

and build up in the Faith." Whatever we may think on the whole of the world's obligations to Dominic, it is to the friars, but more especially indeed to the Franciscans, that we owe much interesting information about the Tartars and Cathay. Thus, besides the many wanderers dumb to posterity who found their way to the Great Khan's camp in the depths of Mongolia, there went also John of Plano Carpini, and William Ruysbroek or Rubruquis, both Franciscan monks of superior intelligence, who have left behind them narratives of what they saw and learned. And these were the first, so far as I know, to bring to Western Europe the revived knowledge of a great and civilised nation lying in the extreme east upon the shores of the ocean. To this kingdom they give the name, now first heard in Europe, of CATHAY.

JOHN OF PLANO CARPINI, deriving his name from a place in the territory of Perugia, and an immediate disciple of the founder of his order, was the head of one of the missions dispatched by Pope Innocent to call the chief and people of the Tartars to a better mind. He set out from Lyons in April 1245, accompanied by Friar Stephen, a Bohemian, who speedily broke down and had to be left behind, was joined at Breslaw by Friar Benedict the Pole, who was intended to act as interpreter, and in February 1246 reached the head-quarters of Batu on the Wolga. After some stay here, they were sent on to the camp of the Great Khan near Karakorum, (a fatiguing journey of three months and a half, which must have sorely tried an elderly and corpulent man like Friar John), arriving on the 22nd July. We shall not go into any further details on the mission or narrative of Plano Carpini which has been so ably reviewed and edited by M. D'Avezac,¹ but be content to say that he obtained his dismissal from Kuyuk Khan on the 13th November, with a brief and haughty reply to the Pope's address, and returned safely, reporting his mission to the Pope apparently some time in the autumn of 1247.²

¹ See that able and admirable essay "Notice sur les Anciens Voyageurs en Tartarie en général, et sur celui de Jean du Plan du Carpin en particulier", *Recueil de Voyages et de Mémoires*, iv, 399.

² The last date is that of his arrival at Kiev a fortnight before St. John Baptist's day (i.e., 9th June).