

see right along them from end to end and from one gate to the other. And up and down the city there are beautiful palaces, and many great and fine hostelries, and fine houses in great numbers. [All the plots of ground on which the houses of the city are built are four-square, and laid out with straight lines; all the plots being occupied by great and spacious palaces, with courts and gardens of proportionate size. All these plots were assigned to different heads of families. Each square plot is encompassed by handsome streets for traffic; and thus the whole city is arranged in squares just like a chess-board, and disposed in a manner so perfect and masterly that it is impossible to give a description that should do it justice.]<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, in the middle of the city there is a great clock—that is to say, a bell—which is struck at night. And after it has struck three times no one must go out in the city, unless it be for the needs of a woman in labour, or of the sick.<sup>6</sup> And those who go about on such errands are bound to carry lanterns with them. Moreover, the established guard at each gate of the city is 1000 armed men; not that you are to imagine this guard is kept up for fear of any attack, but only as a guard of honour for the Sovereign, who resides there, and to prevent thieves from doing mischief in the town.<sup>7</sup>

---

NOTE 1.— † The history of the city on the site of Peking goes back to very old times, for it had been [under the name of *Ki*] the capital of the kingdom of Yen, previous to B.C. 222, when it was captured by the Prince of the T'sin Dynasty. [Under the T'ang dynasty (618-907) it was known under the name of Yu-chau.] It became one of the capitals of the Khitans in A.D. 936, and of the Kin sovereigns, who took it in 1125, in 1151 under the name of Chung-tu. Under the name of Yenking, [given to this city in 1013] it has a conspicuous place in the wars of Chinghiz against the latter dynasty. He captured it in 1215. In 1264, Kúblái adopted it as his chief residence, and founded in 1267, the new city of TATU ("Great Court"), called by the Mongols TAIDU or DAITU since 1271 (see Bk. I. ch. lxi. note 1), at a little distance—Odoric says half a mile—to the north-east of the old Yenking. Tatu was completed in the summer of 1267.