

seen the biggest cocks in the world. And there be hens also that are white as snow, and have no feathers, but have wool only upon them, like sheep.<sup>1</sup> The city is a mighty fine one, and standeth upon the sea.

Departing thence and travelling for eighteen days, I passed through many cities and towns, and witnessed a great variety of things. And as I travelled thus I came to a certain great mountain. And on the one side all the animals that dwell there are black, and the men and women have a very strange way of living. But on the other side all the animals are white, and the men and women have a quite different way of living from the others.<sup>2</sup> All the married women there wear

<sup>1</sup> *Phasianus Lanatus*, *Gallus Lanatus*, Coq à duvet, or Silk fowl. Kircher thus describes them, out of Martini: "Woolly hens, the wool of which is much like that of sheep. They are small, with very short legs, but courageous, and much petted by the women." He adds: "It is generally owned that the wool of these hens cannot be woven into cloth (!) except it be first steeped in a lye, of which I have the secret." (*China Illust.* 196). Martini is speaking of Szechuen, but Polo also speaks of these fowls in Fokien as "hens that have no feathers, but skins like a cat," i.e. an Angora or Persian cat, a race of which Martini mentions in China." It is this breed which gave rise in 1766 to the fable of the fowl-rabbit, which was shown at Brussels as the produce of a rabbit and a common hen." (*Nouv. Dict. de l'Histoire Naturelle*, vol. vii).

<sup>2</sup> "Though on both one side and the other methought they lived and dressed in a beastly manner." MIN. RAM. It is difficult to explain precisely what this story means, but doubtless the range of mountains was that which separates Fokien from the rest of the empire, and which Odoric may have crossed either northwards into Che-Kiang, or westwards into Kiangsi, which last we shall see was the route followed by Ibn Batuta in going to Kingse or Hangcheufu.

The differences between the races on the two sides of the mountain probably point to the friar's having passed a part occupied by the Meau-tse or other aboriginal tribes. These do not now extend so far east, but what Polo says of savage cannibals with blue-painted (i.e. tattooed) faces in Fokien, seems to imply that they did so in his time; and some observations of Sir John Davis's corroborate this (*Polo* i, 78; *Chinese*, *supp. vol.* p. 260). And in the modern Chinese census one class of population in a district of the province of Canton appear as *Blacks* (*Chine Mod.*, p. 167). Indeed Samedo (about 1632) says there was still an independent kingdom, presumably of the Meautse, in the mountains dividing Fokien, Canton, and Kiangsi, viz., those of which Odoric speaks (*Rel. della Cina*, p. 19).

The habits and appearance of those races would, no doubt, stand in