

and that is one of the best and finest cities in the world. These pygmies are three spans in height, and they do greater work in cotton, as it is called, than any people in the world.¹ And the full-sized men who dwell there beget sons who are more than half of them like those pygmies who are so small. The women are wedded in their fifth year, and so there are born and begotten of these little people a countless number. These pygmies, both male and female, are famous for their small size. But they have rational souls like ourselves.²

35. Concerning the cities of Iamzai and of Menzu.

And as I travelled upon this river Talay, I passed many

¹ The *Cathan* of the text is only one out of many readings, but it is that to which the others seem to point. It may be Khoten that is meant, if it is worth while to connect any real name with this legend. But the fine cotton was an element nearer at hand, as the western part of the province of Kiangnan was noted for its enormous production of cotton cloth.

Sir Thomas Brown points out that the stories of pygmies were brought under the shield of scripture by the Vulgate version of Ezekiel xxvii, 12. *Sed et Pygmæi qui erant in turribus tuis*, etc., and goes on afterwards: "Though Paulus Jovius delivers that there are pygmies in Japan, Pigafetta about the Moluccas, and Olaus Magnus placeth them in Greenland, yet wanting frequent confirmation in a matter so confirmable, this affirmation carrieth but slow persuasion." (*Vulgar Errors*, i, 424).

Though we cannot tell how Odoric got hold of this story, there is a considerable combination of "authorities" to place pygmies in the inland countries west of China. We may cite two of these. Reinaud's Arab voyagers say that in the mountains of China there is a town called *Táyu*, whose inhabitants are pygmies. But the story most in point is contained in a rubric of the Catalan world-map (1375). To the N.W. of Catayo near the Himalayas it represents a combat of pygmies and cranes, with a legend that runs thus: "Here grow little men who have but five palms in length; and though they be little, and not fit for weighty matters, yet be they brave and *clever at weaving*, and at keeping cattle. And know ye that these men have children when they be but twelve years old; and they live commonly to but forty years, and have not a proper age (?) And valiantly they defend themselves from the cranes, and take and eat them. And here endeth the land of Catay." (See *Ctesias* xi, in Didot's edit. 1858; *Pliny* vii, 2; *Remusat, Nouv. Mel. Asiat.*, i; *Reinaud, Rel. des Voyages, etc.*, p. 47; *Notices et Extraits*, xiv, 141).

² This passage is very confused in almost all versions. I have nearly followed Ramusio's (larger) which is the most intelligible.