

On the other hand, he points out that the story has a strong resemblance to a real event which occurred in Central Asia in the beginning of Polo's century.

The Persian historians of the Mongols relate that when Chinghiz defeated and slew Taiyang Khan, the king of the Naimans, Kushluk, the son of Taiyang, fled to the Gur-Khan of Karakhitai and received both his protection and the hand of his daughter (see i. 237); but afterwards rose against his benefactor and usurped his throne. "In the Liao history I read," Mr. Wylie says, "that Chih-lu-ku, the last monarch of the Karakhitai line, ascended the throne in 1168, and in the 34th year of his reign, when out hunting one day in autumn, Kushluk, who had 8000 troops in ambush, made him prisoner, seized his throne and adopted the customs of the Liao, while he conferred on Chih-lu-ku the honourable title of *Tai-shang-hwang* 'the old emperor.'"\*

It is this Kushluk, to whom Rubruquis assigns the rôle of King (or Prester) John, the subject of so many wonderful stories. And Mr. Wylie points out that not only was his father Taiyang Khan, according to the Chinese histories, a much more important prince than Aung Khan or Wang Khan the Kerait, but his name *Tai-Yang-Khan* is precisely "Great King John" as near as John (or Yohana) can be expressed in Chinese. He thinks therefore that Taiyang and his son Kushluk, the Naimans, and not Aung Khan and his descendants, the Keraites, were the parties to whom the character of Prester John properly belonged, and that it was probably this story of Kushluk's capture of the Karakhitai monarch (*Roi de Fer*) which got converted into the form in which he relates it of the *Roi d'Or*.

The suggestion seems to me, as regards the story, interesting and probable; though I do not admit that the character of Prester John properly belonged to any real person.

I may best explain my view of the matter by a geographical analogy. Pre-Columbian maps of the Atlantic showed an Island of Brazil, an Island of Antillia, founded—who knows on what?—whether on the real adventure of a vessel driven in sight of the Azores or Bermudas, or on mere fancy and fogbank. But when discovery really came to be undertaken, men looked for such lands and found them accordingly. And there they are in our geographies, Brazil and the Antilles!

The cut which we give is curious in connection with our traveller's notice of the portrait-gallery of the Golden Kings. For it is taken from the fragmentary MS. of Rashiduddin's History in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society, a MS. believed to be one of those executed under the great Vazir's own supervision, and is presented there as the portrait of the last sovereign of the Dynasty in question, being one of a whole series of similar figures. There can be little doubt, I think, that these were taken from Chinese originals, though, it may be, not very exactly.

NOTE 2.—The history of the Tartar conquerors of China, whether Khitan, Churché, Mongol, or Manchu, has always been the same. For one or two generations the warlike character and manly habits were maintained; and then the intruders, having adopted Chinese manners, ceremonies, literature, and civilization, sank into more than Chinese effeminacy and degradation. We see the custom of employing only female attendants ascribed in a later chapter (lxxvii.) to the Sung Emperors at Kinsay; and the same was the custom of the later Ming emperors, in whose time the imperial palace was said to contain 5000 women. Indeed, the precise custom which this passage describes was in our own day habitually reported of the T'ai-P'ing sovereign during his reign at Nanking: "None but women are allowed in the interior of the Palace, and he is drawn to the audience-chamber in a gilded sacred dragon-car by the ladies." (*Blakiston*, p. 42; see also *Wilson's Ever-Victorious Army*, p. 41.)

\* See also Oppert (p. 157), who cites this story from Visdelou, but does not notice its analogy to Polo's.