

CHAPTER X.

THE KINGDOMS OF SAMARA AND DAGROIAN.

So you must know that when you leave the kingdom of Basma you come to another kingdom called Samara, on the same Island.¹ And in that kingdom Messer Marco Polo was detained five months by the weather, which would not allow of his going on. And I tell you that here again neither the Pole-star nor the stars of the Maestro² were to be seen, much or little. The people here are wild Idolaters; they have a king who is great and rich; but they also call themselves subjects of the Great Kaan. When Messer Mark was detained on this Island five months by contrary winds, [he landed with about 2000 men in his company; they dug large ditches on the landward side to encompass the party, resting at either end on the sea-haven, and within these ditches they made bulwarks or stockades of timber] for fear of those brutes of man-eaters; [for there is great store of wood there; and the Islanders having confidence in the party supplied them with victuals and other things needful.] There is abundance of fish to be had, the best in the world. The people have no wheat, but live on rice. Nor have they any wine except such as I shall now describe.

You must know that they derive it from a certain kind of tree that they have. When they want wine they cut a branch of this, and attach a great pot to the stem of the tree at the place where the branch was cut; in a day and a night they will find the pot filled. This wine is excellent drink, and is got both white and red. [It is of such surpassing virtue that it cures dropsy and tisick and spleen.] The trees resemble small date-palms; . . .