

Chandu and stop there three months; and at the same time his son Chinkin used to go away to his usual haunts, and this Achmath remained in charge of the city; sending to obtain the Kaan's orders from Chandu when any emergency arose.

So Vanchu and Chenchu, having come to this conclusion, proceeded to communicate it to the chief people among the Cathayans, and then by common consent sent word to their friends in many other cities that they had determined on such a day, at the signal given by a beacon, to massacre all the men with beards, and that the other cities should stand ready to do the like on seeing the signal fires. The reason why they spoke of massacring the bearded men was that the Cathayans naturally have no beard, whilst beards are worn by the Tartars, Saracens, and Christians. And you should know that all the Cathayans detested the Grand Kaan's rule because he set over them governors who were Tartars, or still more frequently Saracens, and these they could not endure, for they were treated by them just like slaves. You see the Great Kaan had not succeeded to the dominion of Cathay by hereditary right, but held it by conquest; and thus having no confidence in the natives, he put all authority into the hands of Tartars, Saracens, or Christians who were attached to his household and devoted to his service, and were foreigners in Cathay.

Wherefore, on the day appointed, the aforesaid Vanchu and Chenchu having entered the palace at night, Vanchu sat down and caused a number of lights to be kindled before him. He then sent a messenger to Achmath the Bailo, who lived in the Old City, as if to summon him to the presence of Chinkin, the Great Kaan's son, who (it was pretended) had arrived unexpectedly. When Achmath heard this he was much