

for the sovereign, some for the court, some for the city which is so great, some for the crowds of Barons and Knights, some for the great hosts of the Emperor which are quartered round about; and thus between court and city the quantity brought in is endless.

As a sample, I tell you, no day in the year passes that there do not enter the city 1000 cart-loads of silk alone, from which are made quantities of cloth of silk and gold, and of other goods. And this is not to be wondered at; for in all the countries round about there is no flax, so that everything has to be made of silk. It is true, indeed, that in some parts of the country there is cotton and hemp, but not sufficient for their wants. This, however, is not of much consequence, because silk is so abundant and cheap, and is a more valuable substance than either flax or cotton.

Round about this great city of Cambaluc there are some 200 other cities at various distances, from which traders come to sell their goods and buy others for their lords; and all find means to make their sales and purchases, so that the traffic of the city is passing great.

NOTE 1.—It would seem to have been usual to reckon *twelve* suburbs to Peking down to modern times. (See *Deguignes*, III. 38.)

NOTE 2.—The word here used is *Fondaco*, often employed in mediæval Italian in the sense nearly of what we call a *factory*. The word is from the Greek *πανδοκείον*, but through the Arabic *Fandúk*. The latter word is used by Ibn Batuta in speaking of the hostelries at which the Mussulman merchants put up in China.

CHAPTER XXIII.

[CONCERNING THE OPPRESSIONS OF ACHMATH THE BAILO, AND THE PLOT THAT WAS FORMED AGAINST HIM.¹

You will hear further on how that there are twelve persons appointed who have authority to dispose of lands, offices,