

mark! and you will see the event of the battle, and who shall have the best of it; for whose cane soever shall get above the other, to him shall victory be." He replied that he would fain see it, and bade them begin. Then the Christian astrologers read a Psalm out of the Psalter, and went through other incantations. And lo! whilst all were beholding, the cane that bore the name of Chinghis Kaan, without being touched by anybody, advanced to the other that bore the name of Prester John, and got on the top of it. When the Prince saw that he was greatly delighted, and seeing how in this matter he found the Christians to tell the truth, he always treated them with great respect, and held them for men of truth for ever after.²

NOTE 1.—Polo in the preceding chapter has stated that this plain of Tanduc was in Prester John's country. He plainly regards it as identical with the Tanduc of which he speaks more particularly in ch. lix. as belonging to Prester John's descendants, and which must be located near the Chinese Wall. He is no doubt wrong in placing the battle there. Sanang Setzen puts the battle between the two, the only one which he mentions, "at the outflow of the Onon near Kulen Buir." The same action is placed by De Mailla's authorities at Calantschan, by P. Hyacinth at Kharachin Schatu, by Erdmann after Rashid in the vicinity of Hulun Barkat and Kalanchinalt, which latter was on the borders of the Churché or Manchus. All this points to the vicinity of Buir Nor and Hulan or Kalon Nor (though the Onon is far from these). But this was *not* the final defeat of Aung Khan or Prester John, which took place some time later (in 1203) at a place called the Chacher Ondur (or Heights), which Gaubil places between the Tula and the Kerulun, therefore near the modern Urga. Aung Khan was wounded, and fled over the frontier of the Naiman; the officers of that tribe seized and killed him. (*Schmidt*, 87, 383; *Erdmann*, 297; *Gaubil*, p. 10.)

NOTE 2.—A Tartar divination by twigs, but different from that here employed, is older than Herodotus, who ascribes it to the Scythians. We hear of one something like the last among the Alans, and (from Tacitus) among the Germans. The words of Hosea (iv. 12), "My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them," are thus explained by Theophylactus: "They stuck up a couple of sticks, whilst murmuring certain charms and incantations; the sticks then, by the operation of devils, direct or indirect, would fall over, and the direction of their fall was noted," etc. The Chinese method of divination comes still nearer to that in the text. It is conducted by tossing in the air two symmetrical pieces of wood or bamboo of a peculiar form. It is described by Mendoza, and more particularly, with illustrations, by Doolittle.*

But Rubruquis would seem to have witnessed nearly the same process that Polo describes. He reprehends the conjuring practices of the Nestorian priests among the Mongols, who seem to have tried to rival the indigenous *Káms* or Medicine-men.

* [On the Chinese divining-twig, see *Dennys, Folk-lore of China*, 57.—H. C.]