*.' In 981 the Chinese ambassador to the Prince of Kao-chang (Karakhodjo, some 20 miles south-east of Turfan) traversed the Ta-ta country. They then seem to have occupied the northern bend of the Yellow River. He gives the names of some nine tribes of Ta-ta living on either side of the river. He notes that their neighbours to the east were Kitan, and that for a long time they had been fighting them after the occupation of Kan-chou by the Uigúrs. (*Ma Tuan-lin*, Bk. 336, 12-14.) We may gather from this that these Tartars were already settled along the Yellow River and the Yin Shan (the valley in which is now the important frontier mart of Kwei-hua Ch'eng) at the beginning of the ninth century, for the Uigúrs, driven southward by the Kirghiz, first occupied Kan-chou in north-western Kan-suh, somewhere about 'A.D. 842.'"]

NOTE 3.—CHORCHA (*Ciorcia*) is the Manchu country, whose people were at that time called by the Chinese *Yuché* or *Niuché*, and by the Mongols *Churché*, or as it is in Sanang Setzen, *Jurchid*. The country in question is several times mentioned by Rashiduddin as Churché. The founders of the *Kin* Dynasty, which the Mongols superseded in Northern China, were of Churché race. [It was part of Nayan's appanage. (See Bk. II. ch. v.)—H. C.]

NOTE 4.—The idea that a Christian potentate of enormous wealth and power, and bearing this title, ruled over vast tracts in the far East, was universal in Europe from the middle of the 12th to the end of the 13th century, after which time the Asiatic story seems gradually to have died away, whilst the Royal Presbyter was assigned to a locus in Abyssinia; the equivocal application of the term *India* to the East of Asia and the East of Africa facilitating this transfer. Indeed I have a suspicion, contrary to the view now generally taken, that the term may from the first have belonged to the Abyssinian Prince, though circumstances led to its being applied in another quarter for a time. It appears to me almost certain that the letter of Pope Alexander III., preserved by R. Hoveden, and written in 1177 to the *Magnificus Rex Indorum, Sacerdotum sanctissimus*, was meant for the King of Abyssinia.

Be that as it may, the inordinate report of Prester John's magnificence became especially diffused from about the year 1165, when a letter full of the most extravagant details was circulated, which purported to have been addressed by this potentate to the Greek Emperor Manuel, the Roman Emperor Frederick, the Pope, and other Christian sovereigns. By the circulation of this letter, glaring fiction as it is, the idea of this Christian Conqueror was planted deep in the mind of Europe, and twined itself round every rumour of revolution in further Asia. Even when the din of the conquests of Chinghiz began to be audible in the West, he was invested with the character of a Christian King, and more or less confounded with the mysterious Prester John.

The first notice of a conquering Asiatic potentate so styled had been brought to Europe by the Syrian Bishop of Gabala (*Jibal*, south of Laodicea in Northern Syria), who came, in 1145, to lay various grievances before Pope Eugene III. He reported that not long before a certain John, inhabiting the extreme East, king and Nestorian priest, and claiming descent from the Three Wise Kings, had made war on the *Samiard* Kings of the Medes and Persians, and had taken Ecbatana their capital. He was then proceeding to the deliverance of Jerusalem, but was stopped by the Tigris, which he could not cross, and compelled by disease in his host to retire.

M. d'Avezac first showed to whom this account must apply, and the subject has more recently been set forth with great completeness and learning by Dr. Gustavus Oppert. The conqueror in question was the founder of Kara Khitai, which existed as