

that he entered the Black Sea on the 7th May, 1253, and after visiting successively Sartach, Batu, and the court of the Great Khan Mangu near Kara Korum, got back to Antioch about the end of June 1255.

99. After describing several of the nations of Further Asia, he says: "Further on is Great Cathay which I take to be the country which was anciently called the Land of the Seres. For the best silk stuffs are still got from them, and the people themselves call such stuffs *Seric*;¹ the nation getting the name of Seres from a certain town of theirs. I was really given to understand that there is a town in that country which has silver walls and golden battlements.² The land in question is divided into many provinces, several of which have not yet been subdued by the Mongols, and the sea lies between it and India. Those Cathayans are little fellows, speaking much through the nose, and as is general with all those eastern people their eyes are very narrow. They are first-rate artists in every kind of craft, and their physicians have a thorough knowledge of the virtues of herbs, and an admirable skill in diagnosis by the pulse.³ But they don't examine the urine or know anything on that subject; this I know from my own observation. There are a great many of these people at Karakorum; and it has always been their custom that all the sons must follow their father's craft whatever it be. Hence it is that they are obliged to pay so heavy a tribute; for they pay the Mongols daily 1,500 *iascot* or *cosmi*;⁴ the *iascot* is a piece of

¹ This is probably a reference to the Mongol word *Sirkek* (*supra*, p. xliv), and Rubruquis thus anticipated Klaproth in tracing an eastern etymology of the term *SERICA*. I do not know what town he can allude to, but see the *Siurhia* of Moses the Armenian, and the *Saragh* of the Singanfu inscription (*supra*, pp. lxxxiii, xciii).

² Martini alludes to a popular Chinese saying about the golden walls of Singanfu (*Atlas Sinensis*). And these passages are remarkable with reference to the remark of Ptolemy about the metropolis *Thinæ*, that there was no truth in the stories of its brazen walls.

³ Martini speaks of the great skill of the physicians in diagnosis by the pulse, and Duhalde is very prolix on that matter.

⁴ I do not know what the word *iascot* is; but *cosmi* is possibly intended for the same word as the *sommi* of Pegolotti (*infra*, p. 288), though the value here assigned would be about ten times that of the *sommo*, taking the mark as $\frac{2}{3}$ of a pound.