



The Mongols in Russia

Jeremiah Curtin

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Pyrrhus Press specializes in bringing books long out of date back to life, allowing today's readers access to yesterday's treasures. This is a history of the Mongols' movements into modern day Russia during the Middle Ages. From the beginning of chapter 1: "In my history of the Mongols we have seen how Hulagu beguiled the Assassins and slaughtered them. We have seen also how he ended the Kalifat at Bagdad, showing no more regard for the heir of Mohammed than for the chief of those murderers who held that marvelous mountain-land south of the Caspian. The Kalif of Islam was trampled to death under horsehoofs. The chief of the Assassins was treated with insult, endured for a time, and then slain like a wild beast. We are now to consider an expedition planned at that Kurultai held during Ogotai's election, and see what was done by its leader, an expedition which ruined large portions of Europe as far as the Adriatic, and made Batu, the nephew of Jhinghis Khan, supreme lord of them. The Mongols retreated from all lands west of the Carpathians and confined themselves exclusively to that part of Europe which we know as Russia. The West was too narrow for them, too mountainous, too much diversified, and contained too little pastoral land. It had too much culture, and differed too greatly from that immense open region which stretches from the Dnieper, or more correctly from the Danube, to that vast ocean of water which was later called the Pacific. This region is made up of those spaces lying north of the Great Wall of China, that largest fence ever reared by man to ward off an enemy, and farther west by the greatest barrier raised upon earth through creation, and also used by man as a line of defense, a fortress of refuge, that unique mountain system extending from Eastern China to Persia, and then, with a break, to the Caspian. From the Caspian westward the immense space is bounded by the Caucasus and the Black Sea, till it reaches the Danube and the mountains just north of that river. This vast region, or Mongol careering ground as we may call it, began on the east at waters which are really the Pacific, and on the west touched the Danube, which finds its source very near the Rhone and the Rhine, both flowing into the Atlantic, since the North Sea, with its waters, is merely a part of that ocean."

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