

CHAPTER LXXI.

CONCERNING THE CITY OF SINJU AND THE GREAT RIVER KIAN.

YOU must know that when you leave the city of Yanju, after going 15 miles south-east, you come to a city called SINJU, of no great size, but possessing a very great amount of shipping and trade. The people are Idolaters and subject to the Great Kaan, and use paper-money.¹

And you must know that this city stands on the greatest river in the world, the name of which is KIAN. It is in some places ten miles wide, in others eight, in others six, and it is more than 100 days' journey in length from one end to the other. This it is that brings so much trade to the city we are speaking of; for on the waters of that river merchandize is perpetually coming and going, from and to the various parts of the world, enriching the city, and bringing a great revenue to the Great Kaan.

And I assure you this river flows so far and traverses so many countries and cities that in good sooth there pass and repass on its waters a great number of vessels, and more wealth and merchandize than on all the rivers and all the seas of Christendom put together! It seems indeed more like a Sea than a River.² Messer Marco Polo said that he once beheld at that city 15,000 vessels at one time. And you may judge, if this city, of no great size, has such a number, how many must there be altogether, considering that on the banks of this river there are more than sixteen provinces and more than 200 great cities, besides towns and villages, all possessing vessels?

Messer Marco Polo aforesaid tells us that he heard from the officer employed to collect the Great Kaan's duties on this river that there passed up-stream 200,000