

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s THEY WISH TO GO HOME
 for long he cannot fail to be a man of great sense and of very great valour. And TA
 what shall I tell you about it? From this mission onward *they honoured him not as a* VB
youth but as a man of very great age, & thenceforward the youth was called Master Marc Pol
 at court, and so will our book call him in future, *though his virtue & wisdom deserve a much* VA VB
more worthy name than Master Marc. And this is really very right, for he was wise and
 experienced. And why should I make you a long story? *On his return from that embassy* TA
the great Kaan set him over all his embassies. And you may know quite truly that *after* FB
this Master Marc stays with the great Kaan quite seventeen years, and in all this time
 he did not cease to go on missions *hither and thither through different countries wherever* FB
the lord sent him; and sometimes for private affairs of the same Master Marc, but by the good R
will and order of the great Kaan. For the great Kaan, since he sees that Master Marc
 so brought him back news from all parts and that he carried out so well all the duties
 for which he sent him, for this reason all the important missions and the distant ones
 he gave all to Master Marc. *Like a wise man and one who knew all the ways of the lord, he* FB
took much pains to know and understand everything which he thought would please the great Kaan.
 And he accomplished the duty very well, *thank God, and knew how to tell him many* FB
 novelties and many strange things. And the great Kaan, the conduct of Master Marc
 pleased him so much that he wished him very well and did him [8b] so great honour
 and kept him so near to himself that *many of the other barons had great vexation* VA
 at it. *But all things which the said Master Marc Pol saw and did and with whatever he* VL
met of good or of bad he put in writing and so told all in order to his lord. Now this was
 the reason why Master Marc knows more of those things of that country than any
 other man, because he explores more of those strange regions than any man who was
 ever born; and also because he gave it his attention more to know this *and to spy out* FB
and enquire that he might tell the great lord; whence it came about that there was never any VB
who saw more lands than Master Marc, nor had learnt and heard more strange things, which R
things are written here below carefully and in order.

HOW MASTER NICOLAU AND MASTER MAFEU AND MASTER MARC ASK LEAVE OF
 THE KAN. And when Master Nicolau and Master Mafeu and Master
 Marc had stayed with the great Kaan *at this court many years, as long as you* R
 have heard above, they said among themselves *one day* that they wished to go back to VA V
 their parts, *that is to their native country, for it was now high time to do so.* *Though they* V FB R
found themselves very rich in jewels of great value and in gold, an extreme desire to see their native
land again was always fixed in their mind; and even though they were honoured and favoured, yet
they thought of nothing else but of this. And seeing that the great Kaan was very old, they feared
 that if he were to die before their departure they might never be able to return home, because of the
 length of the way and infinite perils which threatened them; though they hoped to be able to do this