



Eothen, or Traces of Travel Brought Home from the East (Classic Reprint)

Alexander William Kinglake

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Chambers Cyclopedia, much advertised for its educational value ;the other cited anonymously by John Cameron Grant in his preface to a recent edition of the Adventures. From the first: An oldEnglish traveler born atSt. Albans about the year 1300. Prompted by curiosity or love of adventure, he left his native country about 1327, visited the Holy Land, served under theSultan of Egypt and the great Khan of Cathay [China] ;and after 33 years wandering through Europe, Asia, and Africa, returned toEngland where he wrote an account of his travels in Latin, French, andEnglish. He died at Liege, Nov. 17, 1372. Mandeville's work is not of great value for historic geography, as he not merely states what came under his own observation, but what he heard; and he was credulous enough to admit what are now regarded as the most absurd and monstrous fables. ...Several of his statements, once regarded as improbable, have since been verified. The common notion of his being preeminently a lying traveler, is therefore in all likelihood not well founded. The second opinion forms a rather strong contrast: There was never aSir John Mandeville in existence, and the renowned book of travels which goes by his name was a compilation by a physician of Liege, Jehan deBourgonne by name. ...Doctor John of Burgundy was a smart man, and understood the literary taste of his time, so he concealed his identity under the pseudonym of Sir John Mandeville, Knight, of St. Albans in England. Perhaps the first quoted sketch may be commended for the absence of the dogmatic opinion that pervades the second; but the ridiculousness of it is woefully apparent as one reads even the first chapters of the Adventures. Nor can it with certainty be affirmed that the originalSir John is identical with the good Burgundian leech, for Jehan deBourgonne had troubles of his own, and from their history (Typographical errors above are due to OCR software and don't occur in the book.)

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