

In this country also there be canes or reeds like great trees, and full sixty paces in length. There be also canes of another kind which are called *Cassan*, and these always grow along the ground like what we call dog's grass, and at each of their knots they send out roots, and in such wise extend themselves for a good mile in length.¹ And in these canes are found certain stones which be such that if any man wear one of them upon his person he can never be hurt or wounded by iron in any shape, and so for the most part the men of that country do wear such stones upon them.² And when

should proceed beyond the Straits of Bali to the South, would be hurried away by strong currents, so as never to return. (*Major's Early Voyages to Terra Australis*, HAK. Soc., p. lv.) And Fra Mauro, towards the south-east of India, has the notification, "that ships sailing towards the south, which allow themselves to approach the Dim Islands (*Isole Perse*) will be carried by the currents into the Darkness, and once entered into those regions, through the density of the air, and of the tenacious waters, they must perish." Similar rubrics occur elsewhere towards the south.

The term *Νεκρὸν* is applied by Agathemerus to the Arctic Sea, and perhaps some notion of the Antarctic was involved in the like term heard of by Odoric (see *Hudson, Geog. Gr. Minores*, ii, 56).

¹ PAL. "These are not, however, of any great thickness, but much about the same as the canes in our Frank countries." *Cassan* is the reading of the majority of copies, which may be a mistake for either *Cassar*, representing *Khaizurán* (Arab.), a bamboo, (and *Casar* is the reading in Ramusio), or for *Cassab* (Arab. *Qassab*) a cane in general. But in any case there seems to be confusion. The first canes like trees, etc., are certainly bamboos; the *Cassan*, which runs along the ground for a mile, is certainly a Rattan. But the striking out roots at the knots appears to be a feature taken from certain kinds of bamboo, and the stones of which he goes on to speak, must be the siliceous concretions (*Tabashír*) found in the bamboo, though perhaps they have been confounded with the bezoar stone, which has always been a notable product of Borneo, and is still an article of trade there.

The largest known bamboos (*B. Maxima*) are found in the Malay islands and Cambodia. They reach to eighty and one hundred feet in length. In Pegu I have seen them close upon, if not quite, ten inches in diameter. Gosse quotes from Rumphius a rattan of twelve hundred feet in length. I cannot get nearer to Odoric's mile. (*Rom. of Nat. Hist.*, p. 130).

² PAL. "And when looking for these stones they strike every cane with steel, and if the steel cannot cut it then they search that cane for the stone, getting a piece of wood of the hardest and sharpest, with which they hack and hew until they come at the stone."