

caravan and his party, that it put an end to the friendly terms on which Benedict had hitherto stood with them.

He was just preparing for his departure from the town of Cialis when the merchants of the preceding caravan arrived on their return from Cathay. They had made their way to the capital of Cathay as usual by pretending to be an embassy ; and as they had been quartered in Peking at the same hostelry with the members of our Society, they were able to give our brother most authentic information about Father Matthew and his companions, and in this way he learned to his astonishment that CHINA was the Cathay that he was in search of.

These were the same Saracens of whom it has been related in a preceding book, that they had dwelt for nearly three months under the same roof with our brethren. They were able to tell therefore how our brethren had made presents to the Emperor of sundry clocks, a clavichord, pictures, and other such matters from Europe. They related also how our brethren were treated with respect by all the dignitaries at the capital, and (mixing falsehood with truth) how they were often admitted to converse with the Emperor. They also described accurately enough the countenances of the members of the Society whom they had seen, but they could not tell their names, it being a Chinese custom to change the names of foreigners. They also produced the strangest corroboration of their story in a piece of paper on which something in the Portuguese language had been written by one of our brethren, and which the travellers had rescued from the sweepings of the rooms and preserved, in order that they might show it as a memorial to their friends at home, and tell them how the people that used this kind of writing had found their way to China. Our travellers were greatly refreshed with all this intelligence, and now they could no longer doubt that Cathay was but another name for the Chinese Empire, and that the capital which the