

36. Of the river Caramoran; and of certain other cities visited by  
Friar Odoric.

Quitting that city and travelling by fresh water channels, I passed many cities and towns, and after eight days I came to a certain city named LENZIN, which standeth on a river called CARAMORAN.<sup>1</sup> This river passeth through the very midst of Cathay, and doth great damage to that country when it breaks its banks, just as the Po does by Ferrara. And as I travelled by that river towards the east, and passed many towns and cities, I came to a certain city which is

travellers of the vast amount of craft. One party of missionaries estimated that the vessels of all sizes which they met on the canal would suffice to build a bridge from Macao to Goa. (*Astley*, iv, 109.) And Barrow calculated that there were at the single city of Nanchangfu, south of the Poyang Lake, 100,000 tons of a class of vessels averaging 250 tons, besides multitudes of smaller craft. (*Autobiog.*, p. 107).

<sup>1</sup> *Kara-muren* (*Mong.*, "the Black River"), called by the Chinese *Hoang Ho* or the Yellow River. The embankment of the river is said to date from the twenty-second century B.C. Its regulation has ever been a source of anxiety to the Chinese Government, and there used to be a tax on the Hong merchants at Canton expressly on account of this object. The will of the Emperor Kea King, who died in 1820, has the following passage:—"The Yellow River has, from the remotest ages, been China's sorrow. Whenever the mouth of the stream has been impeded by sand-banks, it has higher up its banks created alarm by flooding the country", etc. This seems to have been eminently the case in 1855 or 1856, when the stream of the Hoang Ho near the debouchment of the Great Canal was reduced to a few yards in width, the northern banks having given way far up, and the inundations poured over Shantung. On this occasion, much of the water was reported to have escaped into the Gulf of Pecheli, which the Chinese believe to have been the original exit. During the reign of the last Mongol Emperor, a project was adopted for restoring it to this channel. The discontent created by this scheme assisted in exciting the movement for the expulsion of the dynasty. (*Davis*, i, 137, 190; *De Guignes*, iv, 216; *J. R. G. S.*, xxviii, 294, see also *Biot* in *Jour. As.*, ser. iv, vols. i and ii.)

Lenzin is probably Linching, which appears in Berghaus, and in Keith Johnston's Royal Atlas, on the Great Canal very near the 35th degree of latitude. It is plain that Odoric either confounds the canal with the Hoang Ho or takes it for a branch of that river. Indeed, the Chinese official geography quoted in Pauthier's *Chine Moderne* (p. 5), describes a river called the *Yu-hoang-ho*, as traversing Shantung and Pecheli, and introducing itself successively into the Y-ho, the Wen-ho, the