

NO. VIII. THE BOOK OF THE ESTATE OF THE GREAT CAAN, SET FORTH BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF SOLTANIA, CIRCA 1330.

(*Supposed to be the Dominican John de Cora.*)

*Here beginneth the Book of the Estate and Governance of the Great Caan of Cathay, the Emperor Suzerain of the Tartars, and concerning the administration of his empire, and that of the others his princes, as these are set forth by a certain archbishop, called the Archbishop of Soltaniah,<sup>1</sup> by command of Pope John the XXIIInd of that name; translated from Latin into French by Friar John the Long, of Ypres, monk of the monastery of St. Bertin at St. Omer.*

1. The Great Caan of Cathay is one of the most puissant of all the kings in the world, and all the great lords of that country be his lieges and do him homage; and in chief three great emperors; to wit, the Emperor of Armalech,<sup>2</sup> the Emperor Boussay,<sup>3</sup> and the Emperor Usbech.<sup>4</sup> These three emperors send year by year live libbards, camels, and gersfalcons, and great store of precious jewels besides, to the said Caan their lord. For they acknowledge him to be their lord and suzerain. And great power and renown have these three emperors as it appeareth. For when the Emperor Usbech had war with the Emperor Boussaye and went forth to fight him, he brought upon the field 707,000 horsemen, without pressing hard on his empire.<sup>5</sup> What like then and how great must needs be the power of the Great Caan who hath such and so puissant barons for his lieges under him?

<sup>1</sup> "*Par un Arceusque que on dist larceusque Soltensis.*"

<sup>2</sup> This is *Cambalech* in the text, but it is obviously an error of transcription; *Cambalech* being correctly mentioned afterwards as the chief city of Cathay itself.

<sup>3</sup> The Ilkhan of Persia, Abusaid Bahadur, 1317-1335.

<sup>4</sup> Khan of Kipchak, 1313-1341.

<sup>5</sup> This was probably in 1318 when there was war between Abusaid and Uzbek, and the latter threatened the northern frontier of Persia with a great army of horsemen. "He advanced," says the historian Wassaf, "with