

THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO Volume 1
THE BOOK OF MARCO POLO.
PROLOGUE.

Great Princes, Emperors, and Kings, Dukes and Marquises, Counts, Knights, and Burgesses! and People of all degrees who desire to get knowledge of the various races of mankind and of the diversities of the sundry regions of the World, take this Book and cause it to be read to you. For ye shall find therein all kinds of wonderful things, and the divers histories of the Great Hermenia, and of Persia, and of the Land of the Tartars, and of India, and of many another country of which our Book doth speak, particularly and in regular succession, according to the description of Messer Marco Polo, a wise and noble citizen of Venice, as he saw them with his own eyes. Some things indeed there be therein which he beheld not; but these he heard from men of credit and veracity. And we shall set down things seen as seen, and things heard as heard only, so that no jot of falsehood may mar the truth of our Book, and that all who shall read it or hear it read may put full faith in the truth of all its contents.

For let me tell you that since our Lord God did mould with his hands our first Father Adam, even until this day, never hath there been Christian, or Pagan, or Tartar, or Indian, or any man of any nation, who in his own person hath had so much knowledge and experience of the divers parts of the World and its Wonders as hath had this Messer Marco! And for that reason he bethought himself that it would be a very great pity did he not cause to be put in writing all the great marvels that he had seen, or on sure information heard of, so that other people who had not these advantages might, by his Book, get such knowledge. And I may tell you that in acquiring this knowledge he spent in those various parts of the World good six-and-twenty years. Now, being thereafter an inmate of the Prison at Genoa, he caused Messer Rusticiano of Pisa, who was in the said Prison likewise, to reduce the whole to writing; and this befell in the year 1298 from the birth of Jesus.

CHAPTER I.

HOW THE TWO BROTHERS POLO SET FORTH FROM CONSTANTINOPLE TO TRAVERSE THE WORLD.

It came to pass in the year of Christ 1260, when Baldwin was reigning at Constantinople, that Messer Nicolas Polo, the father of my lord Mark, and Messer Maffeo Polo, the brother of Messer Nicolas, were at the said city of CONSTANTINOPLE, whither they had gone from Venice with their merchants' wares. Now these two Brethren, men singularly noble, wise, and provident, took counsel together to cross the GREATER SEA on a venture of trade; so they laid in a store of jewels and set forth from Constantinople, crossing the Sea to SOLDIAIA.

CHAPTER II.

HOW THE TWO BROTHERS WENT ON BEYOND SOLDIAIA.

Having stayed a while at Soldaia, they considered the matter, and thought it well to extend their journey further. So they set forth from Soldaia and travelled till they came to the Court of a certain Tartar Prince, BARCA KAAAN by name, whose residences were at SARA and at BOLGARA [and who was esteemed one of the most

liberal and courteous Princes that ever was among the Tartars.] This Barca was delighted at the arrival of the Two Brothers, and treated them with great honour; so they presented to him the whole of the jewels that they had brought with them. The Prince was highly pleased with these, and accepted the offering most graciously, causing the Brothers to receive at least twice its value. After they had spent a twelvemonth at the court of this Prince there broke out a great war between Barca and Alau, the Lord of the Tartars of the Levant, and great hosts were mustered on either side. But in the end Barca, the Lord of the Tartars of the Ponent, was defeated, though on both sides there was great slaughter. And by reason of this war no one could travel without peril of being taken; thus it was at least on the road by which the Brothers had come, though there was no obstacle to their travelling forward. So the Brothers, finding they could not retrace their steps, determined to go forward. Quitting Bolgara, therefore, they proceeded to a city called UCACA, which was at the extremity of the kingdom of the Lord of the Ponent; and thence departing again, and passing the great River Tigris, they travelled across a Desert which extended for seventeen days' journey, and wherein they found neither town nor village, falling in only with the tents of Tartars occupied with their cattle at pasture.

CHAPTER III.

HOW THE TWO BROTHERS, AFTER CROSSING A DESERT, CAME TO THE CITY OF BOCARA, AND FELL IN WITH CERTAIN ENVOYS THERE.

After they had passed the desert, they arrived at a very great and noble city called BOCARA, the territory of which belonged to a king whose name was Barac, and is also called Bocara. The city is the best in all Persia. And when they had got thither, they found they could neither proceed further forward nor yet turn back again; wherefore they abode in that city of Bocara for three years. And whilst they were sojourning in that city, there came from Alau, Lord of the Levant, Envoys on their way to the Court of the Great Kaan, the Lord of all the Tartars in the world. And when the Envoys beheld the Two Brothers they were amazed, for they had never before seen Latins in that part of the world. And they said to the Brothers: "Gentlemen, if ye will take our counsel, ye will find great honour and profit shall come thereof." So they replied that they would be right glad to learn how. "In truth," said the Envoys, "the Great Kaan hath never seen any Latins, and he hath a great desire so to do. Wherefore, if ye will keep us company to his Court, ye may depend upon it that he will be right glad to see you, and will treat you with great honour and liberality; whilst in our company ye shall travel with perfect security, and need fear to be molested by nobody."

CHAPTER IV.

HOW THE TWO BROTHERS TOOK THE ENVOYS' COUNSEL, AND WENT TO THE COURT OF THE GREAT KAAAN.

So when the Two Brothers had made their arrangements, they set out on their travels, in company with the Envoys, and journeyed for a whole year, going northward and north-eastward, before they reached the Court of that Prince. And on their journey they saw many marvels of divers and sundry kinds, but of these we shall say nothing at present, because Messer Mark, who has likewise seen them all, will give you a full account of them in the Book which follows.

CHAPTER V.

HOW THE TWO BROTHERS ARRIVED AT THE COURT OF THE GREAT KAAAN.

When the Two Brothers got to the Great Kaan, he received them with great honour and hospitality, and showed much pleasure at their visit, asking them a great number of questions. First, he asked about the emperors, how they maintained their dignity, and administered justice in their dominions; and how they went forth to battle, and so forth. And then he asked the like questions about the kings and princes and other potentates.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW THE GREAT KAAAN ASKED ALL ABOUT THE MANNERS OF THE CHRISTIANS, AND PARTICULARLY ABOUT THE POPE OF ROME.

And then he inquired about the Pope and the Church, and about all that is done at Rome, and all the customs of the Latins. And the Two Brothers told him the truth in all its particulars, with order and good sense, like sensible men as they were; and this they were able to do as they knew the Tartar language well.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW THE GREAT KAAAN SENT THE TWO BROTHERS AS HIS ENVOYS TO THE POPE.

When that Prince, whose name was CUBLAY KAAAN, Lord of the Tartars all over the earth, and of all the kingdoms and provinces and territories of that vast quarter of the world, had heard all that the Brothers had to tell him about the ways of the Latins, he was greatly pleased, and he took it into his head that he would send them on an Embassy to the Pope. So he urgently desired them to undertake this mission along with one of his Barons; and they replied that they would gladly execute all his commands as those of their Sovereign Lord. Then the Prince sent to summon to his presence one of his Barons whose name was COGATAL, and desired him to get ready, for it was proposed to send him to the Pope along with the Two Brothers. The Baron replied that he would execute the Lord's commands to the best of his ability. After this the Prince caused letters from himself to the Pope to be indited in the Tartar tongue, and committed them to the Two Brothers and to that Baron of his own, and charged them with what he wished them to say to the Pope. Now the contents of the letter were to this purport: He begged that the Pope would send as many as an hundred persons of our Christian faith; intelligent men, acquainted with the Seven Arts, well qualified to enter into controversy, and able clearly to prove by force of argument to idolaters and other kinds of folk, that the Law of Christ was best, and that all other religions were false and naught; and that if they would prove this, he and all under him would become Christians and the Church's liegemen. Finally he charged his Envoys to bring back to him some Oil of the Lamp which burns on the Sepulchre of our Lord at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THE GREAT KAAAN GAVE THEM A TABLET OF GOLD, BEARING HIS ORDERS IN THEIR BEHALF.

When the Prince had charged them with all his commission, he caused to be given them a Tablet of Gold, on which was inscribed that the three Ambassadors should be supplied with everything needful in all the countries through which they should pass--with horses, with escorts, and, in short, with whatever they should require. And when they had made all needful preparations, the three Ambassadors took their leave of the Emperor and set out. When they had travelled I know not how many days, the Tartar Baron fell sick, so that he could not ride, and being very ill, and unable to proceed further, he halted at a certain city. So the Two Brothers judged it best that they should leave him behind and proceed to carry out their commission; and, as he was well content that they should do so, they continued their journey. And I can assure you, that whithersoever they went they were honourably provided with whatever they stood in need of, or chose to command. And this was owing to that Tablet of Authority from the Lord which they carried with them. So they travelled on and on until they arrived at Layas in Hermania, a journey which occupied them, I assure you, for three years. It took them so long because they could not always proceed, being stopped sometimes by snow, or by heavy rains falling, or by great torrents which they found in an impassable state.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW THE TWO BROTHERS CAME TO THE CITY OF ACRE.

They departed from LAYAS and came to ACRE, arriving there in the month of April, in the year of Christ 1269, and then they learned that the Pope was dead. And when they found that the Pope was dead (his name was Pope * *), they went to a certain wise Churchman who was Legate for the whole kingdom of Egypt, and a man of great authority, by name THEOBALD OF PIACENZA, and told him of the mission on which they were come. When the Legate heard their story, he was greatly surprised, and deemed the thing to be of great honour and advantage for the whole of Christendom. So his answer to the two Ambassador Brothers was this: "Gentlemen, ye see that the Pope is dead; wherefore ye must needs have patience until a new Pope be made, and then shall ye be able to execute your charge." Seeing well enough that what the Legate said was just, they observed: "But while the Pope is a-making, we may as well go to Venice and visit our households." So they departed from Acre and went to Negropont, and from Negropont they continued their voyage to Venice. On their arrival there, Messer Nicolas found that his wife was dead, and that she had left behind her a son of fifteen years of age, whose name was MARCO; and 'tis of him that this Book tells. The Two Brothers abode at Venice a couple of years, tarrying until a Pope should be made.

CHAPTER X.

HOW THE TWO BROTHERS AGAIN DEPARTED FROM VENICE, ON THEIR WAY BACK TO THE GREAT KAAAN, AND TOOK WITH THEM MARK, THE SON OF MESSER NICOLAS.

When the Two Brothers had tarried as long as I have told you, and saw that never a Pope was made, they said that their return to the Great Kaan must be put off no longer. So they set out from Venice, taking Mark along with them, and went straight back to Acre, where they found the Legate of whom we have spoken. They had a good deal of discourse with him concerning the matter, and asked his permission to go to JERUSALEM to get some Oil from the Lamp on the Sepulchre, to carry with them to the Great Kaan, as he had enjoined. The Legate giving them leave, they went from Acre to Jerusalem and got some of the Oil, and then returned to Acre, and went to the Legate and said to him: "As we see no sign of a Pope's being made, we desire to return to the Great Kaan; for we have already tarried long, and there has been more than enough delay." To which the Legate replied: "Since 'tis your wish to go back, I am well content." Wherefore he caused letters to be written for delivery to the Great Kaan, bearing testimony that the Two Brothers had come in all good faith to accomplish his charge, but that as there was no Pope they had been unable to do so.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW THE TWO BROTHERS SET OUT FROM ACRE, AND MARK ALONG WITH THEM.

When the Two Brothers had received the Legate's letters, they set forth from Acre to return to the Grand Kaan, and got as far as LAYAS. But shortly after their arrival there they had news that the Legate aforesaid was chosen Pope, taking the name of Pope Gregory of Piacenza; news which the Two Brothers were very glad indeed to hear. And presently there reached them at LAYAS a message from the Legate, now the Pope, desiring them, on the part of the Apostolic See, not to proceed further on their journey, but to return to him incontinently. And what shall I tell you? The King of Hermenia caused a galley to be got ready for the Two Ambassador Brothers, and despatched them to the Pope at Acre.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE TWO BROTHERS PRESENTED THEMSELVES BEFORE THE NEW POPE.

And when they had been thus honourably conducted to Acre they proceeded to the presence of the Pope, and paid their respects to him with humble reverence. He received them with great honour and satisfaction, and gave them his blessing. He then appointed two Friars of the Order of Preachers to accompany them to the Great Kaan, and to do whatever might be required of them. These were unquestionably as learned Churchmen as were

to be found in the Province at that day--one being called Friar Nicolas of Vicenza, and the other Friar William of Tripoli. He delivered to them also proper credentials, and letters in reply to the Great Kaan's messages [and gave them authority to ordain priests and bishops, and to bestow every kind of absolution, as if given by himself in proper person; sending by them also many fine vessels of crystal as presents to the Great Kaan]. So when they had got all that was needful, they took leave of the Pope, receiving his benediction; and the four set out together from Acre, and went to Layas, accompanied always by Messer Nicolas's son Marco. Now, about the time that they reached Layas, Bendocquedar, the Soldan of Babylon, invaded Hermenia with a great host of Saracens, and ravaged the country, so that our Envoys ran a great peril of being taken or slain. And when the Preaching Friars saw this they were greatly frightened, and said that go they never would. So they made over to Messer Nicolas and Messer Maffeo all their credentials and documents, and took their leave, departing in company with the Master of the Temple.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW MESSER NICOLO AND MESSER MAFFEO POLO, ACCOMPANIED BY MARK, TRAVELLED TO THE COURT OF THE GREAT KAAAN.

So the Two Brothers, and Mark along with them, proceeded on their way, and journeying on, summer and winter, came at length to the Great Kaan, who was then at a certain rich and great city, called KEMENFU. As to what they met with on the road, whether in going or coming, we shall give no particulars at present, because we are going to tell you all those details in regular order in the after part of this Book. Their journey back to the Kaan occupied a good three years and a half, owing to the bad weather and severe cold that they encountered. And let me tell you in good sooth that when the Great Kaan heard that Messers Nicolo and Maffeo Polo were on their way back, he sent people a journey of full 40 days to meet them; and on this journey, as on their former one, they were honourably entertained upon the road, and supplied with all that they required.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW MESSER NICOLO AND MESSER MAFFEO POLO AND MARCO PRESENTED THEMSELVES BEFORE THE GREAT KAAAN.

And what shall I tell you? when the Two Brothers and Mark had arrived at that great city, they went to the Imperial Palace, and there they found the Sovereign attended by a great company of Barons. So they bent the knee before him, and paid their respects to him, with all possible reverence [prostrating themselves on the ground]. Then the Lord bade them stand up, and treated them with great honour, showing great pleasure at their coming, and asked many questions as to their welfare, and how they had sped. They replied that they had in verity sped well, seeing that they found the Kaan well and safe. Then they presented the credentials and letters which they had received from the Pope, which pleased him right well; and after that they produced the Oil from the Sepulchre, and at that also he was very glad, for he set great store thereby. And next, spying Mark, who was then a young gallant, he asked who was that in their company? "Sire," said his father, Messer Nicolo, "'tis my son and your liegeman." "Welcome is he too," quoth the Emperor. And why should I make a long story? There was great rejoicing at the Court because of their arrival; and they met with attention and honour from everybody. So there they abode at the Court with the other Barons.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW THE EMPEROR SENT MARK ON AN EMBASSY OF HIS.

Now it came to pass that Marco, the son of Messer Nicolo, sped wondrously in learning the customs of the Tartars, as well as their language, their manner of writing, and their practice of war; in fact he came in brief space to know several languages, and four sundry written characters. And he was discreet and prudent in every way, insomuch that the Emperor held him in great esteem. And so when he discerned Mark to have so much

sense, and to conduct himself so well and beseemingly, he sent him on an ambassage of his, to a country which was a good six months' journey distant. The young gallant executed his commission well and with discretion. Now he had taken note on several occasions that when the Prince's ambassadors returned from different parts of the world, they were able to tell him about nothing except the business on which they had gone, and that the Prince in consequence held them for no better than fools and dolts, and would say: "I had far liever hearken about the strange things, and the manners of the different countries you have seen, than merely be told of the business you went upon;"--for he took great delight in hearing of the affairs of strange countries. Mark therefore, as he went and returned, took great pains to learn about all kinds of different matters in the countries which he visited, in order to be able to tell about them to the Great Kaan.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW MARK RETURNED FROM THE MISSION WHEREON HE HAD BEEN SENT.

When Mark returned from his ambassage he presented himself before the Emperor, and after making his report of the business with which he was charged, and its successful accomplishment, he went on to give an account in a pleasant and intelligent manner of all the novelties and strange things that he had seen and heard; insomuch that the Emperor and all such as heard his story were surprised, and said: "If this young man live, he will assuredly come to be a person of great worth and ability." And so from that time forward he was always entitled MESSER MARCO POLO, and thus we shall style him henceforth in this Book of ours, as is but right. Thereafter Messer Marco abode in the Kaan's employment some seventeen years, continually going and coming, hither and thither, on the missions that were entrusted to him by the Lord [and sometimes, with the permission and authority of the Great Kaan, on his own private affairs.] And, as he knew all the sovereign's ways, like a sensible man he always took much pains to gather knowledge of anything that would be likely to interest him, and then on his return to Court he would relate everything in regular order, and thus the Emperor came to hold him in great love and favour. And for this reason also he would employ him the oftener on the most weighty and most distant of his missions. These Messer Marco ever carried out with discretion and success, God be thanked. So the Emperor became ever more partial to him, and treated him with the greater distinction, and kept him so close to his person that some of the Barons waxed very envious thereat. And thus it came about that Messer Marco Polo had knowledge of, or had actually visited, a greater number of the different countries of the World than any other man; the more that he was always giving his mind to get knowledge, and to spy out and enquire into everything in order to have matter to relate to the Lord.

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW MESSER NICOLO, MESSER MAFFEO, AND MESSER MARCO, ASKED LEAVE OF THE GREAT KAAN TO GO THEIR WAY.

When the Two Brothers and Mark had abode with the Lord all that time that you have been told [having meanwhile acquired great wealth in jewels and gold], they began among themselves to have thoughts about returning to their own country; and indeed it was time. [For, to say nothing of the length and infinite perils of the way, when they considered the Kaan's great age, they doubted whether, in the event of his death before their departure, they would ever be able to get home.] They applied to him several times for leave to go, presenting their request with great respect, but he had such a partiality for them, and liked so much to have them about him, that nothing on earth would persuade him to let them go. Now it came to pass in those days that the Queen BOLGANA, wife of ARGON, Lord of the Levant, departed this life. And in her Will she had desired that no Lady should take her place, or succeed her as Argon's wife, except one of her own family [which existed in Cathay]. Argon therefore despatched three of his Barons, by name respectively OULATAY, APUSCA, and COJA, as ambassadors to the Great Kaan, attended by a very gallant company, in order to bring back as his bride a lady of the family of Queen Bolgana, his late wife. When these three Barons had reached the Court of the Great Kaan, they delivered their message, explaining wherefore they were come. The Kaan received them with all honour and hospitality, and then sent for a lady whose name was COCACHIN, who was of the family

of the deceased Queen Bolgana. She was a maiden of 17, a very beautiful and charming person, and on her arrival at Court she was presented to the three Barons as the Lady chosen in compliance with their demand. They declared that the Lady pleased them well. Meanwhile Messer Marco chanced to return from India, whither he had gone as the Lord's ambassador, and made his report of all the different things that he had seen in his travels, and of the sundry seas over which he had voyaged. And the three Barons, having seen that Messer Nicolo, Messer Maffeo, and Messer Marco were not only Latins, but men of marvellous good sense withal, took thought among themselves to get the three to travel with them, their intention being to return to their country by sea, on account of the great fatigue of that long land journey for a lady. And the ambassadors were the more desirous to have their company, as being aware that those three had great knowledge and experience of the Indian Sea and the countries by which they would have to pass, and especially Messer Marco. So they went to the Great Kaan, and begged as a favour that he would send the three Latins with them, as it was their desire to return home by sea. The Lord, having that great regard that I have mentioned for those three Latins, was very loath to do so [and his countenance showed great dissatisfaction]. But at last he did give them permission to depart, enjoining them to accompany the three Barons and the Lady.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW THE TWO BROTHERS AND MESSER MARCO TOOK LEAVE OF THE GREAT KAAAN, AND RETURNED TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY.

And when the Prince saw that the Two Brothers and Messer Marco were ready to set forth, he called them all three to his presence, and gave them two golden Tablets of Authority, which should secure them liberty of passage through all his dominions, and by means of which, whithersoever they should go, all necessaries would be provided for them, and for all their company, and whatever they might choose to order. He charged them also with messages to the King of France, the King of England, the King of Spain, and the other kings of Christendom. He then caused thirteen ships to be equipt, each of which had four masts, and often spread twelve sails. And I could easily give you all particulars about these, but as it would be so long an affair I will not enter upon this now, but hereafter, when time and place are suitable. [Among the said ships were at least four or five that carried crews of 250 or 260 men.] And when the ships had been equipt, the Three Barons and the Lady, and the Two Brothers and Messer Marco, took leave of the Great Kaan, and went on board their ships with a great company of people, and with all necessaries provided for two years by the Emperor. They put forth to sea, and after sailing for some three months they arrived at a certain Island towards the South, which is called JAVA, and in which there are many wonderful things which we shall tell you all about by-and-bye. Quitting this Island they continued to navigate the Sea of India for eighteen months more before they arrived whither they were bound, meeting on their way also with many marvels, of which we shall tell hereafter. And when they got thither they found that Argon was dead, so the Lady was delivered to CASAN, his son. But I should have told you that it is a fact that, when they embarked, they were in number some 600 persons, without counting the mariners; but nearly all died by the way, so that only eight survived. The sovereignty when they arrived was held by KIACATU, so they commended the Lady to him, and executed all their commission. And when the Two Brothers and Messer Marco had executed their charge in full, and done all that the Great Kaan had enjoined on them in regard to the Lady, they took their leave and set out upon their journey. And before their departure, Kiacatu gave them four golden tablets of authority, two of which bore gerfalcons, one bore lions, whilst the fourth was plain, and having on them inscriptions which directed that the three Ambassadors should receive honour and service all through the land as if rendered to the Prince in person, and that horses and all provisions, and everything necessary, should be supplied to them. And so they found in fact; for throughout the country they received ample and excellent supplies of everything needful; and many a time indeed, as I may tell you, they were furnished with 200 horsemen, more or less, to escort them on their way in safety. And this was all the more needful because Kiacatu was not the legitimate Lord, and therefore the people had less scruple to do mischief than if they had had a lawful prince. Another thing too must be mentioned, which does credit to those three Ambassadors, and shows for what great personages they were held. The Great Kaan regarded them with such trust and affection, that he had confided to their charge the Queen Cocachin, as well as the daughter of the King of Manzi, to conduct to Argon the Lord of all the Levant. And those two great ladies who were thus

entrusted to them they watched over and guarded as if they had been daughters of their own, until they had transferred them to the hands of their Lord; whilst the ladies, young and fair as they were, looked on each of those three as a father, and obeyed them accordingly. Indeed, both Casan, who is now the reigning prince, and the Queen Cocachin his wife, have such a regard for the Envoys that there is nothing they would not do for them. And when the three Ambassadors took leave of that Lady to return to their own country, she wept for sorrow at the parting. What more shall I say? Having left Kiacatu they travelled day by day till they came to Trebizond, and thence to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Negropont, and from Negropont to Venice. And this was in the year 1295 of Christ's Incarnation. And now that I have rehearsed all the Prologue as you have heard, we shall begin the Book of the Description of the Divers Things that Messer Marco met with in his Travels.

BOOK FIRST.

ACCOUNT OF REGIONS VISITED OR HEARD OF ON THE JOURNEY FROM THE LESSER ARMENIA TO THE COURT OF THE GREAT KAN AT CHANDU.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

HERE THE BOOK BEGINS; AND FIRST IT SPEAKS OF THE LESSER HERMENIA.

There are two Hermenias, the Greater and the Less. The Lesser Hermenia is governed by a certain King, who maintains a just rule in his dominions, but is himself subject to the Tartar. The country contains numerous towns and villages, and has everything in plenty; moreover, it is a great country for sport in the chase of all manner of beasts and birds. It is, however, by no means a healthy region, but grievously the reverse. In days of old the nobles there were valiant men, and did doughty deeds of arms; but nowadays they are poor creatures, and good at nought, unless it be at boozing; they are great at that. Howbeit, they have a city upon the sea, which is called LAYAS, at which there is a great trade. For you must know that all the spicery, and the cloths of silk and gold, and the other valuable wares that come from the interior, are brought to that city. And the merchants of Venice and Genoa, and other countries, come thither to sell their goods, and to buy what they lack. And whatsoever persons would travel to the interior (of the East), merchants or others, they take their way by this city of Layas. Having now told you about the Lesser Hermenia, we shall next tell you about Turcomania.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE PROVINCE OF TURCOMANIA.

In Turcomania there are three classes of people. First, there are the Turcomans; these are worshippers of Mahomet, a rude people with an uncouth language of their own. They dwell among mountains and downs where they find good pasture, for their occupation is cattle-keeping. Excellent horses, known as *Turquans*, are reared in their country, and also very valuable mules. The other two classes are the Armenians and the Greeks, who live mixt with the former in the towns and villages, occupying themselves with trade and handicrafts. They weave the finest and handsomest carpets in the world, and also a great quantity of fine and rich silks of cramoisy and other colours, and plenty of other stuffs. Their chief cities are CONIA, SAVAST [where the glorious Messer Saint Blaise suffered martyrdom], and CASARIA, besides many other towns and bishops' sees, of which we shall not speak at present, for it would be too long a matter. These people are subject to the Tartar of the Levant as their Suzerain. We will now leave this province, and speak of the Greater Armenia.

CHAPTER III.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GREATER HERMENIA.

This is a great country. It begins at a city called ARZINGA, at which they weave the best buckrams in the world. It possesses also the best baths from natural springs that are anywhere to be found. The people of the country are Armenians, and are subject to the Tartar. There are many towns and villages in the country, but the noblest of their cities is Arzinga, which is the See of an Archbishop, and then ARZIRON and ARZIZI. The country is indeed a passing great one, and in the summer it is frequented by the whole host of the Tartars of the Levant, because it then furnishes them with such excellent pasture for their cattle. But in winter the cold is past all bounds, so in that season they quit this country and go to a warmer region, where they find other good pastures. [At a castle called PAIPURTH, that you pass in going from Trebizond to Tauris, there is a very good silver mine.] And you must know that it is in this country of Armenia that the Ark of Noah exists on the top of a certain great mountain [on the summit of which snow is so constant that no one can ascend; for the snow never melts, and is constantly added to by new falls. Below, however, the snow does melt, and runs down, producing such rich and abundant herbage that in summer cattle are sent to pasture from a long way round about, and it never fails them. The melting snow also causes a great amount of mud on the mountain]. The country is bounded on the south by a kingdom called Mosul, the people of which are Jacobite and Nestorian Christians, of whom I shall have more to tell you presently. On the north it is bounded by the Land of the Georgians, of whom also I shall speak. On the confines towards Georgia there is a fountain from which oil springs in great abundance, insomuch that a hundred shiploads might be taken from it at one time. This oil is not good to use with food, but 'tis good to burn, and is also used to anoint camels that have the mange. People come from vast distances to fetch it, for in all the countries round about they have no other oil. Now, having done with Great Armenia, we will tell you of Georgia.

CHAPTER IV.

OF GEORGIANIA AND THE KINGS THEREOF.

In GEORGIANIA there is a King called David Melic, which is as much as to say "David King"; he is subject to the Tartar. In old times all the kings were born with the figure of an eagle upon the right shoulder. The people are very handsome, capital archers, and most valiant soldiers. They are Christians of the Greek Rite, and have a fashion of wearing their hair cropped, like Churchmen. This is the country beyond which Alexander could not pass when he wished to penetrate to the region of the Ponent, because that the defile was so narrow and perilous, the sea lying on the one hand, and on the other lofty mountains impassable to horsemen. The strait extends like this for four leagues, and a handful of people might hold it against all the world. Alexander caused a very strong tower to be built there, to prevent the people beyond from passing to attack him, and this got the name of the IRON GATE. This is the place that the Book of Alexander speaks of, when it tells us how he shut up the Tartars between two mountains; not that they were really Tartars, however, for there were no Tartars in those days, but they consisted of a race of people called COMANIANS and many besides. [Illustration: Mediaeval Georgian Fortress, from a drawing dated 1634. "La province est toute pleine de grant montagne et d'estroit pas et de fort"] [In this province all the forests are of box-wood.] There are numerous towns and villages, and silk is produced in great abundance. They also weave cloths of gold, and all kinds of very fine silk stuffs. The country produces the best goshawks in the world [which are called *_Avigi_*]. It has indeed no lack of anything, and the people live by trade and handicrafts. 'Tis a very mountainous region, and full of strait defiles and of fortresses, insomuch that the Tartars have never been able to subdue it out and out. There is in this country a certain Convent of Nuns called St. Leonard's, about which I have to tell you a very wonderful circumstance. Near the church in question there is a great lake at the foot of a mountain, and in this lake are found no fish, great or small, throughout the year till Lent come. On the first day of Lent they find in it the finest fish in the world, and great store too thereof; and these continue to be found till Easter Eve. After that they are found no more till Lent come round again; and so 'tis every year. 'Tis really a passing great miracle! That sea whereof I spoke as coming so near the mountains is called the Sea of GHHEL or GHELAN, and extends about 700 miles. It is twelve days' journey distant from any other sea, and into it flows the great River Euphrates and many others, whilst it is surrounded by mountains. Of late the merchants of Genoa have begun to

navigate this sea, carrying ships across and launching them thereon. It is from the country on this sea also that the silk called Ghelle is brought. [The said sea produces quantities of fish, especially sturgeon, at the river-mouths salmon, and other big kinds of fish.]

CHAPTER V.

OF THE KINGDOM OF MAUSUL.

On the frontier of Armenia towards the south-east is the kingdom of MAUSUL. It is a very great kingdom, and inhabited by several different kinds of people whom we shall now describe. First there is a kind of people called ARABI, and these worship Mahomet. Then there is another description of people who are NESTORIAN and JACOBITE Christians. These have a Patriarch, whom they call the JATOLIC, and this Patriarch creates Archbishops, and Abbots, and Prelates of all other degrees, and sends them into every quarter, as to India, to Baudas, or to Cathay, just as the Pope of Rome does in the Latin countries. For you must know that though there is a very great number of Christians in those countries, they are all Jacobites and Nestorians; Christians indeed, but not in the fashion enjoined by the Pope of Rome, for they come short in several points of the Faith. All the cloths of gold and silk that are called Mosolins are made in this country; and those great Merchants called Mosolins, who carry for sale such quantities of spicery and pearls and cloths of silk and gold, are also from this kingdom. There is yet another race of people who inhabit the mountains in that quarter, and are called CURDS. Some of them are Christians, and some of them are Saracens; but they are an evil generation, whose delight it is to plunder merchants. [Near this province is another called MUS and MERDIN, producing an immense quantity of cotton, from which they make a great deal of buckram and other cloth. The people are craftsmen and traders, and all are subject to the Tartar King.]

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE GREAT CITY OF BAUDAS, AND HOW IT WAS TAKEN.

Baudas is a great city, which used to be the seat of the Calif of all the Saracens in the world, just as Rome is the seat of the Pope of all the Christians. A very great river flows through the city, and by this you can descend to the Sea of India. There is a great traffic of merchants with their goods this way; they descend some eighteen days from Baudas, and then come to a certain city called KISI, where they enter the Sea of India. There is also on the river, as you go from Baudas to Kisi, a great city called BASTRA, surrounded by woods, in which grow the best dates in the world. In Baudas they weave many different kinds of silk stuffs and gold brocades, such as nasich, and nac, and cramoisy, and many another beautiful tissue richly wrought with figures of beasts and birds. It is the noblest and greatest city in all those regions. Now it came to pass on a day in the year of Christ 1255, that the Lord of the Tartars of the Levant, whose name was Alaue, brother to the Great Kaan now reigning, gathered a mighty host and came up against Baudas and took it by storm. It was a great enterprise! for in Baudas there were more than 100,000 horse, besides foot soldiers. And when Alaue had taken the place he found therein a tower of the Califs, which was full of gold and silver and other treasure; in fact the greatest accumulation of treasure in one spot that ever was known. When he beheld that great heap of treasure he was astonished, and, summoning the Calif to his presence, he said to him: "Calif, tell me now why thou hast gathered such a huge treasure? What didst thou mean to do therewith? Knewest thou not that I was thine enemy, and that I was coming against thee with so great an host to cast thee forth of thine heritage? Wherefore didst thou not take of thy gear and employ it in paying knights and soldiers to defend thee and thy city?" The Calif wist not what to answer, and said never a word. So the Prince continued, "Now then, Calif, since I see what a love thou hast borne thy treasure, I will e'en give it thee to eat!" So he shut the Calif up in the Treasure Tower, and bade that neither meat nor drink should be given him, saying, "Now, Calif, eat of thy treasure as much as thou wilt, since thou art so fond of it; for never shalt thou have aught else to eat!" So the Calif lingered in the tower four days, and then died like a dog. Truly his treasure would have been of more service to him had he bestowed it upon men who would have defended his kingdom and his people, rather than let himself be taken and deposed and put to death as he was. Howbeit, since that time, there has been never another Calif, either at

Baudas or anywhere else. Now I will tell you of a great miracle that befell at Baudas, wrought by God on behalf of the Christians.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW THE CALIF OF BAUDAS TOOK COUNSEL TO SLAY ALL THE CHRISTIANS IN HIS LAND.

I will tell you then this great marvel that occurred between Baudas and Mausul. It was in the year of Christ ... that there was a Calif at Baudas who bore a great hatred to Christians, and was taken up day and night with the thought how he might either bring those that were in his kingdom over to his own faith, or might procure them all to be slain. And he used daily to take counsel about this with the devotees and priests of his faith, for they all bore the Christians like malice. And, indeed, it is a fact, that the whole body of Saracens throughout the world are always most malignantly disposed towards the whole body of Christians. Now it happened that the Calif, with those shrewd priests of his, got hold of that passage in our Gospel which says, that if a Christian had faith as a grain of mustard seed, and should bid a mountain be removed, it would be removed. And such indeed is the truth. But when they had got hold of this text they were delighted, for it seemed to them the very thing whereby either to force all the Christians to change their faith, or to bring destruction upon them all. The Calif therefore called together all the Christians in his territories, who were extremely numerous. And when they had come before him, he showed them the Gospel, and made them read the text which I have mentioned. And when they had read it he asked them if that was the truth? The Christians answered that it assuredly was so. "Well," said the Calif, "since you say that it is the truth, I will give you a choice. Among such a number of you there must needs surely be this small amount of faith; so you must either move that mountain there,"--and he pointed to a mountain in the neighbourhood--"or you shall die an ill death; unless you choose to eschew death by all becoming Saracens and adopting our Holy Law. To this end I give you a respite of ten days; if the thing be not done by that time, ye shall die or become Saracens." And when he had said this he dismissed them, to consider what was to be done in this strait wherein they were.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THE CHRISTIANS WERE IN GREAT DISMAY BECAUSE OF WHAT THE CALIF HAD SAID.

The Christians on hearing what the Calif had said were in great dismay, but they lifted all their hopes to God, their Creator, that He would help them in this their strait. All the wisest of the Christians took counsel together, and among them were a number of bishops and priests, but they had no resource except to turn to Him from whom all good things do come, beseeching Him to protect them from the cruel hands of the Calif. So they were all gathered together in prayer, both men and women, for eight days and eight nights. And whilst they were thus engaged in prayer it was revealed in a vision by a Holy Angel of Heaven to a certain Bishop who was a very good Christian, that he should desire a certain Christian Cobler, who had but one eye, to pray to God; and that God in His goodness would grant such prayer because of the Cobler's holy life. Now I must tell you what manner of man this Cobler was. He was one who led a life of great uprightness and chastity, and who fasted and kept from all sin, and went daily to church to hear Mass, and gave daily a portion of his gains to God. And the way how he came to have but one eye was this. It happened one day that a certain woman came to him to have a pair of shoes made, and she showed him her foot that he might take her measure. Now she had a very beautiful foot and leg; and the Cobler in taking her measure was conscious of sinful thoughts. And he had often heard it said in the Holy Evangel, that if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee, rather than sin. So, as soon as the woman had departed, he took the awl that he used in stitching, and drove it into his eye and destroyed it. And this is the way he came to lose his eye. So you can judge what a holy, just, and righteous man he was.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW THE ONE-EYED COBLER WAS DESIRED TO PRAY FOR THE CHRISTIANS.

Now when this vision had visited the Bishop several times, he related the whole matter to the Christians, and they agreed with one consent to call the Cobler before them. And when he had come they told him it was their wish that he should pray, and that God had promised to accomplish the matter by his means. On hearing their request he made many excuses, declaring that he was not at all so good a man as they represented. But they persisted in their request with so much sweetness, that at last he said he would not tarry, but do what they desired.

CHAPTER X.

HOW THE PRAYER OF THE ONE-EYED COBLER CAUSED THE MOUNTAIN TO MOVE.

And when the appointed day was come, all the Christians got up early, men and women, small and great, more than 100,000 persons, and went to church, and heard the Holy Mass. And after Mass had been sung, they all went forth together in a great procession to the plain in front of the mountain, carrying the precious cross before them, loudly singing and greatly weeping as they went. And when they arrived at the spot, there they found the Calif with all his Saracen host armed to slay them if they would not change their faith; for the Saracens believed not in the least that God would grant such favour to the Christians. These latter stood indeed in great fear and doubt, but nevertheless they rested their hope on their God Jesus Christ. So the Cobler received the Bishop's benison, and then threw himself on his knees before the Holy Cross, and stretched out his hands towards Heaven, and made this prayer: "Blessed LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, I pray Thee by Thy goodness that Thou wilt grant this grace unto Thy people, insomuch that they perish not, nor Thy faith be cast down, nor abused nor flouted. Not that I am in the least worthy to prefer such request unto Thee; but for Thy great power and mercy I beseech Thee to hear this prayer from me Thy servant full of sin." And when he had ended this his prayer to God the Sovereign Father and Giver of all grace, and whilst the Calif and all the Saracens, and other people there, were looking on, the mountain rose out of its place and moved to the spot which the Calif had pointed out! And when the Calif and all his Saracens beheld, they stood amazed at the wonderful miracle that God had wrought for the Christians, insomuch that a great number of the Saracens became Christians. And even the Calif caused himself to be baptised in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen, and became a Christian, but in secret. Howbeit, when he died they found a little cross hung round his neck; and therefore the Saracens would not bury him with the other Califs, but put him in a place apart. The Christians exulted greatly at this most holy miracle, and returned to their homes full of joy, giving thanks to their Creator for that which He had done. And now you have heard in what wise took place this great miracle. And marvel not that the Saracens hate the Christians; for the accursed law that Mahommet gave them commands them to do all the mischief in their power to all other descriptions of people, and especially to Christians; to strip such of their goods, and do them all manner of evil, because they belong not to their law. See then what an evil law and what naughty commandments they have! But in such fashion the Saracens act, throughout the world. Now I have told you something of Baudas. I could easily indeed have told you first of the affairs and the customs of the people there. But it would be too long a business, looking to the great and strange things that I have got to tell you, as you will find detailed in this Book. So now I will tell you of the noble city of Tauris.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE NOBLE CITY OF TAURIS.

Tauris is a great and noble city, situated in a great province called YRAC, in which are many other towns and villages. But as Tauris is the most noble I will tell you about it. The men of Tauris get their living by trade and handi crafts, for they weave many kinds of beautiful and valuable stuffs of silk and gold. The city has such a good position that merchandize is brought thither from India, Baudas, CREMESOR, and many other regions; and that attracts many Latin merchants, especially Genoese, to buy goods and transact other business there; the more as it is also a great market for precious stones. It is a city in fact where merchants make large profits. The people of the place are themselves poor creatures; and are a great medley of different classes. There are

Armenians, Nestorians, Jacobites, Georgians, Persians, and finally the natives of the city themselves, who are worshippers of Mahommet. These last are a very evil generation; they are known as TAURIZI. The city is all girt round with charming gardens, full of many varieties of large and excellent fruits. Now we will quit Tauris, and speak of the great country of Persia. [From Tauris to Persia is a journey of twelve days.]

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE MONASTERY OF ST. BARSAMO ON THE BORDERS OF TAURIS.

On the borders of (the territory of) Tauris there is a monastery called after Saint Barsamo, a most devout Saint. There is an Abbot, with many Monks, who wear a habit like that of the Carmelites, and these to avoid idleness are continually knitting woollen girdles. These they place upon the altar of St. Barsamo during the service, and when they go begging about the province (like the Brethren of the Holy Spirit) they present them to their friends and to the gentlefolks, for they are excellent things to remove bodily pain; wherefore every one is devoutly eager to possess them.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF THE GREAT COUNTRY OF PERSIA; WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE THREE KINGS.

Persia is a great country, which was in old times very illustrious and powerful; but now the Tartars have wasted and destroyed it. In Persia is the city of SABA, from which the Three Magi set out when they went to worship Jesus Christ; and in this city they are buried, in three very large and beautiful monuments, side by side. And above them there is a square building, carefully kept. The bodies are still entire, with the hair and beard remaining. One of these was called Jaspas, the second Melchior, and the third Balthasar. Messer Marco Polo asked a great many questions of the people of that city as to those Three Magi, but never one could he find that knew aught of the matter, except that these were three kings who were buried there in days of old. However, at a place three days' journey distant he heard of what I am going to tell you. He found a village there which goes by the name of CALA ATAPERISTAN, which is as much as to say, "The Castle of the Fire-worshippers." And the name is rightly applied, for the people there do worship fire, and I will tell you why. They relate that in old times three kings of that country went away to worship a Prophet that was born, and they carried with them three manner of offerings, Gold, and Frankincense, and Myrrh; in order to ascertain whether that Prophet were God, or an earthly King, or a Physician. For, said they, if he take the Gold, then he is an earthly King; if he take the Incense he is God; if he take the Myrrh he is a Physician. So it came to pass when they had come to the place where the Child was born, the youngest of the Three Kings went in first, and found the Child apparently just of his own age; so he went forth again marvelling greatly. The middle one entered next, and like the first he found the Child seemingly of his own age; so he also went forth again and marvelled greatly. Lastly, the eldest went in, and as it had befallen the other two, so it befell him. And he went forth very pensive. And when the three had rejoined one another, each told what he had seen; and then they all marvelled the more. So they agreed to go in all three together, and on doing so they beheld the Child with the appearance of its actual age, to wit, some thirteen days. Then they adored, and presented their Gold and Incense and Myrrh. And the Child took all the three offerings, and then gave them a small closed box; whereupon the Kings departed to return into their own land.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT BEFELL WHEN THE THREE KINGS RETURNED TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY.

And when they had ridden many days they said they would see what the Child had given them. So they opened the little box, and inside it they found a stone. On seeing this they began to wonder what this might be that the Child had given them, and what was the import thereof. Now the signification was this: when they presented their offerings, the Child had accepted all three, and when they saw that they had said within themselves that He

was the True God, and the True King, and the True Physician And what the gift of the stone implied was that this Faith which had begun in them should abide firm as a rock. For He well knew what was in their thoughts. Howbeit, they had no understanding at all of this signification of the gift of the stone; so they cast it into a well. Then straightway a fire from Heaven descended into that well wherein the stone had been cast. And when the Three Kings beheld this marvel they were sore amazed, and it greatly repented them that they had cast away the stone; for well they then perceived that it had a great and holy meaning. So they took of that fire, and carried it into their own country, and placed it in a rich and beautiful church. And there the people keep it continually burning, and worship it as a god, and all the sacrifices they offer are kindled with that fire. And if ever the fire becomes extinct they go to other cities round about where the same faith is held, and obtain of that fire from them, and carry it to the church. And this is the reason why the people of this country worship fire. They will often go ten days' journey to get of that fire. Such then was the story told by the people of that Castle to Messer Marco Polo; they declared to him for a truth that such was their history, and that one of the three kings was of the city called SABA, and the second of AVA, and the third of that very Castle where they still worship fire, with the people of all the country round about. Having related this story, I will now tell you of the different provinces of Persia, and their peculiarities.

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE EIGHT KINGDOMS OF PERSIA, AND HOW THEY ARE NAMED.

Now you must know that Persia is a very great country, and contains eight kingdoms. I will tell you the names of them all. The first kingdom is that at the beginning of Persia, and it is called CASVIN; the second is further to the south, and is called CURDISTAN; the third is LOR; the fourth [SUOLSTAN]; the fifth ISTANIT; the sixth SERAZY; the seventh SONCARA; the eighth TUNOCAIN, which is at the further extremity of Persia. All these kingdoms lie in a southerly direction except one, to wit, Tunocain; that lies towards the east, and borders on the (country of the) Arbre Sol. In this country of Persia there is a great supply of fine horses; and people take them to India for sale, for they are horses of great price, a single one being worth as much of their money as is equal to 200 livres Tournois; some will be more, some less, according to the quality. Here also are the finest asses in the world, one of them being worth full 30 marks of silver, for they are very large and fast, and acquire a capital amble. Dealers carry their horses to Kisi and Curmosa, two cities on the shores of the Sea of India, and there they meet with merchants who take the horses on to India for sale. In this country there are many cruel and murderous people, so that no day passes but there is some homicide among them. Were it not for the Government, which is that of the Tartars of the Levant, they would do great mischief to merchants; and indeed, maugre the Government, they often succeed in doing such mischief. Unless merchants be well armed they run the risk of being murdered, or at least robbed of everything; and it sometimes happens that a whole party perishes in this way when not on their guard. The people are all Saracens, i.e. followers of the Law of Mahommet. In the cities there are traders and artizans who live by their labour and crafts, weaving cloths of gold, and silk stuffs of sundry kinds. They have plenty of cotton produced in the country; and abundance of wheat, barley, millet, panick, and wine, with fruits of all kinds. [Some one may say, "But the Saracens don't drink wine, which is prohibited by their law." The answer is that they gloss their text in this way, that if the wine be boiled, so that a part is dissipated and the rest becomes sweet, they may drink without breach of the commandment; for it is then no longer called wine, the name being changed with the change of flavour.]

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCERNING THE GREAT CITY OF YASDI.

Yasdi also is properly in Persia; it is a good and noble city, and has a great amount of trade. They weave there quantities of a certain silk tissue known as Yasdi, which merchants carry into many quarters to dispose of. The people are worshippers of Mahommet. When you leave this city to travel further, you ride for seven days over great plains, finding harbour to receive you at three places only. There are many fine woods [producing dates] upon the way, such as one can easily ride through; and in them there is great sport to be had in hunting

and hawking, there being partridges and quails and abundance of other game, so that the merchants who pass that way have plenty of diversion. There are also wild asses, handsome creatures. At the end of those seven marches over the plain you come to a fine kingdom which is called Kerman.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF KERMAN.

Kerman is a kingdom which is also properly in Persia, and formerly it had a hereditary prince. Since the Tartars conquered the country the rule is no longer hereditary, but the Tartar sends to administer whatever lord he pleases. In this kingdom are produced the stones called turquoises in great abundance; they are found in the mountains, where they are extracted from the rocks. There are also plenty of veins of steel and *Ondanique*. The people are very skilful in making harness of war; their saddles, bridles, spurs, swords, bows, quivers, and arms of every kind, are very well made indeed according to the fashion of those parts. The ladies of the country and their daughters also produce exquisite needlework in the embroidery of silk stuffs in different colours, with figures of beasts and birds, trees and flowers, and a variety of other patterns. They work hangings for the use of noblemen so deftly that they are marvels to see, as well as cushions, pillows quilts, and all sorts of things. In the mountains of Kerman are found the best falcons in the world. They are inferior in size to the Peregrine, red on the breast, under the neck, and between the thighs; their flight so swift that no bird can escape them. On quitting the city you ride on for seven days, always finding towns, villages, and handsome dwelling-houses, so that it is very pleasant travelling; and there is excellent sport also to be had by the way in hunting and hawking. When you have ridden those seven days over a plain country, you come to a great mountain; and when you have got to the top of the pass you find a great descent which occupies some two days to go down. All along you find a variety and abundance of fruits; and in former days there were plenty of inhabited places on the road, but now there are none; and you meet with only a few people looking after their cattle at pasture. From the city of Kerman to this descent the cold in winter is so great that you can scarcely abide it, even with a great quantity of clothing.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF THE CITY OF CAMADI AND ITS RUINS; ALSO TOUCHING THE CARAUNA ROBBERS.

After you have ridden down hill those two days, you find yourself in a vast plain, and at the beginning thereof there is a city called CAMADI, which formerly was a great and noble place, but now is of little consequence, for the Tartars in their incursions have several times ravaged it. The plain whereof I speak is a very hot region; and the province that we now enter is called REOBARLES. The fruits of the country are dates, pistachioes, and apples of Paradise, with others of the like not found in our cold climate. [There are vast numbers of turtledoves, attracted by the abundance of fruits, but the Saracens never take them, for they hold them in abomination.] And on this plain there is a kind of bird called francolin, but different from the francolin of other countries, for their colour is a mixture of black and white, and the feet and beak are vermilion colour. The beasts also are peculiar; and first I will tell you of their oxen. These are very large, and all over white as snow; the hair is very short and smooth, which is owing to the heat of the country. The horns are short and thick, not sharp in the point; and between the shoulders they have a round hump some two palms high. There are no handsomer creatures in the world. And when they have to be loaded, they kneel like the camel; once the load is adjusted, they rise. Their load is a heavy one, for they are very strong animals. Then there are sheep here as big as asses; and their tails are so large and fat, that one tail shall weigh some 30 lbs. They are fine fat beasts, and afford capital mutton. In this plain there are a number of villages and towns which have lofty walls of mud, made as a defence against the banditti, who are very numerous, and are called CARAONAS. This name is given them because they are the sons of Indian mothers by Tartar fathers. And you must know that when these Caraonas wish to make a plundering incursion, they have certain devilish enchantments whereby they do bring darkness over the face of day, insomuch that you can scarcely discern your comrade riding beside you; and this darkness they will cause to extend over a space of seven days' journey. They know the country thoroughly, and ride abreast, keeping near

one another, sometimes to the number of 10,000, at other times more or fewer. In this way they extend across the whole plain that they are going to harry, and catch every living thing that is found outside of the towns and villages; man, woman, or beast, nothing can escape them! The old men whom they take in this way they butcher; the young men and the women they sell for slaves in other countries; thus the whole land is ruined, and has become well-nigh a desert. The King of these scoundrels is called NOGODAR. This Nogodar had gone to the Court of Chagatai, who was own brother to the Great Kaan, with some 10,000 horsemen of his, and abode with him; for Chagatai was his uncle. And whilst there this Nogodar devised a most audacious enterprise, and I will tell you what it was. He left his uncle who was then in Greater Armenia, and fled with a great body of horsemen, cruel unscrupulous fellows, first through BADASHAN, and then through another province called PASHAI-DIR, and then through another called ARIORA-KESHEMUR. There he lost a great number of his people and of his horses, for the roads were very narrow and perilous. And when he had conquered all those provinces, he entered India at the extremity of a province called DALIVAR. He established himself in that city and government, which he took from the King of the country, ASEDIN SOLDAN by name, a man of great power and wealth. And there abideth Nogodar with his army, afraid of nobody, and waging war with all the Tartars in his neighbourhood. Now that I have told you of those scoundrels and their history, I must add the fact that Messer Marco himself was all but caught by their bands in such a darkness as that I have told you of; but, as it pleased God, he got off and threw himself into a village that was hard by, called CONOSALMI. Howbeit he lost his whole company except seven persons who escaped along with him. The rest were caught, and some of them sold, some put to death.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF THE DESCENT TO THE CITY OF HORMOS.

The Plain of which we have spoken extends in a southerly direction for five days' journey, and then you come to another descent some twenty miles in length, where the road is very bad and full of peril, for there are many robbers and bad characters about. When you have got to the foot of this descent you find another beautiful plain called the PLAIN OF FORMOSA. This extends for two days' journey; and you find in it fine streams of water with plenty of date-palms and other fruit-trees. There are also many beautiful birds, francolins, popinjays, and other kinds such as we have none of in our country. When you have ridden these two days you come to the Ocean Sea, and on the shore you find a city with a harbour which is called HORMOS. Merchants come thither from India, with ships loaded with spicery and precious stones, pearls, cloths of silk and gold, elephants' teeth, and many other wares, which they sell to the merchants of Hormos, and which these in turn carry all over the world to dispose of again. In fact, 'tis a city of immense trade. There are plenty of towns and villages under it, but it is the capital. The King is called RUOMEDAM AHOMET. It is a very sickly place, and the heat of the sun is tremendous. If any foreign merchant dies there, the King takes all his property. In this country they make a wine of dates mixt with spices, which is very good. When any one not used to it first drinks this wine, it causes repeated and violent purging, but afterwards he is all the better for it, and gets fat upon it. The people never eat meat and wheaten bread except when they are ill, and if they take such food when they are in health it makes them ill. Their food when in health consists of dates and salt-fish (tunny, to wit) and onions, and this kind of diet they maintain in order to preserve their health. Their ships are wretched affairs, and many of them get lost; for they have no iron fastenings, and are only stitched together with twine made from the husk of the Indian nut. They beat this husk until it becomes like horse-hair, and from that they spin twine, and with this stitch the planks of the ships together. It keeps well, and is not corroded by the sea-water, but it will not stand well in a storm. The ships are not pitched, but are rubbed with fish-oil. They have one mast, one sail, and one rudder, and have no deck, but only a cover spread over the cargo when loaded. This cover consists of hides, and on the top of these hides they put the horses which they take to India for sale. They have no iron to make nails of, and for this reason they use only wooden trenails in their shipbuilding, and then stitch the planks with twine as I have told you. Hence 'tis a perilous business to go a voyage in one of those ships, and many of them are lost, for in that Sea of India the storms are often terrible. The people are black, and are worshippers of Mahommet. The residents avoid living in the cities, for the heat in summer is so great that it would kill them. Hence they go out (to sleep) at their gardens in the country, where there are streams and plenty of water. For all

that they would not escape but for one thing that I will mention. The fact is, you see, that in summer a wind often blows across the sands which encompass the plain, so intolerably hot that it would kill everybody, were it not that when they perceive that wind coming they plunge into water up to the neck, and so abide until the wind have ceased. [And to prove the great heat of this wind, Messer Mark related a case that befell when he was there. The Lord of Hormos, not having paid his tribute to the King of Kerman the latter resolved to claim it at the time when the people of Hormos were residing away from the city. So he caused a force of 1600 horse and 5000 foot to be got ready, and sent them by the route of Reobarles to take the others by surprise. Now, it happened one day that through the fault of their guide they were not able to reach the place appointed for their night's halt, and were obliged to bivouac in a wilderness not far from Hormos. In the morning as they were starting on their march they were caught by that wind, and every man of them was suffocated, so that not one survived to carry the tidings to their Lord. When the people of Hormos heard of this they went forth to bury the bodies lest they should breed a pestilence. But when they laid hold of them by the arms to drag them to the pits, the bodies proved to be so _baked_, as it were, by that tremendous heat, that the arms parted from the trunks, and in the end the people had to dig graves hard by each where it lay, and so cast them in.] The people sow their wheat and barley and other corn in the month of November, and reap it in the month of March. The dates are not gathered till May, but otherwise there is no grass nor any other green thing, for the excessive heat dries up everything. When any one dies they make a great business of the mourning, for women mourn their husbands four years. During that time they mourn at least once a day, gathering together their kinsfolk and friends and neighbours for the purpose, and making a great weeping and wailing. [And they have women who are mourners by trade, and do it for hire.] Now, we will quit this country. I shall not, however, now go on to tell you about India; but when time and place shall suit we shall come round from the north and tell you about it. For the present, let us return by another road to the aforesaid city of Kerman, for we cannot get at those countries that I wish to tell you about except through that city. I should tell you first, however, that King Ruomedam Ahomet of Hormos, which we are leaving, is a liegeman of the King of Kerman. On the road by which we return from Hormos to Kerman you meet with some very fine plains, and you also find many natural hot baths; you find plenty of partridges on the road; and there are towns where victual is cheap and abundant, with quantities of dates and other fruits. The wheaten bread, however, is so bitter, owing to the bitterness of the water, that no one can eat it who is not used to it. The baths that I mentioned have excellent virtues; they cure the itch and several other diseases. Now, then, I am going to tell you about the countries towards the north, of which you shall hear in regular order. Let us begin.

CHAPTER XX.

OF THE WEARISOME AND DESERT ROAD THAT HAS NOW TO BE TRAVELLED.

On departing from the city of Kerman you find the road for seven days most wearisome; and I will tell you how this is. The first three days you meet with no water, or next to none. And what little you do meet with is bitter green stuff, so salt that no one can drink it; and in fact if you drink a drop of it, it will set you purging ten times at least by the way. It is the same with the salt which is made from those streams; no one dares to make use of it, because of the excessive purging which it occasions. Hence it is necessary to carry water for the people to last these three days; as for the cattle, they must needs drink of the bad water I have mentioned, as there is no help for it, and their great thirst makes them do so. But it scours them to such a degree that sometimes they die of it. In all those three days you meet with no human habitation; it is all desert, and the extremity of drought. Even of wild beasts there are none, for there is nothing for them to eat. After those three days of desert [you arrive at a stream of fresh water running underground, but along which there are holes broken in here and there, perhaps undermined by the stream, at which you can get sight of it. It has an abundant supply, and travellers, worn with the hardships of the desert, here rest and refresh themselves and their beasts.] You then enter another desert which extends for four days; it is very much like the former except that you do see some wild asses. And at the termination of these four days of desert the kingdom of Kerman comes to an end, and you find another city which is called Cobinan.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCERNING THE CITY OF COBINAN AND THE THINGS THAT ARE MADE THERE.

Cobinan is a large town. The people worship Mahommet. There is much Iron and Steel and Ondanique, and they make steel mirrors of great size and beauty. They also prepare both Tutia (a thing very good for the eyes) and Spodium; and I will tell you the process. They have a vein of a certain earth which has the required quality, and this they put into a great flaming furnace, whilst over the furnace there is an iron grating. The smoke and moisture, expelled from the earth of which I speak, adhere to the iron grating, and thus form Tutia, whilst the slag that is left after burning is the Spodium.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF A CERTAIN DESERT THAT CONTINUES FOR EIGHT DAYS' JOURNEY.

When you depart from this City of Cobinan, you find yourself again in a Desert of surpassing aridity, which lasts for some eight days; here are neither fruits nor trees to be seen, and what water there is is bitter and bad, so that you have to carry both food and water. The cattle must needs drink the bad water, will they nill they, because of their great thirst. At the end of those eight days you arrive at a Province which is called TONOCAIN. It has a good many towns and villages, and forms the extremity of Persia towards the North. It also contains an immense plain on which is found the ARBRE SOL, which we Christians call the Arbre Sec; and I will tell you what it is like. It is a tall and thick tree, having the bark on one side green and the other white; and it produces a rough husk like that of a chestnut, but without anything in it. The wood is yellow like box, and very strong, and there are no other trees near it nor within a hundred miles of it, except on one side, where you find trees within about ten miles' distance. And there, the people of the country tell you, was fought the battle between Alexander and King Darius. The towns and villages have great abundance of everything good, for the climate is extremely temperate, being neither very hot nor very cold. The natives all worship Mahommet, and are a very fine-looking people, especially the women, who are surpassingly beautiful.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCERNING THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN.

Mulehet is a country in which the Old Man of the Mountain dwelt in former days; and the name means "Place of the Aram." I will tell you his whole history as related by Messer Marco Polo, who heard it from several natives of that region. The Old Man was called in their language ALOADIN. He had caused a certain valley between two mountains to be enclosed, and had turned it into a garden, the largest and most beautiful that ever was seen, filled with every variety of fruit. In it were erected pavilions and palaces the most elegant that can be imagined, all covered with gilding and exquisite painting. And there were runnels too, flowing freely with wine and milk and honey and water; and numbers of ladies and of the most beautiful damsels in the world, who could play on all manner of instruments, and sung most sweetly, and danced in a manner that it was charming to behold. For the Old Man desired to make his people believe that this was actually Paradise. So he had fashioned it after the description that Mahommet gave of his Paradise, to wit, that it should be a beautiful garden running with conduits of wine and milk and honey and water, and full of lovely women for the delectation of all its inmates. And sure enough the Saracens of those parts believed that it was Paradise! Now no man was allowed to enter the Garden save those whom he intended to be his A^SHISHIN. There was a Fortress at the entrance to the Garden, strong enough to resist all the world, and there was no other way to get in. He kept at his Court a number of the youths of the country, from 12 to 20 years of age, such as had a taste for soldiering, and to these he used to tell tales about Paradise, just as Mahommet had been wont to do, and they believed in him just as the Saracens believe in Mahommet. Then he would introduce them into his garden, some four, or six, or ten at a time, having first made them drink a certain potion which cast them into a deep sleep, and then causing them to be lifted and carried in. So when they awoke, they found themselves in the Garden.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW THE OLD MAN USED TO TRAIN HIS ASSASSINS.

When therefore they awoke, and found themselves in a place so charming, they deemed that it was Paradise in very truth. And the ladies and damsels dallied with them to their hearts' content, so that they had what young men would have; and with their own good will they never would have quitted the place. Now this Prince whom we call the Old One kept his Court in grand and noble style, and made those simple hill-folks about him believe firmly that he was a great Prophet. And when he wanted one of his Ashishin to send on any mission, he would cause that potion whereof I spoke to be given to one of the youths in the garden, and then had him carried into his Palace. So when the young man awoke, he found himself in the Castle, and no longer in that Paradise; whereat he was not over well pleased. He was then conducted to the Old Man's presence, and bowed before him with great veneration as believing himself to be in the presence of a true Prophet. The Prince would then ask whence he came, and he would reply that he came from Paradise! and that it was exactly such as Mahommet had described it in the Law. This of course gave the others who stood by, and who had not been admitted, the greatest desire to enter therein. So when the Old Man would have any Prince slain, he would say to such a youth: "Go thou and slay So and So; and when thou returnest my Angels shall bear thee into Paradise. And shouldst thou die, nathless even so will I send my Angels to carry thee back into Paradise." So he caused them to believe; and thus there was no order of his that they would not affront any peril to execute, for the great desire they had to get back into that Paradise of his. And in this manner the Old One got his people to murder any one whom he desired to get rid of. Thus, too, the great dread that he inspired all Princes withal, made them become his tributaries in order that he might abide at peace and amity with them. I should also tell you that the Old Man had certain others under him, who copied his proceedings and acted exactly in the same manner. One of these was sent into the territory of Damascus, and the other into Curdistan.

CHAPTER XXV.

HOW THE OLD MAN CAME BY HIS END.

Now it came to pass, in the year of Christ's Incarnation, 1252, that Alaue, Lord of the Tartars of the Levant, heard tell of these great crimes of the Old Man, and resolved to make an end of him. So he took and sent one of his Barons with a great Army to that Castle, and they besieged it for three years, but they could not take it, so strong was it. And indeed if they had had food within it never would have been taken. But after being besieged those three years they ran short of victual, and were taken. The Old Man was put to death with all his men [and the Castle with its Garden of Paradise was levelled with the ground]. And since that time he has had no successor; and there was an end to all his villainies. Now let us go back to our journey.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCERNING THE CITY OF SAPURGAN.

On leaving the Castle, you ride over fine plains and beautiful valleys, and pretty hill-sides producing excellent grass pasture, and abundance of fruits, and all other products. Armies are glad to take up their quarters here on account of the plenty that exists. This kind of country extends for six days' journey, with a goodly number of towns and villages, in which the people are worshippers of Mahommet. Sometimes also you meet with a tract of desert extending for 50 or 60 miles, or somewhat less, and in these deserts you find no water, but have to carry it along with you. The beasts do without drink until you have got across the desert tract and come to watering places. So after travelling for six days as I have told you, you come to a city called SAPURGAN. It has great plenty of everything, but especially of the very best melons in the world. They preserve them by paring them round and round into strips, and drying them in the sun. When dry they are sweeter than honey, and are carried off for sale all over the country. There is also abundance of game here, both of birds and beasts.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OF THE CITY OF BALC.

Balc is a noble city and a great, though it was much greater in former days. But the Tartars and other nations have greatly ravaged and destroyed it. There were formerly many fine palaces and buildings of marble, and the ruins of them still remain. The people of the city tell that it was here that Alexander took to wife the daughter of Darius. Here, you should be told, is the end of the empire of the Tartar Lord of the Levant. And this city is also the limit of Persia in the direction between east and north-east. Now, let us quit this city, and I will tell you of another country called DOGANA. When you have quitted the city of which I have been speaking, you ride some 12 days between north-east and east, without finding any human habitation, for the people have all taken refuge in fastnesses among the mountains, on account of the Banditti and armies that harassed them. There is plenty of water on the road, and abundance of game; there are lions too. You can get no provisions on the road, and must carry with you all that you require for these 12 days.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OF TAICAN, AND THE MOUNTAINS OF SALT. ALSO OF THE PROVINCE OF CASEM.

After those twelve days' journey you come to a fortified place called TAICAN, where there is a great corn market. It is a fine place, and the mountains that you see towards the south are all composed of salt. People from all the countries round, to some thirty days' journey, come to fetch this salt, which is the best in the world, and is so hard that it can only be broken with iron picks. 'Tis in such abundance that it would supply the whole world to the end of time. [Other mountains there grow almonds and pistachioes, which are exceedingly cheap.] When you leave this town and ride three days further between north-east and east, you meet with many fine tracts full of vines and other fruits, and with a goodly number of habitations, and everything to be had very cheap. The people are worshippers of Mahommet, and are an evil and a murderous generation, whose great delight is in the wine shop; for they have good wine (albeit it be boiled), and are great toppers; in truth, they are constantly getting drunk. They wear nothing on the head but a cord some ten palms long twisted round it. They are excellent huntsmen, and take a great deal of game; in fact they wear nothing but the skins of the beasts they have taken in the chase, for they make of them both coats and shoes. Indeed, all of them are acquainted with the art of dressing skins for these purposes. When you have ridden those three days, you find a town called CASEM, which is subject to a count. His other towns and villages are on the hills, but through this town there flows a river of some size. There are a great many porcupines hereabouts, and very large ones too. When hunted with dogs, several of them will get together and huddle close, shooting their quills at the dogs, which get many a serious wound thereby. This town of Casem is at the head of a very great province, which is also called Casem. The people have a peculiar language. The peasants who keep cattle abide in the mountains, and have their dwellings in caves, which form fine and spacious houses for them, and are made with ease, as the hills are composed of earth. After leaving the town of Casem, you ride for three days without finding a single habitation, or anything to eat or drink, so that you have to carry with you everything that you require. At the end of those three days you reach a province called Badashan, about which we shall now tell you.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OF THE PROVINCE OF BADASHAN.

Badashan is a Province inhabited by people who worship Mahommet, and have a peculiar language. It forms a very great kingdom, and the royalty is hereditary. All those of the royal blood are descended from King Alexander and the daughter of King Darius, who was Lord of the vast Empire of Persia. And all these kings call themselves in the Saracen tongue ZULCARNIAIN, which is as much as to say Alexander; and this out of regard for Alexander the Great. It is in this province that those fine and valuable gems the Balas Rubies are found. They are got in certain rocks among the mountains, and in the search for them the people dig great caves

underground, just as is done by miners for silver. There is but one special mountain that produces them, and it is called SYGHINAN. The stones are dug on the king's account, and no one else dares dig in that mountain on pain of forfeiture of life as well as goods; nor may any one carry the stones out of the kingdom. But the king amasses them all, and sends them to other kings when he has tribute to render, or when he desires to offer a friendly present; and such only as he pleases he causes to be sold. Thus he acts in order to keep the Balas at a high value; for if he were to allow everybody to dig, they would extract so many that the world would be glutted with them, and they would cease to bear any value. Hence it is that he allows so few to be taken out, and is so strict in the matter. There is also in the same country another mountain, in which azure is found; 'tis the finest in the world, and is got in a vein like silver. There are also other mountains which contain a great amount of silver ore, so that the country is a very rich one; but it is also (it must be said) a very cold one. It produces numbers of excellent horses, remarkable for their speed. They are not shod at all, although constantly used in mountainous country, and on very bad roads. [They go at a great pace even down steep descents, where other horses neither would nor could do the like. And Messer Marco was told that not long ago they possessed in that province a breed of horses from the strain of Alexander's horse Bucephalus, all of which had from their birth a particular mark on the forehead. This breed was entirely in the hands of an uncle of the king's; and in consequence of his refusing to let the king have any of them, the latter put him to death. The widow then, in despite, destroyed the whole breed, and it is now extinct.] The mountains of this country also supply Saker falcons of excellent flight, and plenty of Lanners likewise. Beasts and birds for the chase there are in great abundance. Good wheat is grown, and also barley without husk. They have no olive oil, but make oil from sesame, and also from walnuts. [In the mountains there are vast numbers of sheep--400, 500, or 600 in a single flock, and all of them wild; and though many of them are taken, they never seem to get aught the scarcer. Those mountains are so lofty that 'tis a hard day's work, from morning till evening, to get to the top of them. On getting up, you find an extensive plain, with great abundance of grass and trees, and copious springs of pure water running down through rocks and ravines. In those brooks are found trout and many other fish of dainty kinds; and the air in those regions is so pure, and residence there so healthful, that when the men who dwell below in the towns, and in the valleys and plains, find themselves attacked by any kind of fever or other ailment that may hap, they lose no time in going to the hills; and after abiding there two or three days, they quite recover their health through the excellence of that air. And Messer Marco said he had proved this by experience: for when in those parts he had been ill for about a year, but as soon as he was advised to visit that mountain, he did so and got well at once.] [Illustration: Ancient Silver Patera of debased Greek art, formerly in the possession of the Princes of Badakhshan, now in the India Museum. (Four-ninths of the diameter of the Original.)] In this kingdom there are many strait and perilous passes, so difficult to force that the people have no fear of invasion. Their towns and villages also are on lofty hills, and in very strong positions. They are excellent archers, and much given to the chase; indeed, most of them are dependent for clothing on the skins of beasts, for stuffs are very dear among them. The great ladies, however, are arrayed in stuffs, and I will tell you the style of their dress! They all wear drawers made of cotton cloth, and into the making of these some will put 60, 80, or even 100 ells of stuff. This they do to make themselves look large in the hips, for the men of those parts think that to be a great beauty in a woman.

CHAPTER XXX.

OF THE PROVINCE OF PASHAI

You must know that ten days' journey to the south of Badashan there is a Province called PASHAI, the people of which have a peculiar language, and are Idolaters, of a brown complexion. They are great adepts in sorceries and the diabolic arts. The men wear earrings and brooches of gold and silver set with stones and pearls. They are a pestilent people and a crafty; and they live upon flesh and rice. Their country is very hot. Now let us proceed and speak of another country which is seven days' journey from this one towards the south-east, and the name of which is KESHIMUR.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OF THE PROVINCE OF KESHIMUR.

Keshimur also is a Province inhabited by a people who are Idolaters and have a language of their own. They have an astonishing acquaintance with the devilries of enchantment; insomuch that they make their idols to speak. They can also by their sorceries bring on changes of weather and produce darkness, and do a number of things so extraordinary that no one without seeing them would believe them. Indeed, this country is the very original source from which Idolatry has spread abroad. In this direction you can proceed further till you come to the Sea of India. The men are brown and lean, but the women, taking them as brunettes, are very beautiful. The food of the people is flesh, and milk, and rice. The clime is finely tempered, being neither very hot nor very cold. There are numbers of towns and villages in the country, but also forests and desert tracts, and strong passes, so that the people have no fear of anybody, and keep their independence, with a king of their own to rule and do justice. There are in this country Eremites (after the fashion of those parts), who dwell in seclusion and practise great abstinence in eating and drinking. They observe strict chastity, and keep from all sins forbidden in their law, so that they are regarded by their own folk as very holy persons. They live to a very great age. There are also a number of idolatrous abbeys and monasteries. [The people of the province do not kill animals nor spill blood; so if they want to eat meat they get the Saracens who dwell among them to play the butcher.] The coral which is carried from our parts of the world has a better sale there than in any other country. [Illustration: Ancient Buddhist Temple at Pandrethan in Kashmir] Now we will quit this country, and not go any further in the same direction; for if we did so we should enter India; and that I do not wish to do at present. For, on our return journey, I mean to tell you about India: all in regular order. Let us go back therefore to Badashan, for we cannot otherwise proceed on our journey.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OF THE GREAT RIVER OF BADASHAN.

In leaving Badashan you ride twelve days between east and north-east, ascending a river that runs through land belonging to a brother of the Prince of Badashan, and containing a good many towns and villages and scattered habitations. The people are Mahommetans, and valiant in war. At the end of those twelve days you come to a province of no great size, extending indeed no more than three days' journey in any direction, and this is called VOKHAN. The people worship Mahommet, and they have a peculiar language. They are gallant soldiers, and they have a chief whom they call NONE, which is as much as to say Count, and they are liegemen to the Prince of Badashan. There are numbers of wild beasts of all sorts in this region. And when you leave this little country, and ride three days north-east, always among mountains, you get to such a height that 'tis said to be the highest place in the world! And when you have got to this height you find [a great lake between two mountains, and out of it] a fine river running through a plain clothed with the finest pasture in the world; insomuch that a lean beast there will fatten to your heart's content in ten days. There are great numbers of all kinds of wild beasts; among others, wild sheep of great size, whose horns are good six palms in length. From these horns the shepherds make great bowls to eat from, and they use the horns also to enclose folds for their cattle at night. [Messer Marco was told also that the wolves were numerous, and killed many of those wild sheep. Hence quantities of their horns and bones were found, and these were made into great heaps by the way-side, in order to guide travellers when snow was on the ground.] The plain is called PAMIER, and you ride across it for twelve days together, finding nothing but a desert without habitations or any green thing, so that travellers are obliged to carry with them whatever they have need of. The region is so lofty and cold that you do not even see any birds flying. And I must notice also that because of this great cold, fire does not burn so brightly, nor give out so much heat as usual, nor does it cook food so effectually. Now, if we go on with our journey towards the east-north-east, we travel a good forty days, continually passing over mountains and hills, or through valleys, and crossing many rivers and tracts of wilderness. And in all this way you find neither habitation of man, nor any green thing, but must carry with you whatever you require. The country is called BOLOR. The people dwell high up in the mountains, and are savage Idolaters, living only by the chase, and clothing themselves in the skins of beasts. They are in truth an evil race.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF THE KINGDOM OF CASCAR.

Cascar is a region lying between north-east and east, and constituted a kingdom in former days, but now it is subject to the Great Kaan. The people worship Mahomet. There are a good number of towns and villages, but the greatest and finest is Cascar itself. The inhabitants live by trade and handicrafts; they have beautiful gardens and vineyards, and fine estates, and grow a great deal of cotton. From this country many merchants go forth about the world on trading journeys. The natives are a wretched, niggardly set of people; they eat and drink in miserable fashion. There are in the country many Nestorian Christians, who have churches of their own. The people of the country have a peculiar language, and the territory extends for five days' journey. CAIDOU by name; he is, however, at bitter enmity with the Kaan. I will tell you of a great marvel that happened at this city. [Illustration: View of Samarcand. (From a sketch by Mr. Ivanoff.) "Samarcand est une grandissime cite et noble."] It is not a great while ago that SIGATAY, own brother to the Great Kaan, who was Lord of this country and of many an one besides, became a Christian. The Christians rejoiced greatly at this, and they built a great church in the city, in honour of John the Baptist; and by his name the church was called. And they took a very fine stone which belonged to the Saracens, and placed it as the pedestal of a column in the middle of the church, supporting the roof. It came to pass, however, that Sigatay died. Now the Saracens were full of rancour about that stone that had been theirs, and which had been set up in the church of the Christians; and when they saw that the Prince was dead, they said one to another that now was the time to get back their stone, by fair means or by foul. And that they might well do, for they were ten times as many as the Christians. So they gat together and went to the church and said that the stone they must and would have. The Christians acknowledged that it was theirs indeed, but offered to pay a large sum of money and so be quit. Howbeit, the others replied that they never would give up the stone for anything in the world. And words ran so high that the Prince heard thereof, and ordered the Christians either to arrange to satisfy the Saracens, if it might be, with money, or to give up the stone. And he allowed them three days to do either the one thing or the other. What shall I tell you? Well, the Saracens would on no account agree to leave the stone where it was, and this out of pure despite to the Christians, for they knew well enough that if the stone were stirred the church would come down by the run. So the Christians were in great trouble and wist not what to do. But they did do the best thing possible; they besought Jesus Christ that he would consider their case, so that the holy church should not come to destruction, nor the name of its Patron Saint, John the Baptist, be tarnished by its ruin. And so when the day fixed by the Prince came round, they went to the church betimes in the morning, and lo, they found the stone removed from under the column; the foot of the column was without support, and yet it bore the load as stoutly as before! Between the foot of the column and the ground there was a space of three palms. So the Saracens had away their stone, and mighty little joy withal. It was a glorious miracle, nay, it is so, for the column still so standeth, and will stand as long as God pleaseth. Now let us quit this and continue our journey.

CHAPTER XXXV.

OF THE PROVINCE OF YARCAN.

Yarcand is a province five days' journey in extent. The people follow the Law of Mahomet, but there are also Nestorian and Jacobite Christians. They are subject to the same Prince that I mentioned, the Great Kaan's nephew. They have plenty of everything, [particularly of cotton. The inhabitants are also great craftsmen, but a large proportion of them have swollen legs, and great crops at the throat, which arises from some quality in their drinking-water.] As there is nothing else worth telling we may pass on.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

OF A PROVINCE CALLED COTAN.

Cotan is a province lying between north-east and east, and is eight days' journey in length. The people are subject to the Great Kaan, and are all worshippers of Mahommet. There are numerous towns and villages in the country, but Cotan, the capital, is the most noble of all, and gives its name to the kingdom. Everything is to be had there in plenty, including abundance of cotton, [with flax, hemp, wheat, wine, and the like]. The people have vineyards and gardens and estates. They live by commerce and manufactures, and are no soldiers.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OF THE PROVINCE OF PEIN.

Pein is a province five days in length, lying between east and north-east. The people are worshippers of Mahommet, and subjects of the Great Kaan. There are a good number of towns and villages, but the most noble is PEIN, the capital of the kingdom. There are rivers in this country, in which quantities of Jasper and Chalcedony are found. The people have plenty of all products, including cotton. They live by manufactures and trade. But they have a custom that I must relate. If the husband of any woman go away upon a journey and remain away for more than 20 days, as soon as that term is past the woman may marry another man, and the husband also may then marry whom he pleases. I should tell you that all the provinces that I have been speaking of, from Cascar forward, and those I am going to mention [as far as the city of Lop] belong to GREAT TURKEY.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

OF THE PROVINCE OF CHARCHAN.

Charchan is a Province of Great Turkey, lying between north-east and east. The people worship Mahommet. There are numerous towns and villages, and the chief city of the kingdom bears its name, Charchan. The Province contains rivers which bring down Jasper and Chalcedony, and these are carried for sale into Cathay, where they fetch great prices. The whole of the Province is sandy, and so is the road all the way from Pein, and much of the water that you find is bitter and bad. However, at some places you do find fresh and sweet water. When an army passes through the land, the people escape with their wives, children, and cattle a distance of two or three days' journey into the sandy waste; and knowing the spots where water is to be had, they are able to live there, and to keep their cattle alive, whilst it is impossible to discover them; for the wind immediately blows the sand over their track. Quitting Charchan, you ride some five days through the sands, finding none but bad and bitter water, and then you come to a place where the water is sweet. And now I will tell you of a province called Lop, in which there is a city, also called LOP, which you come to at the end of those five days. It is at the entrance of the great Desert, and it is here that travellers repose before entering on the Desert.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

OF THE CITY OF LOP AND THE GREAT DESERT.

Lop is a large town at the edge of the Desert, which is called the Desert of Lop, and is situated between east and north-east. It belongs to the Great Kaan, and the people worship Mahommet. Now, such persons as propose to cross the Desert take a week's rest in this town to refresh themselves and their cattle; and then they make ready for the journey, taking with them a month's supply for man and beast. On quitting this city they enter the Desert. The length of this Desert is so great that 'tis said it would take a year and more to ride from one end of it to the other. And here, where its breadth is least, it takes a month to cross it. 'Tis all composed of hills and valleys of sand, and not a thing to eat is to be found on it. But after riding for a day and a night you find fresh water, enough mayhap for some 50 or 100 persons with their beasts, but not for more. And all across the Desert you will find water in like manner, that is to say, in some 28 places altogether you will find good water, but in no great quantity; and in four places also you find brackish water. Beasts there are none; for there is nought for them to eat. But there is a marvellous thing related of this Desert, which is that when travellers are on the move

by night, and one of them chances to lag behind or to fall asleep or the like, when he tries to gain his company again he will hear spirits talking, and will suppose them to be his comrades. Sometimes the spirits will call him by name; and thus shall a traveller oftentimes be led astray so that he never finds his party. And in this way many have perished. [Sometimes the stray travellers will hear as it were the tramp and hum of a great cavalcade of people away from the real line of road, and taking this to be their own company they will follow the sound; and when day breaks they find that a cheat has been put on them and that they are in an ill plight.] Even in the daytime one hears those spirits talking. And sometimes you shall hear the sound of a variety of musical instruments, and still more commonly the sound of drums. [Hence in making this journey 'tis customary for travellers to keep close together. All the animals too have bells at their necks, so that they cannot easily get astray. And at sleeping-time a signal is put up to show the direction of the next march.] So thus it is that the Desert is crossed.

CHAPTER XL.

CONCERNING THE GREAT PROVINCE OF TANGUT.

After you have travelled thirty days through the Desert, as I have described, you come to a city called SACHIU, lying between north-east and east; it belongs to the Great Kaan, and is in a province called TANGUT. The people are for the most part Idolaters, but there are also some Nestorian Christians and some Saracens. The Idolaters have a peculiar language, and are no traders, but live by their agriculture. They have a great many abbeys and minsters full of idols of sundry fashions, to which they pay great honour and reverence, worshipping them and sacrificing to them with much ado. For example, such as have children will feed up a sheep in honour of the idol, and at the New Year, or on the day of the Idol's Feast, they will take their children and the sheep along with them into the presence of the idol with great ceremony. Then they will have the sheep slaughtered and cooked, and again present it before the idol with like reverence, and leave it there before him, whilst they are reciting the offices of their worship and their prayers for the idol's blessing on their children. And, if you will believe them, the idol feeds on the meat that is set before it! After these ceremonies they take up the flesh and carry it home, and call together all their kindred to eat it with them in great festivity [the idol-priests receiving for their portion the head, feet, entrails, and skin, with some part of the meat]. After they have eaten, they collect the bones that are left and store them carefully in a hutch. And you must know that all the Idolaters in the world burn their dead. And when they are going to carry a body to the burning, the kinsfolk build a wooden house on the way to the spot, and drape it with cloths of silk and gold. When the body is going past this building they call a halt and set before it wine and meat and other eatables; and this they do with the assurance that the defunct will be received with the like attentions in the other world. All the minstrelsy in the town goes playing before the body; and when it reaches the burning-place the kinsfolk are prepared with figures cut out of parchment and paper in the shape of men and horses and camels, and also with round pieces of paper like gold coins, and all these they burn along with the corpse. For they say that in the other world the defunct will be provided with slaves and cattle and money, just in proportion to the amount of such pieces of paper that has been burnt along with him. But they never burn their dead until they have [sent for the astrologers, and told them the year, the day, and the hour of the deceased person's birth, and when the astrologers have ascertained under what constellation, planet, and sign he was born, they declare the day on which, by the rules of their art, he ought to be burnt]. And till that day arrive they keep the body, so that 'tis sometimes a matter of six months, more or less, before it comes to be burnt. Now the way they keep the body in the house is this: They make a coffin first of a good span in thickness, very carefully joined and daintily painted. This they fill up with camphor and spices, to keep off corruption [stopping the joints with pitch and lime], and then they cover it with a fine cloth. Every day as long as the body is kept, they set a table before the dead covered with food; and they will have it that the soul comes and eats and drinks: wherefore they leave the food there as long as would be necessary in order that one should partake. Thus they do daily. And worse still! Sometimes those soothsayers shall tell them that 'tis not good luck to carry out the corpse by the door, so they have to break a hole in the wall, and to draw it out that way when it is taken to the burning. And these, I assure you, are the practices of all the Idolaters of those countries. However, we will quit this subject, and I will tell you of another city which lies towards the north-west at the extremity of the desert.

CHAPTER XLI.

OF THE PROVINCE OF CAMUL.

Camul is a province which in former days was a kingdom. It contains numerous towns and villages, but the chief city bears the name of CAMUL. The province lies between the two deserts; for on the one side is the Great Desert of Lop, and on the other side is a small desert of three days' journey in extent. The people are all Idolaters, and have a peculiar language. They live by the fruits of the earth, which they have in plenty, and dispose of to travellers. They are a people who take things very easily, for they mind nothing but playing and singing, and dancing and enjoying themselves. And it is the truth that if a foreigner comes to the house of one of these people to lodge, the host is delighted, and desires his wife to put herself entirely at the guest's disposal, whilst he himself gets out of the way, and comes back no more until the stranger shall have taken his departure. The guest may stay and enjoy the wife's society as long as he lists, whilst the husband has no shame in the matter, but indeed considers it an honour. And all the men of this province are made wittols of by their wives in this way. The women themselves are fair and wanton. Now it came to pass during the reign of MANGU KAAN, that as lord of this province he came to hear of this custom, and he sent forth an order commanding them under grievous penalties to do so no more [but to provide public hostleries for travellers]. And when they heard this order they were much vexed thereat. [For about three years' space they carried it out. But then they found that their lands were no longer fruitful, and that many mishaps befell them.] So they collected together and prepared a grand present which they sent to their Lord, praying him graciously to let them retain the custom which they had inherited from their ancestors; for it was by reason of this usage that their gods bestowed upon them all the good things that they possessed, and without it they saw not how they could continue to exist. When the Prince had heard their petition his reply was "Since ye must needs keep your shame, keep it then," and so he left them at liberty to maintain their naughty custom. And they always have kept it up, and do so still. Now let us quit Camul, and I will tell you of another province which lies between north-west and north, and belongs to the Great Kaan.

CHAPTER XLII.

OF THE PROVINCE OF CHINGINTALAS.

Chingintalas is also a province at the verge of the Desert, and lying between north-west and north. It has an extent of sixteen days' journey, and belongs to the Great Kaan, and contains numerous towns and villages. There are three different races of people in it--Idolaters, Saracens, and some Nestorian Christians. At the northern extremity of this province there is a mountain in which are excellent veins of steel and ondanique. And you must know that in the same mountain there is a vein of the substance from which Salamander is made. For the real truth is that the Salamander is no beast, as they allege in our part of the world, but is a substance found in the earth; and I will tell you about it. Everybody must be aware that it can be no animal's nature to live in fire, seeing that every animal is composed of all the four elements. Now I, Marco Polo, had a Turkish acquaintance of the name of Zurficar, and he was a very clever fellow. And this Turk related to Messer Marco Polo how he had lived three years in that region on behalf of the Great Kaan, in order to procure those Salamanders for him. He said that the way they got them was by digging in that mountain till they found a certain vein. The substance of this vein was then taken and crushed, and when so treated it divides as it were into fibres of wool, which they set forth to dry. When dry, these fibres were pounded in a great copper mortar, and then washed, so as to remove all the earth and to leave only the fibres like fibres of wool. These were then spun, and made into napkins. When first made these napkins are not very white, but by putting them into the fire for a while they come out as white as snow. And so again whenever they become dirty they are bleached by being put in the fire. Now this, and nought else, is the truth about the Salamander, and the people of the country all say the same. Any other account of the matter is fabulous nonsense. And I may add that they have at Rome a napkin of this stuff, which the Grand Kaan sent to the Pope to make a wrapper for the Holy Sudarium of Jesus

Christ. We will now quit this subject, and I will proceed with my account of the countries lying in the direction between north-east and east.

CHAPTER XLIII.

OF THE PROVINCE OF SUKCHUR.

On leaving the province of which I spoke before, you ride ten days between north-east and east, and in all that way you find no human dwelling, or next to none, so that there is nothing for our book to speak of. At the end of those ten days you come to another province called SUKCHUR, in which there are numerous towns and villages. The chief city is called SUKCHU. The people are partly Christians and partly Idolaters, and all are subject to the Great Kaan. The great General Province to which all these three provinces belong is called TANGUT. Over all the mountains of this province rhubarb is found in great abundance, and thither merchants come to buy it, and carry it thence all over the world. [Travellers, however, dare not visit those mountains with any cattle but those of the country, for a certain plant grows there which is so poisonous that cattle which eat it lose their hoofs. The cattle of the country know it and eschew it.] The people live by agriculture, and have not much trade. [They are of a brown complexion. The whole of the province is healthy.]

CHAPTER XLIV.

OF THE CITY OF CAMPICHU.

Campichu is also a city of Tangut, and a very great and noble one. Indeed it is the capital and place of government of the whole province of Tangut. The people are Idolaters, Saracens, and Christians, and the latter have three very fine churches in the city, whilst the Idolaters have many minsters and abbeys after their fashion. In these they have an enormous number of idols, both small and great, certain of the latter being a good ten paces in stature; some of them being of wood, others of clay, and others yet of stone. They are all highly polished, and then covered with gold. The great idols of which I speak lie at length. And round about them there are other figures of considerable size, as if adoring and paying homage before them. Now, as I have not yet given you particulars about the customs of these Idolaters, I will proceed to tell you about them. You must know that there are among them certain religious recluses who lead a more virtuous life than the rest. These abstain from all lechery, though they do not indeed regard it as a deadly sin; howbeit if any one sin against nature they condemn him to death. They have an Ecclesiastical Calendar as we have; and there are five days in the month that they observe particularly; and on these five days they would on no account either slaughter any animal or eat flesh meat. On those days, moreover, they observe much greater abstinence altogether than on other days. Among these people a man may take thirty wives, more or less, if he can but afford to do so, each having wives in proportion to his wealth and means; but the first wife is always held in highest consideration. The men endow their wives with cattle, slaves, and money, according to their ability. And if a man dislikes any one of his wives, he just turns her off and takes another. They take to wife their cousins and their fathers' widows (always excepting the man's own mother), holding to be no sin many things that we think grievous sins, and, in short, they live like beasts. Messer Maffeo and Messer Marco Polo dwelt a whole year in this city when on a mission. Now we will leave this and tell you about other provinces towards the north, for we are going to take you a sixty days' journey in that direction.

CHAPTER XLV.

OF THE CITY OF ETZINA.

When you leave the city of Campichu you ride for twelve days, and then reach a city called ETZINA, which is towards the north on the verge of the Sandy Desert; it belongs to the Province of Tangut. The people are Idolaters, and possess plenty of camels and cattle, and the country produces a number of good falcons, both Sakers and Lanners. The inhabitants live by their cultivation and their cattle, for they have no trade. At this city

you must needs lay in victuals for forty days, because when you quit Etzina, you enter on a desert which extends forty days' journey to the north, and on which you meet with no habitation nor baiting-place. In the summer-time, indeed, you will fall in with people, but in the winter the cold is too great. You also meet with wild beasts (for there are some small pine-woods here and there), and with numbers of wild asses. When you have travelled these forty days across the Desert you come to a certain province lying to the north. Its name you shall hear presently.

CHAPTER XLVI.

OF THE CITY OF CARACORON.

Caracoron is a city of some three miles in compass. [It is surrounded by a strong earthen rampart, for stone is scarce there. And beside it there is a great citadel wherein is a fine palace in which the Governor resides.] 'Tis the first city that the Tartars possessed after they issued from their own country. And now I will tell you all about how they first acquired dominion and spread over the world. Originally the Tartars dwelt in the north on the borders of CHORCHA. Their country was one of great plains; and there were no towns or villages in it, but excellent pasture-lands, with great rivers and many sheets of water; in fact it was a very fine and extensive region. But there was no sovereign in the land. They did, however, pay tax and tribute to a great prince who was called in their tongue UNC CAN, the same that we call Prester John, him in fact about whose great dominion all the world talks. The tribute he had of them was one beast out of every ten, and also a tithe of all their other gear. Now it came to pass that the Tartars multiplied exceedingly. And when Prester John saw how great a people they had become, he began to fear that he should have trouble from them. So he made a scheme to distribute them over sundry countries, and sent one of his Barons to carry this out. When the Tartars became aware of this they took it much amiss, and with one consent they left their country and went off across a desert to a distant region towards the north, where Prester John could not get at them to annoy them. Thus they revolted from his authority and paid him tribute no longer. And so things continued for a time.

CHAPTER XLVII.

OF CHINGHIS, AND HOW HE BECAME THE FIRST KAAAN OF THE TARTARS.

Now it came to pass in the year of Christ's Incarnation 1187 that the Tartars made them a King whose name was CHINGHIS KAAAN. He was a man of great worth, and of great ability (eloquence), and valour. And as soon as the news that he had been chosen King was spread abroad through those countries, all the Tartars in the world came to him and owned him for their Lord. And right well did he maintain the Sovereignty they had given him. What shall I say? The Tartars gathered to him in astonishing multitude, and when he saw such numbers he made a great furniture of spears and arrows and such other arms as they used, and set about the conquest of all those regions till he had conquered eight provinces. When he conquered a province he did no harm to the people or their property, but merely established some of his own men in the country along with a proportion of theirs, whilst he led the remainder to the conquest of other provinces. And when those whom he had conquered became aware how well and safely he protected them against all others, and how they suffered no ill at his hands, and saw what a noble prince he was, then they joined him heart and soul and became his devoted followers. And when he had thus gathered such a multitude that they seemed to cover the earth, he began to think of conquering a great part of the world. Now in the year of Christ 1200 he sent an embassy to Prester John, and desired to have his daughter to wife. But when Prester John heard that Chinghis Kaan demanded his daughter in marriage he waxed very wroth, and said to the Envoys, "What impudence is this, to ask my daughter to wife! Wist he not well that he was my liegeman and serf? Get ye back to him and tell him that I had liever set my daughter in the fire than give her in marriage to him, and that he deserves death at my hand, rebel and traitor that he is!" So he bade the Envoys begone at once, and never come into his presence again. The Envoys, on receiving this reply, departed straightway, and made haste to their master, and related all that Prester John had ordered them to say, keeping nothing back.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

HOW CHINGHIS MUSTERED HIS PEOPLE TO MARCH AGAINST PRESTER JOHN.

When Chinghis Kaan heard the brutal message that Prester John had sent him, such rage seized him that his heart came nigh to bursting within him, for he was a man of a very lofty spirit. At last he spoke, and that so loud that all who were present could hear him: "Never more might he be prince if he took not revenge for the brutal message of Prester John, and such revenge that insult never in this world was so dearly paid for. And before long Prester John should know whether he were his serf or no!" So then he mustered all his forces, and levied such a host as never before was seen or heard of, sending word to Prester John to be on his defence. And when Prester John had sure tidings that Chinghis was really coming against him with such a multitude, he still professed to treat it as a jest and a trifle, for, quoth he, "these be no soldiers." Natheless he marshalled his forces and mustered his people, and made great preparations, in order that if Chinghis did come, he might take him and put him to death. In fact he marshalled such an host of many different nations that it was a world's wonder. And so both sides gat them ready to battle. And why should I make a long story of it? Chinghis Kaan with all his host arrived at a vast and beautiful plain which was called Tanduc, belonging to Prester John, and there he pitched his camp; and so great was the multitude of his people that it was impossible to number them. And when he got tidings that Prester John was coming, he rejoiced greatly, for the place afforded a fine and ample battle-ground, so he was right glad to tarry for him there, and greatly longed for his arrival. But now leave we Chinghis and his host, and let us return to Prester John and his people.

CHAPTER XLIX.

HOW PRESTER JOHN MARCHED TO MEET CHINGHIS.

Now the story goes that when Prester John became aware that Chinghis with his host was marching against him, he went forth to meet him with all his forces, and advanced until he reached the same plain of Tanduc, and pitched his camp over against that of Chinghis Kaan at a distance of 20 miles. And then both armies remained at rest for two days that they might be fresher and heartier for battle. So when the two great hosts were pitched on the plains of Tanduc as you have heard, Chinghis Kaan one day summoned before him his astrologers, both Christians and Saracens, and desired them to let him know which of the two hosts would gain the battle, his own or Prester John's. The Saracens tried to ascertain, but were unable to give a true answer; the Christians, however, did give a true answer, and showed manifestly beforehand how the event should be. For they got a cane and split it lengthwise, and laid one half on this side and one half on that, allowing no one to touch the pieces. And one piece of cane they called Chinghis Kaan, and the other piece they called Prester John. And then they said to Chinghis: "Now mark! and you will see the event of the battle, and who shall have the best of it; for whose cane soever shall get above the other, to him shall victory be." He replied that he would fain see it, and bade them begin. Then the Christian astrologers read a Psalm out of the Psalter, and went through other incantations. And lo! whilst all were beholding, the cane that bore the name of Chinghis Kaan, without being touched by anybody, advanced to the other that bore the name of Prester John, and got on the top of it. When the Prince saw that he was greatly delighted, and seeing how in this matter he found the Christians to tell the truth, he always treated them with great respect, and held them for men of truth for ever after.

CHAPTER L.

THE BATTLE BETWEEN CHINGHIS KAAN AND PRESTER JOHN.

[Illustration: Death of Chinghiz Khan. (From a miniature in the Livre des Merveilles.)] And after both sides had rested well those two days, they armed for the fight and engaged in desperate combat; and it was the greatest battle that ever was seen. The numbers that were slain on both sides were very great, but in the end Chinghis Kaan obtained the victory. And in the battle Prester John was slain. And from that time forward, day by day, his kingdom passed into the hands of Chinghis Kaan till the whole was conquered. I may tell you that

Chinghis Kaan reigned six years after this battle, engaged continually in conquest, and taking many a province and city and stronghold. But at the end of those six years he went against a certain castle that was called CAAJU, and there he was shot with an arrow in the knee, so that he died of his wound. A great pity it was, for he was a valiant man and a wise. I will now tell you who reigned after Chinghis, and then about the manners and customs of the Tartars.

CHAPTER LI.

OF THOSE WHO DID REIGN AFTER CHINGHIS KAAAN, AND OF THE CUSTOMS OF THE TARTARS.

Now the next that reigned after Chinghis Kaan, their first Lord, was CUY KAAAN, and the third Prince was BATUY KAAAN, and the fourth was ALACOU KAAAN, the fifth MONGOU KAAAN, the sixth CUBLAY KAAAN, who is the sovereign now reigning, and is more potent than any of the five who went before him; in fact, if you were to take all those five together, they would not be so powerful as he is. Nay, I will say yet more; for if you were to put together all the Christians in the world, with their Emperors and their Kings, the whole of these Christians,--aye, and throw in the Saracens to boot,--would not have such power, or be able to do so much as this Cublay, who is the Lord of all the Tartars in the world, those of the Levant and of the Ponent included; for these are all his liegemen and subjects. I mean to show you all about this great power of his in this book of ours. You should be told also that all the Grand Kaans, and all the descendants of Chinghis their first Lord, are carried to a mountain that is called ALTAY to be interred. Wheresoever the Sovereign may die, he is carried to his burial in that mountain with his predecessors; no matter an the place of his death were 100 days' journey distant, thither must he be carried to his burial. Let me tell you a strange thing too. When they are carrying the body of any Emperor to be buried with the others, the convoy that goes with the body doth put to the sword all whom they fall in with on the road, saying: "Go and wait upon your Lord in the other world!" For they do in sooth believe that all such as they slay in this manner do go to serve their Lord in the other world. They do the same too with horses; for when the Emperor dies, they kill all his best horses, in order that he may have the use of them in the other world, as they believe. And I tell you as a certain truth, that when Mongou Kaan died, more than 20,000 persons, who chanced to meet the body on its way, were slain in the manner I have told.

CHAPTER LII.

CONCERNING THE CUSTOMS OF THE TARTARS.

Now that we have begun to speak of the Tartars, I have plenty to tell you on that subject. The Tartar custom is to spend the winter in warm plains, where they find good pasture for their cattle, whilst in summer they betake themselves to a cool climate among the mountains and valleys, where water is to be found as well as woods and pastures. Their houses are circular, and are made of wands covered with felts. These are carried along with them whithersoever they go; for the wands are so strongly bound together, and likewise so well combined, that the frame can be made very light. Whenever they erect these huts the door is always to the south. They also have waggons covered with black felt so efficaciously that no rain can get in. These are drawn by oxen and camels, and the women and children travel in them. The women do the buying and selling, and whatever is necessary to provide for the husband and household; for the men all lead the life of gentlemen, troubling themselves about nothing but hunting and hawking, and looking after their goshawks and falcons, unless it be the practice of warlike exercises. They live on the milk and meat which their herds supply, and on the produce of the chase; and they eat all kinds of flesh, including that of horses and dogs, and Pharaoh's rats, of which last there are great numbers in burrows on those plains. Their drink is mare's milk. They are very careful not to meddle with each other's wives, and will not do so on any account, holding that to be an evil and abominable thing. The women too are very good and loyal to their husbands, and notable housewives withal. [Ten or twenty of them will dwell together in charming peace and unity, nor shall you ever hear an ill word among them.] The marriage customs of Tartars are as follows. Any man may take a hundred wives an he so please, and if he be able to keep them. But the first wife is ever held most in honour, and as the most legitimate [and the same

applies to the sons whom she may bear]. The husband gives a marriage payment to his wife's mother, and the wife brings nothing to her husband. They have more children than other people, because they have so many wives. They may marry their cousins, and if a father dies, his son may take any of the wives, his own mother always excepted; that is to say the eldest son may do this, but no other. A man may also take the wife of his own brother after the latter's death. Their weddings are celebrated with great ado.

CHAPTER LIII.

CONCERNING THE GOD OF THE TARTARS.

This is the fashion of their religion. [They say there is a Most High God of Heaven, whom they worship daily with thurible and incense, but they pray to Him only for health of mind and body. But] they have [also] a certain [other] god of theirs called NATIGAY, and they say he is the god of the Earth, who watches over their children, cattle, and crops. They show him great worship and honour, and every man hath a figure of him in his house, made of felt and cloth; and they also make in the same manner images of his wife and children. The wife they put on the left hand, and the children in front. And when they eat, they take the fat of the meat and grease the god's mouth withal, as well as the mouths of his wife and children. Then they take of the broth and sprinkle it before the door of the house; and that done, they deem that their god and his family have had their share of the dinner. Their drink is mare's milk, prepared in such a way that you would take it for white wine; and a right good drink it is, called by them Kemiz. The clothes of the wealthy Tartars are for the most part of gold and silk stuffs, lined with costly furs, such as sable and ermine, vair and fox-skin, in the richest fashion.

CHAPTER LIV.

CONCERNING THE TARTAR CUSTOMS OF WAR.

All their harness of war is excellent and costly. Their arms are bows and arrows, sword and mace; but above all the bow, for they are capital archers, indeed the best that are known. On their backs they wear armour of cuirbouly, prepared from buffalo and other hides, which is very strong. They are excellent soldiers, and passing valiant in battle. They are also more capable of hardships than other nations; for many a time, if need be, they will go for a month without any supply of food, living only on the milk of their mares and on such game as their bows may win them. Their horses also will subsist entirely on the grass of the plains, so that there is no need to carry store of barley or straw or oats; and they are very docile to their riders. These, in case of need, will abide on horseback the livelong night, armed at all points, while the horse will be continually grazing. Of all troops in the world these are they which endure the greatest hardship and fatigue, and which cost the least; and they are the best of all for making wide conquests of country. And this you will perceive from what you have heard and shall hear in this book; and (as a fact) there can be no manner of doubt that now they are the masters of the biggest half of the world. Their troops are admirably ordered in the manner that I shall now relate. You see, when a Tartar prince goes forth to war, he takes with him, say, 100,000 horse. Well, he appoints an officer to every ten men, one to every hundred, one to every thousand, and one to every ten thousand, so that his own orders have to be given to ten persons only, and each of these ten persons has to pass the orders only to other ten, and so on; no one having to give orders to more than ten. And every one in turn is responsible only to the officer immediately over him; and the discipline and order that comes of this method is marvellous, for they are a people very obedient to their chiefs. Further, they call the corps of 100,000 men a Tuc; that of 10,000 they call a Toman; the thousand they call...; the hundred Guz; the ten... And when the army is on the march they have always 200 horsemen, very well mounted, who are sent a distance of two marches in advance to reconnoitre, and these always keep ahead. They have a similar party detached in the rear, and on either flank, so that there is a good look-out kept on all sides against a surprise. When they are going on a distant expedition they take no gear with them except two leather bottles for milk; a little earthenware pot to cook their meat in, and a little tent to shelter them from rain. And in case of great urgency they will ride ten days on end without lighting a fire or taking a meal. On such an occasion they will sustain themselves on the blood of their horses, opening a vein and letting the blood jet into their mouths, drinking till they have had enough, and then

staunching it. They also have milk dried into a kind of paste to carry with them; and when they need food they put this in water, and beat it up till it dissolves, and then drink it. [It is prepared in this way; they boil the milk, and when the rich part floats on the top they skim it into another vessel, and of that they make butter; for the milk will not become solid till this is removed. Then they put the milk in the sun to dry. And when they go on an expedition, every man takes some ten pounds of this dried milk with him. And of a morning he will take a half pound of it and put it in his leather bottle, with as much water as he pleases. So, as he rides along, the milk-paste and the water in the bottle get well churned together into a kind of pap, and that makes his dinner.] When they come to an engagement with the enemy, they will gain the victory in this fashion. [They never let themselves get into a regular medley, but keep perpetually riding round and shooting into the enemy. And] as they do not count it any shame to run away in battle, they will [sometimes pretend to] do so, and in running away they turn in the saddle and shoot hard and strong at the foe, and in this way make great havoc. Their horses are trained so perfectly that they will double hither and thither, just like a dog, in a way that is quite astonishing. Thus they fight to as good purpose in running away as if they stood and faced the enemy, because of the vast volleys of arrows that they shoot in this way, turning round upon their pursuers, who are fancying that they have won the battle. But when the Tartars see that they have killed and wounded a good many horses and men, they wheel round bodily, and return to the charge in perfect order and with loud cries; and in a very short time the enemy are routed. In truth they are stout and valiant soldiers, and inured to war. And you perceive that it is just when the enemy sees them run, and imagines that he has gained the battle, that he has in reality lost it; for the Tartars wheel round in a moment when they judge the right time has come. And after this fashion they have won many a fight. All this that I have been telling you is true of the manners and customs of the genuine Tartars. But I must add also that in these days they are greatly degenerated; for those who are settled in Cathay have taken up the practices of the Idolaters of the country, and have abandoned their own institutions; whilst those who have settled in the Levant have adopted the customs of the Saracens.

CHAPTER LV.

CONCERNING THE ADMINISTERING OF JUSTICE AMONG THE TARTARS.

The way they administer justice is this. When any one has committed a petty theft, they give him, under the orders of authority, seven blows of a stick, or seventeen, or twenty-seven, or thirty-seven, or forty-seven, and so forth, always increasing by tens in proportion to the injury done, and running up to one hundred and seven. Of these beatings sometimes they die. But if the offence be horse-stealing, or some other great matter, they cut the thief in two with a sword. Howbeit, if he be able to ransom himself by paying nine times the value of the thing stolen, he is let off. Every Lord or other person who possesses beasts has them marked with his peculiar brand, be they horses, mares, camels, oxen, cows, or other great cattle, and then they are sent abroad to graze over the plains without any keeper. They get all mixt together, but eventually every beast is recovered by means of its owner's brand, which is known. For their sheep and goats they have shepherds. All their cattle are remarkably fine, big, and in good condition. They have another notable custom, which is this. If any man have a daughter who dies before marriage, and another man have had a son also die before marriage, the parents of the two arrange a grand wedding between the dead lad and lass. And marry them they do, making a regular contract! And when the contract papers are made out they put them in the fire, in order (as they will have it) that the parties in the other world may know the fact, and so look on each other as man and wife. And the parents thenceforward consider themselves sib to each other, just as if their children had lived and married. Whatever may be agreed on between the parties as dowry, those who have to pay it cause to be painted on pieces of paper and then put these in the fire, saying that in that way the dead person will get all the real articles in the other world. Now I have told you all about the manners and customs of the Tartars; but you have heard nothing yet of the great state of the Grand Kaan, who is the Lord of all the Tartars and of the Supreme Imperial Court. All that I will tell you in this book in proper time and place, but meanwhile I must return to my story which I left off in that great plain when we began to speak of the Tartars.

CHAPTER LVI.

SUNDRY PARTICULARS OF THE PLAIN BEYOND CARACORON.

And when you leave Caracoron and the Altay, in which they bury the bodies of the Tartar Sovereigns, as I told you, you go north for forty days till you reach a country called the PLAIN OF BARGU. The people there are called MESCRIP; they are a very wild race, and live by their cattle, the most of which are stags, and these stags, I assure you, they used to ride upon. Their customs are like those of the Tartars, and they are subject to the Great Kaan. They have neither corn nor wine. [They get birds for food, for the country is full of lakes and pools and marshes, which are much frequented by the birds when they are moulting, and when they have quite cast their feathers and can't fly, those people catch them. They also live partly on fish.] And when you have travelled forty days over this great plain you come to the ocean, at the place where the mountains are in which the Peregrine falcons have their nests. And in those mountains it is so cold that you find neither man or woman, nor beast nor bird, except one kind of bird called _Barguerlac_, on which the falcons feed. They are as big as partridges, and have feet like those of parrots and a tail like a swallow's, and are very strong in flight. And when the Grand Kaan wants Peregrines from the nest, he sends thither to procure them. It is also on islands in that sea that the Gerfalcons are bred. You must know that the place is so far to the north that you leave the North Star somewhat behind you towards the south! The gerfalcons are so abundant there that the Emperor can have as many as he likes to send for. And you must not suppose that those gerfalcons which the Christians carry into the Tartar dominions go to the Great Kaan; they are carried only to the Prince of the Levant. Now I have told you all about the provinces northward as far as the Ocean Sea, beyond which there is no more land at all; so I shall proceed to tell you of the other provinces on the way to the Great Kaan. Let us, then, return to that province of which I spoke before, called Campichu.

CHAPTER LVII.

OF THE KINGDOM OF ERGUIUL, AND PROVINCE OF SINJU.

On leaving Campichu, then, you travel five days across a tract in which many spirits are heard speaking in the night season; and at the end of those five marches, towards the east, you come to a kingdom called ERGUIUL, belonging to the Great Kaan. It is one of the several kingdoms which make up the great Province of Tangut. The people consist of Nestorian Christians, Idolaters, and worshippers of Mahommet. There are plenty of cities in this kingdom, but the capital is ERGUIUL. You can travel in a south-easterly direction from this place into the province of Cathay. Should you follow that road to the south-east, you come to a city called SINJU, belonging also to Tangut, and subject to the Great Kaan, which has under it many towns and villages. The population is composed of Idolaters, and worshippers of Mahommet, but there are some Christians also. There are wild cattle in that country [almost] as big as elephants, splendid creatures, covered everywhere but on the back with shaggy hair a good four palms long. They are partly black, partly white, and really wonderfully fine creatures [and the hair or wool is extremely fine and white, finer and whiter than silk. Messer Marco brought some to Venice as a great curiosity, and so it was reckoned by those who saw it]. There are also plenty of them tame, which have been caught young. [They also cross these with the common cow, and the cattle from this cross are wonderful beasts, and better for work than other animals.] These the people use commonly for burden and general work, and in the plough as well; and at the latter they will do full twice as much work as any other cattle, being such very strong beasts. In this country too is found the best musk in the world; and I will tell you how 'tis produced. There exists in that region a kind of wild animal like a gazelle. It has feet and tail like the gazelle's, and stag's hair of a very coarse kind, but no horns. It has four tusks, two below and two above, about three inches long, and slender in form, one pair growing upwards, and the other downwards. It is a very pretty creature. The musk is found in this way. When the creature has been taken, they find at the navel between the flesh and the skin something like an impostume full of blood, which they cut out and remove with all the skin attached to it. And the blood inside this impostume is the musk that produces that powerful perfume. There is an immense number of these beasts in the country we are speaking of. [The flesh is very good to eat. Messer Marco brought the dried head and feet of one of these animals to Venice with him.] The people are traders and artizans, and also grow abundance of corn. The province has an extent of 26 days' journey. Pheasants are found there twice as big as ours, indeed nearly as big as a peacock, and having tails of 7 to 10 palms in length; and besides them other

pheasants in aspect like our own, and birds of many other kinds, and of beautiful variegated plumage. The people, who are Idolaters, are fat folks with little noses and black hair, and no beard, except a few hairs on the upper lip. The women too have very smooth and white skins, and in every respect are pretty creatures. The men are very sensual, and marry many wives, which is not forbidden by their religion. No matter how base a woman's descent may be, if she have beauty she may find a husband among the greatest men in the land, the man paying the girl's father and mother a great sum of money, according to the bargain that may be made.

CHAPTER LVIII.

OF THE KINGDOM OF EGRIGAIA.

Starting again from Erguiul you ride eastward for eight days, and then come to a province called EGRIGAIA, containing numerous cities and villages, and belonging to Tangut. The capital city is called CALACHAN. The people are chiefly Idolaters, but there are fine churches belonging to the Nestorian Christians. They are all subjects of the Great Kaan. They make in this city great quantities of camlets of camel's wool, the finest in the world; and some of the camlets that they make are white, for they have white camels, and these are the best of all. Merchants purchase these stuffs here, and carry them over the world for sale. We shall now proceed eastward from this place and enter the territory that was formerly Prester John's.

CHAPTER LIX.

CONCERNING THE PROVINCE OF TENDUC, AND THE DESCENDANTS OF PRESTER JOHN.

Tenduc is a province which lies towards the east, and contains numerous towns and villages; among which is the chief city, also called TENDUC. The king of the province is of the lineage of Prester John, George by name, and he holds the land under the Great Kaan; not that he holds anything like the whole of what Prester John possessed. It is a custom, I may tell you, that these kings of the lineage of Prester John always obtain to wife either daughters of the Great Kaan or other princesses of his family. In this province is found the stone from which Azure is made. It is obtained from a kind of vein in the earth, and is of very fine quality. There is also a great manufacture of fine camlets of different colours from camel's hair. The people get their living by their cattle and tillage, as well as by trade and handicraft. The rule of the province is in the hands of the Christians, as I have told you; but there are also plenty of Idolaters and worshippers of Mahommet. And there is also here a class of people called Argons, which is as much as to say in French Guasmul, or, in other words, sprung from two different races: to wit, of the race of the Idolaters of Tenduc and of that of the worshippers of Mahommet. They are handsomer men than the other natives of the country, and having more ability, they come to have authority; and they are also capital merchants. You must know that it was in this same capital city of Tenduc that Prester John had the seat of his government when he ruled over the Tartars, and his heirs still abide there; for, as I have told you, this King George is of his line, in fact, he is the sixth in descent from Prester John. Here also is what we call the country of GOG and MAGOG; they, however, call it UNG and MUNGUL, after the names of two races of people that existed in that Province before the migration of the Tartars. Ung was the title of the people of the country, and Mungul a name sometimes applied to the Tartars. And when you have ridden seven days eastward through this province you get near the provinces of Cathay. You find throughout those seven days' journey plenty of towns and villages, the inhabitants of which are Mahommetans, but with a mixture also of Idolaters and Nestorian Christians. They get their living by trade and manufactures; weaving those fine cloths of gold which are called Nasich and Naques, besides silk stuffs of many other kinds. For just as we have cloths of wool in our country, manufactured in a great variety of kinds, so in those regions they have stuffs of silk and gold in like variety. All this region is subject to the Great Kaan. There is a city you come to called SINDACHU, where they carry on a great many crafts such as provide for the equipment of the Emperor's troops. In a mountain of the province there is a very good silver mine, from which much silver is got: the place is called YDIFU. The country is well stocked with game, both beast and bird. Now we will quit that province and go three days' journey forward.

CHAPTER LX.

CONCERNING THE KAAAN'S PALACE OF CHAGANNOR.

At the end of those three days you find a city called CHAGAN NOR [which is as much as to say White Pool], at which there is a great Palace of the Grand Kaan's; and he likes much to reside there on account of the Lakes and Rivers in the neighbourhood, which are the haunt of swans and of a great variety of other birds. The adjoining plains too abound with cranes, partridges, pheasants, and other game birds, so that the Emperor takes all the more delight in staying there, in order to go a-hawking with his gerfalcons and other falcons, a sport of which he is very fond. There are five different kinds of cranes found in those tracts, as I shall tell you. First, there is one which is very big, and all over as black as a crow; the second kind again is all white, and is the biggest of all; its wings are really beautiful, for they are adorned with round eyes like those of a peacock, but of a resplendent golden colour, whilst the head is red and black on a white ground. The third kind is the same as ours. The fourth is a small kind, having at the ears beautiful long pendent feathers of red and black. The fifth kind is grey all over and of great size, with a handsome head, red and black. Near this city there is a valley in which the Emperor has had several little houses erected in which he keeps in mew a huge number of cators which are what we call the Great Partridge. You would be astonished to see what a quantity there are, with men to take charge of them. So whenever the Kaan visits the place he is furnished with as many as he wants.

CHAPTER LXI.

OF THE CITY OF CHANDU, AND THE KAAAN'S PALACE THERE.

And when you have ridden three days from the city last mentioned, between north-east and north, you come to a city called CHANDU, which was built by the Kaan now reigning. There is at this place a very fine marble Palace, the rooms of which are all gilt and painted with figures of men and beasts and birds, and with a variety of trees and flowers, all executed with such exquisite art that you regard them with delight and astonishment. Round this Palace a wall is built, inclosing a compass of 16 miles, and inside the Park there are fountains and rivers and brooks, and beautiful meadows, with all kinds of wild animals (excluding such as are of ferocious nature), which the Emperor has procured and placed there to supply food for his gerfalcons and hawks, which he keeps there in mew. Of these there are more than 200 gerfalcons alone, without reckoning the other hawks. The Kaan himself goes every week to see his birds sitting in mew, and sometimes he rides through the park with a leopard behind him on his horse's croup; and then if he sees any animal that takes his fancy, he slips his leopard at it, and the game when taken is made over to feed the hawks in mew. This he does for diversion. Moreover [at a spot in the Park where there is a charming wood] he has another Palace built of cane, of which I must give you a description. It is gilt all over, and most elaborately finished inside. [It is stayed on gilt and lathered columns, on each of which is a dragon all gilt, the tail of which is attached to the column whilst the head supports the architrave, and the claws likewise are stretched out right and left to support the architrave.] The roof, like the rest, is formed of canes, covered with a varnish so strong and excellent that no amount of rain will rot them. These canes are a good 3 palms in girth, and from 10 to 15 paces in length. [They are cut across at each knot, and then the pieces are split so as to form from each two hollow tiles, and with these the house is roofed; only every such tile of cane has to be nailed down to prevent the wind from lifting it.] In short, the whole Palace is built of these canes, which (I may mention) serve also for a great variety of other useful purposes. The construction of the Palace is so devised that it can be taken down and put up again with great celerity; and it can all be taken to pieces and removed whithersoever the Emperor may command. When erected, it is braced [against mishaps from the wind] by more than 200 cords of silk. The Lord abides at this Park of his, dwelling sometimes in the Marble Palace and sometimes in the Cane Palace for three months of the year, to wit, June, July, and August; preferring this residence because it is by no means hot; in fact it is a very cool place. When the 28th day of [the Moon of] August arrives he takes his departure, and the Cane Palace is taken to pieces. But I must tell you what happens when he goes away from this Palace every year on the 28th of the August [Moon]. You must know that the Kaan keeps an immense stud of white horses and mares; in fact more than 10,000 of them, and all pure white without a speck. The milk of these mares is drunk by himself and

his family, and by none else, except by those of one great tribe that have also the privilege of drinking it. This privilege was granted them by Chinghis Kaan, on account of a certain victory that they helped him to win long ago. The name of the tribe is HORIAD. Now when these mares are passing across the country, and any one falls in with them, be he the greatest lord in the land, he must not presume to pass until the mares have gone by; he must either tarry where he is, or go a half-day's journey round if need so be, so as not to come nigh them; for they are to be treated with the greatest respect. Well, when the Lord sets out from the Park on the 28th of August, as I told you, the milk of all those mares is taken and sprinkled on the ground. And this is done on the injunction of the Idolaters and Idol-priests, who say that it is an excellent thing to sprinkle that milk on the ground every 28th of August, so that the Earth and the Air and the False Gods shall have their share of it, and the Spirits likewise that inhabit the Air and the Earth. And thus those beings will protect and bless the Kaan and his children and his wives and his folk and his gear, and his cattle and his horses, his corn and all that is his. After this is done, the Emperor is off and away. But I must now tell you a strange thing that hitherto I have forgotten to mention. During the three months of every year that the Lord resides at that place, if it should happen to be bad weather, there are certain crafty enchanters and astrologers in his train, who are such adepts in necromancy and the diabolic arts, that they are able to prevent any cloud or storm from passing over the spot on which the Emperor's Palace stands. The sorcerers who do this are called TEBET and KESIMUR, which are the names of two nations of Idolaters. Whatever they do in this way is by the help of the Devil, but they make those people believe that it is compassed by dint of their own sanctity and the help of God. [They always go in a state of dirt and uncleanness, devoid of respect for themselves, or for those who see them, unwashed, unkempt, and sordidly attired.] These people also have a custom which I must tell you. If a man is condemned to death and executed by the lawful authority, they take his body and cook and eat it. But if any one die a natural death then they will not eat the body. There is another marvel performed by those BACSI, of whom I have been speaking as knowing so many enchantments. For when the Great Kaan is at his capital and in his great Palace, seated at his table, which stands on a platform some eight cubits above the ground, his cups are set before him [on a great buffet] in the middle of the hall pavement, at a distance of some ten paces from his table, and filled with wine, or other good spiced liquor such as they use. Now when the Lord desires to drink, these enchanters by the power of their enchantments cause the cups to move from their place without being touched by anybody, and to present themselves to the Emperor! This every one present may witness, and there are oftentimes more than 10,000 persons thus present. 'Tis a truth and no lie! and so will tell you the sages of our own country who understand necromancy, for they also can perform it. And when the Idol Festivals come round, these Bacsi go to the Prince and say: "Sire, the Feast of such a god is come" (naming him). "My Lord, you know," the enchanter will say, "that this god, when he gets no offerings, always sends bad weather and spoils our seasons. So we pray you to give us such and such a number of black-faced sheep," naming whatever number they please. "And we beg also, good my lord, that we may have such a quantity of incense, and such a quantity of linaloes, and"--so much of this, so much of that, and so much of t'other, according to their fancy--"that we may perform a solemn service and a great sacrifice to our Idols, and that so they may be induced to protect us and all that is ours." The Bacsi say these things to the Barons entrusted with the Stewardship, who stand round the Great Kaan, and these repeat them to the Kaan, and he then orders the Barons to give everything that the Bacsi have asked for. And when they have got the articles they go and make a great feast in honour of their god, and hold great ceremonies of worship with grand illuminations and quantities of incense of a variety of odours, which they make up from different aromatic spices. And then they cook the meat, and set it before the idols, and sprinkle the broth hither and thither, saying that in this way the idols get their bellyful. Thus it is that they keep their festivals. You must know that each of the idols has a name of his own, and a feast-day, just as our Saints have their anniversaries. They have also immense Minsters and Abbeys, some of them as big as a small town, with more than two thousand monks (i.e. after their fashion) in a single abbey. These monks dress more decently than the rest of the people, and have the head and beard shaven. There are some among these Bacsi who are allowed by their rule to take wives, and who have plenty of children. Then there is another kind of devotees called SENSIN, who are men of extraordinary abstinence after their fashion, and lead a life of such hardship as I will describe. All their life long they eat nothing but bran, which they take mixt with hot water. That is their food: bran, and nothing but bran; and water for their drink. 'Tis a lifelong fast! so that I may well say their life is one of extraordinary asceticism. They have great idols, and plenty of them; but they sometimes also worship fire. The other Idolaters who are not of this sect call these people heretics-- Patarins as we should

say--because they do not worship their idols in their own fashion. Those of whom I am speaking would not take a wife on any consideration. They wear dresses of hempen stuff, black and blue, and sleep upon mats; in fact their asceticism is something astonishing. Their idols are all feminine, that is to say, they have women's names. Now let us have done with this subject, and let me tell you of the great state and wonderful magnificence of the Great Lord of Lords; I mean that great Prince who is the Sovereign of the Tartars, CUBLAY by name, that most noble and puissant Lord.

BOOK SECOND.

(1.) ACCOUNT OF THE GREAT KAAAN CUBLAY; OF HIS PALACES AND CAPITAL; HIS COURT, GOVERNMENT, AND SPORTS.

(2.) CITIES AND PROVINCES VISITED BY THE TRAVELLER ON ONE JOURNEY WESTWARD FROM THE CAPITAL TO THE FRONTIERS OF MIEN IN THE DIRECTION OF INDIA.

(3.) AND ON ANOTHER SOUTHWARD FROM THE CAPITAL TO FUCHU AND ZAYTON.

BOOK II. PART I.--THE KAAAN, HIS COURT AND CAPITAL.

CHAPTER I.

OF CUBLAY KAAAN, THE GREAT KAAAN NOW REIGNING, AND OF HIS GREAT PUISSANCE.

Now am I come to that part of our Book in which I shall tell you of the great and wonderful magnificence of the Great Kaan now reigning, by name CUBLAY KAAAN; _Kaan_ being a title which signifyeth "The Great Lord of Lords," or Emperor. And of a surety he hath good right to such a title, for all men know for a certain truth that he is the most potent man, as regards forces and lands and treasure, that existeth in the world, or ever hath existed from the time of our First Father Adam until this day. All this I will make clear to you for truth, in this book of ours, so that every one shall be fain to acknowledge that he is the greatest Lord that is now in the world, or ever hath been. And now ye shall hear how and wherefore.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE REVOLT OF NAYAN, WHO WAS UNCLE TO THE GREAT KAAAN CUBLAY.

Now this Cublay Kaan is of the right Imperial lineage, being descended from Chinghis Kaan, the first sovereign of all the Tartars. And he is the sixth Lord in that succession, as I have already told you in this book. He came to the throne in the year of Christ, 1256, and the Empire fell to him because of his ability and valour and great worth, as was right and reason. His brothers, indeed, and other kinsmen disputed his claim, but his it remained, both because maintained by his great valour, and because it was in law and right his, as being directly sprung of the imperial line. Up to the year of Christ now running, to wit 1298, he hath reigned two-and-forty years, and his age is about eighty-five, so that he must have been about forty-three years of age when he first came to the throne. Before that time he had often been to the wars, and had shown himself a gallant soldier and an excellent captain. But after coming to the throne he never went to the wars in person save once. This befel in the year of Christ, 1286, and I will tell you why he went. There was a great Tartar Chief, whose name was NAYAN, a young man [of thirty], Lord over many lands and many provinces; and he was Uncle to the Emperor Cublay Kaan of whom we are speaking. And when he found himself in authority this Nayan waxed proud in the insolence of his youth and his great power; for indeed he could bring into the field 300,000 horsemen, though all the time he was liegeman to his nephew, the Great Kaan Cublay, as was right and reason. Seeing then what great power he had, he took it into his head that he would be the Great Kaan's vassal no longer; nay more, he would fain wrest his empire from him if he could. So this Nayan sent envoys to another Tartar Prince called CAIDU, also a great and potent Lord, who was a kinsman of his, and who was a nephew of the Great Kaan and

his lawful liegeman also, though he was in rebellion and at bitter enmity with his sovereign Lord and Uncle. Now the message that Nayan sent was this: That he himself was making ready to march against the Great Kaan with all his forces (which were great), and he begged Caidu to do likewise from his side, so that by attacking Cublay on two sides at once with such great forces they would be able to wrest his dominion from him. And when Caidu heard the message of Nayan, he was right glad thereat, and thought the time was come at last to gain his object. So he sent back answer that he would do as requested; and got ready his host, which mustered a good hundred thousand horsemen. Now let us go back to the Great Kaan, who had news of all this plot.

CHAPTER III.

HOW THE GREAT KAAAN MARCHED AGAINST NAYAN.

When the Great Kaan heard what was afoot, he made his preparations in right good heart, like one who feared not the issue of an attempt so contrary to justice. Confident in his own conduct and prowess, he was in no degree disturbed, but vowed that he would never wear crown again if he brought not those two traitorous and disloyal Tartar chiefs to an ill end. So swiftly and secretly were his preparations made, that no one knew of them but his Privy Council, and all were completed within ten or twelve days. In that time he had assembled good 360,000 horsemen, and 100,000 footmen,--but a small force indeed for him, and consisting only of those that were in the vicinity. For the rest of his vast and innumerable forces were too far off to answer so hasty a summons, being engaged under orders from him on distant expeditions to conquer divers countries and provinces. If he had waited to summon all his troops, the multitude assembled would have been beyond all belief, a multitude such as never was heard of or told of, past all counting. In fact, those 360,000 horsemen that he got together consisted merely of the falconers and whippers-in that were about the court! And when he had got ready this handful (as it were) of his troops, he ordered his astrologers to declare whether he should gain the battle and get the better of his enemies. After they had made their observations, they told him to go on boldly, for he would conquer and gain a glorious victory: whereat he greatly rejoiced. So he marched with his army, and after advancing for 20 days they arrived at a great plain where Nayan lay with all his host, amounting to some 400,000 horse. Now the Great Kaan's forces arrived so fast and so suddenly that the others knew nothing of the matter. For the Kaan had caused such strict watch to be made in every direction for scouts that every one that appeared was instantly captured. Thus Nayan had no warning of his coming and was completely taken by surprise; insomuch that when the Great Kaan's army came up, he was asleep in the arms of a wife of his of whom he was extravagantly fond. So thus you see why it was that the Emperor equipped his force with such speed and secrecy.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE BATTLE THAT THE GREAT KAAAN FOUGHT WITH NAYAN.

What shall I say about it? When day had well broken, there was the Kaan with all his host upon a hill overlooking the plain where Nayan lay in his tent, in all security, without the slightest thought of any one coming thither to do him hurt. In fact, this confidence of his was such that he kept no vedettes whether in front or in rear; for he knew nothing of the coming of the Great Kaan, owing to all the approaches having been completely occupied as I told you. Moreover, the place was in a remote wilderness, more than thirty marches from the Court, though the Kaan had made the distance in twenty, so eager was he to come to battle with Nayan. And what shall I tell you next? The Kaan was there on the hill, mounted on a great wooden bartizan, which was borne by four well-trained elephants, and over him was hoisted his standard, so high aloft that it could be seen from all sides. His troops were ordered in battles of 30,000 men apiece; and a great part of the horsemen had each a foot-soldier armed with a lance set on the crupper behind him (for it was thus that the footmen were disposed of); and the whole plain seemed to be covered with his forces. So it was thus that the Great Kaan's army was arrayed for battle. When Nayan and his people saw what had happened, they were sorely confounded, and rushed in haste to arms. Nevertheless they made them ready in good style and formed their troops in an orderly manner. And when all were in battle array on both sides as I have told you, and

nothing remained but to fall to blows, then might you have heard a sound arise of many instruments of various music, and of the voices of the whole of the two hosts loudly singing. For this is a custom of the Tartars, that before they join battle they all unite in singing and playing on a certain two-stringed instrument of theirs, a thing right pleasant to hear. And so they continue in their array of battle, singing and playing in this pleasing manner, until the great Naccara of the Prince is heard to sound. As soon as that begins to sound the fight also begins on both sides; and in no case before the Prince's Naccara sounds dare any commence fighting. So then, as they were thus singing and playing, though ordered and ready for battle, the great Naccara of the Great Khan began to sound. And that of Nayan also began to sound. And thenceforward the din of battle began to be heard loudly from this side and from that. And they rushed to work so doughtily with their bows and their maces, with their lances and swords, and with the arblasts of the footmen, that it was a wondrous sight to see. Now might you behold such flights of arrows from this side and from that, that the whole heaven was canopied with them and they fell like rain. Now might you see on this side and on that full many a cavalier and man-at-arms fall slain, insomuch that the whole field seemed covered with them. From this side and from that such cries arose from the crowds of the wounded and dying that had God thundered, you would not have heard Him! For fierce and furious was the battle, and quarter there was none given. But why should I make a long story of it? You must know that it was the most parlous and fierce and fearful battle that ever has been fought in our day. Nor have there ever been such forces in the field in actual fight, especially of horsemen, as were then engaged--for, taking both sides, there were not fewer than 760,000 horsemen, a mighty force! and that without reckoning the footmen, who were also very numerous. The battle endured with various fortune on this side and on that from morning till noon. But at the last, by God's pleasure and the right that was on his side, the Great Khan had the victory, and Nayan lost the battle and was utterly routed. For the army of the Great Kaan performed such feats of arms that Nayan and his host could stand against them no longer, so they turned and fled. But this availed nothing for Nayan; for he and all the barons with him were taken prisoners, and had to surrender to the Kaan with all their arms. Now you must know that Nayan was a baptized Christian, and bore the cross on his banner; but this nought availed him, seeing how grievously he had done amiss in rebelling against his Lord. For he was the Great Kaan's liegeman, and was bound to hold his lands of him like all his ancestors before him.

CHAPTER V.

HOW THE GREAT KAAH CAUSED NAYAN TO BE PUT TO DEATH.

And when the Great Kaan learned that Nayan was taken right glad was he, and commanded that he should be put to death straightway and in secret, lest endeavours should be made to obtain pity and pardon for him, because he was of the Kaan's own flesh and blood. And this was the way in which he was put to death: he was wrapt in a carpet, and tossed to and fro so mercilessly that he died. And the Kaan caused him to be put to death in this way because he would not have the blood of his Line Imperial spilt upon the ground or exposed in the eye of Heaven and before the Sun. And when the Great Kaan had gained this battle, as you have heard, all the Barons and people of Nayan's provinces renewed their fealty to the Kaan. Now these provinces that had been under the Lordship of Nayan were four in number; to wit, the first called CHORCHA; the second CAULY; the third BARSCOL; the fourth SIKINTINJU. Of all these four great provinces had Nayan been Lord; it was a very great dominion. And after the Great Kaan had conquered Nayan, as you have heard, it came to pass that the different kinds of people who were present, Saracens and Idolaters and Jews, and many others that believed not in God, did gibe those that were Christians because of the cross that Nayan had borne on his standard, and that so grievously that there was no bearing it. Thus they would say to the Christians: "See now what precious help this God's Cross of yours hath rendered Nayan, who was a Christian and a worshipper thereof." And such a din arose about the matter that it reached the Great Kaan's own ears. When it did so, he sharply rebuked those who cast these gibes at the Christians; and he also bade the Christians be of good heart, "for if the Cross had rendered no help to Nayan, in that It had done right well; nor could that which was good, as It was, have done otherwise; for Nayan was a disloyal and traitorous Rebel against his Lord, and well deserved that which had befallen him. Wherefore the Cross of your God did well in that It gave him no help against the right." And this he said so loud that everybody heard him. The Christians then replied to the Great Kaan: "Great King, you say the truth indeed, for our Cross can render no one help in wrong-doing; and therefore it was that It aided not

Nayan, who was guilty of crime and disloyalty, for It would take no part in his evil deeds." And so thenceforward no more was heard of the floutings of the unbelievers against the Christians; for they heard very well what the Sovereign said to the latter about the Cross on Nayan's banner, and its giving him no help.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW THE GREAT KAAAN WENT BACK TO THE CITY OF CAMBALUC.

And after the Great Kaan had defeated Nayan in the way you have heard, he went back to his capital city of Cambaluc and abode there, taking his ease and making festivity. And the other Tartar Lord called Caydu was greatly troubled when he heard of the defeat and death of Nayan, and held himself in readiness for war; but he stood greatly in fear of being handled as Nayan had been. I told you that the Great Kaan never went on a campaign but once, and it was on this occasion; in all other cases of need he sent his sons or his barons into the field. But this time he would have none go in command but himself, for he regarded the presumptuous rebellion of Nayan as far too serious and perilous an affair to be otherwise dealt with.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW THE KAAAN REWARDED THE VALOUR OF HIS CAPTAINS.

So we will have done with this matter of Nayan, and go on with our account of the great state of the Great Kaan. We have already told you of his lineage and of his age; but now I must tell you what he did after his return, in regard to those barons who had behaved well in the battle. Him who was before captain of 100 he made captain of 1000; and him who was captain of 1000 men he made to be captain of 10,000, advancing every man according to his deserts and to his previous rank. Besides that, he also made them presents of fine silver plate and other rich appointments; gave them Tablets of Authority of a higher degree than they held before; and bestowed upon them fine jewels of gold and silver, and pearls and precious stones; insomuch that the amount that fell to each of them was something astonishing. And yet 'twas not so much as they had deserved; for never were men seen who did such feats of arms for the love and honour of their Lord, as these had done on that day of the battle. Now those Tablets of Authority, of which I have spoken, are ordered in this way. The officer who is a captain of 100 hath a tablet of silver; the captain of 1000 hath a tablet of gold or silver-gilt; the commander of 10,000 hath a tablet of gold, with a lion's head on it. And I will tell you the weight of the different tablets, and what they denote. The tablets of the captains of 100 and 1000 weigh each of them 120 _saggi_; and the tablet with the lion's head engraven on it, which is that of the commander of 10,000, weighs 220 _saggi_. And on each of the tablets is inscribed a device, which runs: "_By the strength of the great God, and of the great grace which He hath accorded to our Emperor, may the name of the Kaan be blessed; and let all such as will not obey him be slain and be destroyed_." And I will tell you besides that all who hold these tablets likewise receive warrants in writing, declaring all their powers and privileges. I should mention too that an officer who holds the chief command of 100,000 men, or who is general-in-chief of a great host, is entitled to a tablet that weighs 300 _saggi_. It has an inscription thereon to the same purport that I have told you already, and below the inscription there is the figure of a lion, and below the lion the sun and moon. They have warrants also of their high rank, command, and power. Every one, moreover, who holds a tablet of this exalted degree is entitled, whenever he goes abroad, to have a little golden canopy, such as is called an umbrella, carried on a spear over his head in token of his high command. And whenever he sits, he sits in a silver chair. To certain very great lords also there is given a tablet with gerfalcons on it; this is only to the very greatest of the Kaan's barons, and it confers on them his own full power and authority; so that if one of those chiefs wishes to send a messenger any whither, he can seize the horses of any man, be he even a king, and any other chattels at his pleasure.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCERNING THE PERSON OF THE GREAT KAAAN.

The personal appearance of the Great Kaan, Lord of Lords, whose name is Cublay, is such as I shall now tell you. He is of a good stature, neither tall nor short, but of a middle height. He has a becoming amount of flesh, and is very shapely in all his limbs. His complexion is white and red, the eyes black and fine, the nose well formed and well set on. He has four wives, whom he retains permanently as his legitimate consorts; and the eldest of his sons by those four wives ought by rights to be emperor;--I mean when his father dies. Those four ladies are called empresses, but each is distinguished also by her proper name. And each of them has a special court of her own, very grand and ample; no one of them having fewer than 300 fair and charming damsels. They have also many pages and eunuchs, and a number of other attendants of both sexes; so that each of these ladies has not less than 10,000 persons attached to her court. When the Emperor desires the society of one of these four consorts, he will sometimes send for the lady to his apartment and sometimes visit her at her own. He has also a great number of concubines, and I will tell you how he obtains them. You must know that there is a tribe of Tartars called UNGRAT, who are noted for their beauty. Now every year an hundred of the most beautiful maidens of this tribe are sent to the Great Kaan, who commits them to the charge of certain elderly ladies dwelling in his palace. And these old ladies make the girls sleep with them, in order to ascertain if they have sweet breath [and do not snore], and are sound in all their limbs. Then such of them as are of approved beauty, and are good and sound in all respects, are appointed to attend on the Emperor by turns. Thus six of these damsels take their turn for three days and nights, and wait on him when he is in his chamber and when he is in his bed, to serve him in any way, and to be entirely at his orders. At the end of the three days and nights they are relieved by other six. And so throughout the year, there are reliefs of maidens by six and six, changing every three days and nights. [Illustration: Portrait of Kublai Kaan. (From a Chinese Engraving.)]

CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNING THE GREAT KAAAN'S SONS.

The Emperor hath, by those four wives of his, twenty-two male children; the eldest of whom was called CHINKIN for the love of the good Chinghis Kaan, the first Lord of the Tartars. And this Chinkin, as the Eldest Son of the Kaan, was to have reigned after his father's death; but, as it came to pass, he died. He left a son behind him, however, whose name is TEMUR, and he is to be the Great Kaan and Emperor after the death of his Grandfather, as is but right; he being the child of the Great Kaan's eldest son. And this Temur is an able and brave man, as he hath already proven on many occasions. The Great Kaan hath also twenty-five other sons by his concubines; and these are good and valiant soldiers, and each of them is a great chief. I tell you moreover that of his children by his four lawful wives there are seven who are kings of vast realms or provinces, and govern them well; being all able and gallant men, as might be expected. For the Great Kaan their sire is, I tell you, the wisest and most accomplished man, the greatest Captain, the best to govern men and rule an Empire, as well as the most valiant, that ever has existed among all the Tribes of Tartars.

CHAPTER X.

CONCERNING THE PALACE OF THE GREAT KAAAN.

You must know that for three months of the year, to wit December, January, and February, the Great Kaan resides in the capital city of Cathay, which is called CAMBALUC, [and which is at the north-eastern extremity of the country]. In that city stands his great Palace, and now I will tell you what it is like. It is enclosed all round by a great wall forming a square, each side of which is a mile in length; that is to say, the whole compass thereof is four miles. This you may depend on; it is also very thick, and a good ten paces in height, whitewashed and loop-holed all round. At each angle of the wall there is a very fine and rich palace in which the war-harness of the Emperor is kept, such as bows and quivers, saddles and bridles, and bowstrings, and everything needful for an army. Also midway between every two of these Corner Palaces there is another of the like; so that taking the whole compass of the enclosure you find eight vast Palaces stored with the Great Lord's harness of war. And you must understand that each Palace is assigned to only one kind of article; thus one is stored with bows, a second with saddles, a third with bridles, and so on in succession right round. The great wall has five gates on

its southern face, the middle one being the great gate which is never opened on any occasion except when the Great Kaan himself goes forth or enters. Close on either side of this great gate is a smaller one by which all other people pass; and then towards each angle is another great gate, also open to people in general; so that on that side there are five gates in all. Inside of this wall there is a second, enclosing a space that is somewhat greater in length than in breadth. This enclosure also has eight palaces corresponding to those of the outer wall, and stored like them with the Lord's harness of war. This wall also hath five gates on the southern face, corresponding to those in the outer wall, and hath one gate on each of the other faces, as the outer wall hath also. In the middle of the second enclosure is the Lord's Great Palace, and I will tell you what it is like. You must know that it is the greatest Palace that ever was. [Towards the north it is in contact with the outer wall, whilst towards the south there is a vacant space which the Barons and the soldiers are constantly traversing. The Palace itself] hath no upper story, but is all on the ground floor, only the basement is raised some ten palms above the surrounding soil [and this elevation is retained by a wall of marble raised to the level of the pavement, two paces in width and projecting beyond the base of the Palace so as to form a kind of terrace-walk, by which people can pass round the building, and which is exposed to view, whilst on the outer edge of the wall there is a very fine pillared balustrade; and up to this the people are allowed to come]. The roof is very lofty, and the walls of the Palace are all covered with gold and silver. They are also adorned with representations of dragons [sculptured and gilt], beasts and birds, knights and idols, and sundry other subjects. And on the ceiling too you see nothing but gold and silver and painting. [On each of the four sides there is a great marble staircase leading to the top of the marble wall, and forming the approach to the Palace.] The Hall of the Palace is so large that it could easily dine 6000 people; and it is quite a marvel to see how many rooms there are besides. The building is altogether so vast, so rich, and so beautiful, that no man on earth could design anything superior to it. The outside of the roof also is all coloured with vermilion and yellow and green and blue and other hues, which are fixed with a varnish so fine and exquisite that they shine like crystal, and lend a resplendent lustre to the Palace as seen for a great way round. This roof is made too with such strength and solidity that it is fit to last for ever. [On the interior side of the Palace are large buildings with halls and chambers, where the Emperor's private property is placed, such as his treasures of gold, silver, gems, pearls, and gold plate, and in which reside the ladies and concubines. There he occupies himself at his own convenience, and no one else has access.] Between the two walls of the enclosure which I have described, there are fine parks and beautiful trees bearing a variety of fruits. There are beasts also of sundry kinds, such as white stags and fallow deer, gazelles and roebucks, and fine squirrels of various sorts, with numbers also of the animal that gives the musk, and all manner of other beautiful creatures, insomuch that the whole place is full of them, and no spot remains void except where there is traffic of people going and coming. [The parks are covered with abundant grass; and the roads through them being all paved and raised two cubits above the surface, they never become muddy, nor does the rain lodge on them, but flows off into the meadows, quickening the soil and producing that abundance of herbage.] From that corner of the enclosure which is towards the north-west there extends a fine Lake, containing fison of fish of different kinds which the Emperor hath caused to be put in there, so that whenever he desires any he can have them at his pleasure. A river enters this lake and issues from it, but there is a grating of iron or brass put up so that the fish cannot escape in that way. Moreover on the north side of the Palace, about a bow-shot off, there is a hill which has been made by art [from the earth dug out of the lake]; it is a good hundred paces in height and a mile in compass. This hill is entirely covered with trees that never lose their leaves, but remain ever green. And I assure you that wherever a beautiful tree may exist, and the Emperor gets news of it, he sends for it and has it transported bodily with all its roots and the earth attached to them, and planted on that hill of his. No matter how big the tree may be, he gets it carried by his elephants; and in this way he has got together the most beautiful collection of trees in all the world. And he has also caused the whole hill to be covered with the ore of azure, which is very green. And thus not only are the trees all green, but the hill itself is all green likewise; and there is nothing to be seen on it that is not green; and hence it is called the GREEN MOUNT; and in good sooth 'tis named well. On the top of the hill again there is a fine big palace which is all green inside and out; and thus the hill, and the trees, and the palace form together a charming spectacle; and it is marvellous to see their uniformity of colour! Everybody who sees them is delighted. And the Great Kaan had caused this beautiful prospect to be formed for the comfort and solace and delectation of his heart. You must know that beside the Palace (that we have been describing), i.e. the Great Palace, the Emperor has caused another to be built just like his own in every respect, and this he hath done for his son when he shall

reign and be Emperor after him. Hence it is made just in the same fashion and of the same size, so that everything can be carried on in the same manner after his own death. [It stands on the other side of the lake from the Great Kaan's Palace, and there is a bridge crossing the water from one to the other.] The Prince in question holds now a Seal of Empire, but not with such complete authority as the Great Kaan, who remains supreme as long as he lives. Now I am going to tell you of the chief city of Cathay, in which these Palaces stand; and why it was built, and how.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCERNING THE CITY OF CAMBALUC.

Now there was on that spot in old times a great and noble city called CAMBALUC, which is as much as to say in our tongue "The city of the Emperor." But the Great Kaan was informed by his Astrologers that this city would prove rebellious, and raise great disorders against his imperial authority. So he caused the present city to be built close beside the old one, with only a river between them. And he caused the people of the old city to be removed to the new town that he had founded; and this is called TAIDU. [However, he allowed a portion of the people which he did not suspect to remain in the old city, because the new one could not hold the whole of them, big as it is.] As regards the size of this (new) city you must know that it has a compass of 24 miles, for each side of it hath a length of 6 miles, and it is four-square. And it is all walled round with walls of earth which have a thickness of full ten paces at bottom, and a height of more than 10 paces; but they are not so thick at top, for they diminish in thickness as they rise, so that at top they are only about 3 paces thick. And they are provided throughout with loop-holed battlements, which are all whitewashed. There are 12 gates, and over each gate there is a great and handsome palace, so that there are on each side of the square three gates and five palaces; for (I ought to mention) there is at each angle also a great and handsome palace. In those palaces are vast halls in which are kept the arms of the city garrison. The streets are so straight and wide that you can see right along them from end to end and from one gate to the other. And up and down the city there are beautiful palaces, and many great and fine hostelries, and fine houses in great numbers. [All the plots of ground on which the houses of the city are built are four-square, and laid out with straight lines; all the plots being occupied by great and spacious palaces, with courts and gardens of proportionate size. All these plots were assigned to different heads of families. Each square plot is encompassed by handsome streets for traffic; and thus the whole city is arranged in squares just like a chess-board, and disposed in a manner so perfect and masterly that it is impossible to give a description that should do it justice.] Moreover, in the middle of the city there is a great clock--that is to say, a bell--which is struck at night. And after it has struck three times no one must go out in the city, unless it be for the needs of a woman in labour, or of the sick. And those who go about on such errands are bound to carry lanterns with them. Moreover, the established guard at each gate of the city is 1000 armed men; not that you are to imagine this guard is kept up for fear of any attack, but only as a guard of honour for the Sovereign, who resides there, and to prevent thieves from doing mischief in the town.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE GREAT KAAAN MAINTAINS A GUARD OF TWELVE THOUSAND HORSE, WHICH ARE CALLED KESHICAN.

You must know that the Great Kaan, to maintain his state, hath a guard of twelve thousand horsemen, who are styled KESHICAN, which is as much as to say "Knights devoted to their Lord." Not that he keeps these for fear of any man whatever, but merely because of his own exalted dignity. These 12,000 men have four captains, each of whom is in command of 3000; and each body of 3000 takes a turn of three days and nights to guard the palace, where they also take their meals. After the expiration of three days and nights they are relieved by another 3000, who mount guard for the same space of time, and then another body takes its turn, so that there are always 3000 on guard. Thus it goes until the whole 12,000, who are styled (as I said) Keshican, have been on duty; and then the tour begins again, and so runs on from year's end to year's end.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FASHION OF THE GREAT KAAAN'S TABLE AT HIS HIGH FEASTS.

And when the Great Kaan sits at table on any great court occasion, it is in this fashion. His table is elevated a good deal above the others, and he sits at the north end of the hall, looking towards the south, with his chief wife beside him on the left. On his right sit his sons and his nephews, and other kinsmen of the Blood Imperial, but lower, so that their heads are on a level with the Emperor's feet. And then the other Barons sit at other tables lower still. So also with the women; for all the wives of the Lord's sons, and of his nephews and other kinsmen, sit at the lower table to his right; and below them again the ladies of the other Barons and Knights, each in the place assigned by the Lord's orders. The tables are so disposed that the Emperor can see the whole of them from end to end, many as they are. [Further, you are not to suppose that everybody sits at table; on the contrary, the greater part of the soldiers and their officers sit at their meal in the hall on the carpets.] Outside the hall will be found more than 40,000 people; for there is a great concourse of folk bringing presents to the Lord, or come from foreign countries with curiosities. In a certain part of the hall near where the Great Kaan holds his table, there [is set a large and very beautiful piece of workmanship in the form of a square coffer, or buffet, about three paces each way, exquisitely wrought with figures of animals, finely carved and gilt. The middle is hollow, and in it] stands a great vessel of pure gold, holding as much as an ordinary butt; and at each corner of the great vessel is one of smaller size [of the capacity of a firkin], and from the former the wine or beverage flavoured with fine and costly spices is drawn off into the latter. [And on the buffet aforesaid are set all the Lord's drinking vessels, among which are certain pitchers of the finest gold,] which are called *_verniques_*, and are big enough to hold drink for eight or ten persons. And one of these is put between every two persons, besides a couple of golden cups with handles, so that every man helps himself from the pitcher that stands between him and his neighbour. And the ladies are supplied in the same way. The value of these pitchers and cups is something immense; in fact, the Great Kaan has such a quantity of this kind of plate, and of gold and silver in other shapes, as no one ever before saw or heard tell of, or could believe. [There are certain Barons specially deputed to see that foreigners, who do not know the customs of the Court, are provided with places suited to their rank; and these Barons are continually moving to and fro in the hall, looking to the wants of the guests at table, and causing the servants to supply them promptly with wine, milk, meat, or whatever they lack. At every door of the hall (or, indeed, wherever the Emperor may be) there stand a couple of big men like giants, one on each side, armed with staves. Their business is to see that no one steps upon the threshold in entering, and if this does happen, they strip the offender of his clothes, and he must pay a forfeit to have them back again; or in lieu of taking his clothes, they give him a certain number of blows. If they are foreigners ignorant of the order, then there are Barons appointed to introduce them, and explain it to them. They think, in fact, that it brings bad luck if any one touches the threshold. Howbeit, they are not expected to stick at this in going forth again, for at that time some are like to be the worse for liquor, and incapable of looking to their steps.] And you must know that those who wait upon the Great Kaan with his dishes and his drink are some of the great Barons. They have the mouth and nose muffled with fine napkins of silk and gold, so that no breath nor odour from their persons should taint the dish or the goblet presented to the Lord. And when the Emperor is going to drink, all the musical instruments, of which he has vast store of every kind, begin to play. And when he takes the cup all the Barons and the rest of the company drop on their knees and make the deepest obeisance before him, and then the Emperor doth drink. But each time that he does so the whole ceremony is repeated. I will say nought about the dishes, as you may easily conceive that there is a great plenty of every possible kind. But you should know that in every case where a Baron or Knight dines at those tables, their wives also dine there with the other ladies. And when all have dined and the tables have been removed, then come in a great number of players and jugglers, adepts at all sorts of wonderful feats, and perform before the Emperor and the rest of the company, creating great diversion and mirth, so that everybody is full of laughter and enjoyment. And when the performance is over, the company breaks up and every one goes to his quarters.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCERNING THE GREAT FEAST HELD BY THE GRAND KAAAN EVERY YEAR ON HIS BIRTHDAY.

You must know that the Tartars keep high festival yearly on their birthdays. And the Great Kaan was born on the 28th day of the September moon, so on that day is held the greatest feast of the year at the Kaan's Court, always excepting that which he holds on New Year's Day, of which I shall tell you afterwards. Now, on his birthday, the Great Kaan dresses in the best of his robes, all wrought with beaten gold; and full 12,000 Barons and Knights on that day come forth dressed in robes of the same colour, and precisely like those of the Great Kaan, except that they are not so costly; but still they are all of the same colour as his, and are also of silk and gold. Every man so clothed has also a girdle of gold; and this as well as the dress is given him by the Sovereign. And I will aver that there are some of these suits decked with so many pearls and precious stones that a single suit shall be worth full 10,000 golden bezants. And of such raiment there are several sets. For you must know that the Great Kaan, thirteen times in the year, presents to his Barons and Knights such suits of raiment as I am speaking of. And on each occasion they wear the same colour that he does, a different colour being assigned to each festival. Hence you may see what a huge business it is, and that there is no prince in the world but he alone who could keep up such customs as these. On his birthday also, all the Tartars in the world, and all the countries and governments that owe allegiance to the Kaan, offer him great presents according to their several ability, and as prescription or orders have fixed the amount. And many other persons also come with great presents to the Kaan, in order to beg for some employment from him. And the Great Kaan has chosen twelve Barons on whom is laid the charge of assigning to each of these supplicants a suitable answer. On this day likewise all the Idolaters, all the Saracens, and all the Christians and other descriptions of people make great and solemn devotions, with much chaunting and lighting of lamps and burning of incense, each to the God whom he doth worship, praying that He would save the Emperor, and grant him long life and health and happiness. And thus, as I have related, is celebrated the joyous feast of the Kaan's birthday. Now I will tell you of another festival which the Kaan holds at the New Year, and which is called the White Feast.

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE GREAT FESTIVAL WHICH THE KAAAN HOLDS ON NEW YEAR'S DAY.

The beginning of their New Year is the month of February, and on that occasion the Great Kaan and all his subjects made such a Feast as I now shall describe. It is the custom that on this occasion the Kaan and all his subjects should be clothed entirely in white; so, that day, everybody is in white, men and women, great and small. And this is done in order that they may thrive all through the year, for they deem that white clothing is lucky. On that day also all the people of all the provinces and governments and kingdoms and countries that own allegiance to the Kaan bring him great presents of gold and silver, and pearls and gems, and rich textures of divers kinds. And this they do that the Emperor throughout the year may have abundance of treasure and enjoyment without care. And the people also make presents to each other of white things, and embrace and kiss and make merry, and wish each other happiness and good luck for the coming year. On that day, I can assure you, among the customary presents there shall be offered to the Kaan from various quarters more than 100,000 white horses, beautiful animals, and richly caparisoned. [And you must know 'tis their custom in offering presents to the Great Kaan (at least when the province making the present is able to do so), to present nine times nine articles. For instance, if a province sends horses, it sends nine times nine or 81 horses; of gold, nine times nine pieces of gold, and so with stuffs or whatever else the present may consist of.] On that day also, the whole of the Kaan's elephants, amounting fully to 5000 in number, are exhibited, all covered with rich and gay housings of inlaid cloth representing beasts and birds, whilst each of them carries on his back two splendid coffers; all of these being filled with the Emperor's plate and other costly furniture required for the Court on the occasion of the White Feast. And these are followed by a vast number of camels which are likewise covered with rich housings and laden with things needful for the Feast. All these are paraded before the Emperor, and it makes the finest sight in the world. Moreover, on the morning of the Feast, before the tables are set, all the Kings, and all the Dukes, Marquesses, Counts, Barons, Knights, and Astrologers, and Philosophers, and Leeches, and Falconers, and other officials of sundry kinds from all the places round about, present themselves

in the Great Hall before the Emperor; whilst those who can find no room to enter stand outside in such a position that the Emperor can see them all well. And the whole company is marshalled in this wise. First are the Kaan's sons, and his nephews, and the other Princes of the Blood Imperial; next to them all Kings; then Dukes, and then all others in succession according to the degree of each. And when they are all seated, each in his proper place, then a great prelate rises and says with a loud voice: "Bow and adore!" And as soon as he has said this, the company bow down until their foreheads touch the earth in adoration towards the Emperor as if he were a god. And this adoration they repeat four times, and then go to a highly decorated altar, on which is a vermilion tablet with the name of the Grand Kaan inscribed thereon, and a beautiful censer of gold. So they incense the tablet and the altar with great reverence, and then return each man to his seat. When all have performed this, then the presents are offered, of which I have spoken as being so rich and costly. And after all have been offered and been seen by the Emperor, the tables are set, and all take their places at them with perfect order as I have already told you. And after dinner the jugglers come in and amuse the Court as you have heard before; and when that is over, every man goes to his quarters.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCERNING THE TWELVE THOUSAND BARONS WHO RECEIVE ROBES OF CLOTH OF GOLD FROM THE EMPEROR ON THE GREAT FESTIVALS, THIRTEEN CHANGES A-PIECE.

Now you must know that the Great Kaan hath set apart 12,000 of his men who are distinguished by the name of Keshican, as I have told you before; and on each of these 12,000 Barons he bestows thirteen changes of raiment, which are all different from one another: I mean that in one set the 12,000 are all of one colour; the next 12,000 of another colour, and so on; so that they are of thirteen different colours. These robes are garnished with gems and pearls and other precious things in a very rich and costly manner. And along with each of these changes of raiment, i.e. 13 times in the year, he bestows on each of those 12,000 Barons a fine golden girdle of great richness and value, and likewise a pair of boots of Camut, that is to say of Borgal, curiously wrought with silver thread; insomuch that when they are clothed in these dresses every man of them looks like a king! And there is an established order as to which dress is to be worn at each of those thirteen feasts. The Emperor himself also has his thirteen suits corresponding to those of his Barons; in colour, I mean (though his are grander, richer, and costlier), so that he is always arrayed in the same colour as his Barons, who are, as it were, his comrades. And you may see that all this costs an amount which it is scarcely possible to calculate. Now I have told you of the thirteen changes of raiment received from the Prince by those 12,000 Barons, amounting in all to 156,000 suits of so great cost and value, to say nothing of the girdles and the boots which are also worth a great sum of money. All this the Great Lord hath ordered, that he may attach the more of grandeur and dignity to his festivals. And now I must mention another thing that I had forgotten, but which you will be astonished to learn from this Book. You must know that on the Feast Day a great Lion is led to the Emperor's presence, and as soon as it sees him it lies down before him with every sign of the greatest veneration, as if it acknowledged him for its lord; and it remains there lying before him, and entirely unchained. Truly this must seem a strange story to those who have not seen the thing!

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW THE GREAT KAAEN ENJOINETH HIS PEOPLE TO SUPPLY HIM WITH GAME.

The three months of December, January, and February, during which the Emperor resides at his Capital City, are assigned for hunting and fowling, to the extent of some 40 days' journey round the city; and it is ordained that the larger game taken be sent to the Court. To be more particular: of all the larger beasts of the chase, such as boars, roebucks, bucks, stags, lions, bears, etc., the greater part of what is taken has to be sent, and feathered game likewise. The animals are gutted and despatched to the Court on carts. This is done by all the people within 20 or 30 days' journey, and the quantity so despatched is immense. Those at a greater distance cannot send the game, but they have to send the skins after tanning them, and these are employed in the making of equipments for the Emperor's army.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF THE LIONS AND LEOPARDS AND WOLVES THAT THE KAAH KEEPS FOR THE CHASE.

The Emperor hath numbers of leopards trained to the chase, and hath also a great many lynxes taught in like manner to catch game, and which afford excellent sport. He hath also several great Lions, bigger than those of Babylonia, beasts whose skins are coloured in the most beautiful way, being striped all along the sides with black, red, and white. These are trained to catch boars and wild cattle, bears, wild asses, stags, and other great or fierce beasts. And 'tis a rare sight, I can tell you, to see those lions giving chase to such beasts as I have mentioned! When they are to be so employed the Lions are taken out in a covered cart, and every Lion has a little doggie with him. [They are obliged to approach the game against the wind, otherwise the animals would scent the approach of the Lion and be off.] There are also a great number of eagles, all broken to catch wolves, foxes, deer, and wild goats, and they do catch them in great numbers. But those especially that are trained to wolf-catching are very large and powerful birds, and no wolf is able to get away from them.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCERNING THE TWO BROTHERS WHO HAVE CHARGE OF THE KAAH'S HOUNDS.

The Emperor hath two Barons who are own brothers, one called Baian and the other Mingan; and these two are styled Chinuchi (or Cunichi), which is as much as to say, "The Keepers of the Mastiff Dogs." Each of these brothers hath 10,000 men under his orders; each body of 10,000 being dressed alike, the one in red and the other in blue, and whenever they accompany the Lord to the chase, they wear this livery, in order to be recognized. Out of each body of 10,000 there are 2000 men who are each in charge of one or more great mastiffs, so that the whole number of these is very large. And when the Prince goes a-hunting, one of those Barons, with his 10,000 men and something like 5000 dogs, goes towards the right, whilst the other goes towards the left with his party in like manner. They move along, all abreast of one another, so that the whole line extends over a full day's journey, and no animal can escape them. Truly it is a glorious sight to see the working of the dogs and the huntsmen on such an occasion! And as the Lord rides a-fowling across the plains, you will see these big hounds coming tearing up, one pack after a bear, another pack after a stag, or some other beast, as it may hap, and running the game down now on this side and now on that, so that it is really a most delightful sport and spectacle. [The Two Brothers I have mentioned are bound by the tenure of their office to supply the Kaah's Court from October to the end of March with 1000 head of game daily, whether of beasts or birds, and not counting quails; and also with fish to the best of their ability, allowing fish enough for three persons to reckon as equal to one head of game.] Now I have told you of the Masters of the Hounds and all about them, and next will I tell you how the Lord goes off on an expedition for the space of three months.

CHAPTER XX.

HOW THE EMPEROR GOES ON A HUNTING EXPEDITION.

After he has stopped at his capital city those three months that I mentioned, to wit, December, January, February, he starts off on the 1st day of March, and travels southward towards the Ocean Sea, a journey of two days. He takes with him full 10,000 falconers, and some 500 gerfalcons besides peregrines, sakers, and other hawks in great numbers; and goshawks also to fly at the water-fowl. But do not suppose that he keeps all these together by him; they are distributed about, hither and thither, one hundred together, or two hundred at the utmost, as he thinks proper. But they are always fowling as they advance, and the most part of the quarry taken is carried to the Emperor. And let me tell you when he goes thus a-fowling with his gerfalcons and other hawks, he is attended by full 10,000 men who are disposed in couples; and these are called Toscaol, which is as much as to say, "Watchers." And the name describes their business. They are posted from spot to spot, always in couples, and thus they cover a great deal of ground! Every man of them is provided with a whistle and hood,

so as to be able to call in a hawk and hold it in hand. And when the Emperor makes a cast, there is no need that he follow it up, for those men I speak of keep so good a look out that they never lose sight of the birds, and if these have need of help they are ready to render it. All the Emperor's hawks, and those of the Barons as well, have a little label attached to the leg to mark them, on which is written the names of the owner and the keeper of the bird. And in this way the hawk, when caught, is at once identified and handed over to its owner. But if not, the bird is carried to a certain Baron, who is styled the Bularguchi, which is as much as to say "The Keeper of Lost Property." And I tell you that whatever may be found without a known owner, whether it be a horse, or a sword, or a hawk, or what not, it is carried to that Baron straightway, and he takes charge of it. And if the finder neglects to carry his trover to the Baron, the latter punishes him. Likewise the loser of any article goes to the Baron, and if the thing be in his hands it is immediately given up to the owner. Moreover, the said Baron always pitches on the highest spot of the camp, with his banner displayed, in order that those who have lost or found anything may have no difficulty in finding their way to him. Thus nothing can be lost but it shall be incontinently found and restored. And so the Emperor follows this road that I have mentioned, leading along in the vicinity of the Ocean Sea (which is within two days' journey of his capital city, Cambaluc), and as he goes there is many a fine sight to be seen, and plenty of the very best entertainment in hawking; in fact, there is no sport in the world to equal it! The Emperor himself is carried upon four elephants in a fine chamber made of timber, lined inside with plates of beaten gold, and outside with lions' skins [for he always travels in this way on his fowling expeditions, because he is troubled with gout]. He always keeps beside him a dozen of his choicest gerfalcons, and is attended by several of his Barons, who ride on horseback alongside. And sometimes, as they may be going along, and the Emperor from his chamber is holding discourse with the Barons, one of the latter shall exclaim: "Sire! Look out for Cranes!" Then the Emperor instantly has the top of his chamber thrown open, and having marked the cranes he casts one of his gerfalcons, whichever he pleases; and often the quarry is struck within his view, so that he has the most exquisite sport and diversion, there as he sits in his chamber or lies on his bed; and all the Barons with him get the enjoyment of it likewise! So it is not without reason I tell you that I do not believe there ever existed in the world or ever will exist, a man with such sport and enjoyment as he has, or with such rare opportunities. And when he has travelled till he reaches a place called CACHAR MODUN, there he finds his tents pitched, with the tents of his Sons, and his Barons, and those of his Ladies and theirs, so that there shall be full 10,000 tents in all, and all fine and rich ones. And I will tell you how his own quarters are disposed. The tent in which he holds his courts is large enough to give cover easily to a thousand souls. It is pitched with its door to the south, and the Barons and Knights remain in waiting in it, whilst the Lord abides in another close to it on the west side. When he wishes to speak with any one he causes the person to be summoned to that other tent. Immediately behind the great tent there is a fine large chamber where the Lord sleeps; and there are also many other tents and chambers, but they are not in contact with the Great Tent as these are. The two audience-tents and the sleeping-chamber are constructed in this way. Each of the audience-tents has three poles, which are of spice-wood, and are most artfully covered with lions' skins, striped with black and white and red, so that they do not suffer from any weather. All three apartments are also covered outside with similar skins of striped lions, a substance that lasts for ever. And inside they are all lined with ermine and sable, these two being the finest and most costly furs in existence. For a robe of sable, large enough to line a mantle, is worth 2000 bezants of gold, or 1000 at least, and this kind of skin is called by the Tartars "The King of Furs." The beast itself is about the size of a marten. These two furs of which I speak are applied and inlaid so exquisitely, that it is really something worth seeing. All the tent-ropes are of silk. And in short I may say that those tents, to wit the two audience-halls and the sleeping-chamber, are so costly that it is not every king could pay for them. Round about these tents are others, also fine ones and beautifully pitched, in which are the Emperor's ladies, and the ladies of the other princes and officers. And then there are the tents for the hawks and their keepers, so that altogether the number of tents there on the plain is something wonderful. To see the many people that are thronging to and fro on every side and every day there, you would take the camp for a good big city. For you must reckon the Leeches, and the Astrologers, and the Falconers, and all the other attendants on so great a company; and add that everybody there has his whole family with him, for such is their custom. The Lord remains encamped there until the spring, and all that time he does nothing but go hawking round about among the canebrakes along the lakes and rivers that abound in that region, and across fine plains on which are plenty of cranes and swans, and all sorts of other fowl. The other gentry of the camp also are never done with hunting and hawking, and every day they bring home great store of venison and

feathered game of all sorts. Indeed, without having witnessed it, you would never believe what quantities of game are taken, and what marvellous sport and diversion they all have whilst they are in camp there. There is another thing I should mention; to wit, that for 20 days' journey round the spot nobody is allowed, be he who he may, to keep hawks or hounds, though anywhere else whosoever list may keep them. And furthermore throughout all the Emperor's territories, nobody however audacious dares to hunt any of these four animals, to wit, hare, stag, buck, and roe, from the month of March to the month of October. Anybody who should do so would rue it bitterly. But those people are so obedient to their Lord's command, that even if a man were to find one of those animals asleep by the roadside he would not touch it for the world! And thus the game multiplies at such a rate that the whole country swarms with it, and the Emperor gets as much as he could desire. Beyond the term I have mentioned, however, to wit that from March to October, everybody may take these animals as he list. After the Emperor has tarried in that place, enjoying his sport as I have related, from March to the middle of May, he moves with all his people, and returns straight to his capital city of Cambaluc (which is also the capital of Cathay, as you have been told), but all the while continuing to take his diversion in hunting and hawking as he goes along.

CHAPTER XXI.

REHEARSAL OF THE WAY THE YEAR OF THE GREAT KAAAN IS DISTRIBUTED.

On arriving at his capital of Cambaluc, he stays in his palace there three days and no more; during which time he has great court entertainments and rejoicings, and makes merry with his wives. He then quits his palace at Cambaluc, and proceeds to that city which he has built, as I told you before, and which is called Chandu, where he has that grand park and palace of cane, and where he keeps his gerfalcons in mew. There he spends the summer, to escape the heat, for the situation is a very cool one. After stopping there from the beginning of May to the 28th of August, he takes his departure (that is the time when they sprinkle the white mares' milk as I told you), and returns to his capital Cambaluc. There he stops, as I have told you also, the month of September, to keep his Birthday Feast, and also throughout October, November, December, January, and February, in which last month he keeps the grand feast of the New Year, which they call the White Feast, as you have heard already with all particulars. He then sets out on his march towards the Ocean Sea, hunting and hawking, and continues out from the beginning of March to the middle of May; and then comes back for three days only to the capital, during which he makes merry with his wives, and holds a great court and grand entertainments. In truth, 'tis something astonishing, the magnificence displayed by the Emperor in those three days; and then he starts off again as you know. Thus his whole year is distributed in the following manner: six months at his chief palace in the royal city of Cambaluc, to wit, _September, October, November, December, January, February_; Then on the great hunting expedition towards the sea, _March, April, May_; Then back to his palace at Cambaluc for _three days_; Then off to the city of Chandu which he has built, and where the Cane Palace is, where he stays _June, July, August_; Then back again to his capital city of Cambaluc. So thus the whole year is spent; six months at the capital, three months in hunting, and three months at the Cane Palace to avoid the heat. And in this way he passes his time with the greatest enjoyment; not to mention occasional journeys in this or that direction at his own pleasure.

CHAPTER XXII.

CONCERNING THE CITY OF CAMBALUC, AND ITS GREAT TRAFFIC AND POPULATION.

You must know that the city of Cambaluc hath such a multitude of houses, and such a vast population inside the walls and outside, that it seems quite past all possibility. There is a suburb outside each of the gates, which are twelve in number; and these suburbs are so great that they contain more people than the city itself [for the suburb of one gate spreads in width till it meets the suburb of the next, whilst they extend in length some three or four miles]. In those suburbs lodge the foreign merchants and travellers, of whom there are always great numbers who have come to bring presents to the Emperor, or to sell articles at Court, or because the city affords so good a mart to attract traders. [There are in each of the suburbs, to a distance of a mile from the city,

numerous fine hostelries for the lodgment of merchants from different parts of the world, and a special hostelry is assigned to each description of people, as if we should say there is one for the Lombards, another for the Germans, and a third for the Frenchmen.] And thus there are as many good houses outside of the city as inside, without counting those that belong to the great lords and barons, which are very numerous. [Illustration: Plain of Cambaluc; the City in the distance; from the Hills on the north-west] You must know that it is forbidden to bury any dead body inside the city. If the body be that of an Idolater it is carried out beyond the city and suburbs to a remote place assigned for the purpose, to be burnt. And if it be of one belonging to a religion the custom of which is to bury, such as the Christian, the Saracen, or what not, it is also carried out beyond the suburbs to a distant place assigned for the purpose. And thus the city is preserved in a better and more healthy state. Moreover, no public woman resides inside the city, but all such abide outside in the suburbs. And 'tis wonderful what a vast number of these there are for the foreigners; it is a certain fact that there are more than 20,000 of them living by prostitution. And that so many can live in this way will show you how vast is the population. [Guards patrol the city every night in parties of 30 or 40, looking out for any persons who may be abroad at unseasonable hours, i.e. after the great bell hath stricken thrice. If they find any such person he is immediately taken to prison, and examined next morning by the proper officers. If these find him guilty of any misdemeanour they order him a proportionate beating with the stick. Under this punishment people sometimes die; but they adopt it in order to eschew bloodshed; for their Bacsis say that it is an evil thing to shed man's blood]. To this city also are brought articles of greater cost and rarity, and in greater abundance of all kinds, than to any other city in the world. For people of every description, and from every region, bring things (including all the costly wares of India, as well as the fine and precious goods of Cathay itself with its provinces), some for the sovereign, some for the court, some for the city which is so great, some for the crowds of Barons and Knights, some for the great hosts of the Emperor which are quartered round about; and thus between court and city the quantity brought in is endless. As a sample, I tell you, no day in the year passes that there do not enter the city 1000 cart-loads of silk alone, from which are made quantities of cloth of silk and gold, and of other goods. And this is not to be wondered at; for in all the countries round about there is no flax, so that everything has to be made of silk. It is true, indeed, that in some parts of the country there is cotton and hemp, but not sufficient for their wants. This, however, is not of much consequence, because silk is so abundant and cheap, and is a more valuable substance than either flax or cotton. Round about this great city of Cambaluc there are some 200 other cities at various distances, from which traders come to sell their goods and buy others for their lords; and all find means to make their sales and purchases, so that the traffic of the city is passing great.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCERNING THE OPPRESSIONS OF ACHMATH THE BAILO, AND THE PLOT THAT WAS FORMED AGAINST HIM.

You will hear further on how that there are twelve persons appointed who have authority to dispose of lands, offices, and everything else at their discretion. Now one of these was a certain Saracen named ACHMATH, a shrewd and able man, who had more power and influence with the Grand Kaan than any of the others; and the Kaan held him in such regard that he could do what he pleased. The fact was, as came out after his death, that Achmath had so wrought upon the Kaan with his sorcery, that the latter had the greatest faith and reliance on everything he said, and in this way did everything that Achmath wished him to do. This person disposed of all governments and offices, and passed sentence on all malefactors; and whenever he desired to have any one whom he hated put to death, whether with justice or without it, he would go to the Emperor and say: "Such an one deserves death, for he hath done this or that against your imperial dignity." Then the Lord would say: "Do as you think right," and so he would have the man forthwith executed. Thus when people saw how unbounded were his powers, and how unbounded the reliance placed by the Emperor on everything that he said, they did not venture to oppose him in anything. No one was so high in rank or power as to be free from the dread of him. If any one was accused by him to the Emperor of a capital offence, and desired to defend himself, he was unable to bring proofs in his own exculpation, for no one would stand by him, as no one dared to oppose Achmath. And thus the latter caused many to perish unjustly. Moreover, there was no beautiful woman whom

he might desire, but he got hold of her; if she were unmarried, forcing her to be his wife, if otherwise, compelling her to consent to his desires. Whenever he knew of any one who had a pretty daughter, certain ruffians of his would go to the father, and say: "What say you? Here is this pretty daughter of yours; give her in marriage to the Bailo Achmath (for they called him 'the Bailo,' or, as we should say, 'the Vicegerent'), and we will arrange for his giving you such a government or such an office for three years." And so the man would surrender his daughter. And Achmath would go to the Emperor, and say: "Such a government is vacant, or will be vacant on such a day. So-and-So is a proper man for the post." And the Emperor would reply: "Do as you think best;" and the father of the girl was immediately appointed to the government. Thus either through the ambition of the parents, or through fear of the Minister, all the beautiful women were at his beck, either as wives or mistresses. Also he had some five-and-twenty sons who held offices of importance, and some of these, under the protection of their father's name, committed scandals like his own, and many other abominable iniquities. This Achmath also had amassed great treasure, for everybody who wanted office sent him a heavy bribe. In such authority did this man continue for two-and-twenty years. At last the people of the country, to wit the Cathayans, utterly wearied with the endless outrages and abominable iniquities which he perpetrated against them, whether as regarded their wives or their own persons, conspired to slay him and revolt against the government. Amongst the rest there was a certain Cathayan named Chenchu, a commander of a thousand, whose mother, daughter, and wife had all been dishonoured by Achmath. Now this man, full of bitter resentment, entered into parley regarding the destruction of the Minister with another Cathayan whose name was Vanchu, who was a commander of 10,000. They came to the conclusion that the time to do the business would be during the Great Kaan's absence from Cambaluc. For after stopping there three months he used to go to Chandu and stop there three months; and at the same time his son Chinkin used to go away to his usual haunts, and this Achmath remained in charge of the city; sending to obtain the Kaan's orders from Chandu when any emergency arose. So Vanchu and Chenchu, having come to this conclusion, proceeded to communicate it to the chief people among the Cathayans, and then by common consent sent word to their friends in many other cities that they had determined on such a day, at the signal given by a beacon, to massacre all the men with beards, and that the other cities should stand ready to do the like on seeing the signal fires. The reason why they spoke of massacring the bearded men was that the Cathayans naturally have no beard, whilst beards are worn by the Tartars, Saracens, and Christians. And you should know that all the Cathayans detested the Grand Kaan's rule because he set over them governors who were Tartars, or still more frequently Saracens, and these they could not endure, for they were treated by them just like slaves. You see the Great Kaan had not succeeded to the dominion of Cathay by hereditary right, but held it by conquest; and thus having no confidence in the natives, he put all authority into the hands of Tartars, Saracens, or Christians who were attached to his household and devoted to his service, and were foreigners in Cathay. Wherefore, on the day appointed, the aforesaid Vanchu and Chenchu having entered the palace at night, Vanchu sat down and caused a number of lights to be kindled before him. He then sent a messenger to Achmath the Bailo, who lived in the Old City, as if to summon him to the presence of Chinkin, the Great Kaan's son, who (it was pretended) had arrived unexpectedly. When Achmath heard this he was much surprised, but made haste to go, for he feared the Prince greatly. When he arrived at the gate he met a Tartar called Cogatai, who was Captain of the 12,000 that formed the standing garrison of the City; and the latter asked him whither he was bound so late? "To Chinkin, who is just arrived." Quoth Cogatai, "How can that be? How could he come so privily that I know nought of it?" So he followed the Minister with a certain number of his soldiers. Now the notion of the Cathayans was that, if they could make an end of Achmath, they would have nought else to be afraid of. So as soon as Achmath got inside the palace, and saw all that illumination, he bowed down before Vanchu, supposing him to be Chinkin, and Chenchu who was standing ready with a sword straightway cut his head off. As soon as Cogatai, who had halted at the entrance, beheld this, he shouted "Treason!" and instantly discharged an arrow at Vanchu and shot him dead as he sat. At the same time he called his people to seize Chenchu, and sent a proclamation through the city that any one found in the streets would be instantly put to death. The Cathayans saw that the Tartars had discovered the plot, and that they had no longer any leader, since Vanchu was killed and Chenchu was taken. So they kept still in their houses, and were unable to pass the signal for the rising of the other cities as had been settled. Cogatai immediately dispatched messengers to the Great Kaan giving an orderly report of the whole affair, and the Kaan sent back orders for him to make a careful investigation, and to punish the guilty as their misdeeds deserved. In the morning Cogatai examined all the Cathayans, and put to death a number whom he

found to be ringleaders in the plot. The same thing was done in the other cities, when it was found that the plot extended to them also. After the Great Kaan had returned to Cambaluc he was very anxious to discover what had led to this affair, and he then learned all about the endless iniquities of that accursed Achmath and his sons. It was proved that he and seven of his sons (for they were not all bad) had forced no end of women to be their wives, besides those whom they had ravished. The Great Kaan then ordered all the treasure that Achmath had accumulated in the Old City to be transferred to his own treasury in the New City, and it was found to be of enormous amount. He also ordered the body of Achmath to be dug up and cast into the streets for the dogs to tear; and commanded those of his sons that had followed the father's evil example to be flayed alive. These circumstances called the Kaan's attention to the accursed doctrines of the Sect of the Saracens, which excuse every crime, yea even murder itself, when committed on such as are not of their religion. And seeing that this doctrine had led the accursed Achmath and his sons to act as they did without any sense of guilt, the Kaan was led to entertain the greatest disgust and abomination for it. So he summoned the Saracens and prohibited their doing many things which their religion enjoined. Thus, he ordered them to regulate their marriages by the Tartar Law, and prohibited their cutting the throats of animals killed for food, ordering them to rip the stomach in the Tartar way. Now when all this happened Messer Marco was upon the spot.]

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW THE GREAT KAAH CAUSETH THE BARK OF TREES, MADE INTO SOMETHING LIKE PAPER, TO PASS FOR MONEY OVER ALL HIS COUNTRY.

Now that I have told you in detail of the splendour of this City of the Emperor's, I shall proceed to tell you of the Mint which he hath in the same city, in the which he hath his money coined and struck, as I shall relate to you. And in doing so I shall make manifest to you how it is that the Great Lord may well be able to accomplish even much more than I have told you, or am going to tell you, in this Book. For, tell it how I might, you never would be satisfied that I was keeping within truth and reason! The Emperor's Mint then is in this same City of Cambaluc, and the way it is wrought is such that you might say he hath the Secret of Alchemy in perfection, and you would be right! For he makes his money after this fashion. He makes them take of the bark of a certain tree, in fact of the Mulberry Tree, the leaves of which are the food of the silkworms,--these trees being so numerous that whole districts are full of them. What they take is a certain fine white bast or skin which lies between the wood of the tree and the thick outer bark, and this they make into something resembling sheets of paper, but black. When these sheets have been prepared they are cut up into pieces of different sizes. The smallest of these sizes is worth a half tornesel; the next, a little larger, one tornesel; one, a little larger still, is worth half a silver groat of Venice; another a whole groat; others yet two groats, five groats, and ten groats. There is also a kind worth one Bezant of gold, and others of three Bezants, and so up to ten. All these pieces of paper are [issued with as much solemnity and authority as if they were of pure gold or silver; and on every piece a variety of officials, whose duty it is, have to write their names, and to put their seals. And when all is prepared duly, the chief officer deputed by the Kaan smears the Seal entrusted to him with vermilion, and impresses it on the paper, so that the form of the Seal remains printed upon it in red; the Money is then authentic. Any one forging it would be punished with death.] And the Kaan causes every year to be made such a vast quantity of this money, which costs him nothing, that it must equal in amount all the treasure in the world. With these pieces of paper, made as I have described, he causes all payments on his own account to be made; and he makes them to pass current universally over all his kingdoms and provinces and territories, and whithersoever his power and sovereignty extends. And nobody, however important he may think himself, dares to refuse them on pain of death. And indeed everybody takes them readily, for wheresoever a person may go throughout the Great Kaan's dominions he shall find these pieces of paper current, and shall be able to transact all sales and purchases of goods by means of them just as well as if they were coins of pure gold. And all the while they are so light that ten bezants' worth does not weigh one golden bezant. Furthermore all merchants arriving from India or other countries, and bringing with them gold or silver or gems and pearls, are prohibited from selling to any one but the Emperor. He has twelve experts chosen for this business, men of shrewdness and experience in such affairs; these appraise the articles, and the Emperor then pays a liberal price for them in those pieces of paper. The merchants accept his price readily, for in the first place they would not get so good an one from anybody

else, and secondly they are paid without any delay. And with this paper-money they can buy what they like anywhere over the Empire, whilst it is also vastly lighter to carry about on their journeys. And it is a truth that the merchants will several times in the year bring wares to the amount of 400,000 bezants, and the Grand Sire pays for all in that paper. So he buys such a quantity of those precious things every year that his treasure is endless, whilst all the time the money he pays away costs him nothing at all. Moreover, several times in the year proclamation is made through the city that any one who may have gold or silver or gems or pearls, by taking them to the Mint shall get a handsome price for them. And the owners are glad to do this, because they would find no other purchaser give so large a price. Thus the quantity they bring in is marvellous, though these who do not choose to do so may let it alone. Still, in this way, nearly all the valuables in the country come into the Kaan's possession. When any of those pieces of paper are spoilt--not that they are so very flimsy neither--the owner carries them to the Mint, and by paying three per cent, on the value he gets new pieces in exchange. And if any Baron, or any one else soever, hath need of gold or silver or gems or pearls, in order to make plate, or girdles, or the like, he goes to the Mint and buys as much as he list, paying in this paper-money. Now you have heard the ways and means whereby the Great Kaan may have, and in fact has, more treasure than all the Kings in the World; and you know all about it and the reason why. And now I will tell you of the great Dignitaries which act in this city on behalf of the Emperor.

CHAPTER XXV.

CONCERNING THE TWELVE BARONS WHO ARE SET OVER ALL THE AFFAIRS OF THE GREAT KAAAN.

You must know that the Great Kaan hath chosen twelve great Barons to whom he hath committed all the necessary affairs of thirty-four great provinces; and now I will tell you particulars about them and their establishments. You must know that these twelve Barons reside all together in a very rich and handsome palace, which is inside the city of Cambaluc, and consists of a variety of edifices, with many suites of apartments. To every province is assigned a judge and several clerks, and all reside in this palace, where each has his separate quarters. These judges and clerks administer all the affairs of the provinces to which they are attached, under the direction of the twelve Barons. Howbeit, when an affair is of very great importance, the twelve Barons lay in before the Emperor, and he decides as he thinks best. But the power of those twelve Barons is so great that they choose the governors for all those thirty-four great provinces that I have mentioned, and only after they have chosen do they inform the Emperor of their choice. This he confirms, and grants to the person nominated a tablet of gold such as is appropriate to the rank of his government. Those twelve Barons also have such authority that they can dispose of the movements of the forces, and send them whither, and in such strength, as they please. This is done indeed with the Emperor's cognizance, but still the orders are issued on their authority. They are styled SHIENG, which is as much as to say "The Supreme Court," and the palace where they abide is also called Shieng. This body forms the highest authority at the Court of the Great Kaan; and indeed they can favour and advance whom they will. I will not now name the thirty-four provinces to you, because they will be spoken of in detail in the course of this Book.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HOW THE KAAAN'S POSTS AND RUNNERS ARE SPED THROUGH MANY LANDS AND PROVINCES.

Now you must know that from this city of Cambaluc proceed many roads and highways leading to a variety of provinces, one to one province, another to another; and each road receives the name of the province to which it leads; and it is a very sensible plan. And the messengers of the Emperor in travelling from Cambaluc, be the road whichsoever they will, find at every twenty-five miles of the journey a station which they call Yamb, or, as we should say, the "Horse-Post-House." And at each of those stations used by the messengers, there is a large and handsome building for them to put up at, in which they find all the rooms furnished with fine beds and all other necessary articles in rich silk, and where they are provided with everything they can want. If even a king

were to arrive at one of these, he would find himself well lodged. At some of these stations, moreover, there shall be posted some four hundred horses standing ready for the use of the messengers; at others there shall be two hundred, according to the requirements, and to what the Emperor has established in each case. At every twenty-five miles, as I said, or anyhow at every thirty miles, you find one of these stations, on all the principal highways leading to the different provincial governments; and the same is the case throughout all the chief provinces subject to the Great Kaan. Even when the messengers have to pass through a roadless tract where neither house nor hostel exists, still there the station-houses have been established just the same, excepting that the intervals are somewhat greater, and the day's journey is fixed at thirty-five to forty-five miles, instead of twenty-five to thirty. But they are provided with horses and all the other necessaries just like those we have described, so that the Emperor's messengers, come they from what region they may, find everything ready for them. And in sooth this is a thing done on the greatest scale of magnificence that ever was seen. Never had emperor, king, or lord, such wealth as this manifests! For it is a fact that on all these posts taken together there are more than 300,000 horses kept up, specially for the use of the messengers. And the great buildings that I have mentioned are more than 10,000 in number, all richly furnished, as I told you. The thing is on a scale so wonderful and costly that it is hard to bring oneself to describe it. But now I will tell you another thing that I had forgotten, but which ought to be told whilst I am on this subject. You must know that by the Great Kaan's orders there has been established between those post-houses, at every interval of three miles, a little fort with some forty houses round about it, in which dwell the people who act as the Emperor's foot-runners. Every one of those runners wears a great wide belt, set all over with bells, so that as they run the three miles from post to post their bells are heard jingling a long way off. And thus on reaching the post the runner finds another man similarly equipt, and all ready to take his place, who instantly takes over whatsoever he has in charge, and with it receives a slip of paper from the clerk, who is always at hand for the purpose; and so the new man sets off and runs his three miles. At the next station he finds his relief ready in like manner; and so the post proceeds, with a change at every three miles. And in this way the Emperor, who has an immense number of these runners, receives despatches with news from places ten days' journey off in one day and night; or, if need be, news from a hundred days off in ten days and nights; and that is no small matter! (In fact in the fruit season many a time fruit shall be gathered one morning in Cambaluc, and the evening of the next day it shall reach the Great Kaan at Chandu, a distance of ten days' journey. The clerk at each of the posts notes the time of each courier's arrival and departure; and there are often other officers whose business it is to make monthly visitations of all the posts, and to punish those runners who have been slack in their work.) The Emperor exempts these men from all tribute, and pays them besides. Moreover, there are also at those stations other men equipt similarly with girdles hung with bells, who are employed for expresses when there is a call for great haste in sending despatches to any governor of a province, or to give news when any Baron has revolted, or in other such emergencies; and these men travel a good two hundred or two hundred and fifty miles in the day, and as much in the night. I'll tell you how it stands. They take a horse from those at the station which are standing ready saddled, all fresh and in wind, and mount and go at full speed, as hard as they can ride in fact. And when those at the next post hear the bells they get ready another horse and a man equipt in the same way, and he takes over the letter or whatever it be, and is off full-speed to the third station, where again a fresh horse is found all ready, and so the despatch speeds along from post to post, always at full gallop, with regular change of horses. And the speed at which they go is marvellous. (By night, however, they cannot go so fast as by day, because they have to be accompanied by footmen with torches, who could not keep up with them at full speed.) Those men are highly prized; and they could never do it, did they not bind hard the stomach, chest and head with strong bands. And each of them carries with him a gersfalcon tablet, in sign that he is bound on an urgent express; so that if perchance his horse break down, or he meet with other mishap, whomsoever he may fall in with on the road, he is empowered to make him dismount and give up his horse. Nobody dares refuse in such a case; so that the courier hath always a good fresh nag to carry him. Now all these numbers of post-horses cost the Emperor nothing at all; and I will tell you the how and the why. Every city, or village, or hamlet, that stands near one of those post-stations, has a fixed demand made on it for as many horses as it can supply, and these it must furnish to the post. And in this way are provided all the posts of the cities, as well as the towns and villages round about them; only in uninhabited tracts the horses are furnished at the expense of the Emperor himself. (Nor do the cities maintain the full number, say of 400 horses, always at their station, but month by month 200 shall be kept at the station, and the other 200 at grass, coming in their turn to relieve the first 200. And if there chance to be

some river or lake to be passed by the runners and horse-posts, the neighbouring cities are bound to keep three or four boats in constant readiness for the purpose.) And now I will tell you of the great bounty exercised by the Emperor towards his people twice a year.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HOW THE EMPEROR BESTOWS HELP ON HIS PEOPLE, WHEN THEY ARE AFFLICTED WITH DEARTH OR MURRAIN.

Now you must know that the Emperor sends his Messengers over all his Lands and Kingdoms and Provinces, to ascertain from his officers if the people are afflicted by any dearth through unfavourable seasons, or storms or locusts, or other like calamity; and from those who have suffered in this way no taxes are exacted for that year; nay more, he causes them to be supplied with corn of his own for food and seed. Now this is undoubtedly a great bounty on his part. And when winter comes, he causes inquiry to be made as to those who have lost their cattle, whether by murrain or other mishap, and such persons not only go scot free, but get presents of cattle. And thus, as I tell you, the Lord every year helps and fosters the people subject to him. [There is another trait of the Great Kaan I should tell you; and that is, that if a chance shot from his bow strike any herd or flock, whether belonging to one person or to many, and however big the flock may be, he takes no tithe thereof for three years. In like manner, if the arrow strike a boat full of goods, that boat-load pays no duty; for it is thought unlucky that an arrow strike any one's property; and the Great Kaan says it would be an abomination before God, were such property, that has been struck by the divine wrath, to enter into his Treasury.]

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOW THE GREAT KAAAN CAUSES TREES TO BE PLANTED BY THE HIGHWAYS.

The Emperor moreover hath taken order that all the highways travelled by his messengers and the people generally should be planted with rows of great trees a few paces apart; and thus these trees are visible a long way off, and no one can miss the way by day or night. Even the roads through uninhabited tracts are thus planted, and it is the greatest possible solace to travellers. And this is done on all the ways, where it can be of service. [The Great Kaan plants these trees all the more readily, because his astrologers and diviners tell him that he who plants trees lives long. But where the ground is so sandy and desert that trees will not grow, he causes other landmarks, pillars or stones, to be set up to show the way.]

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCERNING THE RICE-WINE DRUNK BY THE PEOPLE OF CATHAY.

Most of the people of Cathay drink wine of the kind that I shall now describe. It is a liquor which they brew of rice with a quantity of excellent spice, in such fashion that it makes better drink than any ther kind of wine; it is not only good, but clear and pleasing to the eye. And being very hot stuff, it makes one drunk sooner than any other wine.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONCERNING THE BLACK STONES THAT ARE DUG IN CATHAY, AND ARE BURNT FOR FUEL.

It is a fact that all over the country of Cathay there is a kind of black stones existing in beds in the mountains, which they dig out and burn like firewood. If you supply the fire with them at night, and see that they are well kindled, you will find them still alight in the morning; and they make such capital fuel that no other is used throughout the country. It is true that they have plenty of wood also, but they do not burn it, because those stones burn better and cost less. [Moreover with that vast number of people, and the number of hot baths that

they maintain--for every one has such a bath at least three times a week, and in winter if possible every day, whilst every nobleman and man of wealth has a private bath for his own use--the wood would not suffice for the purpose.]

CHAPTER XXXI.

HOW THE GREAT KAAAN CAUSES STORES OF CORN TO BE MADE, TO HELP HIS PEOPLE WITHAL IN TIME OF DEARTH.

You must know that when the Emperor sees that corn is cheap and abundant, he buys up large quantities, and has it stored in all his provinces in great granaries, where it is so well looked after that it will keep for three or four years. And this applies, let me tell you, to all kinds of corn, whether wheat, barley, millet, rice, panic, or what not, and when there is any scarcity of a particular kind of corn, he causes that to be issued. And if the price of the corn is at one bezant the measure, he lets them have it at a bezant for four measures, or at whatever price will produce general cheapness; and every one can have food in this way. And by this providence of the Emperor's, his people can never suffer from dearth. He does the same over his whole Empire; causing these supplies to be stored everywhere, according to calculation of the wants and necessities of the people.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OF THE CHARITY OF THE EMPEROR TO THE POOR.

I have told you how the Great Kaan provides for the distribution of necessaries to his people in time of dearth, by making store in time of cheapness. Now I will tell you of his alms and great charity to the poor of his city of Cambaluc. You see he causes selection to be made of a number of families in the city which are in a state of indigence, and of such families some may consist of six in the house, some of eight, some of ten, more or fewer in each as it may hap, but the whole number being very great. And each family he causes annually to be supplied with wheat and other corn sufficient for the whole year. And this he never fails to do every year. Moreover, all those who choose to go to the daily dole at the Court receive a great loaf apiece, hot from the baking, and nobody is denied; for so the Lord hath ordered. And so some 30,000 people go for it every day from year's end to year's end. Now this is a great goodness in the Emperor to take pity of his poor people thus! And they benefit so much by it that they worship him as he were God. [He also provides the poor with clothes. For he lays a tithe upon all wool, silk, hemp, and the like, from which clothing can be made; and he has these woven and laid up in a building set apart for the purpose; and as all artizans are bound to give a day's labour weekly, in this way the Kaan has these stuffs made into clothing for those poor families, suitable for summer or winter, according to the time of year. He also provides the clothing for his troops, and has woollens woven for them in every city, the material for which is furnished by the tithe aforesaid. You should know that the Tartars, before they were converted to the religion of the Idolaters, never practised almsgiving. Indeed, when any poor man begged of them they would tell him, "Go with God's curse, for if He loved you as He loves me, He would have provided for you." But the sages of the Idolaters, and especially the Bacsis mentioned before, told the Great Kaan that it was a good work to provide for the poor, and that his idols would be greatly pleased if he did so. And since then he has taken to do for the poor so much as you have heard.]

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONCERNING THE ASTROLOGERS IN THE CITY OF CAMBALUC.

[There are in the city of Cambaluc, what with Christians, Saracens, and Cathayans, some five thousand astrologers and soothsayers, whom the Great Kaan provides with annual maintenance and clothing, just as he provides the poor of whom we have spoken, and they are in the constant exercise of their art in this city. They have a kind of astrolabe on which are inscribed the planetary signs, the hours and critical points of the whole year. And every year these Christian, Saracen, and Cathayan astrologers, each sect apart, investigate by means

of this astrolabe the course and character of the whole year, according to the indications of each of its Moons, in order to discover by the natural course and disposition of the planets, and the other circumstances of the heavens, what shall be the nature of the weather, and what peculiarities shall be produced by each Moon of the year; as, for example, under which Moon there shall be thunderstorms and tempests, under which there shall be disease, murrain, wars, disorders, and treasons, and so on, according to the indications of each; but always adding that it lies with God to do less or more according to His pleasure. And they write down the results of their examination in certain little pamphlets for the year, which are called *_Tacuin_*, and these are sold for a groat to all who desire to know what is coming. Those of the astrologers, of course whose predictions are found to be most exact, are held to be the greatest adepts in their art, and get the greater fame. And if any one having some great matter in hand, or proposing to make a long journey for traffic or other business, desires to know what will be the upshot, he goes to one of these astrologers and says: "Turn up your books and see what is the present aspect of the heavens, for I am going away on such and such a business." Then the astrologer will reply that the applicant must also tell the year, month, and hour of his birth; and when he has got that information he will see how the horoscope of his nativity combines with the indications of the time when the question is put, and then he predicts the result, good or bad, according to the aspect of the heavens. You must know, too, that the Tartars reckon their years by twelves; the sign of the first year being the Lion, of the second the Ox, of the third the Dragon, of the fourth the Dog, and so forth up to the twelfth; so that when one is asked the year of his birth he answers that it was in the year of the Lion (let us say), on such a day or night, at such an hour, and such a moment. And the father of a child always takes care to write these particulars down in a book. When the twelve yearly symbols have been gone through, then they come back to the first, and go through with them again in the same succession.]

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CONCERNING THE RELIGION OF THE CATHAYANS; THEIR VIEWS AS TO THE SOUL; AND THEIR CUSTOMS.

As we have said before, these people are Idolaters, and as regards their gods, each has a tablet fixed high up on the wall of his chamber, on which is inscribed a name which represents the Most High and Heavenly God; and before this they pay daily worship, offering incense from a thurible, raising their hands aloft, and gnashing their teeth three times, praying Him to grant them health of mind and body; but of Him they ask nought else. And below on the ground there is a figure which they call *_Natigai_*, which is the god of things terrestrial. To him they give a wife and children, and they worship him in the same manner, with incense, and gnashing of teeth, and lifting up of hands; and of him they ask seasonable weather, and the fruits of the earth, children, and so forth. Their view of the immortality of the soul is after this fashion. They believe that as soon as a man dies, his soul enters into another body, going from a good to a better, or from a bad to a worse, according as he hath conducted himself well or ill. That is to say, a poor man, if he have passed through life good and sober, shall be born again of a gentlewoman, and shall be a gentleman; and on a second occasion shall be born of a princess and shall be a prince, and so on, always rising, till he be absorbed into the Deity. But if he have borne himself ill, he who was the son of a gentleman shall be reborn as the son of a boor, and from a boor shall become a dog, always going down lower and lower. The people have an ornate style of speech; they salute each other with a cheerful countenance, and with great politeness; they behave like gentlemen, and eat with great propriety. They show great respect to their parents; and should there be any son who offends his parents, or fails to minister to their necessities, there is a public office which has no other charge but that of punishing unnatural children, who are proved to have acted with ingratitude towards their parents. Criminals of sundry kinds who have been imprisoned, are released at a time fixed by the Great Kaan (which occurs every three years), but on leaving prison they are branded on one cheek that they may be recognized. The Great Kaan hath prohibited all gambling and sharpening, things more prevalent there than in any other part of the world. In doing this, he said: "I have conquered you by force of arms, and all that you have is mine; if, therefore, you gamble away your property, it is in fact my property that you are gambling away." Not that he took anything from them however. I must not omit to tell you of the orderly way in which the Kaan's Barons and others conduct themselves in coming to his presence. In the first place, within a half mile of the place where he is, out of reverence for his

exalted majesty, everybody preserves a mien of the greatest meekness and quiet, so that no noise of shrill voices or loud talk shall be heard. And every one of the chiefs and nobles carries always with him a handsome little vessel to spit in whilst he remain in the Hall of Audience--for no one dares spit on the floor of the hall,--and when he hath spitten he covers it up and puts it aside. So also they all have certain handsome buskins of white leather, which they carry with them, and, when summoned by the sovereign, on arriving at the entrance to the hall, they put on these white buskins, and give their others in charge to the servants, in order that they may not foul the fine carpets of silk and gold and divers colours.]

END OF VOL I.