

nothing. He himself, whilst still somewhat burdened by the authoritative dicta of "saints and sages" of past times, ventures at least to criticise some of the latter, such as Pliny and Ptolemy, and declares his intention to have recourse to the information of those who have travelled most extensively over the Earth's surface. And judging from the good use he makes, in his description of the northern parts of the world, of the Travels of Rubruquis, whom he had known and questioned, besides diligently studying his narrative,* we might have expected much in Geography from this great man, had similar materials been available to him for other parts of the earth. He did attempt a map with mathematical determination of places, but it has not been preserved.†

It may be said with general truth that the world-maps current up to the end of the 13th century had more analogy to the mythical cosmography of the Hindus than to any thing properly geographical. Both, no doubt, were originally based in the main on real features. In the Hindu cosmography these genuine features are symmetrised as in a kaleidoscope; in the European cartography they are squeezed together in a manner that one can only compare to a pig in brawn. Here and there some feature strangely compressed and distorted is just recognisable. A splendid example of this kind of map is that famous one at Hereford, executed about A.D. 1275, of which a facsimile has lately been published, accompanied by a highly meritorious illustrative Essay.‡

82. Among the Arabs many able men, from the early days of Islám, took an interest in Geography, and devoted labour to geographical compilations, in which they often made use of their own observations, of the itineraries of travellers, and of other fresh knowledge. But somehow or other their maps were always far behind their books. Though they appear to have had an early translation of Ptolemy, and elaborate Tables of Latitudes and Longitudes form a prominent feature in many of their geographical treatises, there appears to be no Arabic map in

* *Opus Majus*, Venice ed. pp. 142, *seqq.*

† *Peschel*, p. 195. This had escaped me.

‡ By the Rev. W. L. Bevan, M.A., and the Rev. H. W. Phillott, M.A. In Asia, they point out, the only name showing any recognition of modern knowledge is Samarcand.