

Cathayans inhabited certain mountain pastures (*Alpes*) which I passed through; and in a certain plain among those mountains dwelt a certain Nestorian who was a mighty shepherd, and lord over the people called Naiman, who were Nestorian Christians. And when Coir Chan died that Nestorian raised himself to be King (in his place), and the Nestorians used to call him King John, and to tell things of him ten times in excess of the truth. For this is the way of the Nestorians who come from those parts of the world; out of a mere nothing they will spin the most wonderful stories, just as they have spread all about that Sartach is a christian, and have told the same of Mangu Cham, and of Ken Cham; the fact being merely that they treat Christians with more respect than other folk, but all the while are not christians a bit. However in this way great tales went forth about this King John; though even when I passed over the lands that had been his pasture grounds nobody knew anything about him except a few Nestorians. Those pastures are now occupied by Ken Cham, whose court was visited by Friar Andrew, and I passed that way myself on my journey back. Now this John had a brother, who was also a great pastoral chief, whose name was Unc, and he dwelt on the other side of those Alps of Caracatay, some three weeks' journey distant from his brother, being the lord of a certain little town called CARACORUM, and ruling over a people called Crit and Merkit.<sup>1</sup> These people were also Nestorian Christians, but their lord had abandoned Christianity and had taken to idolatry, keeping about him those priests of the idols who are all addicted to sorcery and invocation of demons. Beyond his pastures again, some ten or fifteen days, were the pastures of the Moal,<sup>2</sup> a very poor tribe without any captain, and without any religion except soothsaying and sorceries, such as are followed by all the people in those parts. Next to the Moal again was another poor tribe called Tartar.<sup>3</sup> Now King John being dead without leaving an heir, his brother Unc was brought in and caused himself to be called Cham, and his flocks and herds were spread about

<sup>1</sup> The Kerit or Kerait, and the Merkit, two of the great tribes of Mongolia.

<sup>2</sup> The Mongols.

<sup>3</sup> The tribe of Tartars proper dwelt to the eastward, near Lake Buyar.