

reign who holds the sway of nearly half the eastern world, and whose power and wealth, with the multitude of cities and provinces and languages under him, and the countless number, as I may say, of the nations over which he rules, pass all telling.

We set out from Avignon in the month of December, came to Naples in the beginning of Lent, and stopped there till Easter (which fell at the end of March), waiting for a ship of Genoa, which was coming with the Tartar envoys whom the Kaan had sent from his great city of Cambalec to the Pope, to request the latter to despatch an embassy to his court, whereby communication might be established, and a treaty of alliance struck between him and the christians; for he greatly loves and honours our faith. Moreover the chief princes of his whole empire, more than thirty thousand in number, who are called Alans, and govern the whole Orient, are Christians either in fact or in name, calling themselves *the Pope's slaves*, and ready to die for the *Franks*. For so they term us, not indeed from France, but from Frank-land.¹ Their first apostle was Friar John, called De Monte Corvino, who seventy-two years previously, after having been soldier, judge, and doctor in the service of the Emperor Frederic, had become a Minor Friar, and a most wise and learned one.²

Howbeit on the first of May we arrived by sea at Con-

¹ "*Non a Francia sed a Franquia.*"

² "*Qui primo miles iudex et doctor Friderici Imperatoris post lxxii annos factus frater minor.*" A perplexing passage, owing to some error of the author's. Montecorvino could have been but three years old when Frederick II died in 1250. Dobner and Meinert assume that Marignolli meant John de Plano Carpini, who went on a mission from Pope Innocent IV to Tartary in 1246; but *he* was no apostle of Cathay; nor does there seem reason for believing that he was ever soldier or judge. No doubt one takes a liberty in rendering "post lxxii annos" by "seventy-two years previously;" but if it does not mean that, *what* does it mean? In 1266, which would be seventy-two years previous to 1338, John of Montecorvino was about twenty years old and might have become a friar. The Venice MS. has "*pts lxxii annos,*" but I find no light in that.