

no more Christian blood, but to adopt the Christian faith. There seems indeed, even when the early panic caused by the vast scale of the Tartar atrocities had scarcely passed away, (and the feeling for many years grew rather than diminished), an undercurrent of anticipation to have run through Europe that these barbarians were in some way ripe for conversion; and this sentiment is traceable, more or less, in most of the missions that from this time forth were sent to them by Christian Pontiffs and Princes. At its maximum, as we have seen, the power of the Grand Khan extended from the Gulf of Tunking almost to the Baltic. None, or next to none, of the Mongol princes were at this time Mahomedans, and the power of Islam over the length of Asia was for a time prostrated. The heavy blows thus dealt at the Mahomedan enemy; then the old stories of Prester John with whom early rumour had confounded Chinghiz; the vagueness of religious profession in the Khans and their captains, facilitating the ascription to them of that Christianity which was no doubt really professed by some of the tribal chiefs under them; the tolerance and patronage in some cases extended to Christians in the conquered countries; all these circumstances perhaps contributed to create or to augment in Europe the impression of which we have spoken.

And the accomplishment of the missions to which allusion has been made was facilitated by the very extent of the Tartar flood which had thus washed down all artificial barriers from the Yellow River to the Danube. Nor only to those missionaries and ambassadors, or to the crowned kings who bore their own homage to the footstool of the Great Khan, was the way thus thrown open; the circulation of the tide extended far lower, and the accidents of war, commerce, and opportunity carried a great variety of persons in various classes of European life to remote regions of Asia.

96. "'Tis worthy of the grateful remembrance of all Christian people," says Ricold of Montecroce, "that just at the time when God sent forth into the eastern parts of the world the Tartars to slay and to be slain, He also sent forth in the west his faithful and blessed servants Dominic and Francis, to enlighten, instruct,