

vessels in the year, without counting those that passed down! [Indeed as it has a course of such great length, and receives so many other navigable rivers, it is no wonder that the merchandize which is borne on it is of vast amount and value. And the article in largest quantity of all is salt, which is carried by this river and its branches to all the cities on their banks, and thence to the other cities in the interior.³]

The vessels which ply on this river are decked. They have but one mast, but they are of great burthen, for I can assure you they carry (reckoning by our weight) from 4000 up to 12,000 cantars each.⁴

Now we will quit this matter and I will tell you of another city called CAIJU. But first I must mention a point I had forgotten. You must know that the vessels on this river, in going up-stream have to be tracked, for the current is so strong that they could not make head in any other manner. Now the tow-line, which is some 300 paces in length, is made of nothing but cane. 'Tis in this way: they have those great canes of which I told you before that they are some fifteen paces in length; these they take and split from end to end [into many slender strips], and then they twist these strips together so as to make a rope of any length they please. And the ropes so made are stronger than if they were made of hemp.⁵

[There are at many places on this river hills and rocky eminences on which the idol-monasteries and other edifices are built; and you find on its shores a constant succession of villages and inhabited places.⁶

NOTE 1.—The traveller's diversion from his direct course—*sceloc* or south-east, as he regards it—towards Fo-kien, in order to notice Ngan-king (as we have supposed) and Siang-yang, has sadly thrown out both the old translators and transcribers, and the modern commentators. Though the G. Text has here "*quant l'en se part de la cité de Angui*," I cannot doubt that *Ianguï* (Yanju) is the reading intended, and that Polo here comes back to the main line of his journey.