

the letters from Cathay; and that shortly afterwards he appointed legates to proceed on his own part to the court of Cambalec, with a charge which combined the reciprocation of the Khan's courtesies with the promotion of missionary objects.

The letters addressed by the Pope in reply to the Khan and the Alan Princes are of no interest.<sup>1</sup> They were accompanied by letters also to the Khans of Kipchak and Chagatai, and to two Christian ministers of the latter sovereign, expressing the Pope's intention speedily to send envoys to those courts. With these letters the eastern envoys departed from Avignon in July 1338, bearing recommendations also from the Pope to the Doge and Senate of Venice, and to the Kings of Hungary and Sicily.<sup>2</sup>

Some months later the Pontiff named the legates, and addressed a letter to them under date II Kal. Novemb., in the fourth year of his Popedom, *i.e.*, 31st October, 1338. Their names were Nicholas Boneti S. T. P., Nicholas of Molano, JOHN OF FLORENCE, and Gregory of Hungary.

But for the disinterment of Marignolli's reminiscences in the Bohemian Chronicle, this is all that we should know of the mission, excepting what is conveyed by a few brief lines in Wadding's Annals of the Order under 1342, as to the arrival of the party at the Court of Cambalec, and eleven years later as to the return of its surviving members to the headquarters of the Church at Avignon.

It does not appear with what strength or composition the mission actually started, but probably there were a good many friars in addition to the legates. Indeed, a contemporary German chronicler says, that fifty Minorites were sent forth on this occasion; but it is evident that he had no accurate knowledge on the subject; and, indeed, his notice is accompanied by one of the fabulous statements, so frequent in that age, as to the conversion of the Grand Khan to Christianity, and by other palpable errors.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The letter to the Khan from this James Fournier, Bishop of Rome under the name of Benedict XII, commences without any mincing of the matter: "*Nos qui, licet immeriti, LOCUM DEI TENEMUS IN TERRIS.*"

<sup>2</sup> Wadding, l. c.

<sup>3</sup> Under the year 1339: "The King of the Tartars is reported to have been converted through the agency of a certain woman who had been