

N° 9 In this same island of Iceland (Islanda) there is a great quantity of fish. They take it in winter, and dry it by means of the very great cold which there is there, because this said island is within the Arctic circle, and in summer men<sup>1</sup> go there from many parts and barter for this fish, thus dried, in exchange for meal and beer; and this said fish is so dry and hard, that to eat it they beat it with certain hammers of iron on certain stones hard as marble, and then they put it to soak a day or two, and thus they eat it, stewed with butter. And in all this Northern sea there is a very great quantity of fish, and many of them large and of monstrous shape; those who sail in these seas have seen very large lampreys, which resemble great serpents and [have seen them] attack ships, in order to eat the sailors. The natives of the said island most of them build their houses underground, and the walls of fish-bones. They have no wood, except some extremely small trees, and of these very few and in few places; but the Provider of all things provides every year that there comes to them by sea, on the northern parts of the said island, a very great quantity of trees of different kinds and sizes, as driftwood, borne by furious north winds to the coast of the said island, with which the natives provide themselves, and make use of it for all that is needful to them. And they say that often they hear spirits speak and call each other by name, and take the form of living persons, and tell them who they are; and in certain parts of the said island there rise up<sup>2</sup> certain very dreadful fires, and other wonders<sup>3</sup> the natives of the said island say there are in it.<sup>4</sup>

N° 10. The men who dwell in this region are savages,<sup>5</sup> they are destitute of bread and wine, they tame deer and ride upon them, and they fight with another people which is situated farther to the north, and which they call the Nocturnal people, for they go about in the night and perform their business as here [we do] in the day, and this because the days there, from the 14th of September to the 10th of March are so short that there is not an hour of light. They are a very wicked people, quarrelsome, they rob all those who pass [through their country] so that no ship dares to ride at anchor near the coast for fear of these night people, because they slay and rob all who fall into their hands; and a little beyond these night people toward the southeast they say there are certain monsters which have bodies like those of human beings except the head, which is like that of a pig, and that they understand one another, grunting like pigs.

N° 11. Those who inhabit this region, some adore the sun, others the first thing they see in the morning, others adore a piece of colored cloth which they place on a lance, and thus each worships what he prefers: they are under the sway of the great Khan, emperor of the Tartars.

N° 12. Here there are monsters like unto men who have ears so large that they cover the whole body, and they say that farther on towards the East there are certain men who have no joints whatever at the knees nor in the feet: they are under the sway of the grand Khan. In the province of Balor, which is fifty days' journey in extent, there are wild men; they live in the mountains and forests.

N° 13. Here dwells that mighty king of Aziumba and Auxama whom some call Prester John, to whom sixty kings yield obedience; he is very wealthy in all riches,<sup>6</sup> and there is no record that he was ever defeated in any battle, but often as he come back with glorious victory from the south from the Throglodyte people, a race naked and black, which people extends as far as the Cape of Good Hope. Among which people there is a race which does not speak but they understand each other by whistling; and this is not Prester John,<sup>7</sup> because Prester John had his empire in eastern and southern India until Genghis Khan, first king of the Tartars, defeated and overcame him in a very cruel battle, in which he died and the said Genghis took from him all his kingdoms and lordships, and allowed the Christians to live in their own faith, and gave them a Christian king to rule and govern them, which king was called George, and from that time till now all the kings who succeed him are called George, as Marco Polo relates more at large in the 42nd and 48th chapters of his book.<sup>8</sup>

N° 14. The king of this province and Kingdom of Bengal is a very mighty lord, and has under his rule many cities, very large and of great trade.<sup>9</sup> There is in this kingdom and province much cinnamon, cloves, ginger, pepper, sandalwood, lacquer, and silk in great quantities. They are wont<sup>10</sup> in this province and kingdom to burn

<sup>1</sup> Englishmen, Germans, and the inhabitants of various other regions.

<sup>2</sup> fire, dreadful to be seen, rises of itself, and is thrown up and whirled away to a distance.

<sup>3</sup> both to be seen and heard.

<sup>4</sup> which for the sake of brevity are omitted.

<sup>5</sup> live in the desert and are entirely wild.

<sup>6</sup> surpassing by his wealth the most fortunate lot of these most powerful kings.

<sup>7</sup> It is easy to prove that this one is hardly the real Prester John.

<sup>8</sup> in the second and third chapters of his fortieth book.

<sup>9</sup> and he is bound with extremely close bonds with the ever victorious king of Portugal, with whom he has made a perpetual treaty of peace, by means of which he receives immense quantities of.

<sup>10</sup> Were wont, they say.

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