

## CHAPTER XIV.

### EUROPE'S KNOWLEDGE OF TIBET IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

The enormous development of CHINGIS KHAN's Empire which took place in the first half of the 13th century was a very important factor in drawing the East nearer to the West. In a short time the Mongols became masters of the greatest part of Asia and eastern Europe, and at the culmen of its power their Empire stretched from Japan to Katzbach, from Farther India to lake Ilmen. Nearly all the nations of the old world became more or less dependent upon, or entered into communication with the conquerors, and at their court the Great Khans received ambassadors from Popes and Caliphs, from Byzantine Emperors and French Kings, from Sultans of Rum and Grand Dukes of Russia.<sup>1</sup>

The Mongols after having conquered all the northern half of Asia, broke through the Caucasus in 1222, and spread terror over Kipchak, as southern Russia was then called. In 1238 a new Mongol devastation of Eastern Europe began to awake the comprehension of the princes in the western half of our continent. In 1241 Silesia, Moravia and Hungary were overwhelmed. Only political reasons and the death of the Mongol Emperor Ogodai put an end to further progress westwards. The danger could return, and Pope Innocent IV proclaimed a crusade against the Tartars, as the Mongols were called the envoys of Satan and ministers of the Tartarus. But he also used more civilized means, and found amongst the »Tartars» an excellent field of labour for the members of the Mendicant Orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis.<sup>2</sup> The Friar JOHN OF PIAN DE CARPINE was despatched to the great unknown East, and his name has become famous in the history of

<sup>1</sup> KÖPPEN: Die Lamaische Hierarchie und Kirche, Berlin 1859, p. 86. ABEL-RÉMUSAT says, in his *Mémoires sur les relations politiques des princes chrétiens, et particulièrement des rois de France, avec les empereurs mongols*, Paris 1824, p. 5: »Les événemens qui rapprochèrent, au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, des peuples jusque-là séparés par l'étendue entière de notre continent, n'ont point d'exemple dans les annales du genre humain. La grandeur Mongole, qui faillit embrasser le monde entier, fut créée en moins de temps qu'il n'en faut d'ordinaire pour fonder et peupler une seule cité.»

<sup>2</sup> W. W. ROCKHILL: *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World*, 1253—55, London, 1900, Introductory Notice.