

hope that some reader skilled in mediæval French and Italian may be able to throw light on the subject.

Mr. Yule writes as follows:—

“The reference [to these fowls] in ‘Marco Polo’ (p. 226 of the last edition; not p. 126 as stated in the index) is a puzzle, owing to the statement that they are *black* all over. A black has, I am told, been recently created, but the common breed is white, as stated in the note and by Friar Odoric.

“It has occurred to me as a possibility that what Marco Polo may have meant to say was that they were *black all through*, or some such phrase. The flesh of these fowls is deeply pigmented, and looks practically black; it is a feature that is very remarkable, and would certainly strike any one who saw it. The details that they ‘lay eggs just like our fowls,’ *i.e.*, not pigmented, and are ‘very good to eat,’ are facts that would naturally deserve especial mention in this connexion. Mr. A. D. Darbishire (of Oxford and Edinburgh University) tells me that is quite correct: the flesh look horrid, but it is quite good eating. Do any texts suggest the possibility of such a reading as I suggest?”

The references in the above quotation are, of course, to my father’s version of Marco Polo. That his nephew should make this interesting little contribution to the subject would have afforded him much gratification.

A. F. YULE.

The Athenæum, No. 4570, May 29, 1915, p. 485.

LXXX., pp. 226, 230.

SUGAR.

“I may observe that the *Pêh Shī* (or ‘Northern Dynasties History’) speaks of a large consumption of sugar in Cambodia as far back as the fifth century of our era. There can be no mistake about the meaning of the words *sha-t’ang*, which are still used both in China and Japan (*sa-tō*). The ‘History of the T’ang Dynasty,’ in its chapter on Magadha, says that in the year 627 the Chinese Emperor ‘sent envoys thither to procure the method of boiling out sugar, and then ordered the Yang-chou sugar-cane growers to press it out in the same way, when it appeared that both in colour and taste ours excelled that of the Western Regions’ [of which Magadha was held to be part].” (E. H. PARKER, *Asiatic Quart. Rev.*, Jan., 1904, p. 146.)