

for the variety of wares. At this capital the caravan of Cabul merchants reaches its terminus; and a new one is formed for the journey to Cathay. The command of this caravan is sold by the king, who invests the chiefs with a kind of royal authority over the merchants for the whole journey.¹ A twelvemonth passed away however before the new company was formed, for the way is long and perilous, and the caravan is not formed every year, but only when a large number arrange to join it, and when it is known that they will be allowed to enter Cathay. There is no article of traffic more valuable, or more generally adopted as an investment for this journey, than lumps of a certain transparent kind of marble which we, from poverty of language, usually call jasper. They carry these to the Emperor of Cathay, attracted by the high prices which he deems it obligatory on his dignity to give; and such pieces as the Emperor does not fancy they are free to dispose of to private individuals. The profit on these transactions is so great that it is thought amply to compensate for all the fatigue and expense of the journey. Out of this marble they fashion a variety of articles, such as vases, and brooches for mantles and girdles, which when artistically sculptured in flowers and foliage certainly have an effect of no small magnificence. These marbles (with which the empire is now overflowing) are called by the Chinese Iusce.² There are two kinds of it; the first and

forty days to cross if the snow was extensive (*Jarric*). Forty days is the time assigned by Polo also to the passage of this lofty region (ii, 27).

¹ *Jarric*, from the letters which Goës wrote from Yarkand in February and August, 1604, mentions that the chief whom he eventually accompanied paid the king two hundred bags of musk for the nomination. Four others were associated with him as envoys; and one hundred and seventy-two merchants, who purchased this privilege from the chief at a high price, insomuch that he cleared a large amount by the transaction.

² The word as printed in Trigantius is *Tusce*, but this is certainly a mistake for Iusce, i.e. *Yushé* or "Yu stone," the Chinese name of the oriental jade, the *Yashm* of Western Asiatics (see p. 130 *supra*).

The description in the text of the double source of supply of jade is per-